

Univerzita Hradec Králové
Pedagogická fakulta
Katedra kulturních a náboženských studií

**Irish diaspora and its influence on the identity of the city of Boston:
How Irish migrants transformed the city's heritage**

Bakalářská práce

Autor: Sydney Nicole Zezulová
Studijní program: Transkulturní komunikace
Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D
Oponent práce: ThLic. Mgr. Lukáš de la Vega Nosek, Ph.D.

Zadání bakalářské práce

Autor: Sydney Nicole Zezulová

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Název bakalářské práce AJ: Irish diaspora and its influence on the identity of the city of Boston: How Irish migrants transformed the city's heritage

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Tato bakalářská práce se bude zaměřovat na irskou diasporu v Bostonu a na její vliv na formování bostonské městské identity. S působením Irů je spojeno především 19. století, kdy docházelo k imigraci irských přistěhovalců do Spojených států amerických a kdy se Boston stal významným přistěhovaleckým místem. Irská migrace byla motivována ekonomickými i sociálními faktory a výrazným motivem byl zejména hladomor v Irsku v letech 1845–1852. Irský vliv se v Bostonu projevoval v politice, ekonomice, společnosti, náboženství a kultuře. V politické sféře se stalo mnoho Irů vlivnými politiky a dodnes je známo, že Irové jsou politicky aktivní. To mělo významný vliv i na uznání přistěhovaleckých komunit. V oblasti ekonomiky pak měli Irové významný vliv na městský rozvoj a na ekonomickou diverzifikaci. V sociální sféře zanechali Irové trvalý odkaz v odborech, pracovních podmínkách i vzdělávacím systému. V náboženském ohledu zakládali Irové katolické školy a instituce a určovali katolické tradice města. Známou tradicí je i původně irský průvod svatého Patrika. Cílem této bakalářské práce je detailní analýza vlivu irské diasporu na utváření identity města Boston a za účelem sepsání práce bude použita primární a sekundární literatura.

CANNATO, Vincent J. *American Passage: The History of Ellis Island*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2009. ISBN 9780060742737.

IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091.

MARTON, Andrew. Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston's Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914. *Undergraduate History Journal*, 2017, 1 (1): 1-17.

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SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts*, 2015, 43(1): 94-123.

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Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Luděk Jirka, Ph.D.

Oponent: ThLic. Mgr. Lukáš de la Vega Nosek, Ph.D.

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Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracovala pod vedením vedoucího bakalářské práce samostatně a uvedla jsem všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne

Sydney Nicole Zezulová

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Ráda bych poděkovala svému vedoucímu práce Mgr. Lud'ku Jirkovi, Ph.D. za cenné rady a za odborné vedení, které mi poskytl při mém zpracování této bakalářské práce.

Anotace

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Text obsahuje základní údaje charakterizující obsah a výsledky práce v anglickém jazyce.

Klíčová slova

Irská diaspora, etnicita, push-pull faktory, Boston, městská identita, dědictví, transkulturní perspektiva.

Annotation

ZEZULOVÁ, Sydney N. *Irish diaspora and its influence on the identity of the city of Boston: How Irish migrants transformed the city's heritage*. Hradec Králové: Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové, 2024. 70 P. Bachelor's degree thesis.

This thesis focuses on Irish diaspora in Boston and its influence on the formation of Boston's urban identity. The Irish presence is primarily associated with the 19th century when Irish immigrants migrated to the United States and when Boston became a major immigration destination. Irish migration was motivated by both economic and social factors, and the Irish famine of 1845-1852 was a prominent motive. Irish influence in Boston manifested itself in politics, economics, society, religion, and culture. In the political sphere, many Irish became influential politicians and to this day the Irish are known to be politically active. This has also had a significant impact on the recognition of immigrant communities. In the economic sphere, the Irish have had a significant impact on urban development and economic diversification. In the social sphere, the Irish have left a lasting legacy in labor unions, working conditions, and the education system. In the religious sphere, the Irish founded Catholic schools and institutions and defined the Catholic traditions of the city. A well-known tradition is the Irish St. Patrick's Day parade. The purpose of this undergraduate thesis is to analyze in detail the influence of the Irish diaspora on the formation of the identity of the city of Boston, and primary and secondary literature will be used in order to write the thesis.

Text obsahuje základní údaje charakterizující obsah a výsledky práce v anglickém jazyce.

Keywords

Irish diaspora, ethnicity, push-pull factors, Boston, urban identity, heritage, transcultural perspective.

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1. Introduction

The city of Boston is a multicultural hub that is well-known for its Irish heritage. The Irish influence on Boston dates back particularly to the 19th and early 20th century, when the Irish began migrating in mass to the United States. The Irish migration was motivated for a variety of reasons, some being push and pull factors with economic and social forces as the driving motives. The most well-known factor is the Great Famine, otherwise known as the Potato Famine, which occurred in Ireland during the years 1845-1852. The Irish saw the United States as an escape from their economic hardship and the devastating effects of the Great Famine. Other reasons for Irish diaspora were related to social and religious discrimination from the side of the British. The Irish set forth to the United States on the pursuit of better economic prospects and the opportunity to build new lives in a new country. Thanks to the large flux of Irish migration during this time, the city of Boston was transformed everlastingly, as Irish influence was embedded into various fundamental spheres of the city's identity such as in politics, economics, society, religion, and culture.

In the political sphere, many Irish immigrants became influential politicians at the local, state, and national level. They were known to be highly politically active and engaged in the community, which had a significant positive impact on social justice, labor rights, and the recognition of immigrant communities.

Regarding the economic sphere, the Irish had a substantial impact on urban development and economical diversity. The first-generation Irish immigrants worked in labor-intensive industries such as on construction, manufacturing, and infrastructure projects. They built railroads, canals, roads, and bridges, and their contribution helped fuel industrial development. Over the next generations, many Irish families experienced upward social and economic mobility. While the first-generation immigrants to Boston tended to work blue-collared jobs, the later generations became professionals, entrepreneurs, and leaders in various, white-collared industries.

In the social sphere, the Irish left a lasting influence on the city of Boston when it comes to labor unions' rights and labor conditions. They also left a mark on the educational system, thanks to the establishment of Catholic schools in Boston. The Irish immigrants and later generations contributed to the formation of Irish neighborhoods and communities in Boston, such as South Boston, Dorchester, and Charlestown, which are still alive today.

When it comes to Boston culture, the Irish impacted it in practically every aspect. As mentioned, the Irish established Catholic schools and institutions as well as introduced Irish Catholic traditions. One tradition that Boston celebrates annually is the most well-known St. Patrick's Day parade in all the United States. The Irish immigrants also left a lasting impact on the arts, music, dance, film, and cuisine of Boston. Today, Irish step dance is a popular sport among Irish American youth in the Boston area. When it comes to film, the city of Boston annually hosts a handful of Irish film festivals such as The Boston Irish Film Festival, which has huge success. Not to be forgotten are the many Irish restaurants and pubs that are scattered all around the city of Boston.

Although Boston is a mesh of various cultural communities, the primary focus of this thesis is to analyze the influence of Irish diaspora on Boston's urban identity and the way it transformed the city's heritage, keeping in mind a transcultural perspective. I decided for this topic for several different reasons, one reason being my Irish ancestry which traces back to both sides of my family tree. The influence of Irish heritage is not only unique to the city of Boston, but to all of the New England area, and this feeling of Boston-Irish patriotism is something I have personally experienced through my upbringing in the suburbs of Boston, where the majority of my peers also share Irish ancestry. Growing up near Boston, Irish traditions were part of our day-to-day lives, including the Catholic Church where my family attended. Also, many of my friends attended Irish-founded private Catholic schools. One of my fondest memories is celebrating St. Patrick's Day with my family, with traditional Irish food and attending a St. Patrick's Day parade, which one can find in almost every town in the surrounding area of Boston. I was inspired to write about this topic to learn more about my cultural roots and about the Irish influence on the area where I was raised.

1.1. Methodological notes

An analysis of the Irish influence on the urban identity and heritage of Boston has been conducted using primary and secondary literature. The methodology used in this undergraduate thesis relies on a comprehensive review and synthesis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources in this thesis include for example newspapers such as *The Boston Pilot*, which can be found on the Boston College Library online archive¹

¹BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARIES. *Boston Pilot (1838-1857)* [online]. [accessed 2024-03-16]. Available at: <https://newspapers.bc.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL2.1851.09&sp=bpilott&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->

or *The Liberator*, which can also be found on online archives.² Other primary sources include maps, such as a map of Boston from the year 1900³ and websites of specific organizations, such as the Irish Cultural Centre of Greater Boston⁴. Secondary sources include for example books such as *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood* and *The Boston Irish: a political history* by Bostonian historian professor Thomas H. O'Connor. Other secondary resources include collegial dissertations such as doctoral dissertation *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 – 1917* by Dennis Patrick Ryan. To construct the framework of this thesis, an in-depth analysis of key concepts such as Irish-Bostonian history, Bostonian demographics, diasporic factors, transcultural perspective, Boston minority groups, and others is undertaken. A synthesis of similarities, differences, and gaps found in the aforementioned sources aids in the creation of a theoretical analysis of the influence of the Irish diaspora on Bostonian urban identity and heritage. Moreover, the paper involves a final reflection and theoretical speculation to expand upon the current and future situation of Irish influence in the city of Boston. Through the help of research, synthetization, and integration of information related to 19th century Irish diaspora in Boston, this paper aims to contribute a transcultural perspective and bridge a stronger connection between Irish diaspora and Boston identity, a topic which is specifically unique to the defined region in question and impacts the others ethnic communities of Boston.

2. Key Terms

2.1. Diaspora

The concept of diaspora is a lot more complex and multifaceted than to be fully comprehended by a single definition. The term has evolved over the course of history. The term originates in the Greek language but is better known for its use in theology. In the Old Testament, the term diaspora refers to the threat of dispersion that Hebrews face

² DIGITAL COMMONWEALTH MASSACHUSETTS COLLECTIONS ONLINE. *The Liberator (Boston, Mass.: 1831-1865)* [online]. [accessed 2024-03-16]. Available at: https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search?f%5Bcollection_name_ssim%5D%5B%5D=The+Liberator+%28Boston%2C+Mass.+%3A+1831-1865%29&f%5Binstitution_name_ssi%5D%5B%5D=Boston+Public+Library&sort=date_start_dtsi+asc%2C+title_info_primary_ssort+asc

³ *Indexed map of Boston*. Boston: Geo. H. Walker & Co., 1900. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:1257b982q>

⁴ IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE GREATER BOSTON [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://www.irishculture.org>

if they go against God's will. In the New Testament, the term diaspora is viewed as a dispersed group of pilgrims, who await their return to the City of God.⁵ Although for most of the term's history it has referred particularly to Jewish diaspora, the term later on evolved beyond the theological realm to include all nations and communities that have been dispersed to foreign territories, and who still preserve their national culture as well as loyalty and nostalgia to their homeland.⁶ In today's terms, the meaning of diaspora can be summarized as a dispersed community of people with shared national, ethnic, or religious background. They are people living in dispersed conditions, but still have – or might have – the original nation and homeland. These communities of dispersed people share a common origin, heritage, religion, or cultural identity and have moved, settled, or been forced to live in different geographical locations.

Diasporas tend to be long lasting, and they form community consciousness and group solidarity. Members of a diaspora often maintain a sense of connection to their ancestral culture and identity, even though they are living in different countries.⁷ Diasporas can play a significant role in shaping cultural, social, and economic dynamics both in migrants' new locations and in their countries of origin, as can be seen in the case of Irish diaspora in Boston.

2.2. Assimilation/Integration Processes

Assimilation and integration represent varying approaches to managing cultural diversity within societies. While assimilation emphasizes conformity to the dominant culture and may lead to the loss of cultural identity, integration embraces diversity and seeks to create inclusive environments in which different cultural groups can coexist harmoniously. Both processes have implications for social cohesion, identity formation, and the overall well-being of communities.

Assimilation refers to the process by which individuals or groups adopt the customs, attitudes, and behaviors of a dominant culture, often at the expense of their own cultural identity. With assimilation, there is typically pressure for conformity to the norms of the dominant culture, leading to the gradual disappearance of distinct cultural traits.

⁵ DUFOIX, Stéphane and William RODARMOR. *Diasporas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. ISBN 9780520253605. p. 25.

⁶ DUFOIX, Stéphane and William RODARMOR. *Diasporas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. ISBN 9780520253605. p. 39.

⁷ DUFOIX, Stéphane and William RODARMOR. *Diasporas*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008. ISBN 9780520253605. p. 39.

This can happen voluntarily or systematically, resulting from social, economic, or political pressures of the local society. In some cases, governments or institutions implement assimilation policies aimed at encouraging or enforcing the adoption of the dominant culture by minority groups, as seen with the Irish immigrant children in the Bostonian school system. Assimilation is connected with the American concept of a melting pot society. This concept was introduced in the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁸

Assimilation outcomes are influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic status, social networks, and the reception of the host society. The generational model of assimilation highlights that the first generation of immigrants have the hardest time with inclusion into the society. The next generation, that is the children of immigrants, most often have better living situations and are well adapted to their new environment.⁹ A significant factor in the degree of immigration assimilation is attributed to spatial concentration. A higher concentration of an ethnic community can slow the process of assimilation.¹⁰ This is because the larger, more concentrated, and better organized an ethnic community becomes, the more capable it is of effectively preserving cultural symbols that serve as ethnic identifiers. This reality can be seen with the large population of Irish immigrants in Boston in the 19th century, who were able to preserve their cultural traits despite facing adversity from the majority Bostonian community.

Integration, on the other hand, involves the coexistence of different cultural groups within a society while maintaining their distinct identities. This model is relevant to the present-day United States, as its society is better depicted as a salad bowl rather than a melting pot. Unlike assimilation, integration does not necessarily involve giving up one's cultural heritage or adopting the norms of another group. This integrational model helps with the acceptance and acknowledgment of (Irish) ethnic heritage in the city of Boston today.

⁸ UHEREK, Zdeněk; HONUSKOVÁ, Věra; OŠTÁDALOVÁ, Šárka and Vladislav GÜNTER. *Migrace: historie a současnost*. Moderní dějiny (Občanské sdružení Pant). Ostrava: Občanské sdružení PANT, 2016. ISBN 978-80-905942-9-6. p. 61.

⁹ UHEREK, Zdeněk; HONUSKOVÁ, Věra; OŠTÁDALOVÁ, Šárka and Vladislav GÜNTER. *Migrace: historie a současnost*. Moderní dějiny (Občanské sdružení Pant). Ostrava: Občanské sdružení PANT, 2016. ISBN 978-80-905942-9-6. p. 52.

¹⁰ BITTNEROVÁ, Dana; MORAVCOVÁ, Mirjam and Ondřej VALENTA. *Diverzita etnických menšin: Prostorová dislokace a kultura bydlení*. Praha: Tisk ERMAT Praha, 2012. ISBN 9788087398258. p. 19.

