"BIG WAGES, GLORIOUS CLIMATE AND SITUATIONS GUARANTEED"

A STUDY OF THE MIGRATION OF IRISH WOMEN TO GREAT BRITAIN FOR THE PERIOD 1861 TO 1911

TRACY M. ENGLISH

"Big Wages, Glorious Climate and Situations Guaranteed"

A Study of the Migration of Irish Women to Great Britain for the Period 1861 to 1911

Submitted By: Tracy M. English

A Thesis submitted to the Department of History in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

Department of History

April, 1999

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to bridge the gap in Irish migration history. While there are numerous studies completed that explain the migration of Irish men and women to North America and Canada, there have been few studies written that illustrate the reasons for the migration of hundreds of thousands of Irish women to Great Britain. These women are an anomaly in migration history. Unlike Jewish and Italian migrants, Irish women did not migrate as part of a family, nor did they migrate solely to benefit the family financially. This difference was recognized by historians as early as 1885, but has never been studied in earnest. This is surprising when it is remembered that the Irish were the largest immigrant population in Great Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Using the records for the period 1861 to 1911, this study shows where Irish women settled in Great Britain. The few studies completed on the Irish in Britain assume that Irish women followed their male counterparts to the large urban areas. This work shows that while some Irish women did indeed settle in the industrial areas and large cities, a surprising number settled in rural towns and villages. This thesis outlines the historiography of the Irish in Britain, discusses the socio-economic position of Irish women in Ireland and in America to determine why women often saw emigration as their only viable option, and looks at what marriage and fertility patterns were recreated in their new homelands. As well, this work analyses what types of job opportunities were

available for Irish women at home and in America to determine if this was an economically motivated migration. Finally, this work shows where Irish women settled in Britain and determines why they settled in certain areas.

In addition to the published census reports, the evidence used to study Irish women includes the government inquiries into the Irish, the accounts of social commentators including Henry Mayhew and Friedrich Engels, and a wide variety of secondary sources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Valerie Burton and the Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, for their support during the research and writing of this thesis. I would also like to thank the staff of the Queen Elizabeth II Library, without whom I would not have found most of the primary sources used for this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* The title of this thesis was taken from an recruiting advertisement for Irish servants. This advertisement was quoted in Rita Rhodes, Women and the Family in Post-Famine Ireland (London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), 69.

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

> Woman is a greater migrant than man. This may surprise those who associate women with domestic life, but the figures of the census clearly prove it. Nor do women migrate merely from the rural districts into the towns in search of domestic service, for they migrate quite as frequently into certain manufacturing districts, and the workshop is a formidable rival of the kitchen and the scullery.[1]

When emigration theorist E.G. Ravenstein wrote these words in 1885, he had before him a wealth of census data which indicated that Irish women had equalled, if not surpassed, men in terms of total migration from Ireland. During the 1880's, it was not surprising that the large numbers of Irish migrants were investigated. A generation had passed since the Famine forced millions of Irish out of their homes and into other countries, and enough time had passed for social scientists and other academics to look into the impact this large-scale migration had not only on Ireland but on the areas in which they settled. While numerous studies of Irish migration did appear at this time, none except Ravenstein's work recognised the sheer volume of women who migrated. The neglect of the study of Irish women is extraordinary when it is understood that from the Act of Union in 1800 to the creation of the Irish Republic in 1922, approximately four million Irish women left their homeland.[2] The large, continuous migration of young,

---

[1]E.G. Ravenstein, "On the Laws of Migration," Journal of the Statistical Society, Vol XLVII, Part II, June 1885, 196.

[2]Donald Akenson, The Irish Diaspora (Toronto: P.D. Meany, 1993), 157.

usually single, women is an anomaly in the history of European migration, yet until the last quarter of the twentieth century they were, largely because of their gender, the forgotten migrants.

The emigration of Irish women does not fit into the patterns set out by emigration historians. Irish women, unlike Jewish and Italian female migrants, did not migrate as part of a family, nor did they engage in work solely for the economic benefit of the family. These differences were understood by Ravenstein as early as 1885, but it has only been in the past couple of decades that historians have begun to investigate this anomaly seriously. While the arrival of Irish women in America has been documented relatively well, a full-scale study of Irish women in Britain has yet to be written. This is a serious gap in the historiography as Britain was the recipient of the second largest number of Irish women, after the United States. Indeed, by the end of the nineteenth century, Britain was the first choice among Irish female emigrants. [3] This study will attempt to remedy this situation somewhat, but makes no claim to be a definitive study. Using the published census abstracts, as well as local community studies, this essay will investigate the geographic location of Irish women in Britain. It is widely assumed that the Irish migrated to the cities, and while this may be the case, this study will establish that not all Irish settled in the industrial centres of Lancashire or the capital of London.

Using this observation, it will then discuss questions pertaining to the raw numerical data gathered from the published Irish and British censuses and emigration

---

[3]Akenson, The Irish Diaspora, 157.

reports. By looking at the data available, we can gain insight into Irish women's lives in Britain. Where Irish-born women settled determined their chances of meeting and marrying other Irish, possibly continuing marital and reproductive patterns developed in Ireland. Where women settled in Britain also affected their employment opportunities. It will be important to see if the population of Irish women ebbed and flowed with economic changes in the communities in which they settled. It is intended that a clearer picture of Irish female settlement will emerge from this study and while I can only claim to show patterns of settlement, it is hoped that the work will facilitate local studies that might answer questions relating to employment, marriage and community in greater detail.

Chapter 1 outlines the historiography of the Irish in Britain. Chapter 2 discusses the socio-economic position of Irish women in Ireland and America to determine why women often saw emigration as their only viable option. As well, this chapter will look at what marriage and fertility patterns were recreated in their new homelands. Chapter 3 analyses what types of job opportunities were available for Irish women at home and in America to determine if this was an economically motivated migration and whether their economic status improved once they emigrated. Chapter 4 discusses particular problems when using censuses as primary sources, and what can be done to overcome these problems. Chapter 5 is an historiography of Irish women in Britain, dealing specifically with their family and work lives. Chapter 6 contains the information garnered from the census data to show the settlement of Irish women across Britain. Finally, the conclusion attempts to assess the significance of the presence of Irish women in different communities across Britain, as well as raise questions for future study.

Chapter 1

THE IRISH IN BRITAIN

From the beginning of the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, only the United States received more Irish migrants than Britain. In fact, since 1900, Britain has been the main destination for all Irish migrants, male and female.[1] Despite this, little has been written on this large group and what is available consists mainly of local community studies[2]. While these are valuable, they have tended to focus only on the male migrants, commenting on Irish women in these communities with reference to a few interesting or anecdotal cases.[3] This is not surprising, however; like most working class

---

[1]Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain," Feminist Review Number 50, Summer 1995, 12.

[2]See, for example, Frances Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1982); Steven Fielding, Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939 (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993); Lynn Hollen Lees, Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979) and W.J. Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working-Class Community (New York: Peter Lang, 1989).

[3]Roger Swift, "Crime and the Irish in Victorian Britain," in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939 (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989). This article disputes the amount of crime that was actually committed by Irish immigrants in Britain. The statistics in this article address the number of crimes committed by men only. The only mention of women concerns a couple of cases involving murder. Another work by Frances Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, contains more statistical information on Irish women, but also uses anecdotal case studies to describe the women involved in prostitution.

women of the same era, Irish women in Britain left few records. Generally they only came into public view when they did something extraordinary.

In other countries, notably the United States and Australia, women have been more prominently figured in the histories of Irish immigration. Works by Kirby Miller, Hasia Diner and Janet Nolan have made significant contributions from the American perspective.[4] Miller's work is especially relevant to this study, as he used the American census and Registrar General Reports to determine that for the period 1856-1921, approximately half of the three million Irish emigrants to the United States were female.[5] The American census forms asked questions on ethnicity and religion, and Miller and Diner were able to determine that approximately four-fifths of Irish female migrants were Catholic, hailing primarily from Munster and Connaught.[6] Regrettably, British censuses did not include questions that could produce similar answers.

---

[4]Hasia Diner, Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant women in the Nineteenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983); Kirby Miller, Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) and Janet Nolan, Ourselves Alone: Women's Emigration From Ireland, 1885-1920, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989).

[5]Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 352.

[6]Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 353; and Diner, Erin's Daughters in America, 142.

Similar work has been done for Irish women emigrants to Australia.[7] Chris McConville used the Australian census to show that, as in Britain, Irish women began to outnumber men in migration to Australia in the late nineteenth century.[8] The biggest difference regarding migration to Australia was that it tended to involve more family migration,[9] whereas female migration to America consisted mainly of single women.[10]

Proposing a similar study for the hundreds of thousands of Irish women who emigrated to Britain is a daunting task, not simply because of the large number of women involved. Three major problems loom large with any type of broad-based study of the Irish in Britain, male or female. First, unlike other countries which kept records of those who emigrated, Britain has only made cursory attempts to keep records on Irish immigrants, and then only for the period 1876-1920.[11] Secondly, there is no systematic data on the Irish as a multi-generational ethnic group. This lack of information means that we only have data available for those in Britain who were born in Ireland, but no

---

[7]Chris McConville, "The Victorian Irish: Emigrants and Families, 1851-1891, " in Patricia Grimshaw and Chris McConville, eds. Families in Colonial Australia (Sydney: Australian National University Press, 1985) and Sharon Morgan, "Irish Women in Port Phillip and Victoria, 1840-1860" in Oliver MacDonagh and W.F. Mandle, Irish Australian Studies (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1989).

[8]Chris McConville, "The Victorian Irish," 25.

[9]Chris McConville, "The Victorian Irish," 27.

[10]Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 351.

[11]Donald Akenson, The Irish Diaspora: A Primer (Toronto: P.D. Meany Co., 1993),195.

information on their descendants. Finally, with the exception of the 1851 enumeration of worship, British authorities have never collected data on the religious affiliation of its people. Amongst other things, this has meant that an unknown percentage of Irish Protestants have been forgotten, as historians have made the assumption that Irish migrants to Britain were Catholic.[12]

Before beginning any serious study of Irish women in Britain, it may be useful to establish what is already known about the Irish emigrant group as a whole. It has been stated that the Irish were everywhere in England and Scotland in the nineteenth century, once you begin to look for them.[13] Until quite recently, however, few historians bothered looking. The Irish were the focus of some interest in the nineteenth century. In the Post-Famine period, the Irish were well documented in Parliamentary reports, police records and newspaper accounts. The Irish were seen as a distinct minority, but were usually viewed as a severe social problem in Britain, worthy of record and in need of reform.[14]

By the 1920's, however, the Irish were virtually ignored in British society. The most obvious explanation for this was the independence of Ireland in 1921, which

---

[12]Akenson, The Irish Diaspora, 191.

[13]Ruth Anne Harris, The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland: Early Nineteenth Century Irish Labour Migration (Iowa: Iowa State Press University Press, 1994), xii.

[14]For example see Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor (1851; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1968); Charles Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London: Selections (1892; rpt. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967); as well as various newspaper accounts in The Gazette in York and The Guardian in Manchester.

minimized the Irish as a problem for the British. Other factors, however, were also at work. The arrival of Jewish immigrants helped to reduce the appearance of the Irish as a problem minority. Most significantly, historians saw separate groups, such as Jews, Catholics and Irish, as a part of a single working class.[15] As a result, any group that was distinct in British society, such as the Irish, was reduced into one political or social force and ceased to be viewed as a distinct ethnic group.[16]

In the late 1960's, there was a resurgence of interest in the Irish in Britain not seen since the turn of the century. There were three reasons for this renewed interest. First, the history of immigrants and minorities in Britain was brought to centre stage due to the immigration of large numbers of Indo-Pakistani and West-Indians in the 1960's.[17] As in the nineteenth century, these recent immigrants were blamed for a whole range of social problems, including increased unemployment, overcrowding of cities, and even the spread of disease. [18] Historians began to study immigrant history in earnest to find out how similar immigrant groups were treated.

---

[15]Stedman Jones, Gareth, "The Changing Face of Nineteenth Century Britain," History Today May 1993, 39.

[16]See, for example, E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class (New York: Random House, 1963) and Gareth Stedman Jones, Outcast London (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

[17]Colin Holmes, Immigrants and Minorities in British Society (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), 13.

[18]Holmes, Immigrants and Minorities, 14.

The Irish also became the focus for a more obvious, political reason - the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland. From 1968 onwards, the Irish, relatively invisible since the partition of Ireland, became a problem again. With this increase in hostilities came interest in the study of how the Irish in Britain were perceived, usually to uncover information about the success of Irish assimilation into British society.[19]

The third reason for renewed interest in the Irish resulted from a dispute over the causes of emigration. During the 1970's and the 1980's, a series of articles and books appeared[20], attempting to answer several questions - "why did the Irish emigrate in such large numbers?" "Where did they go?", and "what impact did they have on their new homeland?" The discovery of a sizable minority population in Britain, more than 800,000 at its height in 1861, led to renewed study of this population.

At the start of this section, it was stated that the Irish were everywhere in Britain if you looked, but with this renewed interest in the Irish, half of the population remained virtually absent from the historiography - women. Aside from small pieces in the works

---

[19]See, for example, M.A.G. O'Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration," in Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift, eds., The Irish in the Victorian City (London: Croom Helm, 1985) and David Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People: The Irish in Britain 1800-1871," in A New History of Ireland Vol. 5, T.W. Moody and Others, eds., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[20]For the best examples see, David Fitzpatrick, "Irish Immigration, 1801-70," in Moody, A New History of Ireland; Harris, Labour Migration; and Cormac O'Grada, "Some Aspects of Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration," in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, eds., Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1977).

of Frances Finnegan on York, Lynn Hollen Lees on London and, less extensively, W.J. Lowe and Stephen Fielding on Lancashire, the history of Irish women in Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has yet to be written. Bronwen Walter and Mary Hickman, in an invaluable critique, "Deconstructing Whiteness," stated that women were ignored almost immediately upon their arrival in Britain as they failed to fall into the pre-constructed stereotypes that the British had set out for the Irish[21]. There was no corresponding stereotype for women similar to 'Paddy'. Irish women did not appear in caricatures of the Irish[22] and aside from comments on their living conditions, failed to attract much attention in the nineteenth century. With historians' increasing propensity to only see the Irish as a part of a single working class, Irish women were grouped with their male counterparts. We have little knowledge as to how many Irish women worked outside of the home, although Lowe makes a case that in Lancashire they made up a sizable percentage of those employed at the mills. While we have studies on women's involvement in politics in both England and Ireland, we know nothing about Irish women's involvement in such movements as Chartism, the Ladies National Association, or even the suffrage movement.[23]

---

[21]Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain," Feminist Review Number 50, Summer 1995, 12.

[22]L.P. Curtis, Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1971).

[23]For these movements in England and Ireland, see Rosemary Cullen Owens, Smashing Times (Dublin: Attic Press, 1984); Jane Rendall, Equal or Different? Women's

While women did become a focus in both British and Irish history in the 1960's, Irish women in Britain were ignored. The inclusion of women changes the direction of the history of this minority group. Like Irish men, women suffered from the marginal status of being a member of a problem minority group, attacked by the press, and the focus of social reformers, but no one knows to what degree or if their experiences were different. Research on the Irish focussed on male institutions and male experiences, and little research was done to show how women's experiences differed.

Three main themes emerge from the historiography of the Irish in Britain as a complete group. Recent studies of emigration have clarified the reasons why women left Ireland. Unfortunately, these studies have only looked at the migration of Irish women to America and Australia, but the reasons for migration to Britain would be similar to those further afield. As the migration of women is a major concentration of this thesis, the reasons for Irish female migration deserve special consideration and are discussed in the next chapter. Secondly, the effect of the Irish on both urbanisation and industrialization was a major topic among British historians. The Irish were accused of depressing wages and living standards in Britain during the nineteenth century. Finally, historians were

---

Politics 1800-1914 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); Jane Lewis, Women in England 1870-1950 (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986). For the LNA in Ireland , see Maria Luddy, Women and Philanthropy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). For Britain, see Jane Lewis, Women and Social Action in Victorian and Edwardian England (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1991). For Chartism, see Jutta Schwarzkopf, Women in the Chartist Movement (London: MacMillan, 1991).

concerned with the integration of the Irish into British society. While virtually all see a lack of assimilation, most dispute the reasons why the Irish were excluded. As these last two themes are essential to gaining an understanding of the Irish in Britain, they are the focus of this historiography.

Irish and Industrial Britain

The place of the Irish in the development of industrial Britain is well documented. Early studies assumed that Irish migration fuelled the industrial economy by providing a resource not available in Britain - a reserve army of labour. Up to the 1960's, however, historians assumed that Irish immigrants were a part of the working class and did not recognise what made them distinct.[24] Important for the history of the Irish in Britain was the development of urban history, particularly during the 1970's. Urban history focussed attention on the social structures within the ever-expanding Victorian city. While earlier historians viewed cities as the natural location for class formation in the nineteenth century, urban historians also saw the development of fragmented, racial and sectarian

---

[24]For earlier studies, see Arthur Redford, Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1926).

identities which undermined the formation of a single working class.[25] This shift in the focus of social history led to studies that conceived of the Irish as a severe social problem, creating the most visible signs of deprivation of urban and industrial life: ghettoes, poverty and crime. Studies in the 1970's confirmed the Irish were perceived in nineteenth century Britain as a serious problem. More recent studies in the 1980's and 1990's have shown that the Irish were treated unfairly by nineteenth century society and by earlier historians. These works attempted to rehabilitate the image of the Irish, rejecting the idea that they were the source of society's problems in Victorian Britain.

Using the work of nineteenth century social commentators, early historians of the Irish in Britain concentrated on the effect of these immigrants on the labour of Britain. These new arrivals, mostly unskilled and starving, took the lowest jobs simply to survive. The Irish provided a large reserve army of labour, performing the roughest and dirtiest jobs, whether for the railways, the farms or the factories.[26] During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Irish were a much-needed source of seasonal labour during the harvest season or railway construction.[27] In the minds of nineteenth century observers, the problems began when the seasonal migrants flooded Britain after the Famine and did not leave. These largely unskilled rural people descended on the cities of

---

[25]R.J. Morris and Richard Rodger, The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History 1820-1914 (London: The Longman Group, 1993), 11-16.

[26]J.A. Jackson, The Irish In Britain (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 79.

[27]Harris, Labour Migration.

Britain, depressing wages and forcing British labour into other industries. Writing in 1844, Engels stated that the English working man could not compete with the Irish labourers, who required only the barest necessities of life, and willingly took the menial occupations of the lowest class. [28] Agreeing with other social commentators, such as Thomas Carlyle, Engels stated that it was the fault of the Irish that wages for the working classes were depressed, simply due to the endless supply of labour that Ireland could provide.[29]

In 1926 Arthur Redford accepted the views of Engels and Carlyle that the Irish were responsible for keeping wages low. Making the connection between the Irish and their slum living conditions, Redford stated that the Irish, by accepting the lowest wages possible, reduced the standard of living for all English workers[30]. Redford's thesis would hold up well into the 1970's, as historians such as J.H Clapham and Sidney Pollard blamed the Irish for the reduced standard of living. [31]

---

[28]Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class (1844; rpt. Edinburgh: Neill and Company, 1968), 93.

[29]Engels, Working Class, 93

[30]Redford, Labour Migration, 159-60.

[31]J. H. Clapham, An Economic History of Modern Britain (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 57-66 and Sidney Pollard, "Labour in Great Britain," in P. Mathias and others, The Cambridge Economic History of Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 103.

Social historians in the 1960's claimed that the Irish, as a cheap labour force, were indispensable to the financial success of the industrial Britain. E.P. Thompson's classic, The Making of the English Working Class, stated that Irish labour was often preferred in Britain, not simply because it was cheap, but because the Irish took the worst jobs that the English refused. [32] They worked the lowest jobs, lived in the worst conditions, and did not complain[33].

