The Irish Diaspora in Comparative Perspective:
St. John’s, Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Portland, Maine, 1880-1923

By

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of History, in the University of Toronto

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Abstract

Whether they settled in Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, or elsewhere, there was no common experience for the Irish abroad. Emigrants from Ireland and their descendants reshaped their ethnic identities in response to circumstances in both the old world and the new. A comparative study of three Irish-Catholic communities in different stages of development reveals the extent to which Irish ethnicity varied over time and space.

In St. John’s, Newfoundland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, immigration from Ireland was a largely early-nineteenth century, pre-famine phenomenon, so by the 1880s the Irish-Catholic communities were long-established, overwhelmingly native-born, and had achieved relative political and economic independence. Those of Irish descent in St. John’s formed a majority of the city’s population, while in Halifax they were a strong minority. The Irish in Portland, Maine, by contrast, arrived during and after the potato famine of the 1840s, and were a smaller minority in a mostly Yankee-Protestant milieu. This comparative study of three port cities tests how varying new world contexts affected expressions of Irish ethnicity over several generations. Was a sense of “Irishness” transmitted generationally? How, and to what extent, could a sense of ethnic community be maintained? How did relations with other ethnoreligious groups influence identity? What was the role of religion, gender, and class?
How did local and external forces combine to influence expressions and understandings of Irishness?

By examining associational life, the Catholic Church, education, politics, and Irish nationalism, this study argues that Irish-Catholic communities cannot be understood in isolation. Identities were created and sustained by the complex interaction of local, regional, national, and transnational networks. Through such mechanisms as ethnic, benevolent, and nationalist associations, for example, Catholics of Irish birth or descent constructed their understandings of Irishness from outside sources, but the day-to-day expression of these identities was inherently local. At the same time, religion, class, and gender influenced how ethnicity was conceived and articulated, and these processes varied considerably both within and between these three cities. Together, the comparative study reveals how Irish ethnic identity varied from place to place and over time, and how three different Catholic communities on the prow of northeastern North America remained part of an interconnected, transnational Irish diaspora until well into the twentieth century.
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Introduction

The Irish Diaspora in Comparative Perspective

On June 5th, 1920, the students of St. Bonaventure’s College – a Catholic school in St. John’s, Newfoundland, that was run by the Irish Christian Brothers – sent a letter to Brother J.B. Ryan, one of their teachers, on the eve of his departure for Ireland. After wishing him a safe journey, they went on to ask Brother Ryan to “salute for us the hills and valleys of Ireland. For us it is a land of dreams, known only to us through the medium of song, story and history, and ere we separate we venture to express the fervent hope that upon your return to our shores you will bring with you good tidings of great joy that all is well in the old land – ‘tis dawn on the hills of Ireland.”

This short note, penned by boys who were almost certainly several generations removed from their ancestral homeland, introduces some of the central questions that dominate the scholarship of the Irish diaspora. How, and to what extent, was a sense of Irish identity passed from one generation to the next, and how did these identities vary from place to place?

This dissertation is a comparative study of Irish-Catholic community and identity in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland from 1880 to 1923. Whether they settled in Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, or elsewhere, there was no common experience for the Irish abroad. Emigrants from Ireland and their descendants reshaped their ethnic identities in response to local circumstances. A study of these three port cities will test how varying new world contexts affected expressions of Irish ethnicity over several generations. Was a sense of “Irishness” transmitted generationally? How, and to what extent, could a sense of ethnic community be maintained? How did relations with other ethnoreligious groups influence

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identity? What was the role of religion, gender, and class? How did local and external forces 
combine to influence expressions and understandings of Irishness? These and other questions 
will be addressed through five chapters, each with a different thematic focus: associational 
life; the Catholic Church and education; politics; as well as two chapters which examine 
responses to Irish nationalism.

The central argument is that Irish-Catholic communities cannot be understood in 
isolation. Identities were created and sustained by the complex interaction of local, regional, 
national, and transnational networks. Through such mechanisms as ethnic, benevolent, and 
nationalist associations, for example, Catholics of Irish birth or descent constructed their 
understandings of Irishness from outside sources, but the day-to-day expression of these 
identities was inherently local. At the same time, religion, class, and gender influenced how 
ethnicity was conceived and articulated, and these processes varied considerably both within 
and between these three cities. The comparative study provides an excellent method for 
understanding how different networks, both local and external, came to define Irish 
identities.

The period between 1880 and the 1920s is chosen because it allows us to compare 
three Irish-Catholic communities in different stages of development and in separate national 
contexts. As will be discussed in further detail in chapter one, migration from Ireland to St. 
John’s and Halifax was largely over before the great potato famine of 1845-1850. In St. 
John’s, Catholics of Irish birth or descent formed a majority of the population throughout 
most of our period, while in Halifax they were a substantial minority. Irish migration to 
Portland occurred during and after the famine, with a substantial wave occurring in the

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2 St. John’s was the capital of the Dominion of Newfoundland, which did not join Canada until 1949. 
This is why the term “British North American” rather than “Canadian” is used when discussing Halifax and St. 
John’s.
1880s. This study compares two well-integrated, multi-generational populations that existed in a British-imperial context with a (mostly) newly-arrived immigrant and second-generation population who lived in a “Yankee stronghold.” Furthermore, the terminal date of 1923 allows us to investigate the sudden and dramatic upsurge in Irish-disaporic identity that occurred during the Anglo-Irish War, 1919-1921, which was significant in all three ports.

While Protestants of Irish descent will occasionally feature in this study, it is essentially an investigation of Irish-Catholic community and identity. There were a small number of Irish Protestants in each of the cities, but migration from Ireland to all three was overwhelmingly Catholic. Furthermore, the ethnic, benevolent, and nationalist associations which are critical in reconstructing Irish identities had almost exclusively Catholic memberships, and the paucity of nominal census records (which will be discussed in further detail below) mean that identifiably Irish-Protestant experiences are difficult to gauge. Local Protestants – mostly those of English and Scottish descent – do play an important role here. Not only did they consistently engage in Irish affairs throughout the period, they were the principal ethnoreligious “Other” next to which Irish identities can be understood.

This study, then, is about how the Irish-Catholic diaspora varied over time and space, and how three communities on the eastern prow of North America engaged with the broader diaspora. Ethnic identity was constantly reinvented over time and across generations, but engagement with the ancestral homeland continued well into the twentieth century in each city. What follows should not only enhance our knowledge of Irishness in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, but also contribute to our understanding of the Irish diaspora as an interconnected, transnational phenomenon.

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Historiography

A comparative study of Irish-Catholic community and identity must engage with several bodies of literature: works on ethnic and diaspora theory, studies of the broader Irish diaspora, particularly those which deal with the multi-generational ethnic group; and finally the local historical literatures that examine Irish communities in each of the three port cities investigated here.

An important objective of this project is to determine the ways in which the second-, third- and fourth-generation descendants of Irish-Catholic migrants maintained a sense of Irish identity across space and time. In order to address this question, a brief discussion of ethnic and diaspora theory is necessary. Historians, political scientists, cultural theorists, anthropologists, and sociologists have produced a substantial scholarship on what constitutes ethnic groups, ethnic identities, and diasporas. Many see ethnicity as a tool which is employed by a population who are competing with perceived “others” for economic, material and political resources. Others have proposed specific characteristics or typologies which define diasporas. William Safran, for example, highlights six features which define a diasporic population. These include a historical dispersal from a “centre” to a foreign periphery, the retention of a collective memory about the homeland, a perceived rejection by the host society, the belief that the homeland remains the place where their descendants should eventually return, a commitment to the safety and prosperity of the ancestral homeland and, finally, continued relations – either direct or indirect – with the old country.

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Safran also notes that a true diasporic community must be a minority.\(^5\) As pointed out by James Clifford, however, those who study diasporic identities must remain aware of the multitude of experiences. An “ideal type” of diaspora could result in some groups being seen as more or less diasporic than others, thus diminishing the utility of the concept especially when investigating a multi-generational ethnic group.\(^6\)

Formulaic definitions of ethnicity and diaspora are of little use in understanding the variety of ways in which Irish identities were articulated in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. My work, therefore, deals most directly with theories that account for how ethnicity changes over time and space. The most relevant approach, postulated by Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., defines ethnicity as a “process of construction and invention which incorporates, adapts and amplifies pre-existing communal solidarities, cultural attributes and historical memories.”\(^7\) For Conzen, ethnic identities are constantly changing and being re-invented. The strength of ethnic identity can rise and fall over time, and its evolution depends heavily on local temporal and spatial contexts.\(^8\) Geographic factors such as settlement patterns and proximity to other ethnic populations have had a significant impact on the evolution of ethnicity, while crises which challenge a group’s core values – such as political


\(^7\) Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., “The Invention of Ethnicity: Perspectives from the USA,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12.1 (1992): 4-5. It is worth pointing out that Conzen was by no means the first scholar to note that ethnic identities are continuously evolving. In their seminal study, Glazer and Moynihan noted that “ethnic groups [...] are continuously recreated by new experiences in America.” See Glazer and Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, 17.

\(^8\) Conzen, “The Invention of Ethnicity,” 5; 12.
developments in the ancestral homeland – can mobilize “latent ethnic constituencies” causing a resurgence in expressions of identity.\(^9\)

Like Conzen, Mary Waters’ study of early twentieth-century migration from southeast Europe to the United States also supports the idea that ethnicity is constantly “in flux.”\(^{10}\) Waters highlights ethnic identity as being generally self-ascribed: a matter of personal choice. The choice is not always straightforward. The construction of an individual’s ethnic identity often begins in the home at a very young age, and identities change over time as the individual becomes more fully aware of their ethnic background. In Waters’ study, for example, ethnic affiliation was often complicated by mixed ancestry and neighborhoods. As such, identities within a certain population can fluctuate widely through time and across generations.\(^{11}\)

Waters was not the first to identify ethnic identity as a matter of choice. The work of Herbert J. Gans from the late-1970s in which he coined the concept of “symbolic ethnicity” remains significant to the student of multigenerational identity. Gans studied third- and fourth-generation ethnics in 1960s and 1970s America to probe the idea of a perceived “ethnic revival.” He argues that rather than a true revival, what was being observed was an “ethnicity of last resort,” which can be termed symbolic ethnicity.\(^{12}\) By the 1970s, the descendants of nineteenth-century immigrants were in many cases middle class and “scattered throughout suburbia.”\(^{13}\) The old ethnic networks and institutions which had been important for their immigrant ancestors in adjusting to life in the new world, securing

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\(^{13}\) *Ibid.*, 5.
employment, learning English and providing venues for socializing were no longer relevant. Instead, the descendants of these immigrants articulated their ethnic identities through “symbols” such as food, religious rites, celebrating ethnic feast days and, occasionally, engaging in the politics of the homeland.  

Symbolic ethnicity, therefore, may be defined as “a nostalgic allegiance to the culture of the immigrant generation, or that of the old country; a love for and pride in a tradition that can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour.” After three or four generations, the expression of ethnic identity had essentially become a leisure activity, and the extent to which an individual subscribed to a particular ethnic affiliation was an intensely personal choice. This study is not, therefore, a broad investigation of all Catholics of Irish birth or descent in the three cities. Many of them would not have identified with the land of their ancestors at all, while for others, ethnicity was subservient to class, gender, regional, or national identities. Instead, the focus is on how a sense or awareness of Irishness made its way into the lives of these Catholics, and how Irish identity was understood and articulated.

The most important conclusion to draw from the theoretical literature is that identities are complex phenomena that constantly evolve over time and space. Ethnicity, especially for the descendants of the immigrant generation, was a choice. We cannot assume that all Catholics of Irish birth or descent in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland maintained a sense of Irishness, and that this was transmitted across generations. The reality is that particular networks, institutions, and symbols encouraged some individuals to maintain a strong connection to the land of their ancestors, while others did not. This distinction must be kept in mind when attempting any analysis of multi-generational ethnic identity.

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14 Ibid., 10.
15 Ibid., 9.
The second body of literature that informs this work is the substantial scholarship on the Irish diaspora. There is insufficient space here for a comprehensive review. Discussion of the more specialized subfields of Irish-diaspora historiography, such as those that investigate responses to Irish nationalism, will be examined within the body of this thesis. Instead, this section will focus on some of the key works and approaches which assist us in understanding the “marvellously complex phenomenon” of the Irish diaspora.\(^{16}\)

In the 1990s, it was estimated that there were seventy-million people of Irish descent in the world.\(^{17}\) For the purposes of analysis, a more nuanced and specific definition of the Irish diaspora is necessary. Among the scholars to address this critical question, one of the most prominent is Donald H. Akenson. In his influential primer, Akenson employs the metaphor of the Fabergé egg to introduce the complexity of the diaspora. He emphasizes it as a global phenomenon. Scholars must avoid restricting their understanding to particular regions or nations – the United States or the United Kingdom, for example. Furthermore, Akenson highlights the diaspora as a multi-generational and multi-religious entity. It includes those of Irish descent, as well as both Catholics and Protestants. The critical distinction which determines whether an individual is a member of a broader Irish ethnic group is whether or not they maintain a sense of Irish identity.\(^{18}\) The question of identity, therefore, becomes essential in understanding what constitutes the Irish diaspora, and accordingly has become a key focus of the historiography. Its significance was also highlighted by Kevin


\(^{17}\) This figure has been cited by numerous scholars. See for example Raines, *The Irish-American in Popular Culture*, 207; Catherine Nash, “Genealogical Identities,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 20.1 (2002): 35.

\(^{18}\) Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, 3-4; 6; 9; 10. At its most basic level, “Irish identity” could consist of the mere recognition of being of Irish birth or descent. The historian, however, must search for more overt, tangible ways in which individuals engaged with their ancestral homeland, such as participation in nationalist or ethnic associations. It is this public ethnicity which forms the basis for this, and many other, studies of the Irish diaspora.
Kenny, who argues that the key determinant for membership in the Irish diaspora is whether those “of a given dispersed population see themselves in diasporic terms, articulating a sense of common identity among themselves as well as with the homeland.”\(^{19}\) Of course, the understanding of what it meant to be “Irish” varied widely. The different ways in which identity was conceived and articulated has resulted in numerous scholarly methods for gauging Irish ethnicity, and it is these that must be introduced here.

Much of the scholarship from the 1980s and 1990s focuses on single, national populations, and primarily examines the immigrant (first) generation. One of the most significant and controversial works to emerge from this period is Kerby Miller’s *Emigrants and Exiles*. In a study of Irish-Catholic migration to the United States based largely on emigrant correspondence, Miller argues that identities were sustained by the perception that those who left Ireland were involuntary migrants who were exiled from their ancestral homeland by political and economic circumstances. Furthermore, he emphasizes the significance of Irish-Catholic culture in hampering the adjustment to American society. In Ireland, Catholicism emphasized communal values and dependence which were at odds with the individualism required to thrive in large, industrial cities.\(^{20}\) Some scholars have criticized Miller’s approach, even going so far as to call the exile thesis “condescending.”\(^{21}\) Akenson, for example, highlights emigrant agency, maintaining that the decision to leave Ireland was a personal one, and could have been based on numerous factors. Furthermore, far from being culturally handicapped, many Irish emigrants possessed advantages not held by other ethnic minorities in the United States: the ability to speak English, as well as, in the later-nineteenth

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\(^{19}\) Kevin Kenny, “Diaspora and Comparison,” 143.


\(^{21}\) Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, 11. It is important to note, though, that Miller did not argue that the Irish in America were indeed involuntary exiles – rather that they perceived themselves as such, and it was this mentality that was a mainstay of their ethnic identities.
century at least, a degree of literacy.²² A lack of attention to regional variation within the United States is another criticism of Miller’s work. By focusing mostly on Irish Catholics who settled in large American cities, he frequently misses the experiences of those who settled in smaller towns or in rural settings. In many cases, these individuals and their descendants achieved considerable degrees of economic and political success, and the “exile” mentality likely did not apply.²³

Local microstudies of Irish communities have contributed significantly to our knowledge of the variety of diasporic experiences. By focusing on a particular city, town or region, the historian can develop a more detailed and precise understanding of the networks and institutions which sustained Irish identity. There are many examples. David Emmons chronicles the unique and successful mining community of Butte, Montana, with a focus on how Catholics of Irish birth and descent exerted control over a vital occupational niche.²⁴ Another more recent example is the work of John Belchem on Irish Liverpool. Here, Belchem examines how a “complex interplay of cultural and structural factors” shaped Irish-Catholic identities in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Liverpool.²⁵ In a large, stratified community, Belchem focuses especially on the role of the Catholic clergy in sustaining a distinct Irish identity from generation to generation. For the Irish Catholics of Liverpool, Catholicism became “an affirmation of their essential Irishness.”²⁶ In addition to the symbiotic relationship between Irishness and Catholicism, Belchem examined other aspects of life in Liverpool to understand the ways in which “Irishness” made its way into day-to-day

²²Ibid., 37-40.
²³Among the scholars to make this point is Reginald Byron, Irish America (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 55-56.
²⁶Ibid., 19.
routines. Chapters on Irish involvement in local politics, sports, and leisure, associational life, as well as responses to Irish nationalism allow for a holistic understanding of how identities were sustained and transmitted.

An important feature of Belchem’s work is his engagement with the Irish as a multi-generational ethnic group. Studies which have adopted this approach are particularly relevant to this dissertation. Another excellent example is the work of Timothy Meagher on the Irish Catholics of Worcester, Massachusetts. In *Inventing Irish America*, Meagher views ethnicity as “a cultural construction, accomplished over time,” – a definition strongly influenced by Kathleen Neils Conzen.²⁷ The study engages directly with how Irish-Catholic identity was transmitted from one generation to the next, particularly between 1880 and 1925. To understand the evolution of ethnicity, Meagher examines Irish Americans in two ways. First, he examines how everyday expressions of Irishness shifted across generations; and, second, how their relationships with ethnic “others” evolved over time. Meagher’s argument highlights local economic and political circumstances, rather than generational transition, as being the key factor in ethnic development.²⁸ In Worcester, he notes three distinct phases of Irish ethnic expression: during the 1880s, Irish-Catholics went through a period of cooperation and accommodation with their Yankee-Protestant neighbours. In the 1890s, as the town’s economy stagnated, nativism and ethnic competition increased. This resulted in a more distinct, assertive Irish identity, exemplified by the rapid growth of ethnic associations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). From the 1900s to the 1920s, the economy of Worcester stabilized, and the American-born generation of Irish Catholics came of age. This period saw the triumph of an assertive, pan-ethnic Catholicism, as evidenced through

²⁸ Ibid., 14.
the decline of identifiably Irish associations such as the AOH and the growth of the pan-ethnic Knights of Columbus. A temporary resurgence in expressions of Irish identity occurred during the Anglo-Irish War from 1919 until 1921; echoing patterns seen elsewhere in Irish America. Meagher’s contention that Irish ethnic identity rose and fell considerably across generations reinforces the conclusions of theorists such as Conzen. His methodology – particularly his use of associational life, politics, and nationalism – are important in informing my own.

The work of Mark McGowan on Irish-Catholic identity in Toronto provides another model for gauging the evolution of ethnicity. In The Waning of the Green, McGowan argues that over the course of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, expressions of Irish identity in the “Queen’s City” diminished as Catholics became increasingly Canadianized. As in Liverpool and Worcester, Roman Catholicism remained the most distinct badge of Irish heritage. McGowan notes the significance of local economic and political circumstances in determining how ethnicity developed. In this case, the British North American context resulted in notably different expressions of identity than their Irish-American cousins. In Toronto, there was limited anti-British sentiment, as well as an absence of any “exile” mentality. By the twentieth century, a remarkable amount of social integration had occurred. Irish Catholics were well-represented in all social strata, and were geographically dispersed throughout the city. McGowan’s methodology is reminiscent of both Meagher and Belchem’s. In order to understand Irish-Catholic identity in Toronto, he looks at several aspects of life: responses to nationalism, participation in imperial conflicts

29 Ibid., 9-12; 349.
31 Ibid., 7-9.
such as the South African and First World Wars, Catholic education, the Catholic press and the role of the clergy are all investigated as agents or indicators of ethnic change. The influence of this methodology on my own is substantial, while the differences in how Irish identity was expressed in British North America versus the United States will also be an important theme of this dissertation.

Some recent historians of the Irish diaspora have made a particular effort to integrate theoretical perspectives into their studies. Examples include the work of Stephanie Raines, who calls for increased attention to postcolonial diaspora theory in the study of later-generation Irish-American communities, and also Bronwyn Walter’s research on the relationship between ethnic and gender identities in Britain. The most relevant work here, though, is Alan O’Day’s attempt to develop a theory of ethnicity that fits nineteenth- and twentieth-century Irish experiences. In constructing this model, he coined the term “mutative ethnicity.” This conception accepts that Irish identities varied widely across the diaspora and through time. Unlike Gans’ symbolic definition, the key characteristic of mutative ethnicity is that ethnic expression was an active part of day-to-day life, and was closely connected to how individuals accessed resources. For O’Day, Irish identities are sustained through “the continued allocation of benefits such as employment, housing or communal sociability.” Without a common ethnic identity, the capacity for mutual benefit would be diminished. In terms of this study, such an understanding of ethnicity may be more applicable to experiences in Portland, where by the 1880s Catholics of Irish birth or descent were still in competition for economic and political resources with their Yankee-Protestant neighbours as

34 Ibid., 323.
well as other ethnic minorities. In the two British-North American centres, Irish Catholics had achieved a high degree of political and economic success, so the expressions of Irish identity that are examined in the body of this study rarely fit the “mutual benefit” model. Some of his conclusions, though, are relevant for all three ports, and again reiterate some of the most common findings of Irish diasporic scholars: Irish ethnicity evolved considerably over time and space, and the internal dynamics of a community are essential in understandings its evolution.35

Studies of individual Irish-Catholic communities have been vital in enhancing our understanding of how diasporic experiences differed from one place to another. They are not, however, without their limitations. Given the substantial impact of local contexts upon Irish identity, scholars such as Meagher have questioned whether the communities they study are typical or representative of a broader diasporic experience.36 Others, such as Akenson, have lamented the tendency to “slice up” the diaspora for the purposes of analysis. As revealing as microstudies can be, they struggle to inform us about how Irish-Catholic communities interacted and engaged with one another, as well as with broader regional, national, and transnational networks. For a more complete understanding of how the Irish diaspora functioned, historians such as Kevin Kenny have recommended transnational, comparative studies as a potentially revealing methodology.37 According to Kenny, such studies should be “transnational” – focusing on the movement of peoples from one country to another, as well as on links to the ancestral homeland; and also “cross-national” – comparing the settled communities in two or more national contexts, usually at the urban or regional level.38 This

35 Ibid., 335.
36 Meagher, Inventing Irish America, 14.
38 Kenny, “Diaspora and Comparison,” 135; 150.
approach will allow historians to understand how the construction of Irish ethnicity varied depending on national or regional settings. My study of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland is heavily influenced by Kenny’s call. Although the comparative study is, in one way, just another manner of “slicing up” the diaspora, it provides the historian with a more in-depth understanding of how Irish experiences varied from place to place. The choice of two British-North American ports in addition to an American one will allow us to directly test how local, regional, and national circumstances affected the evolution of Irish-Catholic identity.

Other comparative histories of the Irish diaspora are methodologically and conceptually relevant to this work. Matthew Gallman, for example, compares the responses of Philadelphia and Liverpool to the Irish famine migration of the 1840s, with an emphasis on urban planning and development. For him, comparative methodology is key to “sorting out the relative importance of diverse forces shaping decision making.” Particularly revealing here is the choice of cities. Gallman points out that for an urban comparison to be effective, the cities chosen must possess similar characteristics. During the famine migration, both Philadelphia and Liverpool had large pre-famine Irish-Catholic populations and both received substantial numbers of impoverished migrants, which created comparable urban crises. These similarities allow for a detailed comparison of how British and American national contexts affected responses. The need for similarity between cities in an urban comparative study was an important motivation behind the choice of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland as the subjects of this investigation. Three small-to-medium sized Atlantic ports,

39 Ibid., 135; 146.
41 Ibid., 6; 17.
each with influential, well-integrated Irish-Catholic populations, but existing within different national contexts, as well as (especially in the case of Portland) drawing Irish-Catholics from different migration streams should allow for a revealing comparison. A study of, for example, St. John’s and New York City would be considerably less effective.

The transnational work of Malcolm Campbell on the United States and Australia, largely influenced by Kevin Kenny’s appeal for studies of the diaspora beyond the confines of the nation state, is also influential here. Like many scholars before him, Campbell draws attention to the need to overcome the idea of “Irishness” as a homogenous phenomenon.\textsuperscript{42} Furthermore, he emphasizes the impact of local conditions and ideologies in defining diasporic experiences.\textsuperscript{43} The most significant aspect of Campbell’s methodology is his use of regional comparisons, rather than broader, national ones. In order to gain a detailed understanding of the diasporic populations one is studying, the comparisons must be at the urban or regional level. A more focused study “allows for a more precise assessment of the relative influences of cultural heritage and local conditions in shaping immigrant experiences.”\textsuperscript{44} Campbell adopts this approach by examining Irish Catholics in California and eastern Australia – two areas where the immigrants achieved rapid economic and political prosperity, as well as those who settled in Minnesota and New South Wales. His success in understanding Irish accomplishments demonstrates the potential of regional or urban comparative methodology.

Perhaps the most relevant comparative work is by William Jenkins on Buffalo and Toronto. It is salient in a number of ways. First, the study contrasts Irish experiences in a

\textsuperscript{42} Malcolm Campbell, \textit{Ireland’s New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815-1922} (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), vii.

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, xi-xii.

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, 66; 103.
Canadian context with an American one. Many of his conclusions, such as the impact of imperial versus republican concepts of liberty on responses to Irish nationalism, mirror my own. More significant, however, is Jenkins’ use of Irish social networks to analyze community and identity. The various ways in which members of the diaspora interacted with others, both Irish and non-Irish, can tell us a great deal about how ethnic identities were conceived and understood. For Jenkins, examining family, friendship, workplace, associational (religious or lay), and business networks allows for “totalising notions of a singular or unified ‘global’ or ‘North American’ diaspora to be deconstructed.” These networks allowed for the transmission of symbolic or ideological meanings which defined cultural identity. A focused, comparative study allows Jenkins to conclude that there was “not one, but several, Irish diasporas with multiple ways of envisioning and relating to their homeland.” The examination of Irish-Catholic networks will be a central theme throughout my dissertation. By studying how Catholics of Irish birth or descent interacted within their communities, we can see the ways in which Irishness entered their social worlds. Furthermore, these networks – in particular ethnic and nationalist associations – often extended beyond the local level. It is therefore possible to place Irish communities in a broader national or transnational context. How did Irish Catholics in the three ports studied here interact and engage with other diasporic communities? Which networks helped sustain a sense of Irishness within each community? In what ways were Irish identities sustained or influenced by external factors? Such questions are central to this project, and the comparative

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46 Jenkins, “Deconstructing Diasporas;” 360.
47 Ibid., 361.
approach, like those of Kenny, Gallman, Campbell and Jenkins, will allow for a holistic understanding of how the Irish identities evolved and were transmitted over time and space.

Although it is an objective of this dissertation to contribute to our understanding of the broader Irish diaspora, it must be kept in mind that this is a study of three distinct Irish-Catholic communities. It engages directly with the historical literature of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. Each of these local historiographies possesses its own characteristic debates and lacunae. These must be introduced so that it is clear how this study contributes to our knowledge of Irish-Catholic community and identity in the three ports.

The historiography of the Irish in Newfoundland is rich and varied. Numerous themes have been investigated. Historical geographer John Mannion, for example, has studied Irish migration and settlement in Newfoundland, the Irish provisions trade, material culture transfer, as well as British allegations of Irish disloyalty in the eighteenth century. The experiences of Irish women, particularly on the southern Avalon Peninsula, have been the subject of several excellent studies by Willeen Keough. The links between Ireland and the Catholic Church in Newfoundland for the early-to-mid nineteenth century, meanwhile, have


been studied by John FitzGerald, Philip McCann, and John Greene. These works are essential in gaining a thorough understanding of Irish Newfoundland. The most relevant works to this dissertation, however, are those which engage directly with Irish-Catholic ethnic identity. Two authors in particular stand out: Willeen Keough and Carolyn Lambert.

In addition to her work on gender, Keough has taken up the question of Irish-Newfoundland identity in two articles on sectarian violence in late-nineteenth century Harbour Grace. By examining the Harbour Grace Affray, one of the worst examples of sectarian violence in Newfoundland’s history in which five people were killed when members of the Orange Order attempted to march through the largely Catholic neighbourhood of Riverhead on December 26th, 1883, she argues that expressions of ethnic identity drew upon old world symbols, but were articulated into strategies to compete for new world resources. Ethnicity was refashioned in response to local circumstances, drawing from both sides of the Atlantic in an ongoing process of negotiation.

A key difference between Newfoundland and many other North American settings was the lack of a substantial Irish-famine migration. The associated anti-English, frequently anti-Protestant exile mentality which influenced Irish-Catholic identities elsewhere in the diaspora was generally absent. Nevertheless, tensions did arise between Newfoundland Catholics, who were almost exclusively of Irish descent, and Protestants, who were mostly English. The mixed communities of Conception Bay were particularly prone to this type of


\[52 \text{ Keough, “Contested Terrains,” 37; “Ethnicity as Intercultural Dialogue,” 18.} \]
sectarian tension. Despite the denominational compromise of the 1860s which attempted to ensure that both would be represented in cabinet, tensions remained and Catholics and Protestants often found themselves on opposite sides of the political spectrum.\textsuperscript{53} In the 1880s, the cod fishery was experiencing a decline, and local economies were stagnant. In response to the economic downturn, Catholics and Protestants chose “not to cooperate or combine against their economic betters, [...] rather, they turned against each other.”\textsuperscript{54}

Ethnic identities in Newfoundland were “inextricably linked to religion.”\textsuperscript{55} A key question for the ethnic historian becomes, in the case of ethno-religious conflict, what identifiably “ethnic” symbols were invoked? While the violence during the Harbour Grace Affray was essentially between Catholics and Protestants (represented, in this case, by the Orange Order), the riot and its aftermath were marked by ethnic symbolism. The green flag and the Irish harp, for example, were the symbols of the Catholics during the affray. During the court case following the outbreak, the term “Riverhead Fenians” – a reference to the revolutionary Irish nationalists of the 1860s – was frequently applied to the Harbour Grace Catholics.\textsuperscript{56} Ethnic symbols and narratives from the old world were being adapted to circumstances in the new. In 1880s Conception Bay, therefore, ethnicity became a “vital strategy for laying claim to power and resources.”\textsuperscript{57}

Keough’s analysis tells us a great deal about the reciprocal relationship between ethnicity and religion in nineteenth-century Newfoundland. Her conclusions from an economically depressed part of Conception Bay, though, cannot be readily applied to the urban environment of St. John’s, where inter-ethnic competition for resources may not have

\textsuperscript{53} Keough, “Contested Terrains,” 56.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 54; Keough, “Ethnicity as Intercultural Dialogue,” 24.
\textsuperscript{57} Keough, “Contested Terrains,” 70.
been as acute. Indeed, a feature of Irish-Newfoundland historiography has been a general lack of attention to the capital city. Carolyn Lambert’s 2010 PhD dissertation has gone a long way in addressing this lacuna. In yet another study influenced by Conzen’s definition of ethnicity as an ongoing process, Lambert argues that by the late-nineteenth century, expressions of Irish ethnicity were waning in St. John’s. Catholicism, combined with a strong sense of Newfoundland native identity, was replacing Irishness as the basis of “community solidarity.”

Lambert’s study of St. John’s ranges from the 1840s to the late-1880s. During this period, the Irish-born population of St. John’s died off, although the Irish-Catholic ethnic group remained at just over half the city’s population. Her study aims to capture how identities shifted during this generational transition. To do so, she examines several aspects of Irish-Newfoundland’s political, religious and social worlds: the Catholic Church, education, politics as well as engagement with Irish nationalism. She concludes that by the 1880s, Catholics of Irish descent in Newfoundland were well-integrated into the colony’s corridors of political and economic power, as evidenced by the (brief) appointment of Ambrose Shea as Governor in September, 1885. Owing to the absence of sustained, anti-Catholic nativism, there was no need for “ethnic defences,” as there was in Harbour Grace and elsewhere in the diaspora. Catholicism, rather than Irishness, triumphed as the principal “badge of allegiance,” and Newfoundland nationalism replaced Irish as an “unhyphenated identity” evolved. Furthermore, when Irishness was expressed, such as in response to Irish

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58 Carolyn Lambert, “Far from the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1840-86,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010), 35.
59 Ibid., 42.
60 Ibid., 381.
61 Ibid., 391; 394.
nationalist activities, it was marked by an unwavering loyalty to the British Empire and the Crown, echoing the findings of McGowan for Toronto.\textsuperscript{62}

Lambert accepts, particularly when dealing with nationalism, that a “romantic attachment” to Ireland remained.\textsuperscript{63} This study of Catholic identities in St. John’s from the 1880s to the 1920s will attempt to gauge the strength and depth of this romantic attachment, and in so doing contribute to a growing debate on the enduring nature of Irish-Catholic identity in Newfoundland.\textsuperscript{64} Generally, my arguments support Lambert’s conclusions. By the twentieth century, native-Newfoundland Catholic identities were undoubtedly in the ascendancy, and unlike Irish-Catholic populations in, for example, the United States, those in Newfoundland were marked by a strong allegiance to the British Empire.\textsuperscript{65} Expressions of Irish ethnicity did not disappear entirely, however, and it would be wrong to say that Catholics of Irish descent were isolated from Irish diasporic networks by this time. The Catholic Church, as well as Catholic education by the Irish Christian Brothers, retained a strong Irish character into the twentieth century. Irish Newfoundlander continued to engage with Irish nationalism – sending money overseas, passing resolutions in favour of Irish Home Rule, sending delegates to Irish Race Conventions, sending athletes to the aborted Irish Race Olympics in Dublin in 1922, and even forming the “Newfoundland Gaelic League” in 1922: a non-political organization devoted to the study and propagation of Irish-Gaelic language.

\textsuperscript{63} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 353.
\textsuperscript{65} A possible exception to this, as we will see, is in 1920 and 1921, when reports of the Anglo-Irish War caused a short-lived nationalist frenzy in St. John’s, much as in other parts of the diaspora.
literature and culture in St. John’s. It is my hope that such findings will add to our understanding of Irish-Catholic cultural heritage in Newfoundland.

The historiography of the Irish in Halifax is sparse. No substantial monograph exists, and there are only a handful of articles that deal with the Irish in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Halifax. The literature is dominated by Terrence Punch, whose work mostly focuses on early-to-mid nineteenth century Irish experiences. He rarely discusses the multi-generational ethnic group, focusing instead on immigrant experiences and origins. Robert Harvey has addressed Irish-Catholic associational life in a short history of Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society, while twentieth-century nationalism has been briefly assessed by Padraig O’Siadhail in a study of Halifax’s Self-Determination for Ireland League. A number of social historians have also devoted attention to the Irish experience in Halifax in the late-nineteenth century. The most prominent is Judith Fingard, whose work on crime and deviancy focuses in large part on the Irish Catholics of Halifax’s Upper Streets. David Sutherland and A.J.B Johnson, meanwhile, have studied sectarianism and nativism in late-nineteenth-century Halifax – work which complements and informs my own. Irish-Catholic community and identity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries remain under-chronicled, and my thesis should provide valuable insight into the city’s ethnic relations during this period.

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The Irish of Portland have not garnered as much scholarly attention as those in some other American centres, but there is nevertheless a formidable body of literature that deals with experiences from the 1880s to the 1920s. The first major study of the Irish in Portland was Michael C. Connolly’s PhD dissertation on the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS). Although the work may primarily be defined as a piece of labour history, the PLSBS was largely composed of Irish dockworkers.\(^70\) The study shows a feature of Irish-Catholic life that was not seen in St. John’s and Halifax: a distinctly ethnic labour union. This demonstrates the position of Portland’s Irish as a recently-arrived immigrant group competing for resources with an entrenched Yankee-Protestant population. For the members of the PLSBS, expressions of Irish identity were part of day-to-day competition for political and economic resources.

Much of the research from Connolly’s dissertation found its way into his 2010 monograph, *Seated by the Sea*, a more general history of the port of Portland. The most substantial addition is an excellent chapter on the Catholic Church’s interaction with the longshoremen, particularly Bishop Louis S. Walsh’s role as mediator in a 1921 strike.\(^71\) The Church was particularly keen to temper labour radicalism in the city, while at the same time not estranging the longshoremen. Rather than emphasizing ethnic competition for resources, Catholic bishops were generally keen to promote cooperation – especially between Catholics.\(^72\) The complex relationship between the Church and Portland’s Irish community will be an important theme of this study.

\(^70\) Connolly, “The Irish Longshoremen of Portland, Maine,” especially 96-147.
\(^72\) Ibid., 113.
Several articles published in Connolly’s edited volume, *They Change Their Sky: The Irish in Maine*, deal specifically with the Portland Irish. Connolly includes a chapter on dockworkers’ adherence to Irish nationalism in the early-twentieth century, Kenneth Nilsen provides a chapter on the Irish language, Matthew Jude Barker writes about Irish ethnic and benevolent associations, and Eileen Eagan and Patricia Finn analyse the experiences of Irish women.73 These articles provide a solid basis for my work. The most important contribution of this study will be to place the Portland Irish in a broader national and transnational context. How, for example, did an organization such as the Irish National League of Portland operate locally, and more importantly, how did it engage with its parent organization in America, as well as with Ireland? What was the balance between local and external factors in terms of dictating Portland’s response to Irish affairs? This approach will permit an understanding of how ideas flowed in and out of Portland, as well as where the impetus for such ethnic and nationalist associations came from.

The choice of the three ports has allowed me to build upon a thorough body of historical scholarship, while at the same time ensuring that this dissertation will contribute to our understanding of Irish-Catholic life in all of them. The works on ethnicity and diaspora theory provide the overall framework for this project, while those on the Irish diaspora – particularly Meagher, McGowan, Belchem and Jenkins – suggest themes through which Irish ethnic identity can be gauged and understood.

Sources, Method and Structure

Comparative studies, particularly those involving three or more localities, present a host of conceptual and methodological problems for the historian. Finding comparable data sets for the three ports has been a considerable challenge, as many of the documents traditionally relied upon are either incomplete or missing for one of them. For example, few nominal census records exist for Newfoundland covering 1880-1923. Canadian censuses covering Nova Scotia are only available until 1911, while the 1890 United States census for all of Maine was destroyed by fire. The implications of the lack of comparable statistical sources will be discussed below, but first we must introduce the most significant body documents used in this study: local newspapers from 1880 to 1922.

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries witnessed tremendous change for newspapers in North America. Daily papers in all three cities expanded from four-page publications printed by hand presses to modern, twelve- to twenty-page editions containing local and international news, advertisements, information for women, youth, as well as dedicated sports and business sections. Newspapers are useful here in a number of ways. For the Catholics of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, the daily press provided the most consistent means of following events in the ancestral homeland. Reports on Irish affairs were printed almost constantly throughout the period. Columns titled “Affairs in Ireland” or “Irish News” were frequent. In most cases, these would take the form of telegraphed reports from London documenting the activities of Irish nationalist parties and political leaders. Generally, Irish news was readily available for those who sought it. For the historian of the Irish diaspora, the papers provide excellent detail about Catholic associational life. Details of

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74 A small number of census booklets from 1911, covering St. John’s East, have survived. Their limited scope, however, make a sampling method difficult to apply.
meetings, social events, executives and, occasionally, lists of members were often reported in local papers. This is particularly useful since the records of most Irish-Catholic ethnic associations for the period have not survived. Fundraising for Irish causes, the formation of nationalist associations, resolutions on Irish affairs by local Catholics, and the participation of local delegates in regional, national, and international conferences were also reported in the press. Locally-written editorials and letters to the editor on Irish affairs appeared relatively frequently and provide a more direct means of gauging popular opinion. Newspapers also assist in charting Irish-Catholic political involvement, in addition to informing us about important educational and devotional matters.