2.3. Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

The meaning of the term ethnicity has changed over the course of history. The word ethnic comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which originally meant a large group of animals. In the English language, the term was used between the 14th-19th centuries to refer to racial characteristics. The importance of ethnic identity varied across countries, with the concept of ethnicity and race being more central to national self-identification in the 19th century United States than in other nations.¹¹ During the time of the Second World War, the term ethnics was used in the United States as a more euphemistic term to define the Jews, Italians, Irish, and other immigrant groups who were defined in contrast to the dominant community of the United States at the time, who were otherwise known as white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants (WASP).¹²

Ethnicity is an aspect of social relations between groups that recognize and acknowledge their cultural differences. Defining ethnicity requires social contact and interaction between two groups, such as between the majority and minority group of a society. Thanks to social interaction, a group is able to conceptualize the idea of “us vs. them”, that is they are able to define who is an insider and who is an outsider based on their distinct differences.¹³ Based on these differences, an ethnic group is finally able to define themselves and recognize the defining characteristics of their ethnic identity. It is important to note that ethnicity is situational and dynamic. For example, the Irish established their Irish ethnic identity once they immigrated to the United States, and they express their ethnic identity differently than in Ireland. In Ireland, before they migrated, they were defined not as unified Irish, but by individual clans. Ethnic groups tend to share an understanding of common origin, which justifies their group unity, and ethnic identity can be seen as metaphoric kinship.

2.4. Heritage

Heritage refers to the cultural, historical, and natural elements that are passed down from previous generations and are considered valuable and worth preserving for

¹¹ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History* 90 (1), 134-162, 2003. p. 136.

¹² ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland. *Etnicita a nacionalismus: antropologické perspektivy*. Studijní texty (Sociologické nakladatelství). Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství (SLON), 2012. ISBN 978-80-7419-053-7. p. 21.

¹³ ERIKSEN, Thomas Hylland. *Etnicita a nacionalismus: antropologické perspektivy*. Studijní texty (Sociologické nakladatelství). Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství (SLON), 2012. ISBN 978-80-7419-053-7. p. 45.

future generations. Heritage plays an essential role when it comes to recollecting the previous history and experiences of a community. Heritage is a social construct, and it is fluid, as the understanding of a community's heritage can change over time.¹⁴

Heritage includes a variety of elements, which can be both tangible and intangible. The tangible aspects of heritage are physical elements, while the intangible aspects represent the living expressions of a community's identity. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recognizes physical elements of heritage such as monuments, buildings, landscapes, and works of art. Non-physical elements of heritage can include traditions, customs, rituals, languages, religion, and music.¹⁵

Heritage can face a number of different challenges, one of them being migration or diaspora. Migration and diaspora can have a significant impact on heritage by introducing new cultural, social, and historical elements to both the migrants' destination and their places of origin, which can lead to the transformation of a community's heritage. Heritage relies on active preservation within its native community. Preserving and promoting heritage is often seen as a means of maintaining a sense of identity, fostering community pride, and enriching cultural diversity. Although throughout the 19th century and later on there were waves of migration from other countries, the Irish heritage of Boston has been able to remain and be shared and enjoyed even by those who are not Irish.

2.5. Urban Identity

Urban identity is a concept that takes into consideration the unique material and nonmaterial characteristics of a city, along with peoples' subjective experiences and perceptions of the city. Urban identity can be defined by a city's physical elements like architecture, design, and nature. It can also be defined by its non-material elements such as social dynamics, economic dynamics, political dynamics, and heritage.¹⁶ The Irish of Boston influenced its urban identity in both the material and non-material sense.

¹⁴ UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM. *How can we untangle heritage and challenge people's preconceptions?* [online]. [accessed 2024-02-09]. Available at:

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/quest/preserving-and-creating-culture/sustainable-heritage.aspx>

¹⁵ *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* [online]. Paris:

UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2023. [accessed 2024-02-09]. Available at:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>

¹⁶ MANSOUR, Hasan, Fernando B. ALVES and António Ricardo DA COSTA. The Challenges in Understanding Urban Identity. *U Porto Journal of Engineering* 9 (2), 114-131, 2023.

Urban identity is often intertwined with collective memory, which refers to the mutual recollections that define a community's past. Historical events, cultural traditions, and shared experiences contribute to the collective memory that indicate how urban residents perceive the city. The Irish community of the 19th century contributed to Boston's collective memory which carries on even today.

Migration and the establishment of new ethnic communities can have a notable influence on city identity through the new social, cultural, political, economic, and demographic elements that these communities introduce. Migration and diaspora often lead to the development of ethnic neighborhoods within a city, as seen with the neighborhoods of Boston in the 19th century. These ethnic neighborhoods serve as key urban areas, as they facilitate cultural preservation, identity, and sense of community. The various elements that the different communities introduce to a city contribute to the city's vibrancy and help form a sense of identity and *genius loci* (sense of place) among its residents. Thanks to the large population of Irish immigrants to Boston in the 19th century, they left their mark on the majority of Bostonian neighborhoods.

3. Irish Diaspora (19th – Early 20th Century)

3.1. Factors of Irish Diaspora

Although the Irish diaspora in North America and specifically in the Boston area dates back to times before the 19th century, this section will focus on events and factors relevant to Irish diaspora from the 19th to the early 20th century. This chapter will also touch upon details in the 18th century, as their influence also carried on into the 19th century. Irish diaspora exhibited unique traits during the 19th century. Throughout much of this era, Ireland had a higher emigration rate relative to its population size in comparison to any other European nation. Additionally, Ireland stood out as the only country to undergo prolonged depopulation during this period.¹⁷

The Catholics of Ireland faced oppression under the British government which carried over from the 18th century. They were oppressed under a series of codes known as the Penal Laws.¹⁸ The Catholic Irish were forbidden from voting, serving in public office, practicing law, teaching in schools, and more. The Penal Laws also regulated the

¹⁷ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History* 90 (1), 134-162, 2003, p. 135.

¹⁸ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 34.

interactions between Catholics and Protestants. Catholics were not allowed to be apprentice to a Protestant nor buy land from a Protestant. Furthermore, the Catholic bishops of Ireland were required to flee the country under the death penalty. It is to note that by the second half of the 18th century, only seven percent of land in Ireland was owned by Catholics.¹⁹ Many Penal Laws lasted until 1829, which was the year of the Catholic Emancipation. Despite the emancipation, the Catholics of Ireland still faced oppression and unfair living conditions throughout the 19th century.

The first wave of Irish migration to Boston began in the beginning of the 19th century. The beginning of the century was full of economic hardships for the Irish. Following the War of 1812 and particularly after the decline in grain prices following Napoleon's defeat in 1815, Irish landlords changed their rent policies to generate income. They significantly increased farmers' rent prices to unsustainable levels and converted their fields into larger tillage holdings or pastureland for cattle grazing. This postwar land policy prompted a substantial increase in emigration of financially strained tenant farmers and displaced laborers from all regions of Ireland, particularly from the southern and western counties. Between 1825 and 1830, more than 125,000 individuals left Ireland for the United States, averaging around 20,000 migrants per year. Of this number, over 30,000 settled in Massachusetts and by 1830, the Irish Catholic population in Boston alone had surged to over 8,000, which is double the figure from just five years earlier.²⁰

The second wave of Irish migration to Boston resulted from the tragic famine in Ireland, which triggered mass Irish diaspora. The famine, also known as the Potato Famine or the Great Famine, began in the summer of 1845 when an unusual fungus struck the potato crops of Ireland. Within the next year, the fungus attacked the Irish potato crops again, causing the potato crops in all of Ireland to be ruined. This potato fungus served as a massive shock to the Irish people because potatoes were the main source of the Irish diet during this time. Many farmers were further threatened by eviction. On top of the potato fungus, the continent of Europe was at the same time hit by an extremely severe winter, leading to a larger agricultural crisis. The Irish began dying by the thousands, not only from famine, but also from disease. Before the famine, the Irish population had numbered approximately 8,5 million. During the period 1846–1855, between 1,1 and 1,5

¹⁹ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 34.

²⁰ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 34-35.

million individuals of the Irish population died due to starvation and famine-related illnesses.²¹ Because of their hopelessness, many Irish saw no other choice but to leave their homeland, and therefore chose to emigrate to other lands such as North America. Around 2,1 million people emigrated from Ireland, with 1,8 million of them relocating to North America (1,5 million to the United States and 300,000 to Canada, many of whom subsequently migrated south to the United States). Irish immigrants constituted the largest group arriving in the United States in the 1840s, comprising 45 percent of the total influx, and the second largest group in the 1850s, accounting for 35 percent of arrivals.²² Additionally, significant numbers settled in Britain and Australia.

In addition to the Great Famine, during the middle of the 19th century there was no refined capitalistic plan that was capable to preserve the Irish peasant economy, which at this point was on the verge of collapse.²³ Although the famine caused a significant number of Irish to disperse, almost four times the amount left Ireland during other years.²⁴

Overall, the causes of Irish diaspora to Boston in the 19th century are various, and trace back to times before. The most significant factors contributing to Irish diaspora were economic hardships, the Great Famine, and long-term social and religious discrimination by the British in Ireland. The need to flee Ireland and the hope to start a new, better life in the United States were enticing factors for the Irish to migrate there. The economic and labor opportunities of Boston and a previously established Irish community in the city were some of the reasons why the Irish chose Boston as their migration destination in the 19th century.

3.2. Demographic of the Irish Diaspora

The demographic of the Irish diaspora changed over the course of its history. The majority of Irish immigrants in the 18th century originated from the northern regions of Ireland, tracing their roots to Scottish settlers who were established in Ulster by English monarchs. Enduring challenges such as high rents, oppressive taxes, and recurrent famines, the Ulster Scots began migrating from Ireland in substantial numbers in the early

²¹ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History* 90(1), 134-162, 2003, p. 144.

²² KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History* 90(1), 134-162, 2003. p. 144.

²³ COHEN, Robin. *Migrace: stěhování lidstva od pravěku po současnost*. Brno: Mapcards.net, 2019. ISBN 978-80-87850-09-1. p. 59.

²⁴ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History*. Organisation of American Historians 90(1), 134-162, 2003. p. 145.

1700s. By the end of the 18th century, an estimated 200,000 to 250,000 Scotch-Irish had immigrated to America.²⁵ It is to note that these Scottish Irish were predominantly Protestant and created the first Irish community of Boston. This group represented the majority of Irish immigrants to Boston up into the early 19th century. In contrast to the later Irish immigrants, the Protestant Scottish Irish tended to be middle-class laborers such as craftsmen and relatively affluent farmers. However, the demographic of the Irish diaspora began to shift a decade later in wave of the Great Famine.

Around the time of the Great Famine, the social profile of the Irish diaspora shifted, as more independent, young Catholics began to escape the poorest provinces such as Connacht and Munster.²⁶ Now, larger waves of emigrants originated from the southern and western counties of Ireland, particularly from areas such as Cork, Kerry, Galway, and Clare. They were often poorer and relied on financial help for their transatlantic journey, which was in some cases funded by Irish immigrants who were already settled in Boston. Overall, the largest influx of Irish immigrants to Boston was comprised of the less wealthy Irish, who came from southern and western Ireland.²⁷

By 1855, nearly 30 percent of Boston's population was first generation Irish.²⁸ During the middle of the 19th century, the number of Irish immigrants coming to Boston was steady, but in the next decades the number of Irish immigrants to Boston declined, except for a few exceptional years in 1852, 1853, and 1863, when there were random rises in Irish migration to Boston.²⁹ By the 1870s, Irish-born immigrants accounted for nearly one fourth of Boston's population.³⁰ By the year 1880, Boston had over 140,000 Irish Bostonians, which accounted for 40 percent of the Bostonian population.³¹

The gender composition of Irish diaspora significantly influenced the development of Irish communities abroad. In Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, Irishmen consistently outnumbered Irishwomen, while in the United States, there were

²⁵ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 33.

²⁶ COHEN, Robin. *Migrace: stěhování lidstva od pravěku po současnost*. Brno: Mapcards.net, 2019. ISBN 978-80-87850-09-1. p. 60.

²⁷ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 40.

²⁸ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 2.

²⁹ HANDLIN, Oscar. *Boston's immigrants 1790-1865: A study in acculturation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941. p. 56.

³⁰ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History*. Organization of American Historians 90(1), 134-162, 2003. p. 152.

³¹ MARTON, Andrew. Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston's Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914. *Undergraduate History Journal* 1 (1), 1-17, 2017, p. 2.

relatively equal sex ratios by the second half of the 19th century.³² Thanks to the equal sex ratios and a large number of unmarried Irish immigrants, this allowed for the Irish community to remain steadily homogenous. This homogeneity is evident when considering the rates of endogamic marriage within the Irish community of Boston. Between 1875 and 1879 the Boston Irish community saw approximately 50 mixed marriages annually.³³ Homogeneity and endogamy allowed for the Irish ethnic community of Boston to cohesively strengthen in contrast to Irish communities in other countries, where they experienced the weakening of Irish community cohesion due to the imbalance between the sexes.

4. The Irish Bostonian Community in the Multicultural City

4.1. Boston in the 19th century

The United States became independent from British rule in 1776 and as a result, Britain stopped protecting international trade. Because of this, the United States lost important international markets, such as British ports in the West Indies, which became inaccessible to trade. American international commerce came to a stop as a result of the embargo of 1808, the tense pre-war years, and the War of 1812 itself. The War of 1812 (which actually lasted from 1812 to 1815) took place between the United States and Great Britain and was caused by maritime issues, territorial disputes, trade restrictions such as the Embargo Act, and issues of national pride and honor.³⁴ This had a significant, negative impact on the city of Boston, as the city relied heavily on trade and labor through its ports. Boston subsequently suffered from economic hardships, and local merchants sought alternative investment opportunities for their capital.

Although the start of the 19th century in Boston was not favorable, the city began a quick recovery. The 19th century city of Boston underwent rapid industrialization, urbanization, restoration, and globalization. Boston emerged as a hub for the exchange of international trade and ideas. Bostonians found new goods to trade in China and India.³⁵ Bostonians in this century were active in simultaneously preserving their city's history

³² KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History*. Organisation of American Historians 90(1), 134-162, 2003. p. 137.

³³ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 37.

³⁴ ALLISON, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverly: Commonwealth Editions, 2004. ISBN 1-889833-47-9. p. 43.

³⁵ ALLISON, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverly: Commonwealth Editions, 2004. ISBN 1-889833-47-9. p. 43.

while steadily shaping its future. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Bostonians made remarkable efforts to unify their community, and achieved this through initiatives such as preserving historical monuments, promoting sports, and fostering a vibrant music scene.

At this time, job opportunities were ample in factories, shipyards, and various industries. The demand for labor during this rapid period of industrialization attracted Irish and other immigrants seeking employment and economic improvement. During the time of the Great Famine in the years 1845-1852, the Port of Boston was a key center of immigration. By the middle of the 19th century, Boston already had a significant Irish community, which could provide support and a sense of community for incoming immigrants. This pre-existing community structure eased the transition for new arrivals.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was another turning point for the city of Boston. The state of Massachusetts was the first state in the Union to abolish slavery.³⁶ Boston played a crucial role in supporting the Union war effort. The war opened even more job opportunities for migrant communities like the Irish. The city's industries, such as shipbuilding, textile manufacturing, and munitions production were mobilized to supply the Union army with essential goods and equipment. Additionally, Boston's ports facilitated the transportation of troops, supplies, and wounded soldiers to and from the front lines. Many Irish immigrants worked in factories such as City Point Works or South Boston Iron Works, where they manufactured rifles, cannons, ammunition, and more.³⁷ The Irish's contribution to support the Union in the Civil War proved their loyalty to their new land, which was significant because it was the turning point for the Irish gaining respect by the Bostonian community.