For the most part, the chances for upward mobility of the Irish in the job market were hampered by three factors. First, the Irish tended to form, or were forced to form, ghetto communities in the cities and towns that they inhabited. John Werly identified two clearly delineated ghettoes in Manchester, Frances Finnegan saw four in York, and Gerard O'Tuathaigh declared them to be prevalent in all areas of Britain. These historians used the work of Victorian commentators such as Joseph Rowntree, James Kay-Shuttleworth and Friedrich Engels, as evidence. These observers saw that the Irish lived in squalor, with no sewage or amenities in overcrowded neighbourhoods that excluded other ethnic groups.[34]

---

[32]Thompson, Working Class, 473-75,

[33]Thompson, Working Class, 471-73.

[34] Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, John Werly, "The Irish in Manchester," and Gerard O'Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration." in Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift, eds. The Irish in the Victorian City (London: Croom Helm, 1985). All of these articles define Irish ghettoes as areas where Irish lived to the exclusion of other ethnic groups. As well, they further define ghettoes by including the deplorable living conditions and large family sizes.

Frances Finnegan is by far the best at articulating why the ghetto formed such a barrier to Irish chances for an improved standard of living. Discussing the horrendous conditions of the Britannia and Butcher yards, two Irish slum communities in York investigated for the Poor Law Commission in 1836, Finnegan described a community containing not only hundreds of two- room houses, but also slaughterhouses, pigsties, stables and even a dung heap. [35] The conditions of overcrowding were horrendous, with upwards of 11 people or more in each two- room house.[36] With periodic investigation by commissions, police and the press, the people who lived in these ghettoes gained a savage reputation, and were declared unfit for anything but the lowest jobs.

It did not help Irish immigrants when members of their communities were accused of criminal activity. The Irish propensity for criminal activity was well documented in the previously mentioned nineteenth century sources, but in the 1970's and 1980's historians of industrialisation turned their attention to the "dangerous classes"[37]. namely those members of the working classes that challenged order and stability in nineteenth century Britain. Already on the margins as an immigrant group, the Irish easily fit the profile of dangerous criminals. Historians of the Irish in Britain writing in the 1970's and early 1980's appeared to confirm that the Irish were a serious threat to law and order.

---

[35] Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 43

[36]Finnegan, The Irish in York, 47

[37]Hudson, The Industrial Revolution, 206.

Writing in 1973, John Werly saw Victorian Manchester as on the verge of exploding due to tension in the ghetto. Using the Report on the State of the Irish Poor (1836) as his evidence, Werly stated that every weekend in Manchester saw the threat of violence[38]. While usually associated with such minor offenses as drunk and disorderly conduct, the Irish showed such blatant disregard for authority that they gained the reputation as "perpetually in the state of agitation," willing to take on a fight for any purpose[39]. Finnegan and O'Tuathaigh saw the ghetto as a constant battle zone, decreasing any hope that the Irish could improve their status. By their apparent ignorance of authority, the Irish were condemned.

The level of poverty in the ghettoes also contributed to the dangerous reputation of the Irish. During the nineteenth century, the Irish were accused of making large demands on poor relief. Finnegan suggested that the reason many immigrants settled in nonindustrial towns such as York was because the local system of relief was not based on a residency requirement. [40] By 1871, the Irish only made up 7.2% of the population of York, but represented 43% of total claimants for poor relief. Werly stated that the Irish in Manchester spread disease to the entire community. Their horrific living conditions led to their poor health, early death rate, high infant mortality and high susceptibility to

---

[38]Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, Reports From Committee. Volume XXXIV, Appendix G, 1836 in Werly, "The Irish in Manchester," 354-55.

[39]Werly, "The Irish in Manchester,' 355.

[40]Finnegan, The Irish in York, 16.

disease.[41] What emerged from this early debate on the effect of the Irish on Britain and industrialization is a picture of a dangerous, lazy and diseased group, incapable of taking care of themselves or others, and unworthy of any intervention in the form of better jobs and wages.

By the 1980's, referring less to contemporary evidence and more to market evaluations and census reports, historians rejected the view that the Irish were essential to the success of British industry. E.H. Hunt questioned the lack of real evidence in these early histories, and stated that the words of social commentators and reformers were taken by earlier historians at face value[42]. Hunt argued that Irish labour was dispensable, and that if the large-scale immigration had not taken place, the native British population would have easily taken the jobs[43]. Hunt also rejected the view that the British would not take the lowest paid jobs. He reasoned that most of the worst jobs of industrialization, such as canal building, had been completed by the native labour before the Irish had arrived.[44] Jeffrey Williamson took this view one step further and argued that the Irish actually stunted industrial expansion during the nineteenth century. [45] Williamson argued

---

[41]Werly, "The Irish in Manchester," 356.

[42]Hunt, British Labour History, 172.

[43]Hunt, British Labour History, 173.

[44]Hunt, British Labour History, 174.

[45]Jeffrey Williamson, "Impact of the Irish on the British Labour Market During the Industrial Revolution," in Swift and Gilley, Irish in Britain, 136-39,

that by providing an endless source of labour to Britain in both industry and agriculture the Irish stopped the implementation of mechanization. If the labour supply was high, there was no need to invest in costly machinery. [46] Williamson also disputed the earlier views that the Irish were responsible for keeping wages low. He believed that the Irish 'crowded out' native competitors in certain jobs. While wages were indeed lowered in such labour intensive occupations as the railways, dockwork and farming, the Irish rarely moved out of the lowest jobs and therefore did not cause decreased wages in all working class jobs. [47]

Until the late 1980's the predominant view was that the Irish were trapped in an endless cycle of poverty caused by their virtual inability to move out of the lowest paying jobs, with little differentiation regardless of the time period or their geographic location. Only one historian before the 1980's, Lynn Lees, took issue with the idea that the Irish were not upwardly mobile, even if they did not move out of the jobs of the working classes. Lees recognized that while in the early part of the Industrial Revolution the Irish were confined to casual, unskilled labour, by the mid-Victorian period this was modified. Irish immigrants became shopkeepers, skilled craftsmen and better paid labourers in Britain.[48]

---

[46]Williamson, "Impact of the Irish," 136-39.

[47]Williamson, " Impact of the Irish," 159.

[48]Lynn Hollen Lees, "Patterns of Lower Class Life," in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds., Nineteenth Century Cities (New Haven: Yale University Press,

Lees was alone in her interpretations of the Irish at this time, but more recent work has built upon her research. Colin Pooley's "Segregation or Integration?" stated that despite the perceived immobility of the Irish, 17 to 40% of the Irish-born population, particularly in large industrial centres such as Manchester, were employed in skilled or higher status jobs in the factories, or set up their own businesses. [49] Pooley argued that earlier historians concentrated only on those Irish investigated by Poor Law Commissions and neglected to recognise that there was a large group of Irish immigrants that made real improvements to their lives. Other historians, such as W.J. Lowe and David Fitzpatrick, agreed with Pooley, but maintained that geographic location played a large role in determining the chances for upward mobility. [50]

Historians from the late 1970's onwards rehabilitated the image of Irish immigrants. While rarely disputing that the Irish lived in the worst conditions, they disputed the view that there were ghettoes in the traditional sense. Lynn Lees stated that while the Irish were often found in the worst areas of the city, they shared their areas with members of the English working class, and later in the period, with other immigrants[51].

1969), 373-74.

[49]Colin Pooley, "Segregation or Integration? The Residential Experience of the Irish in Mid-Victorian Britain." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., The Irish in Britain: 1815-1939 (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), 70. See also Lees, Exiles of Erin, 92-100.

[50]W.J. Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 83-86 and Fitzpatrick, "Peculiar Tramping People," 639-41.

[51]Lees, Exiles, 92-100 and "Patterns of Lower Class Life," 368.

Colin Pooley rejected the idea of a ghetto on the basis that there was little evidence of subsequent English-born children living in the same residential neighbourhoods. What Finnegan and Werly had seen as culturally distinct ethnic ghettoes had continual turnover, meaning that new immigrants replaced the old ones. While Irish, these immigrants did not remain in these areas long enough to form ghettoes.[52] Others would come to similar conclusions[53]. Frances Finnegan, in her work on York, used the 1851 census to show the Irish propensity for ghettoisation, but found that by the next census only five of the 154 Irish families in Britannia Yard remained. David Fitzpatrick used this as evidence that while the Irish may have resided in the worst locations, they were not present in the town long enough to form a ghetto in the truest sense of the word[54]. More importantly, he also stated that the early studies focussed only on three or four areas. Until there was a more widespread survey of the Irish, it was difficult to see how the Irish could be characterised as a ghetto people[55].

W.J. Lowe recognised that while the Irish may have lived in close proximity to one another, they were widely dispersed throughout the landscape of Lancashire towns. While an Irish ethnic community developed, geographical residence patterns were

---

[52]Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?" 60-63.

[53]Davis, "Little Irelands," and Lowe, Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire.

[54]Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People," 634.

[55]Fitzpatrick, " A Peculiar Tramping People," 634.

incidental, as the so-called ghetto was neither impermeable nor permanent. [56] The Irish did not purposely take over neighbourhoods and make them their own, they simply lived where they could afford housing, often in close proximity to their workplace.[57]

Pooley and others also recognised that there were distinct Irish communities set up, developed around the Catholic Church and other social organisations. The pervasiveness of the Catholic Church in the lives of the Irish in Britain has also been the subject of scholarship. Historians stressed the positive and negative influences of the Church, describing how the local priests helped to ease the transition for the new immigrants. These priests provided education and a social connection for the Irish. [58] By far the best example of this positive view came from Raphael Samuel, who described eloquently how priests eased the transition from rural to urban life by giving advice, finding work and housing, and caring for the sick. [59]

The Irish reputation for criminal activity has also come in for reassessment. Using criminal statistics and placing less weight on social commentary, David Fitzpatrick stated

---

[56]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 69-71.

[57] Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 71.

[58]Stephen Fielding, Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939 (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), 56-72; Lees, Exiles of Erin, 174-82 and Graham Davis, The Irish in Britain: 1815-1914 (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, Ltd., 1991), 138-58.

[59]Raphael Samuel, "The Roman Catholic Church and the Irish Poor," in Swift and Gilley, eds., The Irish in the Victorian City, 267-80.

that crime had very little to do with ethnic affiliation. In areas with a high overall crime rate, the Irish were more likely to commit crime.[60] While John Werly had seen Lancashire as a hotbed of Irish criminal activity, Lowe saw no real discrepancy between Irish and English crime rates. Only if the historian concentrated on a couple of criminal categories, such as drunkenness or assault, was it possible to see a higher percentage of Irish involved in crime. [61]

The belief that the Irish were responsible for their own poverty has also been revised. W.J. Lowe stated that poverty was the flaw of the casual labour system. Looking at Gareth Stedman Jones' Outcast London, with its claim that casual labour led to mass poverty and unemployment for the entire working class[62], it is difficult to see how the massive casual labour force in Lancashire could escape the same problems.

Colin Pooley's work went even further, stating that the appearance of Irish poverty was largely the result of historians using the work of nineteenth century social commentators as evidence. These commentators concentrated only on the small percentage of the population, namely those Irish that caused problems. [63] Pooley believed that the Irish community in Britain showed signs of upward mobility, best evidenced by

---

[60]Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People,"648.

[61]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 36.

[62]Jones, Outcast London.

[63]Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?" 61.

the reduction of their numbers on poor relief and their residential mobility. By looking at the manuscript census records, Pooley recognized that children of immigrants showed a high rate of residence in the better areas of the cities. The perception that the Irish were condemned to a life of poverty may be true for the immigrants, but to get a better idea of their mobility, it is necessary to look at the next generation.[64]

In the end, it appears that historians now recognise that while the Irish provided a labour force to Britain during the nineteenth century, the consensus is that their presence did not contribute to a fall in the living standards of the British working classes. Wages would still have been low as employers generally were interested only in profits. Conditions in the working class neighbourhoods were awful before the Irish arrived, but were exacerbated by the influx of so many immigrants into the industrial cities. Historians no longer use the term ghetto to describe Irish communities, but instead have shifted attention to ethnic communities built around the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, this shift in focus has yet to include a major study of Irish female immigrants, but a survey of the historiography of the Irish in Britain does yield some small pieces of information. This will be further discussed in Chapter 3, which deals specifically with the employment of Irish women.

---

[64]Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?" 70-71. Pooley used the enumerators' reports to uncover information about the second generation of Irish in Britain.

Ethnicity and the Irish

If we are looking for a radical shift in the historiography of ethnicity in Britain, we probably will not find it, yet. For the most part, historians have concentrated on the public manifestations of ethnic conflict and explained how the conflict kept the Irish from assimilating into British society. Historians of ethnicity are clearly divided into two groups. The first group, writing mostly in the 1970's and early 1980's, stressed that prejudice against the Irish had three manifestations: anti-Irish racism, anti-Catholicism, and anti-nationalism. Prejudice was recognised as the basis for what the historians saw as widespread hostility against the Irish in the nineteenth century and the reasons why the Irish did not assimilate into British society. The second group, writing mostly in the 1980's and 1990's, stated that while the prejudice existed, it had little basis in fact or was not as pervasive as once believed. These writers set out to prove that the British feared the Irish without cause.

The basis for this field of research came from Marx, who wrote in 1870,

> Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates that Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation.... His attitude towards him is much the same as that

> of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave states of the U.S.A.[65]

Historians, focussing on the public displays of anti-Catholic, anti-Irish or anti-nationalist discrimination, effectively eliminated women from the history of the Irish in Britain, as women often did not appear on the public stage.

Racism is an interesting point of departure, for in the 1970's L.P. Curtis looked back to nineteenth century caricatures and writings on the Celts to back up his claim that the Anglo-Saxon British felt racially superior to the Irish Celt. Curtis stated that all prejudice towards the Irish was racially biassed and used works by nineteenth commentators on race, such as John Beddoes and J.M. Robertson, as evidence that the British feared that Irish integration into their society would destroy the Anglo-Saxon race.[66] Other historians, notably Frances Finnegan, used Curtis' work to explain anti-Irish prejudice. Finnegan declared that while there were fluctuations in anti-Irish sentiment when changes in relations occurred between Ireland and Britain, anti-Irish prejudice underpinned all community relations in York.[67]

Curtis' work sparked a series of articles throughout the 1980's. Sheridan Gilley did not completely disregard race as a factor in anti-Irish prejudice, but declared it to be

---

[65] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in L.I. Golman and others, eds., On Ireland: Ireland and the Irish Question (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), 293-94.

[66]Curtis, Apes and Angels.

[67]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 166-167.

only a small element. Gilley used the Irish fight for Home Rule as an example of how British hostility towards the Irish had little to do with race. Unionist hostility was political rather than racial, as the Irish fought to separate themselves from the British empire, not the British race.[68]

Social commentators in the nineteenth century did not make women the subject of racial discussions, and the decade of debate that followed the publication of Curtis' work offered no ideas about why women were ignored by these early writers. Yet, historically, women were subject to the same prejudice when they looked for employment or interacted with the British. The debate on the Irish race did not uncover why women did not have a corresponding stereotype to the male 'paddy', despite the fact that they were doubly prejudiced by being both female and Irish[69]. At the same time, none of these historians effectively explained the use of the term race in reference to the Irish. Referring to works by nineteenth century social commentators, historians accepted, without argument, the view that the Irish were seen as a separate race in Britain.

Anti-Catholicism, not surprisingly, influenced much of the historical writing on the Irish in Britain. Stephen Fielding suggested that the wide-spread hostility towards Catholics stemmed from Protestant fear that the Catholic Church wanted to re-establish

---

[68]Sheridan Gilley, "English Attitudes Towards the Irish in England, 1780-1900," in Colin Holmes, ed., Immigrants and Minorities in British Society (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978), 95-96.

[69]Walter and Hickman. "Deconstructing Whiteness,"14.

itself in Britain.[70] The 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act and the re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in 1850 only confirmed the threat. During the 1860's and 1870's, anti-Catholic lecturers toured British towns, exploiting fears that the Catholics wanted to take over the British government and restore Catholicism as the official religion of Britain. Historians used the evidence of sectarian riots and other displays of anti-Catholicism to demonstrate that prejudice against the Irish was based on religious differences.[71]

Recent work disagreed with earlier studies in a couple of key areas. While rarely disputing that anti-Catholicism existed in Victorian Britain, historians such as Stephen Fielding, Graham Davis, W.J. Lowe and David Fitzpatrick have shown that the sectarian riots that exemplified religious differences in the nineteenth century were rare. They usually followed an anti-Catholic lecture or occurred on Catholic or Protestant holidays. For the most part, relations between Catholics and Protestants were uneasy, but rarely violent.[72]

By concentrating on how sectarian division shaped British history, historians missed an opportunity to include women. Women were rarely involved in sectarian riots,

---

[70]Fielding, Class and Ethnicity, 6-7.

[71]E.R. Norman, Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968); W.L. Arnstein, "Victorian Prejudice Re-examined," Victorian Studies 12 (1968-69) and G.F.A. Best, "Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain," in Robert Robson, ed., Ideas and Institutions in Victorian Britain (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967)

[72]Fielding, Class and Ethnicity, 8; Davis, The Irish in Britain, 150-51; Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People," 650 and Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 173.

although Frank Neal does mention that women were seen in the crowds. No research has at yet been done to see how anti-Catholic prejudice affected women, despite the fact that discrimination must have impacted on them as well. In Lancashire, women made up a large part of the workforce, yet we do not know if they suffered from anti-Catholic discrimination when they looked for work. If anti-Catholicism was a primary reason for the lack of assimilation of the Irish into British society, we should know if women, as the largest group of practising Catholics in Britain, were affected.

Politics, both in Ireland and Britain, is well researched in terms of the role that the Irish played. It was assumed that the large support of the Irish for Chartism led to increased sectarian violence after the collapse. Before its decline in 1848, it appeared that English and Irish workers were united in a program that seemed to combine workers' concerns with the fight for an independent Ireland[73]. As evidence of this co-operation, it was shown that the sectarian violence that erupted after 1848 was stopped with the rise of the labour movement in the 1880's.

Attention then focussed on the negative impact that Irish involvement had on Chartism. Davis stated that by tying their interests to Irish nationalists, English working class radicals hampered their cause, as the British government feared Irish violence in Britain similar to what they had witnessed in Ireland. [74] Revisionist research denied any

---

[73]Fielding, Class and Ethnicity, 2-3.

[74]Davis, The Irish in Britain, 189.

real level of support for Chartism among the immigrants. While there was a link between the nationalist clubs and Chartism, aside from a few well-known leaders like Arthur O'Neill and Fergus O'Connor, Chartism did not attract widespread support. For the most part, the immigrants were more concerned with earning enough money to feed their families, and popular British politics did not appear to offer them much hope[75].

The fight for an independent Ireland was also used to explain anti-Irish prejudice. While the role of nationalism to explain anti-Irish sentiment was not questioned, what was disputed was the actual role of immigrants in Nationalist campaigns. Lees remarked that Irish immigrants spent more time dreaming of a free Ireland than did their counterparts in Ireland[76], but historians mistook dreams for actual involvement. The immigrants actually did not participate in Nationalist politics on a large scale and made up a very small percentage of members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood[77]. While always expressing support for Home Rule, the immigrants were not active participants, and did not support violence as the means to accomplishing independence. Fitzpatrick gave the best explanation for the lack of active support among immigrants for Home Rule. Nationalist newspapers had a very modest circulation, the Gaelic Athletic

---

[75]Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People, " 645 and Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 188.

[76]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 194

[77]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 211 and Fielding Class and Ethnicity, 85-7.

Association never attracted more than 10% of Liverpool's population, and they contributed the equivalent of only one twenty-fifth of American or one-third of the Australian monetary contribution to the Nationalist cause[78]. As well, while the Irish Republican Brotherhood attracted attention, the violence in Britain that was attributed to the brotherhood never included immigrants[79]. The immigrants dreamed of independence, but only offered lack-lustre support to the cause. Any anti-Irish sentiment towards Irish immigrants was therefore unwarranted.

Women appeared to be influenced by discrimination in different ways. Chartism not only represented the first apparent attempts at incorporating Irish concerns into working class radicalism, it also represented working class women's first public activist role. Unfortunately, support of Chartism was no more beneficial to working class women than it was to Irish men, as Chartist support of the family wage and female domesticity survived the decline of Chartism. What role Irish women played in Chartism is unknown, but their role in trade unions, at least in Scotland, has been researched.[80]

The extent of women's support of Nationalist movements is largely unknown. Irish women in Britain may or may not have played a public role in these organizations,

---

[78]Fitzpatrick, "A Curious Middle Place," 38.