It must be kept in mind that newspapers during this period were by no means detached, unfiltered reflections of local opinion. Most were intensely partisan, and their commentaries were coloured by distinct political agendas. In order to be able to read these documents critically, the individual newspapers used here must be briefly introduced. For St. John’s, this study relies primarily on three papers: the *Evening Telegram*, the *Evening Herald*, and the *Daily News*. The *Telegram* was the most substantial. Established in 1879, and aimed at a “Protestant readership,” the paper was the press organ of the Liberal party, particularly after it was re-formed by William Whiteway in 1885. It expanded to a 12-page format in 1906, and claimed a daily readership of 40,000 by 1913, though this figure was almost certainly exaggerated. The *Herald* was the *Telegram*’s rival publication. From 1882 until 1889, it was known as the *Evening Mercury*, and supported Conservative interests. In

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77 *Ibid.*, 42-43. While the paper could generally be labelled “Conservative” during the period, its political affiliations did shift somewhat during the period. It supported Whiteway up until 1885, but it 1900 briefly lent its support to Sir Robert Bond’s Liberals. It remained a Liberal paper until 1917, before becoming the organ for the People’s Party.
the mid-1880s, during the period of heightened ethno-religious tensions in the wake of the Harbour Grace Affray, the paper was virulently anti-Catholic – though later editors of the paper bemoaned this stance. In the twentieth century it became the press organ for Edward Patrick Morris’s Catholic-dominated People’s Party before ceasing publication in 1919.\textsuperscript{78} The \textit{Daily News} was established in 1894 as a politically independent tribune, but quickly developed a Conservative outlook, opposing the \textit{Telegram} and Sir William Whiteway.\textsuperscript{79}

The Newfoundland press during this period, with the exception of the mid-1880s, was not sectarianized. Unlike in larger North-American cities, there were few papers which were identifiably Catholic or Irish.\textsuperscript{80} Two publications, though, did cater to a Catholic readership, and while they were relatively short-lived, they serve as important sources here. The \textit{Terra Nova Advocate} was established in 1875 as an “organ and vindicator, especially in matters political, of the Catholic population,” while the \textit{Newfoundland Colonist} was established as an organ of Catholic opinion in the sectarian aftermath of the Harbour Grace Affray, and was published from 1886 until 1892.\textsuperscript{81}

Like St. John’s, three Halifax papers form the primary research base for that city: The \textit{Herald}, the \textit{Chronicle}, and the \textit{Acadian Recorder}. The papers were partisan in nature, but did not affiliate with any particular ethnoreligious sect. Before they merged in 1949, the \textit{Chronicle} and \textit{Herald} (as well as their associated evening publications, the \textit{Mail} and the \textit{Star}), were Halifax’s most prominent daily newspapers. The \textit{Herald} was founded in 1875 as a “faithful exponent of Conservative Party policy,” devoted to the “continuance of the British

\begin{footnotes}
\item[78] Ibid.
\item[79] Ibid., 32.
\item[80] Examples of newspapers which catered to Irish-Catholic readerships in other cities include the \textit{Boston Pilot}, as well as Toronto’s \textit{Irish Canadian} and \textit{Catholic Register}.
\item[81] Ellison, \textit{Directory of Newfoundland and Labrador Newspapers}, 102; 180.
\end{footnotes}
connection.” The paper rapidly gained popularity, despite the poor political fortunes of Nova Scotia’s Conservatives during this period. In 1892, it expanded to a twelve-page format and became increasingly associated with eye-catching, sensationalist headlines. The Herald became one of eastern Canada’s most influential papers in the early-twentieth century, claiming 100,000 daily readers on the eve of the First World War. Although some Conservative papers in British North America were marked by a decidedly anti-Catholic editorial policy, the Herald was closely allied with the Catholic clergy. Sermons and pastorals were frequently published, and, despite the owners and editorial staff being largely Anglo-Protestant, the paper’s religious outlook could has been described as being “more Catholic than the Pope.”

The Chronicle was Halifax’s leading Liberal organ. It was founded in 1844, and by the twentieth century was known for its “cool, measured” approach to reporting, especially when compared to its rival, the Herald. The Acadian Recorder was another Liberal publication, and was the city’s oldest newspaper during our period, having been established in 1813 by the Blackadar family. While the other Halifax papers evolved into multi-page, modern editions by the 1900s, the Recorder retained its four-page, hand-printed format until the end of its run in 1930. The paper covered associational life – particularly institutions such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians – in greater detail than its counterparts, and therefore serves as an informative source for this dissertation.

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82 William March, Red Line: The Chronicle-Herald and Mail-Star, 1875-1954 (Halifax: Chebucto Agencies, 1986), 1-2. The titles of these publications varied throughout the period under investigation here, but for the sake of consistency the papers will be referred to as the Halifax Herald, Morning Chronicle and Acadian Recorder, respectively.
83 Ibid., 66.
84 Ibid., 60; 69.
85 Ibid., v-vi.
86 Ibid., 55.
Portland’s newspaper press was also divided along party lines. The most significant publication for the historian of Irish-Catholic affairs is the Democratic organ, the *Eastern Argus*. The *Argus*, founded in 1803 and described as “uncompromisingly Democratic,” published daily until it was succeeded by the politically independent *Portland Herald* in January, 1921. The paper frequently contained reports on the Irish-Catholic community’s activities and their responses to affairs in the homeland. Its Republican rival, the *Press*, tended to cover less Irish news but it is still used here, particularly in investigating ethnic politics in Portland, while the *Portland Evening Express* and *Portland Sunday Telegram* (initially called the *Maine Sunday Telegram*) also serve as sources.

Newspapers are the most abundant source for this study, but their contents are supplemented by several other key bodies of records. For St. John’s and Halifax, the minute books of two of the cities’ most prominent Irish benevolent associations – St. John’s Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) as well as Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society (CIS) – have survived. Their contents are essential in reconstructing associational life, as well as the ways in which Irish-Catholic identities were understood and articulated. In Portland, the records of the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society are analogous, and, furthermore, these allow the historian to investigate an Irish-dominated labour union. Some documents relating to Portland’s Irish American Relief Association, St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society as well as the Portland Catholic Union are also used here. Church documents from all three cities are significant. Bishops’ correspondences, for example, reveal the ways in which the Catholic clergy in each port fostered links with the ancestral homeland as well as important information on Catholic education. Church publications, such as Portland’s *Maine Catholic Historical Magazine* likewise provide an alternative way of gauging Irish-Catholic opinions.

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87 *Eastern Argus*, January 24, 1921.
Censuses, when available, as well as city directories are useful in reconstructing the occupational background of Irish ethnic, benevolent, and nationalist associations. Together with material gleaned from newspapers, the range of sources employed here should provide a thorough understanding of how Irish identities made their way into day-to-day lives in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland.

Before moving on to the study’s structure, something must be said about what is omitted from it. Readers interested in statistical comparisons of Irish-Catholic occupational structure, social mobility, and family will be disappointed. I had originally planned to include a highly statistical second chapter comparing features such as family size, interdenominational marriage, women’s role in the economy, and occupational mobility across generations. A lack of comparable statistical data, however, has made this investigation virtually impossible. For St. John’s, there are few nominal census records available before 1921, while city directories did not record ethnicity or religion, and list only heads of households. Scholars such as Carolyn Lambert have worked around this by using John Mannion’s thorough list of Irish-Catholic surnames and drawing data samples from city directories. While this method is quite effective for the mid-nineteenth century, by the twentieth inter-denominational and inter-ethnic marriage make name-based sampling potentially inaccurate. Alternative sources such as parish censuses are, likewise, unavailable. Canadian censuses for Halifax up to 1911 are useful, but nominal lists for 1921 are not yet available to the historian. Finally, American censuses do not record religion, a problem highlighted by Donald Akenson as presenting considerable difficulties in reconstructing the

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88 See Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 29; 54-55.
Irish-American ethnic group. While parents’ place of birth is recorded, those who were more than two generations removed from Ireland would be missed in a data sample. Because of these inconsistencies, the margin of error for any in-depth statistical comparison is too high. Instead, this study relies on the qualitative sources listed above.

This study also lacks a distinct chapter on women and gender. The documents employed here are not particularly effective in revealing gendered aspects of the diasporic experience. Women, though, do have a prominent place in the analysis. In the investigation of associational life, for example, we shall see women taking an increasingly active role throughout the period. By the twentieth century, many Irish ethnic and benevolent associations had independent women’s auxiliaries. Women are even more significant in the discussion of responses to Irish nationalism. By the end of the period, they sat on the executives of local nationalist associations in positions equal to men. In other instances, such as with the Ladies’ Land League in 1880s Portland, women formed their own active, independent nationalist organizations. The role of women in Catholic education—particularly orders of nuns—is also an important topic here.

The intersection of ethnic and class identities is another feature of Irish-Catholic life that is not afforded its own chapter. Again, the shortcomings of the data are largely to blame. With the exception of Portland’s PLSBS, the experiences and opinions of working-class Irish Catholics are difficult to assess. The leaders of most benevolent and nationalist associations were from the middle classes, as were those who wrote letters to local newspapers. Like

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89 Akenson, The Irish Diaspora: A Primer, 225-228. In his doctoral research on Toronto and Buffalo, William Jenkins noted that “A major challenge facing the comparative researcher is a failure for the variables of interest to be recorded in a similar fashion.” Jenkins was able to use sources such as assessment rolls and city directories to make up for inconsistencies in census data and reconstruct Irish residency and occupational mobility. In this case, though, the near-total lack of nominal census data for St. John’s makes a similar method impossible to apply. See Jenkins, “Social and Geographical Mobility Among the Irish in Canada and the United States,” 54.
gender, though, questions of class are frequently discussed throughout the body of this dissertation. When examining associational life, for example, city directories and censuses are used to reconstruct the class background of ethnic and benevolent societies. Particular attention will be paid to the Irish-Catholic elite of each port, their backgrounds, and whether or not they came to be political or community leaders, while Irish-Catholic labour will be discussed when examining the PLSBS.

Similarly, race does not feature prominently in this study of ethnicity. A substantial historical literature exists on how the Irish, particularly in the United States, defined themselves in racial terms. Sources such as mid-nineteenth century political cartoons demonstrate that Irish Catholics were often ascribed simian racial characteristics by Anglo-Protestant newspaper editors, although as Lawrence McCaffrey points out, there is little evidence to suggest that Irish Americans ever considered identified as anything other than “white.” In the three cities studied here, at no point did any individual refer to themselves as white, or in “race as colour” terms. Instead, they frequently defined their identity as being part of the “Irish race,” which may be equated to the broader diaspora or ethnic group. It is

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93 In his recent study, Bruce Nelson elaborates on the differences between “race as colour” and “race as ethnicity.” See Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race*, 7-9.
this definition, rather than race as a fixed set of characteristics based on skin colour, that we engage with most directly here.

In order to understand what constituted, created and reinforced Irish identities, this study examines five principal facets of Irish-Catholic life in the three ports: associational life, the role of the Church, education, politics and responses to Irish nationalism. The choice of these themes is heavily influenced by other historians of Irish ethnicity who focused on similar subjects such as Belchem, Lambert, McGowan, and Meagher. The first chapter introduces the three cities and their respective Irish-Catholic communities, setting the context for the comparisons which follow. Chapter two focuses on Irish-Catholic associational life. The central theme is how ethnic and benevolent associations facilitated expressions of Irish identity. The chapter is divided into three subsections, each dealing with different types of associational life. The first examines Irish-Catholic benevolent associations, in particular the Benevolent Irish Society of St. John’s, the Charitable Irish Society of Halifax, and Portland’s Irish American Relief Association (IARA). The minute books of the BIS and the CIS have survived, allowing for a detailed comparison of how these societies operated. Executive and, when possible, member lists are cross-referenced with city directories in order to determine the social origins of the members. An important sub-argument of this section is that in the case of the BIS and CIS, expressions of Irishness went hand in hand with a devout loyalty to the British Empire, revealing how Irish and imperial identities could overlap in Canada and Newfoundland.

The discussion of associational life will then move to other ethnic societies. For St. John’s, the principal focus will be the Newfoundland Gaelic League, formed in 1922 to create awareness of Irish-Gaelic language and culture in Newfoundland. For Halifax and
Portland, the discussion will concentrate on the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Again, the social origins of the members will be investigated via censuses and city directories. The prominent role played by the AOH is discussed, with emphasis on how the Halifax organization came to eclipse the CIS as that city’s most prominent Irish ethnic association. We will also investigate how local branches of the AOH were integrated into broader regional and national networks.

The chapter concludes by examining how St. Patrick’s Day celebrations evolved in each community. The feast served as an annual, organized expression of Irish identity. Generally, there was remarkable continuity in how the day was celebrated in all three ports. Mornings were marked by religious devotions, almost always involving a sermon on the life of St. Patrick. Later, the principal ethnic societies would usually dine and stage a parade. Into the twentieth century, a larger number of Irish dances, lectures, plays, and musical evenings added to the variety of the celebrations.

Chapter three discusses the Catholic Church’s role in sustaining connections to Ireland, as well as the significance of Catholic education. The sections in this chapter each deal with one of the three cities independently, focusing particularly on how both higher and lower clergy helped sustain and reinvent ethnic connections to Ireland. They conclude with a discussion of education. How young Catholics were taught was an important issue in all three ports, and was the subject of much discussion by both the clergy and in the press. For St. John’s, we deal specifically with the schools of the Irish Christian Brothers, and how their curriculum may have reinforced a knowledge of and appreciation for Ireland among Catholic males in St. John’s. Curricula in Halifax and Portland contained less identifiably Irish content. For Halifax, the discussion concentrates on separate Catholic education within the
public school system, as well as the campaign to bring the Irish Christian Brothers to St. Mary’s College in 1913. Finally, for Portland, the chapter examines Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh’s fight for publicly-funded Catholic schools, which reveals a great deal about the Irish-American clergy’s philosophy on education.

The fourth chapter investigates Irish-Catholic political culture in the three cities. It is divided in two: the first part looks at examples of “ethnic politics” in the three cities, and the second examines how events in Ireland occasionally found their way into local political debates. In St. John’s, because of the nature of settlement, local politics could rarely be described as “ethnic.” There was seldom any reference to an “Irish” vote. Instead, the first section of this chapter focuses on occasions when Catholics and Protestants found themselves on opposite sides of the political spectrum, such as in the aftermath of the Harbour Grace Affray in the mid 1880s. In Halifax, as in St. John’s, politics in this period tended to be class-based, rather than ethnic. Nevertheless, in the 1880s there are numerous references to specifically “Irish” voting patterns, and these are discussed here. Portland, with its large, newly-arrived immigrant community was home to the most obvious examples of ethnic politics. There, newspaper editors frequently discussed the voting habits of the city’s Irish Catholics. While it was assumed that most would support the Democratic Party, the Republicans did make appeals to Irish voters, suggesting that political affiliations were not set in stone. This section also discusses each city’s Irish-Catholic political elite: they were found high in the ranks of all political parties.

The second part of the political chapter looks at how Irish affairs or Irish metaphors found their way into local politics. Examples of this were more evident in St. John’s and Halifax than in Portland. In St. John’s, Ireland’s struggle for Home Rule and the opinions of
Catholics of Irish descent were often invoked in debates over Newfoundland’s Confederation with Canada in the late-nineteenth century, while the nature of Irish-Newfoundland identity was discussed explicitly during native rights campaigns in the 1890s. The most significant intrusion of Irish affairs into local politics was in 1886, however, when the passage of a bill in the Newfoundland Assembly supporting Irish Home Rule failed as the Catholic-dominated Liberal Party refused to support it. The public outcry that ensued tells us a great deal about Catholic-Newfoundlanders’ engagement with their ancestral homeland. In Nova Scotia, Irish politics impinged on domestic politics on several occasions. In the late-1880s following the visit of Justin McCarthy, Ireland’s relationship with Great Britain was compared to Nova Scotia’s place within Canadian Confederation. Around the same time, Halifax’s T.E. Kenny, who was a Catholic of Irish descent, helped bring the question of Irish Home Rule to the federal Parliament. Much later, in 1917, an attempt to pass a pro-Home Rule resolution through the Nova Scotian Legislature produced considerable controversy, and was withdrawn. Portland does not play a prominent role in this discussion, however, as few such examples of Irish affairs entering local politics were recorded.

The dissertation concludes by analyzing responses to Irish nationalism. Virtually every scholar who has studied the Irish diaspora has focused, at least in part, on local engagement with Irish nationalism. In terms of gauging Irish identity, continued interaction with the affairs of the homeland may be seen as a clear marker of ethnicity. Furthermore, the responses demonstrate how local organizations interacted with national and transnational Irish networks, and therefore provide a glimpse of how each community was integrated into the broader diaspora. Owing to the substantial quantity of material collected, this subject has been divided in two, roughly along chronological lines. Chapter five deals with responses to
Irish nationalism from 1880 until 1912. The focus is mostly on how Irish-Catholics engaged with constitutional Irish nationalism, though this discussion is preceded by a comparison of how each city responded to the Irish famine crisis of 1880. In all three cities, subscriptions were taken for relief of the Irish poor, and the language of the appeals provides us with an understanding of the strength of Irish identity at this time. The second part examines the Land League in each of the three cities, noting that Halifax and, especially, Portland saw far more organized League activity than did Newfoundland’s capital. The third section of the chapter discusses how the three communities supported the Irish Parliamentary Party, Charles Stewart Parnell and the struggle for Irish Home Rule. Attention is given to fundraising endeavours, especially the Parnell Indemnity Fund which was taken in 1889 in all three ports; the Irish National League which was organized in Halifax and Portland, lectures and tours by Irish nationalist speakers; and organized opposition to Home Rule that was expressed during this period. The chapter concludes with a discussion of nationalist activity from 1892 until 1912. The death of nationalist leader Parnell in 1891 seems to have dampened enthusiasm for Home Rule in the three ports, but some activity did continue to take place. In 1896, for example, the cities sent delegates to the Irish Race Convention. In 1898, they marked the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1798 Irish Rebellion with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Meanwhile, lecture tours of prominent nationalists like T.P. O’Connor continued, and although organized support for Irish nationalist causes waned during this period, it is obvious that interest in the Irish Question did not disappear entirely. A key question in this chapter is to determine why nationalist organizations such as the Land League and the Irish National League flourished in Halifax and Portland, but were virtually absent in St. John’s. It is here that the theme of regional, national, and transnational networks
is most important, and Newfoundland’s relative isolation from the rest of North America will be significant.

The final chapter investigates nationalism from 1912 until 1922, encompassing the Home Rule Crisis of 1912, the increasing radicalization of Irish nationalism, the First World War and the 1916 Easter Rising, as well as the Anglo-Irish War and its aftermath. The first part examines the period from 1912 to 1918, and, compared to the 1880s, the relative lack of enthusiasm for Home Rule in all three cities. Tours and lectures did continue and some individuals clearly maintained an interest in Irish affairs. Responses to the First World War – in particular Irish-Catholics’ loyal responses in St. John’s and Halifax, as well as responses to the Easter Rising and its aftermath – are important subjects here. The second half of this chapter deals with Irish nationalism from 1919, and investigates one of the most fascinating periods in Irish diasporic history. After years of dormancy, interest in Irish affairs exploded following the conclusion of the War. Intense debates over potential forms of Irish self-government, as well about its future within the Empire took place in all three ports. Analysis will concentrate on local Irish-nationalist organizations during this period, especially the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Canada and Newfoundland, as well as the Friends of Irish Freedom and the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic which operated in Portland. Not only do these organizations fit into broader nationalist networks; they also highlight the growing divide between British-North American responses to Irish nationalism and Irish-American ones. In Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, while some support for an independent Irish Republic was present, most expressions of Irish nationalism remained within a British-imperial framework and envisioned Ireland as a self-governing dominion within the Empire. Irish-Portlanders, though, were almost unanimous in their call
for an Irish Republic free from any British connection. The chapter examines the activities of these societies through to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, and their subsequent dissolution. Finally, we examine the vehement, exclusively Protestant opposition to these groups, particularly in St. John’s and Halifax. Rallies and meetings protesting what was perceived as seditious elements in these two cities were organized by the Orange Order and other Protestant organizations, adding an intriguing dimension to local nationalist activity. Taken together, responses to the Irish Question in all three cities between 1919 and 1921 show how circumstances could bring about an active engagement with the ancestral homeland as well as with the broader diaspora. This sudden but temporary surge in interest in Irish affairs brings us to some fascinating conclusions about the variety, longevity, and persistence of Irish diasporic identities.
Chapter One

The Setting: St. John’s, Newfoundland, Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Portland, Maine

A primary objective of this study is to understand how differing local contexts influenced the evolution of ethnicity. The first step in accomplishing this is to introduce each of the port cities examined here: their early development, how they evolved from the 1880s to the 1920s, and, especially, their Irish-Catholic communities. Although they were similar in terms of geography and climate, and of relatively comparable size, St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland were home to remarkably different Irish populations. In St. John’s, Catholics of Irish descent formed a majority of the city’s inhabitants, and were overwhelmingly native-born, as migration from the Irish southeast to Newfoundland was a largely late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century phenomenon. They were fully integrated into the colony’s corridors of economic and political power, could be found living throughout the town, and were well-represented in all socioeconomic classes. The Irish-Catholic community of Halifax was quite similar. Likewise the product of migration from Ireland’s south and southeast in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the Irish were socially, politically and economically well-integrated with their Anglo-Protestant neighbours. The key difference between Halifax and St. John’s was that those of Irish birth and descent in Nova Scotia’s capital formed a strong minority, rather than a majority, of the city’s total population. Furthermore, they shared the institutions of the Catholic Church with Scots, French-speaking Acadians, and Mi’kmaq, while St. John’s Catholics were almost exclusively of Irish descent. Portland’s Irish community was quite different from those of the two British-North American
centres. Migration from Ireland to that city occurred during and after the potato famine of the 1840s, with a substantial wave arriving in the early 1880s from the west of Ireland – mostly county Galway. Irish immigration to Portland continued throughout the period under investigation here, so the city was home to a significantly larger Irish-born population than St. John’s or Halifax. Overall, however, Portland’s Irish community was much smaller than the others studied here. Catholics of Irish birth and descent were a minority in Yankee-Protestant dominated milieu. Although they could be found in each of Portland’s urban wards, they tended to cluster in the working-class neighbourhoods of Gorham’s Corner and Munjoy Hill, and were more socially and economically marginalized than their counterparts in St. John’s and Halifax. This chapter provides further detail on each of these three cities and their Irish Catholic communities, and establishes the context for the comparisons which follow.

1.1 St. John’s, Newfoundland

Located on the northeast arm of Newfoundland’s Avalon Peninsula, the city of St. John’s extends up a steep slope from the shores of a natural, sheltered harbour. The site has been occupied by Europeans since the early-to-mid sixteenth century, when Breton, Basque, Norman, and Portuguese fishing vessels used it as a seasonal base for the migratory cod fishery. A year-round population, including families, almost certainly existed by the 1620s. Population growth was slow: by the 1790s it was still under 4,000. The town, though, had taken over from West Country English ports as the administrative centre of the fishery.

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2 McPherson, “The Demographic History of St. John’s,” 1; Pope, Fish Into Wine, 53.
Merchants built brick and stone premises adjacent to public houses, small shops and wooden dwellings. These were centred along the two principal commercial streets, later named Water and Duckworth, which ran parallel to the northwest shore of the harbour.⁴ Permanent settlement increased dramatically in the early-nineteenth century, and the town quickly recovered from a devastating fire in 1846 as urban development spread up the hill away from the water.

By the 1880s, the population had grown to over 28,000. Owing to a high degree of emigration towards the end of the decade, it dropped slightly in the early 1890s before steady growth resumed. Towards the end of our period, in 1921, the city recorded 36,650 inhabitants.⁵ Development extended over the hill to the elite mansions and estates of King’s Bridge and Circular Roads, and west to the working-class neighbourhood of Riverhead. In 1883, Moses Harvey praised the city’s appearance:

Already, on the summits overlooking the business part of the city, houses of a superior description are erected: and these will ere long grow into crescents and squares, and form the fashionable quarter. Water Street, the principal business street, presents a very substantial though not handsome appearance, the houses being of stone of brick. Shops, stores and mercantile counting-houses occupy the ground floors, while the merchants and shop-keepers live in the upper stories. Many of the shops present a very handsome appearance. In other parts of the city the houses are for the most part built of wood and many of them are dingy and commonplace. Of late years, however, taste has been developing and houses have been built of a superior description.⁶

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⁵ Colonial Office, Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1884; 1891, 1901; 1911; 1921. See Vol. I, Table I, “Population, Sex, Condition, Denominations, Professions, etc.” For 1884, 1891 and 1901, population statistics are calculated by adding “City and Suburbs” columns for both St. John’s East and West electoral districts. For 1911 and 1921, they are calculated by adding the figures for the five urban wards in St. John’s East and West.

A report from New Brunswick’s *St. Croix Courier*, which was reprinted in the *Evening Telegram* in August, 1883 described the town as “one of the most picturesque in North America.” The harbour was lauded as “one of the finest in the world,” while several prominent structures, including Government House, the Colonial Building, the Athenaeum, as well as the Catholic cathedral were praised.\(^7\)

The city’s neighbourhoods were defined by class rather than ethnicity. Irish-Catholics and Anglo-Protestants lived side by side throughout the town. The upper and middle classes lived atop the hill, on Military, Rennie’s Mill, Monkstown, King’s Bridge, and Circular Roads. The working-classes tended to live closer to the harbour.\(^8\) Despite the laudatory descriptions of Moses Harvey and others, even up to the 1920s conditions in some of these working-class tenements were appalling. In 1910, a government inquiry noted that “a very large number of tenements are totally unsafe for human habitation. They are so bad that they cannot but degrade those who live in them physically, mentally and morally.”\(^9\) In his Lenten pastoral of 1917, which was reprinted in the *Daily News* in 1919, Archbishop Edward Patrick Roche echoed this description: “It is impossible to associate the ideals of home life with the environment and surroundings in which many of our people are compelled to live. The houses in some of the congested parts of the city are small, overcrowded ill-lighted, ill-ventilated and generally unsuited for habitation.” His message of 1919 went on to add “[...] the housing conditions in certain sections are a disgrace to the city.”\(^10\) Four-to-five thousand people in the centre of town – an area roughly between Springdale Street and Carter’s Hill –

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\(^7\) *Evening Telegram*, August 9, 1883.
\(^8\) Carolyn Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1840-86,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010), 49.
\(^10\) *Daily News*, June 26, 1919.
had no sewage connection. The death rate, particularly for children, was extremely high owing to the unsanitary conditions. In the 1910s, a movement did exist to move some of these residents to better housing in the suburbs, but by the end of 1920 only fifty community houses had been constructed.\textsuperscript{11}

To the north and west of St. John’s lay its agricultural hinterland. In 1911, the town was surrounded by 450 farms, many of which were owned and operated by Catholics of Irish descent. These comprised over 10,000 “improved” acres, and continued to supply the town with eggs, milk, potatoes, cabbage, and other fresh vegetables well into the twentieth century, despite increased competition from elsewhere in Newfoundland as well as the Canadian mainland.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{12} Robert MacKinnon, “The Agricultural Fringe of St. John’s, 1750-1945,” in \textit{Four Centuries and the City}, 73.
Figure 1: Map of St. John’s, Newfoundland, 1909.13

From very early in its history, the port maintained close links with Ireland. In order to support the English migratory cod fishery, food and provisions had to be imported from Europe. Up to 1675, salted meat, bread, peas, and other victuals came mainly from England. Around that date, English fishing vessels increasingly tended to call into Ireland’s south coast ports, most notably Waterford and Cork, to take on supplies.\(^{14}\) This provisions trade forged the links that would eventually lead to migration from the Irish southeast to Newfoundland.\(^{15}\) By the eighteenth century, West Country fishing vessels recruited young, male Irish labourers in these ports. This migration was seasonal. Few overwintered in Newfoundland, and fewer-still remained permanently.\(^{16}\) The mid-eighteenth century saw an increase in the migration of Irish women – a condition that was essential for permanent settlement.\(^{17}\)

The migratory fishery collapsed at the end of century with the outbreak of the French Revolutionary Wars. Fewer and fewer migrants returned home, and most “seasonal migration became emigration.”\(^{18}\) During the first third of the nineteenth century, some 35,000 Irish passengers were recorded – most arriving in St. John’s. Growing numbers of female immigrants ensured that natural population growth would follow. The vast majority of these migrants came from within thirty miles of the port of Waterford: southwest Wexford, south Kilkenny, southeast Tipperary, southeast Cork and county Waterford. One of


\(^{17}\) Mannion, “Tracing the Irish,” 8. See also Handcock, *Soe Longe as there Comes Noe Women*.

the most significant characteristics of Irish-Newfoundland migration is that “no other province in Canada or state in America drew such an overwhelming proportion of their immigrants from so geographically compact an area in Ireland for so long a time.”\textsuperscript{19} The outflow was increased by dramatic population growth, a shortage of land and the decline of the domestic textile industry in the Irish southeast. While some left out of necessity, however, most made a conscious decision to emigrate in order to improve their economic fortunes.\textsuperscript{20} Direct migration from Ireland trailed off dramatically in the 1830s, and by 1840 had virtually ceased. St. John’s and the rest of Newfoundland were largely unaffected by the vast waves of emigrants fleeing the Irish potato famine in the late-1840s.\textsuperscript{21}

St. John’s Irish-Catholic community consistently formed a majority of the population in the nineteenth century. The 1845 census recorded over 16,000 Catholics – almost all of whom would have been of Irish birth or descent – out of a population of 21,000 (78%). The proportion of Catholics to Protestants decreased as the century wore on, falling to 62% by the 1880s, and continued to drop throughout the period under investigation here:\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Mannion, “Tracing the Irish,” 10.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 43-44.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
The drop in the relative size of St. John’s Irish-Catholic population was almost certainly owing to their propensity to emigrate from the city to Canada and the United States in the late-nineteenth century. Almost 80% of those who left the island during this period were Catholics of Irish birth or descent.\textsuperscript{24}

Although there were substantial numbers of Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s, the proportion of residents born in Ireland dropped from 3.5% in 1884 to 0.3% in 1921:

\footnotesize

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Roman Catholic & Church of England & Methodist & Presbyterian & Other (Includes Congregationalist, Baptist, Salvation Army as well as other faiths) & Total \\
\hline
1884 & 19,396 (62.3\%) & 6,332 (20.3\%) & 3,820 (12.2\%) & 1,048 (3.4\%) & 546 (1.8\%) & 31,142 \\
1891 & 16,590 (57.2\%) & 6,395 (22.0\%) & 4,453 (15.4\%) & 1,018 (3.5\%) & 551 (1.9\%) & 29,007 \\
1901 & 16,093 (52.6\%) & 6,677 (21.8\%) & 5,823 (19.0\%) & 981 (3.2\%) & 1,027 (3.4\%) & 30,601 \\
1911 & 16,446 (50.2\%) & 7,367 (22.4\%) & 6,471 (19.7\%) & 1,158 (3.5\%) & 1,390 (4.2\%) & 32,832 \\
1921 & 18,179 (49.6\%) & 8,214 (22.4\%) & 7,469 (20.4\%) & 1,109 (3.0\%) & 1,699 (4.6\%) & 36,670 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Religious Denominations in St. John’s, 1884-1921 (% of total population).\textsuperscript{23}}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{23}Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1884, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1891, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1901, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1911, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921, Table I. For 1884, 1891 and 1901, the figures are calculated by adding “City and Suburbs” columns for both St. John’s East and West electoral districts. For 1911 and 1921, they are calculated by adding the figures for the five urban wards in St. John’s East and West.

\textsuperscript{24}Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 44-45; see also Edward Chafe, “A New Life on Uncle Sam’s Farm: Newfoundlanders in Massachusetts, 1840-1859 (M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982).
Table 1.2: Population of St. John’s by Place of Birth, 1884-1921.25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Newfoundland</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>British Colonies</th>
<th>Foreign/Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>28,446 (91.3%)</td>
<td>590 (1.9%)</td>
<td>1079 (3.5%)</td>
<td>318 (1%)</td>
<td>495 (1.5%)</td>
<td>214 (0.7%)</td>
<td>31,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>27,147 (93.6%)</td>
<td>518 (1.8%)</td>
<td>623 (2.1%)</td>
<td>263 (0.9%)</td>
<td>294 (1.0%)</td>
<td>159 (0.5%)</td>
<td>29,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>29,059 (95%)</td>
<td>368 (1.2%)</td>
<td>295 (1%)</td>
<td>208 (0.7%)</td>
<td>413 (1.3%)</td>
<td>258 (0.8%)</td>
<td>30,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>31,365 (95.5%)</td>
<td>396 (1.2%)</td>
<td>204 (0.6%)</td>
<td>210 (0.6%)</td>
<td>401 (1.2%)</td>
<td>256 (0.8%)</td>
<td>32,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>35,013 (95.5%)</td>
<td>359 (1%)</td>
<td>127 (0.3%)</td>
<td>252 (0.7%)</td>
<td>476 (1.3%)</td>
<td>443 (1.2%)</td>
<td>36,670</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A salient feature, then, of the population studied here is that it was almost entirely a Newfoundland-born second-, third- and fourth-generation ethnic group. Because they arrived so early and formed such a high percentage of the population, the Irish-Catholics of St. John’s were well-integrated into the colony’s political and economic structures. Relations with their Anglo-Protestant neighbours were usually harmonious, and examples of ethnic or sectarian violence were rare.26 The study of St. John’s, then, provides us with an opportunity to examine a successful, multi-generational Irish ethnic group that existed in a British-North American context. The focus is on how for some, even those several generations removed from Ireland, a sense of “Irishness” remained part of their lives.

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25 Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1884, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1891, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1901, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1911, Table I; Census of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1921, Table I. For 1884, 1891 and 1901, the figures are calculated by adding “City and Suburbs” columns for both St. John’s East and West electoral districts. For 1911 and 1921, they are calculated by adding the figures for the five urban wards in St. John’s East and West. Figures for 1891 show a small discrepancy from the “total” St. John’s figure in table 2.1, likely due to three individuals failing to report a place of birth.

26 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 45-46.
1.2 Halifax, Nova Scotia

Halifax sits on a peninsula inside a large, natural harbour on the southeast coast of Nova Scotia. Its founding and early history were far less haphazard than St. John’s. In the late 1740s, mainland Nova Scotia was a British possession, while Cape Breton (Île Royale) was held by the French. Britain was keen to establish a rival fortification to the French fortress at Louisbourg, on the east end of Île Royale. A plan for a settlement and military garrison near a Mi’kmaq site on Chebucto Bay was developed by the Board of Trade and Plantations in London, led by Lord Halifax. Each settler was to receive fifty acres of land, plus ten acres for each member of their family. Military officers were to be granted even more land, depending on rank.27 On June 21st, 1749, an expedition of almost two thousand settlers – mostly English – under Edward Cornwallis arrived at Chebucto, and began clearing a site for the town, which was soon christened Halifax. The original settlement was at the base of a sugarloaf hill, where deep water would allow ships to anchor.28

Early growth was slow, and for years Halifax remained an “outpost in the wilds.”29 Raids by Mi’kmaq were frequent during the first few decades, and many of the initial settlers promptly left for New England. Their departure was offset by the arrival of other Yankees who were lured by the prospect of government land grants.30 Population levels rose and fell through the years of war and peace. In 1752 the town’s first newspaper, the Halifax Gazette, was founded, and by the end of the 1750s, the citadel fort was completed near the summit of

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28 Ibid., 24.
29 Ibid., 42.
the hill overlooking the harbour.\textsuperscript{31} The town’s population swelled with an influx of loyalists following the American Revolution. It reached 4,000 in the 1780s, including about four hundred blacks. Although many of them left for Sierra Leone in 1792, those that remained ensured that a black community would persist in Halifax, situated near the Bedford Basin, until well into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{32} A German-Protestant minority also resided in the town’s northern suburbs.\textsuperscript{33} By 1800, Halifax, though only fifty years old, had grown to twice the population of St. John’s.

Growth and expansion continued, and by the beginning of our period the population exceeded 36,000. By 1921, it was close to 60,000.\textsuperscript{34} Many commentators were quick to praise the town’s pleasant appearance and environs. One commentator from Portland, whose observations were printed in the \textit{Halifax Herald} in 1883, noted that “the first view of the city from whatever quarter is beautiful, and every other survey […] but continues the impression that in beauty of location and surroundings few cities on the continent match it.”\textsuperscript{35} Electric streetlights were installed in the 1880s. Port facilities were developed considerably. While delays on the Intercolonial Railroad meant that Halifax could not rival Portland’s status as Canada’s winter port until well into the twentieth century, the city’s significance as a centre for export did increase substantially during this period.\textsuperscript{36}

By 1900 the city covered much of the peninsula. In the north end, the neighbourhood of Richmond had developed considerably, and expansion continued to the west and to the

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 17.  
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Census of Canada}, 1881; 1921.  
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Halifax Herald}, July 18, 1883.  
south, facilitated by electric streetcars which began running in 1896. While some commentators were keen to emphasize the town’s positive qualities, urban problems persisted through the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Many streets and sidewalks outside the commercial heart of the city were unpaved, and complaints about their dusty or muddy conditions were common. Working-class housing, such as those on Albermarle Street, was described as “appalling” in the 1880s. By 1900, temperance activists were working in these disadvantaged areas to improve the city’s material and moral condition.

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37 Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, Halifax: The First 250 Years, 114; Blakely, Glimpses of Halifax, 17. A setback to urban growth occurred in 1917, when the munitions ship Mont Blanc exploded in Halifax harbour, destroying much of the north end.