During the second half of the 19th century, Boston continued to grow and flourish as it gained more land and developed cultural institutions. In the middle of the 19th century, many streets, such as those in South Boston, were newly paved which allowed for horsecar lines and an overall evolution in city transportation. The Dorchester Avenue Railroad Company built one of the first horsecar lines in 1854. In the year 1889 the streetcar system was electrified and equipped with trolley cars that also traveled underground. In the year 1898, the city started constructing the subway under Tremont

³⁶ HISTORY.COM EDITORS. *Boston: A City Steeped in United States History*. [online]. A&E Television Networks, 2019 [accessed 2024-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/boston-massachusetts>

³⁷ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 62.

Street.³⁸ The development in city transportation was significant because it allowed the Irish to move around and work in other areas of the city. Towards the end of the 19th century, heavy industries began relocating outside of Boston and to other parts of the country. At the end of the century, Boston and its Irish neighborhoods such as South Boston, transformed from heavy industries to manufacturing, as new utility companies were introduced such as the Boston Edison Electric Company and the Massachusetts Electric company.³⁹ These new public utility companies supplied the essentials like gas, electricity, and phone lines to homes, schools, and businesses. This opened a new sector of labor for the Irish that required skill and qualification, which is partially to thank for Irish socioeconomic mobility in the city.

Boston did not only experience rapid urbanization during the 19th century, but also an extreme influx of immigrants. From 1836 to the early 20th century, the United States experienced one of its largest waves of immigration, when during this time 30 million European immigrants came to the United States.⁴⁰ Thanks to immigration, the Bostonian population went through a dramatic increase throughout the course of the 19th century. In 1810, the population of Boston was 33,878. By the year 1820, the population rose to 43,298. Only 30 years later in 1850, the population of Boston had climbed to 136,881. In 1870, the city's population had reached to 251,000, and by the year 1875 had reached 341,919. By the last decade of the 19th century, Boston's population was at 448,000.⁴¹ Immigration had the greatest impact on the rising population of the city. The image below depicts the expansion of Boston in the second half of the 19th century.

³⁸ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 67.

³⁹ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 66.

⁴⁰ COHEN, Robin. *Migrace: stěhování lidstva od pravěku po současnost*. Brno: Mapcards.net, 2019. ISBN 978-80-87850-09-1. p. 70.

⁴¹ ALLISON, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverlys: Commonwealth Editions, 2004. ISBN 1-889833-47-9. p. 114.

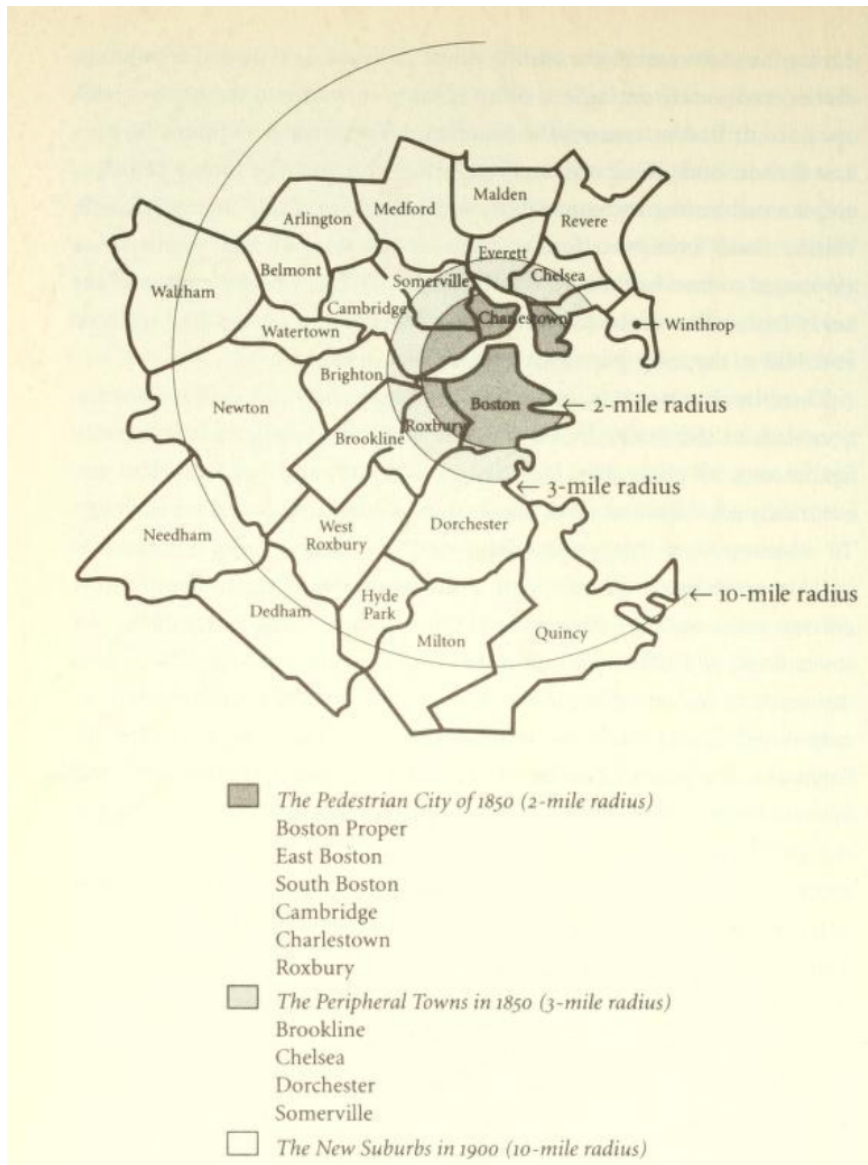


Image 1: The expansion of Boston during the second half of the 19th century. Source: O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 114.

Overall, the 19th century for Boston was a time of social, religious, industrial, political, and economical transformation. The multifaceted transformation of Boston offered many job opportunities to both locals and immigrants. This transformational century for the city of Boston is significant because the large influx of Irish who came during this period were able to contribute and leave their mark on the transforming city.

4.2. Minorities and Ethnic Neighborhoods of 19th century Boston

Boston is comprised of various neighborhoods that still exist today. In the 19th century, these neighborhoods were influenced by the various immigrant communities that moved to Boston. It is important to at least briefly mention some of the different neighborhoods and ethnic minorities because it highlights that 19th century Boston was a highly multicultural society. The Irish tended to keep their affairs within their own community but lived alongside an array of other ethnic communities as well. This chapter will highlight a few of the neighborhoods that were relevant to the Irish community and their influence on Boston in the 19th century.

The North End in the 19th century was settled by German, English, and Irish immigrants. The Irish immigrants from the time of the Great Famine accounted for the bulk of the immigrants that moved to the North End at that time. By the 1850s, the Irish accounted for more than half of the population of the North End neighborhood, however this neighborhood had the worst living conditions in the whole city. Because of the poor immigrants living here, this neighborhood became known for poor sanitation, disease, violence, drinking, and prostitution.⁴² At the end of the 19th century, other immigrants such as Jews, Italians, Greeks, and Portuguese moved to the North End, and this area became known for its various ethnic enclaves and the rise of Italian influence.

The West End was expanded in the 19th century, as the city filled in ponds in this neighborhood to create more land for the city. Because of the landfill project and new industries, the West End became a destination for Irish, Jewish, Italian, and Polish immigrants in the 19th century. The West End received a large influx of Irish immigrants during the Great Famine, and by the 1850s, the Irish accounted for the majority of the population of this neighborhood.⁴³ The Irish played a role in landfill project of this neighborhood. The Irish remained the dominant community of the West End until the end of the 19th century, when Jews from Russia, Poland, and other eastern European countries immigrated in large to the West End and became the new dominant immigrant community in this neighborhood.

In East Boston, as in other parts of the city, the Irish community accounted for the largest foreign-born community in this neighborhood. Because of East Boston's location

⁴² *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁴³ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

on the waterfront, many of the Irish and other immigrants here worked on the wharves. At the end of the 19th century, large waves of Russian, Italian, and Portuguese immigrants migrated to this neighborhood, raising the neighborhood's population from 36,930 in 1890 to 62,377 in 1915.⁴⁴

The South End is a neighborhood in Boston that was mainly built on a landfilled marsh. This neighborhood underwent expansion in the 19th century, as it underwent various landfill projects. At the beginning of the 19th century, the South End was occupied by the middle-class Protestant Anglo-Saxons and skilled German and Irish artisans. Later on, a significant number of poorer Irish Catholic immigrants began moving across the Boston channel to this neighborhood, which is located on a peninsula. Here, the Irish lived in mainly isolated and segregated communities. The area of South Boston grew rapidly in size thanks to the Irish migrants, and the Irish played a big role in the physical development of this neighborhood. In 1810, this area of Boston had a mere population of 400 individuals, but by 1855 South Boston had a population of over 16,000 and of those a significant number being Irish newcomers. Towards the end of the 19th century, the Irish remained the dominant population of the South End, but other immigrants such as Jews and Italians also lived in the South End as well. By 1905, there were approximately 3,000 Polish immigrants living in South Boston, who also were faithful Catholics like the Irish.⁴⁵ Although the population of South Boston began to diversify by the end of the 19th century, the predominant cultural influence remained the Irish, who continued to move into South Boston even at the end of the 19th century. South Boston remained predominantly Irish even after many of the other Bostonian neighborhoods fell to influences of other immigrant groups. The duration of the Irish's presence in South Boston created a strong sense of solidarity, unity, and determination to protect their Irish neighborhood from other minority influences.⁴⁶

Roxbury was a neighborhood for the elite Protestant Anglo-Saxon natives of Boston in the middle of the 19th century, especially thanks to the horse-drawn bus line and the railroad that went between Providence and Boston.⁴⁷ Immigrants began moving

⁴⁴ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁴⁵ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 179.

⁴⁶ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22] BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>.

⁴⁷ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

into Roxbury, and the Irish were once again the immigrant majority. An area of Roxbury known as Roslindale was heavily populated by the Irish. By the end of the 19th century, Roxbury was inhabited by various immigrant groups such as the Germans, Jews, Scandinavians, Latvians, and Italians.

Cambridge and Allston-Brighton, an area that used to be a part of Cambridge but today is now separate, is an area of Boston that was also highly inhabited by the Irish by the middle of the 19th century. The second largest immigrant group of this neighborhood were the Italians.⁴⁸ The African American population here quickly increased after the Civil War. Their population by the year 1910 had tripled and in this year totaled 1,500.⁴⁹ Towards the end of the 19th century, Swedish, Portuguese, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Jewish immigrants also migrated to this neighborhood.

Jamaica Plain was a notable destination for the Irish during the years of the Great Famine. By the middle of the 19th century, Jamaica Plain started developing and urbanizing. The Irish remained the largest migrant community of this neighborhood and by 1880, the Irish accounted for 25 percent of this neighborhood's population.⁵⁰ The second largest immigrant community of this neighborhood in the 1880s were the Protestant Germans, who accounted for 14 percent of the population.⁵¹ The German and the Irish tended to work together in the breweries, which was one of the prominent industries of Jamaica Plain in the 19th century.

The neighborhood of Dorchester transformed over the course of the 19th century from farmland to an ethnically diverse neighborhood. The Irish significantly transformed Dorchester as they established Catholic churches here, such as St. Peter's Catholic parish.⁵² Towards the end of the 19th century, many triple decker houses were built, which became a symbol of Boston immigrant family life. Italian, Irish, and Jewish immigrants tended to live in these triple decker homes as they were cheaper. By 1910, Dorchester

⁴⁸ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁴⁹ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁵⁰ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁵¹ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

⁵² *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>

was comprised of 27 percent of foreign-born immigrants coming mainly from Ireland, Canada, and (the Jewish) from Russia.⁵³



Image 2: The image above shows a map of Bostonian neighborhoods in the year 1900. Source: Geo. H. Walker & Co. *Indexed map of Boston*. Map. Boston: Geo. H. Walker & Co., 1900. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:1257b982q>

⁵³ *Immigrant Places*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Global Boston. Available at: <https://globalboston.bc.edu/index.php/home/immigrant-places/>



Image 3: A graphic map of the neighborhoods of Boston. Source: BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION. Neighborhoods. *Irish Heritage Trail* [online]. [accessed. 2024-02-29]. Available: <http://www.irishheritagetrail.com/neighborhoods/>

The African American population of Boston, another notable minority group in Boston, was around 2,000 people by the 1850s.⁵⁴ The Boston public schools officially integrated African American children from the year 1855. By the middle of the 19th century, the majority of the African American Bostonian community lived in the West End but also could be found in the South End.⁵⁵ The Irish saw this community as their greatest threat when it came to labor, but later in the second half of the 19th century they began to tolerate each other. For example, in 1887 the Irish and the African Americans worked together against Protestant Anglo-Saxon opposition to establish a monument on the Boston Common to commemorate the individuals who died in the Boston Massacre of 1770.⁵⁶ Also, the Irish and the African American community congregated together at Catholic churches such as St. Mary's.

⁵⁴ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 150.

⁵⁵ LEONARD, William. Black and Irish Relations in 19th Century Boston: The Interesting Case Lawyer Robert Morris. *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 37 (1), 65-85, 2009, p. 66.

⁵⁶ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 153.

The Irish were the first large group of immigrants to arrive to Boston in the 19th century. Because of this, they formed the dominant immigrant community in most of the Boston neighborhoods for the majority of the 19th century. They also had the opportunity to partake in the early urban development of the city. Although the Irish lived amongst other minorities who immigrated to Boston in the 19th century, the Irish communities of Boston were relatively homogeneous and tended to marry, recreate, and rely on their own community. Although the Irish did not go particularly out of their way to get along with the other immigrant communities and were cautious about the threat of other immigrant communities taking their jobs, they served as a cultural envoy between new immigrants and Boston society. The majority of immigrants towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century met Boston through the eyes of the Irish community, rather than the eyes of the Protestant Anglo-Saxons.⁵⁷ The Irish helped prove that the various communities of Boston were capable of living in an ethnically diverse society: “*For at the turn of the century when many scholars at Harvard and other leading universities were restoring to immigration restriction leagues and the publication of dangerous pseudo-scientific theories of Aryan racial supremacy, the Irish in Boston confidently insisted that the Republic could survive as a culturally, pluralistic society.*”⁵⁸ The Irish Catholic parishes of Boston also helped prove that the Irish were capable of living in an ethnically pluralistic society, as they accepted Catholics of other migrant origin into their parishes.

4.3. Integration and Assimilation of the Irish in 19th century Boston

The Irish newcomers of the 19th century were not welcomed with open arms by the Bostonian majority community. The majority community of Boston in the 19th century was predominantly Anglo-Saxon and Protestant.⁵⁹ The Bostonian majority’s attitude towards the Irish immigrant community of Boston evolved over the course of the 19th century.