[79]Fitzpatrick, "A Curious Middle Place," 34.

[80]Davis, The Irish in Britain, 110. The role that the Irish played in the rise and decline of Chartism is well researched. See, for example, Dorothy Thompson, The Chartists: Politics in the Industrial Revolution, (London: Temple Smith, 1984).

but they were still affected by the prejudice that accompanied the debate. Irish women experienced racism and prejudice at a personal level, particularly as they had more opportunities to interact with the British through work in domestic service. The debate over whether or not there was an accurate basis for prejudice obscured the fact that it existed, and we need to find out if Irish women's experiences differed from those of Irish men. Only then can we truly understand how roles were gendered for the Irish in Britain.

A final note should be added before concluding this chapter. While historians recognised that there were Protestants among those who emigrated to Britain during the nineteenth century, little research has been done to find out how their experiences differed from those of their Catholic counterparts. It was largely assumed that they had little difficulty assimilating into British society, but no one has researched to find out if this was the case. The main impediment to this research is the lack of a reliable census that identifies the religion of Irish immigrants.

Conclusion

In the end, it is difficult to see how women fit into the traditional historiography of the Irish in Britain. Maybe it is necessary to ask different questions of the evidence than previously used. The questions that have been raised in this chapter are necessary if the history of this large migratory group is to be written. Before these questions can be asked, however, it is necessary to determine where Irish women settled. The lives that they led, the people with whom they came into contact, their religious practices, even who they married would be different depending on the geographic area in which they settled. This study will try to facilitate that research by showing where Irish women settled and why they chose certain areas over others.

Chapter 2

MARRIAGE, MIGRATION AND FAMILY

Historians look for major events that mark the shift from one era to another. The Great Famine that occurred in Ireland from 1845 to 1849 stands as a marker that has been taken to indicate the end of rural Irish society. Few remnants of Irish society remained after the Famine as the way that Irish people dealt with each other was forever altered. The way of life that existed for both men and women was swept away by the destruction caused by the Famine. Family roles and marriage patterns were altered as well, which changed the status and roles of women in this new society. To understand, then, why hundreds of thousands of women left for Britain, and indeed why millions more left for Australia, Canada, and the United States, we must begin with the Famine in Ireland.

Most scholars agree that the reason why few women left Ireland prior to the Famine was because their presence in rural society was necessary for the survival of the family. This was evident particularly in rural areas, where the wages of wives and daughters - from spinning and other cottage industries - accounted for 15 to 35% of the family income.[1] A report on the conditions of the poor classes in Ireland, written in 1835, stated that labouring families operated as an interdependent unit where every member of

---

[1]Mary Cullen, "Breadwinners and Providers: Women in the Household Economy of Labouring Families, 1835-36," in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy, eds., Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990), 98-99.

the family was expected to contribute, either through paid or unpaid work. The report singled out women specifically as indispensable, for when the family could no longer support itself -- a situation whose cause was usually the unemployment of the husband -- the burden of providing for the family during the crisis period fell to the wife.[2] The report also showed that rural women contributed income to the family on a regular basis, not only when the male head of the household was incapable of supporting the family. These wages were a steady and stable part of every budget, irrespective of the employment status of the husband. Income came from a variety of sources, most notably from the sale of pigs and other livestock, spinning and other cottage industries, the sale of potatoes and other vegetables, and begging. It is not surprising, therefore, that Irish women were not expected to leave the family home.

Prior to the Famine, there was little reason not to stay in Ireland and marry at a young age. The inheritance system provided for both sons and daughters, as they were often given equal shares of the family land and possessions, therefore providing the basic requirements for a marriage. With little else to wait for, men and women were more likely to marry in Ireland than anywhere else in Europe. As well, Irish men and women had the lowest age at marriage in Europe.[3] In 1841, the last census before the Famine, farmers'

---

[2]Reports of His Majesty's Commissioner for Inquiries into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland H.C. 1835 (369) xxxii Pt. V, 176.

[3]Robert Kennedy, The Irish: Emigration, Marriage and Fertility (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), 145-6.

wives on average married before the age of 22, and only 12.5% of women between the ages of 45 to 54 had never married.[4] Within marriage, fertility was high as there appeared to be little interest in birth control.[5]

Prior to the Famine, those with more than a small piece of land, such as tradesmen or wealthier farmers, were more cautious about their marriage partners. The pattern of spontaneous marriage, that is marrying whomever one chose without parental interference, was seen in the early nineteenth century only in the lower, rural classes of the West. Marrying too young meant the expense of caring for a family too soon, a behaviour which was thought reckless and ascribed to the poor.

The practice of those who married late, if at all, provided the link between the pre- and post-Famine eras in Ireland. In the decades after the Famine the rural classes gradually adopted the patterns of late marriage and fewer children. [6] The Famine is often blamed for pushing the rural Irish to change their family lives. This happened in a number of ways. In the first place, the Famine claimed responsibility for almost the total elimination of the poorest classes, either through disease or emigration. Second, the

---

[4]David Fitzpatrick, "The Modernisation of the Irish Female," in Patrick O'Flanagan, Paul Ferguson and Kevin Whelan, eds., Rural Ireland, 1600-1900 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1987), 168-69.

[5]K H. Connell, "Population," in P.B. McDonald ed., Social Life in Ireland, 1800-1845 (Dublin: Cultural Relation Committee of Ireland, 1957), 85-97.

[6]Diner, Erin's Daughters in America, Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983) 7.

Famine forced British lawmakers to enact legislation that outlawed subdivision of land, thereby transforming Irish lands into viable farms. The farmers who remained realised that their farms had to become more diversified and most farms switched from potatoes to cash crops, as well as butter, eggs and other dairy products that could be produced for market. Commercial farmers realized that the landowning system had to be converted and most farms were consolidated into larger, generally commercial, holdings. Irish farmers moved from tillage to pasture farming, which resulted in the removal of the potato as a staple in their diet and the reliance more on store-bought goods. [7] The Famine also showed parents that there was little to be gained by dividing land and possessions into equal portions for all their children. The inheritance system in rural Ireland was converted from partible to impartible inheritance, which entailed the practice of only one family member, usually a son, inheriting per generation.[8]

Women found their economic status in rapid decline after the Famine. The contraction in the textile industry, both in the factories of the north and the small-scale industry in the south, left women with few ways to earn an income off the farm. At the same time, their presence in rural Ireland became unnecessary, as the shift from tillage to pasture farming required less labour. Taken together, women found their status reduced to

---

[7]Joanna Bourke, Husbandry to Housewifery. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) 135-37.

[8]Kennedy, The Irish, 146-50.

the point where they became redundant.[9] Women's work in rural Ireland is discussed further in the next chapter.

As women's economic status declined, so did their opportunities for marriage. Without the option to become wage earners and without a piece of land for a dowry, most women in Ireland became unattractive as possible marriage partners. The average age of marriage for women in Ireland rose from 21.7 years in 1841 to 29 years in 1926, and a quarter of Irish women aged 45 to 54 had never married in 1926, compared with 12.5% in 1841.[10] Not surprisingly, as women's socio-economic status declined, the numbers of Irish women who emigrated increased, and by the late nineteenth century Irish women surpassed men in migrating from Ireland.

There are a growing number of historians who argue that many Irish women chose to leave Ireland of their own accord because they recognised the opportunities that awaited them outside of Ireland. Unfortunately, these "pull" factors have been investigated only for Irish women who migrated to America, but historians studying emigration to other areas can gain some insight from this research. American historians disagree as to which motives were crucial in female migration. Janet Nolan argued that

---

[9]Fitzpatrick, "Modernisation of the Irish Female," 164.

[10]W.E Vaughn and A.J. Fitzpatrick, Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821-1971 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 91.

Irish women migrated primarily for marriage opportunities unavailable at home.[11] Unfortunately, Nolan has little statistical evidence to support her claims. Hasia Diner, moreover, disagrees with Janet Nolan's conclusion that women migrated solely to marry. Using evidence gathered from the northeastern portion of the United States, Diner stated that Irish women migrated to further economic prospects. Diner demonstrated that in the United States, Irish women married later, if they married at all, continuing the pattern common in Ireland after the Famine.[12] Unfortunately, the methodology of Diner's study is questionable. Since she confined her study to several factory towns with a high percentage of single Irish women and much lower numbers of single Irish men, it is not surprising that marriage rates were similar to those back in Ireland. In these towns, marriage was not always a viable option.

Other "pull" factors may help to explain this large-scale migration of women, as well as give the historian some basis for comparison. It appears that women were better equipped for emigration, as they took advantage of opportunities in Ireland to prepare themselves for their new lives. As girls were released from the endless drudgery of labour, they were able to take advantage of the ever improving educational system in Ireland[13]. Irish women were more literate than men and therefore the more attractive

---

[11]Janet Nolan, Ourselves Alone: Women's Emigration From Ireland, 1885-1920 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989), 74.

[12]Diner, Erin's Daughters in America, 50-74.

[13]Fitzpatrick, "Modernisation," 164.

employee, particularly during the later Victorian period when education became increasingly valued. An improved education not just in literacy, but also in domestic economy, opened up a wealth of information on emigration in the form of letters and advertisements. Women were more aware of their options, and more chose to emigrate[14].

In her study of women in Ireland from 1890 to 1914 Joanna Bourke stated that rural women, anxious to improve their own station in life, used the newly formed national schools set up by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction to further their chances of employment[15]. While the purpose of the schools had been to train rural women for their new roles in the home, the schools' training in cookery, laundry, needlework and other domestic chores eventually created a new class of educated and skilled women, necessary in Britain, North America and Australia[16].

It appears that individual desires also played a role in emigration. Using emigrant letters as her primary source, Rita Rhodes showed that women, rather than being forced out, were anxious to leave[17]. This is most evident in the later Victorian period, when the increased education of women gave them access to the information they needed to see other options. Through letters from America and Britain, women were increasingly

---

[14]Fitzpatrick, "Modernisation," 175.

[15]Bourke, Husbandry to Housewifery, 98-99.

[16]Bourke, Husbandry to Housewifery, 98.

[17]Rita Rhodes, Women and the Family in Post-Famine Ireland, (London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992) 270.

aware of the opportunities - employment, marriage or increased freedom - that emigration could give them[18]. They understood that emigration could give them financial independence, but still permit them to contribute to the family economy through remittances. Emigration allowed women to escape the dreariness of rural life. Letters, newspapers, books and advertisements showed women there were other opportunities for them if they emigrated. Assisted emigration, whether paid for by the British government or paid for by emigrants already in Britain and America, made emigration affordable. With virtually nothing to keep them on the land, it is not surprising that women represented approximately 50% of Irish emigrants in the post-Famine period.

The young women who left Ireland after the Famine had already experienced significant changes in their traditional expectations. As a result, although they were willing to work in nonindustrial jobs such as domestic service and to contribute to the family economy through remittances, they also expected to earn independent incomes, marry and have children. It appears from studies of Irish women in America that emigration did not represent a radical break with pre-Famine Irish culture. It did represent, however, a rejection of the lack of employment and marriage opportunities that faced them in post-Famine Ireland. Irish-born women in foreign cities tried to obtain jobs in domestic service that were comparable with their duties in rural Ireland and do not

---

[18]Rhodes, Women and the Family, 270-71.

seem to have entered the industrial work force in great numbers.[19] In addition, they returned to the freer marriage patterns of pre-Famine Ireland, abandoning the constraints that had bound them at home. They married fellow Irish emigrants, left the outside workplace and entered the sphere of home and family, as their ancestors had for generations before the Famine.[20] Once married, they retained the high fertility of their rural Irish sisters. By emigrating, Irish women were able to regain their adult status as cash producers and wives within the family economy, something they could no longer do within rural Ireland.

As we have seen, the average rate of marriage dropped and the average age of marriage rose in Ireland in the period after the Famine. Only by emigrating could women regain the opportunity to marry and reproduce like their mothers and grandmothers. Marriage ages among the Irish in foreign cities, therefore, resembled those of pre-Famine rather than post-Famine Ireland.

In the United States, Irish immigrants revived the practise of early marriage, although it appears that they still married at later ages than other immigrant groups in American cities.[21] The Irish in America also tended to marry other Irish from the same counties in Ireland from which they had emigrated. As in Ireland, intermarriage of

---

[19]Nolan Ourselves Alone, 68-69.

[20]Nolan, Ourselves Alone, 74.

[21]Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 513.

Catholics and Protestants was condemned for religious reasons among the Irish in the United States. The few who broke with tradition often met with a combination of pity and scorn.

After emigration, Irish women maintained the high marital fertility of their predecessors at home. In 1920, for instance, over half of the women giving birth in the Irish-American community had at least three other children at home. [22] As a result of such high fertility, as early as 1900 the Irish-American family was larger by one than the average American family.[23]

Irish women in America attended school in higher numbers than their foreign and American-born counterparts,[24] and while Irish-born women were well-represented in domestic service occupations, their daughters went into better-paying manufacturing and professional careers.[25] While their own lives may not have been much improved from their positions in Ireland, Irish-born women appear to have prepared their daughters for better lives.

It appears that after emigration, many Irish women returned to the same family patterns that characterised their predecessors' lives in Ireland. They married earlier and had more children than their contemporaries in Ireland. It appears that they did not

---

[22]Nolan, Ourselves Alone, 77.

[23]Nolan, Ourselves Alone, 77.

[24]Nolan, Ourselves Alone, 81.

[25]Nolan, Ourselves Alone, 82.

follow the patterns set out by the host community either, for in America they did marry at later ages than other immigrant groups. Whether Irish women in Great Britain followed the patterns established in post-Famine Ireland or those seen in America will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Chapter 3

IRISH WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Work is the aspect of women's lives that has received the greatest attention, in part, because the ability to contribute to the survival of the family has been considered an important role for women in Irish society. In an examination of women in pre-Famine Ireland, one must necessarily turn to the role of women in the majority community, that is the community of the rural poor. The majority of female migrants came from this class. The survival of the pre-Famine poor was not only a result of the efforts of Irish men but rather of subsistence strategies which involved the efforts of each member of the family. While the lives of women were different depending on the type of household that they lived in, they were similar in that work on the land by itself could not be relied upon to support the family in a society in which the majority of families were landless or without adequate land. Nor could the wage employment of husbands or fathers be presumed to maintain the family throughout the year. A parliamentary commission on the condition of the poor in 1836 estimated that about 585,000 labourers with 1,800,000 dependants were unable to obtain work 30 weeks out of the year.[1] A witness before that same commission was unable to determine how a labourer's family survived even when he had full employment: "How can a labourer with a family lay by anything, even if he has 10d a day

---

[1]Third Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, 5 (43), H.C. 1836, xxx.

regularly, which is not the case with nine out of ten labourers? ...It is a mystery to me how they live; most of them must half starve themselves."[2]

Few members of the Irish poor assumed that the survival of the family relied exclusively on the labour of the male head of the family. Instead, the combined work and wages of all family members were the only way for the family to survive. Among the very poor, the contribution of the male head did not differ substantially from that of other family members. It was reported before the Poor Commission in 1835 that in County Kerry the death of a husband was not a serious predicament for the family he left behind: "The (assistant commissioners) were however informed, that as soon as any one child arrived at an age that enabled him to assist the mother, her condition became but a little poorer than it was during the lifetime of her husband...."[3] It could not be taken for granted by a family that the presence of a male head of household was sufficient for the preservation of the family as the economic activities of women and children were also essential.

In order for the family to survive, they needed one thing: access to a patch of farmable land. Land owned or rented by the rural poor was probably in areas that were difficult to farm, and the most perilous households often had to bring the worst land into

---

[2]First Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland with Appendix A and Supplement, Appendix A, 161, (369) H.C. 1835, xxxii, pt. I, 177.

[3]First Report into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, 163.

cultivation to create a patch of farmable land. The creation and upkeep of this type of land was dependent on the toil of all members of the family. In the 1820's an investigator in southern Ireland suggested that the solution to the precarious lives of Irish women was to encourage women to move into the growing industrial sector: "The cultivation and manufacture of flax and hemp, would give employment to the females, besides being more suitable to their sex and character than the work they are generally employed at, such as digging, planting and the disgraceful drudgery of carrying dung, turf or potatoes on their backs, more like mules or asses than human beings...."[4] Women were attracted to this type of employment, particularly in the north where they went to work in the linen mills of Belfast. In the south, however, most piece work was still done at home.

An animal economy was an important element of women's work on small farms. There was a substantial rise in the number of animals kept on Irish farms in the pre-Famine years, no doubt in an attempt to improve the financial situation of these precarious families.[5] In 1841, the average small farm, consisting of less than five acres, contained .7 cattle, 1.3 sheep, 1.1 pigs and 7.4 poultry.[6] The 1835 Parliamentary commission on the Irish poor reported that for working class families in the province of

---

[4]Report of the Present State of the Disturbed District, in the South of Ireland: with an Enquiry into the causes of the distresses of the peasantry and farmers, quoted in Rhodes, Women and Family, 23.

[5]L.M. Cullen, Life in Ireland, (London: B.T. Batsford, 1979), 163.

[6]Census of Ireland for the year 1841, p. xxxi, quoted in Lynn Lees, "Mid-Victorian Migration and the Irish Family Economy," Victorian Studies 20 (Autumn 1976), 27.

Munster, between 18 and 31 percent of the family income came from the sale of pigs, eggs and poultry.[7] It was virtually impossible for the smallest farms to provide for the upkeep of small animals, therefore those that needed the extra income the most were denied a sizeable source of income.

Many family members were forced to leave the land in search of adequate paid labour to provide for their families. Irish men often had difficulty obtaining employment in pre-Famine rural Ireland, which left little employment for women except at the peak of the agricultural season. A witness before a parliamentary commission on the poor testified in 1835 to the depressed state of the labour market in County Carlow: "In the turf-cutting season, at haymaking, in harvest, and when the digging of potatoes is going on, both women and children (above 12 years of age) are employed... but these periods taken together do not make more than four months, and during the remainder of the year there is no field work whatsoever for them."[8]

When women could not find adequate paid employment or when the family hit hard times, their contribution to the family often took a negative turn. This usually took the form of denying themselves some of the limited resources of the family. Many Irish women understood that the breadwinner must be kept well-fed to allow his continued

---

[7]Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, Appendix D, 89-90, 108-111, quoted in Lees, "Mid-Victorian Migration," 28.

[8]First Report into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, Appendix (A), 132.

financial contribution to the household.[9] The result of this deprivation was recorded in the 1830's by a rector in County Cork:

> I recollect a case which may give you some idea of the state to which women of the labouring classes are sometimes reduced. About five or six years ago, during a time of distress, I gave a kind of soup to some of them every evening. One evening they came before the soup was ready, and waited in the yard; some cabbage stumps that were thrown out of the kitchen were lying about; the pigs and fowl had been feeding on them and stripped them almost quite bare; I saw myself six or seven of the poor women turn their faces toward the wall and eat the stumps the pigs had left.[10]

If possible, women would contribute by their productive or wage labour to the family economy; if no such opportunity was available, they curtailed their diet. This latter behaviour became increasingly ineffectual, however, in the face of declining rural employment for males as well as females.

In addition to agriculture, textile manufacturing provided another source of income for women. For the eighteenth and early nineteenth century rural poor, textiles allowed the survival of families with small holdings and limited productive capabilities, by providing them with an independent source of revenue.[11] In remote areas women wove

---

[9]Laura Oren, "The Welfare of Women in Labouring Families: England, 1860-1950," in Mary S. Hartman and Lois W. Banner, ed., Clio's Consciousness Raised (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 226-244.

[10]First Report into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, Appendix (A),161.