Figure 2: Map of Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1878.\footnote{H.W. Hopkins, City Atlas of Halifax [Map] (Halifax: Provincial Surveying and Publishing Co., 1878). Courtesy, Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Numbers indicate the locations of the city’s urban wards. The principal streets of the town are located between the Citadel and the harbour.}
The British military garrison continued to be a prominent feature in the town, though by the 1880s its role in city life was decreasing. Thomas Raddall has called late-nineteenth century garrison life “quiet and pleasant,” at least when compared to mid-century experiences. Certainly, soldiers drank and gambled far less than their predecessors. In February, 1906, however, the long association between the British military and Halifax ended, as the last of the troops returned to Britain, and the military fortifications were handed over to the Canadian Government.⁴⁰

An important feature of life in Halifax between 1880 and the 1920s was the increasingly diverse ethnic profile of the city. In the twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of immigrants, mostly from southern and eastern Europe, passed through the city on their way to central Canada and the Prairie West. In 1913, for example, 96,000 immigrants arrived at Pier 2 in Halifax and made their way west.⁴¹ Although few of these migrants would have remained in Halifax more than a day or two, small Jewish, Chinese and southern European communities were developing. In 1894, the city’s first synagogue was opened, and by 1901 there were 120 Jews in the city.⁴² Small numbers of Italians, Galicians, Russians and Greeks also came before and during the First World War.⁴³

The city’s Irish connection, like St. John’s, goes back almost to its inception. There were Irish residents in Halifax from shortly after its founding. Most of these were Protestant, and it was not until the 1760s that there were enough Irish Catholics in Halifax for Terrence Punch to refer to them as the town’s “first minority group.”⁴⁴ In 1767, out of a population of

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⁴⁰ Raddall, Warden of the North, 204. 217; Fingard, Guildford and Sutherland, Halifax: The First 250 Years, 121.
⁴¹ Raddall, Warden of the North, 227.
⁴² Fingard, Guildford, and Sutherland, Halifax, The First 250 Years, 107.
⁴³ Raddall, Warden of the North, 143.
3022, about 470 were Irish Catholics. In the early-nineteenth century, Irish-Catholic immigration to Halifax increased substantially. Parallels between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland existed from the outset. While some came directly from the Irish southeast, many arrived from Newfoundland as part of a “two boat” movement. In 1797, a priest, James Jones, noted that most of his congregation had arrived from Placentia.\(^{45}\) After 1820, Newfoundland declined as a source for migrants, but direct migration from the Irish southeast continued, in addition to a small influx from the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, where Irish Catholics were engaged in agriculture and the timber trade.\(^{46}\) Regardless of their origins, most of those who came to the city simply earned enough for passage to Boston or New York. Those who remained were lured by construction projects and other work on the waterfront, the Shubenacadie Canal, or the renovation of the fort on Citadel Hill in 1828.\(^{47}\)

An examination of marriage, death and baptism records confirms that the Irish-Catholic population of Halifax, like that of St. John’s, came largely from southeast Ireland. Over 80% of those who can be identified by place of birth in Ireland were from Waterford, Wexford, Cork, Carlow, Tipperary, and Kilkenny and Kerry in the southwest. Dungarvan, Thomastown and Waterford City in county Waterford, Clonmel in Tipperary, Callan in Kilkenny, and Middleton and Cork City in Cork were the most frequently reported places of birth in the nineteenth century.\(^{48}\)

By the 1880s, Catholics of Irish birth or descent were a significant minority in Halifax. In 1881, 12,802 persons (36% of the total population) described themselves as

“Irish.” The great majority were Catholic, owing to the lack of sustained Irish-Protestant migration. By the early 1900s, this number had dropped to 10,427 (25.4%), and the proportion continued to fall. The total number of Catholics was always slightly higher, with 14,705 (41%) recorded in 1881. There were small numbers of French, German, and Scottish Catholics in the city, so the formula “Catholic equals Irish” does not hold true for Halifax as closely as it does for St. John’s. It is safe to assume, however, that a majority of Catholics in Halifax were of Irish birth or descent. The overall proportion of Catholics remained relatively stable throughout the period:

Table 1.3: Population of Halifax by Religion (with % of total).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Roman Catholic</th>
<th>Church of England</th>
<th>Methodist</th>
<th>Presbyterian</th>
<th>Other &amp; Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>14,705 (40.7%)</td>
<td>9,332 (25.9%)</td>
<td>3,680 (10.2%)</td>
<td>4,985 (13.8%)</td>
<td>3,398 (9.4%)</td>
<td>36,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>15,638 (40.6%)</td>
<td>9,964 (25.9%)</td>
<td>3,798 (9.9%)</td>
<td>4,876 (12.7%)</td>
<td>4,219 (11.0%)</td>
<td>38,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>16,693 (40.6%)</td>
<td>10,877 (26.4%)</td>
<td>4,507 (11.0%)</td>
<td>4,864 (11.8%)</td>
<td>4,191 (10.2%)</td>
<td>41,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>19,334 (41.5%)</td>
<td>13,174 (28.3%)</td>
<td>4,591 (9.8%)</td>
<td>5,133 (11.0%)</td>
<td>4,387 (9.4%)</td>
<td>46,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>23,140 (39.6%)</td>
<td>16,367 (28.0%)</td>
<td>5,634 (9.7%)</td>
<td>6,628 (11.4%)</td>
<td>6,603 (11.3%)</td>
<td>58,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Irish Catholics in Halifax were therefore a significant minority in Halifax throughout our period. As in St. John’s, though, the community in Halifax was overwhelmingly native born:

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49 *Census of Canada, 1881*, Table III; *Census of Canada, 1901*, Table XI. Figures are calculated by adding totals for each of Halifax’s six urban wards.

50 *Census of Canada, 1881*, Vol. 1, Table II; *Census of Canada, 1891*, Vol. 1, Table IV; *Census of Canada, 1901*, Vol. 1, Table X; *Census of Canada, 1911*, Vol. 2, Table II; *Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. 1, Table 38. These figures are calculated by adding the totals for each of Halifax’s six urban wards.
Table 1.4: Population of Halifax by place of birth (% of total).\footnote{Census of Canada, 1881, Vol. 1, Table IV; Census of Canada, 1891, Vol. 1, Table V; Census of Canada, 1901, Vol. 1, Table XIV; Census of Canada, 1911, Vol. 2, Table XVI; Census of Canada, 1921, Vol. 1, Table 54. These totals are calculated by adding figures for Halifax’s six urban wards. The 1881 figures do not include Sable Island, and there is a slight discrepancy between the total reported population of 36,100 and those recorded by place of birth (36,034). The 1901 Census did not tally birthplace by ward, only accounting for the much larger area of Halifax County.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nova Scotia</th>
<th>Elsewhere in Canada &amp; Newfoundland</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>England, Wales &amp; Scotland</th>
<th>Elsewhere in British Empire</th>
<th>Foreign Or Unknown</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>27,872 (77.3%)</td>
<td>2,310 (6.4%)</td>
<td>2,249 (6.2%)</td>
<td>2,413 (6.7%)</td>
<td>263 (0.7%)</td>
<td>927 (2.7%)</td>
<td>36,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>29,586 (76.9%)</td>
<td>2,809 (7.3%)</td>
<td>1,557 (4.0%)</td>
<td>3,238 (8.4%)</td>
<td>129 (0.3%)</td>
<td>1,176 (3.1%)</td>
<td>38,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>41,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>38,023 (81.6%)</td>
<td>3,222 (6.9%)</td>
<td>683 (1.5%)</td>
<td>404 (0.9%)</td>
<td>994 (2.1%)</td>
<td>3,293 (7.1%)</td>
<td>46,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>46,091 (79.0%)</td>
<td>6,004 (10.3%)</td>
<td>478 (0.8%)</td>
<td>3,544 (6.1%)</td>
<td>288 (0.5%)</td>
<td>1,967 (3.4%)</td>
<td>58,372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Irish could be found living throughout the peninsula, though there were some concentrations along Upper and Lower Water, Abermarle, and Salter Streets. Even here, though, they mixed with other ethnoreligious groups. The 1881 Canadian census confirms that the Irish population of the town was spread across the peninsula:
Table 1.5: Persons declaring Irish origins (either by birth or ancestry) by ward, 1881. \(^{52}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>People of Irish Origin</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>2,436</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>1,216</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>925</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five (Section One)</td>
<td>1,707</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five (Section Two)</td>
<td>3,063</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>1,875</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12,802</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although there was a slightly higher concentration in the smaller ward four, as well as wards two and three, the Irish were spread throughout the city, as was the case in St. John’s. Distinct Irish neighbourhoods did not exist; Halifax was settled by class, rather than ethnicity.

There are many parallels between the Irish Catholics of St. John’s and Halifax. Both drew a great proportion of their migrants from the southeast of Ireland, and settlement occurred before the famine. Because of this, by the 1880s both communities consisted of multi-generational ethnic groups, a generation or more removed from the land of their ancestors. Finally, both were integrated into each city’s political and economic establishment, and identities were articulated within a British-imperial context. The critical difference between the two was that in St. John’s, Catholics of Irish birth or descent formed a majority of the population, while in Halifax they were a substantial minority. The

\(^{52}\) Census of Canada, 1881, Vol. 1, Table III.
comparison of two similar populations on the east coast of British North America allows us to investigate clearly how local factors influenced expressions of Irish-Catholic identity.

### 1.3 Portland, Maine

Five-hundred kilometres to the southwest of Halifax, around the southern tip of Nova Scotia and across the Bay of Fundy, lies Portland. Like Nova Scotia’s capital, the city is situated on a peninsula, known as the Neck, that juts out into the island-studded Casco Bay. The peninsula is three miles long, and dominated by two hills on each side: Munjoy Hill to the east, and Bramhall Hill to the west.\(^5^3\) The earliest European attempts at settlement were precarious. In 1633, George Cleeve and Richard Tucker established a fishing, lumbering and fur trading outpost, known first as Casco, and later Falmouth. By 1675, about forty families, mostly English, had settled, but the embryonic community was destroyed by local Wabanaki in 1676, and was abandoned by Europeans for two years. It was resettled by 1678, and ten years later six- or seven-hundred residents occupied the site. Further waves of conflict with natives and the French, though, resulted in it being effectively abandoned. In 1715, a third attempt at settlement resulted in a town that endured.\(^5^4\) Falmouth was incorporated in 1718 and evolved as a timber port centred on a thriving shipbuilding industry.\(^5^5\) Development was again hampered when the town was almost completely destroyed by the British in 1775. By 1786, the reconstructed settlement was named Portland.

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The most significant individual in the development of nineteenth-century Portland was John Alfred Poor. He envisioned the city as being able to rival New York and Boston as a shipping centre to Europe. In 1845, he convinced Montreal merchants that Canadian grain could be shipped through Portland to Europe during the months when the St. Lawrence River was frozen. The Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway – later leased to the Grand Trunk – was completed in 1853, and Portland’s identity as “Canada’s Winter Port” was established. It would retain this designation until the 1920s, when the development of port facilities in Halifax and Saint John, New Brunswick, eroded Portland’s status.\(^{56}\) As the railway was being completed, the wharves which had formed the centre of the shipbuilding industry were demolished, and the southern shore of the peninsula filled in to create Commercial Street. The thoroughfare was over one hundred feet wide, and quickly became the centre of the city’s maritime industries. Fore, Middle, Congress, and Cumberland Streets were the other principal commercial avenues which ran from east to west through the peninsula.\(^{57}\)

Like the two British-North American ports, Portland developed significantly after 1880. The city spread beyond the peninsula, a trend facilitated first by horse-drawn streetcars, and then electric ones from the 1890s. The suburb of Deering, to the northwest of the peninsula, was annexed in 1899, adding 7,500 to the population and swelling it to over 50,000.\(^{58}\) The industrial core was centred around Back Cove, an area of reclaimed land on the northern side of the peninsula. In 1895, Mayor James P. Baxter referred to Back Cove as “a slimy and ill-odered waste not only offensive to the nostril and eye, but a menace to the

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\(^{57}\) Conforti, “Introduction,” xv.

\(^{58}\) *Ibid.*, xvii.
health of the city.” Travellers to Portland would have been struck by the constant railroad sounds of an active, bustling port. Despite Mayor Baxter’s comments about Back Cove, the views over Casco Bay were beautiful, and, as a journalist from New York noted in 1889, Portland was an ideal summer vacation spot: “the loveliness and beauty of the city beckon with a thousand graceful hands to men of all lands; lovely homes spring up everywhere, and Portland rejoices for her history of trials is in the past, and her future is all before her.”

Promenades were built on the eastern and western side of the peninsula, and parks were created throughout the town, ensuring that during this period it combined a bustling port and active industrial core with an attractive summer resort.

59 Ibid., xviii.
60 Eastern Argus, September 19, 1889.
61 Conforti, “Introduction,” xvii; Connolly, Seated by the Sea, 74.
Figure 3: Map of Portland, Maine, 1900.  

Portland, Maine, and Vicinity [Map] (Portland: The Thurston Print, 1900). Numbers indicate the city’s urban wards. After 1900, the suburb of Deering, to the north of Back Cove, was annexed by Portland and comprised wards eight and nine. Courtesy, Maine Historical Society.
Portland was more ethnically diverse than either Halifax or St. John’s. Although the early settlement was a “predominantly English place with scatterings of Scots and Scots-Irish,” a degree of ethnic plurality was present by 1800. Like other Atlantic seaports, Portland traded extensively with the West Indies, and this brought small numbers of Hispanics and blacks to the city by the mid-nineteenth century. At this time, Portland’s black population was concentrated along the base on Munjoy Hill, and they thrived in work along the waterfront. As the West-Indian trade collapsed and their socioeconomic niche in the community was eroded, however, the black population of Portland declined. By the 1930s, only 268 blacks remained in the city. As its racial profile became increasingly homogenous, the city’s ethnic makeup became more diverse. In addition to the Irish-Catholics, large numbers of Canadians (English and French), Portuguese, and Scandinavians arrived in the late-nineteenth century. They were followed by Italians, Armenians, Jews, Greeks, Russians, and Poles by the early 1900s:

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63 Conforti, “Introduction,” xxiv.
Table 1.6: Population of Portland by place of birth, 1880-1920 (% of total population).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
<th>Canada &amp; Newfoundland</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>Poland &amp; Russia</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>33,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>28,600 (78.5%)</td>
<td>3,140 (8.6%)</td>
<td>2,923 (8.0%)</td>
<td>544 (1.5%)</td>
<td>187 (0.5%)</td>
<td>31 (0.1%)</td>
<td>1,000 (2.7%)</td>
<td>36,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>39,710 (79.2%)</td>
<td>3,273 (6.5%)</td>
<td>4,376 (8.7%)</td>
<td>598 (1.2%)</td>
<td>436 (0.9%)</td>
<td>148 (0.3%)</td>
<td>1,604 (3.2%)</td>
<td>50,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>46,493 (79.4%)</td>
<td>2,952 (5.0%)</td>
<td>4,492 (7.7%)</td>
<td>656 (1.1%)</td>
<td>1,333 (2.3%)</td>
<td>783 (1.3%)</td>
<td>1,862 (3.2%)</td>
<td>58,571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>56,043 (80.9%)</td>
<td>2,425 (3.5%)</td>
<td>5,004 (7.2%)</td>
<td>744 (1.1%)</td>
<td>1,794 (2.6%)</td>
<td>1,229 (1.8%)</td>
<td>2,033 (2.9%)</td>
<td>69,272</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the city’s ethnic diversity, the fact remains that throughout the period under investigation here, approximately 80% of Portlanders were American-born. Many of the immigrants congregated in the largely working-class areas of Munjoy Hill, while the town’s upper-middle class Yankee population dominated the west end. As in many other New England cities, a degree of racism and nativism continued well into our period, exemplified by the growth of the anti-black, anti-immigrant, and anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan in early 1920s.  

As in Halifax, many of the early Irish residents of Portland were Protestants.

Thaddeus Clark, who was later killed by Wabanaki raiders, was the first Irishman recorded in

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66 Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Table 25; Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, Vol. 1, Table 34; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Volume 1, Table 35; Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Volume 2, Table 2; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Volume 3, “Population – Maine,” Table 13. Figures are calculated by adding totals for Portland’s nine urban wards. The 1880 census did not provide specific data on place of birth for municipalities.  
68 Conforti, “Introduction,” xxv.
Portland in 1662. Several prominent Irish-Protestant families were present in the town during the eighteenth century, and some early Catholic residents ended up converting to Protestantism. In 1718, the McCallum arrived from Derry carrying around twenty Presbyterian families. After a difficult winter, they had to be provided with Indian meal by the public treasury of Massachusetts. Most went on to settle in New Hampshire, but some remained in the town. It was not until the nineteenth century that an Irish-Catholic population began to emerge in Portland. By the 1820s, Irish immigrants arrived to work on the Cumberland and Oxford canals. Church records reveal that many of the Irish Catholics who settled in Portland before the famine arrived from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Father Charles Daniel Ffrench of Galway was the first Catholic priest to serve Portland in the late 1820s, while a chapel, St. Dominic’s, was begun in 1828, and dedicated in 1833. Although it was small, there was a distinct Irish-Catholic presence in Portland by the early 1840s.

While Irish settlement in St. John’s and Halifax was an overwhelmingly pre-famine phenomenon, Irish-Catholic immigration to Portland, like other parts of the northeast United States, increased substantially between 1845 and 1850. The Catholic parish of St. Dominic’s had one thousand members in 1846, but by the end of 1847 this number had risen to over fifteen hundred, an increase almost entirely due to the influx of Irish-famine migrants. These immigrants came primarily from the west of Ireland – particularly county Galway. By

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69 Connolly, *Seated by the Sea*, 9.
71 Ibid., 155.
the 1860s, some 2,600 of Portland’s 37,400 residents were Irish. The vast majority were Catholic.\textsuperscript{72}

A secondary migration wave in the early 1880s increased the Galway-born population of the city. A substantial number of the migrants were Irish-speakers from Cois Fharráige, along the Connemara coast to the west of Galway City. The promise of unskilled labour on railways or on the waterfront for men, and domestic work in Yankee households for women, reinforced chain migration from the west of Ireland; a stream of young, single immigrants came to join their relatives in Portland.\textsuperscript{73} The “Connemara connection” of Portland’s Irish community contributed to one of its distinctive factors: the high proportion of Gaelic speakers. Kenneth E. Nilsen suggested that twentieth-century Portland may have had “the highest percentage of Irish speakers among its Irish-born residents of any American city.”\textsuperscript{74} The language was frequently spoken in family settings or along the waterfront well into the twentieth century. It was not taught in schools and, as in St. John’s and Halifax, seems to have rarely been passed on to the second generation. Nevertheless, the ability of many of Portland’s Irish-Catholic residents to converse in the language “that strangers do not know” was a distinctive feature of the community by the 1920s.\textsuperscript{75}

Unlike St. John’s and Halifax, Irish Catholics in Portland did tend to congregate in particular parts of the city. The two most significant locales were the slopes of Munjoy Hill, on the eastern end of the peninsula, and Gorham’s Corner at the meeting of Pleasant, Center,

\textsuperscript{74} Kenneth Nilsen, “The Language that Strangers Do Not Know: The Galway Gaeltacht of Portland, Maine, in the Twentieth Century,” in They Change Their Sky, 298.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 333-334.
Danforth, York, and Fore Streets to the west of the city centre. Gorham’s Corner had the greatest concentration of Irish Catholics into the twentieth century, while the base of Munjoy Hill – formally Portland’s most substantial black neighbourhood – was an ethnically diverse working-class area. Conditions, particularly in Gorham’s Corner, were rough. The nineteenth-century author and local historian Edward H. Elwell referred to the district as “an unsavoury locality of the town, in bad repute because of the turbulent character of its inhabitants, the center of sailor boarding houses, and the scene of street brawls and drunken rows.” Although there was a small elite, most Irish Catholics were working class, with a particular concentration in the longshore (for men) and domestic (for women) industries. The figures in Table 1.6 show that the percentage of Irish-born residents in Portland was decreasing by the end of the period. Most of the immigrants who arrived during and in the decade or so after the famine would have died by the 1920s, and the percentage of Irish people in the city was further eroded by the annexation of the suburb of Deering in 1899. The census of 1900 provides a somewhat better idea of the size of the multi-generational Irish ethnic group. In that year, 7,644 residents of Portland (15.2% of the total population) reported having two Irish-born parents, while a further 2,272 had at least one. While these figures do not account for those whose grandparents emigrated from Ireland, or the English Canadians who were of Irish descent, it is safe to say that there were significant numbers of Catholics of Irish birth or descent in Portland at the beginning of the twentieth century, but they remained a minority. The town did indeed remain a “Yankee stronghold.”

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77 Quoted in Connolly, Seated by the Sea, 55; Conforti, “Introduction,” xxi.
78 Connolly, Seated by the Sea, 50; Eagan, “Women, Class and Ethnicity,” 198.
79 Census of the United States, 1900, Volume 1, Tables 59, 61, 63, 65, 66.
Irish Catholics dominated the longshore industry, and were “clearly a force to be reckoned with in other areas, especially within the field of manual labor,” while Portland boomed as an exporting port. By the end of our period, second-generation Irish Catholics were moving farther up Munjoy Hill, west of Gorham’s Corner, north of Congress Street and into the suburbs, resulting in a diverse, widely spread, multi-generational Irish community. The census of 1920 allows us to see how the Irish-born population of Portland was spread throughout the city’s nine urban wards:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Born in Ireland</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>2,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>8,779</td>
<td>6,547</td>
<td>6,554</td>
<td>4,606</td>
<td>5,869</td>
<td>7,584</td>
<td>10,434</td>
<td>8,711</td>
<td>10,188</td>
<td>69,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Irish-born</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Slightly higher concentrations remained in wards two, four, six and seven, but Irish Catholics could be found throughout the town. Between 1880 and the 1920s, Portland was essentially “an ethnic city, and its largest ethnic group was Irish.”

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80 Connolly, *Seated by the Sea*, 65.
82 Connolly, “The Irish Longshoremen of Portland, Maine,” 106.
Conclusion

Thanks to their proximity, comparable size, and yet remarkably different Irish-Catholic communities, St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland present an excellent opportunity for comparison. This study provides us not only with a greater understanding of Irishness in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Maine, but also reveals the strength and variety of Irish identities in the broader diaspora. The following chapters will establish how each of these local settings influenced Irish identities, as well as how the respective populations remained connected to ethnic networks which transcended space. Ethnicity was invented and reinvented by the interaction of domestic and external factors, and one of the best examples of this may be seen in Irish-Catholic associational life. This is the subject of chapter two.
Chapter Two

Irish-Catholic Associational Life

One of the most direct ways of examining how Irish identities were conceived, articulated and understood is to study associational life. Irish-Catholic ethnic and benevolent societies were prominent in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland between the 1880s and the 1920s. As disposable income increased and the time that ordinary people devoted to work diminished, new concepts of leisure culture emerged. Ethnic and benevolent associations became important venues for socialization, particularly for men. They vied for primacy within their communities, and attempted to offer members a badge of exclusivity which, for most of the societies studied here, came from a shared sense of Irish or Catholic identity. How each society displayed its Irishness, though, varied widely depending on the socioeconomic origins of the members, as well as local contexts. Furthermore, ethnic and benevolent associations were frequently connected to broader organizations, and can reveal how each community fit into regional, national, or transnational networks.

This chapter argues that the public expression of ethnic identity was a day-to-day reality for many Catholics of Irish birth or descent, and was significantly influenced by three variables: location, class, and gender. Catholicism, meanwhile, was so closely intertwined with ethnicity that the two were in some cases indistinguishable. In St. John’s and Halifax, most Irish societies were dominated by the middle classes and espoused a loyal, respectable vision of Irishness. The British Empire context was key, as even associations which in American settings tended to be republican, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians in

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Halifax, frequently proclaimed their imperial loyalty. In Portland, the labouring classes tended to be more involved in Irish associational life, due in part to the composition of its Irish-Catholic community. A strong loyalty to the American republic was a consistent feature, and the connection between Irishness and the Empire was seldom acknowledged. Finally, in all three cities, public Irish identity was overwhelmingly masculine. Women did take part occasionally, but usually only through the ladies’ auxiliaries of male organizations.

The discussion begins by examining Irish benevolent associations. In St. John’s, the Benevolent Irish Society (BIS), founded in 1806, remained the city’s most prominent Irish ethnic association throughout our period. It presented a middle-class Irish identity that espoused a devout loyalty to the British Empire. Although its primary focus was on charity and education, it continued to engage with Ireland and Irish affairs well into the twentieth century. In Halifax, the Charitable Irish Society (CIS), founded in 1786, was strikingly similar to its Newfoundland contemporary. It consisted of an elite or middle-class membership, and publicly displayed its loyalty to Britain and the monarchy. The principal difference between the two was that while the St. John’s BIS remained that city’s foremost Irish society, the CIS in Halifax was gradually eclipsed by the more proletarian Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH). Portland’s Irish benevolent associations were smaller in both size and influence than their British North American counterparts, perhaps owing to that city’s smaller Irish-Catholic elite. Nevertheless, the Irish American Relief Association

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3 At this stage, a clearer definition of what is meant by terms such as “middle class,” “working class,” and “elite” is necessary, as such concepts can vary substantially depending on local contexts. There were very few true Irish-Catholic “elites” in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. I use the term to refer to the wealthiest and most powerful members of each community. They tended to be merchants, prominent businessmen, lawyers and physicians, and in many cases they held political office. The middle classes were the educated, white-collar professionals. They ranged from clerks and accountants to less-prominent businessmen and attorneys. The working classes included a wide range of occupations, from skilled tradesmen to unskilled labourers. The occupational structures of the associations investigated here are addressed in further detail below.
(IARA) and the St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society were well-respected institutions, and both are discussed here.

The discussion then moves to other Irish or Catholic associations. For St. John’s, Catholic groups such as the Star of the Sea (SOS), an organization for Catholic fishermen, and the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society (TABS) is briefly discussed, as will the Knights of Columbus. Though not explicitly “Irish,” members were predominantly of Irish descent, and they did occasionally pass resolutions on the politics of the old country and were active in St. Patrick’s Day celebrations. The focus, though, is on a little-known society that was formed near the end of our period, in 1922: the Newfoundland Gaelic League. The League drew upon the upsurge in Irish diasporic identity that accompanied the Anglo-Irish War in the early 1920s, and attempted to enhance knowledge and understanding of Irish-Gaelic language, culture and history in Newfoundland among both men and women. For Halifax and Portland, this section concentrates on the Ancient Order of Hibernians and their Ladies’ Auxiliaries, which were prominent in both cities. Attention will also be paid to the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS), established in 1880, which was an Irish-Catholic labour union and allows us to directly chart the opinions of working-class Irishmen.

A comparative analysis of St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in the three ports concludes the chapter. It was on and around this day that Irish identities were most publicly and deliberately expressed. How the event varied over time and space allows us to gauge the vitality of Irish-Catholic communities, with a particular emphasis on the links between Irishness and Catholicism. Together, this analysis allows us to see how Irish identities entered the social worlds of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. Public articulations of
Irishness by men and women of different social classes allow for a thorough comparison of how Irish ethnicity was understood.

2.1 Irish Benevolent Associations

A common feature of the associational life of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland around the turn of the twentieth century was the presence of Irish benevolent societies. These groups tended to be elite or middle class, and were founded on the basis of charitable relief for the poor. In addition to the principles of charity, such associations fostered a middle-class vision of Irish ethnicity, characterized by loyalty and respectability. In some cases, their charitable objectives became secondary as the twentieth century wore on, and they offered various pastimes and social opportunities for Irish-Catholic men. Their development, as well as their continued engagement with Ireland and Irish affairs, reveals a great deal about how ethnicity found its way into the day-to-day lives of the middle classes.

The St. John’s Benevolent Irish Society was formed in 1806 when a group of Irishmen met at the London Tavern to establish an association for the relief of the local poor. By the twentieth century, it remained the town’s only Irish-Catholic ethnic fraternal association.4 Founded along the principles of “loyalty, true benevolence and philanthropy,” the society’s first meeting was held on February 17th, 1806. Membership was restricted to “natives of Ireland,” or the “sons of Irish parents.”5 The society was strictly non-denominational. Some of island’s most prominent Catholics, such as merchants Henry Shea, Patrick Ryan, and Francis Meagher, were founding members, while Irish Protestants were

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4 Carolyn Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010), 188.
also involved.\(^6\) Although the “lady friends” of the society were present at social functions, and occasionally helped organize fundraisers, full BIS membership was reserved for men only.

Much of the society’s early activity was organized through its committee of charity, which was responsible for distributing aid to the poor.\(^7\) By the 1820s, it increasingly turned its attention towards the education of the city’s poor children, and with this objective in mind the Orphan Asylum School was opened by the BIS in 1827. Early attendance was around 250, and reflected the society’s non-denominational values: both Catholic and Protestant pupils were welcomed.\(^8\) Charity and education remained the society’s primary concerns until the twentieth century.

Although it was theoretically non-denominational, by the beginning of the period investigated here, and indeed as early as the 1820s, the BIS had evolved into a “de facto Catholic society.”\(^9\) The non-denominational policy, despite the Protestant religion of some original members, was by mid-century “a fiction,” and membership was almost entirely Catholic.\(^10\) From the 1850s, the Catholic bishop replaced the Governor as the society’s patron, and growing numbers of clergy joined in the latter half of the nineteenth century.\(^11\) The BIS donated money to the development of Catholic infrastructure, such as the construction of St. Patrick’s church in the city’s west end, and it maintained a significant presence at Catholic celebrations such as the welcoming of new priests or bishops, or on the

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\(^6\) Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 188.
\(^7\) Benevolent Irish Society, *Centenary Volume*, 23.
\(^8\) Ibid., 42-44.
\(^9\) Lambert, “Far From the Homes of their Fathers,” 212.
\(^10\) Benevolent Irish Society, *Centenary Volume*, 84; 113.
\(^11\) Lambert, “Far From the Homes of their Fathers,” 221.
occasion of visits by papal delegates.\textsuperscript{12} Although the official policy of the BIS remained non-sectarian, it was essentially an association of Irish Catholics.

The society’s members were primarily drawn from the elite and middle classes, as well as some skilled members of the working class. Full membership rolls for the period are rare, but the re-written constitution of 1909 lists the entire complement for that year, and these names can be cross-referenced with data from city directories in order to create an occupational profile of the society:

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{Ibid.}, 226; Benevolent Irish Society, \textit{Centenary Volume}, 146.
Table 2.1: Occupational Profile of the St. John’s Benevolent Irish Society, 1909.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Number of BIS Members</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar or Professional</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers, Liquor Merchants, Shopkeepers, Druggists</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- or Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evidently, the BIS was a middle-class association. The city’s elite Catholics were represented, particularly on the executive. In 1909, the president was the Hon. James D. Ryan, one of St. John’s most prominent retailers, as well as a member of the Legislative Council. The vice president was James M. Kent, Newfoundland’s Minister of Justice and Attorney General. The remainder of the executive included John L. Slattery, who was...

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13 Benevolent Irish Society, *Constitution and Rules of the Benevolent Irish Society, St. John’s, Newfoundland, As Amended and Adopted on March 11th, 1909* (St. John’s: Benevolent Irish Society, 1909), 36-38; McAlpine’s *St. John’s Directory, 1908-1909* (Halifax: McAlpine Publishing Company, 1908). The society’s membership in 1909 was 385. The analysis here is based on 252 of those who could be definitively matched to an occupation in McAlpine’s Directory. The categories are my own, though they closely resemble those used by Mark McGowan and Brian Clarke in their occupational studies of Toronto – originally formulated by Peter G. Goheen. Given the narrower range of occupations recorded in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland and the smaller sample size, clerical and professional occupations were combined, as were semi- and unskilled, to produce a more simplified table. Those involved in public service are also included as “white collar or professional.” A full list of occupational categories may be seen in Appendix A. See Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 295-296; Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 261-262; Peter G. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto, 1850-1900: Pattern and Process of Growth* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, 1970). Amongst the occupations considered “White Collar or Professional” are: accountants, agents, auctioneers, bank tellers, barristers, bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, collectors, dentists, editors, insurance agents, law students, managers, morticians, physicians, principals, proprietors, reporters, salesmen, solicitors, teachers, telephone operators and veterinarians. Public servants are also incorporated into this category, and include the Ministers of Finance and Justice, the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Head Constable and Sub-Sherriff of Newfoundland; school, road, health and revenue inspectors; a Colonial Secretary’s Office messenger; the Secretary Treasurer of the Municipal Council and the Supreme Court’s crier. “Grocers, Liquor merchants, shopkeepers and druggists” include those employed in business, specifically: bartenders, book sellers, druggists, dried good merchants, grocers, liquor merchants, outfitters, provisions merchants, storekeepers, tobacconists, traders, wholesalers. Those considered “Skilled” include bakers, boilermakers, boot and shoe manufacturers, builders and contractors, butchers, carpenters, cooperers, drapers, engineers, foremen, gas fitters, harness makers, locksmiths, machinists, master mariners, painters, plumbers, patternmakers, steamfitters, stenographers, tailors, tidewaiters, undertakers, upholsterers, watchmakers and wheelwrights. Finally, the “Semi- and Unskilled” category includes a caretaker, a cabman, a fisherman, a labourer and a teamster.
secretary treasurer for the municipal council; Michael A. McCarthy, a manager at John
McCarthy’s grocery; W.J. Higgins, a solicitor; Thomas J. Nash, an undertaker; and Philip F.
Moore, who was a member of the House of Assembly. The bulk of the members came from
the white-collar and professional middle classes. Fifty of the recorded members were clerks,
while seventeen were accountants and thirteen were bookkeepers. Grocers were also well
represented. An interesting feature of this table is that only two Catholic clergymen could be
definitively identified. The remaining clergymen were Christian Brothers, both of whom
taught at St. Patrick’s Hall School, located in the society’s own building. While it is possible
that some clergy were not listed by title in the printed membership roll – the Christian
Brothers, for example, were simply listed as “teachers” in the city directory – it is safe to
conclude that by the twentieth century, the clergy were not a dominant force in the ranks of
the BIS.

Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the BIS began to move
away from its benevolent and educational objectives, and function instead as a venue for
middle-class, male socialization. In the mid-1880s, the society’s membership was in decline.
In order to ensure its future, a Juvenile Branch was established in 1886, which boys “under
twenty years of age of Irish descent” were eligible to join.\textsuperscript{14} It was formed in close
cooperation with the Irish Christian Brothers, who by this time were in charge of the BIS
schools. The Brothers encouraged their male pupils as well as recent graduates to join, and
by St. Patrick’s Day, 1888, 180 boys marched with the main body of the society. In 1889,
fourty-two new members were admitted, with total enrollment reaching 325.\textsuperscript{15} A BIS
membership was seen as positive for the boys, as it would enhance their social skills through

\textsuperscript{14} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of their Fathers,” 215; \textit{Colonist}, March 14, 1887.
\textsuperscript{15} Benevolent Irish Society, \textit{Centenary Volume}, 158.
an association with “many of the most influential and respectable members of the
community.”\textsuperscript{16} The Juvenile Branch was given its own recreation rooms in the basement of
the newly-constructed St. Patrick’s Hall, and it was these young men who championed the
development of a reading room and gymnasium for the use of BIS members.\textsuperscript{17} Although it
was not re-formed after the devastating fire of 1892, the Juvenile Branch exemplified the
society’s movement towards a leisure-oriented association, with socialization and
respectability as primary objectives.

Several new groups emerged from the movement towards pastimes and leisure. The
BIS Dramatic Society, for example, was active from at least 1891. The members, both men
and women, were not necessarily society members, but rather individuals interested in
raising funds to pay off debts accrued through the construction of the society’s rooms at St.
Patrick’s Hall, as well as to improve facilities for the education of the city’s poor.\textsuperscript{18} Irish
plays, such as \textit{Colleen Bawn} in 1892, were performed in front of enthusiastic crowds to
celebrate St. Patrick’s Day.\textsuperscript{19} Balls and dances were held frequently from the 1870s. In the
early 1890s, the BIS’s billiards committee was active, and group excursions to Harbour
Grace, Topsail, Donovans, and Bay Bulls became common in summer.\textsuperscript{20} Debates were
regularly held, some of which pertained to Irish topics. By the turn of the century, the literary
and amusement committee had grown to fifteen members, three times the size of the

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Colonist}, March 8, 1887.
\textsuperscript{17} Benevolent Irish Society, \textit{Centenary Volume}, 158; See also Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) Minutes,
November 19; December 4, 1887, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), Benevolent
Irish Society Fonds, MG 612, Reel 76.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Evening Herald}, August 31, 1891.
\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Evening Telegram}, March 16, 1892.
\textsuperscript{20} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of their Fathers,” 239; Benevolent Irish Society, \textit{Centenary Volume},
164.
education and charity committees. Billiards, cards, debate, music and dramatic subcommittees were established by 1911.

Sports and athletics also became an important feature of the BIS. The most significant example was its association football (soccer) team, which entered the league in 1897. Known by nicknames such as the “green and white” or the “Irish boys,” the team wore white jerseys and green shorts, with a green badge containing a golden harp. After mixed success in the early-twentieth century, the team came into its own after the First World War, winning the 1920, 1921 and 1922 Newfoundland football championships. They attracted large crowds, with over three thousand turning out to watch a match against the Feildians in 1922.

Between sports and other pastimes, members of the society “began to frequent St. Patrick’s Hall more regularly for the purposes of social intercourse.” For the young Catholic men of St. John’s, the BIS had become “a place to amuse themselves after the day’s work was finished.” Although providing funds and support for the school at St. Patrick’s Hall remained important, it was social opportunities which continued to draw men of Irish descent to the society well into the twentieth century.

The extent to which the BIS continued to engage with Irish affairs between the 1880s and the 1920s reveals a great deal about middle-class Irish identity in St. John’s. The mid-nineteenth century saw fairly limited societal involvement with events in Ireland. Expressions of ethnicity were most frequently exhibited on feast days, such as St. Patrick’s Day; through occasional engagement with Irish nationalism, such as fundraising for Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal movement in the 1840s; and on occasions of important celebrations,

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21 BIS Minutes, May 20, 1899.
22 BIS Minutes, February 10, 1911.
23 Evening Telegram, May 28, 1897.
26 Ibid.
such as the centenary of O’Connell’s birth in 1875. By the 1880s, as transatlantic networks of communication improved and Irish news became more accessible to the Catholics of St. John’s, BIS involvement with Ireland increased, despite the fact that those of Irish descent, rather than Irish birth, predominated. These expressions of identity always took place within a loyal, British-imperial context. Most pronouncements on events in Ireland, such as toasts or special resolutions, emphasized the strengthening of bonds between Great Britain and Ireland, as well as the loyalty of Catholics in Newfoundland and throughout the diaspora, while concurrently displaying support for Irish self-government.

Toasts were an important part of BIS dinners, balls, dances, and other celebrations. A feature from the society’s inception, they are an example of the public expression of Irish identity in St. John’s, and show how the members of the BIS understood their ethnicity. The toasts reveal a devotion to the ancestral homeland, as well as love and respect for both the British Empire and Newfoundland. The format consisted of a proposed topic, followed by a short speech from a member or special guest. In the first half of the nineteenth century, these toasts appear to have adopted an explicitly unionist tone. By the 1860s, perhaps as Irish-Protestant involvement in the society ebbed away, toasts to the Union and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland were dropped in favour of a toast to “Ireland as she ought to be.” Nevertheless, the toasts never lost their loyal, pro-imperial focus. To take one example, at the St. Patrick’s Day dinner of 1882, which was the first to be held at the new St. Patrick’s Hall, the opening toast was to the “pious and immortal memory of St. Patrick.” This was immediately followed by a toast to the Queen and Royal Family, which was met with a respectful silence. Only after the toast to the monarchy was “Ireland as she ought to be”

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27 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 227.
28 Ibid., 237.
29 Benevolent Irish Society, Centenary Volume, 152.
proposed. The phrase “as she ought to be” reflected a desire for peace and prosperity in the ancestral homeland, as well as support for Irish self-government, though only in the form of a dominion within the British Empire. In response, a speech on Irish affairs was made by the vice president, Robert J. Kent. He referred to reports of Irish unrest and ill-feeling that had appeared recently in newspaper reports, and expressed his hope and belief that journalists were exaggerating the situation. The reference to Irish discontent was almost certainly related to the escalating circumstances of the Land War in the early 1880s. It not only demonstrates romantic esteem for the old country, but also provides a clue as to how Catholic Newfoundlanders gained information on events in Ireland: the local press. That the accuracy of the reports was questioned reveals a disconnect between old world and new. As transatlantic communications networks improved in the twentieth century, however, so too did the flow of information from Ireland to the diaspora, and this in turn raised the potential for increased knowledge of and involvement in the affairs of the homeland.