The Irish of Boston were often stereotyped based on personal shortcomings and deficiencies. They were often compared to African Americans, who were seen at that time

⁵⁷ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 181.

⁵⁸ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 182.

⁵⁹ MARTON, Andrew. Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston’s Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914. *Undergraduate History Journal* 1 (1), 1-17, 2017. p. 2.

as poor slaves. The majority viewed the Irish practically as a different race, as written in the book of Noel Ignatiev. This is because the Irish of the 19th century were fleeing caste oppression and a system of landlordism, which made the material conditions of the Irish peasant comparable to the material conditions of an American slave.⁶⁰ Not only did the religious differences alarm the Protestant Anglo-Saxon community in the first half of the 19th century, but the various social and economic challenges that Irish immigration brought also amplified their concerns. Undoubtedly, factors such as poverty, unemployment, and religious differences played a significant role in the swift decline of relations between the Irish immigrant community and the majority population of Boston. Many Irish immigrants were dependent on the aid of groups like the Charitable Irish Society or reliant on more substantial support from local municipal agencies. As a result, unemployed Irish Catholics faced increasing resentment from the city's Protestant Anglo-Saxon natives. The newcomers were criticized as vicious criminals who overwhelmed charities, homeless institutions, and jails, leading to higher tax rates and a decline in the city's moral standards. Some other derogatory labels used against the Irish community of Boston included phrases such as "foreign paupers", "idle bums", and "drunken hooligans."⁶¹ The South Boston area, a neighborhood heavily populated by the Irish, was frequently characterized as a destitute neighborhood filled with bars and pool halls, where most working-class families struggled to make ends meet in their battered double- and triple-decker homes.

During the 1840s, the Irish community faced bigotry from the local majority population along with threatening challenges that stemmed from the "Know-Nothing movement" of the 1850s. The Know-Nothing movement was a nativist political movement in the United States during the middle of the 19th century. This movement was particularly active in the 1850s and was characterized by its anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic sentiments. The movement emerged in response to the large influx of immigrants, primarily from Ireland and Germany, during the 1840s and 1850s. The Know-Nothings aimed to curb the influence of immigrants and Catholics in American society. They believed that these groups posed a threat to the values and jobs of native-born Protestant Anglo-Saxon Americans. The majority population dissuaded immigrants

⁶⁰ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 2.

⁶¹ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 3.

who had already acquired citizenship from participating in political activities. Recent Irish newcomers faced potential legislation aiming to reduce immigration quotas and to extend the residency period required for naturalization. This movement, which attacked the Irish Catholic community, tested the Irish's integrity and ability to withstand adversity. The Irish Bostonian community was so solidified, that it was able to get passed these challenging times and even flourish, as we see later on in the chapter about Irish Bostonian politics.

As previously mentioned, the majority religion amongst native Bostonians in the 19th century was Protestantism, which significantly contributed to the negative interaction amongst the majority and the Catholic Irish. For example, Irish Catholic priests were prohibited from entering hospitals, institutes for the homeless, and other public institutions to provide solace to the sick and dying. In public schools, Irish Catholic Bostonian children were compelled to study Protestant renditions of the Bible and recite unfamiliar hymns and prayers. The Irish Catholic churches of Boston faced acts of vandalism, along with disruptions of their Catholic ceremonies. Even their burials were subjected to various rules and irritating regulations imposed by local authorities. For example, in March of 1849, Irish Catholic St. Augustine's Church had received an order from the Board of Health to close its historic cemetery. The Board, citing numerous complaints about a strong odor believed to arise from insufficiently deep graves, deemed the cemetery a significant health risk. Consequently, they prohibited any further burials on those sacred grounds.⁶² The social and religious conflict between Irish Catholics and the majority, mostly Protestant Anglo-Saxon Bostonians was intense in the 1850s. This strife was additionally amplified by the issue of racism.

The abolitionist movement, which gained popularity in Boston in the decades before the American Civil War (1861-1865), surpassed the influence of the Know-Nothing movement because the social and political atmosphere began moving towards the problematics of slavery rather than immigration. Although the Irish experienced some relief following the Know-Nothing movement, they faced a new societal test due to their lack of support for abolition. In the 1840s, the attitude of New Englanders became pro-abolition and anti-slavery. The Irish community of Boston was however mostly against the abolition movement. The Boston Irish community took this stance for a variety of reasons, one being that they viewed the majority of the liberal, upper-middle-class

⁶² O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 50.

Protestants who comprised the local abolition movement, with skepticism. They perceived these individuals as hypocrites and bigots, alleging that while they showed concern for human rights and the wellbeing of impoverished African American communities, they also aligned themselves with the anti-Catholic sentiments of the Know-Nothing movement. Additionally, the Irish Catholic community accused Protestants of advocating against the interests of impoverished white immigrants. Another reason for the Irish community being anti-abolition was due to their political views. During this time, they were long supporters of the Democratic party, who in the Boston area so happened to be against abolition.

However, as the country started moving towards the beginning of the Civil War, the views of Boston's Irish community towards the abolition movement changed, as the Irish community strived to be loyal, patriotic citizens of the United States. They began supporting Abraham Lincoln, the Republican president of the time, in hopes that the war would end quickly and that the Union (the Northern States that remained committed to the preservation of the United States as a single nation) would be restored. Also, many Irish immigrants joined and fought for the Union during the Civil War. For example, the 9th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry was all Irish and won recognition for their efforts in the battlefield.⁶³ This show of patriotism and shift in the Irish community's political views was reflected in the changing attitude of the majority population towards their community. With the Civil War, the majority Protestant Anglo-Saxon population of Boston began accepting the Irish community, acknowledging them for their entrepreneurial motivation and recognizing the hardships they had to face while crossing the Atlantic Ocean in hope of starting a better life in the United States. The Irish were now granted more access to Bostonian society, and they were no longer required by law to wait two years to be able to register to vote. Although the Protestant Anglo-Saxons viewed the Irish more positively, the Irish were still not so happy with them and the Bostonian government. The Irish felt as if they were fighting a rich man's war, since the wealthier men were able to hire substitutes or pay for exemption from the war. Ultimately, the Civil War was the changing point in attitude of the majority towards the Irish community of Boston, but the tension between them to some extent remained.

The adaptation of the 19th century Irish to their new life in Boston cannot be considered a model of assimilation in term of dissolving their identity into the melting

⁶³ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 59.

pot. The Irish were overall excluded from economics, politics, and society of the native majority. Although the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority hoped for Irish assimilation through the local educational system, the Irish resisted and created their own private Catholic schools. The Irish also established their own churches and institutions, where they could maintain their religious and traditional practices. The Irish created rather ethnically homogenous neighborhoods in Boston, which contributed to their ability to maintain many of their cultural traditions and elements, especially through the institutions that they created for their own micro-level society. Although the Civil War marked a shift in the majority's attitude of the Irish into a more positive one and they were more accepted into the majority society, the Irish still lived separately from the natives and maintained their unique way of life. Thanks to their growing population, they were able to assert themselves into Bostonian politics, but this was through their own efforts, and they did not need to fully assimilate in order to do so. Overall, The Irish of the 19th century existed in parallel with the majority community, but they did not however assimilate into the majority community. Assimilation seems to be rather a political concept than a bottom-up human-oriented perspective.

5. Irish Influence on Bostonian Urban Identity

The areas of urban identity that we will be exploring in this thesis are political, economic, social, and cultural. In the following chapters, we will see how the 19th-century Irish immigrants and their decedents influenced these areas of urban life, ultimately contributing to Boston's urban identity.

5.1. Influence on Bostonian Politics

After the Civil War, the Irish began playing a significant role in the Bostonian political sphere, as they became more active in local politics. Although there was a significant number of other immigrants in Boston, especially from Germany, Italy, Poland, and Lithuania, only a small percentage of them were registered to vote, and therefore did not leave such a political impact as the Irish community of Boston who could vote. In the 1880s, the percentage of registered Irish voters was 60 percent, whereas non-Irish had only 37 percent of registered voters.⁶⁴ Thanks to the large number of Irish

⁶⁴ MARTON, Andrew. Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston's Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914. *Undergraduate History Journal* 1 (1), 1-17, 2017. p. 6.

immigrants in Boston, they were able to start fending for themselves and join the political sphere of the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority. The other minority groups did not have the same population strength as the Irish, and therefore were not able to join the Bostonian political sphere as rapidly and strongly as the Irish were able to in the second half of the 19th century.

In the late 19th century, the Irish community of Boston was comprised of various wards and ward bosses, which overall formed the Irish political machine of Boston. Between the years 1885 to 1993, the position of Bostonian mayor was occupied by 12 different Irish-born or Boston-born Irish immigrants. There were only 22 years out of this period when Boston was not run by an Irish Bostonian mayor.⁶⁵ Some of the most prominent Irish Bostonian politicians of the 19th and early 20th century were Martin Lomasney, Patrick Kennedy, John F. Fitzgerald, James Michael Curley, John W. McCormack, and John E. Powers. Coincidentally, all these Irish politicians came from a similar background; they came from immigrant families, their fathers died at a young age, and they were forced to drop out of school to work unskilled jobs in order to help support their families.⁶⁶ This unfortunate background was shared by a lot of the Irish community and created a strong sense of community solidarity amongst the local Irish Bostonians and the politicians.

The local Irish political leaders, or ward bosses, such as Michael Lomasney and John F. Fitzgerald, created clubs in Boston such as the Hendricks Club and the Jefferson Club, where they were able to congregate, to promote new legislature, and to support local Irish Bostonian politicians make it to state and federal politics.⁶⁷ The Irish political machine of Boston was strongly pro-Irish and actively aimed to support their fellow Irish community of Boston by all means possible.

There were two types of Bostonian politics that were defined during the 19th century. One was an older, more traditional type run but the Puritan majority, and this type of politics was more rational and bureaucratic. The second type of politics during this time was known as “ethnic politics”, which put an emphasis on family, community,

⁶⁵ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. XI.

⁶⁶ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 99.

⁶⁷ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 89.

and human values, specific to an ethnic community.⁶⁸ The renowned Irish politicians of Boston favored this second approach to politics. The majority of the Boston Irish were democratic, and they were primarily concerned with the practicality of politics, that is, of supplying their community with living essentials and improving their community's way of life in Boston. This practical philosophy of Irish-run Bostonian politics, where the government is responsible for actively engaging in citizens' lives, created a significant change not only in the political philosophy of the local Democratic party, but also influenced the ideals of the national Democratic party to become more engaged in citizens' lives.⁶⁹ The Irish politicians of Boston, thanks to their focus on their own community, were able to allocate food, money, and jobs to the Irish community, which ultimately allowed for the Irish to move out of the slums and rise the socioeconomic ladder by the turn of the 20th century.⁷⁰

The Irish-run wards of Boston also served other minority communities. The other immigrant communities benefited from the Irish establishing various institutions, such as churches, hospitals, and schools, which gave other immigrant communities opportunity to adapt to their new Bostonian life. Although Irish Bostonian politics benefited other immigrant communities, the Irish ward bosses tended to put their Irish community first, and for that reason in some instances used their power to benefit their Irish community while exploiting the other minority groups of Boston. Many employees at Boston City Hall were appointed with the help of the Irish political machine of Boston and thanks to the large population of registered (Irish) voters, which other ethnic groups at the time did not have. For this reason, ward bosses were able to reject permits and businesses licenses of other ethnic groups such as the Jews and the Italians in order to benefit their larger (Irish) ethnic community.⁷¹

To highlight a few of the city's prominent Irish Bostonian politicians who were active in the 19th and early 20th centuries, we will begin with Patrick J. Maguire. Maguire was born in Ireland and migrated to North America in 1838. In Boston, he established an Irish Catholic newspaper known as *The Republic*. He was also a democrat and served for

⁶⁸ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 84.

⁶⁹ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 126.

⁷⁰ MARTON, Andrew. *Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston's Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914*. *Undergraduate History Journal* 1 (1), 1-17, 2017. p. 5.

⁷¹ MARTON, Andrew. *Ward Bosses and Reformers: An Analysis of Boston's Irish Political Machine, 1884-1914*. *Undergraduate History Journal* 1 (1), 1-17, 2017. p. 6.

a long time on the Democratic City Committee. Thanks to his influence in Boston politics, he was able to place many Irish democrats on the city's payroll. In 1877 he became the president of the City Committee. Through his newspaper, Maguire advocated for the Irish and defiled Republican and anti-Irish politics. He helped get the first Irish-born mayor Hugh O'Brien elected to office.⁷²

Hugh O'Brien was the first Irish-born, Roman Catholic mayor of Boston, who was elected in 1884. He was so favored that he served four consecutive terms. During his time in office, he improved the city by widening streets, improving parks, and advocating for the construction of the Boston Public Library.⁷³ He was adamant about establishing tax relief and fiscal management. In his first year in office, he was able to cut the tax rate by 24 percent, and for the next four years O'Brien kept the tax rate below 15 USD.⁷⁴ Between the years 1885 and 1887, O'Brien reduced the city net debt by over 1,000,000 USD. Thanks to his successful fiscal management, O'Brien was able to allocate funds to and manage the ambitious park system program. This network of parks extends from Boston Common to Franklin Park, stretches seven miles long, and is known as "the Emerald Necklace."⁷⁵ O'Brien was held in high regard by the Protestant Anglo-Saxon community of Boston, and he proved the potential of the Irish immigrant community.

Patrick A. Collins was the second Irish-born immigrant to be elected as the mayor of Boston and served as mayor from 1903-1905. He aimed to revive the Democratic party and its influence. In 1882 he was the first Irish Bostonian to be elected to the United States Congress. During his time as a state legislature, he made it a priority to rid of the restrictions against Catholics in public institutions like hospitals. Thanks to his advocacy, the Massachusetts General Hospital of Boston allowed for an increase in Irish patients. Collins left such an impact on Boston that a monument was created to honor him on Commonwealth Avenue.⁷⁶ He urged his Irish followers to become United States citizens rather than remaining as displaced immigrants, which gained him favoritism amongst the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority community. In one of his speeches, he promoted the

⁷² O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 118.

⁷³ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 119.

⁷⁴ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 129.

⁷⁵ Emerald Necklace. *The Cultural Landscape Foundation* [online]. [accessed 2024-02-20]. Available at: <https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/emerald-necklace>

⁷⁶ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 106.

idea of American citizenship and loyalty: “*We and our children and our children’s children are here merged in this great, free, composite nationality, true and loyal citizens of the state and federal systems, sharing in the burdens and the blessings of the freest people on earth.*”⁷⁷

Martin Lomasney, also known as “Mahatma”, was another well-known Irish Bostonian politician as he was one of the most powerful ward bosses of Boston specifically in the West End’s ward eight.⁷⁸ He was born in Boston to Irish immigrants in 1859. He was politically successful at both the local and state levels, as he served two terms in the state Senate and in the House of Representatives. He is most well-known for establishing the Hendricks Club of Boston, which was often used for political meetings and supporting the Irish political machine of Boston. The Hendricks club helped new immigrants find labor and housing upon their arrival to Boston. Lomasney often sent aid to the East Boston ports where new immigrants would arrive. He was known for sending his followers to hold signs reading “*Welcome to America. The Democratic Party Welcomes You to America. Martin Lomasney Welcomes You to Boston.*”⁷⁹ He also advocated for the establishment of North Station and Boston Garden.