[11]L.M. Cullen, The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 94.

and spun not only to clothe their families but also for the English market. The putting out system used by wool and cotton merchants supplemented family income in southern Ireland.[12] The north was dominated by the linen industry and the demand for yarn reached into the rural districts of Ulster, Connaught and north Leinster.[13]

With the exception of linen the pre-Famine textile industry was marked by continued decline. The woolen and cotton manufactures went through an accelerated descent in the 1820's that was a result of both internal weakness and external competition from English manufacturers. By the early 1840's, the Irish wool industry supplied only about 14 percent of domestic consumption.[14] The introduction of machine-spun yarn in the 1820's made the spinning of yarn in Ireland a low paid job. A farmer testified before the parliamentary commission in 1835 that in County Clare:

> Spinning is nearly done away with; formerly, indeed, there were flannel fairs which were frequented by buyers from the north, if you looked into a house, during the long nights, you would see them full of women, carding and spinning, and the rent of some farmers was easily paid by the labour of their females. There is nothing of that kind now, and a woman is lucky if she can get employment two months of the year in the fields.[15]

---

[12]David Dickson, "Aspects of the Rise and Decline of the Irish Cotton Industry," in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, ed. Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History, 1600-1900 (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1977), 107.

[13]Cullen, Life in Ireland, 81.

[14]Cullen, An Economic History of Ireland, 106.

[15]First Report for Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes, Appendix A, 147.

According to one observer involved in the ordnance survey in the 1830's, "spinning is now resorted to more as an alternative to being idle than from anything it can produce as they cannot make more than 2d per day by it."[16]

Making ends meet in rural Ireland required the efforts of all family members. In subsistence economies the involvement of all family members on the land was essential. Domestic industry was also a principal component of family income. But in the early nineteenth century, the diminution of adequate land and employment together with the decline in labour necessary for the textile industry seriously weakened the economic opportunities of the poor. As the common channels of livelihood declined, families had to seek other tactics to guarantee survival. Women again came to the forefront but the ways in which they contributed to their families changed. Post-Famine Ireland was a land dominated by commercial farmers just as pre-Famine Ireland was a land dominated by the poor. In the new community of farmers, women became relegated to a more marginal position in this land-conscious society, and for some, migration became the only way to survive.

Most pre-Famine women were engaged in a subsistence economy that demanded high levels of female participation. The post-Famine female majority was no longer engaged in such an economy. Even the poor that survived the Famine -- labourers and

---

[16]Brian Trainor, ed., Ordnance Survey Memoir for the Parish of Antrim (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1969), 66.

destitute farmers of the west -- had to subsist in an economy that often limited the opportunities for women to contribute to their households. Beyond this general observation, however, it is difficult to describe the work performed by women or the numbers employed because information on women's work was often neglected in the census returns. One contemporary, Charles H. Oldham, reported on the gap between occupational statistics and female agricultural participation:

> Speaking particularly of agriculture as an occupation for women in Ireland, I cannot accept the Census figure for 1911 - that of an Agricultural Class numbering 703,520 persons, only 58,138 are Women! There are considerable districts in the West of Ireland where practically the whole of the agricultural work is now being done by women; the men are migratory workers, who work on the farms in Great Britain in the summer, and often return to work there at mining occupation in the winter. But these women agricultural workers are probably included among the 1.104,032 women who appear in the Irish census as the 'Indefinite' or Unoccupied Class.[17]

Despite the unsatisfactory quality of the census records, Oldham did use the data to show that for the period 1881to 1911, the employment of women was in steady decline. The traditional areas of employment for women - agricultural, domestic and industrial (largely textile) - all declined during the period.[18] The domestic class, the

---

[17]Charles H. Oldham, "The Incidence of Emigration on Town and Country Life in Ireland," Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, 13, Part XCIV (June 1914), 213.

[18]Oldham, "The Incidence of Emigration," 210.

major employer for women off the farm, showed the sharpest decline. If one examines the category of domestic indoor servant, for example, the number of women employed decreased 46 percent, from 232,429 in 1881 to 125,783 in 1911. For those women aged 15 to 19, domestic service declined as a source of employment by more than 50 percent. One reason for this was the failure of Irish cities to grow significantly in the post-Famine period.[19]

Another traditional area of employment for women was that of textiles. As discussed previously, the domestic textile industry was an important supplement to rural incomes in the pre-Famine period. As the nineteenth century advanced, however, the textile industry faltered, due to the mechanization of the industry and the inability of Irish textiles to compete in the English market.[20] The result was a reduction in the number of persons employed in textiles from 696,000 in 1841 to 130,000 in 1880.[21] The decline of the textile industry had an additional impact in the productive capabilities of women. Irish textile products were replaced by English imports whose cost made the continuation of home manufacture unrealistic. As women's ability to contribute to the cash economy of the family lessened, their importance to the family also declined. In the interests of

---

[19]Rhodes, Women and Family in Post-Famine Ireland, 129.

[20]Rhodes, Women and Family in Post-Famine Ireland, 130

[21]Charles Booth, "The Economic Distribution of Population in Ireland," in Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, ltd, 1902), 71.

thrift and altered consumer preferences, most families turned to the market, rather than the home, for the bulk of their necessities.

Finally, women's roles in the agriculture were also revised. The subsistence and labour-intensive economy of the pre-Famine period was replaced by a pasture economy oriented towards the English market. These structural changes were particularly detrimental to women who could generally only expect employment during the labour-intensive events of the agricultural year.[22]

The de-feminisation of agriculture was most obvious in the usual female preserve of dairying. By the end of the 1870's Irish butter had to withstand new competition from both the Danes and the Dutch in the traditional English markets. Irish butter was less likely to meet the high standards of the Danish product, nor could it withstand competition against the butter substitutes of the Dutch. This twofold competition doubled the imports into Britain of non-Irish butter in the 1870's and 1880's.[23] Even the establishment of co-operative creameries in the late nineteenth century could do little to help the Irish dairy industry.[24] As butter making left the home, it took with it opportunities for female employment. The modernization of Irish agriculture further reduced employment opportunities for women and agrarian pursuits became more

---

[22]Rhodes, Women and Family in Post-Famine Ireland, 133.

[23]James Donnelly, The Land and the People of Nineteenth Century Cork, Studies in Irish History, Second Series, Vol.9 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 153.

[24]Bourke, Husbandry to Housewifery, 102-108.

exclusively male. For most of the women left behind, migration became the only chance to survive financially and hundreds of thousands of these women turned to Britain.

Chapter 4

CENSUS RECORDS AND IRISH SETTLERS

The censuses are, and will probably remain, the preeminent source for the quantitative study of the Irish in Britain during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While other official sources, such as court records, birth, marriage and death records and other government-generated sources might help us complete the picture, the census provides the historian with the only systematic source for the study of the Irish in the period. Censuses were taken at regular intervals, covered essentially the same topics, and provide the researcher with a source for studying the location and condition of the whole population.[1] Aside from the census, most people only came into contact with government officials at irregular points in their lives, such as the birth of a child or the death of a spouse.[2] For the study of a migrant group, such as Irish women, the census is the only source that provides information on the living conditions, occupations, and geographic location of the population at large.

---

[1] The manuscript census enumeration books permit detailed micro-studies of households but this study uses the published aggregates compiled by the Registrar's Office. The aspirations of this study, therefore, is more limited.

2 Dudley Baines, "Birthplace Statistics and the Analysis of Internal Migration," in Richard Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure: An Interpretative Guide to Nineteenth Century Censuses for England and Wales (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978), 147- 48.

Despite the wealth of information contained in the published census reports, the data are not as easy and straightforward to use as would first appear. There are inherent problems in using the census for any type of historical research, and the historian must be made aware of them before beginning any serious use of the census. As I intend to use the published census abstracts for a study of the lives of the hundreds of thousands of Irish women who migrated to Britain during the period 1841 to 1911, it is necessary to be prepared for the pitfalls that are there. This portion of the study will, therefore, examine some of the general problems of using the published census reports for the study of the British population as a whole.

First it is necessary to provide a brief account of how the census information was collected and reproduced in order for the historian to understand why certain problems arose. Initially, the census was taken on an ad hoc basis. There was no central or permanent registrar's office, and every census required a new act of parliament. The early censuses from 1801 to 1831 were heavy burdens on the enumerators, as they were personally responsible for collecting information from each and every household. In later censuses the onus was on the household to fill out the information and enumerators would complete only what the householder did not. [3]

The problems associated with this system are fairly easy to comprehend. The census took weeks to complete; the chances of missing people were great, and the large

---

3 D.V. Glass and P.A.M. Taylor, Population and Emigration (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1976), 12-14.

size of some enumeration districts complicated the count of population. Steps were taken in 1833 to remedy the situation with the establishment of a permanent General Registrar office, and again in 1844 with the creation of a household schedule which the head of the household was responsible for completing. During the week before the census, the enumerator delivered a schedule to every household. On census day, the householder was required to complete the form, and everyone present in the home that night was to be included, even if it was not their permanent home.[4] The next day, the enumerators would return to collect the completed forms, and fill in any information that was not included. The schedules were then copied by the enumerator into a book and passed on to the Registrar who ensured that everything was in the proper order. The books were then sent on to the census office in London and were rechecked again. Finally, when all of the information had been analysed it was published as a Parliamentary Paper, complete with tables and texts. The original schedules, but not the enumerators' books were destroyed.[5] For this study I will use the information contained in the published Parliamentary Papers.

Some of the general problems associated with the use of the published census reports are difficult to overcome. The first is the lack of information available in the censuses for the period 1801 to1831. Irish migration was well underway before the Famine, but is impossible to uncover the number who migrated to Britain before 1841 as

---

4 Susan Lumas, Making Use of the Census (London: PRO Publications, 1993), 6.

5 Lumas, Making Use of the Census, 9.

the censuses were largely simple population enumerations. These early censuses contained only limited information on births, marriages and occupations, and no information on birthplaces of the inhabitants of Britain.[6] Ruth Ann Harris, in her work on early nineteenth century Irish labour migration, did attempt to use these early censuses to uncover possible locations and occupations for Irish migrants after their arrival in Britain. For the most part, however, the author had to depend on poor law reports and works by social commentators to get a fuller picture of the lives of these early migrants.[7]

In 1841, the census forms were revised under the direction of the London (later Royal) Statistical Society, which recommended the use of a self-administered household schedule that listed by name and characteristics every person in the household.[8] For the first time, questions were asked on a wide range of topics, including birthplace, housing and occupations. Later censuses incorporated questions on education, marital status, fertility, languages spoken and, for one census only, religion.[9]

Unfortunately for the social and economic historian, direct questions on social and cultural characteristics were not included in the censuses. As stated, the only census of

---

6 Lawton, The Census and Social Structure, 1.

7 Ruth Ann Harris, The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland: Early Nineteenth Century Irish Labour Migration (Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1994), 141-162.

8 D.V. Glass and P.A.M. Taylor, Population and Emigration: Government and Society in Nineteenth Century Britain (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1976), 14-15.

9 Office of the Population Censuses and Surveys, Guide to the Census Reports, Great Britain 1801-1966 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Service, 1977), 38-9.

religion occurred in 1851 and was considered too controversial to be repeated.[10] For the study of a migrant group such as the Irish, the lack of reliable religious information has meant that Irish Protestant migrants have largely been ignored in studies of the Irish in Britain. Questions on income are non-existent for the period of study.[11] Even questions on ethnicity are limited to place of birth. From 1881 onwards questions were asked on languages spoken apart from English, but then only in Scotland and Wales.[12]

What must be remembered when using the census is that coverage was limited to information deemed useful to policy makers. The British government and the Registrar General asked questions on topics that were of concern to them, not what they thought future historians could use for research. The census provides a picture only of life on census night, and does not ask questions about the state of the population in the intercensal period.[13] When studying a migratory group such as the Irish, it is important to understand that the published census data shows only the result of migration: it is not a full record of the migration itself.

While some of the above problems can be overcome, others are not as easy to compensate for. The first is that published census data contain only a fraction of the

---

10 David Thompson, "The Religious Census in 1851," in Lawton, The Census and Social Structure, 246.

11 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Guide, 38-9.

12 Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Guide, 38-9.

13 Edward Higgs, Making Sense of the Census (London: HMSO Office, 1989), 75.

possible information that was entered into the original census enumerators' books.[14] While birthplace information was recorded for all residents of Britain, the published census data reports contain only this information for approximately one hundred principal towns. This is a particularly difficult problem when dealing with a group such as the Irish who had a tendency to migrate to urban areas in Britain.[15] Many towns that were found to have a significant Irish population in later censuses were not included in earlier reports, including many of the industrial towns in Lancashire.[16] As well, it is difficult to ascertain the number of Irish who lived in rural or urban areas. While the birthplace information is listed in the census reports for all of the counties in England, Scotland and Wales, the incomplete data on the urban areas make it difficult to determine the numbers of Irish who were, respectively, urban or rural dwellers.

Another problem arises from the lack of exact definition of the units of enumeration for both urban and rural areas. In 1835, the Municipal Corporations Act was passed, giving a more realistic definition of urban areas than was previously used. This act increased the number of towns, cities and boroughs from 129 to 216, with an

---

14 Richard Lawton, "Census Data For Urban Areas," in Lawton, The Census and Social Structure, 84-85.

15 David Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People: The Irish in Britain, 1800-1871," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and J.F. Byrne, eds. A New History of Ireland, Vol. 5. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 633.

16Colin Pooley, "Segregation or Integration? The Residential Experience of the Irish in Mid-Victorian Britain," in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds., The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939 (London: Pinter Publishers, 1989), 61.

additional 753 urban areas, whose populations were now tabulated in the Census General Reports.[17] This number was further increased in subsequent censuses. For the historian, these reforms provide the opportunity to track population mobility within counties in England, Scotland and Wales, but the changing basis for census enumeration makes comparison over time difficult. County borders were constantly redrawn, as were town and city borders, often making it difficult to state with certainty that the district enumerated was the same from census to census.[18] Dudley Baines has offered a series of formulas to calculate changes to districts over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to hypothetical standard counties and towns using information available in all of the census reports.[19] With more than fifty counties and upwards of one thousand towns and districts, however, reducing all the areas to a hypothetical standard is a herculean task, and for the most part an unnecessary one. The major administrative redistribution of the population occurred in 1891 with the creation of the County of London, which in turn reduced the size of the neighbouring counties of Surrey, Kent and Middlesex.[20] Not surprisingly, this redistribution reduced the population of the three affected counties. As

---

17 Lawton, "Census Data for Urban Areas," in Lawton, The Census and Social Structure, 92.

18 Dudley Baines, Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 90.

19 Baines, Migration in a Mature Economy, 90-125.

20 Baines, "Birthplace Statistics," in Lawton, The Census and Social Structure, 159.

long as the historian is aware of these changes, however, it is possible to work with the county and town numbers provided in the census.

There is also the problem of accuracy in the census. For the early censuses in particular, census enumerators often had little training and were responsible for covering large districts: unsurprisingly, errors occurred. As well, these enumerators dealt with a population that did not fully understand the purpose of the census and were fearful of what the government planned to do with such information.[21] This, in turn, could lead to false reports from individuals who did not want to divulge certain information to the government out of fear of taxation or other government intrusions. In addition, it must also be remembered that each census form was hand-written, and problems no doubt arose from the copying of information into the enumerators' books or due to revision by the clerks in the census office.[22] For the most part, however, the majority of historians who have used the census reports have declared the errors to be minimal.[23]

The final problem concerns the difficulty in analysing the occupations of women. Census statistics are useful for the comparative study of occupations and offer a glimpse

---

21 Michael Drake, "The Census, 1801-1891," in E.A Wrigley, ed., Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the study of Social Data (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 20-21.

22 P.M. Tillott, "Sources of Inaccuracy in the 1851 and 1861 Censuses," in Wrigley, Nineteenth Century Society, 83-84.

23 Tillott, "Sources of Inaccuracy," in Wrigley, Nineteenth Century Society, 84.

as to the social and economic status of those enumerated.[24] Unfortunately, the statistics for women are not as complete as they could have been. Many single and married women are recorded as without employment information and without a visible means of support, leaving the historian to wonder how these women survived.[25]

Other problems arise from the fact that most women were not employed in a single occupation for most of the year;[26] that part-time and casual work was not enumerated;[27] and that many women were recorded without any type of occupation.[28] The explanation for this is that the census was intended to give a picture of the state of the nation and, it has been suggested, its primary reason for concern with occupations was to discern the relationship of particular jobs to health.[29] It was not until the 1881 Census that occupational statistics were tabulated for the purpose of gaining an insight into the social and economic structure of the British population.[30]

---

24 Dennis Mills and Joan Mills, "Occupation and Social Stratification Revisited: The Census Enumerators' Books of Victorian Britain," Urban History Yearbook 1989, 63-77.

25 Tillott, "Sources of Inaccuracy," in Wrigley, Nineteenth Century Society, 121-22.

26 Hill, "Women, Work and the Census," 84.

27 Edward Higgs, "Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses,' History Workshop Journal, 23 (Spring 1987), 63-64.

28Sally Alexander, Anna Davin and Eve Hostetter, "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm," History Workshop Journal 8 (Autumn 1979), 175.

29 Higgs, "Women, Occupations and Work," 66.

30 Higgs, "Women, Occupations and Work," 67.

For historians of women, the differences in the censuses mean that, where possible, information must be gathered from other sources to supplement the information found in the census. Parliamentary inquiries are always a good source, particularly for women involved in the burgeoning textile and industrial sectors. Works by social commentators such as Henry Mayhew, Friedrich Engels and James Kay-Shuttleworth are also useful.[31] For some occupations, such as domestic service which rarely came to the attention of the public, the census is often the best source available for study.

Irish Women in Britain

Most studies of the Irish in Britain have focussed on the level of integration of the Irish into British society, often referring to them as the outcasts of Victorian life, separate from the English in terms of national identity, politics, religion, and social and economic status.[32] This image of the Irish is only partially complete, however, as most of these studies have been based on very specific geographic areas, such as the large industrial

---

31 Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Classes in England (1844; rpt. Edinburgh: Neill and Company, 1968); Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, Thoughts and Suggestions on Certain Social Problems (London: Longman and Brown, 1863); Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor(1851; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1968).

32 Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, The Irish in the Victorian City, 8-9. For other examples see also R. Lawton, "Irish Immigration to England and Wales in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," Irish Geography 4 (1959), 32-54; J.M. Werly, "The Irish in Manchester, 1832-49," Irish Historical Studies xviii (1973) 345-58; M.A.G O'Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series, 31 (1981), 149-74.

centres of Lancashire and Scotland, or the metropolis of London. Other historians have suggested that the picture of the Irish as outcasts may not be accurate for smaller centres, but the study is yet to be produced that proves the claim.

Previous studies have neglected two aspects of Irish migration. First, Irish migration to Britain did not end with the last of the famine immigrants. The Irish-born population in Britain steadily declined after 1861,when it reached a peak of more than 600,000. By 1911 the total Irish-born population in Britain still exceeded 375,000. In Scotland, the decline was not quite as dramatic, decreasing from 207,000 in 1871 to 175,000 in 1911.[33] David Fitzpatrick suggests that the number of Irish migrants to Britain in the thirty-five year period of 1876 to 1911 numbered close to 300,000.[34] The Irish represented the largest minority group in England, Wales and Scotland well into the twentieth century. Despite this large number, however, most studies of the Irish in Britain end with the Victorian period. Only two substantial studies have attempted to remedy this neglect.[35]

Secondly, few of the works on the Irish in Britain have dealt with the hundreds of thousands of women who migrated from Ireland to Britain, in spite of recent evidence

---

33 Fitzpatrick, "A Curious Middle Place," 11

34 Fitzpatrick, "A Curious Middle Place," 12.

35 Graham Davis, The Irish in Britain and Stephen Fielding, Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939 (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993).

that shows that by the turn of the century female immigrants outnumbered men.[36] Works by Lynn Hollen Lees and Frances Finnegan provided glimpses of the occupations, living conditions and religious lives of women in London and York, respectively. [37] David Fitzpatrick, in two wide-ranging works on the Irish in Britain, gave a broader picture of the lives of female immigrants, including some information on their geographic location, on their limited occupational opportunities and propensity to participate in organised religion.[38]

What has not been done is to determine the influence, if any, that Irish migrant women had on British towns. Colin Pooley's study of the Irish migrant population as a whole did, however, contradict the view that the Irish were concentrated in a few centres.[39] Few towns or counties in Britain were without a substantial Irish community. In many smaller towns, the impact of the Irish was just as great as it was in the large centres of London or Liverpool because of their concentration. Pooley argued that because of their widespread geographic location, it is impossible to paint all Irish immigrants with the same brush -- experiences varied from town to town.