The format and tone of BIS toasts changed little into the twentieth century. One of the society’s grandest celebrations of the era was its 1906 centenary, when balls, banquets, athletics meets, Masses and other events marked the one-hundredth anniversary of its founding. At one of the banquets, the toast list was almost identical to the 1882 example. St. Patrick was followed by the King, with “Ireland as she ought to be” again third on the list. Other toasts were made to the Catholic clergy, Newfoundland’s Governor, and even the clergy of the Church of England. The author of the 1906 Centenary Volume praised the cessation of toasts celebrating the Union, noting that “old Ireland as she ought to be” reflected the members’ “keener desire to free the land of their forefathers from the

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30 Evening Telegram, April 13, 1882.
31 Evening Telegram, March 27, 1906.
oppression of foreign rule.”\textsuperscript{32} Despite the somewhat nationalist tone of this comment, the society’s toast list consistently reflected its non-sectarian policy and publicly expressed members’ loyalty to the monarchy and Empire.

The BIS engaged with Ireland and Irish affairs even more directly through special meetings and resolutions, most of which involved responses to political circumstances in the old country. Example include a special meeting and resolution in 1886 to discuss William Ewart Gladstone’s Irish Home Rule Bill; an assembly and celebration to welcome Gladstonian member of parliament Courtney Kenny later that same year; a meeting in 1896 to determine Newfoundland’s representation at the Irish Race Convention; a special gathering to honour the memory of Robert Emmet on the centenary of his death in September, 1903; a meeting to mourn the death of Land League founder Michael Davitt in 1906; a planned societal excursion to Ireland in 1913 to celebrate the passage of the Irish Home Rule Bill; a banquet in 1914 to celebrate the same; and numerous meetings and resolutions during the Anglo-Irish War between 1919 and 1921.\textsuperscript{33} Most of these meetings and resolutions, while showing a passionate commitment to Home Rule, expressed the desire that Ireland should remain a part of the British Empire. Resolutions on other subjects concerning imperial affairs further demonstrate the members’ close association of Irishness and imperial identity. Following a British victory in the South African War in March, 1900, likely at Paardeberg and Tugela Heights, the society met to celebrate at St. Patrick’s Hall. They passed a resolution praising the Irish contribution to the conflict, praising the “Irish regiments that preferred annihilation to retreat and upheld the best traditions of the fighting

\textsuperscript{32} Benevolent Irish Society, \textit{Centenary Volume}, 152.
\textsuperscript{33} These will be discussed in greater detail in chapters five and six.
race.”  

At no point was it conceded that some Irish Catholics had also been fighting with the Boers against Britain, or that many Irish Americans had supported the South Africans. A similar example occurred following Queen Victoria’s death in 1901, when another assembly was called in order to express condolences to the Royal Family. The resolution mentioned the shared grief of the members at the death of their “glorious and beloved sovereign,” and went on to discuss the accession of King Edward VII, asserting the society’s “fealty and allegiance to his crown,” and expressed the hope that the “principles of liberty” of the Empire would be maintained throughout his reign.

The BIS remained St. John’s only Irish ethnic association throughout this period. Growing numbers of young men joined the society, peaking at 104 new members in the winter of 1920. Most of them sought the growing range of social opportunities available to the society’s members, from cards and billiards to acting and athletics. Nevertheless, it remained the city’s foremost public custodian of Irish identity, and was at the heart of most formal engagement with Irish affairs. The brand of Irishness embraced by the society combined a strong attachment to the ancestral homeland with a devout loyalty to Newfoundland and the Empire. For the members of the BIS, Ireland could not be conceived of without its British connection.

Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society displayed many striking similarities to its Newfoundland equivalent. Both were upper- or middle-class benevolent associations, and both expressed devotion to the British Empire, as well as to the Irish connection. Perhaps the most critical difference between the two is that while the BIS remained St. John’s only ethnic

34 BIS Minutes, March 4, 1900.
36 Evening Telegram, January 30, 1901.
37 BIS Minutes, February 6, 1920.
fraternal society, the CIS had to vie with the Ancient Order of Hibernians for the title of Halifax’s principal Irish association. Although it evolved beyond its charitable and benevolent goals, the CIS did not provide its members with the same array of pastimes as did the BIS. The society, however, did remain a significant presence in Halifax, and membership was seen as an important mark of respectability for men of Irish descent.

The Charitable Irish Society was founded on January 17th, 1786 at John O’Brien’s inn. About half of the 136 founding members were Irish Protestants, including its first president, Richard John Uniake. The town’s most influential Catholics were also involved from the outset, such as Michael and Thomas Tobin, as well as Lawrence Kavanagh, who would go on to become the first Catholic member of Nova Scotia’s legislature in 1822.38 The society’s creed was to aid “any of the Irish nation who shall be reduced by sickness, old age, shipwreck or other misfortune.”39 Emphasis was also placed on respectability, both for the members themselves and throughout the community, as the society aimed to “discourage [...] the growth of vice and immorality” in the town.40 Early members were required to pay twenty shillings to the relief fund as initial dues, and then pay two shillings at each quarterly meeting. Non-attendance or non-payment was met with a fine and, eventually, expulsion from the society.41 The CIS was strictly non-denominational, and relief was distributed both to Catholics and Protestants. Discussion of political and sectarian controversies was


41 Harvey, “Black Beans, Banners and Banquets,” 16.
forbidden at meetings, as the society explicitly encouraged “harmony and good will amongst men.”

Membership was initially restricted to Irishmen and their sons. As with the St. John’s BIS, increased Catholic migration to Halifax during the early-nineteenth century eroded Irish-Protestant dominance in the society, and by the late-1840s, membership was well over 90% Catholic. From its founding, CIS membership was drawn from the town’s elite and middle classes. Some of Nova Scotia’s most powerful individuals had been members of the society, and this elite character was retained into the period under investigation here. Few full lists of members exist for our period, but for several years in the early-twentieth century, a list of proposed members, complete with occupations, has survived. Table 2.2 provides an occupational profile of those who were proposed for membership in 1914:

Table 2.2: Occupational Profile of Proposed Members of the Halifax Charitable Irish Society, 1914.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Proposed Members</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar and Professional</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers, Shopkeepers and Merchants</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- or Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The similarities to the St. John’s BIS are striking. Educated, white-collar jobs dominated, and unskilled labourers were almost completely absent. For young, Catholic, middle-class men of

42 Stewart, The Irish in Nova Scotia, 15.
44 “Propositions for Membership, 1914,” Public Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), Charitable Irish Society Fonds, MG 20, Vol. 63, No. 17. The breakdown in occupations is similar to Table 2.1. The semi- and unskilled workers in this instance consist of a letter carrier and a coalweigher; while “Other” contains two men for whom no occupation was recorded, and A.J. Foley, who was simply listed as a “gentleman.”
Halifax, membership in the CIS provided not only an opportunity to express their ethnic identity, but also represented a significant badge of respectability.

The CIS’s primary objective remained the charitable relief of Halifax’s poor. In its early years, this often took the form of bread, which was distributed to suffering residents, but by the nineteenth century, relief generally took the form of monetary donations. The Committee of Charity was responsible for the distribution of aid, which in the 1880s consisted of relieving individual families as well as contributions to local charities. The society held quarterly meetings, usually at the Halifax Hotel, and voted as to how to distribute funds. In 1903, for example, $300 was voted to the Committee of Charity for the relief of specific cases, while $50 each was pledged to St. Teresa’s Home and the Home of the Guardian Angel. In 1912, the society aided 157 families through its $500 relief fund. As the twentieth century wore on, a growing number of charities – mostly Catholic – applied to the CIS for funds. By 1920, it supported the St. Patrick’s Boy’s Home, the Society of the Good Shepherd, St. Joseph’s Orphanage, the Halifax Infants Home, the Guardian Angel, the Protestant Orphans Home, St. Teresa’s, the Children’s Hospital, as well as the Tuberculosis League. Furthermore, like the BIS, the CIS began to take an interest in education. In 1919, a committee was formed to establish a scholarship to Dalhousie University, which was to be awarded to a student of Irish descent. The society did offer its members a variety of social pastimes, such as dinners on or around St. Patrick’s Day, and picnics in the summer. These were not as elaborate as the leisure activities organized by the St. John’s BIS, however, and

45 Harvey, “Black Beans, Banners and Banquets,” 17.
48 CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1920.
49 CIS Minute Book, August 19, 1919.
50 For example, see CIS Minute Book, August 20, 1912.
the CIS remained focused on the charitable relief of the poor and suffering until well into the twentieth century.

The CIS’s engagement with Irish affairs was, again, quite similar to that of the BIS in St. John’s. Resolutions on political developments in the homeland were common, and always showed support for constitutional nationalism along with an explicit loyalty to the British Empire. Most of these resolutions emerged from special meetings called to discuss affairs in the ancestral homeland, and frequently demonstrated members’ esteem for the old country. For example, at a meeting to discuss relieving those afflicted by famine in Ireland in 1881, CIS president James Butler wrote to the Archbishop of Tuam, stating that “though separated from [our brethren at home] by the heaving waters of the Atlantic Ocean, neither time nor distance has ever been able to make us forget their sufferings. [...] We feel bound as Irishmen and sons of Irishmen to show our sympathy by action as well as word.” The society pledged £100 for the relief of the hungry. 51 Most often, special meetings on Irish affairs had to do with political circumstances in the old country. The CIS was called together in 1882 to discuss Home Rule, in 1886 to welcome Irish nationalist politician Justin McCarthy, in 1890 to mark the death of Irish-American newspaper editor John Boyle O’Reilly, on several occasions in 1913 and 1914, and again in 1919 and 1920 to discuss Anglo-Irish relations. Support for Irish nationalism was always constitutional, and discussion of an independent Irish Republic did not occur. Even in 1920 and 1921, during the Anglo-Irish War, CIS resolutions condemned Britain’s actions in Ireland and advocated Irish self-government, but the minutes were careful to establish that the discussions were “highly loyal and patriotic in nature.” The society resolved that Ireland must be granted “a measure of self-government which would be satisfactory to the Irish people, but would also preserve Ireland as a partner

51 CIS Minute Book, May 17, 1881.
in the commonwealth of British nations which we here in Canada are a part.” Meetings concluded with the singing of both God Save Ireland and God Save the King.

The CIS demonstrated its loyalty to the Empire in a number of other ways. Like the BIS, toasts reflected the society’s attachment to the monarchy. At the St. Patrick’s Day banquet of 1914, for example, the first toast was to the King. This was followed by toasts to St. Patrick and Ireland, and also to the Catholic clergy, Daniel O’Connell, and Canada. Another example of the CIS’s pro-imperial stance can be seen in their address to Viscount Gordon of Aberdeen, the former Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who in 1895 was appointed Governor General of Canada. Upon his arrival in Halifax, the CIS met to pass a special resolution, which stated that “as Irishmen and sons of Irishmen who made their homes in Nova Scotia, we viewed with admiration and approval the wisdom and justice of Your Excellency’s administration of Irish affairs while Lord Lieutenant, and we beg to assure you of our high appreciation of the value of services rendered by Your Excellency to our Mother Country.” Finally, during the First World War, the CIS fervently supported the Canadian effort. Donations were made to the Patriotic Fund, the Red Cross and the Soldier’s Disablement Fund. Following the conclusion of the War in 1918, a celebratory parade and banquet was held in conjunction with Halifax’s other ethnic associations, the Scottish North British Society and the English St. George’s Society. Even in the midst of this display of imperial identity, the CIS did not forget its ethnic affiliation. The minutes specifically mentioned that peace would almost certainly bring Home Rule to Ireland, and that in itself

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52 CIS Minute Book, November 29, 1920; See also Morning Chronicle, February 18, 1921. CIS involvement with Irish nationalism will be treated more fully in chapters five and six.
was a cause for celebration.\textsuperscript{55} For the CIS, Irishness was expressed next to a strong sense of Canadian patriotism and British loyalty.

While the CIS prominently and publicly displayed its Irish identity, more direct engagement with Irish affairs, such as sending money to the ancestral homeland, tended to evoke controversy. Funds were sent across the Atlantic on a number of occasions in the nineteenth century, such as during the great famine of the 1840s as well as in 1880.\textsuperscript{56} In 1885, however, a subscription of $100 to the Irish Parliamentary Party Fund was rejected on the grounds that it did not reflect the charitable objectives of the society. Instead, a private collection was taken amongst the members, and $80 was raised for the cause.\textsuperscript{57} In 1888, a similar incident took place when the Sisters of Mercy in Galway appealed to the CIS for a donation. The plea was rejected in a close vote.\textsuperscript{58} The lingering question of precisely what role the society should take in the affairs of the homeland was debated at length as its constitution was being revised in 1892. J.C. O’Mullin, a prominent member of the Conservative Party in Halifax who would become president of the society from 1907 to 1909, objected to the phrase “local charity” being included in the society’s mission. According to O’Mullin, such language would prevent the CIS contributing aid to Ireland in the event of a disaster, such as a famine. A debate ensued, and it was decided that the “object of the society was to assist people in Nova Scotia.”\textsuperscript{59} The word “local” was retained. Two years later, though, in 1911, the society reversed this trend by contributing over $600 to a Home Rule fund.\textsuperscript{60} While members of the Charitable Irish Society seem to have possessed a

\textsuperscript{55} CIS Minute Book, February 15; August 17, 1915; November 20, 1918.
\textsuperscript{56} Harvey, “Black Beans, Banners and Banquets, 17.”
\textsuperscript{57} CIS Minute Book, November 17, 1885.
\textsuperscript{58} CIS Minute Book, August 17, 1888.
\textsuperscript{59} CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1892
\textsuperscript{60} CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1911.
shared esteem for Ireland, precisely how this was to be expressed was a contestable issue, and attitudes towards direct engagement with the ancestral homeland varied over time.

Owing to its smaller Irish-Catholic elite, benevolent associations did not thrive in Portland to the same extent as in St. John’s or Halifax. Those that existed did not leave behind minute books or membership lists, so an investigation of them must be based on their original constitutions and bylaws in addition to newspaper reports. As in the two British-North American ports, these groups offered both financial relief for the poor and social opportunities to their members. The societies, though, were small, younger, and at no point did they dominate the public expression of Irish identity in Portland. Instead, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, various nationalist groups and, later in the period, the Knights of Columbus were that city’s most successful Catholic associations.

The most prominent Irish benevolent association in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Portland was the Irish American Relief Association. On April 29th, 1863, some of Portland’s leading Irish residents met to form a relief society. The IARA was eventually organized on February 4th, 1865. It functioned more as a mutual benefit association than a true benevolent society, as charitable aid appears to have been given primarily to those who were members of the society, rather than to the broader Irish-Catholic community. Its objective was “to afford relief to its members when afflicted by sickness, and to embrace the opportunity to do good to one another when the occasion and means of the occasion permit.” Little information on membership for our period exists. A re-written constitution, printed in 1876, lists 272 members, but by 1919, a report in Portland’s Eastern

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62 “Constitution and Bylaws of the Irish American Relief Association, 1876,” Maine Historical Society (MHS), MSP837i, 4
Argus listed a total of forty one, so it appears as though the IARA’s size and influence waned between these years.\textsuperscript{63} By 1921, it had “ceased to be active other than as a business corporation.”\textsuperscript{64} The Argus’ list of members, cross-referenced with City Directories, allows for an occupational analysis of the society, and reveals that the IARA was a rather diverse group. Some of Portland’s wealthiest Irish-Catholics were present, including clothing merchant Charles McCarthy Jr., physician J.L. McAleney, and C.A. Mannix of Mannix Brothers’ stonecutters. The bulk of the members, though, came from the lower-middle classes and skilled-working classes, as can be seen in Table 2.3:

Table 2.3: Occupational Profile of the Irish-American Relief Association, 1919.\textsuperscript{65}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar or Professional</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers, Shopkeepers or Merchants</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Working Class</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi/Unskilled Working Class</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The more working-class profile of the IARA, at least when compared to the BIS and CIS, was likely due to its function as a mutual benefit association. Working-class individuals were more prone to accidents at work which could rob them and their families of essential income, and for such people an insurance-oriented society would have been appealing.

\textsuperscript{63}“Constitution and Bylaws of the Irish American Relief Association, 1876,” 23-27; Eastern Argus, May 5, 1919.

\textsuperscript{64}Barker, “The Irish Community and Irish Organizations of Nineteenth-Century Portland, Maine,” 174.

\textsuperscript{65}Eastern Argus, May 5, 1919; 1920 Directory of Portland (Portland: Portland Directory Company, 1920). Of the 41 members listed in the Argus, thirty could be positively identified in the Directory. “White collar or professional” includes clerks, physicians, managers, real estate agents, a police captain and an automobile inspector. “Grocers, shopkeepers or merchants” includes a cigar merchant and a furrier, “skilled working class” includes boilermakers, carpenters, cooks, foremen, machinists, mechanics, press feeders, stonecutters, timekeepers and woodworkers, and “unskilled” includes checkers, drivers, freight handlers, janitors and night watchmen. One member was a Catholic priest.
In order to become a member, an individual had to be in good standing within the community, be of “good moral character,” pay an initial fee of $5 as well as a 25-cent monthly rate, and receive a vote of two-thirds of the members present in favour of admission. The constitution makes no explicit mention of members’ place of birth, ancestry, or religion, so the IARA’s ethnic affiliation seems to have been more implicit than those of either the BIS or the CIS.

A variety of leisure events and pastimes were organized by the IARA, both for its members and for the broader community. The association owned its own hall at 46 Plum Street, though towards the end of the period meetings appeared to have been held at the Hibernian Hall.66 Balls and banquets were held annually for members and their guests. So too were picnics and excursions to various locations around southern Maine. In the 1880s, these were sometimes grandiose affairs. A report on the eve of the seventeenth annual excursion to Cushing’s Island in 1880 noted that IARA outings had been known to attract up to 2,500 people. Events included athletics, baseball, shooting competitions, as well as archery for women. The numbers, even if exaggerated, suggest that the event drew individuals not only from outside the IARA membership, but also from beyond Portland’s Irish-Catholic community.67

Unlike the BIS and CIS, direct engagement with Irish affairs through the IARA appears to have been rare. The only notable examples were in 1880, when the association pledged $500 to the relief of those suffering from famine in Ireland, and in 1920 when $200 was pledged to purchase bonds of the Irish Republic.68 Although some of the society’s social

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67 Eastern Argus, July 19; July 22, 1880.
68 Eastern Argus, February 3, 1880; April 12, 1920.
events seem to have captured the attention of Portland’s Irish-Catholic community, and perhaps the entire city, the IARA rarely publicly displayed its Irishness. Its identification with the ancestral homeland tended to be implicit.

Other Irish-Catholic benevolent associations appear to have been active in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, but they rarely appear in press reports. The St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society, for example, possessed similar objectives to the BIS and CIS, aiming to promote “kind and fraternal feelings among its members, and affectionate concern for the welfare of all Catholics of Portland.” A sickness committee evaluated cases of destitution and recommended to the main body of the society whether financial aid should be provided. Members could be any persons from the community who were approved by the board of trustees, and who received a majority vote from those present. Furthermore, the society was the only benevolent association investigated here to admit women as well as men. Other than the reference to St. Patrick in the association’s name, it does not appear to have publicly expressed any identification with Ireland. Its objective was to relieve all suffering Catholics of Portland, not just those of Irish birth or descent.

Charitable and benevolent associations are crucial in understanding how Irish identity was publicly expressed in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. One of the most significant conclusions to draw from this discussion is the similarity between the St. John’s Benevolent Irish Society and Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society. Both emphasized respectability and a devout loyalty to the British Empire as being important facets of Irishness. For society members, as well as for the Irish-Catholic populations of both cities, it was this conception of Irish ethnicity that was most visible, both through charitable activities and, especially, the

69 “Constitution and Bylaws of the St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society, 1871,” MHS, M837s.1, 3.
70 “Constitution and Bylaws of the St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society, 1871,” 8.
array of social opportunities organized by these associations. Furthermore, both continued to support Irish self-government within the British Empire throughout this period. The key difference between them is that while in St. John’s the BIS remained the preeminent Irish association, in Halifax the CIS existed next to other groups such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as will be discussed below. In Portland, the Irish American Relief Association and other Catholic benevolent societies did not give Irishness the same public face as did their British North American counterparts, despite well-attended social outings. Instead, it fell almost entirely to other groups such as the AOH to make the expression of Irish ethnicity a day-to-day reality.

2.2 Other Associations

For Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s, the Benevolent Irish Society was just one part of a vibrant associational life. The vast majority of these groups did not overtly express a sense of ethnic identification. Instead, they brought together different Catholic occupational groups in the name of charity, sociability, temperance, spirituality, or mutual benefit. Although they were rarely involved in the public expression of Irish identities, groups such as the St. John’s Mechanics Society, St. Vincent de Paul, the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, St. Joseph’s Catholic Institute, the Star of the Sea, as well as the Catholic Cadet Corps and the Knights of Columbus were important features in the day-to-day lives of Catholics, and therefore must be briefly addressed here.

The Mechanics Society and the Star of the Sea were the city’s most prominent working-class Catholic organizations in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Composed primarily of skilled tradesmen, the Mechanics Society was formed in 1827 and functioned as a mutual benefit association. In the 1880s, in the face of Catholic emigration
from Newfoundland to the Canadian Maritimes and the United States, the society’s membership was in decline, so like the BIS the society established a juvenile branch to increase its ranks.\textsuperscript{71} The results of these efforts are unclear, but the Mechanics did continue to participate in Catholic celebrations, such as the consecration of Archbishop Edward Roche in 1915, so the organization persisted throughout our period.\textsuperscript{72} In the mid-nineteenth century, the Mechanics Society had been closely involved with Daniel O’Connell’s Repeal movement in St. John’s, and the Irish birth or ancestry of many of its members seems to have been an important part of their mutual identification.\textsuperscript{73} By 1900, however, there does not appear to have been any involvement in Irish affairs or public expressions of ethnic identity by this group.

The Fishermen’s Star of the Sea Association was formed by the Church as a benefit organization for Catholic fishermen in 1871. It was strictly a denominational society: only Catholic fishermen could become members. Emphasis was placed on respectability and temperance, with members required to be “sober, moral and industrious.”\textsuperscript{74} Perhaps more than any other non-ethnic Catholic group in St. John’s, the SOS did occasionally engage in Irish affairs during the period. The most prominent example was in 1881, when the society held its own subscription for the relief of the Irish poor, which included a concert as well as individual voluntary subscriptions. Over £120 was raised for the cause.\textsuperscript{75} The SOS also held lectures on Irish topics well into the twentieth century, ranging from talks on Daniel O’Connell in the 1880s, to a discussion of Home Rule and the Ulster crisis in 1914, which was organized because the Irish Question was so “acute,” as well as a lecture on Patrick

\textsuperscript{71} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 215.
\textsuperscript{72} Evening Telegram, June 26, 1915.
\textsuperscript{73} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 360.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 194-195.
\textsuperscript{75} Terra Nova Advocate, April 21, 1881.
Pearse in 1922. Despite such occasional engagement with the ancestral homeland, the SOS and the Mechanics Society were not ethnic associations. It was their shared occupational status and their Roman Catholic religion that remained the most salient feature of members’ publicly expressed identities.

One of the most prominent Catholic associations in St. John’s was the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society. In 1906, a history of the society published in a local paper noted that it included over five-hundred members, in addition to three-hundred in its juvenile branch. This almost certainly made it the largest Catholic group in early-twentieth century St. John’s. It was formed in 1858 as a lay successor to the Church-run Temperance Society, which had been prominent in the 1840s. Membership came largely from the working classes, and its objectives were to encourage sobriety and temperance among the Catholics of St. John’s.

Like the SOS, the TABS also functioned as a benefit society, and had a reading room, literary club, athletics clubs, two bands, a dramatic society as well its own theatre, “equal to any in the province.” While the society was certainly a prominent feature in the lives of many St. John’s Catholics, the Irish ancestry of the majority of its members seems to have been rarely, if ever, publicly expressed.

By the twentieth century, two new associations emerged and became prominent features of St. John’s Catholic social landscape: the Catholic Cadet Corps and the Knights of Columbus. The Cadets, a paramilitary organization, were founded in 1896 “to minister to the physical, mental and moral life of the boys who were recently released from the restraints of

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76 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 242; Daily News, March 24, 1914; Evening Telegram, March 27, 1914; Daily News, June 1, 1922.
79 Ibid., 197; Daily News, March 17, 1906.
school and to qualify them for good and worthy citizens.” The Corps’ companies emphasized loyalty, discipline, self-reliance, obedience, and, from the early-twentieth century, total abstinence from alcohol. In 1910, Brother J.B. Ryan, who was superintendent of the Christian Brothers’ schools, introduced school companies which swelled membership to over six hundred. The Cadets’ band played at many of the city’s Catholic functions, and the group also possessed successful football, basketball, shooting, and rowing teams. Loyalty to Newfoundland and the British Empire was an important facet of Cadet life, and this was most clearly demonstrated by the group’s enthusiastic response to the First World War: 160 of the first five hundred Newfoundland Regiment volunteers were current or former Cadets. Like the BIS, the Catholic Cadet Corps highlights the strong sense of imperial patriotism held by many Catholic Newfoundlanders.

Formed in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1882, the Knights of Columbus quickly grew to become the “largest body of Catholic laymen in the world.” Although its original founders were almost all Irish Americans, unlike ethnic associations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Knights emphasized loyalty to the American republic instead of old world affiliations. The society “looked more to the potential of the United States than to the traditions of Europe.” In the 1880s, the Knights spread across Connecticut and New England. Early members were mostly Irish, but small numbers of French, German, and Italian Catholics did join. From its inception, then, the association was not an Irish ethnic

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81 Ibid., 387-388. See also Evening Telegram, October 2, 1914.
83 Ibid., 9.
one, fighting instead for respectability and Catholic legitimacy within “the rules of the American battlefields.”

The Knights began to expand beyond New England and into British North America towards the turn of the twentieth century. A group from upstate New York assisted in establishing a council in Montreal in 1897, and from there it spread to Ottawa and Quebec City. From New England, the organization passed into the Canadian Maritimes as councils were set up first in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and subsequently throughout New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. The origins of the Knights of Columbus in Newfoundland can be traced back to 1904, when a group of Catholic men – some of whom were already members of councils in Nova Scotia and New England – met at St. Patrick’s Hall in St. John’s to discuss the establishment of a local chapter. The Knights required the permission of Michael Francis Howley, the Archbishop of St. John’s, in order to found the organization in the city. Howley, concerned about the presence of what he considered a secret Catholic society, was initially hesitant to permit the formation of a council, so the Knights would be forced to wait several years before becoming officially incorporated in Newfoundland. When this finally occurred, it was not in St. John’s, but rather in Harbour Grace where Bishop John March was more supportive. In 1909, the Dalton Council of the Knights of Columbus was established in Harbour Grace. Almost immediately, Howley acquiesced, and on November 30th, the Terra Nova Council was formed in St. John’s, with seventy-three men as charter members.

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84 Ibid., 47; 71.
85 Ibid., 117.
By the beginning of the First World War, there were 613 Knights spread across Newfoundland. As in other parts of North America, the Knights reacted patriotically to the conflict, fully endorsing the British effort. Owing to their limited financial resources, the St. John’s Knights’ official response was limited, but six of their members lost their lives on European battlefields. Following the conclusion of the War, a desire to commemorate their fallen colleagues as well as a growing interest in Catholic education resulted in the construction of a new school. A fundraising drive, led largely by members’ wives who formed the Columbus Ladies Association, took place in 1919 and 1920, and on Columbus Day, October 12th, 1921, the Knights of Columbus Memorial School opened in St. John’s.\textsuperscript{87}

The Knights were not an ethnic association, so public acknowledgement of Irish ethnicity was rare. Even as expressions of Irish identity became increasingly common in St. John’s in the early 1920s, the Knights did not engage with the affairs of the ancestral homeland. The only exception was a lecture on Daniel O’Connell and Irish nationalism delivered by House of Assembly member James M. Kent in 1914.\textsuperscript{88} While the Knights became a prominent association for the Catholic men of St. John’s, they did not challenge the BIS as the foremost public custodian of Irish ethnicity in the city. Instead, it was a little-known group formed at the very end of our period which, for a short time, became the colony’s most assertive Irish cultural organization: the Newfoundland Gaelic League.

The associations examined here reveal a great deal about how Catholics of Irish descent interacted with one another, as well as how their social worlds revolved around class, religion, and, often, a shared sense of Newfoundland patriotism and imperial loyalty. Most of them tell us little about how Irishness found its way into the day-to-day lives of St. John’s

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{88} Evening Herald, January 22, 1914.
Catholics, or how they understood and articulated their ethnicity. The Newfoundland Gaelic League provides some of the most direct evidence available in charting the strength of inter-generational ethnic identity in the city. It suggests that some Catholics took a keen interest in the politics, history and culture of Ireland, but the expression of their ethnicity was encouraged and guided by external influences.

The Gaelic League, which does not appear to have had any official connection to its cultural-nationalist namesake in Ireland, was formed largely thanks to the efforts of Michael Walsh, a young Galway-born engineer. Unlike the overwhelming majority of twentieth-century St. John’s Irish Catholics, Walsh was born in Ireland, arriving in St. John’s in the early weeks of 1921. Exactly why he chose to come to the city is uncertain, but he arrived with his wife and a letter of introduction from a priest who happened to be a close friend of Archbishop Edward P. Roche. Roche immediately went about trying to help the young man find employment in Grand Falls and Bell Island, but was unsuccessful. Eventually, he wrote to the St. John’s municipal council, praising Walsh’s degree in civil engineering from the National University of Ireland, and expressed the hope that temporary employment could be secured for him. It appears as though Walsh worked in the city from this point on.

The details surrounding the formation of the Gaelic League are unclear. It seems to have originated just as the passionate response to the Anglo-Irish War, 1919-1921, organized through the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland, was fading. The nationalist fervour involved a direct engagement with Irish affairs on the part of St. John’s Catholics, and that is what Walsh tapped into when forming the Gaelic League. The earliest

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89 Archbishop Edward Roche to Ryan, May 26, 1921, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s (ARCASJ), Edward Roche Papers, 107/15/17.
90 The Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland (SDILN) and its role in reinvigorating Irish identities in the colony will be addressed in chapter six.
meetings were likely in the fall of 1922, but it was not until the winter of 1923 that the group’s activities began to be reported in the local press. A “large attendance” was requested at a meeting at the Star of the Sea hall on February 26th to discuss how the League should mark St. Patrick’s Day. Later, through the month of March, large ads appeared for a concert and comedy night to be held under the auspices of *Conradh na Gaedhilge* in conjunction with the Columbus Ladies’ Association.\(^91\) The evening was to include a variety of Irish musical numbers, recitations and a performance of the J. Bernard McCarthy play, *The Romantic Lover*, and concluded with the singing of the “Flag of Newfoundland.”\(^92\)

Following the St. Patrick’s Day celebration, the Gaelic League met to elect an executive, and then passed a resolution proclaiming that “the study of Gaelic language and customs will be beneficial to the people of the Irish race in Newfoundland.”\(^93\) The executive included both men and women, and seems to have been mostly drawn from the city’s educated Catholic population. No membership lists have survived, so the only identifiable members are the thirteen who sat on the executive. Of these, only seven could be definitely traced using the 1924 St. John’s City Directory, and their occupations may be seen in Table 2.4:

\(^91\) *Daily News*, February 24, 1923.
\(^92\) *Daily News*, March 13, 1923.
\(^93\) *Evening Telegram*, April 13, 1923.
Table 2.4: Names and Occupations of the 1923 Executive of the Newfoundland Gaelic League.\textsuperscript{94}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michael Walsh</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Civil Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James A. Gibbs</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Law Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis J. O’Quinn</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.J. Fagan</td>
<td>Asst. Treasurer</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.J. Power</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss L. Shortall</td>
<td>Asst. Secretary</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo Hickey</td>
<td>Guard</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.J. James</td>
<td>Director of Publicity</td>
<td>Surveyor, Dept. of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Kelly</td>
<td>Director of Organization</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Targett</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.J. St. John</td>
<td>Corresponding Secretary</td>
<td>Grocer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James O’Neil Conroy</td>
<td>Auditor</td>
<td>Solicitor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

League meetings were held weekly, and members were provided with a variety of social opportunities and pastimes. A debate on the prohibition law in Newfoundland was held towards the end of April. Several days later, an Athletics Association was formed, though it is not known whether or not this was devoted to Gaelic sports.\textsuperscript{95} The League did possess an association football team, who played matches against the BIS.\textsuperscript{96} A Gaelic League card party and dance was organized by the female members, and attracted over two-hundred guests. Mrs. Walsh, the wife of founder and first president Michael, who herself had a university degree, ran Irish language classes. In late June, an outing to Donovans was planned.\textsuperscript{97}

\textsuperscript{94}Evening Telegram, April 13, 1923; George H. Andrews and E.A. Smith, \textit{St. John’s City Directory, 1924} (St. John’s: St. John's (NFLD.) City Directory Company, 1924).

\textsuperscript{95}Daily News, April 24; April 27, 1923.

\textsuperscript{96}A “large crowd” was reported at a September, 1923 meeting between the associations. Daily News, September 21, 1923.

\textsuperscript{97}Evening Telegram, May 10; May 18; June 28, 1923.
Lectures on Irish history and literature were also features of Gaelic League meetings, covering a range of topics. Mrs. Walsh, for example, spoke about Eva Kelly, who wrote extensively for the nationalist newspaper *The Nation* about the Young Ireland movement of the 1840s.98 A few weeks later, Michael J. James, a St. John’s surveyor for the Department of Agriculture, gave a talk on Robert Emmet. He concluded with the hope that “the Irish race in Newfoundland would be associated at some not far distant date with the writing of Emmet’s epitaph.”99 James O’Neil Conroy, brother of the Knights of Columbus Grand Knight Charles, delivered an address on Parnell and the Home Rule movement in early May, while shortly after Mrs. Walsh presented a talk on nationalism in Anglo-Irish literature.100

The most interesting lecture in the spring of 1923 was by the League’s vice president, James A. Gibbs, who was a law student at his father’s firm. The subject was the Sinn Fein movement and the rise of revolutionary Irish nationalism. Up to the 1920s, support for Irish republicanism in Newfoundland had been rare, but Gibbs’ talk praised Sinn Fein and the effectiveness of physical force nationalism. He finished by expressing “the wish that the future may contain the realization of the hopes of [Arthur] Griffith and his associates.” This statement does not necessarily represent a ringing endorsement of republicanism, however, as after the Anglo-Irish Treaty, Griffith was part of the Sinn Fein faction which supported the Free State and, therefore, Ireland’s status within the Empire. Following the talk, the members of the League voted to have Gibbs’ lecture published and circulated as a pamphlet.101

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98 *Evening Telegram*, March 5, 1923.
99 *Evening Telegram*, April 18, 1923. Following his death sentence in 1803, Emmet was reported to have said “when my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then, let my epitaph be written.” See Marianne Elliott, *Robert Emmet: The Making of a Legend* (London: Profile Books, 2003), 85.
100 *Daily News*, May 4, 1923; *Evening Telegram*, May 18, 1923.
101 *Daily News*, June 1, 1923.
In the summer of 1923, the Gaelic League appeared to be flourishing. In August, however, president Michael Walsh left St. John’s, and references to the society in the local press became less frequent. Walsh was apparently unable to secure permanent employment in the city, so he and his wife embarked for New York. A large meeting of the League was called to bid them farewell. Treasurer Denis O’Quinn praised Walsh’s contribution to the Irish of St. John’s, crediting the Galway native with almost single-handedly “re-firing the flames of Irish nationalism in Newfoundland.”¹⁰² The next day, Walsh and his wife left the town on board the Silvia, and the Gaelic League declined thereafter.

The fact that Michael Walsh was perceived to have had such a critical role in rekindling Irish-Newfoundland identities demonstrates how specific individuals and associations could dictate public ethnic expression. The language used at Gaelic League meetings and in lectures frequently referred to the “Irish Race in Newfoundland,” so for its members it was a shared knowledge and appreciation of their ancestry and ethnicity that brought them together. It would be unfair to suggest that Walsh and the Gaelic League created and nurtured these identities from nothing. Instead, for many Catholics, an identification with Ireland had been strengthening throughout the early-twentieth century as transatlantic communications improved, the Christian Brothers introduced Irish content into their curricula, and the Self-Determination for Ireland League brought pan-diasporic networks and an active, direct engagement with Irish nationalism to the colony in 1920 and 1921.¹⁰³ For most, an understanding of their Irishness, if it existed at all, remained private and domestic, but Michael Walsh’s leadership and dynamism created an associational framework through which Irish identities could be publicly expressed. The short, but active

¹⁰² Daily News, August 10, 1923.
¹⁰³ The role of the Irish Christian Brothers in fostering Irish identities in St. John’s, particularly for young men, will be discussed in chapter three.
existence of the Gaelic League in St. John’s shows that the distinction between a private, symbolic, romantic attachment and an assertive, public ethnic identification could be a narrow one.

In Halifax, Catholic associational life tended to be more closely connected to individual parishes – St. Mary’s, St. Patrick’s, and St. Joseph’s – than in either St. John’s or Portland. Each parish possessed its own temperance society, athletics association, dramatic group, and various musical ensembles. These groups brought together Catholics from across Halifax for a variety of social and benevolent purposes, and the most prominent feature of parish-based associational life in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Halifax was its temperance associations. The St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s temperance societies had been active since the late-1860s and early-1870s respectively. These organizations, which encouraged sobriety and respectability, flourished well into the twentieth century. At its 1919 annual meeting, the St. Mary’s Young Men’s Total Abstinence and Benefit Society claimed a membership of 614, with over 130 having joined in the previous year. The group’s patriotic response to the Canadian War effort was praised, with over one-hundred members having volunteered. The St. Patrick’s Total Abstinence and Benefit Society held a similarly upbeat meeting the following night.

Catholic parishes were also connected to the city’s sporting culture. Baseball games between parishes could draw large crowds, such as when St. Mary’s played St. Joseph’s in 1894. The St. Mary’s Amateur Athletics Club, meanwhile, was one of the most prominent sporting organizations in Halifax, and under its auspices were a variety of teams as well as a rowing club. The association’s finest hour was in August, 1909, when one of its own, John

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104 Acadian Recorder, February 9, 1920.
105 Morning Chronicle, February 10; February 11, 1920.
106 Halifax Herald, July 24, 1894.
O’Neil, became the champion amateur sculler of North America. A parade, led by the St. Mary’s Young Men’s Total Abstinence and Benefit Society was held following the news of the victory, and upon the rower’s return to the city on August 12th, a welcoming ceremony took place on the waterfront. As he disembarked, the St. Patrick’s band played “The Wearing of the Green” in honour of O’Neil’s Irish ancestry.  

Such recognition of Irish connections was rare, though, as these were not ethnic associations, and membership was not exclusively of Irish descent.