John F. Fitzgerald, also known as “Honey Fitz” became the first American-born Irish Catholic (born in the North End of Boston) to serve as the mayor of Boston. He served as mayor in the beginning of the 20th century. His campaign was centered around building a “*Bigger, Better, Busier Boston.*”⁸⁰ Fitzgerald advocated for the improvement and development of Boston port facilities. He allocated a 9 million USD investment from the Massachusetts legislature for port improvements and also established the Board of Directors of the port. Thanks to the improvements, new European trades began traveling through the ports of Boston.⁸¹ During his time as mayor, he also played a role in the establishment of public baths and playgrounds which were aimed to help the locals. Some of his more notable contributions to Boston were Fenway Park and the Franklin Park

⁷⁷ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 133.

⁷⁸ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 142.

⁷⁹ O’CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 153.

⁸⁰ *John Fitzgerald: Mayor of a Bigger, Better, Busier Boston*. [online]. National Park Service. [accessed 2024-02-20]. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/john-fitzgerald-mayor-of-a-bigger-better-busier-boston.htm>

⁸¹ FITZGERALD, John Francis. *Letters and Speeches of the Honorable John F. Fitzgerald: Mayor of Boston, 1906-07, 1910-13*. Boston: Printing Department, 1914. ISBN 1018913165. p. X.

Zoo.⁸² Fitzgerald also went on to serve as a member of the State Senate and the United States House of Representatives. At only 29 years old he became the ward boss of the North End. He was the maternal grandfather of 35th President of the United States John F. Kennedy.

James Michael Curley was another prominent politician in Boston for 40 years. He served as mayor four times in the first half of the 20th century. He oversaw various public improvement projects such as establishing recreational facilities, the expansion of public transportation, and the expansion of Boston City Hospital. In his first term, he expanded the Boston City Hospital for 11 million USD and expanded the Strandway, which is a motor parkway along Dorchester Bay on the South Boston Peninsula. These expansions supplied jobs to hundreds and thousands of people.⁸³ Curley established a Tammany Club in Boston, and through his club as ward boss he distributed clothes, coal, arranged medical care, legal services, welfare, and helped those in need find jobs.⁸⁴ His club organized picnics that attracted up to 20,000 people, who danced, played, ate, and listened to Irish politicians.⁸⁵

The influence of Irish Bostonian politics had an incredible impact on the city. The Irish politicians not only aided in the physical development of the city, but also aided in improving the relations between the Irish community and the Protestant Anglo-Saxon community of Boston. The success of the Irish Bostonian politicians allowed the Irish community of Boston to flourish and build a stronger sense of community identity. The Irish politicians of Boston were significant not only for Irish community, but also proved to the other ethnic communities of Boston that it is possible to become a part of Bostonian society.

⁸² *John Fitzgerald: Mayor of a Bigger, Better, Busier Boston*. [online]. National Park Service. [accessed 2024-02-20]. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/john-fitzgerald-mayor-of-a-bigger-better-busier-boston.htm>

⁸³ GLAESER, Edward L. and Andrei SHLEIFER. The Curley Effect: The Economics of Shaping the Electorate. *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 21 (1), 1-19, 2005. p. 11.

⁸⁴ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 180.

⁸⁵ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 137.

5.2. Influence on Bostonian Economics

5.2.1. Urban Development

The Irish left a significant impact when it comes to the physical development of Boston in the 19th century. Boston generally underwent a significant urban expansion in the 19th century, and thanks to the large influx in Irish immigrants during this time, they played a big role in the expansion of the city.

Irish building contractors were some of the main beneficiaries in funding Boston's urban expansion following the Civil War. By the end of the 19th century, there were 235 first- and second-generation Irish contractors in Boston.⁸⁶ In the years that Boston was run by an Irish mayor, such as Fitzgerald in 1906, the Irish contractors in Boston flourished and really made their physical mark on the city. The famous professional baseball stadium Fenway Park of Boston, which was officially opened in 1912, was built by building contractor Charles E. Logue, an Irish immigrant. Logue also worked on other various notable buildings in Boston. Irish Bostonian politicians are to thank also for the allocation of funds to the physical urban development of Boston. Irish politicians lobbied for the foundation of more public playgrounds, zoos, golf courses, and others.⁸⁷ For example, Irish Bostonian mayor John Fitzgerald established Franklin Park Zoo by the end of his second term.⁸⁸ He also invested 9 million USD into the improvement and development of Boston ports, as previously mentioned in the chapter about Irish influence on Bostonian politics.

The physical influence of the Irish community on Boston can also be seen through the establishment of religious buildings, such as St. Mary of the Assumption Parish, which was founded in 1833 under the direction of Irish Bishop John F. Fitzpatrick and designed by Irish American architect Patrick Keely.⁸⁹ Also to be noted is St. Augustine's Chapel, which is the oldest Gothic-style building in New England. Today it remains a major historical monument of Boston.⁹⁰ The Holy Cross Cathedral of the South End was built

⁸⁶ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 92.

⁸⁷ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 139.

⁸⁸ *John Fitzgerald: Mayor of a Bigger, Better, Busier Boston*. [online]. National Park Service. [accessed 2024-02-20]. Available at: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/john-fitzgerald-mayor-of-a-bigger-better-busier-boston.htm>

⁸⁹ ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH. *History of Our Parish*. [online]. St. Mary of the Assumption Parish. [accessed 2024-02-20]. Available at: <https://stmarybrookline.com/history-of-our-parish>

⁹⁰ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 140.

by Irish immigrant Patrick Charles Keely in the second half of the 19th century and is almost the same size as the Notre Dame Cathedral of Paris.⁹¹

Irish immigrant sculpturers such as Martin, James, and Joseph Milmore, who immigrated to Boston in 1851, also left a physical mark of Irish influence on Boston through their sculptures and memorials. They made a number of Civil War memorials in Boston, such as in the neighborhoods of Charlestown, Jamaica Plain, and Cambridge. Their sculptures are also found in the State House and Boston Public Library. They created the famous Soldiers and Sailors Monument which was unveiled in 1876 in front of a crowd of 25,000 people.⁹² Another notable Irish sculpturer was John O'Donoghue, who built a bust of Hugh O'Brien, Boston's first Irish mayor. This bust is also located in the Boston Public Library.

The Irish are not only to thank for the establishment of institute buildings, but also for the development of city projects. Many of the Irish immigrants worked on transport, landfill, and other major urban development and expansion projects. The majority of the Irish men who came to Boston during the years of the Great Famine worked on the canals, railroads, streets, construction of buildings, and or on the docks.⁹³ The Irish worked on these unskilled jobs that the other residents of Boston did not want to do, but these jobs were responsible for the physical growth of the city. The Irish's physical contribution to the city of Boston did not only benefit the Irish community, but all communities of Boston, and the Irish contributions are still used today.

5.2.2. Economic Diversity and Socioeconomic Mobility

Many first-generation Irish immigrants in the 19th century came to Boston with little funds and limited skills. The majority of these Irish newcomers sought shelter in crowded neighborhoods along the waterfront of the city, such as the neighborhood of the North End, where they stayed with friends and relatives. These congested areas were close to markets, shops, wharves, docks, stables, and workshops, all places where unskilled individuals like many of the new newly immigrated Irish could find sporadic employment and occasional sources of food. The first-generation Irish immigrants tended to be blue-

⁹¹ BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION. *Irish Heritage Trail* [online]. [accessed. 2024-02-29]. Available at: <http://www.irishheritagetrail.com/neighborhoods/>

⁹² BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION. *Irish Heritage Trail* [online]. [accessed. 2024-02-29]. Available at: <http://www.irishheritagetrail.com/neighborhoods/>

⁹³ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 14.

collared workers. In 1850, about 48 percent of the working Irish Bostonians were laborers. In contrast, only eleven percent of the German Bostonians and less than five percent of Protestant Anglo-Saxon natives were laborers.⁹⁴

Many men had to depend on the modest earnings of their wives, daughters, and sisters, who were usually employed in Boston's hotels, lodging houses, and private residences. The Irish women of Boston were very active when it came working, whereas the women of the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority community tended to stay away from the more labor-intensive jobs. By the 1850s, approximately 2,227 Irish women and girls worked as domestic servants.⁹⁵ The income generated by these Irish women helped sustain the men of their families until the men were able to secure temporary positions as day laborers, where they performed unskilled tasks such as street sweeping, upkeeping horses and stables, tending to the unloading of ships, and fish cutting.⁹⁶ There were many large Irish families of nine or ten children who had to survive on an average weekly salary of 10 to 12 USD. The activeness of the Irish women when it came to working is significant to note because thanks to them, the Irish were able to further extend their influence into the Bostonian society.

When the Civil War began, many Irish found the opportunity to make use of their technical skills. Patrick Lally, an Irish immigrant who arrived in 1825, emerged as one of the earliest accomplished Irish entrepreneurs in South Boston. Having acquired expertise in the blacksmith trade at Hinckley Locomotive Works, he successfully bought his own blacksmith and wheelwright business within a few years. His machine shop quickly evolved into a thriving manufacturing enterprise. Notably, during the Civil War, Lally's establishment played a significant role by providing the Union with gun carriages and paddle arms for war vessels.⁹⁷ The manual workers benefited from the rapid expansion of industries during the war time as guns, cannons, ammunition, locomotives, and more were needed to support the Union's efforts. Many Irish workers contributed to the manufacture of these wartime materials, which was significant because it also proved their loyalty to the Union and contributed to building a better relationship with the Bostonian natives.

⁹⁴ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 117.

⁹⁵ HANDLIN, Oscar. *Boston's immigrants 1790-1865: A study in acculturation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941. p. 66.

⁹⁶ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 48.

⁹⁷ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 41.

The growth of public utilities in Boston during the second half of the 19th century also presented labor opportunities for the Irish immigrants. There were jobs available for both unskilled and skilled workers. The jobs for unskilled workers included ditch-digging and cement-mixers, while the skilled workers found opportunities as plumbers, carpenters, conductors, and firemen.⁹⁸ At this point, the Irish were not reliant on only the unskilled jobs. The Irish were now starting to be a part of all working sectors in Bostonian society.

Second- and third- generation Irish immigrant families achieved some economic and social success. The huge population influx of Irish immigrants to Boston created a whole new urban economic dynamic, as the need for professions such as doctors, businessmen, journalists, and nurses rose. Irish businessmen usually worked their way up to economic success by opening a pub or grocery store within densely populated immigrant neighborhoods such as in the North End and South End of Boston.⁹⁹ Many of the wealthier Irish Bostonian families made their wealth through the liquor business. By 1852, over 60 percent of the 1500 liquor-selling establishments of Boston were Irish-owned.¹⁰⁰ Also, more second-generation Irish immigrants began working white-collar jobs. Together 254 of the 1300 individuals who were practicing law in Boston at the end of the 19th century were Irish Bostonians.¹⁰¹ By 1905, 12 percent of Boston's doctors were first- or second- generation Irish.¹⁰² Journalism also became a common profession of the later generation Irish immigrants. By the end of the 19th century, one fifth of Boston's newspapermen were Irish.¹⁰³ The Irishmen also made their way into Bostonian politics, which also allowed them to allocate funds and job opportunities back to their Irish community. This economic success and shift from blue-collar to white-collar jobs allowed Irish families to move to more favorable areas of Boston such as Charlestown, Dorchester, and South Boston, although it is to be noted that this was not the case for all the Irish families of Boston. The socioeconomic mobility of the Irish in 19th century Boston was

⁹⁸ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 69.

⁹⁹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 88.

¹⁰⁰ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 90.

¹⁰¹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 97.

¹⁰² RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 108.

¹⁰³ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 112.

important, as they were able to better their reputation amongst the majority society and also participate in all areas of Bostonian life.

5.3. Influence on Bostonian Society

5.3.1. Social Impact

Social and political views of the Boston Irish community were broadcast in various Irish-founded media outlets in Boston. For example, *The Boston Pilot* was the first Catholic newspaper in America. John Boyle O'Reilly was an Irish reporter for *The Boston Pilot* and became editor then co-owner in 1876. He used *The Boston Pilot* as a platform to express loyal American patriotism and advocate for social reform, which ultimately led to his acceptance by the elite class of Boston. In *The Boston Pilot* he advocated for union rights and also advocated for the establishment of gyms as an alternative to drinking in pubs.

Other notable contributions to Boston social reform include for example Irish immigrant William Lloyd Garrison. He established an abolitionist newspaper known as *The Liberator*.¹⁰⁴ He played a key role in the abolitionist movement in the city of Boston and was a prominent figure in the intellectual and social circles of Boston during the 19th century. Garrison moved to Boston in 1829, where he became involved in various reform movements, including the temperance movement and the movement for women's rights, before dedicating himself fully to the cause of abolition. Garrison spread the message of Daniel O'Connell, who was an Irish political leader, lawyer, and advocate for Catholic emancipation and Irish nationalism (in Ireland). Many Irish, both in Ireland and abroad, viewed O'Connell as a role model and supported his movement. In O'Connell's opinion, the subjugation of Ireland and black American enslavement were equally of the same global syndrome of oppression.¹⁰⁵ In the end, the abolitionist movement through O'Connell and his Irish American followers like Garrison only represented a minority of the Irish American population, but it is still a notable part of the Boston abolitionist movement and highlights the transnational network between the Boston Irish and the

¹⁰⁴ DIGITAL COMMONWEALTH MASSACHUSETTS COLLECTIONS ONLINE. *The Liberator* [online]. [accessed 2024-03-16]. Available at: https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/search?f%5Bcollection_name_ssim%5D%5B%5D=The+Liberator+%28Boston%2C+Mass.+%3A+1831-1865%29&f%5Binstitution_name_ssi%5D%5B%5D=Boston+Public+Library&sort=date_start_dtsi+asc%2C+title_info_primary_ssort+asc

¹⁰⁵ KENNY, Kevin. Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study. *The Journal of American History* 90(1), 134-162, 2003. p. 157.

native Irish in Ireland. By the end of the 19th century, first- and second-generation Irish made up 20 percent of Boston's newspapermen.¹⁰⁶ This is significant to note because the Irish were able to broadcast their Irish culture and values through media.

Not only the Irish politicians but also the activism of the ordinary Irish community of Boston left a mark on Bostonian social justice. One example of Irish-Bostonian social involvement includes the Broad Street Riots of 1837. Fights sprang out between local firefighters and the Irish community, as a group of firefighters deliberately interfered in an Irish Catholic funeral procession. As a result of these riots, Boston city officials made reforms to the Boston Fire Department, making it less of a social club and more of a full-time profession.¹⁰⁷ The Irish also didn't hold back when it came to justice for the soldiers in the Civil War. The Irish felt as if they were fighting a rich man's war because the wealthier Protestant Anglo-Saxon Bostonians were able to hire substitutes or pay for exemption from the war. This resulted in protest and violence, and Boston experienced a draft riot in July of 1863 between the Irish of the North End and draft marshals.¹⁰⁸

There were various Irish women who also impacted the social movements in Boston. For example, Mary O'Sullivan and Margaret Lillian Foley were both active suffragettes.¹⁰⁹ Margaret Foley worked as a social worker, labor organizer, and suffragist from Boston. She went on to work as the speaker and organizer for the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association. Other notable female Irish figures in Boston of the time were Frances MacKenzie, who was a key figure in establishing the St. Elizabeth's Hospital in the South End of Boston and Mary Boyle O'Reilly, who served as a member of the Massachusetts prison committee.¹¹⁰

The Irish also had a substantial impact when it comes to labor reform and labor politics. The labor strikers often did not take into account their backgrounds; being white, or immigrant, or Catholic, or Irish. Irish workers fought alongside African Americans and immigrants of other nationalities.¹¹¹ For this reason, it is difficult to define labor unions

¹⁰⁶ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 112.