---

36 Mary Hickman and Bronwen Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness," 12.

37 Lynn Hollen Lees, Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979); Frances Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice: A study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875 (Cork: Cork University Press, 1982).

38 Fitzpatrick, "A Curious Middle Place" and "A Peculiar Tramping People".

39 Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?," 62.

As with all census research, there will be some limitations to this study. First, the listing of principal towns changed over the course of the period 1841 to 1911, making comparison difficult. Only the principal towns, in addition to the counties, list the birthplace statistics of the residents. This is a particular problem for the study of the Irish, as towns which had a substantial Irish population in 1911, such as Bootle, Birkenhead, St. Helen's, Newcastle and Bournemouth, were not always included in other censuses.[40] At the other end of the spectrum, the 1871 Census of Scotland gave the Irish-born population for every county and for twenty-two burghs.[41] The 1911 Census, however, gives the county totals along with the population of only four burghs, Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh.[42] The second problem in assessing the influence of Irish women on British society lays with the fact that all census abstracts list only those who were born in Ireland. The census, therefore, only includes first generation Irish women and all but eliminates the possibility of studying second and third generation Irish. For this reason, this study deals only with Irish born in Ireland. This lack of information becomes a more serious limitation as the numbers of Irish women migrating to Britain declined in the

---

40 Census of England and Wales, 1871, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872. Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, *General Report;* 1917, xxxv, 483.

41 Census of Scotland, 1871, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1.

42 Census of Scotland, 1911, *Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking*, 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45.

early twentieth century and the focus of government and other agencies shifted to the children of the previous migrants.[43]

Before 1911, the census did not record the county in Ireland from which Irish men and women migrated. In order to determine the origin of Irish settlers before 1911, the historian has to turn to other sources. Lynn Lees used the work of social commentators like Mayhew, as well as reports from the statistical society, to state with some certainty that two-thirds of the London Irish came from Munster.[44] Fitzpatrick used the Poor Law Inquiry reports to observe that Liverpool migrants came from Connacht, and that Yorkshire was the choice for many migrants from Mayo and Sligo.[45] Brenda Collins also used the Poor Law Inquiries to determine that most Irish migrants to Scotland came from Ulster.[46] While it is difficult to use the census to account for the county of birth, it is possible to supplement the information available with other parliamentary sources or with the works of social commentators.

---

43 Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?," 61.

44 Lees, Exiles of Erin, 51.

45 Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People," 627-28.

46 Brenda Collins, "Irish Emigration to Dundee and Paisley during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in J.M. Goldstrom and L.A. Clarkson, eds., Irish Population, Economy and Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 202.

The census does not provide much information on the social and economic characteristics of Irish migrants. [47] It was not until the 1851 census that the occupations for women were listed. As stated earlier, however, this is not necessarily an insurmountable obstacle. For the most part, something can be learned about the occupations of women in the various towns and counties from other sources, particularly in reference to industrial areas in Lancashire and the midlands or Scotland.[48]

A more significant problem is that domestic service appears to be the major source of employment for Irish women, and domestic service was an under-reported occupation in the census.[49] In English towns, over one-third of all occupied females were employed in domestic service.[50] Lees gained her information on domestic service from an examination of the manuscript census returns and from Henry Mayhew's 1857 publication on the perils of domestic service.[51] W.J. Lowe used the census exclusively to determine that after textile work, domestic service was the largest employer of women in

---

47 Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?," 63.

48 See for example Pat Hudson, The Industrial Revolution (London: Edward Arnold, 1992); Judy Lown, Women and Industrialisation: Gender at Work in Nineteenth Century England (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990); Jane Rendall, Women in an Industrialising Society: England 1750-1880 (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990) and Elizabeth Roberts, Women's Work: 1840-1940 (London Macmillan Education, 1988). These works use Parliamentary Papers, social commentators and other sources to uncover the nature of women's work in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

49 Lees, Exiles of Erin, 133-5.

50 Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People," 642.

51 Lees, Exiles of Erin, 95.

Lancashire.[52] Whatever its drawbacks, the census is still a major source for occupational statistics on Irish migrant women. The key is to supplement the data with information from other sources if available.

---

52 W.J. Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working Class Community (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 80-92.

Chapter 5

IRISH WOMEN IN BRITAIN - AN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Migration is one of the bigger themes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and is arguably the least well studied. Despite the large number of Irish women who migrated to Great Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, few historians have studied this phenomenon. Since the migration of Irish women, and indeed of Irish men, was the first large-scale industrial migration of modern history, a study of the processes involved in such a movement may contribute to our understanding of modern migrations. While the migration of Irish women in the nineteenth century is clearly important to study in its own right, valuable parallels may emerge to help us understand other migrations. As discussed in previous chapters, Irish women migrated to Britain primarily for economic reasons and they appear to have followed their ancestors when they chose areas in which to settle. In previous chapters it has been shown that the lives of Irish women revolved around two things -- home and work. This chapter will use the limited studies of Irish women in Britain to determine whether the lives of Irish women in these two spheres differed from those of their counterparts in Ireland and America. The next chapter will elaborate on those ideas by way of considering where Irish women settled in Britain and it will suggest explanations as to why they moved to certain areas.

Previous studies of the Irish in Britain have concentrated, almost exclusively, on

the distribution of Irish migrants within the counties.[1] While these types of studies are valuable, they tend to ignore two important characteristics of Irish migration. First, the Irish settled in towns of different sizes and economic structures. Their settlement choices are a reflection of three things: the types of employment available, the presence of other Irish, and the level of prejudice against the Irish in each town, but all of these reasons require investigation. Secondly, Irish-born women encompassed approximately one-half of those who migrated to Britain and did not always follow their male counterparts to the same towns. County studies have not identified this trend, as aggregate county totals show that Irish men and women resided in the same county, but not necessarily in the same towns. The change in perspective when one looks at the individual towns in each county can be great, as will be seen in the next chapter.

This chapter and the next will concentrate on Irish women in Britain. As discussed in previous chapters, the two major factors that affected the lives of women in Ireland were their role within the family and their employment outside of the home. This chapter will discuss how these roles changed for women once they migrated to Britain.

---

[1]In 1851, 46% of Britain's total male and female Irish-born migrants lived in the seven largest cities of London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Manchester, Edinburgh, Birmingham and Leeds. M.A.G. O Tuathaigh has estimated that over 80% of the Irish lived in towns of more than 10,000. See M.A.G. O Tuathaigh, "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration," Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth series, Vol. 31, 1981, 153. For examples of studies that have concentrated solely on the Irish in the counties, see J.A. Jackson, The Irish in Britain, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963)and Kevin O'Conner, The Irish in Britain, (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972).

The next chapter will concern the data collected from the census reports published from 1861 to1911.

Prior to the Famine, migration to Britain was for the most part short-term as most of those who came to Britain did so to work in seasonal industries, particularly agriculture. As the work year was extended, however, many Irish chose to remain in Britain for longer periods of time. Occasionally they remained in Britain for their entire working lives and returned to Ireland once their working days were over.[2] Irish women did not make up a large number among the seasonal migrants. Ruth-Ann Harris' incomparable study of pre-Famine seasonal migration to Britain states that women were often left behind because there was little for them to do in Britain. While there was employment available in the service industries, these jobs were not open to Irish women until English women abandoned them in favour of higher paying factory employment in the later nineteenth century.[3]

Increasingly, however, male and female Irish migrants began to make the move to Britain a permanent one. Settling mainly in the industrial areas of Lancashire and London, but also in virtually every county, these migrants created the first communities of Irish in Britain. When the Famine forced many to leave their homes in Ireland, they often settled in the same areas as the earlier migrants. As will be seen in the following

---

[2]Harris, The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland, 3-24.

[3]Harris, The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland, 157.

chapter, Irish women followed the same routes as their male counterparts into Britain. They settled first in Lancashire and London, but over the course of the period under study, Irish women were to be found in virtually every area of Britain.

As Irish migrant women often did not have the skills necessary to compete in the urban job markets in Britain, it is not surprising to find that they were occupied in low-status, low-paying jobs in Britain. Like their male counterparts, they were forced to take whatever jobs were available. Only three areas in Britain - York, London and Lancashire - have been studied for insights into the occupations of Irish-born women. All three show Irish women involved in lower class occupations, and none record a great number of Irish women employed in any professional or skilled trades.[4]

In London, where there was no one dominant industry to provide employment, Lynn Hollen Lees has shown that Irish women settled predominantly in three trades: domestic service (42.7% of all occupied Irish women), the food industry (15.1%) and the clothing industry (17.2%).[5] Irish women could also be found doing subsidiary work in the leather and paper industries, as well as engaged in various forms of street selling.

Domestic service was by far the predominant occupation for Irish-born women in London, just as it was for their English counterparts during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Lees' study of London, 50.7% of all occupied women were

---

[4]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 80-81; Lees, Exiles of Erin, 93-96 and Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 98-109.

[5]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 95.

classified as servants. Of all occupied Irish women, 42.7% were employed in some form of service.[6] While they were classified in the same occupation, however, the lives of Irish and English servants were very different. Declared incompetent and disrespectful, Irish women in London were often barred from working in wealthier homes.[7] Employment for these women was often restricted to working either at a pub or with an East End Jewish family. These were not considered premium employment opportunities for an English domestic servant.

Because Irish women were found in proportionate numbers to their English counterparts in a variety of occupations, including agriculture, paper, printing and other industries, it might be possible to argue that Irish women adjusted quickly to the economic structure around them. Irish women were, however, found in smaller numbers in textiles and administrative positions. The lack of Irish-born women in clerical positions is not surprising at mid-century when it is recalled that women as a group were only starting to gain a foothold in secretarial positions at this time,[8] and uneducated Irish women were probably not candidates for the few positions that were available. Lees

---

[6]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 93.

[7]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 95.

[8]Meta Zimmick, "Jobs for the Girls: The Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914," in Angela V. John, ed., Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England, 1800-1918 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986), 153-178.

suggests that Irish women could often not find jobs in the textile industry as they did not have the connections needed to help them look for work.[9]

Only two other geographic areas have been analysed for insights into the employment of Irish women, but these two also show a high concentration of Irish-born women in the lowest occupations. The Irish-born female population of York never exceeded more than 1000 (or 3.5% of the total population) for the period 1840 to 1875, but these women did make their mark on certain occupations. Nowhere is this better seen than in field and farm labour, which employed approximately 28% of all occupied Irish women in 1851; by 1861, 36.3% of all occupied Irish women worked in agriculture. [10] Besides the Irish, no other women in York were involved in this occupation. The number of Irish female workers was also high in comparison with other Yorkshire towns, where Irish women rarely made up even 1% of all field labourers.[11]

Irish women in York were barely visible in the service industries. Whereas in London 42.7% of all occupied Irish women were employed as servants in 1851, only 3.5% of occupied Irish women in York worked in service during the same period. The percentage did rise to 15.3% in 1861 in York, but declined again at the next census. This is a surprising statistic as domestic service was by far the largest employer of women in

---

[9]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 98.

[10]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 101.

[11]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 101.

York during this period. Unfortunately, Finnegan gives limited explanation of the low percentage of women involved in the service industry, except to say that the alternative employment (provided in chicory cultivation) might have provided alternative jobs for Irish women at this time.[12] The concentration of Irish women in a small number of occupations is a reflection of the lack of alternative employment in York compared with other industrial towns. Other towns in Yorkshire, including Bradford, Halifax and Sheffield, also had a sizable agricultural workforce, but Irish women were not numerous among them.[13] It was not until the 1871 census that Irish women began to move out of agricultural labour and into other types of employment.

At the county level, the only other area historians have studied is Lancashire, but the data provided for this area are not as satisfactory as those from the other two studies. W.J. Lowe's study of the Lancashire Irish includes a substantial amount on the occupations of Irish women, but only of the female heads of households. Lowe records that approximately 39% of Irish women in Lancashire were listed in the census as without occupation.[14] It was generally believed that Irish women in factory districts resisted factory work despite the fact that female labour was in high demand.[15] Irish female heads of households were more likely to operate boarding houses than were English women,

---

[12]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 101-02.

[13]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 101.

[14]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 79-108.

[15]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 94.

which lends support to the idea that Irish women preferred to be home-based. Further proof of this is the fact that Irish women did work in other aspects of factory production, but only if the work could be done in their own homes. As an example, when a Manchester manufacturer imported cotton fibers from Brazil that were so dirty that no one could be found willing to clean them, Irish women were willing to undertake this chore and took home bags of them to clean.[16] Irish women may have preferred to be home-based, but they still could earn a living in the manufacturing industry.

That said, Lowe's work does show some interesting facets of Irish women's work. As in London, the majority of employed Irish women were involved in the service industries in numbers comparable with their English counterparts. In 1851, 24.2% of all Irish women were employed as domestic servants, while 24.3% of English women were involved in the same occupation. By 1871, the number of Irish servants had decreased to 19.9%, while 25.5% of English women in Lancashire were still employed as servants.[17] Significant numbers of Irish women were also employed in 1851 as seamstresses (12.6% of total Irish female population) and cotton workers (6.3%). These numbers were approximately the same for the 1871 census.

One of the most interesting statistics calculated by Lowe is the number of Irish female heads of households occupied in small businesses. In 1851, only 2.1% of Irish

---

[16]Harris, The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland, 155.

[17]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 81.

female heads ran their own businesses, while in 1871 the percentage had increased to 7.2%.[18] Unfortunately, Lowe does not state what he means by the term small business, but other historians have classified it as anything from a market stall to the operation of a pub or store.[19] In Lancashire it was increasingly common for women in general to operate their own businesses, as by 1871 13.6% of all occupied females owned some form of business.[20] In other areas, however, Irish women were more likely than their English counterparts to operate a small business. In London, 8.1% of occupied Irish women ran a small business in 1851, compared with only 1.6% of the total female population. In York, the number of Irish women involved in small business decreased from 4.2% to 3.6% of the total Irish female population for the period 1851to1871. Irish women represented, however, half of the total number of female owners of small businesses in York for that same period.[21] This was in spite of the fact that the Irish female population of York was only about 3.5% of the total number of women in the town.

Irish women heading households in 1851, particularly in Liverpool and Manchester, were more likely to work in their homes as dressmakers and seamstresses

---

[18]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 81.

[19]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 101.

[20]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 81.

[21]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 96-106.

rather than in the cotton mills. This was largely unsteady and low-wage work.[22] The large number of women employed as dressmakers and seamstresses is partly explained by the fact that as heads of households they could not leave children at home alone while they went out to work. From Lowe's study it appears that it was not until the second generation entered the workforce that Irish women turned to the mills for employment. Second generation Irish women were more likely to be found in the mills and factories, and indeed in other skilled work, than their mothers.

As a less than desirable occupation, it appears that prostitution was a means for some women to survive when no other options were available. As seen in other lines of work, however, whether or not Irish women became prostitutes appears to be influenced by where they settled. In areas where unskilled work was readily available, Irish women were unlikely to turn to prostitution.

Lynn Lees does not fully investigate prostitution as an option in London, but she does quote from Henry Mayhew who determined that prostitution was a last resort for Irish women who could not obtain suitable employment.[23] Studies by Finnegan and Lowe discuss prostitution statistics for Irish women in detail for York and Lancashire, respectively. In York, Finnegan determined that the Irish had little to do with prostitution. Of the 619 prostitutes arrested between 1840 and 1875, only 23 were Irish,

---

[22]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 82.

[23]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 95.

representing just 3.7% of the total number of arrests.[24] Yet, considering that Irish women never represented more than 3.5% of the total population of York, it appears that they were slightly over-represented in arrests for prostitution. Irish women seemed more likely to resort to prostitution in the industrial areas of Lancashire, but the total number of arrests varied greatly from town to town. In the areas of Lancashire where Irish women had difficulty finding adequate employment, the number of them arrested for prostitution was higher than in areas where they were able to find suitable jobs. In Manchester, Irish women constituted between 28% and 36% of all women arrested for prostitution between 1851 and 1871,[25] at a time when they represented less than 5% of the population (see figures 5 and 6 in chapter 6). In Oldham, where Irish women never represented more than 2% of the population, they accounted for 46% of the arrests for prostitution in the late 1860's. Finally, in Liverpool, Irish women constituted 8.2 % of the population in 1871, but accounted for 28% of arrests for prostitution. The previous year, 46% of all women arrested for prostitution were Irish women. [26]

All of the above statistics for Lancashire must be treated with caution as they represent the total number of arrests of Irish women for prostitution, not the total number of Irish women arrested. It is not a great leap to assume that some Irish women were

---

[24]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 142-45.

[25]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 102-03.

[26]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 102-03.

arrested more than once for the same crime. Even with this disclaimer, however, Irish women were disproportionately represented in arrests. None of the studies cited offer much of an explanation for why Irish women turned to prostitution in some areas and not in others. Lowe determined that in Lancashire few occupational opportunities were available to unskilled Irish women, and therefore they responded by turning to prostitution. In York, where opportunities were equally constricted, Irish women were less likely to resort to prostitution.

From the small amount of research completed, it appears that Irish women in Great Britain followed similar marital and reproductive patterns as their American counterparts, at least in some respects. In Ireland the mean age at marriage for Irish-born women was 28.9 in 1851, in Great Britain it was 26.2. By 1861, the mean age in Great Britain was further reduced to 24.0.[27] It appears that Irish-born women in Britain, as in America, gradually returned to the pre-Famine practice of early marriage. Lynn Lees' study examined the age of marriage among those left behind in Ireland, a sample of Irish in London, the total population in England and the total population in London. While there is a steady decrease in the age of marriage regardless of the place of residence, the age of marriage among Irish women in London shows the sharpest decrease between 1851 and 1861. The average age for Irish women to marry in London was well below not only that of their counterparts in Ireland, but also well below that of the host population.

---

[27]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 260.

This decrease in age at marriage is a more extreme example of the return to pre-Famine patterns of early marriage than is seen in America, where it took several decades after the Famine before Irish women began to marry earlier.

Table 5.1: Mean age at marriage in Irish and English populations, by sex, 1851 and 1861.

Population	Male - 1851	Female - 1851	Male - 1861	Female - 1861
Irish population in Ireland	31.2	28.9	31	26.4
Irish Sample in London	28.3	26.2	26.2	24
General Population in England	27.1	25.9	26.5	25.4
General Population London	27.6	25.9	26.5	24.9

Source: Lynn Hollen Lees, Exiles of Erin, 260.

The only major study that discusses marriage and fertility rates of Irish-born women in Britain is Lynn Hollen Lees' work on the London Irish. Even in this small sample, however, some interesting traits emerge. In Lees' work we see that Irish men and women married whom and when they pleased, breaking with the system that existed in Ireland. Unlike in post-Famine Ireland, where marriages were often arranged and there were few opportunities for courtship, London offered a variety of places for meeting members of the opposite sex. Lees states that most Irish lived in close-knit small communities where there were ample supplies of other Irish to court.[28]

---

[28]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 149.

As they did in America, the London Irish generally married within their own ethnic group. Lees found little evidence to suggest that there was intermarriage with people of English descent or with Roman Catholics of European ancestry. Using the 1861 census and parish registries, Lees found that in the twenty percent of households with one English-born and one Irish-born spouse, virtually all of the English partners were second or third generation Irish. The first generation Irish marrying in London chose spouses from their own counties in Ireland or from areas adjacent to them, as they did in America. Finally, a majority of Irish chose partners who lived within a quarter mile of them in London. It appears that despite the freedom of union that greeted Irish immigrants in London, they still chose partners from their own communities.[29]

While studies suggest that Irish women in America returned to the pre-Famine custom of large families, Irish women in Britain appear to have followed the example set by the host population in each city, and indeed produced even smaller families than the host population. In London, the Irish chose to marry at earlier ages, but family size did not increase with earlier marriage. While Irish families in America resembled the size of families in pre-Famine Ireland, about 5.05 persons per family, the London Irish reduced their families to sizes comparable with the English. The average family household in Britain was between 4.0 to 4.6 persons for the second half of the nineteenth century.[30] The

---

[29]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 153-54.