In the twentieth century, several Catholic organizations which transcended parish boundaries came to prominence. One was the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association (CMBA), which has been formed as a charitable auxiliary of the Church in Niagara Falls, New York, and quickly became Canada’s most popular Catholic mutual-aid society. In Halifax, the group gained clerical support and attracted many of the city’s most influential Catholics. Even more prominent, however, was the rapid growth of the Knights of Columbus. Despite the order spreading from New England into the Maritime provinces in the opening years of the twentieth century, it was not until 1906 that a branch was established in Halifax. On March 26th, a large delegation of Knights from Antigonish, Sydney, Charlottetown, Saint John, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec, and Boston arrived in the city to oversee the founding of Halifax Council No. 1097. The installation ceremony was presided over by W.J. Mahoney, a well-known New Brunswick attorney. Many of the visiting delegates were “doctors, lawyers and businessmen well known in this city,” and the initial eleven-man Halifax executive supports the impression of the Knights being an elite- or middle-class Catholic organization. Four were lawyers, four were merchants or ran their own companies, and one was a doctor.

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107 *Halifax Herald*, August 9; August 11; August 12, 1909.
While this elite representation does not necessarily translate to the Knight’s broader membership, it is safe to assume that in Halifax it was, at the very least, a middle-class association of Catholics.\textsuperscript{110} The organization seems to have grown quite quickly. It remained connected to others in the region, being part of the Maritime state council, and also transcended national boundaries: “many” Halifax Knights attended a national convention at New Haven in June, 1906.\textsuperscript{111}

As in St. John’s, the Knights of Columbus were seldom involved in the public expression of Irish identity. Instead, Canadian and imperial patriotism were emphasized. The most notable example of this was in the closing months of the First World War, when the Knights organized a patriotic fund to assist the Canadian War effort. The fund ran through the summer of 1918, and by the end of August over $100,000 had been raised.\textsuperscript{112} The Knights did not challenge the Charitable Irish Society for the title of Halifax’s most prominent Irish association. Instead, it was the Ancient Order of Hibernians, organized in Halifax in 1902, that came to match and, arguably, exceed the CIS in terms of driving the public expression of Irish ethnicity.

The AOH was formed in New York in 1836, initially as a North American offshoot of secret, agrarian Ribbonmen societies, which were active in nineteenth-century rural Ireland. The early order was mostly confined to New York City, and expanded throughout the United States and into Canada by the 1870s.\textsuperscript{113} Membership was restricted to Catholic males of Irish birth or descent, although a Ladies’ Auxiliary of the organization was formed.

\textsuperscript{110} Acadian Recorder, March 26, 1906; McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory, 1906 (Halifax: McAlpine’s Publishing Company, 1906).
\textsuperscript{111} Acadian Recorder, June 26, 1906.
\textsuperscript{112} Halifax Herald, August 26, 1918. Although the contemporary sources never referred to it as such, this fund was likely part of the Knights’ Catholic Army Huts campaign of 1917-1918.
in 1894. In addition to mutual insurance benefits, the American AOH was part of a broad ethnic defensive strategy which attempted to improve the position of Irish-American Catholics in response to nativism. In the United States, the organization championed “the preservation of Irish culture,” specifically through the teaching of Irish language, literature and history to younger generations of Irish Americans, much like the objectives of the Newfoundland Gaelic League in the 1920s. Staunch support for Irish nationalism was another feature of the organization during this period. National conventions constantly discussed events in the homeland, and passed resolutions and raised funds for the Irish Parliamentary Party and Home Rule in the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s. Following the 1916 Easter Rising, the national organization in America overtly supported Sinn Fein and Irish republicanism.

Membership was drawn primarily from the skilled and unskilled working classes, and reached over 195,000 in 1908 before beginning to decline, making the AOH the most significant Irish ethnic organization on the continent in the early-twentieth century.

The AOH was first established in Halifax in the early weeks of 1902. Although it has been described as espousing an “aggressive, almost belligerent assertion of Irish interests,” early newspaper reports on its founding contained few references to its ethnic affiliation. Those behind the organization in Halifax expected the city’s young Catholic men to flock to the organization not because of its Irish connections, but rather due to its generous sick benefits.

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117 Meagher, Inventing Irish America, 170.
118 Acadian Recorder, January 9, 1902.
They argued that most mutual-aid organizations in Halifax were either insurance orders or else preached total abstinence. The AOH was neither, and this made it unique for young Catholic Haligonians. The organization also had a close connection to the Church, as a chaplain was to be appointed directly by the archbishop in order to provide spiritual supervision.119

As with the founding of the Knights of Columbus several years later, the organizational impetus for establishing the AOH seems to have come from New Brunswick. On January 15th, 1902, a delegation of New Brunswick Hibernians, led by provincial president J.C. Ferguson, formally installed Halifax Division No. 1. There were twenty-six charter members, but by the time the order was officially established, an additional seventy had applied to be members.120 Although no full list of members has survived, an examination of Division One’s original executive, coupled with data from McAlpine’s 1902 Halifax City Directory provides some conclusions about members’ occupational status:

Table 2.5: Occupations Profile of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Division No. 1, 1902 Executive.121

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position on Executive</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.J. McManus</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Boot and Shoe Manufacturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F.W. Smith</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James E. Power</td>
<td>Financial Secretary</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James J. O’Donnell</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Letter Carrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Haley</td>
<td>Sergeant at Arms</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Dee</td>
<td>Inside Sentinel</td>
<td>No Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Saxton</td>
<td>Outside Sentinel</td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

119 Acadian Recorder, January 9, 1902. Despite the founders’ arguments, the CMBA did offer comparable benefits.
120 Halifax Herald, January 16, 1902.
121 Acadian Recorder, January 9, 1902; McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory, 1902 (Halifax: McAlpine’s Publishing Company, 1902).
While in many American cities the AOH was an amalgam of semi- and unskilled labourers, those behind the organization in Halifax came from a variety of class backgrounds. The founding president, P.J. McManus, possessed his own boot and shoe business, while vice president F.W. Smith was a press reporter. Two of the founding executive were clerks, while treasurer J.J. O’Donnell was a letter carrier and outside sentinel George Saxton was a painter. The composition of the executive, however, does not necessarily reflect the occupational profile of the entire membership, as those with the most education were the most likely to be elected to executive positions. They key attraction of sick benefits would have attracted skilled tradesmen and members of the working classes. Unlike in American divisions where AOH members tended to be Irish-born, the order in Halifax was predominantly composed of native Catholics of Irish descent.

As predicted by its founders, the AOH grew quickly. The New Brunswick provincial council was expanded to include Nova Scotia, and one of the Halifax division’s first big days came in 1906, when the annual provincial convention was held in the city. At this meeting, members praised the “exceptional” growth of the local branch. Following a High Mass at St. Patrick’s church, the delegates paraded through the city’s principal streets attracting a large crowd of spectators, mostly “those of Irish origin.” On this occasion, references to the AOH’s Irish identification were frequent. A large banner honouring Daniel O’Connell was featured in the parade, and in his speech Father McManus, who was the rector of St. Mary’s Collegiate Schools as well as chaplain of the Halifax division, praised the organization’s Irish loyalty. McManus specifically highlighted the multi-generational nature of the Halifax Irish, stating that “as sons and daughters of Irish parents, all looked with glowing pride upon the history of Ireland – land of saints, warriors, statesmen and scholars.” Archbishop Edward
McCarthy gave a comparable address, while some of the city’s other Catholic associations were also involved. John J. O’Brien, who had been Halifax’s representative at the 1896 Irish Race Convention, gave a speech on behalf of the CIS, while Derry-born lawyer, John C. O’Mullin, congratulated the AOH on behalf of both the CMBA and the Knights of Columbus. The delegates elected Halifax’s P.J. McManus as their provincial president, and the order’s keen interest in education was shown by the establishment of a $3,000 scholarship fund, to be given to students of Irish descent. The convention also passed resolutions mourning the death of Irish Land League founder Michael Davitt, and formally voiced their opposition to the way members of the “Irish race” were occasionally caricatured in the press.122

The 1906 convention brought important publicity to the AOH in Halifax, and by the spring of 1909, there were approximately 225 members in the city. In early March, about forty of them signed a petition requesting the establishment of a west-end division. On March 25th, seventy-five men were inaugurated as charter members of AOH, Halifax Division No. 2. The first president was John W. Churchill, a builder, and the new branch quickly moved into rooms on Quinpool Road.123 Hibernian growth continued, and one year later, in May, 1910, a third division was established with a charter membership of sixty men. This branch was centred in St. Patrick’s parish, and by June had moved into rooms on Creighton Street.124 Later in 1910, the three Halifax divisions had a combined membership of over five hundred.125

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122 *Halifax Herald*, August 29; August 30, 1906.
125 *Acadian Recorder*, October 4, 1910.
The three divisions, in addition to one later formed in Dartmouth, had common representation on the Halifax County AOH Council. They also had representatives on the Maritime Provincial Council, which included New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and eventually Prince Edward Island. Throughout the period, Halifax Hibernians sent delegates to provincial conventions. Canadian national conventions also took place, such as in 1907 when representatives from Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes met in Quebec City. AOH networks also transcended national boundaries, as delegates were dispatched to national meetings in the United States. Through transnational ethnic associations like the AOH, Catholics of Irish descent belonged to inherently local organizations, but were also exposed to networks which spanned the diaspora.

In addition to sick benefits, prospective members were attracted by the variety of social pastimes and leisure opportunities offered by the AOH. Its first official dinner was held on St. Patrick’s Day, 1902. By that fall, the order had organized its own athletics meeting, which featured sprints and distance running, weight lifting, a tug of war competition and boxing. Sports and athletics remained a feature of Hibernian activity, and an “All-Irish” Halifax baseball team was selected to compete against a Saint John, New Brunswick, side at the 1908 convention in that city, though there is no record of Gaelic games ever being played.

Hibernian group excursions were another prominent social feature of the organization. The first of these was in 1904, and reflected the close connection between the Maritimes and New England, as a large contingent of Hibernians from Halifax and Saint

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126 Acadian Recorder, August 3, 1908.
127 Acadian Recorder, March 18, 1902; Halifax Herald, September 26, 1902; Acadian Recorder, July 13, 1908.
John travelled to Boston. Fairs were held to raise funds for the Hibernians’ library and reading rooms, while musical nights were also staged. By 1912, a piano had been added to Division One’s rooms on Hollis Street. Division Two, meanwhile, held weekly socials throughout that winter. Numerously lectures were organized by the AOH during this period. Occasionally, such as in the winter of 1904, these would take the form of a series spread over the course of a season, frequently addressing Irish topics. As part of the 1904 series, John J. O’Brien gave a talk on his experiences at the 1896 Irish Race Convention in Dublin. He closed by re-emphasizing the esteem that members of the Halifax AOH felt for their ancestral homeland, as well as their hope that Home Rule would eventually become a reality. Other lectures on Irish affairs, such as one on Daniel O’Connell in 1908, drew large Hibernian audiences and represented an important public acknowledgement of the order’s Irish identity.

More direct involvement in the affairs of Ireland also took place. Like the CIS, the AOH frequently passed resolutions on Irish politics and nationalism. Unlike in some American settings, support for revolutionary Irish nationalism did not permeate the order in Canada. In Toronto, for example, both Canadian and imperial loyalty were emphasized by the AOH, while in Montreal expressions of nationalism tended to be more overt, but still fell within a constitutional framework. This was also the case in Halifax. As the Irish Question became more acute in 1912, the Halifax County AOH board passed a resolution supporting

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128 Acadian Recorder, July 25, 1904.
129 Acadian Recorder, August 22; November 28, 1904; April 9, 1906; January 15, 1912; October 7, 1912.
130 Halifax Herald, March 19, 1904.
131 Acadian Recorder, January 1, 1908.
John Redmond and his Irish Nationalist Party. Several years later, in the aftermath of Dublin’s 1916 Easter Rising, the Council passed a resolution which vociferously condemned the outbreak. The Hibernians emphasized their “absolute disapproval of the riotous and rebellious character of the uprising,” and went on to express their “confidence in that great Irish tribune, John Redmond, whose leadership and qualities as a statesman more than ever appeal to the Irish race.” Interest in the Irish Question grew in the summer and fall of 1920, and the members of the Halifax AOH, like Irish Catholics throughout the diaspora, took a keen interest in the Anglo-Irish struggle. At a “mass meeting” of Halifax Hibernians held at Quinpool Road on October 5th, 1920, the local branches passed a resolution demanding the immediate release from prison of the nationalist Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, in addition to the granting of self-determination for Ireland. The Hibernians continued to provide an institutional framework through which responses to events in the old country could be organized.

As was the case in Toronto, Halifax Hibernians continually re-affirmed their devotion to Ireland, but also never lost sight of their identity as Canadians or as subjects of the British Empire. At the first AOH St. Patrick’s Day dinner, the opening toast proposed by president McManus was to the health of the King. Only after this were toasts to Ireland, St. Patrick and Home Rule conducted. The order’s imperial connection was most obviously displayed in its response to the First World War. While many American divisions condemned the conflict or supported Germany, the Halifax Hibernians responded enthusiastically to the Canadian effort. In keeping with its status as a mutual benefit organization, the Halifax AOH agreed in

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133 Acadian Recorder, September 26, 1912.
135 Morning Chronicle, October 5, 1920. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter six.
136 Acadian Recorder, March 16, 1902.
1915 to pay insurance premiums for the “large number” of local Hibernians who were fighting overseas.\textsuperscript{137} In 1918, the provincial convention due to be held in Chatham, New Brunswick, was cancelled owing to the large number of members who were away at War. The executive did, however, pass its congratulations on to the Knights of Columbus for the success of its patriotic fund.\textsuperscript{138}

In some parts of North America, such as Toronto and Worcester, Massachusetts, AOH membership was declining in the late-1910s and early-1920s, as North American centred, non-ethnic organizations such as the Knights of Columbus became more popular.\textsuperscript{139} In Halifax, however, the order appears to have retained its popularity well into the twentieth century. Events continued to draw large crowds. In 1920, for example, 1,200 people attended the order’s annual picnic at McNab’s Island.\textsuperscript{140} The AOH did, however, organize a drive to increase its membership in the autumn of 1921, which possibly suggests that membership was beginning to wane.\textsuperscript{141}

Although the three Halifax divisions of the AOH were strictly for men, women also became an important part of the organization. Within two years of the order’s establishment in the city, plans were being made for the formation of a Ladies’ Auxiliary branch. By October 17\textsuperscript{th}, 1904, an executive had been elected and on the 21\textsuperscript{st} the auxiliary was officially installed.\textsuperscript{142} The branch appears to have had a great deal of institutional freedom. They held their own meetings, elected their own executives, and organized their own provincial conventions – though usually in conjunction with the male organization. In 1906, when the provincial meeting came to Halifax, it was the Ladies’ Auxiliary members who were charged

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{137} *Halifax Herald*, December 7, 1915.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} *Halifax Herald*, August 24, 1918.
  \item \textsuperscript{139} McGowan, *Waning of the Green*, 154; Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} *Halifax Herald*, June 22, 1920.
  \item \textsuperscript{141} *Acadian Recorder*, October 3, 1921.
  \item \textsuperscript{142} *Acadian Recorder*, October 17; October 24, 1910.
\end{itemize}
with organizing its social gatherings. It made independent contributions to the AOH library fund, and raised money for the St. Mary’s scholarship. The branch’s motto was “unity, friendship and Christian charity,” and this seems to reflect some of their most important activity: organizing charitable relief for the “deserving poor.” Although little data on membership have survived, the Auxiliary appears to have grown substantially in Halifax. By the end of our period in 1921, four Ladies’ branches were active in the city. Its popularity and independence shows that women, like their male counterparts, were active in the public expression of ethnicity.

Owing to its smaller Catholic population, associational options for those of Irish birth and descent in Portland were somewhat limited. As in St. John’s and Halifax, parish-based clubs and temperance organizations existed, and provided a variety of pastimes, while many educated Catholics joined literary societies such as the Grattan Literary Association. Formed in 1877, and named for the eighteenth-century Irish parliamentarian Henry Grattan, the society functioned mostly as a debating society, but also put on performances of Irish plays such as Dion Boucicault’s *The Shaughraun* in May 1884. Such performances of Irish dramas were yet another way in which ethnicity was expressed. The works of Boucicault have been described as “iconic” for the diaspora, and attendance was a “sacramental celebration of Irishness.” An Irish-American drill group, the Sheridan Rifles, was also active throughout the period, and performed at many public occasions in Portland.

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143 *Halifax Herald*, April 4, 1906.
144 *Halifax Herald*, October 26, 1905.
145 *Acadian Recorder*, January 10, 1921.
146 Barker, “Irish Community and Irish Organizations of Nineteenth-Century Portland, Maine,” 177.
147 *Eastern Argus*, May 2, 1884.
149 *Eastern Argus*, January 11, 1892.
organizations, though, were small, and although they did encourage the public expression of Irish identity, their overall impact on Portland’s Irish-Catholic community was limited.

One important organization for many Irish-Catholics in Portland that was not paralleled in either St. John’s or Halifax was the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS), which was an Irish-Catholic labour union. Formed on December 15th, 1880, the society was Irish-dominated from the outset. African Americans, for example, who had controlled the longshore industry in the early-to-mid nineteenth century, were officially excluded.\(^{150}\) The society was determined to fight for higher wages for its members, and also defended longshore work as an Irish occupational niche as growing numbers of Italians and Poles sought work along Portland’s waterfront.\(^{151}\)

The PLSBS continually responded to events in Ireland throughout the period. The most notable examples of this were in the early 1920s, even as an American-born generation of Irish Catholics came to dominate the union. In the spring of 1920, for example, it purchased $2,000-worth of bonds of the Irish Republic, making it one of the top contributors to that drive.\(^{152}\) The society had previously responded patriotically to the American involvement in the First World War, and it cashed in its Liberty Bond in order to make the payment.\(^{153}\) One year later, though, a comparable engagement with Irish affairs provoked dissension. The union was approached to subscribe to an Irish Relief Fund, and on this


\(^{151}\) Ibid., 149; 156; 197. See also Michael C. Connolly, Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland, Maine, and its Irish Longshoremen (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2010), 96; Michael C. Connolly, “Black Fades to Green: Irish Labor Replaces African-American Labor Along a Major New England Waterfront, Portland, Maine, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” Colby Quarterly 37.4 (2001): 357-73. Other unions along Portland’s waterfront also had ethnic affiliations. The Freight Handlers’ Union, for example, was largely Italian.

\(^{152}\) Eastern Argus, April 12, 1920.

occasion a motion to pledge $1,000 did not pass, as many of the members claimed they had already contributed individually to the drive.\textsuperscript{154} As PLSBS membership declined in the early 1920s, interest in the Irish Question was maintained. In 1922 a motion condemning the escalating violence of the Irish Civil War was passed, and a copy sent to British Prime Minister David Lloyd George.\textsuperscript{155} The PLSBS demonstrates how members of the Irish-Catholic working class in Portland – both Irish- and American-born – continued to identify with their ancestral homeland. Furthermore, the existence of an ethnic union shows how some Irish Catholics continued to fight for social and occupational security in the face of competition from entrenched Yankee-Protestants, as well as from other ethnic groups.

Although by the twentieth century, a small Irish-Catholic elite did exist, the use of ethnicity as a defensive strategy demonstrates the precarious position of many Irish Catholics in the port. Continued engagement with the ancestral homeland by the PLSBS has many of the hallmarks of what Alan O’Day has termed “mutative ethnicity,” as the symbolic engagement with the old country was part of the competition for resources.\textsuperscript{156} Ethnic unions, though, did not exist in either St. John’s or Halifax. In communities where Catholics of Irish birth or descent were numerically strong, had achieved substantial levels of economic and political success, and were fully integrated with their Anglo-Protestant neighbours, expressions of ethnicity remained, but were not part of a distinct competitive strategy. Instead, Irishness in St. John’s and Halifax tended to be a romantic, symbolic identification with the old country, with many facets of Herbert Gans’ model of “symbolic ethnicity.”\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{154} Connolly, “Irish Nationalism Among Early Twentieth-Century Irish Longshoremen in Portland, Maine,” 289.
\textsuperscript{155} Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society Minute Book, Vol. 7, April 25, 1922.
\textsuperscript{156} This was introduced in detail in chapter one. See Alan O’Day, “The Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity: Mutative Ethnicity,” Immigrants and Minorities 27.2/3 (2009): 317-339.
As in the two British-North American ports, the Knights of Columbus became a prominent organization for Portland Catholics. A curious difference, though, is that although the order’s membership demonstrated more ethnic variety than in either St. John’s or Halifax, it also engaged far more directly with Irish affairs in the early-twentieth century. The Portland Council No. 101 was organized in the summer of 1894, and the impetus for its establishment came mostly from Boston. On August 1st, Thomas H. Cummings, the national organizer, came to Portland to encourage the city’s young Catholic men to establish a local branch. On August 13th, a delegation of 350 Boston Knights arrived to oversee the official establishment of the Portland Council, which was the first in Maine. Joseph A. McGowan, an Irish-born cashier, was installed as the first Grand Knight. Although McGowan was from Ireland, within ten years the American-born appear to have predominated. Of the 1905 executive, which was listed in a short history of the local council in the *Portland Sunday Telegram*, only one was born in Ireland. Eight had at least one Irish parent, while two were of French-Canadian extraction. Although the Knights were typically middle class, the 1905 executive reveals a variety of occupational backgrounds. The Grand Knight, William H. Gulliver, was a lawyer, but Deputy Grand Knight John F. Kane was listed as a plumber. The remainder of the executive consisted of three clerks, a treasurer, a physician, a druggist, a restaurant proprietor, a heading maker, and a stonemason.

The Knights of Columbus quickly became an important institution in the social life of the city. They possessed their own baseball team, which could attract crowds of over one

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thousand, their own minstrel troupe, and organized sports days.\textsuperscript{160} The group’s banquets could be grand events. Over 1,200 attended the Knight’s ball in 1912, and in 1915 seven hundred attended the annual Columbus Day event, including representatives from councils across Maine and Massachusetts. Speeches by Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh, as well as the Mayor of Portland and the Governor of Maine, praised the strength of the Knights in the region.\textsuperscript{161}

The Knights of Columbus were known for their strong sense of American patriotism, and members were accepted regardless of ethnic affiliation. As was the case elsewhere in the United States, the American contribution to the First World War was enthusiastically supported. At a banquet in 1919, the Portland Council reflected with pride on the fact that over one thousand local Catholics had answered their country’s call.\textsuperscript{162} Despite such typical expressions of patriotism, however, the Portland Knights engaged more directly in Irish affairs than councils in either St. John’s or Halifax, where occasional lectures on Irish subjects were the only ethnic markers. Usually the Portland Knights’ ethnic expressions were subtle, such as at the 1919 ball which ended with the singing of “We are Irish Yet.”\textsuperscript{163} Like the PLSBS, more direct participation occurred during the Anglo-Irish War, as the council pledged $2,000 to the Irish Republican bond drive.\textsuperscript{164} The following year, a special meeting of the Knights was called to discuss further contributions to the Irish Relief Fund, though the result of this meeting is unclear.\textsuperscript{165} Despite these contributions, the Knights were not an Irish ethnic association in Portland and their executives demonstrate that non-Irish Catholics were

\textsuperscript{160} For examples, see Eastern Argus, July 2, 1911; January 17; August 30, 1920.
\textsuperscript{161} Eastern Argus, August 1, 1912; September 22; October 13, 1915.
\textsuperscript{162} Eastern Argus, October 13, 1919. On the Knights’ response to the First World War in the United States, see Meagher, Inventing Irish America, 351-352.
\textsuperscript{163} Eastern Argus, October 13, 1919.
\textsuperscript{164} Eastern Argus, April 12, 1920.
\textsuperscript{165} St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books, May 15, 1921. Maine Irish Heritage Center.
part of the organization. Perhaps the most significant conclusion to draw from their involvement in the Irish Question is that an appreciation of ethnicity or heritage did not exclude a sense of American patriotism and national identity. As will be discussed in chapters five and six, support for an independent Irish Republic in British North America provoked controversy and opposition, but in Portland such responses were an acceptable, natural consequence of one’s place of birth or ancestry. For the Portland Council, an ongoing interest in Irish affairs did not clash with their North American focus. It was simply an acknowledgement of the ethnic origins of a majority of its members.

The most prominent Irish-Catholic organization in Portland in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Owing to its proximity to Boston and other Irish-American population centres where the order thrived, the AOH was established in Portland long before Halifax. Portland Division One was incorporated on February 8th, 1878, with stonecutter Daniel M. Mannix as the founding president. A second division was established in November, 1881, while third, fourth, and fifth divisions were later organized, as well as two companies of the Hibernian Knights – the AOH’s uniformed division – and three ladies’ auxiliaries.\textsuperscript{166} In 1905, of the fifteen individuals named on the executives of Divisions One, Two, and Three, ten could be definitively identified in city directories and nominal census records. There was an assistant in the Department of Public Works, a teamster, a finisher, an insurance agent, a blacksmith, a bookbinder, a driver, a currier, a labourer, and a letter carrier. Although there is some occupational variety within the AOH executive, the order seems to have drawn members from the skilled- and unskilled-working classes, as was the tendency elsewhere in the United States. Eight of the ten were born in North America, with only Division One’s president, Patrick J. Feury, being Irish-

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\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Portland Sunday Telegram}, July 2, 1905.
\end{flushright}
born. Only three did not possess at least one Irish-born parent.\textsuperscript{167} The conclusions from this tiny sample are supported by further data from 1912. A report on the Hibernians’ annual ball, which brought together members from all five divisions, listed the full Cumberland County board.\textsuperscript{168} Several months later, the \textit{Eastern Argus} listed Portland’s delegates to the state Hibernian convention.\textsuperscript{169} From these two lists, a further twenty individuals could be positively identified, and again, the working classes and the American-born predominated, as indicated in Appendix B. The proportions are similar to the 1905 sample. Of the twenty individuals listed there, thirteen were born in North America, while all but two had at least one Irish-born parent. The 1912 sample also demonstrates a similar level of occupational diversity. With the exception of Judge Joseph Connolly, who was one of the city’s leading Irish Catholics, a majority of the members came from the skilled and unskilled working classes.\textsuperscript{170}

The AOH grew steadily throughout much of the period, and although a small decline occurred, it did not suffer from the drastic drop in membership that affected the order in some other parts of North America. In 1888, the delegates to the state convention reported that there were two hundred active members in Portland. By 1905, this tally had increased to six hundred, and the order continued to maintain a prominent presence in the city until well into the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{171} The order also helped foster a sense of Irish community and identity across Maine and New England. The Portland branches of the AOH, which together

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Eastern Argus}, January 10, 1912.
\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Eastern Argus}, September 16, 1912.
\textsuperscript{170} The membership list was compiled from \textit{Eastern Argus}, January 30, 1912; September 16, 1912; Places of birth are gleaned from the online genealogical database, www.ancestry.com, with most of the information coming from the \textit{Twelfth Census of the United States}, 1900. Occupational profiles are compiled using the \textit{Portland City Directory, 1912} (Portland: Portland Directory Company, 1912).
\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Eastern Argus}, January 11, 1888; \textit{Portland Sunday Telegram}, June 18, 1905.
formed the Cumberland County Council, met with other Maine Hibernians at biennial state conventions, and also sent delegates to national conferences. This was one way in which Irish-Catholic networks extended beyond the local level, and created regional ties which expanded and strengthened the expression of ethnicity.

Like the AOH in Halifax, the Portland divisions offered their members a variety of social opportunities. Annual balls were held, as were picnics which would usually involve an athletics program consisting of baseball, track events and rowing. On occasion, as was the case with some IARA events, these would extend beyond the organization itself and capture the attention of the whole community, such as in 1881 when five thousand were reported to have attended the AOH’s annual picnic at Sebago Lake.

On or around March 4th of each year, the Hibernians would hold one of their grandest events, which was also a direct expression of their Irish heritage: the birthday of early-nineteenth century Irish revolutionary Robert Emmet. The Emmet celebration would generally consist of a lecture on Irish affairs, followed by a ball or banquet which was attended by Portland’s leading citizens, both Irish and non-Irish. Lecturers were not shy about publicly displaying the AOH’s support for Irish nationalism, with the 1912 speaker noting that “the principles that [Emmet] gave his life for one hundred years ago are still as dear to the hearts of present day Irishmen as they were then, and the fruits of their perseverance are unfolding every day with the ultimate hope of Irish independence.”

By the twentieth century, Irish music and readings were an important part of the Emmet celebration, and the Order became increasingly concerned with the transmission of Irish identity from one generation to the next. At the 1912 event, the concert was designed “with a

172 Eastern Argus, July 17; August 17, 1883.
173 Eastern Argus, August 18, 1881.
174 Eastern Argus, March 4, 1912; Portland Press, March 1, 1884.
view not only of keeping these Irish classics before our people, but encouraging the younger
generation to a study of Irish literature and music.”

The Emmet celebration was just one example of the Portland Hibernians’ expression of
Irishness. Although the American AOH had emerged from a tradition which supported
revolutionary Irish republicanism, until the Anglo-Irish War most of the order’s resolutions
on Irish affairs demonstrated a strong identification with Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish
Parliamentary Party and Irish Home Rule within the British Empire. In 1885, the
Hibernians adopted a more active role in Irish affairs when they were the primary inspiration
behind a fundraising drive for the Irish Parliamentary Party. The order organized a meeting
for all interested Irish Americans at the Hibernian Hall, and upon its conclusion the drive was
organized. The re-formed Irish National League of Portland quickly took over, and raised
over $450 for the cause, $75 of which was donated by the AOH.

During the Anglo-Irish War, the AOH’s constitutional support waned, and the
organization became more directly supportive of the republican cause. 1915, the national
president of the AOH, James McLaughlin, gave a rousing speech to the local divisions which
condemned the British War effort, and argued that no Catholic Irishman should fight for an
alien nation. In 1919, the five divisions of the AOH joined with the Friends of Irish
Freedom to organize a nationalist parade in Portland on St. Patrick’s Day, at which the
republican tricolour was prominently displayed. Later that summer, the state convention
passed a resolution against the League of Nations because it had failed to secure the

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175 *Eastern Argus*, March 4, 1912.
176 See for example an 1886 pro-Gladstonian resolution, *Eastern Argus*, June 9, 1886. A similar
resolution was passed in 1890. See *Eastern Argus*, June 11, 1890.
177 *Eastern Argus*, November 14; December 18, 1885.
179 *Eastern Argus*, March 18, 1919.
independence of Ireland.\textsuperscript{180} Support for Irish nationalism continued, as Divisions One, Two, and Five each pledged $500 to the 1920 Irish Republican bond drive.\textsuperscript{181} In Portland, the order remained one of the most important institutions through which public engagement with Irish affairs was organized.

There are numerous parallels between how the AOH functioned in Halifax and Portland. Both attracted large numbers of young Catholics, who were primarily attracted by the order’s array of social pastimes as well as its sick benefits. In both cities, though, the order continually engaged in Irish affairs and publicly expressed Irish identities. The AOH was one of the most important agents through which an understanding and appreciation of Irishness was conceived, articulated and passed from one generation to the next. The question remains, though, as to why the order flourished in Halifax and Portland, yet was not established at all in St. John’s. At least part of the answer lies in the fact that other associations filled many of the roles which allowed it to achieve success in the two southern ports. The Benevolent Irish Society controlled the most important public expressions of Irish ethnicity, while sick benefits and social opportunities for young Catholic men were offered by working-class institutions such as the Star of the Sea or the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society. An equally plausible reason lies in how the Irish-Catholic communities in each port were connected to regional, national, and transnational Irish networks. Portland’s proximity to Boston and other Irish-American centres meant that ideas and organizational frameworks flowed easily into southern Maine, accounting for the relatively early establishment of the AOH in Portland. Similarly, in Halifax ideas flowed into the city from elsewhere in the Maritimes, Canada, and New England, and the AOH fostered links between Halifax’s Irish

\textsuperscript{180} Eastern Argus, August 29, 1919.
\textsuperscript{181} Eastern Argus, April 12, 1920.
Catholics and other communities in these regions. Although there was a substantial flow of people, most of whom were Catholics, from Newfoundland to the Maritimes and New England in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, such institutional networks were unable to cross the Cabot Strait. Organizations such as the Hibernians which relied on national and regional frameworks in Canada and the United States could not penetrate the politically independent Newfoundland Dominion. For St. John’s, then, the lack of an associational niche for the Hibernians to fill, combined with its distance from North American Irish-Catholic networks, likely accounts for the absence of Hibernian divisions in that city.

2.3 St. Patrick’s Day

The manner in which Irish-Catholic communities celebrated St. Patrick’s Day has been a prominent theme in the historiography of the diaspora. Parades, banquets, masses, lectures, and other events on March 17th have been highlighted as sites of identity formation, where “group memory is reflected, ritually enacted and reaffirmed, and often redefined.” Furthermore, through direct participation or observation, the celebrations tended to involve a far higher proportion of the Catholic population than did the ethnic and benevolent associations discussed above. By investigating the manner in which the feast was marked, the historian obtains a clearer picture of how Catholics of Irish descent communally understood and constructed their ethnicity. Some events, such as Masses on St. Patrick’s morning, reinforced the links between ethnicity and religion. Parades, meanwhile, could represent a significant expression of group strength and solidarity, particularly in communities where there was a intense competition for economic and political resources.

Lectures and sermons reinforced Irish nationalism amongst diasporic populations, while banquets conveyed images of respectability to other ethnoreligious groups. An examination of St. Patrick’s Day in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland demonstrates how their respective Irish-Catholic communities came together in large, public celebrations. In all three ports, the close, reciprocal relationship between their Irish ethnicity and Roman Catholic religion was the most prominent theme.

Between the 1880s and the 1920s, St. Patrick’s Day was the foremost occasion on which the Catholics of St. John’s acknowledged their Irish ancestry. Some aspects of the feast, such as the Benevolent Irish Society’s annual parade, remained relatively constant, but in general the period was marked by an increasing variety of social and cultural events. The feast was a public holiday. Shops were closed, and newspapers did not publish, allowing for a large public participation in the festivities.

The BIS was the most prominent organization involved in the celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. The society had begun marking the occasion in the early-nineteenth century through Masses and dinners, and its annual parade began in 1851, largely motivated by similar marches which were becoming popular elsewhere in the diaspora. The parade wandered through the city’s principal streets, and included stops to visit the Roman Catholic bishop as well as the Governor of Newfoundland. Mass was held at the Catholic Cathedral.

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184 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 236.
until 1881, when it moved to St. Patrick’s church in the west end, before reverting to its original location in 1899.\textsuperscript{186}

The parade was an opportunity for the BIS to demonstrate its numerical strength, its Irish identity, its devotion to St. Patrick as well as, through the visit to the Governor, loyalty to Newfoundland and the British Empire. A fairly typical example was in 1893. The society assembled at St. Bonaventure’s College, as St. Patrick’s Hall was still being rebuilt in the wake of the 1892 fire. The assembly then marched west along the city’s main streets to St. Patrick’s, where High Mass, including a lengthy sermon on the life and work of St. Patrick, was said. Following the service, the members marched east along Water and Duckworth Streets to Government House, where president John T. O’Mara gave a speech praising the Governor and emphasizing the members’ loyalty to the monarchy. God Save the Queen was played before the society marched up Military Road to the Episcopal Palace, where Bishop Power gave an address on Irish Home Rule.\textsuperscript{187}

This pattern was essentially repeated year after year by the BIS, though on occasions when the feast fell on a Sunday, the parade tended to be staged the preceding Saturday.\textsuperscript{188} Group dinners had been sporadically held in the 1880s, but were gradually abandoned.\textsuperscript{189} This was in part owing to apathy among the participants, falling membership in the mid-1880s, as well as general economic conditions. In 1887, a debate took place in the local press as to the propriety of holding a dinner that year, given the colony’s economic distress. One correspondent called it a needless expense in the midst of an economic depression. Responses to this letter defended the dinner, with another individual arguing that it

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{186} Ibid., 106.
\bibitem{187} Evening Telegram, March 18, 1893.
\bibitem{188} See for example Evening Telegram, March 18, 1889.
\bibitem{189} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 237-239.
\end{thebibliography}
represented an important expression of “love for the old land,” which recently had been “less abounding [...] than it ought to be.”\textsuperscript{190} A letter to the \textit{Evening Telegram} did not mention the dinner specifically, but praised the parade, calling upon Irishmen and their descendants to rally “around their banner of green” in celebration of the feast.\textsuperscript{191} Despite such defences of traditional practice, the annual dinners had ceased by the 1890s.

By the late-nineteenth century and into the twentieth, an increasing variety of events were organized in the city to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. In 1896, for example, the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society organized a “Shamrock Dance” for its members. In 1899, the same year the High Mass returned to the Cathedral, the BIS Dramatic Society performed \textit{The Irish Heiress}, while the Old Favourite Troupe put on \textit{Kerry Gow}. Irish plays became a common occurrence on St. Patrick’s Night. In 1901, the pupils and ex-pupils of the Irish Christian Brothers organized an “Irish Night,” consisting of Irish music, recitations, and the performance of a “patriotic drama,” \textit{Pyke O’Callaghan}, about the final days of the 1798 uprising.\textsuperscript{192} Another event was added to St. John’s celebration in 1908. An Irish Night, organized by the Ladies’ Association of St. Bonaventure’s College, featured music and readings, and remained an annual feature throughout the remainder of the period. Plays, musical nights, and lectures on Irish subjects became increasingly frequent as the twentieth century progressed.