¹⁰⁷ ALLISON, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverly: Commonwealth Editions, 2004. ISBN 1889833479. p. 53.

¹⁰⁸ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *The Boston Irish: a political history*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. ISBN 9780316626613. p. 89-90.

¹⁰⁹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 44.

¹¹⁰ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 48.

¹¹¹ IGNATIEV, Noel. *How the Irish Became White*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1995. ISBN 9780415963091. p. 95.

and reforms that were solely Irish lead, but Irish strikers were found in all types of labor unions in Boston, for example amongst carpenters, boot makers, mill workers, and others. The collaboration amongst ethnic minorities in Bostonian labor reform is significant to note because it shows the sense of unified struggle and solidarity, despite the workers being from different ethnic backgrounds.

Before and after the Civil War, the Irish immigrants of Boston could be found working in sectors that were critical for American and Bostonian industrialization. They often worked in unskilled jobs such as in the mines, on train rails, in factories, and on the docks. As a large number of Irish Bostonians worked these manual and labor-intensive jobs, they faced poor working conditions and long working hours. In response to adverse working conditions, the Irish community adopted two distinct approaches. Initially, they adapted methods of violent protest, a method which came with them from rural Ireland to their new home in the United States. Later on, they turned to the formation and participation in trade union movements. For example, in 1825 over 500 house carpenters of Boston went on strike in support of a ten-hour workday.¹¹² The Irish community of Boston lead the fight for the short hours movement of the 1860s, which also advocated for shorter working days.¹¹³

The Irish community of Boston also left a notable impact on the educational system. As the number of Irish in Boston grew, there was an increase in their participation in the school system and on school committees. For example, Irish Bostonian John George Blake was a member of the Boston School Committee for 16 years. During his time on the committee, he advocated for manual training and regular sanitation inspections of the school and educational facilities.¹¹⁴ Various Irish Catholic parishes of Boston expanded to have their own schools towards the end of the 19th century. This was mainly due to the rapid increase in the Irish Catholic population size of Boston and because of the education that was being taught in Protestant led public schools. In the 1840s, the enrollment in Boston schools skyrocketed, which can be seen as a direct influence from the wave of Irish immigration during the time of the Great Famine. In

¹¹² A Brief History of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America. SOUTHEASTERN CARPENTERS REGIONAL COUNCIL. *Southeastern Carpenters Regional Council* [online]. [accessed 2024-02-21]. Available at: <https://www.southeasterncarpenters.org/pdf/SECRC-History.pdf>. p. 7.

¹¹³ JURAVICH, Tom; HARTFORD, William F. and James R. GREEN. *Commonwealth of toil: Chapters in the history of Massachusetts workers and their unions*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996. ISBN 1558490450. p. 40.

¹¹⁴ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 108.

1841, the enrollment in primary schools and grammar schools of Boston was at 12,000 students. By 1851, the enrollment reached over 21,000, which accounts for a growth rate of 77 percent.¹¹⁵

In 1859 there was a rebellion in the North End at Eliot public school because the Irish Catholic students were required to rehearse the Protestant version of the Ten Commandments and to read the King James edition of the Bible. A young Irish Catholic boy named Thomas J. Wall was beaten by a school submaster because he and his Catholic peers refused to recite the Protestant Ten Commandments. This led to the Eliot School rebellion within the school and other schools in Boston.¹¹⁶ This is significant because the Irish were not willing to accept the culture of the majority community of Boston. The Irish were not willing to fall for the oppression of their community in Boston, and therefore were active in preserving their cultural and religious values. Because of 19th century Irish Catholic immigration to Boston, schools such as Boston College (founded in 1863) were established to educate the Irish Catholic immigrant community of Boston.¹¹⁷ A network of Catholic parish schools was also established, for example, the parish school established through St. Augustine's Church by Irish immigrant priest Monsignor Denis O'Callaghan in 1895.¹¹⁸ By 1917 the Boston Irish had established 29 elementary schools, four high schools, four prestigious academies, and one college.¹¹⁹

The Irish community of Boston also left an impact when it comes to health and charity. Many of the Irish immigrants who arrived in the wake of the Great Famine arrived in "coffin ships", where they caught lice-borne typhus and other illnesses along their journey.¹²⁰ Because of disease, Boston established a quarantine hospital on land called Deer Island. This island served as a quarantine zone starting from the spring of 1847. By the end of 1847, the hospital cured 2,034 people, and 300 patients had died. The typhus epidemic settled later on in 1848, but the hospital continued to treat disease-ridden

¹¹⁵ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 57.

¹¹⁶ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 59.

¹¹⁷ *Mission and History*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-22]. BOSTON COLLEGE. Boston College. Available: <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/about/mission.html>

¹¹⁸ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 65.

¹¹⁹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 77.

¹²⁰ BIR NEWSROOM. Deer Island- The stories of the famine-era burials. *Boston Irish Magazine* [online]. Boston Neighborhood News, 2020 [accessed 2024-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.bostonirish.com/history/2020/deer-island-stories-famine-era-burials>

immigrants afterwards. Even though this hospital was not founded by the Irish community, many of the staff who worked at the hospital were Irish, and the site of the hospital is marked today in dedication to the deceased Irish immigrants of the Great Famine.

The Carney Hospital, founded in 1863, was one of the significant medical facilities constructed in Boston in the years of the Civil War, and has its origins in the efforts of Andrew Carney, an Irish-born philanthropist and businessman, who immigrated to the United States in the 19th century. Andrew Carney donated 75,000 USD towards the establishment of the hospital. The Carney hospital gained a solid reputation, becoming a landmark in South Boston that endured well into the 20th century.¹²¹ The Carney Hospital helped all different immigrants in need. Andrew Carney was also notable for his contributions to the construction of the new Holy Cross Cathedral and Boston College in the South End of the city.

One of the notable Irish organizations of 19th century Boston was the Charitable Irish Society. Although it was founded already in 1737 by Irish immigrants, it significantly grew in the 19th century. The society was originally Protestant Irish, but they were a very inclusive club despite the conflicts between the Protestants and the Catholics in the 19th century. Their main goal was to provide loans and various forms of assistance to less fortunate Irish immigrants such as to the elderly, sick, or needy. It also aimed to raise immigrant spirit and unity upon arrival to Boston and also amongst the decedents of Irish immigrants.¹²² The Society still exists today, and it is the oldest Irish-founded organization in all of North America. The Society has expanded and helps not only Irish immigrants and their descendants, but also allocates grants to migrants from other countries such as Haiti, Lebanon, and Uganda.¹²³ The Charitable Irish Society was a significant contribution to Boston because it stepped beyond the notion of religion and background with the ultimate goal of helping immigrants in need.

¹²¹ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 29.

¹²² SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 43(1), 94-123, 2015.p. 96.

¹²³ SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 43(1), 94-123, 2015. p. 115.

5.3.2. Social Life

The Irish immigrants were determined that their children would have better lives, and for this reason instructed their children in the virtues of personal morality and the importance of education. Irish Bostonian families in the 1880s had on average five or six children and for the most part had both parents at home.¹²⁴ A big factor in this was their Catholic religion, which banned abortion and contraceptives and looked down upon divorce. The Holy Family, being the obedient Jesus, devoted mother Mary, and strong carpenter Joseph, became the ideal for working class Irish families. The Irish were known to tolerate fighting, swearing, and drinking, but objected sins such as premarital sex, birth control, and child rearing outside of marriage. The Irish students of Boston were taught lessons of morality not only through their families, but also in parish schools, Sunday school, and in church.

The Irish had a significant impact on Bostonian social life, not only when it came to family and other moral values, but also when it came to all types of social entertainment. The Irish created unique ways for recreation and leisure. They often met in pubs, which facilitated the creation of close bonds amongst the Irish community. The importance of physical presence in pubs was mainly for the Irish social life, and this left a mark on Boston, as many Irish-founded pubs were established across the city.

The importance of alcohol in Irish culture is complicated, especially in connection to the Catholic Church. Scholars have endeavored to examine the diverse factors contributing to the distinctive role of this spending of leisure time in Irish culture. Economists highlight that the challenging aspects of society were due to limited land and a scarcity of employment opportunities. Sociologists draw attention to societal dynamics, emphasizing how the scarcity of land deterred early marriages, led to gender segregation, and fostered male bonding through playful and leisure activities.¹²⁵ Nevertheless, the newcomers who came from Ireland to Boston brought with them their habits. With this characteristic boomed the establishment of Irish-founded taverns, bars, and saloons in Boston. The Irish influence is notable through the increase in the number of liquor licenses. Within a three-year span, the number of licensed liquor dealers increased from

¹²⁴ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 41.

¹²⁵ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 44.

850 in the year 1846 to 1,200 licensed individuals in the year 1849.¹²⁶ During this time, the mayor of Boston reported that the Irish community was responsible for owning two-thirds of the Bostonian taverns and pubs.¹²⁷ For the Irish immigrants who were unemployed and lacking money and status, the pubs served as a social center of the Irish neighborhoods; they were gathering spots where conversation, camaraderie, songs, stories, folklore, and the distinctive Irish accent created a friendly and familiar atmosphere. Not only were pubs the center of social happening for the Irish community, but also served as a critical center for political development and expression in the Irish Bostonian community. In these pubs and taverns was where political party leaders secured voters, educated inexperienced political organizers, supported their communities with free legal advice, and aided new immigrants with applying for United States citizenship.

As a response to the Irish's usual leisure time activities, every pastor in Boston was required to develop amusement and recreation programs according to the Third Plenary Council of 1884.¹²⁸ Sport organizations such as the Irish Athletic Club of Boston of 1879 were founded.¹²⁹ The Irish Bostonians were known to be fond of sports, especially boxing, Gaelic football, baseball, and track and field. Irish immigrant Patsy Donovan managed the Red Sox at the brink of the 19th and 20th century.¹³⁰ Irish Bostonian John L. Sullivan became one of America's greatest athletes when he won the heavyweight boxing championship of 1882.¹³¹ The Irish athletes connected not only the Irish community, but the whole Bostonian community, as Bostonians were proud of the successful athletes who represented their city.

The Irish Bostonians were also active when it came to organizing various events like music concerts. For example, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore organized a huge music festival in Boston in 1869. It turned into a week-long festival including President Ulysses S. Grant.¹³² By the end of the 19th century, second-generation Irish alone accounted for

¹²⁶ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 44.

¹²⁷ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 44.

¹²⁸ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 124.

¹²⁹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 125.

¹³⁰ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 127.

¹³¹ ALLISON, Robert J. *A Short History of Boston*. Beverly: Commonwealth Editions, 2004. ISBN 1889833479. p. 76.

¹³² RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 130.

over 15 percent of the entertainment business in Boston.¹³³ Irish entertainment served and brought joy to all Bostonian communities, not just the Irish.

5.4. Influence on Bostonian Culture and Religion

Elements of Irish culture were often preserved through Irish-founded media outlets such as the *The Boston Pilot*, through Irish-established institutions like schools and churches, and through family. The Boston Irish kept their relations with Ireland and turned to *The Boston Pilot* for news from their homeland. They could find articles about Ireland in every print of *The Boston Pilot*.¹³⁴ This transnational connection between the Boston Irish and those in Ireland fueled the preservation of Irish culture and Irish patriotism, even from abroad.

Irish Catholicism had a significant impact on Bostonian culture. Before the 19th century, Boston was predominantly an Anglo-Saxon and Protestant city. In the 17th and much of the 18th centuries, Catholicism was completely banned in Massachusetts.¹³⁵ Even for much of the 19th century Catholic immigrants faced oppression due to their religion. Boston went through a dramatic change in the 19th century with the arrival of immigrants from Europe, especially from Ireland, who outnumbered the other immigrants during this time and brought with them Catholicism.

Before the 19th century, South Boston had started out with no official place of Catholic worship and with only a few members, but over the course of one generation, South Boston grew to become a hub of Catholicism, comprised mostly of Irish Catholics.¹³⁶ The Catholic churches became an integral part of the Irish Bostonian community. The Church actively organized sports and other events. The Irish Catholic Church of Boston also contributed to the city by introducing orphanages, asylums, hospitals, and other pastoral support. In 1833, the Sisters of Charity established the Saint Vincent Orphan Asylum in Boston.¹³⁷ The Irish Catholic churches of Boston were also

¹³³ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 142.

¹³⁴ BOSTON COLLEGE LIBRARIES. *Boston Pilot (1838-1857)* [online]. [accessed 2024-03-16]. Available at: <https://newspapers.bc.edu/?a=cl&cl=CL2.1851.09&sp=bpilott&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN-->

¹³⁵ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *Boston Catholics: a history of the church and its people*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998. ISBN 9781555533595. p. 14.

¹³⁶ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 40.

¹³⁷ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 4.

known for their charity and aiding the poor. A significant group of Irish Catholic volunteers belonged for example to Saint Vincent de Paul Society, which had around 500 volunteers per year.¹³⁸ The establishment of these institutions was significant, as it allowed for the Catholic Church to have a greater influence on Boston.

The Irish Catholic leaders of Boston were well informed about social problems which promoted unfavorable and criminal behavior that served as a barrier for Irish acceptance and assimilation by the majority community of Boston. They knew that this behavior hindered the relations between the Irish Bostonian community with other minority groups, and for this reason, the Irish Catholic churches and organizations of Boston began promoting ideals of hard work and perseverance as the key to becoming good Americans. In the 1830s and 1840s the Irish Catholic community of Boston founded a number of societies, which were organizations that advocated for moderation as the way to a good life. The Church helped the Irish community gain credibility in Bostonian society by promoting the idea of becoming a humble American citizen.

John Bernard Fitzpatrick, who was a second-generation Irish Bostonian, was the third Bishop of Boston in the years 1846-1866. He was born in Boston in 1812. Fitzpatrick was responsible for the foundation of various Catholic churches in Boston. For example, he acquired the Holy Trinity, St. Joseph's Church, and St. Vincent's Church for the Catholic archdiocese.¹³⁹ During the 20 years of his episcopacy, Fitzpatrick oversaw the establishment of more than 70 new churches in the diocese (including Boston). Fitzpatrick helped the Catholic Church survive the prejudices of the Know-Nothing Movement, and he was also known as a peacemaker between the Irish and the African American community of Boston. Fitzpatrick and the Catholic Church supported the abolition movement during the time of the Civil War. Fitzpatrick advocated for the rights of his Catholic community, especially when it came to education. He was determined and succeeded in helping the Irish Catholic community nonviolently integrate into the social and political realm of the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority community.