[30]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 138.

post-Famine Irish family in London consisted of only 3.8 persons on average for the same period. Unfortunately, no further study has investigated whether this decline in the size of Irish family continued for the rest of the period.

In Liverpool and Manchester between 1851 to 1871, the size of Irish families decreased to the point that they were smaller than their English-born counterparts, as was seen also in London.[31] The Liverpool Irish had an average family size of 3.98 persons in 1851; by 1871 the family size further decreased to 3.87 persons. The family size of the resident population in Liverpool in 1851 was 3.96 persons, decreasing only to 3.92 persons by 1871. The average size of families for the whole of England and Wales in 1851 was 4.8, decreasing to 4.5 by 1871.[32] As can be seen, it appears that while the family was still large, the size depended primarily on the location of that Irish family in the urban structure.

Whether Irish women achieved greater independence after emigration is certainly open to debate, but their lives were markedly different than those of their contemporaries in Ireland. Generally, Irish women in Britain married earlier than in Ireland, and their family sizes, while still small in comparison with pre-Famine Ireland, were still quite large, depending on the area studied. While they had greater opportunities for marriage outside of their own ethnic group, they generally married those who had emigrated from

---

[31]W.J. Lowe, "The Irish in Lancashire," unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of Liverpool, 1986, 81 - 84. Quoted in Lees, Exiles of Erin, 138.

[32]W.J. Lowe, The Irish in Lancashire, (New York: Peter Lang, 1989) 56-58.

the same part of Ireland as they had. It appears that while women did have the chance for greater independence, for the most part they simply continued with family patterns established prior to the Famine. Of course, this conclusion is tempered by the fact that relatively few studies have been completed on Irish women in Britain, and therefore we have little from which to draw comparisons.

While this survey of Irish women in Britain is incomplete, it does offer some insight into the lives of Irish women in Britain. They were found in low-paying jobs, but the type of occupation depended on the areas in which they settled. In London, Irish women were found predominantly as servants and garment workers; in York as agricultural labourers and in Lancashire as servants, garment workers or small business operators. Within the family, Irish women followed the American trend of returning to early marriage to members of their own ethnic group. They did, however, follow the example set by the British host community and had fewer children. Irish women in Britain may not have realized it, but they created lives for themselves distinct from their counterparts in Ireland and America.

Chapter 6

IRISH WOMEN IN BRITAIN

In previous chapters this study has surveyed what has been written about the Irish in Britain. Concentrating on Irish women with regards to their familial and economic roles, it has been shown that Irish women in Britain are a challenging study. While they returned to the pre-Famine patterns of early marriage, they did not produce as many children as their ancestors in Ireland. At the same time, they appear to have worked outside the home before marriage, primarily as factory workers, vendors or domestic servants, but they often stopped working after marriage. It appears that Irish women created their new world in Britain with one eye on Ireland and the other on their host community.

This chapter will take the ideas developed in previous chapters further. The published census reports for the period 1861 to 1911 will be used to demonstrate that Irish women migrated primarily for economic reasons, and that they initially settled in areas where there was already an established Irish community. These dates of 1861 to 1911 were not chosen arbitrarily. The 1861 census was the first census that separated Irish men and women into different categories. Prior to this census the Irish were counted as one group, regardless of gender. The 1911 census was the last before civil war

separated Ireland from Britain. After the war Irish emigration to Britain slowed, only to increase again in the second half of the twentieth century.

There are three major questions to be answered in this chapter. First, what areas of Britain attracted the largest numbers of Irish women? Secondly, did Irish women tend to migrate to areas where employment opportunities grew and did their numbers increase and decrease with fluctuations in the economy of each area? Finally, there are many towns in Great Britain where the numbers of Irish women greatly exceeded the numbers of Irish men. Why did Irish women settle in areas where they had little chance of interacting with other Irish? This is significant when it is remembered that the Irish tended to intermarry. These questions will be answered from two main sources. The published census reports have been analyzed to provide a series of tables that help to shed light on the movement of Irish women throughout Britain. As well, a series of primary and secondary sources have been used to help to uncover what was happening in the various towns in Britain, primarily with regards to the economy. I have argued in previous chapters that the migration of Irish women to Great Britain was largely an economic one. By showing how Irish women responded to the economy in each town, it can be seen how the lives of Irish women in Britain were determined primarily by economic factors.

The data for this analysis are drawn from the published census reports for the period 1861 to 1911. There are, however, a number of limitations inherent in these records. The list of towns and cities for which information is calculated is not

exhaustive: the census tabulated birthplace records for a small number of principal towns. The decision to include certain towns and exclude others was based on both size and regional importance. All large towns and many smaller towns are recorded, but other urban areas, particularly those in Lancashire, are not in every census. In 1871 and 1891, the census was revised to include many of the growing industrial centres, but these were included only at the expense of towns with populations with fewer than 50,000 inhabitants.

Secondly, all census records refer only to those born in Ireland. The census therefore covers those who migrated from Ireland to Britain. It does not, however, give any hint of whether Irish birth is linked with Irish culture, or the extent to which second or third generation Irish communities existed. This becomes a substantial problem at the turn of the century as the migration of Irish to Britain decreased, and the future of Irish communities depended on these later generations.

Third, the census does not record the counties in Ireland from which the Irish migrated and therefore we are left to speculate about the precise paths of migration to Great Britain.[1] Finally, the census provides no information on the social and economic

---

[1]David Fitzpatrick does speculate on probable routes the Irish took to Great Britain. He presumes from several local community studies that migrants from Ulster tended to travel from Derry to Glasgow and onward to other parts of Scotland. Those from the western provinces of Munster and Connaught had a tendency to settle in Lancashire and London via Liverpool. He does not hypothesize about the people of Leinster. See David Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People: The Irish in Britain, 1801-1870," in W.E. Vaughn, ed., A New History of Ireland Vol 5. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 625.

characteristics of the migrants and only limited references to the age and sex composition. Understanding the complete demographic profile of the Irish in Britain is, therefore, difficult to do. Despite these problems, however, the data provide an enlightening picture of the distribution of Irish-born migrants, male and female, throughout Great Britain.

Scotland

Initially, a decision was made to eliminate Scotland from this survey because of the overwhelming volume of data available. It quickly became apparent, however, that eliminating the Scottish portion of Irish migrant women would seriously distort the picture of Irish migration to Great Britain. By 1911, more than 8% of those who emigrated from Ireland had settled in Scotland.[2] This portion of the chapter will deal with Irish women in Scotland, while the next concerns Irish women in England. The Irish in Scotland had such an impact on that society that they deserve to be treated separately.

Irish women first settled in Scotland in the pre-Famine period. It appears that those women who migrated to Scotland before, and indeed after the Famine, came mainly from the northern counties in Ireland.[3] The Report on the Irish Poor (1836) states

---

[2]Brenda Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Thomas Devine, ed., Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1991),1.

[3] Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People,"625.

that the Irish left the north of Ireland after the 1798 uprising, and settled in the larger industrial areas.[4] While the uprising no doubt convinced many Irish to leave the northern area, equally important was the failure of the linen industry in the early nineteenth century. The Irish hand manufactures could not compete with machine-produced linen, and the industry in Ireland collapsed in the 1820's. Hand loom operations continued in Scotland in the pre-Famine period, in conjunction with machine production, and many Irish left for Scotland in search of work.[5] By 1851, approximately half of the labour force in the Dundee linen industry was Irish-born.[6]

In 1901, 8 of the 20 towns with the largest number of Irish-born women in Great Britain were in Scotland. (See Figure 6.1) These large numbers of women concentrated in the large industrial towns are not surprising, for unlike Lancashire, it appears that Irish women were integrated quickly into the mills and factories of Scotland. This was to be expected as many of the women who migrated to Scotland were trained in the linen industry and could find work easily. [7] If this was an economic migration, skilled Irish women would have little trouble finding work in the booming industrial sectors of

---

[4]"Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain," Reports from Committee Volume XXXIV, Appendix G, 1836, 146.

[5]Brenda Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 5-6.

[6]Brenda Collins, "Proto-Industrialization and Pre-Famine Emigration," Social History, Volume 7, no. 2, May 1982, 127-146.

[7]Ian Adams, The Making of Urban Scotland (London: Croom Helm, 1978) 89-90.

Scotland. In Glasgow, Irish women were generally found at the steam looms of the cotton manufactures, or working in the subsidiary industries of bleaching, dyeing, and calico printing.[8] In Paisley, Irish women were found doing the coarser work in the cotton, silk and woolen mills.[9] Unskilled Irish women also found a way to make a living in Scotland, as Irish women in Paisley were seen in the streets hawking fruit, fish and hardware. [10] Another town, Greenock, which reached its peak population of Irish women in 1871 (see figure 6.1), counted Irish women among its hawkers. Greenock was, however, primarily a port town, and little else is known about what Irish women did to make a living in this area. This fact is disappointing when we look at figure 6.2, which shows that Irish women represented a significant percentage of the population of Greenock throughout the period.

---

[8]J. E. Handley, The Irish in Scotland (Cork: Cork University Press, 1945) 111-112.

[9]Handley, The Irish in Scotland, 102. Handley garnered most of his information on Irish labour from the Select Committee on Manufactures and Shipping, 1833.

[10]Handley, The Irish in Scotland, 103.

Figure 6.1 - The twenty towns in Great Britain with the largest total of Irish-born women.

Census 1861		Census 1871		Census 1881	
London	60122	London	50723	London	43605
Liverpool	43690	Liverpool	40588	Liverpool	35778
Glasgow	32558	Glasgow	33597	Glasgow	32621
Manchester	29950	Manchester	19298	Manchester	14033
Dundee	8583	Dundee	8805	Dundee	7187
Birmingham	5520	Bolton	6538	Salford	7123
Edinburgh	4557	Leeds	5339	Hamilton	5105
Leeds	4400	Greenock	4684	Leeds	4761
Preston	4164	Birmingham	4643	Bradford	4478
Bradford	3718	Bradford	4619	Greenock	4465
Stockport	3640	Edinburgh	4007	Edinburgh	3914
Bolton	2916	Newcastle	3093	Birkenhead	3700
Greenock	2890	Preston	2904	Birmingham	3384
Sheffield	2869	Sheffield	2767	Paisley	2616
Paisley	2554	Paisley	2514	Bolton	2535
Bristol	2397	Sunderland	2427	Preston	2506
Sunderland	1872	Stockport	2375	Newcastle	2466
Merthyr Tydfil	1793	Bristol	2120	Northampton	2464
Wolverhampton	1682	Halifax	1658	Blackburn	2437
Hull	1345	Plymouth & Devonport	1506	Oldham	2352

Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
London	50236	London	52837	London	55888
Glasgow	28774	Glasgow	29606	Liverpool	33955
Liverpool	24278	Liverpool	22346	Glasgow	23860
Manchester	12428	Manchester	10052	Manchester	18216
Salford	5109	Salford	4235	Salford	6520
Dundee	5041	Govan	3478	Birkenhead	4872
Leeds	3574	Dundee	3394	Bootle	4161
Greenock	3563	Edinburgh	3341	Portsmouth	3996
Edinburgh	3345	Greenock	3249	St. Helen's	3769
Birkenhead	3154	Leeds	2950	Leeds	3620
Bradford	3024	Birkenhead	2733	Newcastle	3511
Birmingham	2538	Patrick	2723	Bradford	3081
Paisley	2376	Paisley	2558	Birmingham	2873
Newcastle	2117	Bootle	2485	Barrow in Furness	2796
Preston	2080	Bradford	2228	Edinburgh	2794
Cardiff	1924	Birmingham	2046	Bristol	2710
Bolton	1808	Coatbridge	1908	Dundee	2207
Blackburn	1801	Barrow in Furness	1850	Bolton	2156
Oldham	1786	Portsmouth	1783	Preston	2139
Barrow in Furness	1777	Sheffield	1777	West Ham	2116

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861, Population Tables - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1863, Volume II, LIII, Part I, 265, Part II, I; Census of Scotland, 1861, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1864, LI, 49; Census of England and Wales, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872 Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1; Census of Scotland, 1871, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of Scotland, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, Volume III, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland,1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1891, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Infirmities, 1893, Volume III, cvi, 1; Census of Scotland, 1891, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of Scotland, 1891, Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Indices, 1893-94, Volume II, cviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901, Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc. 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of Scotland, 1901, Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1903, Volume III, lxxxvi, 205; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, General Report; 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking, 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

Figure 6.2 - The twenty towns in Great Britain with the largest total of Irish-born women

Census 1861	%	Census 1871	%	Census 1881	%
Liverpool	9.8	Greenock	10.3	Dumbarton	6.9
Dundee	9.5	Dumbarton	8.7	Greenock	6.7
Airdrie	8.3	Dundee	8.6	Liverpool	6.5
Glasgow	8.2	Glasgow	8.6	Glasgow	6.4
Greenock	6.9	Liverpool	8.2	Dundee	5.1
Stockport	6.7	Bolton	7.9	Airdrie	4.9
Manchester	6.5	Airdrie	7.2	Northampton	4.7
Ayr	5.5	Paisley	5.9	Paisley	4.7
Paisley	5.4	Manchester	5.1	Birkenhead	4.4
Preston	5.1	Hamilton	4.6	Manchester	4.1
Hamilton	5.0	Stockport	4.5	Salford	4.0
Newport	4.7	Ayr	4.3	Hamilton	3.7
Kilmarnock	4.2	Newport	3.9	St. Helen's	3.3
Bolton	4.1	Stirling	3.6	Ayr	3.3
Stirling	3.9	Kilmarnock	3.5	Stockport	3.3
Dumfries	3.6	Preston	3.4	Preston	2.6
Bradford	3.5	Bradford	3.2	Middlesborough	2.4
Halifax	3.1	Middlesborough	3.1	Bolton	2.4
Gateshead	3.1	Chester	3.0	Bradford	2.4
Chester	3.0	Gateshead	2.9	Blackburn	2.3
Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
Coatbridge	7.1	Coatbridge	5.2	Bootle	6.0
Dumbarton	6.8	Patrick	5.0	Bristol	5.4
Rutherglen	6.0	Greenock	4.8	Liverpool	4.5
Greenock	5.6	Govan	4.5	Birkenhead	3.7
Glasgow	4.4	Bootle	4.2	Barrow in Furness	3.6
Paisley	3.6	Glasgow	3.7	Salford	2.8
Liverpool	3.4	Motherwell	3.6	Manchester	2.6
Barrow in Furness	3.4	Barrow in Furness	3.2	Warrington	2.2
Airdrie	3.3	Paisley	3.2	St. Helen's	2.2
Dundee	3.3	Liverpool	3.0	Wigan	2.0
Birkenhead	3.2	Birkenhead	2.5	Preston	1.8
Wigan	2.6	Hamilton	2.3	Bury	1.7
Salford	2.5	Dundee	2.1	Chester	1.7
Manchester	2.5	Salford	1.9	Portsmouth	1.7
London	2.3	Manchester	1.8	Bournemouth	1.6
St. Helen's	2.3	Wigan	1.8	Gillingham	1.6
Hamilton	2.2	Kilmarnock	1.8	Wimbledon	1.5
Ayr	2.1	St. Helen's	1.6	Ealing	1.5
Stockport	1.9	Southampton	1.6	Blackburn	1.5
Preston	1.9	Preston	1.5	Middlesborough	1.5

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861 Population Tables - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1863, Volume II, LIII, Part 1, 265, Part II, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1861, General Report, 1863, Volume III, LIII, 1; Census of Scotland,1861 Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1861, L, 855; Census of Scotland,1861 Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1864, LI, 49; Census of England and Wales, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872 Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1871 General Report, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1; Census of Scotland, 1871, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of Scotland, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, Volume III, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland,1881, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1881, xcvi, 143; Census of Scotland,1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1891, Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Infirmities, 1893, Volume III, cvi, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1891 General Report, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629; Census of Scotland, 1891, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of Scotland, 1891, Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Indices, 1893-94, Volume II, cviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901, Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc. 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of Scotland, 1901, Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1903, Volume III, lxxxvi, 205; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, General Report, 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking, 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

In Edinburgh, where the population of Irish women reached its peak in 1861, there were opportunities for women in the footwear and clothing industries.[11] While Irish were also found as hawkers and carters of coal, it is not known how many women were involved in these occupations.[12]

The town with the second largest number of Irish-born women, and indeed one of the towns with the highest percentage of Irish-born women, was Dundee. (See figures 6.1 and 6.2) Irish women moved to Dundee chiefly to find jobs in the jute industry, as well as

---

[11]R. J. Morris, "Urbanization and Scotland," in People and Society in Scotland, 1830-1914 (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1990) 81

[12]Handley, The Irish in Scotland, 133-34.

the other mills in the city.[13] At the peak of the jute industry in Dundee in the late nineteenth century, the ratio of Irish women to Irish men was approximately 170 Irish women to every 100 Irish men in Dundee. (See figure 6.3)

Figure 6.3

The towns in Great Britain with the highest female/male ratios among Irish-born migrants

Calculation: read females/males x 100

Census 1861		Census 1871		Census 1881	
Bath	259	Bolton	282	Bath	216
Macclesfield	207	Bath	207	Dundee	169
Brighton	172	Preston	167	Croydon	166
Bradford	151	Dundee	162	Ipswich	144
Dundee	148	Truro	159	Preston	144
Stockport	144	Stockport	153	Stockport	139
Ipswich	141	Arbroath	141	Rochdale	135
Manchester	136	Norwich	132	Blackburn	135
London	126	Oxford	132	Bradford	132
Bury St. Edmunds	125	Manchester	131	Norwich	128

Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
Hastings	216	Hastings	205	Walsall	260
Dundee	175	Bath	181	Dundee	185
Croydon	161	Bournemouth	180	Bath	179
Preston	158	Dundee	176	Tottenham	174
Nottingham	137	Brighton	163	Eastbourne	156
Blackburn	136	Blackburn	162	Northampton	148
Brighton	133	Preston	162	Willesden	145
Rochdale	132	Croydon	152	Ealing	141
Bradford	130	Southampton	151	Wimbledon	140
Aston Manor	126	Hornsey	145	Bournemouth	139

[13]Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 11.

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861 Population Tables - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1863, Volume II, LIII, Part I, 265, Part II, I; Census of England and Wales, 1861, General Report, 1863, Volume III, LIII, I; Census of Scotland 1861, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1861, L, 855; Census of Scotland 1861, Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1864, LI, 49; Census of England and Wales, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872 Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1871 *General Report*, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1; Census of Scotland, 1871, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of Scotland, 1871, Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, Volume III, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1881, General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland 1881, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1881, xcvi, 143; Census of Scotland 1881, Population Abstracts - Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1891, Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Infirmities, 1893, Volume III, cvi, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1891 *General Report*, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629; Census of Scotland, 1891, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of Scotland, 1891, Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Indices, 1893-94, Volume II, cviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901, Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc. 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of Scotland, 1901, Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1903, Volume III, lxxxvi, 205; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, *General Report;* 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking, 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

While Irish women were well represented in the mills and factories of Scotland, they did not readily become domestic servants. In Edinburgh, the demand for indoor domestic servants created by the increasing wealth of the middle class generated service opportunities for women. In 1841, domestic service accounted for 70 percent of the entire female labour force in Edinburgh, decreasing to 55 percent in 1871 and to 40 percent in 1911.[14] In the other major Scottish cities of Aberdeen and Glasgow, the numbers of women employed in the domestic service industries were well below that of Edinburgh, but generally 25 percent of all working women in these cities were servants.

---

[14]Richard Rodger, "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914," in George Gordon, ed., Perspectives of the Scottish City, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985) 32.

In Dundee, the number of women employed in service industries declined rapidly throughout the period, from a high of 27 percent in 1841 to a low of 8.5 percent in 1911.[15]

The significant number of women employed as domestic servants in Scotland does not, however, include many Irish women. The Report on the State of the Irish Poor (1836) stated that virtually all of the domestic servants in Paisley were Scottish. Rather than employ Irish women in their homes, manufacturers preferred to have them work in their factories, as one manufacturer declared,

> It is my decided opinion that our manufacturers never would have extended so rapidly if we had not had large importations of Irish families; for the work of this town requires women and children as well as men...The girls in the cotton mills are chiefly Irish; there are few Irish among the sewing girls or in the thread works. The domestic servants are almost all Scotch girls... [16]

It is difficult to determine whether it was the prejudice of the Scots or the availability of factory work that kept Irish women away from domestic service, but both were abundant in Scotland.