The First World War did result in a toning down of St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, although the BIS parade continued throughout the conflict. In 1919, the BIS Dramatic Company resumed their performances with \textit{Molly Bawn}, while the St. Bonaventure’s Irish Night and a Catholic Cadet Corps dance completed the public program. The diversity of the

\textsuperscript{190} \textit{Colonist}, March 2; March 8, 1887.
\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Evening Telegram}, March 16, 1887.
\textsuperscript{192} \textit{Evening Telegram}, March 18, 1896; March 6; March 18, 1898; March 19, 1901.
131

celebration continued to increase right until the end of the period. In 1922, the BIS parade still followed its traditional route, though on this occasion Mass returned to St. Patrick’s, and the procession was led by the Irish Free State’s tricolour flag. The most varied program was in 1923. The Gaelic League joined with the St. Bonaventure’s ladies in producing the annual Irish Night, the BIS held a Ceilidh, with cards, Irish music, and dancing, and finished with a rousing rendition of the unofficial Irish anthem, God Save Ireland. The Ladies’ Auxiliaries of the Star of the Sea and the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society organized Irish entertainments, while some of the Catholic schools of the city – St. Patrick’s Hall, St. Joseph’s and Holy Cross – each held its own musical events. 193

In Halifax, the feast of St. Patrick was marked with a vigor comparable to St. John’s. In the 1880s, it was the CIS that organized Halifax’s most prominent events, and in these years their celebration was almost identical to the St. John’s BIS: a parade followed by High Mass in the morning, with an annual societal dinner at night. As they marched through the city’s principal streets towards St. Mary’s Cathedral, the members of the CIS carried banners which contained a variety of Irish symbols. The lead banner displayed the slogan “Erin Go Braugh,” while “Erin and Acadia,” as well as banners dedicated to Daniel O’Connell and the Irish harp followed. At the head of the parade was the Brian Boru sword – an acknowledgement of the romantic affinity held by the society for the heroic Irish figure. The processions could also be part of a group response to events in Ireland. In 1889, president J.J. O’Brien sent a circular to the members of the CIS requesting that they make a special effort to turn out for that year’s annual St. Patrick’s Day parade, as it would represent an important

193 Evening Telegram, March 18, 1919; March 18, 1922; March 18, 1923.
show of force and solidarity, given relations between the British Government and Ireland.\textsuperscript{194}

The CIS’s annual dinner, often held at the Halifax Hotel, was a grand affair, bringing together many of the town’s leading citizens, and continuing late into the night.\textsuperscript{195}

The other key feature of St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in late-nineteenth century Halifax was the torchlight procession. On St. Patrick’s eve, members of the city’s “Young Irish Societies” paraded from the foot of Salter Street through the downtown. Examples of the groups involved in this parade included the Hibernian Emerald, the Knights of St. Patrick, the Shamrock, the North Star, the Young Hibernians, the Sons of Erin, the Blue Star, the Flag of Erin, the Knights of O’Connell, and the South Star. Little is known about their membership, and no reference was ever made to their activities beyond the annual procession. It is possible that they only assembled once a year.\textsuperscript{196}

By 1887, the torchlight procession appears to have been a popular event. The \textit{Halifax Herald} noted that the streets were lined with spectators. The marchers stopped at the Mayor’s residence, where cheers for the Queen and St. Patrick were given.\textsuperscript{197} Controversy emerged, however, as the Catholic clergy expressed their opposition to the event. The archbishop objected to “the late hour at which the marches take place, as well as the fact that large numbers of young people of both sexes tramp the streets up to the early hours of the morning.” Clerical influence appears to have been substantial. In 1888, only small numbers turned out to march, though in 1890 over one thousand were said to have taken part. This revival was temporary, however, and in 1892 the Young Irishmen marched with the CIS on

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{194} “Circular From President J.J. O’Brien to the CIS, March 13, 1889,” PANS, Charitable Irish Society Fonds, MG 20, Vol. 64.
\item \textsuperscript{195} See for example \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 16; March 18, 1885.
\item \textsuperscript{196} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 17, 1886.
\item \textsuperscript{197} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 17, 1887.
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St. Patrick’s morning. By the mid-1890s references to their existence in local papers ceased.\textsuperscript{198}

In the 1890s, St. Patrick’s Day celebrations began to change. As in St. John’s, a greater number of cultural events were organized to mark the occasion. The St. Patrick’s Minstrels staged musical evenings, while Irish plays were also performed, such as \textit{True to Ould Ireland} in 1892.\textsuperscript{199} By 1898, Temperance Associations from St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s parishes joined the CIS’s annual procession, but in 1899 no procession took place. The 1900 march was organized not by the CIS, but rather by the Leinster Regiment who were stationed in the city’s garrison during the South African War. CIS celebrations appear to have declined dramatically in the early-twentieth century. No parade was held for several years, and although the dinner remained an annual event, only eighty members attended in 1901.\textsuperscript{200}

The most significant change in how St. Patrick’s Day was celebrated in Halifax was the AOH’s accession to the city’s most prominent public celebrant of the feast. Although organized in 1902, the Hibernians initially lacked the numerical strength to stage a large procession. For the first five years of its existence, AOH members celebrated with a societal dinner. In 1907, the order decided to revive the city’s annual parade. The event that year appears to have been small, and received little attention. The second annual AOH procession in 1908, however, was more substantial. Like the CIS in previous years, the Hibernians assembled at their rooms on Hollis Street and marched to St. Patrick’s Church, where Archbishop McCarthy said Mass. Members wore silk hats, along with white gloves and

\textsuperscript{198} Halifax Herald, March 17, 1887; March 17, 1888; March 16, 1889; March 17, 1890; March 17, 1892.

\textsuperscript{199} Halifax Herald, March 17, 1892.

\textsuperscript{200} Halifax Herald, March 17, 1898; March 17, 1899; March 19, 1900, March 18, 1901.
green ties. The old CIS banners, as well as the Brian Boru sword, were incorporated into the procession.\textsuperscript{201} In 1911, the CIS sent representatives to march with the Hibernians, while carriages carrying leading members of the clergy were also present.\textsuperscript{202} From this point on, the members of the AOH and CIS marched together on March 17\textsuperscript{th}, but it was the Hibernians who by the 1910s dominated the public celebration of St. Patrick’s Day in Halifax.

The First World War again changed the dynamics of how the day was marked. Instead of a procession, the AOH attended Mass as a society during the conflict. Following the cessation of hostilities, the celebration does not seem to have regained its former grandeur. The three Halifax divisions of the AOH, alongside the Dartmouth branch, did march together in 1919 and 1920, but the CIS did not join them and the event appears to have been rather low key. In 1922, near the close of our period, there was no procession at all. The feast was not ignored, however, and as in St. John’s a variety of Irish musical nights, banquets and plays took place.\textsuperscript{203}

Of the three ports investigated here, Portland exhibited the greatest continuity in terms of how St. Patrick’s Day was observed. The events of the 1920s were virtually identical to those of the 1880s. The city also presents a puzzle. Despite its relatively small but enthusiastic Irish-Catholic community, as well as the presence of assertive ethnic organizations such as the Ancient Oder of Hibernians, at no point during the period was there a regular St. Patrick’s Day procession in the city.

The feast day generally began with morning Masses at both the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception and St. Dominic’s Church. Sermons would involve a retelling of the life and work of St. Patrick, and frequently emphasized the crucial role of the Irish clergy in

\textsuperscript{201} Halifax Herald, March 3, 1908; CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1909.
\textsuperscript{202} CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1911; Halifax Herald, March 14, 1911.
\textsuperscript{203} Halifax Herald, March 15, 1915; March 17, 1919; March 18, 1920; March 18, 1922.
spreading and maintaining the Catholic faith across the globe. In the evening, the children of the city’s Catholic schools performed a concert of Irish music at City Hall, which usually closed with a lecture on an Irish subject. The repertoire of these concerts tended to include a variety of ballads, such as the “Hymn to St. Patrick,” “Come Back to Erin,” and the “Wearing of the Green.” This pattern was repeated year after year, although occasionally, when March 17th fell during Holy Week as it did in 1913, the children’s Irish concert would be set aside in favour of a Passion play.

Parades were not a feature of the celebration. Only in 1919, when a large nationalist march was organized, did a public procession through local streets occur on St. Patrick’s Day. Some Portlanders went so far as to participate in parades in nearby cities. In 1893, a delegation of Hibernians marched in the Lewiston parade, while in 1905 a similar group travelled to take part in Biddeford’s procession. Given that towns throughout New England, and even elsewhere in southern Maine, staged annual St. Patrick’s Day processions, it is strange that the tradition never took off in Portland. Although the city had been described as a “Yankee stronghold,” it was no different in this respect to most other towns in the region. Furthermore, a public procession on St. Patrick’s Day could serve as a powerful statement of group solidarity in the face of Irish-Catholic competition with Yankee neighbours. The lack of a parade was likely due to a combination of factors, such as the absence of a mid-nineteenth century marching tradition in Portland, a lack of impetus on behalf of organizations such as the AOH to start a parade, and perhaps the influence of the Church, who wished to emphasize the sanctity of the day.

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204 Eastern Argus, March 18, 1880; March 18, 1886.
205 See for example, Eastern Argus, March 18, 1884; March 15, 1915.
206 Eastern Argus, February 18, 1913.
207 Eastern Argus, March 10, 1893; Portland Sunday Telegram, March 5, 1905.
Although they did occasionally take on the symbolism of supporting Irish nationalism, the parades in St. John’s and Halifax had little to do with demonstrating Irish-Catholic strength to a hostile Anglo-Protestant population. Instead, the processions in these cities were a symbolic celebration of Irishness and Catholicism, with the long-lasting tradition of marching as an important motivation. The most significant common feature between St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland was the prominent role of the Catholic Church. Rather than an assertive display of ethnic solidarity, the feast tended to be a celebration of the relationship between Irishness and Catholicism. The clergy had a great deal of influence over how the events were organized, as can be seen in the abandonment of Halifax’s torchlight procession, as well as the postponement of the children’s Irish concert during Holy Week in Portland. The panegyric on St. Patrick was an annual feature in all three cities, and this frequently focused on St. Patrick’s role in establishing Catholicism in Ireland, and the role of Irish men and women in propagating the faith overseas. Although support for Irish nationalism was another prominent theme, as was loyalty to the British Empire in St. John’s and Halifax, St. Patrick’s day in the three ports most clearly reflected a “deeply Catholic interpretation of Irish history and communal identity.” The continuation and, in some cases, expansion of St. Patrick’s Day celebrations reveals a strong connection to the ancestral homeland, and also how deeply interwoven Irish and Catholic identities could be.

**Conclusion**

Ethnic identities were deeply personal and varied widely from one individual to another, as well as over time and from place to place. Investigating Irish associational life

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allows us to see how such private identities became public. Groups like the BIS in St. John’s, or the AOH in Halifax and Portland provided Catholics of Irish birth or descent with frameworks through which public expressions of ethnicity and responses to events in the ancestral homeland were organized and articulated.

Several key characteristics of Irish-Catholic identity in the three ports become obvious when analyzing their ethnic and benevolent associations. In St. John’s, the BIS and its middle-class membership emphasized a devout loyalty to Britain and the Empire alongside a strong romantic attachment to Ireland and a desire for Home Rule. The working-class Catholics of the city tended to join non-ethnic associations, such as the Star of the Sea or the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society. Through these societies, it was the Catholic religion which formed the basis of their group identity, despite occasional acknowledgements of their Irish heritage. The public expression of ethnicity in St. John’s, therefore, remained a largely middle-class phenomenon in the early-twentieth century. Late in the period, the Gaelic League suggests that, for some, Irish identities in St. John’s were becoming stronger as the twentieth century wore on, and included both men and women. Furthermore, it shows the significance of particular individuals such as Michael Walsh in creating the associational frameworks which allowed Irishness to be expressed.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians in Halifax and Portland provides direct comparative data, and highlights how Irish identities in British North America could be different from those in the United States. After the 1916 Easter Rising, the AOH in Halifax, like the BIS and CIS, continued to support the Canadian War effort and Irish Home Rule within the Empire, while the organization in Portland became increasingly republican and anti-British. Furthermore, the AOH in both cities demonstrates how Irish-Catholic communities did not
exist in isolation. Through their regional and national conventions, the Hibernians linked their local experiences to broader diasporic networks, and facilitated the flow of information in and out of each centre.

Finally, St. Patrick’s Day celebrations elicited public engagement with Irish ethnicity on a much broader scale than did ethnic or benevolent associations. The manner in which St. Patrick’s Day was celebrated in the three ports reveals how closely Irish and Catholic identities could be intertwined. For many, an identification as Roman Catholics would have been a stronger affiliation that was expressed far more frequently and publicly than their ethnicity, but on March 17th the connection between the two was emphasized. The clergy, as well as Catholic education, were important facets of this link, and is to this relationship that we turn to next.
Chapter Three

The Catholic Church, the Clergy, and Education

There can be no doubt that for Irish immigrants and their descendants, religion and ethnicity were closely intertwined. An individual’s faith, whether Catholic or Protestant, could come to embody different, frequently oppositional cultural identities. For the Catholic diaspora, as with many other immigrant populations, the Church became an essential institution in the adjustment to a new setting – a “centre around which they organized.”¹ More than any other organization or association, it was the Catholic parish which formed the basis of an ethnic community, capable of transcending both class and gender by bringing large numbers of Irish men and women together in worship, lay sodalities and other associations.² In the United States, Canada, and Newfoundland, religion was the most tangible aspect of Irishness passed from one generation to the next, and was essential in fostering new, North American identities, while at the same time subtly reinforcing awareness of ethnic origins.

By the late-nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland was developing an increasingly North American focus. A persistent theme in the historiography of the Irish diaspora during this period has been the gradual transition from predominantly Irish identities to less-ethnic, nationally-focused Newfoundland-, Canadian- or American-Catholic ones.³ A central argument of this dissertation, however, is that a

³ Several scholars of inter-generational Irish Catholics have made this argument. Amongst the most relevant for this study are, for Newfoundland, Carolyn Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010); for Toronto, Mark McGowan, The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999) and Brian Clarke, Piety and Nationalism:
symbolic, romantic ethnic affiliation to Ireland persisted for many Catholics well into the twentieth century. In all three cities, the Church and its personnel remained connected to Ireland throughout the period, and served to remind those of Irish descent of their ethnic origins. The object of this chapter is to investigate how Catholics’ involvement with their faith sustained or complemented Irish identities. How did the clergy reinforce connections to the ancestral homeland? Was the local priesthood indigenized, or did clerics tend to be born or trained in Ireland? Did bishops and archbishops express Irish identities, and did their leadership within the Church help popularize interest in the affairs of the old country? Finally, how were Catholic youths educated, and how did their experiences affect ethnic and national identities?

This chapter’s central argument is that in each of the three examples, the Church and its clergy maintained Irish connections throughout the period, though these varied considerably. The most significant feature of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Catholic life in North America was the growth of devotional, ultramontane Catholicism. As noted by Ann Taves and Brian Clarke, by this period the faith was largely standardized, international, and free of national or cultural particularities. Social and spiritual life was closely connected to the parish, and in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, associations such as the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, the St. John’s Catholic Institute, St. Vincent de Paul, or St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s Total Abstinence and Benefit Society promoted a

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4 Clarke, Piety and Nationalism, 3-5; 60-61; Ann Taves, The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-Nineteenth Century America (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1986), 111; 114; 118. Devotional, ultramontane Catholicism was also ascendant in Ireland in the post-famine period. See Emmet Larkin, “The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850-1875,” The American Historical Review 77.3 (1972): 625-692.
devout, ultramontane, non-ethnic Catholicism. For the communities studied here, it was not the religion itself – liturgies, devotions, sodalities, or confraternities – that complemented and reinforced Catholics’ sense of Irish identity. Instead, it was the clergy, particularly those of Irish birth or descent, who nurtured popular connections to Ireland from the 1880s to the 1920s. The focus of this chapter, then, is on the clergy of each city, and how they used their influential positions within the Church to promote particular visions of Irish ethnicity, and how these existed comfortably alongside other loyalties and identities. Catholicism did indeed serve as one of the “twin pillars” of Irish-Catholic identity,5 but it was through its personnel and, especially, their leadership of local Irish nationalism, rather than the day-to-day practice of religion, that connections to the old land were maintained. In St. John’s, where the Church had always maintained a close institutional connection to Ireland, the clergy overtly reinforced Irish ethnicity well into the twentieth century, though these links to the old country were weakening by the end of the period. In Halifax, although the Church’s early history accentuated immigrants’ Irishness through ethnic conflict with their Scottish coreligionists, by the 1880s it was becoming increasingly Canadian in character and orientation. Some Irish connections were nevertheless maintained. The evolution of the Church in Portland was quite different from the British North American cases. There, by the end of this period, Catholic leaders were struggling to deal with growing numbers of non-Irish Catholics, who were transforming the city’s parishes into multi-ethnic entities.

Although a pan-ethnic, American-Catholic identity was evolving,6 Portland’s English-

5 Clarke, Piety and Nationalism, 258.
6 The idea of a “pan-ethnic Catholicism” is adopted from Timothy Meagher’s study of Irish-American Catholics in Worcester. There, as the city’s ethnic composition became more diverse in the early-twentieth century, conflict between Yankees and Irish evolved into a more general tension between Catholics and Protestants, epitomized by the growth of the Ku Klux Klan, as well as by the success of non-ethnic Catholic associations such as the Knights of Columbus. By the late-1920s, those of Irish descent in Worcester had largely abandoned their sense of ethnic distinctiveness, working instead with other Catholics in order to build “a
speaking clergy were still active in sustaining Irish identities into the 1920s, particularly through their direct, public support for Irish nationalism.

In order to understand and compare the complex relationships between the Catholic Church and ethnicity, unlike the other chapters of this dissertation, the discussion here is divided into three sections, each independently dealing with one of the port cities. Each part begins with a survey of local institutional Catholicism, with a particular emphasis on how distinctly Irish connections were forged and maintained by each Church body from their earliest inceptions through to the period under investigation here. The analysis then moves to the most significant “Irish” aspect of Catholicism in these cities: the clergy. Following an analysis of clerical indigenization, the focus is on how individual priests, bishops, and archbishops conceived and projected their identities, and how their leadership influenced popular connections to Ireland. The sections conclude with a discussion of Catholic education in the three ports. Where, how, and by whom young pupils were taught undoubtedly influenced their identities, and, as we will see, the relationship between education and Irishness varied substantially from place to place. Together, these discussions bring us to a more in-depth understanding of the complex, variable relationship between ethnicity and religion amongst the Irish-Catholics of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland.

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vast, self-contained Catholic world,” in which ethnic differences were insignificant. A strong sense of American patriotism emerged as the dominant feature of this non-ethnic Catholicism. Although many of the non-English speaking Catholic groups maintained their own parishes and separate ethnic identities, those of Irish descent tended to see themselves primarily as “American Catholics.” In Portland, as will be discussed below, the dynamic was somewhat different, though the Church hierarchy did emphasize a comparable philosophy towards the end of the period. See Meagher, *Inventing Irish America*, 13; 370-371.
3.1 The Catholic Church, Education and Identity in St. John’s

From its inception, the Catholic Church in Newfoundland maintained a distinctly Irish orientation. The late-eighteenth century saw a relaxation of the anti-Catholic penal laws, and, faced with growing Irish settlement in St. John’s, Governor John Campbell allowed the construction of a chapel in 1783. Not long after, some of the town’s wealthier Irish merchants petitioned the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, William Egan, to send a priest to oversee the establishment of an organized Catholic Church in Newfoundland. They specifically requested that the popular, Tipperary-born Franciscan James Louis O’Donel be dispatched to lead the mission. Egan and James Talbot, Vicar Apostolic of London who was at that time responsible for the Church in Newfoundland, acquiesced, and the island was established as a separate ecclesiastical territory with O’Donel as Prefect Apostolic. The establishment of the Church in Newfoundland, therefore, owed much to the links between the Catholics of St. John’s and the southeast of Ireland, and these networks would be maintained throughout the nineteenth century.\(^7\)

The early years of O’Donel’s tenure were fractious, as some priests resented being placed under his supervision, while naval governors frequently exhibited hostility towards the expansion of Catholicism. Nevertheless, the Church continued to grow in the late-eighteenth century, and several other Irish-speaking priests arrived from Ireland to serve St. John’s as well as outport communities such as Ferryland, Placentia, and Harbour Grace. In 1796, O’Donel was elevated to the status of bishop, but after 1800, his health began to decline, and on January 1\(^{st}\), 1807, he resigned and returned to Ireland. O’Donel’s successor,

Patrick Lambert, was another Irish Franciscan, and served as bishop until 1815, when he was replaced by his fellow Wexford native Thomas Scallan. During this era, Catholicism in Newfoundland was far from unified. Bitter factional feuds, often between immigrants from Leinster and those from Munster, prevented the development of a homogenous Irish-Catholic identity. It was Scallan’s successor, Michael Anthony Fleming, who began to forge a unified Catholicism on the island, with its Irishness as a key characteristic.\footnote{John Edward Fitzgerald, “Conflict and Culture in Irish-Newfoundland Roman Catholicism, 1829-1850,” (PhD Diss., University of Ottawa, 1997), 2-3.}

Born in Carrick-on-Suir, county Tipperary, in 1797, Fleming first came to Newfoundland in 1823, where he served as a priest in St. John’s under Scallan. As the Bishop’s health failed, Fleming was named coadjutor, and succeeded him as Vicar Apostolic upon his death in 1830. In order to expand and unify the Church, Fleming looked almost exclusively to Ireland. His objective was the creation of a unified Newfoundland Catholicism, sustained by a strong, independent community, “unencumbered by Protestant or British intermeddling.”\footnote{Ibid., 179.} To fortify the Church’s presence on the island, priests were recruited from Ireland, usually from the southeast. He discouraged the development of a native-born, Newfoundland clergy, believing that “the missioners best-suited to this country are those who have hitherto served it, namely young men drafted from Irish colleges.”\footnote{Quoted in Michael F. Howley, \textit{Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland} (Boston: Doyle and White, 1888. Reprinted 1979), 389-390.} To strengthen the Church, and in keeping with its Irish character, Fleming recruited teaching orders from Ireland – the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy and, briefly, a community of Franciscan Brothers – to educate young Catholics. By his death in 1850, virtually all priests were Irish-born or trained, and young Catholics were taught by Irish nuns or brothers.\footnote{Fitzgerald, “Conflict and Culture,” 459.}
Church had become “the central part of Irish ethnicity and culture, acting as a means of preserving both.”

It was under Fleming’s successor, Limerick’s John Thomas Mullock, whom Carolyn Lambert describes as a “champion of Newfoundland’s progress,” that a native, more Newfoundland-focused Catholic Church began to emerge. The island’s earliest bishops had made some attempts to encourage both immigrant and native-born Newfoundlanders into the clergy. Bishop Patrick Lambert, for example, sent several young men from St. John’s to the Séminaire de Québec between 1808 and 1820, but only two, James Sinnott and Willam Herron (or Hearn), both of whom were Irish-born, were ordained as priests. It was not until Mullock’s era that native-born Catholics began to minister on the island, and the Church began to reflect a more Newfoundland-oriented identity. The process of clerical indigenization was slow. In 1857, the Bishop established a seminary at St. Bonaventure’s College, but in its early years only a handful of native priests studied there. Instead, most prospective candidates went to Europe, particularly All Hallows College in Dublin, or the Irish College in Rome.

Lambert’s research on clerical indigenization in St. John’s suggests that by the beginning of this period, the priests serving the city continued to be overwhelmingly born in Ireland. She traced twenty-seven priests who served the two urban parishes – the Cathedral and St. Patrick’s – from 1844 to 1890, and found that only six were born in Newfoundland. Five of these had been born after 1868. Most were from either Kilkenny or Tipperary, demonstrating the continued links between the St. John’s Church and the traditional Irish-

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12 Lambert, “Far from the Homes of Their Fathers,” 75.
13 Ibid., 78.
Newfoundland homeland.¹⁶ These Irish priests were joined by Irish nuns, as well as by Irish Christian Brothers, who came to the colony in 1876.¹⁷

As late as the 1880s, the Catholic Church in St. John’s remained “essentially Irish in character,” and religion and ethnicity were “inextricably linked.”¹⁸ The transformation to a more Newfoundland-oriented Church was underway, however, so one of the central questions of this chapter is in what ways did the Church continue to instill a sense of Irish identity amongst its adherents in St. John’s? Alongside the ethnic and benevolent associations discussed in chapter two, as well as the nationalist groups that will be addressed in chapters five and six, it was the city’s Irish-born churchmen who frequently took the lead in encouraging popular engagement with Irish affairs. Through their efforts, successive generations of St. John’s Catholics continued to be reminded of their ethnic origins as well as the problems of their ancestral homeland.

Using a method similar to Carolyn Lambert’s, it is possible to trace the process of clerical indigenization in St. John’s urban parishes – the Cathedral, St. Patrick’s and, later, St. Joseph’s. The Newfoundland Almanac and Yearbook provides full clergy lists for the period, and examining these at ten-year intervals from 1881 to 1921 yields a sample of thirty-two Catholic priests who served the city. By cross-referencing this list with Monsignor Francis A. Coady’s excellent biographical files on deceased Newfoundland priests, we may analyze the changing nature of the St. John’s Church. Of the thirty-two priests recorded, eleven were born in Ireland, nineteen in Newfoundland and two, Fathers Edmund Crook (or

¹⁶ Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 100.
¹⁷ Ibid., 99-102.
¹⁸ Ibid., 111.
Cook) and Anthony Fyme, were born in England and the Netherlands, respectively.\footnote{The Newfoundland Almanac (St. John’s: W.J. Herder, 1881; 1886); A Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland (St. John’s: J.C. Withers, 1891; 1896; 1901; 1906; 1911; 1916); Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland (St. John’s: The Royal Gazette Print, 1921); Francis A. Coady, ed., Lives Recalled: Deceased Catholic Priests Who Worked in Newfoundland, Mini-Biographies: 1627-2010 (St. John’s: Knights of Columbus, 2011).} Local clergy dominated during this period, though those born in Ireland were a significant minority. An analysis of the parish priests serving the city at various intervals throughout the period reveals the ongoing transition to a domestic clergy:

Table 3.1: Origins of Catholic Priests Serving the City of St. John’s, 1881-1921.\footnote{The Newfoundland Almanac, 1881; A Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland, 1891; 1901; 1911; Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland, 1921; Coady, ed., Lives Recalled.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irish-born Priests</th>
<th>Newfoundland-born priests</th>
<th>Other priests</th>
<th>Percent born in Newfoundland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the two Newfoundland-born priests in 1881, one of whom was the future Archbishop Michael F. Howley, present a surprising statistic, we see a general rise in the proportion of domestic clerics throughout the period. By the twentieth century, clergymen born in Ireland such as Daniel O’Callaghan, Peter Sheehan, and Monsignor J.J. McDermott were a decreasing minority. A similar analysis for the clergy who served the entire diocese reveals an even more pronounced trend towards clerical indigenization:
Table 3.2: Origins of Catholic Priests Serving the Diocese of St. John’s, 1881-1921.\textsuperscript{21}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Irish-born Priests</th>
<th>Newfoundland-born priests</th>
<th>Other priests</th>
<th>Percent born in Newfoundland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Newfoundland-born priests dominated by the end of our period. Some of these had trained in Ireland, and were therefore given an opportunity to enhance or develop an affinity for their ancestral homeland. Table 3.3 demonstrates that, although most travelled to Europe for their education rather than Canada or the United States, a minority completed their theological studies in Ireland:

Table 3.3: Training of Newfoundland-born Clerics Serving the City of St. John’s 1881-1921.\textsuperscript{22}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Newfoundland-born candidates trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Hallow’s, Dublin</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt Melleray, Cappoquin, Waterford</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louvain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Augustine’s Seminary, Toronto</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{21} The Newfoundland Almanac, 1881; A Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland, 1891; 1901; 1911; Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland, 1921; Coady, ed., Lives Recalled.

\textsuperscript{22} The Newfoundland Almanac (St. John’s: W.J. Herder, 1881; 1886); A Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland (St. John’s: J.C. Withers, 1891; 1896; 1901; 1906; 1911; 1916); Year Book and Almanac of Newfoundland (St. John’s: The Royal Gazette Print, 1921); Coady, ed. Lives Recalled.
Only six of the nineteen Newfoundland-born priests examined here studied in Ireland, and of
the seven serving the city in 1921, none had trained there. Clerical links to Ireland were
diminishing, though they had not died out completely.

The evolution of St. John’s Irish nationalism in the 1880s demonstrates the
significance of Church networks in sustaining links to Ireland. The most important individual
involved in maintaining these transatlantic links was Bishop Thomas Joseph Power. Born in
Rosbercon, near New Ross in county Wexford, Power was appointed in 1870 following the
death of John Thomas Mullock. He was the last in an unbroken chain of Irish-born bishops,
though he was the first non-Franciscan to lead the St. John’s Church. Power’s tenure is
generally regarded as a quiet period in Newfoundland’s Catholic history. He shied away
from domestic politics to a greater extent than his predecessors Fleming and Mullock, and
biographer Hans Rollman has described his character as “irenic.”23 His most significant
legacy, essential to the retention of Irishness within St. John’s Catholicism, was his
successful effort to bring the Irish Christian Brothers to the city, which will be discussed
below.

Power’s leadership in many ways typified the transatlantic nature of the
Newfoundland Church in the late-nineteenth century. He maintained close institutional ties to
Ireland, while concurrently embracing a sense of Newfoundland patriotism. His Irish
orientation was most obviously displayed in his leadership of the 1880 Irish Relief Fund,
which aimed to relieve the suffering of those affected by famine and poverty in Ireland. As
will be discussed in chapter five, similar funds were organized throughout North America,
but St. John’s stands out because of the direct involvement and leadership of Bishop Power.

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Frances G. Halpenny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 860-861.
The call for charitable relief came from the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and it was Power, a member of the Dublin Mansion House Committee, who personally wrote to the Lord Mayor announcing that a local fund would be taken up. A secular committee was established to manage the effort, which raised over £2,000. Once the fundraising drive ceased, it was the Bishop who personally remitted the money to Ireland, and he who received a note of thanks from Dublin. Clerical links with Ireland were still significant in leading Catholic Newfoundlanders’ engagement with their homeland. 

Although he maintained direct connections to his birthplace, Power was lauded as a Newfoundland patriot. In 1890, for example, as debates over French fishing rights on the island’s west coast resulted in an outpouring of Newfoundland nationalist sentiment, the Bishop was praised in the press, as his “interests and sympathies [were] with Newfoundland.” Although he was Irish-born, Power encouraged “natives in every branch of our public service and social system.” Upon his death in 1893, the transatlantic aspects of his tenure were again highlighted, as he was mourned both in Newfoundland and in the “old country.” The Benevolent Irish Society’s (BIS) resolution of sympathy was sent to leading St. John’s and Irish newspapers. Though he was originally from Ireland, and keenly interested in the affairs of the land of his birth, the Catholics of St. John’s had embraced Power as one of their own. His episcopate, building upon trends begun by Mullock, represents an important period of transition from an Irish- to a Newfoundland-centred Church.

24 Evening Telegram, February 3; March 4; April 16, 1880; Terra Nova Advocate, March 3; April 12, 1880.
25 Evening Telegram, March 20, 1890.
26 Evening Telegram, December 5, 1893.
27 Evening Telegram, December 27, 1893.
The lower clergy were similarly engaged in sustaining popular connections to Ireland in the 1880s. In 1881, a collection was organized for the Irish National Land League, which supported the rights of Ireland’s impoverished agricultural tenants against an elite class of Protestant landlords. Unlike in Halifax or Portland, no secular branch of the League was established in St. John’s, and the fundraising drive appears to have been clerically led. The subscription was reported in the *Dublin Weekly News*, which acknowledged £60.7s from the “old stock” Irish of St. John’s, and referred to the “St. John’s, Nfld, branch of the Land League.” The collection appears to be an isolated endeavour, however, given the lack of any other organized League activity in the port. Of the fifty-seven subscribers, sixteen were priests. Most of these were parish priests from St. John’s and nearby communities on the Avalon Peninsula, but clerical subscriptions came from as far away as Bonavista. Higher clergy were conspicuously absent from the list, likely owing to the controversial nature of Land League activity, which will be analyzed in full in chapter five. Bishop Power did not contribute, and only two of the clergymen listed held the title “Right Reverend.” The significance of Church networks was further demonstrated by the way the money was remitted to Ireland. It was not sent directly to the Land League organization in Dublin, but rather to the Archbishop of Cashel, T.W. Croke, suggesting that the local clergy were closely involved in the campaign.28

Individual parish priests were also significant in fostering interest in Irish affairs amongst St. John’s Catholics. It is not surprising that priests recently arrived from Ireland maintained an interest in the politics of the land of their birth, but what is relevant here is that, as important local figures, their public engagement with Ireland likely had a considerable impact on the Catholic community’s expression and understanding of ethnicity.

28 *Terra Nova Advocate*, August 13, 1881.
In the late-nineteenth century, Reverend Michael A. Clancy of Placentia stands out as one of the colony’s most vocal commentators on Irish affairs.

Clancy was born in Ennis, county Clare, in 1843. He came to Newfoundland in 1872 after completing his studies at Maynooth and in Belgium. He served several parishes throughout rural Newfoundland in the 1870s, and taught for a short time at St. Bonaventure’s College. In 1883, he left a position in Ferryland to serve as a parish priest in Placentia, about 150 kilometres southwest of St. John’s.\(^{29}\) Although stationed outside the city, Clancy frequently wrote letters calling on Irish-Newfoundlanders to take an interest in the affairs of their ancestral homeland. Described by one biographer as “an ardent Irish patriot,”\(^{30}\) one of his most significant public acts was the organization of a fundraising drive to offset legal costs incurred by Irish nationalist leader Charles Stewart Parnell in 1888. On September 22\(^{nd}\), Clancy wrote a letter to the *Colonist* calling for a subscription to be taken up in St. John’s. He specifically noted that Church leaders in Ireland, such as the Archbishop of Dublin, William Joseph Walsh, had endorsed the fund and appealed to St. John’s Catholics to “join with the lovers of justice and fair play all over the world and show our sympathy with and our confidence in Mr. Parnell.” He pledged $20 of his own, but, interestingly, he did not assume an active role in managing the drive. This was most likely because of Placentia’s remoteness from St. John’s, where, undoubtedly, most subscribers would be based. The editor of the *Colonist* lauded the inspiration of the “popular Placentia priest,” and echoed the call for Catholics to subscribe. Evidently, his position as a Catholic clergyman placed him in an influential role, and contributed significantly to the broad success of the fund.\(^{31}\)


\(^{31}\) *Colonist*, September 22, 1888. The overall success of the fund, and the local controversy it evoked, will be dealt with more fully in chapter five.
With the subscription in place, Clancy continued to act as a leading commentator on Irish affairs throughout the next year. When Parnell was finally acquitted of any involvement in the 1882 Phoenix Park murders, Clancy wrote a letter to the Colonist which again highlighted the Irish Church’s support for the nationalist leader, as well as praising Newfoundland’s fundraising efforts: “What a glorious vindication for the unshaken confidence that the grand bishops and priests of Ireland had in the honour of Parnell; worth all their struggles, all their trials, is this present consummation. We here, too, in Newfoundland, thank God, did our best to show our confidence in him, our love of honesty and fair play.”

32 The leadership of the Irish Church was obviously important in inspiring Clancy’s nationalism. It is interesting that he passed no public comment on the fall of Parnell in the wake of the Kitty O’Shea divorce scandal, when the Catholic Church in Ireland opposed his continuing leadership of the Irish Party. Having previously been so supportive of the disgraced leader, perhaps Clancy believed that silence was the best way to avoid damaging Catholic Newfoundlanders’ confidence in Ireland’s fight for self-government.

Although no record exists of Clancy advocating Irish nationalism from the pulpit in Placentia, in addition to his letters he also gave lectures on Irish affairs which further popularized the nationalist cause in Newfoundland. One such talk was given in his old parish of Ferryland in November, 1889, and was reprinted in St. John’s newspapers, thus influencing opinion in the city as well. The speech covered the history of Britain’s presence in Ireland – “long centuries of tyranny and oppression” – and concluded by discussing the contemporary fight for Home Rule. A commentator in the Colonist noted the “hearty cheers which again and again greeted the reverend lecturer, [showing] the keen appreciation with

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32 Colonist, March 5, 1889.
which the audience followed him.” Clancy’s leadership of Irish-Newfoundland nationalism continued into the 1890s. In 1896, he was chosen alongside BIS president James D. Ryan to represent the colony at the Irish Race Convention in Dublin. His selection and passionate address, which was partly drafted by Bishop Michael Francis Howley and Brother Fleming – an Irish-born Christian Brother – presents further evidence of the close relationship between clerical leadership and support for Irish self-government in Newfoundland. As a priest, Clancy was well-liked and respected, and he essentially served as a celebrity advocate for Irish Home Rule. Through his position within the Church, he was able to raise local consciousness regarding affairs in Ireland in the late-1880s and 1890s.

Perhaps more than any other individual, Power’s successor, Newfoundland’s first native-born bishop, Michael Francis Howley, epitomizes the shift in Church orientation from Irish to domestic. Howley was renowned for his Newfoundland and imperial patriotism, but frequently expressed his esteem and admiration for his ancestral homeland, and as such exemplifies the triple identity shared by many Catholics in St. John’s around the turn of the twentieth century: pride and passion for Newfoundland, the British Empire, and for Ireland. Like many young St. John’s candidates for the priesthood, Howley received his formative education in the town, where he was one of the first pupils at St. Bonaventure’s College in 1858. He left that institution in 1863, and travelled to Rome, where he studied at the Urban College of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda. After being ordained in 1868, the young Father Howley served for a time in Scotland, before returning to Newfoundland at the request of Bishop Power in 1870. Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, he served in various parishes throughout Newfoundland, and in 1886 he took charge of the remote St.

33 Colonist, October 9, 1889.
34 Evening Telegram, September 14, 1896.
George’s on the west coast of the island. There, he was a popular and effective administrator in the undeveloped and isolated region, and in the early 1890s he emerged as the “principal spokesman” for western settlers in the debate over French fishing rights. By 1892, St. George’s was elevated to a Vicariate Apostolic, and Howley was installed as Newfoundland’s first native-born bishop. Following Power’s death, he returned to St. John’s in 1894 to lead the Church there. Perhaps the greatest endorsement of his prominence and prestige, as well as the continuing growth of Newfoundland Catholicism, was the elevation of St. John’s to an archdiocese in 1904, with Howley serving as the colony’s first archbishop.35

Long before his appointment as bishop, the young Reverend Howley frequently commented on Irish affairs, and his letters and lectures were often reprinted in St. John’s newspapers. In 1885, for example, while visiting Pictou, Nova Scotia, he gave a St. Patrick’s Day address focusing on the life and legacy of Ireland’s patron saint, as well as on the “centuries of wrong and oppression” of British rule in Ireland.36 Also during his youth, Howley developed a keen interest in his Irish ancestry. On the Howley side, his ancestors came from Glangoole in county Tipperary, and throughout his career he maintained correspondence with relatives in the old country, and collected papers relating to his genealogy.37 His emotional esteem for his ancestral homeland was reinforced by his relatively frequent trips to Ireland. In 1890, Howley gave a speech to a nationalist meeting in Kerry, where he addressed the assembly as “fellow countrymen,” noting that although not born in Ireland, he “belonged to a country which had always claimed for itself the proud

36 Evening Telegram, April 4, 1885.
honour of being called ‘the Ireland of the west.’” Howley elaborated on the connections between the two islands, concluding that in many ways, Newfoundlanders were “more Irish than the Irish themselves.”\(^{38}\) In addition to his profound connection to Ireland, Howley’s 1890-1891 Irish tour also exemplified his Newfoundland patriotism. Upon his return to the colony, he was roundly praised for convincing the Irish nationalist press of Newfoundland’s position on the French Shore Question.\(^{39}\) In 1902, the Bishop made another trip to Ireland, touring the country extensively, and spending several weeks in Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Cork.\(^{40}\) Back in St. John’s, he gave a lecture at St. Patrick’s Hall on his impressions of Ireland, and the current state of the country – another example of clerical networks fostering a direct connection between those of Irish descent in St. John’s and their ancestral homeland.\(^{41}\)

Following his appointment as bishop, Howley continued to take an interest in Irish self-government. In 1898, Irish people at home and throughout the diaspora marked the centenary of the 1798 United Irishmen’s Rising. At a sermon on St. Patrick’s Day, Howley chided his fellow Newfoundlanders for their reluctance to organize a proper commemoration, citing a popular nationalist poem in noting that he “was not one of those who fears to speak of ’98.” His address was noted for its “force and patriotism” when it came to the rebellion.\(^{42}\) The uprising was obviously a topic of great interest to Howley. In 1906, to mark the BIS centenary, he gave another address on 1798. Though an ardent constitutional nationalist, he

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\(^{38}\) *Evening Telegram*, September 27, 1890.

\(^{39}\) *Evening Telegram*, July 8, 1891.

\(^{40}\) “Travel Diary,” Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s (ARCASJ), Michael Francis Howley Papers, 106/12/14.

\(^{41}\) *Evening Telegram*, February 28, 1903.