Another Irish Bostonian bishop was John Joseph Williams. He was the fourth Bishop of Boston in 1866, and he was also second-generation Irish. Within his first five

¹³⁸ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 12.

¹³⁹ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *Boston Catholics: a history of the church and its people*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998. ISBN 9781555533595. p. 82.

years as bishop, he authorized the establishment of at least 15 new churches.¹⁴⁰ Thanks to Irish bishops like Fitzpatrick and Williams, the Catholic Church of Boston was able to leave its mark on the city and create connections between the Irish and other Bostonian ethnic minorities.

Because of the Catholic Church's involvement in the community and the rapidly growing population of first- and second- generation Irish immigrants, Catholicism gained its respect and popularity in Boston in by the end of the 19th century. This was significant because the respect of the Catholic Church helped the Irish gain respect in the eyes of the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority.

The Catholic Church was not the only Irish influence on Bostonian culture. The various traditions that the Irish continued to celebrate in Boston also left their mark on the city. The Irish of Boston were the first to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in the country. Although the annual St. Patrick Day celebrations of Boston began already in the year 1737, the 19th century Irish immigrants and their descendants played a big role in preserving, funding, and expanding the St. Patrick Day festivities. In the 19th century, the parade went from downtown Boston through Charlestown, South Boston, and Dorchester, and always had thousands of spectators, both Irish and non-Irish. On St. Patrick's Day, the Irish would decorate their stores and houses with Irish banners and flags.¹⁴¹

Other means of Irish influence on Bostonian culture can be seen through the arts. Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore was an Irish-born Bostonian composer who created famous wartime music such as "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."¹⁴² The Irish in Boston were also well-known for theater, where they acted in plays about their Irishness, which people from different communities of Boston came to see.¹⁴³ The Irish's mark on Bostonian culture through traditions and the arts is significant because it became a part of the city's heritage which carries on to today.

¹⁴⁰ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *Boston Catholics: a history of the church and its people*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998. ISBN 9781555533595. p. 126.

¹⁴¹ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 143.

¹⁴² RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 130.

¹⁴³ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 142.

6. Why Irish Heritage in Boston is Long-lasting

Among all the neighborhoods in Boston, South Boston has experienced the least alteration in its ethnic, social, and religious composition. It stands as one of the few remaining remnants of a unique way of life that traces its roots to the early era of Irish immigrant families and the influence of traditional political leaders.

6.1. Irish Bostonian Patriotism

Irish Bostonian patriotism refers to a sense of loyalty, pride, and attachment that individuals of Irish descent in Boston feel towards both their Irish heritage and their adopted home, Boston. This unique form of patriotism is characterized by a blend of Irish identity, cultural traditions, and a strong connection to the city of Boston.

The social and religious values and morals of the Irish community became an integral part of its cultural fabric and were reinforced through song, story, church sermons, schools, and family. These values strengthened the Irish community's sense of ethnic solidarity. Ethnic pride, religious beliefs, moral principles, and shared struggles are what made the Irish community of Boston so strong. Because of the Irish's hardships as immigrants to the United States, when fathers often died young and working hours were very long, the Irish Bostonians became a very tight-knit community. Because of the hardships that came with immigration, the Irish became very reliant on family ties and friendship as a means of comfort. They were devoted to their neighborhoods, mothers, siblings, and friends, and they were willing to mutually help each other over anything else.

There was mutual and reciprocal support amongst the Irish and the Irish political leaders of Boston. They all united in their struggles from pre- and post- migration life. Irish American nationalism did not originate necessarily from a direct focus on Ireland itself, but rather from the isolation, displacement, and economic struggles that were collectively experienced by the Irish immigrants. In essence, while Irish patriots who moved abroad advocated for an independent Ireland, they also sought acceptance and prosperity in their new homelands. These struggles brought the Irish community closer together, and they took pride in their ability to overcome the hardships together.

Immigration was a defining point for Irish nationalism. Before dispersing, the Irish viewed themselves according to clan. Upon reaching the United States, the immigrants were transformed into Irishmen. Due to the horrific years of the Great Famine,

the discrimination under the British, and the struggle to adapt to their new lives in the United States, a collective sense of anger and shame grew amongst the Irish community. This gave way to a sense of devotion to their motherland, Ireland, and created a sense of the Irish as a nation in exile. Often times this expression of devotion for the Irish nation was most intensely seen through first- and second-generation Irish Americans, and the most dedicated nationalists were in many cases children of Irish immigrants. Irish nationalism satisfied many needs of the Irish community during their difficult times of adjusting to religious and ethnic prejudice in the United States.¹⁴⁴

The sense of Irish Bostonian patriotism derives from the new lives of the Irish in Boston. For example, the private Irish Catholic schools of Boston played a big role in cultivating Irish pride in the community's Irish roots. One student at St. Mary's Catholic school in the North End noted that although many of the students have not seen the shores of Ireland, they honor it.¹⁴⁵ At the same time, the Irish schools taught pride in United States patriotism in order to quiet criticisms coming from the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority. Parochial schools idolized heroes such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In these parochial schools, the Irish students were learning just as much about Ireland as they were about the United States, and therefore established pride for both their nations.¹⁴⁶ The successful rise of Irish politicians to Bostonian politics also facilitated Irish Bostonian pride.

Today, the sense of Irish Bostonian patriotism is built on the desire for identification. Many individuals tend to look at their family history in order to understand who they are today. Through the struggles of the 19th century Irish immigrants, modern day Irish Bostonians are able to find their shared origin story, which defines who they are and connects them to a more specific community. The story of the Irish in Boston is one of pride, as the Irish were able to overcome the many hardships they faced, and that is why many Irish Bostonians today take pride in who they are.

¹⁴⁴ MULCRONE, Michael P. *The World War I Censorship of The Irish-American Press*. Dissertation work. Seattle: University of Washington, 1993. p. 105.

¹⁴⁵ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 69.

¹⁴⁶ RYAN, Dennis Patrick. *Beyond the Ballot Box: A Social History of the Boston Irish, 1845 - 1917*. Doctoral Dissertation. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Amherst, 1979. p. 69.

6.2. Active Preservation of Irish Bostonian Heritage

The 19th century was the time of the largest influx of Irish immigrants to Boston, and their heritage is actively preserved in the city even today through various institutes, monuments, traditions, and events. The city of Boston established the Irish Heritage Trail, which leads through 20 sites related to Irish heritage in the city. The majority of the sites on this trail have direct connection to the Irish immigration and immigrants who came to Boston in the 19th century. Below is a map of the heritage trail and the names of the sites.



Image 4: Map of the Irish Heritage Trail in Boston. Source: BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION. *Boston Irish Heritage Trail Map*. Online. Available: https://www.irishboston.org/Boston_Irish_Heritage_Trail_Map.pdf. [accessed. 2024-02-29].

There are other notable Irish heritage sites in Boston that are not included on the Boston Irish Heritage Trail, for example, the Great Hunger Memorial. This memorial is a sixteen-foot Celtic cross, which was dedicated in 2019 to recognize the 850 Irish immigrants who died between the years 1847-1850 in a quarantine hospital on Deer Island and were left in unmarked graves on the island.¹⁴⁷ Other means of present-day preservation of Irish heritage in Boston are through various institutes. For example, the Charitable Irish Society of Boston. The Society had the city of Boston designated by the Irish government as the official international site for the 2012 Irish Famine Commemoration. On St. Patrick's Day in 2012, the Charitable Irish Society hosted an official delegation which came from Drogheda, County Louth, for the commemorations. Irish President Michael D. Higgins launched the commemoration on May 5, 2012, in Faneuil Hall, the site where the New England Relief Committee was established in the 19th century.¹⁴⁸ The Charitable society still remains active today in preserving cultural ties with their ancestral Irish land. Another example of their active preservation of Irish heritage is the annual dinner that they host for prominent Irish and Irish American figures on March 17th (St. Patrick's Day).¹⁴⁹

Another institute that promotes Irish heritage in Boston is the Irish Cultural Centre of greater Boston. They host Irish cooking classes, Irish concerts, Irish music classes, Gaelic language classes, Irish history classes, Irish dance classes, and more.¹⁵⁰ They also organize Irish sports and support leagues like the Gaelic Athletic Association. In addition, they host 5k races and golf tournaments dedicated to Boston Irish heritage. The events that this cultural center hosts are geared for kids and adults of all ages.

Furthermore, the Boston Public Library, America's oldest public library, is a notable supporter of Irish heritage in Boston. It has a collection dedicated to Irish heritage that includes more than 13,000 artifacts. The music department at the Boston Public Library has a collection of Irish sheet music, and the Microfilm Department has a collection of newspapers and articles that have significant value to Irish heritage. The Photo Department of the Boston Public Library has a collection of rare pictures from the

¹⁴⁷ BIR NEWSROOM. Deer Island- The stories of the famine-era burials. *Boston Irish Magazine* [online]. Boston Neighborhood News, 2020 [accessed 2024-02-18]. Available at: <https://www.bostonirish.com/history/2020/deer-island-stories-famine-era-burials>

¹⁴⁸ SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 43(1), 94-123, 2015. p. 115.

¹⁴⁹ SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 43(1), 94-123, 2015. p. 115.

¹⁵⁰ IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE GREATER BOSTON. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://www.irishculture.org>

Civil War, and many of these photographs encapsulate the Irish history of Boston.¹⁵¹ Irish heritage is also preserved through education at various colleges and universities in Boston. For example, Boston University has an Institute for the Study of Irish Culture. Boston College has an Irish Studies program, which is one of the leading centers for Irish studies internationally.¹⁵²

Irish heritage is not only preserved today through memorials and institutions, but also through the entertainment sphere of Boston. There are a number of Irish pubs and restaurants that are located around Boston. They present traditional Irish food, music, and Irish pub atmosphere. Some pubs include The Brendan Behan Pub, The Druid, The Burren, The Black Rose, and Mr. Dooley's. Some Irish restaurants of Boston include J.J. Foley's Café and Corrib Pub & Restaurant. Also, various events honoring Irish heritage in Boston are hosted annually. They include music festivals such as the Boston Celtic Music Festival and South Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade.¹⁵³ The fact that Irish heritage is being actively preserved in Boston today is a sign that the Irish had a significant impact on the city's identity, and that a large community still identifies and cherishes their Irish origins.

7. Transcultural Reflection, Identity, and Adaptation of the Irish's Impact on Boston

This thesis falls under the undergraduate study field known as Transcultural Communication, and for that reason it is critical to apply the content of this thesis through a transcultural perspective. Through the study of transcultural communication, we are able to comprehend why foreign cultures and societies are different from us, and through these differences we are able to define ourselves. The study of transcultural communication not only helps to understand different cultures and our own culture, but also to deconstruct various prejudices about other ethnicities, religions, languages, and other beliefs.

To begin, it is important to first understand the meaning of transculturality. When we break down the term transculturality, we must first note that the term *Trans* brings the

¹⁵¹ BOSTON IRISH TOURISM ASSOCIATION. *Irish Heritage Trail* [online]. [accessed. 2024-02-29]. Available at: <http://www.irishheritagetrail.com/neighborhoods/>

¹⁵² BOSTON COLLEGE. *Irish Studies* [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/sites/irish.html>

¹⁵³ SOUTH BOSTON ALLIED WAR VETERANS COUNCIL. *South Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade*. [online]. [accessed 2024-02-29]. Available at: <https://southbostonparade.org>

term *culture* onto a unique level of comprehension. The term *transculturality* means going beyond or exceeding cultures. It allows us to overcome boundaries, unlike multiculturalism and interculturalism. Multiculturalism refers to the parallel existence of various cultural groups side-by-side and believes that simply being together will lead to mutual enrichment. It does not facilitate dialogue between various groups. Interculturalism promotes interaction amongst different cultural groups in a society but does not step beyond the perspective of a group's own culturally conditioned beliefs. Both multiculturalism and interculturalism neglect the importance of dialogue between cultures.¹⁵⁴ Through transculturality, we are able to step across our ethnic, cultural, and religious boundaries, but at the same time without forgetting about them. František Burda conceptualizes cultures as social constructs, which are directly or indirectly reliant on interactions. Within these social constructs occurs the formation of a symbolic world and the subsequent intermingling of the social world with the intersubjective worlds of individual social participants.¹⁵⁵ The current world is comprehended as a global village, in which the interaction of various cultures occurs. Life in today's globalized world implies meeting with diversity. This also applies to the Irish of Boston in the 19th century, as they lived amongst other minority groups such as Italians, Jews, African Americans, and particularly the majority Protestant Anglo-Saxon community. Many people occupy the same geographic area, but recognize different religions, have various nationalities, unique traditions, different norms, and speak other languages. To exist in a diverse society is not an easy task. For this reason, it is critical to apply a transcultural approach.

Transcultural perspective helps us overcome possible misunderstandings between cultures, and often times to overcome conflicts between the majority and minority society.¹⁵⁶ From the transcultural perspective it is key to have an open social, religious, and political dialogue between societies on the basis of historical experience. Transcultural dialogue strives for shared cultural signs and symbols, while preserving ethnic diversity, pluralism, and the right to be different. At the same time, it allows rooting in one's own culture and going beyond its borders. A transcultural viewpoint aligns seamlessly with the theme of Irish diaspora and migration as it provides a framework to comprehend the intricate dynamics of interactions, exchanges, and adaptations amidst the

¹⁵⁴ SOKOLÍČKOVÁ, Zdenka. *Výzvy pro transkulturní komunikaci*. Ostrava: Moravapress, 2014. p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ BURDA, František. *Za hranice kultur: transkulturní perspektiva*. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury, 2016. ISBN 978-80-7325-402-5. p. 22.

¹⁵⁶ SOKOLÍČKOVÁ, Zdenka. *Výzvy pro transkulturní komunikaci*. Ostrava: Moravapress, 2014. p. 63.

Irish dispersal in Boston. Transculturalism emphasizes the dynamic exchange and interaction between different cultures, as it looks beyond traditional notions of cultural boundaries and fixed identities.

Ethnic communities, like those of 19th century Boston, are formed through migration, diaspora, and are comprised of various cultural communities coming from different cultural backgrounds. As mentioned in the Key Term section of this thesis, ethnicity in the 19th century United States was central to self-identification, and therefore in terms of the Irish immigrant group in Boston, they relied heavily on their Irish identity to define who they are as individuals. Ethnicity requires social interaction between various groups in order for a group to be able to define their own characteristics. Ethnic identity relies on the recognized differences which are formed on the basis of these societal interactions with other ethnic groups. In terms of the Irish in Boston, they were able to distinguish their Irish Catholic ethnic identity through interactions with the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority and with the other minority communities of 19th century Boston such as the Germans, Italians, and African Americans. Their differences stemmed from varying origin, religion, norms, language, and tradition.

Transcultural perspective takes into consideration the complexities of ethnic identity. These complexities stem from the reality of navigating multiple cultural influences, as individuals and communities interact with both their native culture and the culture of the majority society where they newly live. Transculturalism recognizes that cultural identity is fluid and evolving. Even though one's cultural identity evolves through migration, the preservation of cultural heritage continues to play a big role in diasporic communities. Transculturalism acknowledges the significance of preserving ties to ancestral traditions, languages, and customs. This is key for diasporic communities as they adjust to unfamiliar cultural elements of their new environment. A notable transformation here which has transcultural potential is the transformation of Irish identity on the basis of diaspora to Boston.