Looking at figures 6.1 and 6.2, we have evidence that the population of Irish women did change with fluctuations in the economy. In 1861, Irish women represented 9.5 percent of the population of Dundee. By 1911, they constituted only 1.3 percent, not

---

[15]Rodger, "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914," 33.

[16]"Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain," Reports from Committee Volume XXXIV, Appendix G, 1836, 133-34.

enough tc qualify for the list of the twenty towns with the highest percentage of Irish women. This decrease represented a loss of more than six thousand Irish women. Glasgow saw a more substantial decline, with a loss of approximately ten thousand Irish women for the period. In all areas of Scotland, and indeed in all areas of Great Britain, the decline is attributable to two major factors: the decrease in Irish emigration to Britain and mortality. In the industrial areas of Scotland, however, this decline was also due to the reduction in industrial production. The increasing mechanization of industry throughout the nineteenth century[17] conspired against unskilled Irish workers. While those who emigrated from the north of Ireland in the early nineteenth century were primarily skilled linen workers, those who migrated in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century did not have the skills necessary to compete for jobs in the Scottish industrial sector.[18] During the later nineteenth century Scotland appears to have become a stopping point for Irish migrants. They would stay in Scotland long enough to earn their passage to America.[19]

---

[17]Ian Adams, The Making of Urban Scotland, (London: Croom Helm, 1978) 90-93.

[18]Rodger, "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914," 45.

[19]Brenda Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 12; M.W. Flinn, Scottish Population History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 454.

Before turning attention to the rest of Britain, there is one other fact that sets Scotland apart from England. When we look at figures 6.3 and 6.4, we see very few Scottish towns in which Irish women substantially outnumber Irish men, and vice versa. This is surprising when it is remembered that most of the migration during this period consisted of young single men and women.[20] This can be partly explained by the lack of Irish women in the domestic service sector in Scotland. Only in the leisure towns of England were Irish women accepted as domestic servants, explaining why there were more Irish women than men in these area. As well, a survey of the occupations in the cities in Scotland shows that there was plenty of work for all Irish migrants. Irish men and women worked in the factories, but men also had the advantage of opportunities in shipbuilding, railways and other industries.[21] The abundance of jobs in Scotland did not force Irish men and women to look elsewhere for employment until the late nineteenth century.

---

[20]Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," 6.

[21]Rodger, "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities 1841-1914," 36-37.

Figure 6.4

Towns in Great Britain with the lowest female/male ratios among Irish-born migrants

Calculation : read females/males x 100

Census 1861		Census 1871		Census 1881	
Colchester	26	Colchester	32	Dysart	50
Winchester	43	Yarmouth	36	Middlesborough	55
Dudley	47	Winchester	42	South Shields	58
Dorchester	58	Barrow in Furness	43	Dumbarton	58
Portsmouth	60	Canterbury	44	Hamilton	61
Plymouth & Devonport	60	Middlesborough	53	St. Helen's	63
Lincoln	60	Portsmouth	57	Montrose	67
South Shields	64	Plymouth & Devonport	58	Sunderland	68
Northampton	70	Dorchester	58	Kirkcaldy	68
Merthyr Tydfil	73	Swansea	63	Portsmouth	69

Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
Merthyr Tydfil	48	Merthyr Tydfil	34	Rotherham	46
Devonport	50	Rhondaa	41	Barnsley	49
St. Helen's	57	West Hartlepool	42	Tynemouth	54
Hamilton	57	Devonport	43	Middlesborough	57
Falkirk	58	Motherwell	47	St. Helen's	57
Coatbridge	59	Stockton on Tees	49	West Hartlepool	57
Hanley	65	Hamilton	50	Stockton on Tees	58
Airdrie	65	Coatbridge	52	Huddersfield	61
Portsmouth	69	Middlesbrough	54	Wigan	65
Swansea	70	Rotherham	57	Yarmouth	66

Source: Census of England and Wales. 1861 Population Tables - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1863, Volume II, LIII, Part I, 265, Part II, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1861. General Report, 1863, Volume III, LIII, 1; Census of Scotland.1861. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1861, L, 855; Census of Scotland.1861. Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1864, LI, 49; Census of England and Wales. 1871. Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872 Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1871 General Report, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1; Census of Scotland. 1871. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of Scotland. 1871. Population Abstracts - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1881. Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, Volume III, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1881. General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland.1881. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1881, xcvi, 143; Census of Scotland.1881. *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, lxxx, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1891. Population Abstracts - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Infirmities, 1893, Volume III, cvi, 1; Census of England and Wales. 1891 General Report, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629; Census of Scotland. 1891. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of Scotland. 1891, Ages, Education, Civil

Condition, Occupations. Birthplaces and Indices, 1893-94, Volume II, cviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901, Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc, 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of Scotland, 1901, Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1903, Volume III, lxxxvi, 205; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, General Report; 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking, 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

England

Outside Scotland, Irish women were found predominantly in the large urban centres of London and Lancashire, where once again it appears that job opportunities played the largest part in the decision to settle in certain areas. Migrants to these two regions seem to have come primarily from the depressed western Irish provinces of Connaught and Munster, and entered England via Liverpool.[22] The use of Liverpool as a gateway to the rest of England would help to explain why so many Irish women were counted in the city on census day, despite the fact that many of them failed to find employment in the city. W. J. Lowe's study of the Irish in Lancashire showed that Irish female heads of households were found as servants, charwomen, street sellers and hawkers in the 1851 and 1871 censuses, but the majority did not work outside of home.[23] Few of the Irish women studied by Lowe were found in the cotton factories before 1871,

---

[22]Fitzpatrick, "A Peculiar Tramping People," 625.

[23]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 90.

but the percentage of these women involved in factory production was not significantly lower than that of the general female population who worked in the mills.[24] Irish women were also found in significant numbers as domestic servants, but in amounts lower than their English counterparts.[25] It should be noted that Lowe's study refers only to single Irish women who were heads of households. This is a problem when studying Irish women as the majority of those who migrated to Britain were single and lived with relatives or as servants within homes. These women were, along with any working married women, not included in Lowe's survey and therefore not included in this study of the Irish in Lancashire.

Irish women were found in the mills and factories of other Lancashire towns, but rarely in comparable numbers to their English counterparts. They were more successful in obtaining factory employment outside of Liverpool. In Manchester, seven percent of all Irish female heads of households worked in the cotton factories, compared with six percent of the English female population.[26] In Preston, fifteen percent of all Irish female heads of households worked in the town's textile industries, compared with twenty-one percent of the total female population.[27] Most interesting is the town of Oldham, where thirteen percent of all occupied heads of households in 1871 worked in the cotton

---

[24]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 81.

[25]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 81.

[26]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 84.

[27]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 84.

industry, but none of these women were Irish. [28] If they were employed, Irish women in the North of England were likely to be found as charwomen, lodginghouse keepers or housekeepers.[29]

No one has undertaken a study of Irish women in Britain after 1871, so we are left to speculate as to their general occupations for the rest of the period under study. The statistics used for this study suggests that after 1871 Irish women began to move out of the industrial areas and into other areas of Britain. If we turn to figure 6.1, we see that Irish women settled in the largest numbers in the industrial towns of Lancashire, and while their actual numbers declined over the course of the period, they remained a significant presence. While Lowe's study of Lancashire showed that Irish women made few inroads into factory employment before 1871, it must be remembered that his study included only heads of households, and single women (who were more likely not to be heads of households) would have had more of an opportunity to work outside of the home. As well, the migration of Irish women into the smaller industrial towns of Lancashire suggests that they at least hoped for the opportunity to work in these higher-paying industries. After all, Lancashire factories offered a chance to move away from low-paid service jobs. Barrow-in-Furness, where Irish women increased in number from

---

[28]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 84.

[29]Lowe, The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire, 90.

1777 in 1891 to 2796 in 1911, offered work in the jute industry. [30] Irish women who had gained experience working in the same industry in Scotland were no doubt attracted to the higher wages offered in Lancashire. Bootle and St. Helen's, two other Lancashire towns which saw increased migration of Irish women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, offered textile employment for semi-skilled and unskilled Irish women. Hugh Heinrick's 1872 survey of the Irish in England found Irish women working in the factories of Wigan. [31] Opportunities were available for Irish women in Blackburn and Burnley in cotton weaving [32] and in Bolton and Rochdale in cotton spinning.[33] It appears that despite their lack of success finding factory employment in the two decades after the Famine, Irish women realized that the best opportunities for them to make a living were in the industrial towns of Lancashire. Even if they were unable to find work in the mills, at least there were jobs available in the subsidiary industries and in the service sector.

Outside of Lancashire and London, Irish women were found primarily in the industrial areas of Yorkshire. Frances Finnegan's research on York showed that Irish

---

[30]Roberts, Women's Work, 34.

[31]Hugh Heinrick, A Survey of the Irish in England - 1872, Alan O'Day, ed., (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990) 98.

[32]T.W. Freeman, "Migration Movements and the Distribution of Population in Eire," Journal of the Statistical Social Inquiry Society of Ireland. Volume 16, 1938-39, 101.

[33]Pat Thane, "Late Victorian Women," in T.R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day, eds., Later Victorian Britain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988) 262.

women worked primarily in the agricultural sector, but were also found in the predictable jobs of charwomen, servants and hawkers.[34] Finnegan's work concentrated solely on the town of York, but to show that female agricultural labour in the town was an anomaly for Yorkshire, she stated that in the towns of Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield, which had a strong agricultural labour force, Irish women were rarely employed in the fields. Finnegan showed that Irish women had the opportunity in these areas to turn to other occupations for employment.[35]

Leeds offered employment for women in a variety of industries. Using county records and census reports, David Hey has shown that the woollen, carpet and cotton yarn industries in Leeds were dominated by women, children and Irish immigrants.[36] Leeds also had a thriving industry making buttons, hooks, eyes and pins for the tailoring industry.[37] Given the dangerous nature of the trades to the health of workers[38], and the fact that Irish women performed similar work in other areas, mainly London, it is likely that Irish women were to be found in this industry.

---

[34]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 98-100.

[35]Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice, 101.

[36]Hey, Yorkshire from AD 1000 (London: Longman Inc., 1986), 258.

[37]Roberts, Women's Work, 40.

[38]Roberts, Women's Work, 41.

Another Yorkshire town, Bradford, had a thriving worsted industry during the period that appears to have employed Irish women.[39] Sheffield had a cutlery industry that employed immigrant families in the mid-nineteenth century,[40] and it seems that the number of Irish women in the town declined as the industry faltered. By the 1881 census, Sheffield was no longer among the twenty principal towns in terms of Irish female population. In Yorkshire, it seems that Irish women moved on when it became apparent that the industries that they were involved in began to decline. Only Leeds and Bradford maintained a significant Irish community into the twentieth century.

Birmingham is another area of sizable Irish female settlement, although the number of Irish-born women in the city did decline by almost half over the course of the period under study. Birmingham is an interesting area for the study of the settlement of Irish women during the period as it was chiefly a centre for heavy industry such as chain and gun making, nut, bolt and other manufactures, and glass making.[41] Women were employed to make nails and chains,[42] but it is not known if Irish women were employed in this industry. Irish women were, however, found working with gold and silver plate in

---

[39]Pooley, "Segregation or Integration?" 173.

[40]Hey, Yorkshire from AD 1000, 264.

[41]Black's Guide to Warwickshire (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875) 28-35.

[42]Roberts, Women's Work, 40.

1875, [43] which would help to explain the large numbers and percentages of Irish women in Birmingham in this period. (see figures 6.1 and 6.2)

Outside the aforementioned towns, Irish women were found in other areas which had at least one major industry. Jobs were available in the hardware trades in towns such as Wolverhampton, [44] and Middlesbrough, Merthyr Tydfil and Barrow in Furness, which were mainly steel and iron towns,[45] did offer women's employment as lodginghouse keepers and charwomen servicing an increasing male population.

The largest numbers of Irish women were found throughout the period under study in the city of London. At the peak of Irish settlement in Britain in 1861, one-sixth of all Irish women in Britain were found in London. (see figure 6.1) As we have seen was the case for the rest of Britain, migration to London was mainly economic. The ever-changing London economy offered a wide variety of semi-skilled and unskilled jobs for women. By 1861, the year in which the Irish population in London reached its peak, there were 25,000 dressmakers, 95,000 food and drink processors, 59,000 shopkeepers and more than 460,000 manufacturing workers in the city of London.[46] For those women with few skills, such as the Irish, London was probably the best place to find work.

---

[43]Black's Guide to Warwickshire, 31.

[44]Hudson, The Industrial Revolution, 182.

[45]Pooley, "Segregation and Integration?" 69.

[46]Porter, London: A Social History (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995) 187.

From two works by Lynn Lees, we have some insight into the occupations of Irish women in London before 1871. Irish women appear to have followed their English counterparts into domestic service, but were often rejected for the best positions and instead worked for East End Jewish families or in pubs.[47] Service was a desirable occupation for Irish women as it offered somewhere to live while earning money to send back to their families in Ireland.

Irish women were also found working in the various manufacturing industries in London, but often only in work subsidiary to the leather, clothing and paper industries.[48] The most significant unskilled job for Irish women was street selling, whether in the fruit and vegetable markets of Southwark, Spitalfields or Covent Garden,[49] or with a portable cart in the heart of London. Henry Mayhew saw as Irish women were disreputable sellers, and commented on their offensive nature throughout his survey of the London poor.[50] As in other areas of Britain, Irish women in London often had little choice but to turn to the lowest paid and lowest status jobs to make a living.

When we turn our attention to figures 6.3 and 6.4, we see that Irish women were found in small and surprising places. While their actual numbers in these areas are

---

[47]Lees, "Irish Migration," 30.

[48]Lees, Exiles of Erin, 95-96.

[49]Porter, London: A Social History, 194.

[50]See, for example, Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, 110, where Mayhew describes in detail the tireless but underhanded Irish street seller.

relatively insignificant in terms of the overall population of the towns, at least in non-industrial areas, the fact that Irish women outnumbered their male counterparts to such a high degree in smaller towns was unexpected. From these tables, we see that in the early part of the period Irish women followed Irish men to the industrial centres of Manchester, Dundee, Bradford, Stockport, Arbroath, Preston and Bolton. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Irish women could find employment in these areas, whether in the mills in secondary industries, or in the unskilled jobs of laundresses, charwomen and lodginghouse keepers.

By the mid- to late nineteenth century, however, Irish women began to move away from the traditional areas of Irish settlement. In several areas, particularly the resort and leisure towns of Britain, Irish women greatly outnumbered Irish men. Towns like Bath, Brighton, Hastings, Bournemouth, Eastbourne, Southampton and Wimbledon were all noted in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for their role as vacation centres in England. [51] Irish women began to move into these towns in greater numbers in the late nineteenth century, when an unprecedented expansion in the resort industry took place.[52]

---

[51]The most significant work on the resort culture in Britain is John Walton's The English Seaside Resort - A Social History 1750-1914 (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983). See also F.M.L. Thompson The Rise of Respectable Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) which deals with the development of the leisure class in Britain; and Phyllis Hembrey's British Spas from 1815 to the Present (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997) is an excellent social history of several spa towns, particularly the early history of Bath.

[52]Walton, The English Seaside Resort, 85.

While Irish women had little success in the middle of the nineteenth century finding service employment, the lure of higher paying jobs in the industrial areas led many English women away from service by the end of the nineteenth century.[53] This move, in addition to the expansion in the resort industry, created new opportunities for Irish women. While they had always been a presence in the older vacation towns of Brighton and Bath[54] (see figure 6.3), Irish women were now found in the newer resorts in Sussex, Kent and Hampshire, which were built in the late nineteenth century to provide the middle and working classes with an inexpensive vacation spot.[55]

Evidence of the movement of English women is seen when attention is turned to figures 6.5 and 6.6, which show that by the early twentieth century English women outnumbered their male counterparts in the industrial areas of Oldham, Dundee, Preston, Rochdale and Bristol. While English women were still well represented in the resort towns, they recognized that they would have better economic opportunities in the industrial north. Their male counterparts, on the other hand, had realized the employment opportunities of the industrial north earlier and consistently outnumbered English women in the mining, steel and iron towns. (See figure 6.6)

---

[53]Roberts, Women's Work, 46.

[54]Graham Davis and Penny Bonsall Bath - A New History (Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1996), 51-60.

[55]John Walton, The English Seaside Resort, 64.

Figure 6.5

The towns in Great Britain with the highest female/male ratios among the general population

Calculation: read females/males x 100

Census 1861		Census 1871		Census 1881	
Ipswich	160	Bath	148	Bath	146
Bath	153	Montrose	134	Dundee	128
Brighton	138	Truro	133	Brighton	128
Montrose	136	Brighton	132	Arbroath	126
Sunderland	133	Arbroath	131	Aberdeen	126
Forfar	131	Forfar	129	Forfar	125
Truro	130	Kirkaldy	128	Croydon	124
Arbroath	130	Dundee	126	Montrose	123
Dundee	128	Exeter	125	Dunfermline	122
Aberdeen	127	Aberdeen	123	Bristol	121

Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
Hastings	149	Bournemouth	171	Bournemouth	165
Bath	145	Bath	147	Bath	146
Airdrie	143	Oldham	130	Oldham	140
Brighton	128	Brighton	128	Preston	126
Croydon	126	Hornsey	128	Brighton	125
Dundee	125	Oxford	127	Dundee	123
Edinburgh	119	Hastings	125	Rochdale	120
Bristol	119	Dundee	124	Bristol	116
Willesden	118	Croydon	123	Oxford	114
Preston	118	Rochdale	121	Hastings	112

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861. General Report, 1863, Volume III, LIII, 1; Census of Scotland,1861. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1861, L, 855; Census of England and Wales, 1871 General Report, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1; Census of Scotland, 1871. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of England and Wales, 1881. General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland,1881, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1881, xcvi, 143; Census of England and Wales, 1891 General Report, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629; Census of Scotland, 1891. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901. Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc. 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of England and Wales, 1911. Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, General Report, 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

Figure 6.6

The Towns in Great Britain with the lowest female/male ratios among the general population

Calculation: read females/males x 100

Census 1861		Census 1871		Census 1881	
Merthyr Tydfil	77	Wolverhampton	82	Hamilton	48
Winchester	94	Middlesbrough	83	Dumbarton	87
Coatbridge	98	Barrow in Furness	92	Middlesbrough	92
Cambridge	98	Swansea	94	St. Helen's	93
Colchester	100	Gateshead	98	Greenock	95
Gateshead	100	Portsmouth	99	Falkirk	95
Sheffield	101	Sheffield	99	West Ham	97
Canterbury	102	South Shields	99	Gateshead	99
Dudley	102	Newport	100	Airdrie	100
South Shields	102	Merthyr Tydfil	101	Wolverhampton	100

Census 1891		Census 1901		Census 1911	
Falkirk	51	Newport	63	Newport	70
Ayr	70	Rhondaa	83	Merthyr Tydfil	84
Merthyr Tydfil	89	Barrow in Furness	83	Barrow in Furness	85
Barrow in Furness	90	Motherwell	83	Coatbridge	88
Hamilton	90	Coatbridge	86	Hamilton	89
Coatbridge	90	Hamilton	87	Middlesbrough	92
St. Helen's	92	Merthyr Tydfil	88	Dumbarton	95
Devonport	92	Devonport	90	Rhondda	96
Middlesbrough	92	East Ham	93	Liverpool	97
Dumbarton	96	Liverpool	93	Devonport	97

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1861. General Report, 1863, Volume III, LIII, 1; Census of Scotland,1861. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1861, L, 855; Census of England and Wales, 1871 General Report, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1; Census of Scotland, 1871. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1871, lix, 813; Census of England and Wales, 1881, General Report, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583; Census of Scotland,1881. Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1881, xcvi, 143; Census of England and Wales, 1891 General Report, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629; Census of Scotland, 1891, Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report, 1890-91, xciv, 153; Census of England and Wales, 1901, Summary Tables, 1903, lxxxiv, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1901, General Report, with Appendices, cviii, 1; Census of Scotland, 1901, Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc. 1902, cxxix, 1133; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Birthplaces, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1; Census of England and Wales, 1911, Summary Tables, 1915, lxxxi, 385; Census of England and Wales, 1911, General Report, 1917, xxxv, 483; Census of Scotland, 1911, Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables, 1911, lxxi, 665.