\(^{42}\) *Evening Telegram*, March 18, 1898; *Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) Minutes*, March 18, 1898, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), Benevolent Irish Society Fonds, MG 612, Reel 76.
glorified the romantic legacy of the United Irishmen, before concluding with a passionate argument for Irish self-government.\footnote{43}{“United Irishmen,” ARCASJ, Michael Francis Howley Papers, 106/34/14.}

Though Newfoundland-born, Howley maintained a strong sense of Irish ethnicity, but he is remembered most notably as a Newfoundland patriot. In addition to his advocacy for the colony’s position during the French Shore debates, Howley wrote and collected patriotic poetry, laid the cornerstone of Cabot Tower on Signal Hill to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of Newfoundland’s discovery, and was involved in the competition to select the Dominion’s national anthem.\footnote{44}{Crosby, “Michael Francis Howley,” 513.} In his \textit{Ecclesiastical History}, Howley’s tone demonstrates the pride he felt at the development of a home-grown, Newfoundland-centred Church under Mullock, as he suggested that Fleming’s successor held “wider and nobler views” when it came to fostering a domestic Catholicism.\footnote{45}{Howley, \textit{Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland}, 390.}

The Archbishop was also an ardent imperialist. He was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1903, and frequently made strong appeals for Catholic loyalty to the Empire.\footnote{46}{Evening Telegram, February 9, 1903.} The clergy were keen to maintain amicable relations with their Anglo-Protestant fellow-Newfoundlanders, as well as with colonial authorities. Because of this, they avoided actions which could potentially be deemed disloyal or seditious. Examples of the Church’s loyalty are many, but the best may be seen in its participation in significant imperial celebrations, such as royal jubilees and accessions. In 1897, citizens of the Empire came together to mark Queen Victoria’s diamond jubilee. On June 21\textsuperscript{st}, a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral, which was elaborately decorated in bunting and lights. A procession led by the children of the Presentation and Mercy convents, which included members of the city’s most
prominent Catholic societies, the Star of the Sea, the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, the Society of the Holy Name and the BIS, as well as the Bishop and local clergy, marched through the Cathedral grounds. Inside, banners displaying loyal slogans in both English and Latin, such as “God Save Queen Victoria – Domine Salvam Fac Reginam Victoriam” – were hung. A marching band provided music for the occasion, and the Cathedral bells were rung in celebration. At the conclusion of Mass, the congregation passionately sang God Save the Queen.\(^{47}\)

A similar display of St. John’s Catholic imperial identity occurred after Victoria’s death in 1901. On this occasion, Howley gave another sermon at the Cathedral on Catholics’ duty to the Empire. He emphasized the loyalty of St. John’s Irish Catholics, stating that:

> It is true that we, children of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland, differ in religious communion from our deceased sovereign. It is true that we (or at least many of us), are not of her race and nationality; but these facts do not in any way slacken the bonds of loyalty and fealty which bind us to the Church of the sovereign. [...] The teachings of the Catholic Church, based as they are upon the inspired words of sacred writ, make it a fundamental principal of our faith to serve with truth, honour and respect the sovereign who rules us.\(^{48}\)

An almost identical message was preached in 1910 following the death of King Edward:

> “The Catholic Church has ever and always impressed upon her children the great maxim and precept of loyalty and obedience to the sovereign.” Again, the Archbishop highlighted the compatibility between Irish ethnicity and British loyalty, stating “to the country of our forefathers, to long-suffering Ireland and her people, he always showed himself sympathetic.”\(^{49}\) Although ethnic and religious differences were acknowledged, for Howley

\(^{47}\) *Evening Telegram*, June 21, 1897.

\(^{48}\) *Evening Telegram*, January 22, 1901.

\(^{49}\) *Evening Telegram*, March 11, 1910.
and the Newfoundland Church, loyalty to the monarchy and Empire was part of one’s most basic duty as a Catholic. There was absolutely no perceived conflict between loyalties to the Church, to Ireland, to Newfoundland and to the Empire. Howley, therefore, represented and actively promoted the triple identity – Newfoundland, imperial and Irish – espoused by many Catholics in St. John’s in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Individual parish priests also helped foster popular engagement with Irish nationalism in the early-twentieth century, though, like Howley, always within a staunchly imperial context. In 1907, Father Daniel P. O’Callaghan came to St. John’s at Howley’s request. Born in Ireland in 1875, the young priest quickly became, like Clancy, a leading commentator on Irish affairs. Between 1910 and 1914, O’Callaghan gave several lectures on Irish history and politics to St. John’s audiences. Topics ranged from general histories of Ireland to more focused speeches on Daniel O’Connell. What is particularly interesting about his lectures is that they were frequently delivered to non-ethnic Catholic associations and sodalities, such as the Society of the Holy Name. On such occasions, popular awareness and engagement with Irish nationalism were encouraged entirely through the institutional frameworks of the Catholic Church. After 1912, as the Home Rule crisis unfolded, O’Callaghan’s lectures tended to be more focused on Ireland’s political independence from Great Britain. In keeping with the pro-imperial stance of the Newfoundland Church, O’Callaghan’s comments on Ireland reflected a strong loyalty to the monarchy and a desire to keep the old land within the imperial fold. He emphasized Irish-Catholic loyalty to Britain, both in Ireland and in Newfoundland, while vehemently arguing against the anti-Catholic Ulster unionist position.

50 James M. Fleming Sr., Chronological History of the Irish Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador: The Important Church Events of the Parishes, Bishops, Priests and Religious of the Island (St. John’s: James M. Fleming Sr., 2006).
51 For examples, see Evening Telegram, March 7; May 3, 1911.
52 See chapter six.
that Irish Home Rule would equal “Rome Rule.” In a lecture to the Society of the Holy Name in 1912, for example, he noted that “no true Irishman, no matter how strong an adherent to the Catholic Church, would take his politics from Rome.”\footnote{Daily News, March 22, 1912; See also Evening Herald, March 22, 1912; Daily News, January 15, 1913. He gave similar lectures to the Fisherman’s Star of the Sea Association, see Evening Herald, March 27, 1912.} Like Michael Clancy before him, O’Callaghan, a newly-arrived priest from Ireland, was a popular, well-informed commentator, and represented an important link between the Catholics of St. John’s, who by this time tended to be several generations removed from the old country, and the contemporary affairs of their ancestral homeland. Through his clerical influence and the associational networks of the Church, interest in Irish affairs was maintained by many St. John’s Catholics.

Howley died in 1914, and was succeeded by another native-born Newfoundlander, Edward Patrick Roche. Born in Placentia in 1874, Roche was educated at St. Bonventure’s in St. John’s and All Hallows in Dublin, where he was ordained in 1897. He returned to Newfoundland’s capital, and served in the nearby communities of Topsail and Manuels until 1907, when he was appointed administrator of the Cathedral. His experience at the centre of the Archdiocese made him a logical successor to Howley in 1914.\footnote{Kathleen M. Winter, “Edward Patrick Roche,” Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Four (St. John’s: Harry Cuff Publications, 1993), 614-615.} He held similar convictions to his predecessor, including a strong Newfoundland patriotism, which is remembered thanks to his staunch opposition to Confederation with Canada in the late-1940s. His Newfoundland-Catholic identity coexisted with a pride for the British Empire and the freedom it afforded Roman Catholics, which was best-exemplified during the First World War. Roche was keen that Catholics do their bit for King and Country – so much so that he pressed Governor W.E. Davidson, who led the Newfoundland Patriotic Association, the body
which oversaw the Newfoundland Regiment, to appoint more Catholic officers.55 His pride in imperial institutions was explained in a letter to an agent for the Irish Republican newspaper, the Irish World, Mr. Patrick N.H. O’York (likely a pseudonym), who offered the Archbishop a subscription. Roche indignantly declined, stating:

In this colony, we have the greatest freedom in matters civil and religious, and as a consequence our people are unanimously loyal to the British Empire and the British Throne. More than one-third of the people of the Colony are of Irish extraction and have persevered amongst them the best and noblest traditions of the Irish race, but there is no disloyalty amongst them to the Flag under whose protecting folds we live in perfect freedom. Consequently, such publications as the Irish World are likely to find scant courtesy amongst the people of this colony.”56

The freedom for Catholics afforded by the Empire was cited by Roche as the central reason for Newfoundland Catholic loyalty. A similar argument was conveyed in an undated speech from 1917, in which he would eventually go on to call for Home Rule to be granted to Ireland. The Archbishop noted that Newfoundlanders enjoyed:

the freest institutions that are to be found in any part of the world. We have civil freedom, we have religious freedom, and we have educational freedom. We are absolutely free to manage, or, as the case may be, mismanage our own affairs. [...] These institutions have been given to us and preserved for us by our partnership in the British Empire.57

These passages display a deep devotion and respect for Britain, its Empire and the monarchy, but such sentiments in no way diminished Newfoundland patriotism or Irish ethnicity.

Given the pro-imperial disposition of the Church and its leaders in Newfoundland, it is not surprising that as Irish nationalism in St. John’s became increasingly controversial after the First World War, Catholic clerics took a less active role in promoting Irish self-

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56 Roche to O’York, December 17, 1915, ARCASJ, Edward Roche Papers, 107/14/8.
government. The formation and evolution of the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland (SDILN) will be discussed in full in chapter six, but the position of the clergy, particularly Archbishop Edward Roche, should be introduced here. Although at no point did it publicly endorse Ireland’s separation from the British Empire, the SDILN was labelled disloyal and seditious by many St. John’s Protestants, and it was the subject of organized protests by the local Orange Order. Unlike the nationalist endeavours of the 1880s, such as the Land League subscription, the SDILN was entirely secular. No priests served on its executive, nor did they speak at its meetings. The Church networks which bound St. John’s Catholics to their ancestral homeland had been replaced by a North American-centred nationalist association, but in the face of mounting local tensions regarding the Irish Question, Archbishop Roche felt the need to intervene. In a letter to the League’s chairman, R.T. McGrath, he noted that although he “had nothing to do with the formation of the Self-Determination League,” and therefore had no right to interfere in its business, he feared a sectarian backlash to the organization was inevitable given the Orange Order’s opposition. The Archbishop urged McGrath to be cautious in any public response to the Orangemen, calling for “tact, reserve and diplomacy” in order to avoid “the creation in this peaceful country [...] of the very conditions which the League professes to be endeavouring to avoid in Ireland,” and the “throes of a sectarian war.”

Roche’s concerns were not with the political situation in Ireland, but rather with the tensions brewing closer to home. By the 1920s, although the Church still maintained connections to the old land, it had evolved into a Newfoundland-centred institution. An ethnic bond to Ireland was sustained between 1880

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and the 1920s, but the predominant orientation of the Church was domestic, and it placed its Irish identity alongside a strong devotion to the British Empire.

One of the most consistent, obvious themes emphasized by Church leaders in all three cities was the importance of separate education for Catholic pupils. The manner in which young, native-born Catholics were taught was essential in forming their identities. Through the presence of Irish teaching orders or through Irish material in curricula, ethnic identities could be sustained or reinvented for those several generations removed from Ireland. For the Catholics of St. John’s, the presence of the Irish Christian Brothers, the Sisters of Mercy and the Presentation Sisters reinforced connections to Ireland throughout this period.

In his history of education in Newfoundland, Frederick Rowe has described the colony’s system of publicly-funded denominational schools as “unique.”\(^59\) In 1843, thanks largely to the efforts of Bishop Fleming and the high proportion of Catholics on the island, particularly around St. John’s, the Church was given full control over its schools, and provided with government education grants. This system, which included completely separate denominational school boards, remained in place until the late-twentieth century.\(^60\) The origins of Catholic education in the city, however, as well as its Irish orientation, predate even the 1843 Education Act. Like all of the higher clergy investigated here, Fleming was a strong advocate of separate education for young Catholics, and not long after his arrival in Newfoundland, he began to push for independent, Church-run schools. Before the 1830s, the only facility for Catholic education was the Benevolent Irish Society’s Orphan Asylum


School (OAS), established in 1827. Although technically non-denominational, few Protestant pupils attended, and it quickly emerged as “the chief Roman Catholic school in St. John’s.”\textsuperscript{61} Despite Fleming’s best efforts, it was not until 1847 that the OAS came under Church control. In fact, the earliest direct connection between Ireland and the education of Catholics in St. John’s was through the Presentation Sisters in 1833. Fleming was aware of the benefits that Irish teaching orders had brought to the towns and villages of Ireland, and predicted that their presence in St. John’s would not only enhance Catholic respectability and morality, but would also integrate youth into the “religious and social structures of the Church.”\textsuperscript{62} With the objective of securing education for lower-class girls, Fleming travelled to the Galway convent of the Presentation Sisters and recruited four nuns for St. John’s. They accompanied him across the Atlantic, and immediately established a school for the city’s poorer young ladies, with approximately 450 enrolled from the outset.\textsuperscript{63} More Presentation nuns arrived from Ireland in subsequent years, and in 1853, following a devastating fire in 1846, a permanent convent was constructed, while a second was established in the west end in 1856. From this point, the order flourished in St. John’s.\textsuperscript{64}

Fleming’s next endeavour was to recruit nuns to serve the city’s wealthier girls. For this purpose, he approached the Dublin congregation of the Sisters of Mercy. In May, 1847, two sisters arrived to established a pay, or pension, school.\textsuperscript{65} The Mercy order’s early years in Newfoundland were fraught with uncertainty, and by the late-1840s only one, Sister Frances Creedon, remained. From 1850, though, as steady streams of “novices and postulants

\textsuperscript{61} Rowe, \textit{The History of Education in Newfoundland}, 37.
\textsuperscript{62} Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 121-122.
\textsuperscript{63} Sister Mary Paula Penny, “A Study of the Contribution of Three Religious Congregations to the Growth and Education in the Province of Newfoundland,” (PhD Diss., Boston College, 1980), 44.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Ibid.}, 46-48.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{Ibid.}, 48.
arrived from Ireland to fill its ranks,” the order prospered.66 A new stone convent was built in 1857, while the nuns established schools in the east end, as well as an orphanage at Belevedere in 1859.67 Perhaps the Mercy Sister’s most significant contribution to the educational field in St. John’s was the establishment of St. Bride’s College at Littledale, in the west end of the city, in 1884. Originally conceived as a boarding school for outport girls, by 1895 St. Bride’s had evolved into a centre for Catholic teacher training. It expanded in the 1910s and 1920s, and produced most of Newfoundland’s lay-Catholic female teachers until the mid-twentieth century, when, in 1952, the college became affiliated with Memorial University.68

Through Fleming’s efforts, the education of young girls in St. John’s was firmly in the hands of Irish nuns by the mid-nineteenth century. For the most part, though, Catholic boys remained under the tutelage of lay teachers at the OAS. In 1847, the Church finally assumed control of the school, and again Fleming looked to Ireland to secure a teaching order. Several male Franciscan Brothers arrived in the port in 1847, but their presence was short-lived, and by 1854 only one remained.69 The establishment of St. Bonaventure’s as a seminary in 1856 provided an avenue for higher male education in the city, but most young men of means still travelled abroad for their schooling.70 Male education was rather precarious until 1876, when Bishop Power succeeded where Fleming and Mullock had failed – in bringing the Christian Brothers of Ireland to St. John’s.

66 Ibid., 50-51.
67 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 132.
69 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 124-125.
70 J.B. Darcy, Noble to Our View, 22.
The Irish Christian Brothers were founded in 1802 by Edmund Ignatius Rice, and quickly developed an excellent reputation as educators. Negotiations between Power and the organization in Ireland had begun in 1872, and in 1875 Brother McDonnell arrived in St. John’s to negotiate terms. Determined to remain free from outside interference and inspection, the Christian Brothers refused government education grants. Power and the Brothers reached a deal, and in 1876 Brother F.L. Holland arrived as the superior of the new St. John’s congregation. They immediately took control of the OAS, and attendance figures increased dramatically. In fact, the reputation of the Brothers was such that the St. John’s middle classes abandoned St. Bonaventure’s and sent their children to the more plebeian OAS. For a time, rich and poor were educated together, but Power was keen to maintain a class distinction in the boys’ Catholic schools. Those who could afford to pay were to attend St. Bonaventure’s, while those who could not were to attend the Brothers’ OAS school. The dilemma of whether to teach the more respectable youths of St. John’s was finally solved in 1889, when they were formally asked to take control of St. Bonaventure’s as well. From this point, the reputation of the college soared, and by 1897 there were 125 day students and twelve boarders in attendance. The role of the Brothers in Catholic education in St. John’s continued to expand throughout this period. By 1890, they ran a school in the

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73 Martin, “From Waterford to St. John’s,” 24-26; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 143.
74 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 168-172.
west end on Patrick Street, while in 1897 the boys’ orphanage at Mount Cashel was also placed under their supervision.\textsuperscript{75}

By 1900, then, the education of Catholic pupils in St. John’s was almost entirely carried out by Irish teaching orders. What impact did their presence have on the ethnic and religious identities of young Catholics? Most obviously, separate education from their Protestant neighbours for both boys and girls would have heightened a sense of Catholic distinctiveness. Catholic education was, first and foremost, designed to produce new generations of devout, moral, faithful Catholics, so it was the religious aspects of students’ identities that the schools most profoundly reinforced. As Archbishop Roche noted in a speech at the opening of St. Joseph’s School in St. John’s east end, “the Catholic school is the safeguard of the Catholic faith, and, therefore, the strongest defence of the Church.” This was why “the Church has ever insisted upon her right to have her children trained in her own schools.”\textsuperscript{76} Similar sentiments were expressed by Howley in response to the Manitoba Schools Question in 1898.\textsuperscript{77}

While identities as Newfoundland Catholics were most directly emphasized by St. John’s schools, the fact that most educators were Irish must have influenced ethnic awareness to some degree. Throughout the period studied here, a significant majority of Sisters and Brothers were born in Ireland, and relatively recently-arrived in Newfoundland. As early as the 1850s, the Presentation and Mercy nuns were joined by local candidates, but most of those serving Newfoundland would have been born, or at least trained, in Ireland.

\textsuperscript{75} See *Evening Telegram*, November 28, 1888; Penny, “A Study of the Contributions of Three Religious Congregations,” 62; 65.

\textsuperscript{76} Archbishop Edward Roche, “Blessing of the School at St. Joseph’s,” ARCASJ, Edward Roche Papers, 107/22/4.

\textsuperscript{77} See Archbishop Michael Francis Howley, “Circular,” February 20, 1898, ARCASJ, Michael Francis Howley Papers, 106/9/1.
until well into the twentieth century. Most Christian Brothers, too, came from Ireland, and locals who wished to join their ranks were sent to the old country to be trained until 1916, when the order established a novitiate at New Rochelle, New York. A small number of St. John’s natives, such as John Sullivan and Patrick Strapp, returned to the city as Christian Brothers in the 1890s, but generally the order’s residence at Mount St. Francis was dominated by the Irish-born.

In addition to providing the young Catholics of the city with a direct, personal connection to Ireland, aspects of the curricula may also have helped sustain Irish ethnicity, and this was particularly the case for the boys educated by the Christian Brothers. The schools of the Presentation Sisters focused on reading and writing, in addition to practical skills which, at the time, were deemed important for lower-class girls: sewing, spinning, and cooking. The Sisters of Mercy added French, Italian, geography, as well as music for an additional fee, to their middle-class pension schools, but there is little evidence to suggest that distinctly Irish content was taught at girls’ schools. For the boys of the Irish Christian Brothers, however, a knowledge of Ireland’s culture, history, and politics was directly reinforced. The schools provided a well-rounded education, covering reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, grammar, history, geometry, navigation, music, and, later in the period, French, electricity, chemistry, and physics. Despite the establishment of a council of higher education in 1895, and the Dominion’s Department of Education in 1920, which resulted in a somewhat more standardized curriculum for both Catholic and Protestant schools, the Brothers maintained their independence. They continued to use their own texts,

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79 The new institution’s first three graduates were, in fact, Newfoundlanders. See Ibid., 153.
80 Darcy, Noble to Our View, 56.
82 Ibid., 126.
some of which possessed an Irish or nationalist outlook. As Carolyn Lambert has noted, their curriculum, particularly in subjects such as history and literature, emphasized “the distinctiveness of Catholic Ireland,” and exposed the boys of St. John’s to “very assertive and nationalist material.” Texts such as the *Irish History Reader* were explicitly nationalist in tone, and the desirability of Irish self-government was directly taught to the city’s young Catholic males.

The Irish-centred curriculum had a profound impact on Irish identity in St. John’s. Writing to Brother Holland in 1899, Brother Slattery noted that the youth of the town had an interest in their ancestral homeland, stating that “I think reading books [has] done it all, but whatever the cause, our boys are as Irish as any by the Shannon or the Lee.”

Perhaps the best testament to the Irish Christian Brothers’ influence on the city’s Catholic pupils comes from the boys themselves. In 1914, just before the onset of War stalled the British government’s Home Rule legislation, Irish self-government seemed a virtual certainty. When news of the impending success reached St. Bonaventure’s College, “the enthusiasm of the boys was unbounded.” Members of the BIS attended a special assembly at the school, where nationalist speeches were given, including one by the local superior, Brother J.B. Ryan, and “A Nation Once Again” was sung, “the chorus of which the boys joined in with a truly patriotic ardour.” A similar example occurred in the spring of 1920, when Brother Ryan was set to return to Ireland, and the students of St. Bonaventure’s sent him a farewell note in which their distinct, intergenerational esteem for Ireland was clearly articulated. As introduced at the beginning of this dissertation, they asked Ryan to “salute for us the hills and valleys of Ireland. For us it is a land of dreams, known only to us through the medium of

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83 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 159-160.
85 *BIS Minutes*, August 22, 1914.
song, story and history, and ere we separate we venture to express the fervent hope that upon your return to our shores you will bring with you good tidings of great joy that all is well in the old land – ‘tis dawn on the hills of Ireland.”

Later, in the autumn of 1920, when Katherine Hughes arrived in St. John’s to establish a branch of the SDIL, she gave a lecture on Irish self-government to the pupils of St. Bonaventure’s, and even as late as 1922, Brother J.J. O’Donnell gave a “fiery” lecture on Irish self-determination at the college.

Catholic education in St. John’s created and reinforced pupils’ identities in a number of ways. Separate education strengthened perceptions of Newfoundland-Catholic distinctiveness. Boys’ and girls’ schools enhanced gender identities, while, at least after 1889, the separation of pay and free schools undoubtedly exposed class divisions. An ethnic element also existed, as Irish teaching orders – especially the Christian Brothers – nurtured their students’ romantic and symbolic esteem for Ireland. Of course, ethnicity was also invented and sustained by family, ethnic and benevolent associations, media, and the broader community, but the Brothers’ schools were essential in leading the ethnic resurgence which accompanied the Anglo-Irish War from 1919 to 1921. Their influence may also have resulted in a gendered ethnic identity, as there is no evidence that the Mercy or Presentation nuns included Irish topics in their curricula. An ethnicized education, therefore, tended to be available only to young men. The participation of women in the nationalist movement and the Gaelic League at the end of the period, though, suggests that they, too, developed an ethnic attachment to their ancestral homeland, so Irish identity could be created and sustained in a number of ways. Nevertheless, although their influence was not universal, there can be no doubt that the St. John’s congregations of Irish Christian Brothers provided a critical

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87 Darcy, Noble to Our View, 103.
network that connected the Catholics of St. John’s to Ireland, and helped invent and reinvent their ethnicity.

3.2 The Catholic Church, Education and Identity in Halifax

Much like St. John’s, the Catholic Church hierarchy in Halifax maintained close connections to Ireland from the eighteenth century. By the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, however, these was not as strong as those observed in Newfoundland’s chief port, and the Church was more locally and Canadian oriented. Nevertheless, thanks to a small number of outspoken clergy, both Irish- and Canadian-born, the Church continued to reinforce Catholic Haligonians’ awareness and engagement with Ireland throughout the period examined here.

In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, Catholicism in Halifax reinforced settlers’ sense of ethnic distinctiveness even more than in St. John’s. From the time that a number of prominent Irishmen successfully petitioned the Nova Scotian colonial legislature to lift its ban on Catholic Mass in 1784, the local Church remained linked to Ireland.88 The ethnicity of its adherents was reinforced not only by continued Irish settlement in the city, but also by the Halifax Church’s existence as an Irish enclave within a broader Nova Scotian institution dominated by French and Scottish Catholics, in addition to their minority status in a predominantly Anglo-Protestant town.89

The city’s earliest resident priests were Irish, and arrived following appeals from the city’s powerful Catholics to the Archbishop of Cork. A Capuchin priest, James Jones, arrived

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in 1785, but returned to Ireland around 1800. He was succeeded by Dominican Edmund Burke, likely from Tipperary, who had served Placentia in Newfoundland before moving to Halifax. Father Burke also returned to Ireland, but was replaced by his namesake, Edmund Burke, a native of Laois. He had been serving on the Great Lakes frontier, probably the first English-speaking priest to work there, when the Bishop of Quebec selected him to minister to the Irish Catholics of Halifax. Under Burke, Catholicism flourished in the town. A school was constructed, and, swelled by increased settlement from Ireland and by Catholic soldiers in the garrison, his congregation grew. Perhaps the most significant feature of Burke’s tenure was his successful effort to have the Maritime region removed from Quebec’s jurisdiction. In 1817, after lengthy negotiations with Rome, Nova Scotia was declared a separate see, with Burke installed as Vicar Apostolic.

From this point, the history of Catholicism in Nova Scotia began to be dominated by ethnic conflict between the Irish of Halifax and the Scots of Cape Breton and the east. For several years after his death, Burke was not replaced, and the Irish in Halifax began to demand that a new bishop be sent from Ireland. Despite several attempts, none agreed to take on the mission, so a Highland Scot, William Fraser, was appointed. To add insult to this perceived injury, Fraser chose to administer the diocese from the heavily-Scottish community of Antigonish, rather than move to Irish-dominated Halifax. In an attempt to placate the Haligonians, the Bishop dispatched two Irish priests to the city, James Grant and John Loughnan, but throughout the 1830s the town’s Catholics continued to protest to

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92 Hanington, Every Popish Person, 67-69.
authorities in Ireland and Rome. The Holy See sent Monsignor Antonio De Luca to Halifax to report on the situation. His comments highlighted the ethnic tensions within Nova Scotia, and particularly noted the disaffection of “certain powerful Irishmen living in Halifax.” As a result of their influence and De Luca’s report, an Irish coadjutor, Father William Walsh of Dublin, was sent to Halifax in 1842. Fraser was predictably outraged with what he saw as a usurpation of his authority, and owing to the lack of cooperation between the two men, Rome finally decided that the diocese should be split in two in 1844. Fraser chose the small port of Arichat as his seat, though remained in Antigonish until his death in 1851, while Walsh continued as the Bishop of Halifax. Catholicism continued to expand in Halifax through midcentury, and this was recognized in 1852, as the district was raised to an archdiocese, with Walsh serving as the first archbishop until his death in 1858.

The Archdiocese of Halifax remained an ethnically plural one. In the 1850s, its population consisted of about thirty-thousand Catholics. The ten thousand or so who resided in the city were predominantly Irish, while those scattered throughout mainland Nova Scotia tended to be French-Acadian, Mik’maq, or Scottish. This legacy of ethnic difference within Catholicism heightened Irish identities for Halifax’s Catholics, perhaps even more than in Bishop Fleming’s Irish-centred St. John’s Church. By the 1860s, though, another Irish-born Bishop, Thomas Louis Connolly, was leading the Catholics of Halifax into Canadian Confederation, and this would have a significant impact upon the identity and orientation of the local Church.

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95 Ibid., 78.
96 Hanington, Every Popish Person, 86.
99 Hanington, Every Popish Person, 115.
Unlike in St. John’s, where Fleming shunned the development of a home-grown clergy, the facilities for clerical indigenization in Halifax developed relatively early, allowing for a more North American-oriented Church by the late-nineteenth century. The movement for indigenization was inspired by Edmund Burke, as he struggled to convince Irish and French priests to come to Halifax. A seminary was established as early as 1818, and by 1820 six locally-educated priests had been ordained. These efforts ceased in the mid-1820s, however, and locals interested in the priesthood were sent to Quebec or Ireland.\(^{100}\)

A significant step in the development of a home-grown Halifax Church was the establishment of St. Mary’s as a seminary. Again, this offered the young men of Halifax an opportunity to study for the clergy locally. The institution was initially staffed by Irish priests, Father R.B. O’Brien and Lawrence Dease, and it therefore maintained a strong Irish character. St. Mary’s, however, was fraught with difficulties, and even into the late-nineteenth century most of the city’s boys still attended seminaries outside Nova Scotia.\(^{101}\)

It was not until well into the period studied here that another institution was established in Halifax to facilitate a domestic Catholic clergy: Holy Heart Seminary, founded in 1895. St. Mary’s had closed in 1881 owing to a lack of funds, so for fourteen years at the onset of this period there existed no facility for local clerical education, and candidates continued to leave the province. Some, such as Gregory O’Brien who was ordained at All Hallows in 1890, went to Ireland.\(^ {102}\) Archbishop Cornelius O’Brien saw the lack of domestic educational facilities as a serious problem for the Church in Halifax, so he approached the French Eudist fathers, asking them to establish a diocesan seminary in the city. Holy Heart was opened on Quinpool Road in 1895, with a class of ten young men, both French- and

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\(^{100}\) *Ibid.*, 71.  
\(^{101}\) Shook, *Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada*, 61-62.  
\(^{102}\) *Halifax Herald*, August 12, 1890.
Canadian-born. In its early years, the seminary was French in “language, character and tradition,” though by the early-twentieth century attempts were being made to encourage Halifax’s Irish Catholics to attend.\(^{103}\) With this objective in mind, the Irish Eudists John B. O’Reilly, Patrick A. Bray and Patrick J. Skinner joined the faculty. In 1914, pupils from France were withdrawn, and Holy Heart became an exclusively diocesan seminary.\(^{104}\) From this point, most priests serving Halifax passed through the local college.\(^{105}\)

An analysis of clerical origins for Halifax reveals a similar pattern of indigenization to St. John’s. Catholic directories and almanacs reveal clergy serving at St. Mary’s Cathedral, St. Patrick’s, St. Joseph’s, and St. Agnes’ parishes at approximately ten-year intervals throughout the period. This list can be cross-referenced with nominal census data in order to determine priests’ places of birth. The method yielded a sample of thirty-eight priests who served the city between 1881 and 1919, and of these twenty-nine could be positively identified by birthplace. Sixteen were Nova Scotian-born, ten were from Ireland and three came from England or France. Owing to the lack of available Canadian census results after 1911, the young priests who served Halifax after this point become quite difficult to trace. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the city was increasingly tending towards a domestic clergy in the early-twentieth century:

\(^{103}\) Shook, *Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada*, 102.
\(^{104}\) Ibid., 104-105.
\(^{105}\) Hanington, *Every Popish Person*, 162.
Table 3.4: Origins of Halifax Roman Catholic Clergy, 1881-1919.\textsuperscript{106}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number born in Ireland</th>
<th>Number born in Nova Scotia</th>
<th>Number born elsewhere</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Percentage (of known) born in Nova Scotia</th>
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<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With so many unknowns for 1919, the statistic for that year is uncertain, but clearly there is a trend towards an indigenized priesthood. In fact, of the seven Nova Scotian priests recorded for that year, three of them were identifiable because they were enrolled at Holy Heart Seminary in 1911. Although anecdotal evidence suggests that Irish priests such as Fathers Nash and O’Sullivan, who will be introduced below, were still being recruited, in Halifax the facilities to produce a domestically-born and educated clergy were well in place by the end of the period.

Even before the 1880s, the Church in Halifax was adopting a more Canadian focus. From the 1860s, the city’s leading clergy were active regarding questions of national significance, both to Catholics and to the general population. Though born in Cork, Archbishop Thomas Louis Connolly, sometimes referred to as the “Godfather of Confederation,” was instrumental in rallying Halifax-Catholic support for Canadian Confederation in the 1860s, as well as securing educational rights for English-speaking

\textsuperscript{106} Names of clergy serving Halifax were drawn from: \textit{Sadlier’s Catholic Directory, Almanac and Clergy List, 1881; 1891} (New York: D.J. Sadlier and Co., 1881; 1891); \textit{The Catholic Directory, Almanac and Clergy List Quarterly, 1900; 1910} (Milwaukee: M.H. Wiltzuis and Co., 1900; 1910); \textit{The Official Catholic Directory, 1919} (New York: P.J Kenedy and Sons, 1919). Biographical information was gained using a method similar to chapter one. The genealogical database www.ancestry.com was used to identify individual’s places of birth. Original data from the \textit{Census of Canada, 1881; 1891; 1901; 1911}. 
Catholics nationwide. Connolly was succeeded by the Limerick-born Michael Hannan in 1877, but he only served for five years, and his legacy in terms of leading the Catholics of Halifax was unremarkable. A far more significant figure for the historian of Irish-Catholic identity in Halifax is Hannan’s successor, Cornelius O’Brien. Born on Prince Edward Island and educated in Rome, his orientation and career in many ways paralleled his St. John’s contemporary, Archbishop Howley. Both were the first North American-born bishops in their respective sees, both were highly intellectual, producing published works on a variety of subjects, and both espoused a strong national patriotism alongside a devotion to monarchy and Empire, while still maintaining a romantic esteem for Ireland.

O’Brien was born in 1843, the son of Irish immigrants. His early education was at St. Dunstan’s College in Charlottetown, where he worked closely with Bishop Peter McIntyre. Probably thanks to the McIntyre’s influence, O’Brien studied for the priesthood, like Howley, at the Urban College in Rome. After being ordained there in 1871, he returned to his home province as a parish priest at St. Dunstan’s. There he served until 1883 when, surprisingly, he was selected as Hannan’s successor and named Archbishop of Halifax. Though the appointment was unexpected, O’Brien possessed many of the characteristics that were deemed necessary to lead the Archdiocese. He was British North American-born, but of Irish descent – essential in appeasing the city’s urban Irish Catholics – and he also spoke French, which was vital in dealing with the Acadian population elsewhere in the

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Maritimes.\(^{110}\) During his episcopate, Catholic infrastructure in the city developed considerably, allowing for a more self-contained Catholic community through the establishment of schools, a hospital, reformatories, and infant homes. With largely separate institutions, the educational and social needs of Catholics could be met “in relative isolation from Protestants.”\(^{111}\)

Like Howley, O’Brien maintained an interest in Irish affairs long before he was named archbishop, and as a clergyman he was sought out to give lectures on the affairs of the old country. While still stationed in Charlottetown in 1876, for example, he gave a talk on Daniel O’Connell’s legacy. The speech assumed a nationalist tone, noting “centuries of [English] slavery,” in Ireland, and ended with an appeal for Irish self-government.\(^{112}\) His pro-Home Rule stance continued to be publicly articulated following his move to Halifax. A similar lecture on O’Connell was delivered there in 1885, while in 1887 he actively declared his support for the city’s leading secular Irish-nationalist organization, the Irish National League.\(^{113}\) O’Brien’s support for constitutional nationalism was further demonstrated with a generous contribution to the Parnell Indemnity Fund in 1889.\(^{114}\) The following year, however, he became the only leading clergyman in any of these three cities to publicly speak out against Parnell in the wake of the Kitty O’Shea divorce scandal, following the lead of the Church hierarchy in Ireland.\(^{115}\) Even though the fall of Parnell significantly damaged the momentum of the nationalist cause in the 1890s, Archbishop O’Brien maintained his esteem for the old land. In 1894, he organized a meeting of Halifax’s Catholic societies to raise

\(^{110}\) Hanington, *Every Popish Person*, 156.
\(^{111}\) Murphy, “Cornelius O’Brien,” 773.
\(^{113}\) *Morning Chronicle*, December 31, 1885; July 26, 1889.
\(^{114}\) *Morning Chronicle*, January 26, 1889. This fund will be fully analyzed in chapter five.
\(^{115}\) *Halifax Herald*, December 19, 1890.
funds for the relief of the Irish poor.\textsuperscript{116} Although his public comments on Ireland became less frequent in the twentieth century, and his personal papers contain few direct references to Irish affairs, O’Brien clearly maintained a great love for his parents’ homeland and, within the boundaries of the British Empire, strongly supported Home Rule.

Far more than his Irish identity, O’Brien is remembered for his “fervent Canadian patriotism and his attachment to imperial connections.”\textsuperscript{117} Politically, he supported John A. Macdonald’s Conservatives and the National Policy, and occasionally, such as in 1891, used his influence within the Church to persuade Nova Scotian Catholics to boycott the Liberals. He also became a key player in the Manitoba Schools Question, as Catholic educational rights were being contested.\textsuperscript{118} He frequently advocated a greater role for Canada in imperial affairs, serving on the executive of the Imperial Federation League of Great Britain, which called for a federalist system within the Empire. In 1890, the Archbishop served as the League’s vice president for Nova Scotia, and he was also the provincial president of the British Empire League.\textsuperscript{119} O’Brien was concerned with the position of Catholics within the Empire, and his leadership in this regard was demonstrated in 1902, when he personally led a protest of the Royal Accession Oath by Halifax Catholics. On this occasion, the Archbishop highlighted the loyalty of Catholics in Halifax and throughout the Empire.\textsuperscript{120} In similar fashion to Howley in St. John’s, the life and career of Cornelius O’Brien demonstrates the mutual compatibility of strong Nova Scotian, Canadian, and imperial loyalty with an emotional attachment to Ireland and support for constitutional Irish nationalism.


\textsuperscript{117} Murphy, “Cornelius O’Brien,” 772.

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{119} See \textit{Morning Chronicle}, June 5; July 11; December 14, 1888; \textit{Halifax Herald}, February 20, 1890; Murphy, “Cornelius O’Brien,” 772.

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Halifax Herald}, January 23, 1902.
The Halifax Church, like its counterpart in Toronto,\textsuperscript{121} was unquestionably becoming increasingly Canadian during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Irish connections continued throughout the period, however, and, as in St. John’s, several individual priests were significant in maintaining popular interest in Ireland. As late as the 1910s, priests still came from Ireland, and newly-arrived clerics were often recruited by the city’s Irish ethnic associations, such as the Charitable Irish Society (CIS), to give talks on Irish affairs. Father M. O’Kelly, for example, arrived from Ireland in the spring of 1910 to serve at St. Patrick’s Church. On St. Patrick’s Day, not long after he arrived in Halifax, O’Kelly made his first public appearance as a special guest at the CIS’s annual dinner. He gave a lengthy speech on Ireland’s fight for Home Rule, predicting that the movement “was on the verge of a great triumph.”\textsuperscript{122} The same year, another Irish-born clergyman, Father Nash, gave an address to the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), which concluded with a stirring rendition of “The Wearing of the Green.”\textsuperscript{123} Several months later, Nash gave a speech to the CIS on St. Patrick’s Day, 1911. His tone and approach were strikingly similar to those adopted by Father O’Callaghan in St. John’s around the same time. Self-government for Ireland was imminent, but Nash expressed the hope that the nation should remain within the British Empire, and that God Save the King would continue to be sung with enthusiasm in the old country.\textsuperscript{124} Clerical figures often led the way when it came to understanding the affairs of Ireland, but their nationalism was invariably framed in a loyal, pro-imperial context.