Before the Irish dispersed abroad, they differentiated amongst themselves based on clans. When they arrived in Boston, their notion of identity changed from clan identity to ethnic/national identity, as their identity transitioned to a more universal Irish identity, rather than individual clan identity. This identity transformation stems from the new interaction between the Irish immigrants with the other communities of Boston. In Ireland, the *us vs. them* interaction was defined by *us (our clan) vs. them (other clans)*.

After migrating to Boston, this critical *us vs. them* interaction morphed into *us (Irish) vs. them (the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority and other immigrant communities)*.

Transcultural perspective not only recognizes the interaction between various cultures within a society, but also acknowledges the existence of transnational cultural networks which connect individuals and communities beyond geographical borders. This means that immigrational communities are engaged with their community back in their homeland and at the same time engaged with the other cultural communities in their new home. Immigrational communities maintain ties with their native cultural roots while simultaneously contributing to the formation of the cultural landscape of their new location. Diasporic communities facilitate ongoing global dialogues and interactions that overcome geographical and cultural distances. This can be seen through the 19th century Irish community of Boston, especially during the times of emancipation. The Irish of Boston were actively engaging with the politics back in Ireland, which at that time were advocating for Catholic rights. On a similar note, in the United States the issues of emancipation and abolition were being solved. Although these causes can be comparable (in terms of social injustice), the Irish of Boston were interestingly enough not willing to support abolition in the United States. On the other hand, their Catholic comrades in Ireland were persuading the Irish Bostonians that they should support abolition, because it was a very similar cause to what they are fighting for back at home. In this instance, the majority of Irish Bostonians were not able to step outside their cultural and communal boundaries to empathize and have solidarity with the African American community.

Another aspect of transculturalism includes the importance of cultural competence. This competence refers to the ability of individuals and communities with different cultural backgrounds to have positive interactions, understanding, and collaboration between each other. In terms of diaspora, it is the ability of the diasporic community and the communities in their new home to have mutual understanding and positive interactions. A lack of intercultural competence leads to conflicts amongst cultural communities in a society. Cultural competence is promoted by the concept of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism emphasizes the importance of comprehending cultural practices and beliefs within their respective cultural frameworks, rather than assessing them based on external criteria, for example assessing another culture based on one's understanding of their own culture. Cultural relativism is the opposite of ethnocentrism and promotes an open-minded and holistic understanding of cultural diversity. This concept recognizes each culture as distinct and that no culture is superior

to another.¹⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, the Irish immigrants of 19th century Boston experienced prejudice and negative stereotypes from the majority community, although the people of the majority community themselves were descendants of Protestant Anglo-Saxon immigrants who also faced religious and social persecutions. In the beginning of the 19th century, it seems like the majority community and the Irish could only see their differences as negative, and for that reason did not have good relations until the Civil War, during which they found their similarities in supporting the Union cause. Societies with multiple ethnic communities often exhibit cultural hybridity, which from the transcultural perspective is recognized as a blend of various cultural elements. This merge of cultural elements from various cultures leads to new cultural expressions, practices, identities, and traits. Phenomena such as migration, globalization, and interconnectedness facilitate the process of cultural hybridity. The cultural influence and interactions between communities do not occur only between one minority community and the majority community of the given society. These interactions are seen amongst all cultural communities in a culturally plural society, even between cultural minorities. As seen in 19th century Boston, the Irish influenced other immigrant communities of Boston through their advocacy for immigrant and labor rights. This ultimately relates to the desire for human dignity that all people of all cultural origins have in common.

Although the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority and the Irish of 19th century Boston were not able to look beyond their differences in many cases, there were some institutions and events when the various communities of Boston were able to step past religious differences in order to help each other. For example, the Charitable Irish Society of Boston was predominantly Protestant at the beginning of the 19th century. Within the first one hundred years since its founding, the Society was able to look beyond their political and religious differences so that they could withhold their commitment to help those in need.¹⁵⁸ Another example of mutual solidarity and common goal amongst various communities in Boston were the labor strikes. The strikers in Boston did not take their ethnicity, race, or religion into account. They all fought together on the basis of solidarity to improve labor conditions for all peoples.

A transcultural dimension in relation to Irish diaspora can be seen mainly in the transformation of Bostonian urban identity and the Irish's heritage legacy. The Irish left

¹⁵⁷ SOKOLÍČKOVÁ, Zdenka. *Výzvy pro transkulturní komunikaci*. Ostrava: Moravapress, 2014. p. 63.

¹⁵⁸ SHANNON, Catherine B. The Charitable Irish Society of Boston (1737-1857). *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 43(1), 94-123, 2015. p. 115.

a mark on Boston's urban identity and heritage through their influence in politics, economics, society, religion and culture. In all these aspects, the Irish came into contact and interaction with other communities of Boston, especially with the majority Protestant Anglo-Saxon community. The defining elements that set the Irish and the majority communities apart from each other mainly stemmed from their differences in religion, where the Irish immigrants of the 19th century were predominantly Catholic, and the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority of Boston were predominantly Protestant. As the Irish grew in population size and they experienced socioeconomic mobility, the interactions between them and the majority community became more frequent.

Understanding of culture and identity allows us to uncover meanings that people, as carriers of culture and individual cultural phenomena, give. It also allows us to understand how an individual interprets cultural phenomena and how culture can influence a person and his life. Culture can be interpreted as a holistic system of meanings, values, and social norms, which members of a given society and through the process of socialization pass on to future generations.¹⁵⁹ The Irish who immigrated to Boston have passed on their cultural traits to their decedents, and we see the survival of these cultural elements through the Irish heritage in Boston today.

Another aspect of transcultural perspective can be seen when contemplating the Irish immigrant experience. The Irish's experience in Boston is completely different than the Irish's experience in other destinations of 19th century diaspora (for example Australia or Canada). It's not only about the interactions between the Irish immigrants and the local people in these destinations that makes their experiences different, but also about the living conditions, social conditions, and the integration/assimilation process in these destinations. The conditions in 19th century Boston were optimal for the Irish influence to flourish there. The industrialization of Boston after American independence and the War of 1812, along with the need for workers, and the already established Scottish Irish community in Boston, allowed for the Irish to establish themselves in the Boston community. Although it was not right away, the Irish were able to climb the socioeconomic ladder, and establish themselves in politics, which allowed them to sit side-by-side with their Protestant Anglo-Saxon counterparts. As mentioned in the Key Term chapter of this thesis, the degree of assimilation into a society is influenced by various social, economic, and political factors, along with the reception and

¹⁵⁹ MURPHY, Robert Francis. *Úvod do kulturní a sociální antropologie*. Studijní texty (Sociologické nakladatelství). Praha: Sociologické nakladatelství (SLON), 2004. ISBN 80-86429-25-3.

integration/assimilation policies of the host society. Integration refers to the process of incorporating people of different ethnocultural backgrounds, where individuals maintain aspects of their own culture, but also actively participate in the broader societal structures and institutions. Assimilation, on the other hand, involves the absorption or blending of minority groups into the dominant culture of a society. This process typically entails adopting the language, customs, values, and behaviors of the dominant group, often at the expense of one's original cultural identity. The American approach to 19th century immigrants was geared towards assimilating them into American society. Although assimilation was the goal, many immigrant groups, such as the Irish of Boston, formed ethnic enclaves, which limited their assimilation into the American society. The Irish were able to keep their traditions and norms thanks to the confines of their ethnic neighborhoods and large population. Although the 19th century Irish immigrants of Boston did not assimilate to the Protestant Anglo-Saxon Bostonian way of life, they did open a doorway for themselves to participate alongside the majority in Bostonian society. First-generation immigrants tend to have a harder time becoming a part of the new society. On the other hand, the children of immigrants usually experience a better living situation than their parents and are well adapted to their new environment. This can be seen in the case of the Irish immigrants in Boston.

The development in the relationship between the Irish and the Protestant Anglo-Saxons of Boston is another significant point to note. Although the Protestant Anglo-Saxons and the Irish did not get along in the beginning, the interaction between the two groups evolved in a more positive direction during the course of the 19th century. Through collective action, political organization, and labor activism, Irish Bostonians gradually gained economic opportunities, political representation, and social influence, which began to challenge existing power structures among the Bostonian communities. This shift in power dynamics transformed the relationship between the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority and Irish immigrants, as the Irish asserted themselves as a significant force within Boston society. Moreover, shared experiences among these two groups such as participation in labor movements, military service, and community activism fostered a sense of common identity, even though they come from different backgrounds. Through these collective endeavors, individuals from both the majority and Irish community found common ground and solidarity, contributing to the development of a shared transcultural identity rooted in mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation. Thanks to the shift in their interactional dynamic, the Protestant Anglo-Saxons and the Irish began working

together on developing the city of Boston. These interactions between the majority and the Irish were mixed, but they unified in their collective goal of developing Boston and bettering the city as a whole. Through this common effort that stepped beyond secluded cultural lines, Boston experienced great transformations in the 19th century. The evolution of power relations between the Protestant Anglo-Saxon majority and Irish immigrants highlights the fluidity and complexity of transcultural interactions. It underscores the potential for marginalized groups to challenge and reshape dominant narratives, leading to greater social equity and inclusion within transcultural societies. It also proves how overcoming a community's defining boundaries can lead to positive change in the development of a city.

Although this thesis focuses mainly on the influence of Irish diaspora in the 19th century, it is important to consider the future of the Irish legacy in Boston. The migratory flows to Boston have drastically changed since 19th century. The minority communities in Boston are evolving, as the population of South American, Latin American, and African American communities are continuously growing. This poses a challenge not only to the Irish Bostonian community, but also to the other longstanding communities of Boston, such as the former Jewish district along Roxbury's Blue Hill Avenue, which has transitioned to a predominantly African American population. Meanwhile, other areas of the city like North Dorchester and Jamaica Plain are currently in the process of changing from historically Irish neighborhoods to increasingly diverse communities with significant African American and Hispanic populations.¹⁶⁰ These demographical changes raise a few questions that I would like to reflect on from a transcultural perspective.

⇒ Will the surge of new minority communities in Boston cause the Irish legacy on urban identity to eventually disappear?

⇒ Is it possible that the Irish Bostonians will overtime forget their Irish identity and morph into the majority community?

Although these questions seem concerning when it comes to the survival of Irish legacy in Boston, it is important to remember that a key piece to personal identity is knowing where you (your ancestors) are from. Although the Irish Bostonians of today may or may not practice the same traditions and beliefs as their immigrant ancestors from the 19th century, they still have the collective memory of their origin. Today's Irish

¹⁶⁰ O'CONNOR, Thomas H. *South Boston: My Home Town The History of an Ethnic Neighborhood*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994. ISBN 978-1-55553-880-4. p. 1.

Bostonians are in the United States thanks to their 19th century ancestors who journeyed to Boston from Ireland. This defining element of origin is unerasable, whether the Irish Bostonians of today behave like their ancestors or not. The question of Irish Bostonians morphing with the Bostonian majority into one universal Bostonian community is unrealistic, especially in today's globalized world. Some may say that through globalization, through exogamic marriages, and through the mixing of cultures that today's world is becoming more culturally unified. In reality, it is the opposite. Through the process of globalization, people might take their cultural differences more into consideration, in order to establish their sense of identity and solidarity with their specific community. Therefore, although the influx of new migrants may be transforming the neighborhoods and other aspects of Boston, the Irish of Boston will always hold a collective memory of their Irish origins, as it is a part of their identity story. Collective memory is a phenomenological process that gives social meanings into the past, present, and future.¹⁶¹ This shared story of Irish origin will not be forgotten and does not only leave a lasting mark in the Irish community of Boston, but also on urban identity itself. In the 19th century, the Irish influenced the city of Boston in significant ways, and these influences will always remain as an unerasable footprint in Boston's urban history, no matter how the demographics of Boston change into the future.

8. Conclusion

To conclude, the 19th century first- and next- generation Irish immigrants did have a significant influence on Boston's identity and heritage, and this influence resonates beyond the bounds of the Irish community. Within one century, the Irish were able to assert themselves into the political life of the majority community and establish their religion in the midst of resentment from the Protestant majority community of Boston. Although the Irish were first faced with diversity, their ability to join politics and climb the socioeconomic ladder is significant, as it proves to other ethnic communities that despite being different, they are able to leave their mark on the local society. The Irish experience in Boston serves as a powerful example of resilience, adaptability, and the pursuit of the American Dream amidst adversity. Their journey from marginalized immigrants to integral members of Bostonian society offers a compelling narrative of

¹⁶¹ BOOZER, Anna Lucille. Memory (collective). In BAGNAL, Roger S.; BRODERSEN, Kai; CHAMPION, Craig B.; ERSKINE, Andrew and Sabine R. HUEBNER (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012. ISBN 978-14-4433-838-6.

perseverance and success in the face of challenges. It also highlights the positive potential for urban and social development when ethnic communities such as the Irish and the majority community are able to step beyond their differences and collaborate on the development of a city.

Through their contributions to politics, economics, society, culture, and religion, the Irish have not only shaped the physical landscape of the city but have also left an indelible mark on the city's collective identity. Today, the influence of 19th century Irish immigrants can still be seen on Boston's urban identity, with St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Irish festivals, and Gaelic sports events serving as vibrant expressions of Irish heritage within the city. These cultural markers not only celebrate the Irish legacy but also foster a sense of belonging and pride among Bostonians of all backgrounds, further enriching the city's urban identity.

This thesis was purely theoretical and relied on primary and secondary sources of information. The goal of this thesis was to analyze the influence of 19th century Irish diaspora on the urban identity and heritage in the city of Boston. I believe that enough evidence was presented to confirm that Irish immigrants of the 19th century did leave a mark on Boston urban identity and heritage from the political, economic, social, cultural, and religious perspective. The analysis of the Irish's influence extends beyond urban identity and heritage and shows the impact of the Irish influence on a transcultural level.

The significance of the Irish influence on Boston extends far beyond the boundaries of the Irish community itself, resonating deeply with other ethnic communities as well. The Irish impact on Bostonian politics, labor movements, and cultural institutions has helped pave the way for other ethnic groups to assert their rights and carve out their own spaces within the city. The solidarity forged through shared struggles and triumphs has fostered a sense of unity among diverse communities, inspiring collaboration and mutual support. Moreover, the celebration and preservation of Irish heritage in Boston serve as a model for the recognition and appreciation of all ethnic cultures within the city. By honoring the contributions of the Irish community, Boston sets a precedent for valuing and embracing the richness of cultural diversity, fostering a more inclusive and vibrant urban landscape for all residents.

In essence, the 19th century Irish immigrant influence on Boston's urban identity is significant not only for its historical and cultural resonance but also for the enduring legacy of resilience, community, and cultural vibrancy that continues to shape the city to

this day. Embracing and celebrating the Irish heritage is integral to understanding and appreciating the multifaceted identity of Boston as a dynamic and inclusive urban center.

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