As in other towns, women were employed in resort towns as servants and laundry workers, but not to the same degree as in areas like London. Women were just as likely to be shopkeepers, lodginghouse keepers or hawkers as they were to be servants.[56] There were other opportunities available in some towns; for example, Blackpool had a small clothing industry and the East Anglian resorts also had a fishery. Areas like Brighton, Hastings, Bournemouth and Eastbourne also had jobs available in private schools that were set up in the nineteenth century. [57] Irish women were more likely to be found working in the hotels, coffee houses and boarding houses in resort towns[58] as their lack of skills often left them with few alternatives in small towns.

Conclusion

Irish-born women who migrated to Great Britain initially settled in areas where they had the best opportunities for employment. Lancashire and London offered these women low-paid, unskilled employment, while Scotland became the destination for those with experience in the mills of northern Ireland. Over the course of the period, however, the population of Irish women in the larger urban areas declined, as English women

---

[56]John Walton, The English Seaside Resort, 94.

[57]John Walton, The English Seaside Resort, 97.

[58]Hickman and Walter, "Deconstructing Whiteness,"12.

began to compete in earnest for textile jobs and move out of the domestic sector. By the turn of the century, Irish-born women were proportionately more likely to be found in the leisure towns working in the service industry than they were to be found in the mills of Lancashire. More importantly, this move to the leisure towns represented a serious break with the traditional migration patterns of Irish women. While at the beginning of the period they primarily settled in areas with a large Irish population, they now moved to areas that did not contain a sizable Irish community. When it is remembered that Irish women married predominantly within their own ethnic group, this shift is significant.

CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to fill the large gap in the historiography of Irish women in Britain. While there has been some scholarship on the migration of the Irish to Britain, little was known about where Irish women settled and what awaited them once they settled in certain areas. From this thesis, however, some important insights into the lives of Irish women in Britain emerge. Earlier studies stated that Irish women settled in the same towns as Irish men. By using the published census reports, however, I have been able to show that while Irish women did indeed settle in the same industrial towns of Lancashire and Scotland as their male counterparts, over the period under study the next generation of Irish female migrants settled in virtually every area of Great Britain. Their lives, and indeed their lifestyles, differed radically depending on where they settled. In the industrial areas, they rarely worked in the mills, and instead found employment in the subsidiary and service industries. In Scotland, however, they were the dominant workgroup in the mills. In London, it appears that they were involved primarily in the service and clothing industries, while in York Irish women worked mostly in agriculture. The most interesting fact to emerge from this study, however, was the significant percentage of Irish women who moved to the small leisure towns. These women represent a notable departure from other migrants, and further study into their lives in these towns is warranted.

The migration of hundreds of thousands of women from Ireland to Great Britain in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was also distinguished for other reasons. Unlike other European migrants who transferred their traditional culture intact when they migrated, Irish women did not. They did return to the pre-Famine pattern of early marriage, but they did not produce as many children as their predecessors in Ireland. As well, they differed from their American counterparts in their choice of occupations. While Irish women in America moved quickly into domestic service in the period after the Famine, in Britain they worked in the manufacturing industries before turning to service late in the century. This was an economic migration, but the level of success enjoyed by Irish women appears to have depended on the areas in which they settled.

This study has raised some interesting questions for further research. The data showed that while women did migrate initially to large urban centres, it is their move to the smaller towns that will intrigue the historian. From the small amount of research already completed we see that Irish women in the urban areas of Britain returned to the pre-Famine patterns of early marriage, reduced family size and marriage within their own ethnic group. We do not know if these patterns continued in areas where Irish women were separated from other Irish.

While this thesis has only speculated about the occupations of Irish women, a study using the manuscript census records would uncover what jobs Irish women had outside of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Scotland, and the metropolis of London. Unfortunately, those resources were not available for this thesis, but an

exploration of the manuscript data would also help shed light on something not possible with the published census reports - the lives of second and third generation Irish women in Britain. This study has dealt with the lives of Irish-born women in Britain, but a study of the second and third generation would be a true test of the upward mobility of Irish migrants. Research has shown that children of Irish women in the United States were more likely to attain a higher education level than their mothers and had better paid and advanced skilled jobs. It would be interesting to see if these patterns hold true for the children of Irish-born women in Britain.

Other areas are also in need of investigation. While we know that Irish men became involved in British politics, we do not know if Irish women were involved. As well, studies have shown that Irish men had a higher per capita arrest rate than English-born men. Frances Finnegan's study of York showed varying degrees of the involvement of Irish women in criminal activity. Local studies of Irish women across Britain would uncover if Irish women were a real criminal problem in Britain.

While this thesis has provided some insight into the migration and settlement of Irish women, it is but a beginning. Dependence on sources available in Canada has limited the aspirations of this work. Still, what it has put on record from published census reports are statistics previously unresearched. Other researchers might go further in examining questions which arise from my work. Meanwhile, this study showed where Irish women settled in Britain and offered some ideas as to what awaited them in various towns based on available primary and secondary sources. The next step is to turn to the

manuscript censuses, parish records, letters and other sources to uncover in greater detail what happened to Irish women once they moved to Britain. Only then can we determine if they achieved the personal and economic independence that they sought when they left Ireland.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Parliamentary Papers

Census of England and Wales, 1861. *General Report*, 1863, Volume III, LIII, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1861 *Population Tables* - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1863, Volume II, LIII, Part 1, 265, Part II.

Census of England and Wales, 1871 *General Report*, 1873, Volume IV, lxxi, Part II, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1871, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1872 Volume III, lxxii, Part I, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1881, *General Report*, 1883, Volume IV, lxxx, 583.

Census of England and Wales, 1881, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, Volume III, lxxx, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1891, *General Report*, 1893, Volume IV, cvi, 629.

Census of England and Wales, 1891, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Infirmities, 1893, Volume III, cvi, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *General Report, with Appendices*, cviii, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1901, *Summary Tables*, 1903, lxxxiv, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1911, *Birthplaces*, 1913, Volume IX, lxxviii, 1.

Census of England and Wales, 1911, *General Report;* 1917, xxxv, 483.

Census of England and Wales, 1911, *Summary Tables*, 1915, lxxxi, 385.

Census of Scotland,1861, *Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces,* 1864, LI, 49.

Census of Scotland,1861, *Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report,* 1861, L, 855.

Census of Scotland, 1871, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1873, Volume II, lxxiii, 1.

Census of Scotland, 1871, *Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report,* 1871, lix, 813.

Census of Scotland,1881, *Population Abstracts* - Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1883, lxxx, 1.

Census of Scotland,1881, *Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report,* 1881, xcvi, 143.

Census of Scotland, 1891, Ages, Education, Civil Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces and Indices, 1893-94, Volume II, cviii, 1.

Census of Scotland, 1891, *Tables of Population, etc. Population Tables and Report,* 1890-91, xciv, 153.

Census of Scotland, 1901, Ages, Marital Condition, Occupations and Birthplaces, 1903, Volume III, lxxxvi, 205.

Census of Scotland, 1901, *Parliamentary Burghs, Counties, Population, etc.* 1902, cxxix, 1133.

Census of Scotland, 1911, *Population, Ages and Conjugal Condition, Occupations, Birthplaces, Housing and Gaelic Speaking,* 1913, Volume II, lxxx, 45.

Census of Scotland, 1911, *Preliminary Report, Reports and Tables*, 1911, lxxi, 665.

First Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland with Appendix A and Supplement, Appendix A, (369) H.C. 1835, xxxii, pt. I.

Reports of His Majesty's Commissioner for Inquiries into the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, H.C. 1835 (369) xxxii Pt. v.

Report on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, Reports From Committee. Volume XXXIV, Appendix G, 1836.

Third Report of the Commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland, (43), H.C. 1836, xxx.

Books and Articles

Black, Adam and Charles. Black's Guide to Warwickshire. Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1875.

Booth, Charles. "The Economic Distribution of Population in Ireland," in Ireland: Industrial and Agricultural. Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Dublin: Browne and Nolan, Ltd, 1902.

_____. Life and Labour of the People of London: Selections. 1892; rpt. New York: Pantheon Books, 1967.

Engels, Friedrich, The Condition of the Working Classes in England. 1844; rpt. Edinburgh: Neill and Company, 1968.

Kay-Shuttleworth, Sir James. Thoughts and Suggestions on Certain Social Problems. London: Longman and Brown, 1863.

Heinrick, Hugh. A Survey of the Irish in England - 1872. Edited by Alan O'Day. London: The Hambledon Press, 1990.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels. On Ireland: Ireland and the Irish Question. Edited by L.I. Golman and others. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971.

Mayhew, Henry. London Labour and the London Poor. 1851; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1968.

Secondary Sources

Adams, Ian. The Making of Urban Scotland. London: Croom Helm, 1978.

Adams, William Forbes. Ireland and Irish Emigration To the New World from 1815 to the Famine. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932.

Akenson, Donald. The Irish Diaspora: A Primer. Toronto: P.D. Meany Co., 1993.

Alexander, Sally, Anna Davin and Eve Hostetter. "Labouring Women: A Reply to Eric Hobsbawm," History Workshop Journal 8 (Autumn 1979).

Arnstein, W.L. "Victorian Prejudice Re-examined," Victorian Studies 12 (1968-69).

Baines, Dudley. "Birthplace Statistics and the Analysis of Internal Migration," in Richard Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure: An Interpretative Guide to Nineteenth Century Censuses for England and Wales. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978.

_____. Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Belchem, John. "English Working Class Radicalism and the Irish, 1815-1850," in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in the Victorian City. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

_____. "The Immigrant Alternative: Ethnic and Sectarian Mutuality Among the Liverpool Irish During the Nineteenth Century," in Owen Ashton and others, eds. The Duty of Discontent: Essays for Dorothy Thompson. London: Mansell Publishing, 1995.

Best, G.F.A. "Popular Protestantism in Victorian Britain," in Robert Robson, ed. Ideas and Institutions in Victorian Britain. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967.

Bourke, Joanna. Husbandry to Housewifery. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Collins, Brenda. "Irish Emigration to Dundee and Paisley during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in J.M. Goldstrom and L.A. Clarkson, eds. Irish Population, Economy and Society. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

_____."Proto-Industrialization and Pre-Famine Emigration." Social History. Volume 7, No. 2, May 1982, p. 127-146.

_____. "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in Thomas Devine, ed. Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1991.

Connell, K.H. "Population," in P.B. McDonald ed. Social Life in Ireland, 1800-1845. Dublin: Cultural Relation Committee of Ireland, 1957.

Cullen, L.M. and T.C. Smout, eds., Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1977.

Cullen, L.M.. Life in Ireland. London: B.T. Batsford, 1979.

Cullen, Mary. "Breadwinners and Providers: Women in the Household Economy of Labouring Families, 1835-36," in Maria Luddy and Cliona Murphy, eds., Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1990.

Cullen Owens, Rosemary. Smashing Times. Dublin: Attic Press, 1984.

Curtis, L.P. Apes and Angels, The Irishman in Victorian Caricature. Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1971.

Davis, Graham and Penny Bonsall. Bath - A New History. Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1996.

Davis, Graham. The Irish In Britain: 1915-1914. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, Ltd., 1991.

_____. "Little Irelands." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds.The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

Dickson, David. "Aspects of the Rise and Decline of the Irish Cotton Industry," in L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, ed. Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History, 1600-1900. Edinburgh: John MacDonald Publishers, Ltd., 1977.

Diner, Hasia. Erin's Daughters In America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1983.

Donnelly, James. The Land and the People of Nineteenth Century Cork.. Studies in Irish History, Second Series. Vol.9. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975.

Drake, Michael. "The Census, 1801-1891," in E.A. Wrigley, ed. Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Fielding, Steven. Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England,1880-1939. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993.

Finnegan, Frances. Poverty and Prejudice: A Study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875. Cork: Cork University Press, 1982.

_____. " The Irish In York." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in the Victorian City. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

Fitzpatrick, David. "A Curious Middle Place: The Irish in Britain, 1871-1921." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

_____. "Irish Emigration, 1801-1870," in T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin and J.F. Byrne, eds. A New History of Ireland. Vol. 5. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

_____. "The Modernisation of the Irish Female," in Patrick O' Flanagan and others, eds. Rural Ireland: 1600-1900. Cork: Cork University Press, 1987.

_____. "A Peculiar Tramping People: The Irish in Britain 1800-1871," in T.W. Moody, F.X Martin and J.F. Byrne, eds. A New History of Ireland. Vol. 5, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Flinn, M.W. Scottish Population History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Freeman, T.W. "Migration Movements and the Distribution of Population in Eire," Journal of the Statistical Social Inquiry Society of Ireland. Volume 16, 1938-39, 89-104.

Gilley, Sheridan. "English Attitudes Toward the Irish in England, 1780-1900," in Colin Holmes, ed. Immigrants and Minorities in British Society. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978.

Glass, D.V. and P.A.M. Taylor. Population and Emigration. Dublin: Irish University Press, 1976.

Gordon, George, ed. Perspectives of the Scottish City. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985.

Handley, J.E. The Irish in Scotland. Cork: Cork University Press, 1945.

Harris, Ruth-Anne. The Nearest Place That Wasn't Ireland: Early Nineteenth Century Irish Labour Migration. Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1994.

Hembrey, Phyllis. British Spas from 1815 to the Present. Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997.

Hey, David. Yorkshire From AD 1000. London: Longman Inc., 1986.

Hickman, Mary and Bronwen Walter. "Deconstructing Whiteness: Irish Women in Britain," Feminist Review Number 50, Summer 1995.

Higgs, Edward. Making Sense of the Census. London: HMSO Office, 1989.

_____ "Women, Occupations and Work in the Nineteenth Century Censuses," History Workshop Journal 23 (Spring 1987)

Holmes, Colin. Immigrants and Minorities in British Society. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1978.

Hudson, Pat. The Industrial Revolution. London: Edward Arnold Press, 1992.

_____. "Women and Industrialisation." in June Purvis, ed. Women's History Britain. 1850-1945. London: University College London Press, 1995.

Hunt, E.H. British Labour History, 1851-1941. London, 1981.

Jackson, John Archer. The Irish in Britain. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963.

Kennedy, Robert. The Irish Emigration, Marriage and Fertility. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973.

Lawton, Richard. "Census Data for Urban Areas," in Richard Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978.

_____. The Census and Social Structure. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978.

Lees, Lynn Hollen. Exiles of Erin: Irish Migrants in Victorian London. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979.

_____. "Patterns of Lower Class Life: Irish Slum Communities in Nineteenth Century London." in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett, eds. Nineteenth Century Cities. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

_____. "Mid-Victorian Migration and the Family Economy." Victorian Studies, XX, 1976.

Lewis, Jane. Women in England 1870-1950. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986.

Lowe, W.J. The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire: The Shaping of a Working-Class Community. New York: Peter Lang, 1989.

Lown, Judy. Women and Industrialisation: Gender at Work in Nineteenth Century England. Oxford: Polity Press, 1990.

Luddy, Maria. Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Lumas, Susan. Making Use of the Census. London: PRO Publications, 1993.

Miller, Kirby. Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Mills, Dennis and Joan Mills. "Occupation and Social Stratification Revisited: The Census Enumerators' Books of Victorian Britain," Urban History Yearbook 1989.

Morris, R.J. "Urbanization and Scotland," in R.J. Morris, ed. People and Society in Scotland, 1830-1914. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1990.

Murphy, Cliona. The Women's Suffrage Movement and Irish Society in the Early Twentieth Century. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989.

Neal, Frank. Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.

Nolan, Janet. Ourselves Alone: Women's Emigration From Ireland, 1885-1920. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1989.

Norman, E.R. Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968.

O'Conner, Kevin. The Irish in Britain. London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1972.

Office of the Population Censuses and Surveys. Guide to the Census Reports, Great Britain, 1801-1966. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Service, 1977.

Oldham, Charles. "The Incidence of Emigration on Town and Country Life in Ireland," Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland.13, Part XCIV, June 1914.

O'Grada, Cormac. "Some Aspects of Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration." L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, eds. Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History. Edinburgh, 1977.

Oren, Laura. "The Welfare of Women in Labouring Families: England, 1860-1950," in Mary S. Hartman and Lois W. Banner, eds. Clio's Consciousness Raised. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

O'Sullivan, Patrick, ed. Irish Women and Irish Migration. London: Leicester University Press, 1995.

O'Tuathaigh, M.A.G. "The Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain: Problems of Integration," in Sheridan Gilley and Roger Swift, eds. The Irish in the Victorian City. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

Pollard, Sidney "Labour in Great Britain," in P. Mathias and others, The Cambridge Economic History of Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Pooley, Colin. "Segregation or Integration? The Residential Experience of the Irish in Mid-Victorian Britain." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in Britain. 1815-1939. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

Porter, Roy. London: A Social History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Ravenstein, E.G. "On the Laws of Migration," Journal of the Statistical Society. Volume XLVII, Part II, June 1885.

Redford, Arthur. Labour Migration in England, 1800-1850. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1926.

Rendall, Jane. Equal or Different? Women's Politics 1800-1914.Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

_____. Women in an Industrialising Society: England 1750-1880.Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Rhodes, Rita. Women and the Family in Post-Famine Ireland. London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992.

Roberts, Elizabeth. Women's Work, 1840-1940. London: MacMillan Education, 1988.

Rodger, Richard. "Employment, Wages and Poverty in the Scottish Cities, 1841-1914," in George Gordon, ed. Perspectives of the Scottish City. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1985.

Rossiter, Ann. "Bringing the Margins into the Centre: A Review of Irish Women's Emigration." in Sean Hutton and Paul Stewart, eds. Ireland's Histories: Aspects of State, Society and Ideology. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Samuel, Raphael. " Workshop of the World: Steam Power and Hand Technology in Mid-Victorian Britain." History Workshop, Issue 3, Spring 1977.

Schwarzkopf, Jutta. Women in the Chartist Movement. London: MacMillan, 1991.

Stedman Jones, Gareth . Outcast London, A Study of the Relationship Between Classes In Victorian Society. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

_____. "The Changing Face of Nineteenth Century Britain." History Today May 1993, 36-40.

Swift, Roger. "Crime and the Irish in Nineteenth Century Britain." in Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

Swift, Roger and Sheridan Gilley, eds. The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

_____. The Irish in the Victorian City. London: Croom Helm, 1985.

Thane, Pat. "Late Victorian Women," in T.R. Gourvish and Alan O'Day, eds. Later Victorian Britain. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Thompson, David. "The Religious Census in 1851," in Richard Lawton, ed. The Census and Social Structure. London: Frank Cass and Company, 1978.

Thompson, Dorothy. The Chartists: Politics in the Industrial Revolution. London: Temple Smith, 1984.

Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class. New York: Random House, 1963.

Thompson, F.M.L. The Rise of Respectable Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Tillot, P.M. "Sources of Inaccuracy in the 1851 and 1861 Censuses," in E.A. Wrigley, ed. Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Trainor, Brian, ed. Ordnance Survey Memoir for the Parish of Antrim. Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1969.

Vaughn, W.E. and A.J. Fitzpatrick. Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821-1971. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978.

Walkowitz, Judith. Prostitution and Victorian Society. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.

Walton, John. The English Seaside Resort - A Social History, 1750-1914. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1983.

Werly, John. "The Irish in Manchester, 1832-1849," Irish Historical Studies, Vol. XVIII, 1973.

Williamson, Jeffrey G. "Impact of the Irish on the British Labour Market During the Industrial Revolution." in The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939. Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley eds. London: Pinter Publishers, 1989.

Wrigley, E.A. Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

Zimmick, Meta. "Jobs for the Girls: The Expansion of Clerical Work for Women, 1850-1914," in Angela V. John, ed., Unequal Opportunities: Women's Employment in England, 1800-1918. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1986.