\textsuperscript{121} See McGowan, \textit{The Waning of the Green}, 56.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 17, 1910.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Halifax Herald}, October 21, 1910.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 17, 1911.
It was not only Irish-born priests who led engagement with Ireland during this period. Reverend Dr. William J. Foley was born in Halifax, educated in Montreal, and served in the city for many years, including as rector of St. Mary’s Cathedral from 1908 to 1926. Long before this appointment, the young Father Foley was selected to represent the city at the 1896 Irish Race Convention. There, he gave a stirring speech on behalf of the Irish-Catholics of Halifax, which will be analyzed in chapter five. Around the same time, he wrote biographies of Irish nationalist leaders which appeared in the \textit{Halifax Herald}.\textsuperscript{125} Foley represents an example of a second-generation Irish Catholic who exhibited a strong pride in his ethnicity from his parents. In 1906, it was strongly hinted in the local press that Foley would succeed the deceased Cornelius O’Brien as Archbishop of Halifax. The \textit{Herald} noted his ethnicity, stating that he was “essentially and characteristically Irish in personality and sympathies.”\textsuperscript{126} In the end, Edward McCarthy was chosen for the post, but Foley continued to serve in the city as rector of St. Mary’s.\textsuperscript{127}

Although he was clearly proud of his Irish origins, Foley’s constitutional nationalism coexisted with a strong sense of Canadian and imperial patriotism, best exemplified at the start of the First World War. Not long after Britain declared war on Germany in August, 1914, he gave an address on the duties of Halifax Catholics in wartime. On this occasion, he praised the strong links between Canada and the Empire, while also pointing out the loyalty of the Irish people, concluding that the unity of English, Scots and Irish on the battlefields of Europe would be difficult to overcome.\textsuperscript{128} Foley, like many of his fellow Halifax Catholics of

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Halifax Herald}, September 22, 1896.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{Halifax Herald}, June 1, 1906.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Halifax Herald}, June 1, 1906; Hanington, \textit{Every Popish Person}, 265.
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Halifax Herald}, August 13, 1914.
Irish descent, was aware and proud of his ancestral connections to Ireland, but this identity existed alongside strong affiliations to Canada and the Empire.

A more controversial figure within the Halifax Church was Father Thomas O’Sullivan, a native of Ireland who served the new St. Thomas Aquinas parish from 1919. In 1920, he emerged as one of the city’s most vocal Irish nationalists at a time when Ireland’s fight for self-government was moving away from the moderate, constitutional nationalism which had been endorsed by the clergy in Canada and Newfoundland before the War. As has been seen in St. John’s, Church figures had little involvement with the post-war nationalist association, the Self-Determination for Ireland League (SDIL). In Halifax, Father O’Sullivan became one of its leading figures. Around the time that a branch of the League was established in Halifax, the Irish-born priest wrote letters to Halifax papers calling for an end to the British administration in Dublin, and subsequently served as the provincial president of the League. O’Sullivan’s comments drew an irate reaction from anti-nationalists in Halifax, with several labelling him republican and seditious. Despite these accusations, his publicly expressed opinions on Irish affairs were in actuality quite moderate, and were typical of the non-committal nationalism espoused by the SDIL, as O’Sullivan placed the objective of Irish independence within an imperial framework. He had served as a Canadian army chaplain during the War, and now wished for his homeland what he and other soldiers had been fighting for in Belgium: self-determination for small nations. Irish independence, irrespective of its form, was required to “save the Empire.” More than any other individual connected with the SDIL, O’Sullivan was attacked by those opposed to self-

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129 Its formation will be discussed in chapter six.
130 *Halifax Herald*, August 18; October 9, 1920.
131 *Morning Chronicle*, October 11, 1920; *Halifax Herald*, November 20; December 1; December 2, 1920.
determination for Ireland. The ferocity of his detractors, combined with the fact that he was
individually singled out, demonstrates the significance of his vocal support for the
movement. As a Catholic priest, O’Sullivan was a leader within the community, and his
influence was vital in rallying popular support for Irish independence. It is important to
remember, though, that he appears to have been an isolated figure in this period.

O’Sullivan’s radical Irish nationalism contrasts sharply with the views of Halifax’s
Archbishop during the 1910s and 1920s. Born in the north end of Halifax in 1850, Edward
McCarthy studied locally at St. Mary’s and, later, at Laval in Montreal, making him the
city’s first Canadian-trained archbishop. Following his ordination in 1876, he served various
parishes throughout Nova Scotia before returning to the city, first at St. Patrick’s and then as
reector of St. Mary’s Cathedral. ¹³² Like Archbishop Roche in St. John’s, McCarthy was less
involved in Irish affairs than his predecessors, and was certainly more locally and Canadian
oriented, a characteristic exemplified by his participation in the First Plenary Council of
Quebec in 1909, a meeting of all Canadian Bishops which was important in fostering the
development of a national, Canadian Church. ¹³³ McCarthy appears to have made few public
or private comments on the Home Rule controversy, or the Irish revolutionary movement
between 1916 and 1921. His circulars and personal correspondence rarely mention Ireland,
with a notable exception in the winter of 1921. The Archbishop had received a letter from the
Bishop of Down and Connor, Joseph MacRory, regarding the suffering of Catholics in
Belfast as a result of the sectarian violence that accompanied the Anglo-Irish War. McCarthy
took it upon himself to raise funds for the relief of women and children. On January 4ᵗʰ, he
sent a circular to his clergy detailing the Belfast suffering, and calling upon them to take up

¹³² Halifax Herald, June 26, 1906.
¹³³ Hanington, Every Popish Person, 166-169.
collections in their parishes as soon as possible. This demonstrates at least some emotional attachment to his ancestral homeland, though the language of the appeal makes no direct mention of ethnicity. Because the circular was sent not only to “Irish” parishes, but to Acadian and Scottish ones throughout the Maritimes as well, the Archbishop did not argue that relief should be given owing to emotional or ancestral connections to Ireland. Instead, he maintained that it was the charitable duty of “every Catholic Canadian throughout the length and breadth of the land” to aid the suffering of women and children of Belfast. Evidently, there was a positive response throughout the Archdiocese, and several weeks later McCarthy sent a cheque for $5,000 to MacRory in Belfast. Overall, the evolution of the higher clergy in Halifax was similar to St. John’s. By the 1920s, the Irish-born leaders of the 1880s had been replaced by native-born, locally-oriented archbishops. In both cases, however, some direct connections to Ireland were maintained by both higher and lower clergy until the end of the period under investigation here. The Church never entirely lost its Irish orientation.

The Catholic education system of Halifax epitomizes the continental, Canadian orientation of Catholic life in the city. Throughout the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries, it evolved quite differently to its St. John’s contemporary. In Newfoundland, there were entirely separate, publicly-funded denominational school systems. Nova Scotia only possessed one school system, but a unique gentleman’s agreement, originally forged between Premier Charles Tupper and Archbishop Connolly, ensured that Catholic pupils attended schools staffed by Catholic teachers. In effect, these were “Halifax public schools attended by Catholic children.” A standardized, universal curriculum was followed by both

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135 McCarthy to MacRory, February 10, 1921, AAH, Edward McCarthy Papers, Vol. 4/344.
136 Terrence Burns, “Public School Education of Catholics in the City of Halifax, 1819-1900 (MA Diss., St. Mary’s University, 1962), 41.
Catholic and Protestant schools, and both were subject to inspection by the Board of School Commissioners on which representatives from both denominations sat. Religious instruction was permitted only after school hours, and all teachers held government teaching certificates. Through this system, Church control over education was maintained, and as Archbishop O’Brien explained in a letter to an Apostolic Delegate, although not “separate schools,” they were “nevertheless to a certain extent Catholic in tone and free of danger to the faith.”

Generally the system worked quite well, and was an example of Halifax’s tradition of “denominational compromise,” which maintained harmonious relationships between the city’s Protestants and its Catholic minority. Its greatest test, and the strongest reaction of the clergy in defence of separate education, occurred in 1892 with the emergence of the Russell Street School affair. Under the terms of the gentleman’s agreement, the Archdiocese of Halifax owned the school buildings, and rented them to the Board of School Commissioners. The mostly Protestant Board decided to abandon the agreement and construct a new Catholic school on Russell Street, and, furthermore, to strip the Church of the right to nominate teachers. O’Brien was furious, and called on Catholic parents to boycott the new school, which most did. The Archbishop urged the school board to return control of the building to the Church, arguing that the gentleman’s agreement in fact saved the board a significant sum of money. Ultimately, he was successful, though the incident did serve to temporarily strain relations between Halifax’s Catholics and Protestants.

Throughout this period, although it was not codified in law, the Catholic pupils of Halifax attended their own schools. How did this influence their identities? As in St. John’s,

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138 This system is addressed in further detail in chapter four.
139 Hanington, Every Popish Person, 165; Burns, “Public School Education of Catholics in the City of Halifax,” 65-66; See also Archbishop O’Brien, “Facts About School Buildings,” No Date, AAH, Cornelius O’Brien Papers, Vol. 3/64; O’Brien to Board of School Commissioners, April 7, 1892, PANS, Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Halifax, Volume Eight, mfm 12550.
a separate awareness of being English-speaking, Canadian Catholics was most directly reinforced, while gender and class identities were also affected. Unlike at the Irish Christian Brothers’ schools in St. John’s, however, an ethnic attachment to Ireland appears to have rarely been a feature of Catholic education in Halifax. A critical difference between the two ports was the absence of Irish teaching orders in the Nova Scotian centre until very late in this period. As Catholic education was expanding in the mid-nineteenth century, Archbishop Walsh did not look to Ireland for teachers as Fleming had done. Instead, the Sisters of Charity were recruited from New York in 1849. Although many of these nuns would have been Irish or of Irish descent, they lacked the direct institutional connection to the old country possessed by the Mercy and Presentation Sisters in St. John’s. Walsh also brought a congregation of the French Order of the Sacred Heart to the city, while Connolly recruited the De La Salle Christian Brothers to serve the new St. Patrick’s Boys’ School. The presence of these orders combined to give Catholic education in Halifax a far more Canadian or North American focus than the St. John’s case. In fact, it was not until 1913 that an Irish teaching order came to the city. St. Mary’s College had been closed from 1881 to 1903, and was still struggling. Inspired partly by the manner in which the Irish Christian Brothers had turned around St. Bonaventure’s in St. John’s twenty-five years previously, Archbishop McCarthy resolved to bring the order to Halifax to resurrect the college’s reputation. Negotiations were underway by spring, 1913, and in order to raise the money necessary to attract the Brothers, McCarthy organized a large fundraising campaign. In less than a month, the residents of Halifax pledged over $47,000, and an agreement was signed in March, 1913.

140 Hanington, Every Popish Person, 101.
141 Ibid., 116.
with the college leased to the order for a period of sixty years. They were responsible for revenues and expenditures, and were protected from any outside interference.\(^{142}\)

The extent to which the Brothers at St. Mary’s introduced Irish material into the curriculum is unclear, but their influence on community and identity must have been limited, as only a few hundred boys passed through the institution during the period investigated here.\(^{143}\) In the city’s public schools, owing to the standardized curricula, Irish content was almost certainly limited, even in schools populated by Catholics. In fact, aspects of the material taught in Halifax schools were designed to strengthen both Canadian and imperial patriotism. History and geography texts focused on Canada and the Empire, and varied little through this period, though by the 1910s, high school students used a greater variety of Canadian texts.\(^{144}\) Furthermore, schools were called upon to directly enhance students’ patriotism in the late-nineteenth century. In 1898, the school board’s minutes noted that Empire Day would be declared a school holiday, as “the greatest sentiment as well as the most stirring which we can put into the minds and hearts of our children is Civis Britannicus Sum.”\(^{145}\) As a result of this directive, the participation of the city’s Catholic school students in the following year’s Empire Day procession was noted in the press.\(^{146}\) Also in 1898, Nova Scotia’s Journal of Education noted that “Canadian patriotism should be comprehensive, respectful, intelligent and, at the same time, intense.”\(^{147}\) Even as late as 1920, the journal

\(^{142}\) Shook, Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada, 64-65; Halifax Herald, June 9; July 4, 1913. A copy of the contract has been preserved in Edward McCarthy’s papers. See “Copy of Contract Made Between Archbishop McCarthy and the Irish Christian Brothers,” April 24, 1913, AAH, Edward McCarthy Papers, Vol. 3/49.

\(^{143}\) Shook, Catholic Post-Secondary Education in English-Speaking Canada, 66.

\(^{144}\) Examples include A History of British America; A Brief History of England; Geography of the British Empire. See Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Halifax, Volume Seven, December 14, 1882; Volume Eight, April, 1911.

\(^{145}\) Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Halifax, Volume Ten, October, 1898.

\(^{146}\) Halifax Herald, May 24, 1899.

reminded teachers that duty to “district, country and race” should be emphasized on both Dominion Day and Empire Day.\textsuperscript{148} Halifax’s Catholic schools were not exempt from this mentality, and no doubt actively nurtured Canadian and imperial identities amongst their students. A sense of Irish ethnicity was neither sustained nor invented by the schools. Instead, the focus was on producing devout, Catholic Canadians, with a passion for the broader Empire. Catholics of Irish descent in Halifax developed their romantic esteem for Ireland from other sources, with the leadership of the higher and lower clergy a consistent factor during this period.

**3.3 The Catholic Church, Education and Identity in Portland**

The evolution of Catholic identity in Portland was notably different from St. John’s or Halifax. The American context, as well as the presence of significant numbers of non-Irish Catholics in the city and separate non-English speaking parishes after 1900, complicated Catholic identity. Parallels did exist among the three ports, as Portland also hosted an increasingly North American-focused clergy during this period. Even those born in the United States, however, publicly supported Irish nationalism, and the Catholic Church in Portland was much more active than its counterparts in St. John’s and Halifax in encouraging popular engagement Ireland’s political struggles, particularly after the First World War. Although a pan-ethnic, American-Catholic identity may have been developing, the Church in Portland continued to reinforce Irish ethnic distinctiveness well into the twentieth century.

An organized Church presence in Portland did not develop until the late-1820s and 1830s. As in Halifax, French missionaries served the port’s tiny population of Irish Catholics.

until 1827, when Father Charles Daniel Ffrench, a Galway-born Dominican, was appointed to minister to the approximately three-hundred Catholics in the town. By 1830, Portland’s first Catholic chapel, St. Dominic’s, had been erected, and its Catholic population continued to grow as more Irish settled. The Church in the region had developed sufficiently by 1855 to warrant the separation of the Portland diocese, consisting of Maine and New Hampshire, from Boston. David William Bacon, a native of Brooklyn, was appointed as the first Bishop. Unlike St. John’s and Halifax, then, Catholic leadership in Portland was North American, rather than Irish, from the outset, though all of the diocese’ bishops have been of Irish extraction. Owing to the lack of local clergy, Bacon recruited his priests from a variety of North American and European seminaries. In Portland itself, those of Irish birth or descent predominated, though continental Europeans, such as German Eugene Müller, also served the city. The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception was dedicated in 1869, and by the beginning of the period studied here Catholicism was well-established in the city. Although there were many Irish or Irish-American priests, Portland’s Church hierarchy did not reflect the same direct connections to Ireland as those of St. John’s or Halifax.

Owing to a high degree of clerical turnover in the Portland diocese, as well as the lack of Maine census data for 1890, the city’s priests were more difficult to definitively trace than those of St. John’s or Halifax. Amongst those that could be pinpointed as serving the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, St. Dominic’s, and the Sacred Heart parishes, we again see a trend towards a home-grown Church. A method identical to that used for Halifax identified thirty-six Portland priests, of whom twenty-seven could be identified in census

150 Ibid., 144-147.
151 Ibid., 159.
152 Ibid., 184.
records. Nine were born in Ireland, seventeen in North America (eleven in Maine), and one, Father Anthony Petillo, was from Italy. The breakdown of this data by date reveals a similar pattern to St. John’s and Halifax:

Table 3.5: Origins of Portland Roman Catholic Clergy, 1881-1919.\(^\text{153}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number born in Ireland</th>
<th>Number born in North America (Number born in Maine)</th>
<th>Number born elsewhere</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Percent of identified priests born in North America (Percent born in Maine)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (0)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20% (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50% (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>71% (57%)</td>
</tr>
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<td>1910</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5 (4)</td>
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<td>71% (57%)</td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6 (5)</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>67% (56%)</td>
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These figures are not quite as reliable as those for the two British-North American ports. Because Irish immigration to New England continued throughout this period, an Irish-born priest serving Portland in the early-twentieth century may well have arrived as a young child and been domestically raised and trained. Despite the increasingly diverse ethnic profile of Catholicism in the city, the clergy did maintain a distinct Irish-American character. Of the North American-born priests, parents’ place of birth could be determined for thirteen. Of

\(^{153}\) Names of clergy serving Halifax were drawn from: Sadlier’s Catholic Directory, Almanac and Clergy List, 1881; 1891; The Catholic Directory, Almanac and Clergy List Quarterly, 1900; 1910; The Official Catholic Directory, 1919. Biographical information was gained using a method similar to chapter one. The genealogical database www.ancestry.com was used to identify individual’s places of birth. Original data is from the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880; Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900; Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910; Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920.
these, ten had at least one Irish parent. Although indigenization was taking place, some Irish connections were undoubtedly preserved throughout this period.

As in St. John’s and Halifax, individual churchmen were vital in maintaining the connection between Portland’s Irish Catholics and their ancestral homeland, while at the same time reinforcing a sense of American-Catholic distinctiveness. When Bishop Bacon died in 1874, he was succeeded by James Augustine Healy, who became one of nineteenth-century American Catholicism’s most fascinating figures, especially for the historian of ethnicity, race and identity. Healy’s father, Michael, emigrated from Galway to Georgia in 1818, where he established a cotton plantation on the Ocmulgee River, near Macon. He became one of the most successful plantation owners in the region, eventually owning over 1,500 acres. The elder Healy, though, was most notable for his long-term, seemingly stable romantic relationship with one of his black slaves, Eliza. Although she could not legally be his wife, unlike most black-white unions in the Antebellum South, Healy appears to have lived openly and faithfully with Eliza until they both died within a few months of one another in 1850. Together they had ten children, with James Augustine, the eldest, born in 1830.

Aware that his children were slaves under Georgia law, Michael Healy sent each of them North to be educated. James left the plantation in 1837, and probably never saw his birthplace again. He was enrolled in a Quaker-run school in New York City until the age of fourteen, and subsequently studied at Holy Cross Seminary in Worcester, Massachusetts. It was this period that had the greatest impact on young Healy’s identity. Any remnants of

154 That the diocese produce more home-grown priests was a concern for Portland Bishops even quite late in our period. In 1913, Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh announced a fund to improve local facilities for educating Maine-born clergy. See Eastern Argus, December 31, 1912.
blackness or southernness were abandoned during his time at Holy Cross, and James came to fully regard himself as an American Catholic. The fact that he was African American, and legally born a slave, had virtually no relevance in his later career. As he studied for the priesthood in Montreal and, later, in Paris, Healy, like his brothers, used “religion to confirm a white identity,” and by the time of his ordination had successfully “passed into the white community.” From this point, the most central aspect of his identity was his Catholicism.

After years serving as a parish priest and as Chancellor of the diocese in Boston, Healy was appointed Bishop of Portland in 1875. Thanks to his studies in Montreal and Paris, he was fluent in French, which made him a strong candidate for the ethnically-plural diocese. He served Maine until his death in 1900, and his episcopate saw the establishment of numerous parochial schools, as well as the separation of New Hampshire from the Portland See in 1884. James O’Toole’s analysis of the Bishop’s identity focuses on the abandonment of blackness in favour of a white-oriented American Catholicism. Certainly, his personal correspondence suggests that Healy in no way considered himself an African American. During the Civil War, for example, he expressed little sympathy with abolition or the plight of southern slaves.

O’Toole pays little attention, however, to the ethnic aspects of Healy’s identity, simply noting in his conclusion the large Celtic cross upon his grave which epitomized his identity as “[solely] an Irish Catholic.” Certainly, Healy’s peculiar upbringing – he rarely met his Irish-born father after the age of seven – as well as the formation of his Catholic identity in an ethnically-plural environment at Holy Cross, in Montreal, and in Paris, may

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156 Ibid., 34.
157 Ibid., 35; 41.
159 O’Toole, Passing for White, 88.
160 Ibid., 217.
have diluted any attachment to Ireland. His career in Portland, however, displays occasional engagement with the old country. In 1880, like Bishop Power in St. John’s, it was Healy who called on the Catholics of Portland to pledge money for the relief of the Irish poor.¹⁶¹ Later that spring, he expressed public support for the work of the Irish National Land League in Portland, and he made at least one tour of Ireland during his tenure as bishop.¹⁶² Despite these occasional public flashes of an ethnic identification with his father’s homeland, Bishop Healy, at least according to O’Toole, primarily saw himself as a white, American Catholic.¹⁶³ His sense of Irishness was symbolic, only emerging on occasions when the situation in the old country was particularly acute, such as in 1880. He therefore provides an excellent example of the tenuous, highly variable nature of intergenerational identities within the Irish diaspora.

Healy was replaced by another well-known figure in American Catholicism: William H. O’Connell. Born in Lowell, Massachusetts, of Irish parents and educated at Boston College, O’Connell is best known for serving as Archbishop of Boston and, later, for being named a Cardinal following his five-year tenure in Portland. His episcopate was fairly unremarkable. In fact, he did not spend much time in the diocese at all, preferring Palm Beach in Florida to Maine’s long winters.¹⁶⁴ O’Connell was unquestionably aware of his Irish ethnicity, and his memoirs, written in 1934, display a considerable degree of Anglophobia and a strong nationalist tone. He referred to Ireland as “the nearest victim of England’s hate,” and noted that the “memories [of English oppression would] never die in

¹⁶¹ *Eastern Argus*, January 26, 1880.
¹⁶² *Eastern Argus*, May 13, 1880; O’Toole, *Passing for White*, 149.
¹⁶³ O’Toole, *Passing for White*, 149-150.
the heart or soul of any man of woman of Irish blood.”  

Furthermore, as Cardinal, he was an important national leader of Irish-American nationalism between 1919 and 1921.

Despite this overt nationalism, his ethnic affiliation appears to have had little impact on his tenure as Bishop of Portland. If anything, he was dismayed at the lack of ethnic unity amongst Catholics within the state, especially between the Irish Americans of the city and the Franco-Americans who dominated elsewhere in the diocese. The Bishop encouraged his flock to join non-ethnic Catholic societies such as the Catholic Union, Catholic reading circles and working men’s clubs to foster solidarity. Despite his efforts, however, ethnic divisions remained when O’Connell left Portland in 1905. His episcopate, ultimately, had little impact on how those of Irish birth and descent identified with the old country.

Following O’Connell’s move to Boston, he was succeeded by Louis Sebastian Walsh, who was a key figure in fostering Irish nationalism in Portland, while at the same time promoting an inclusive, non-ethnic Roman Catholic solidarity. Born in Salem, Massachusetts, and of Irish descent, Walsh was in many ways an ideal candidate for the divided diocese. In addition to his Irish ethnicity, which stood him in good stead in Portland itself, he had studied at the Grand Seminaire in Montreal, and, like Healy, was fluent in French. Like Howley and O’Brien, Walsh embodied multiple facets of Catholic identity. He possessed a strong American patriotism, particularly during the First World War, as

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165 O’Connell, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, 30, 32.
169 Later in his life, Walsh was a strong proponent of the “Americanist” school of United States’ Catholicism, which “sought to accommodate their Church to American circumstances, and viewed the American Catholic Church as the model for the future Church worldwide.” The Bishop sat on the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Council, a lobbying organization that aimed to secure and advance the position of Catholicism in the postwar United States. This position put Walsh in a bitter feud with the ultramontane Cardinal O’Connell in the early-1920s, which lasted until the former’s death in 1924. See Douglas J. Slawson, *Ambition and Arrogance: Cardinal William O’Connell of Boston and the American Catholic Church* (San Diego: Cobalt Productions, 2007), ix; 88-91; 147-151.
well as a desire to forge a unified, non-ethnic Catholicism in the face of Ku Klux Klan antagonism in 1923 and 1924, as will be discussed below. At the same time, though, he maintained a strong passion for Ireland, and more than any other individual, his personal leadership and connections to the old country led the ethnic resurgence in Portland in 1920 and 1921.

In April, 1917, as the United States entered the War, Walsh gave a lecture in Portland on Irish history, which concluded with an appeal for young Catholics of Irish descent in the city to become acquainted with the history of their ancestral homeland. For the Bishop, who maintained an interest in historical scholarship, the transmission of ethnicity from one generation to the next was a laudable objective.\(^{170}\) When it came to Portland Catholics engaging with Irish nationalism after the War, Walsh was again a leading figure. Although he was not officially involved in the city’s secular nationalist organizations, the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) and, later, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR), he publicly supported them and used his influential position to forward the cause of Irish independence. For example, in 1920, the FOIF held a rally to support the Irish Republic. The event attracted a massive crowd to City Hall, and although some of Portland’s most influential lay Catholics participated, it was Walsh who presided. A fundraising drive was established, and again Walsh led the way, pledging $1,000 to the cause.\(^{171}\) The Bishop also presided at a second “monster meeting” in April. His speech in favour of Irish independence framed the cause in distinctly American terms, stating that Ireland asked “simply for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”\(^{172}\) Not long after, Walsh

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\(^{172}\) *Evening Express*, April 17, 1920.
toured the state, giving a nationalist lecture in Augusta on May 30th.\textsuperscript{173} The participation and leadership of Portland’s most influential cleric was undoubtedly important in raising local passion for Ireland, particularly amongst the American-born.

Walsh’s personal connections were also significant in attracting and welcoming visiting nationalist speakers to Portland. On the afternoon preceding the April, 1920 monster meeting, Walsh held a luncheon in honour of guest lecturers Judge Daniel F. Cohalan and Lindsay Crawford. Fifty “of the most representative men of Portland” were in attendance.\textsuperscript{174} Later, in August, Walsh travelled to Poland Springs for a meeting with the Irish-Catholic and nationalist senator, David I. Walsh.\textsuperscript{175} In July, 1921, Mary MacSwiney, widow of the deceased nationalist Lord Mayor of Cork who died on a hunger strike protesting British atrocities in Ireland, visited the city. Bishop Walsh met with her to discuss affairs in Ireland, and again held a luncheon enabling her to meet some of Portland’s most prominent citizens.\textsuperscript{176} Finally, near the end of 1921, Reverent Michael O’Flanagan, American vice president of Sinn Fein, arrived as a special guest of the Bishop.\textsuperscript{177} Though he was not a member of any formal nationalist organization, Walsh and his clergy were influential agents in popularizing Irish nationalism in Portland. By framing Ireland’s national question in American terms, he was able to generate interest amongst those born in the United States which might have been otherwise absent. Like his counterparts in St. John’s and Halifax, Walsh’s nationalism shows how a symbolic ethnic identification could be heightened when circumstances in the ancestral homeland became severe. This is characteristic of the “invented” model of ethnicity posited by Kathleen Neils Conzen and others. Much as

\textsuperscript{173}Louis Sebastian Walsh Diaries, May 30, 1920, Archives of the Diocese of Portland (ADP).
\textsuperscript{174}Walsh Diaries, April 11, 1920.
\textsuperscript{175}Walsh Diaries, August 22, 1920.
\textsuperscript{176}Walsh Diaries, July 31; August 8, 1921.
\textsuperscript{177}Portland Press Herald, December 2, 1921.
Howley, O’Brien and other high clergy embraced Irish, imperial, Newfoundland, and Canadian identities, for Louis Sebastian Walsh, Irishness existed comfortably alongside a distinctly Catholic, American patriotism.

Some of Portland’s parish priests assisted their bishop in promoting the Irish nationalist cause in the 1910s and 1920s. The parish priest at St. Dominic’s, for example, Father Martin Clary, was dispatched by Walsh to give nationalist speeches throughout the state in the spring of 1920. Reverend T.H. Houlihan of the Cathedral parish, meanwhile, presided at a rally to meet the Lord Mayor of Cork, Donal J. O’Callaghan, who visited Portland in 1921. Other local clergymen participated in the parade, which included over one-thousand participants, preceding the Mayor’s talk.

As well as playing a leading role in promoting Irish nationalism, some clergymen developed close links with Portland’s secular nationalist associations. Evidence of this relationship may be seen in the Mass books of St. Dominic’s parish, where weekly announcements read to the congregation were recorded. Those from early 1920 through 1921 contained announcements calling on parishioners to attend nationalist meetings, or to donate to fundraising drives. Masses were also held in collaboration with nationalist organizations, such as the Solemn Requiem Mass at the Cathedral following the death of Terence MacSwiney.

The Catholic Church in Portland, therefore, was an important agent in maintaining the connection between an increasingly American-born Irish-Catholic population and their ancestral homeland. With the individual exception of Father O’Sullivan in Halifax, the

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178 Louis Sebastian Walsh Diaries, April 15, 1920.
179 Eastern Argus, August 1, 1921.
180 St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books, February 1, 1920; April 4, 1920, Maine Irish Heritage Center (MIHC).
Portland Church was more closely involved with the affairs of Ireland than was the case in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Nevertheless, the relationship between ethnicity and religion in the New England port was complex, as Catholics of Irish descent were joined by relatively large numbers of non-English speakers. The diocese’s growing diversity was a cause of concern for the clergy before the War. Walsh’s annual report in the *Maine Catholic Historical Magazine* discussed the position of non-English speakers:

> The Italians, Poles, Slavs and Lithuanians are scattered in all parts and often change residence to secure work. The Rev. Pastors are well aware of the danger to their faith by isolation, by contact and perhaps marriage with unbaptized and non-Catholic people, and are urged to give or obtain for them all the blessings of instruction, Holy Mass and the sacraments. Where it is possible, a priest who speaks their language should be invited two or three times a year to visit them.182

Before these comments by Walsh, the Church was developing structures to minister to non-English speaking Catholics in the city of Portland. As early as 1911, the city’s Italians were granted their own parish, St. Peter’s, which was served by Father Anthony Petillo through much of the period studied here.183 Most eastern Europeans were served within the pre-existing English-language parishes of the city. St. Dominic’s, for example, though heavily “Irish” in character, held special confessions for Poles and Lithuanians in 1913.184 Over the next two years, the facilities for non-English speakers continued to improve. Poles were given their own national church, which became St. Louis’ on Danforth Street in 1915, and Bishop Walsh brought Father Sciskalski to work at St. Dominic’s alongside Father Clancy

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183 *Eastern Argus*, October 17, 1914.
184 *St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books*, May 11, 1913.
that same year.\textsuperscript{185} In 1916, Father Norbert Palakins, a Lithuanian priest, arrived from Brooklyn to serve the city’s Lithuanians and Slovaks.\textsuperscript{186}

The impact of this ethnic diversification and the establishment of distinct national parishes on community and identity was complex. In many cases, parishes such as St. Peter’s and St. Louis’ would have served to enhance ethnic divisions already reinforced in working-class milieus such as the Portland waterfront.\textsuperscript{187} As noted by Jay Dolan in his history of American Catholicism, Italian, French, and other non-English speakers were often not welcome in “Irish” parishes, and because of this, coupled with the obvious linguistic divide, they tended to establish their own.\textsuperscript{188} Because they were the focal point of Catholic “community,” the separation of Portland’s parishes into distinct, ethno-linguistic entities could well have helped sustain separate, Irish identities, even for those born in the United States.

At the same time, heavily Irish parishes like St. Dominic’s continued to incorporate non-English speakers until very late in the period, so it is certain that on many occasions, Irish, Polish, Lithuanian, and even Italian Catholics would have worshipped together, and worked alongside one another in non-ethnic parish sodalities. One of the central arguments of Timothy Meagher’s study of Irish ethnicity in Worcester, Massachusetts, is that after 1900, a pan-ethnic, American-Catholic identity was emerging.\textsuperscript{189} In that city, particularly amongst the American-born, all of whom spoke English, Catholics of different ethnic backgrounds were mixing in formerly “Irish” parishes. Such trends, coupled with a general

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{185} \textit{Eastern Argus}, July 9, 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{186} \textit{Walsh Diaries}, May 19, 1916.
\item \textsuperscript{187} See Michael C. Connolly, \textit{Seated by the Sea: The Maritime History of Portland, Maine, and its Irish Longshoremen} (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2010), 96.
\item \textsuperscript{188} Dolan, \textit{The American Catholic Experience}, 179. See also Deirdre M. Moloney, \textit{American Catholic Lay Groups and Transatlantic Social Reform in the Progressive Era} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 35-36.
\item \textsuperscript{189} Meagher, \textit{Inventing Irish America}, 273; 289.
\end{itemize}
anti-Catholicism that was being articulated through organizations like the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, fostered a militant, pan-ethnic Catholicism. There is some evidence to suggest that similar processes were underway in Portland. It is certain that Catholics sodalities, as well as, for men, non-ethnic associations such as the Knights of Columbus, brought those of different ethnic backgrounds together, with a common, shared sense of Catholic identity. A general, non-ethnic solidarity was further reinforced on an annual basis when Portland’s Catholic men, regardless of origin, paraded together in honour of the Holy Name. This procession could attract more than two-thousand individuals, and in the absence of St. Patrick’s Day parades, served as the only major public display by the city’s Catholics. It was an expression of Catholic solidarity independent of ethnicity.

The Church and its leaders were also keen to foster a sense of American patriotism and loyalty amongst the city’s Catholics. This process was similar to the Newfoundland, Canadian and imperial patriotism espoused by the Churches of St. John’s and Halifax, and, as in those examples, American identity was most obviously displayed during the First World War. Following America’s entry into the conflict, Bishop Walsh was quick to remind the city’s Catholics that “devotion to Church and country [were] synonymous.” Special Masses were held to mark Patriot’s Day, and Walsh also reminded congregations that it was their “solemn duty” to buy Liberty Bonds, even going so far as to personally loan money to poor families to facilitate purchase. Some months later, Father Houlihan gave a passionate address calling on the city’s Catholic men to volunteer for service in Europe. Clearly, Walsh and his clergy were keen to instill a sense of American loyalty within the Catholic

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190 Ibid., 340-343.
192 Eastern Argus, April 7, 1917.
194 Eastern Argus, June 4, 1917.
community, perhaps to enhance their respectability in the eyes of the Yankee establishment. In the early 1920s, Walsh and the Catholic clergy again called for unity in the face of heightened anti-Catholicism in the state, epitomized by the drastic growth of the Ku Klux Klan. The basis for this unity was an overt Americanism, which some ethnic groups, such as the Franco-Americans of Lewiston and Biddeford, staunchly resisted. When faced with accusations of hyphenated Americanism and disloyalty, Walsh and his clergy actively promoted Maine Catholics’ American identity in 1923 and 1924. Nevertheless, many of these same clergymen were preaching the more ethnically insular message of Irish nationalism in 1920 and 1921.

The system for educating the young Catholics of Portland differed from both St. John’s and Halifax. As in many other American centres, there was no public funding for Catholic schools. The establishment of independent, parochial schools administered and funded by the Church was a key priority for American bishops, who, in the mid-nineteenth century, deemed the nation’s public schools as “heretical and infidel.” In Portland, as in many other locales, Church-run schools operated independently of government inspection and funding.

In the early 1880s, there were only three parochial schools in the city: St. Dominic’s, which was founded in 1865; the Kavanagh School, attached to the Cathedral parish, founded 1876 and administered by the Sisters of Mercy; and the Mercy convent itself. The nuns had come to Portland in 1873, when the French-Canadian Sisters of Notre Dame were

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195 Mark Paul Richard, “‘This is Not a Catholic Nation’: The Ku Klux Klan Confronts Franco-Americans in Maine,” *The New England Quarterly* 82.2 (2009): 302. In his broader study of Franco-American identity in Lewiston, Mark Paul Richard has argued that Walsh’s push for Americanization within the Church was staunchly resisted by those of French-Canadian birth and descent, and if anything, served to promote ethnic retention. See Mark Paul Richard, *Loyal But French: The Negotiation of Identity by French-Canadian Descendants in the United States* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2008), 125; 140-146.
recalled to Canada. Their presence reinforced the Irish character of Maine’s English-speaking Catholics, as the nuns served the city of Portland itself, and other areas where those of Irish birth and descent predominated, while French orders continued to work elsewhere in the state. The Sisters of Mercy worked at most of Portland’s parochial schools, with thirty-three nuns teaching in the city by 1880, serving approximately one-thousand students. The facilities for Catholic education developed considerably between the 1880s and the 1920s. Schools were opened in the new Sacred Heart parish, in Deering and, in 1909, the Catholic Institute for Boys and the Catholic Girls’ High School, located at the Kavanagh School, were established.

More than any other bishop who served Portland, Bishop Walsh was “by training, temperament and inclination an educator.” He was an advocate for parochial education, describing the state schools in the pages of his Maine Catholic Historical Magazine as “Godless surroundings, where false history, Godless science and false philosophy implant their poisonous seeds deeply and surely in the youthful mind.” It was the duty of all Catholic parents, therefore, to ensure that their children attended Church-run schools. One of the great political debates of his episcopate was over public funding for parochial education. The public school board in Portland was granted money by the state legislature based on the number of pupils who studied in the city. Like several other towns in Maine, the local board did not submit the number of students attending public school, but rather the total number of school-aged children who resided in Portland. Catholic youths attending parochial schools

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199 Ibid., 229.  
201 Maine Catholic Historical Magazine 4.6 (June, 1915): 5-6.  
were included, and therefore earned the board a significant sum of money, which was then reinvested into the public schools alone. Walsh saw the injustice of the system, and between 1912 and 1916, he vehemently argued that a portion of the city’s grant be given to the parochial schools.\footnote{Lucey, \textit{The Catholic Church in Maine}, 307-308.} In both the local press, and in the \textit{Maine Catholic Historical Magazine}, he argued that Catholic schools saved the state over $400,000 per year, and were therefore worthy of public funding.\footnote{Eastern Argus, June 21, 1913; \textit{Maine Catholic Historical Magazine} 3.5 (November, 1914): 28; “Educational Stats for Portland Schools,” \textit{Maine Catholic Historical Magazine} 6.4 (April, 1916).} Ultimately, though, the Bishop’s fight was unsuccessful, as state and local authorities were never willing to grant public funds to parochial education.\footnote{Lucey, \textit{The Catholic Church in Maine}, 311.}

We may only speculate as to what impact Catholic education in Portland had on the ethnic identities of the American-born Irish, as little data on curricula have survived. Although some parochial schools in the United States did teach Irish content,\footnote{Dolan, \textit{The American Catholic Experience}, 292.} there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case in Portland. The Sisters of Mercy may have provided an indirect link to Ireland, but by the twentieth century, most nuns would have been American-born. It is far more likely that, as in Halifax, Portland’s parochial schools were devoted to producing devout, American Catholics. They almost certainly emphasized American patriotism, especially after Walsh called on his teachers to follow the state superintendent of education’s program as closely as possible – with the obvious exception of religious education – in order to bolster his argument for public funding.\footnote{Lucey, \textit{The Catholic Church in Maine}, 309.} Although distinct Catholic identities were sustained, young American-born Catholics seldom learned of their ethnic origins in school.

We are left, therefore, with a complex and somewhat ambiguous portrait of Catholic identity in Portland. More than in St. John’s or Halifax, the Church in Portland led popular
engagement with Irish nationalism in the twentieth century. Parishes, meanwhile, were
divided along ethno-linguistic lines, and this could often have served to solidify pre-existing
ethnic divisions within Portland Catholicism. Nevertheless, a unified, Catholic identity was
likely beginning to emerge in the city, and the Church was, first and foremost, American. An
Irish connection was maintained, however, and from the 1880s to the 1920s, Catholic
networks in Portland, like those in St. John’s and Halifax, served to reinforce the bond of
those of Irish birth and descent to their ancestral homeland.

**Conclusion**

The relationship between ethnicity and religion was complex in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. Generally, the Church in each port fostered distinct identities as Roman Catholics more directly than Irish ethnic ones. In all three cases, though, clerical networks helped sustain popular engagement with affairs in Ireland throughout this period. In St. John’s, where the origins of the Church were almost exclusively Irish, a small number of Irish-born priests as well as proud Irish-Newfoundlanders like Archbishop Howley allowed it to retain its ethnic character. What sets Newfoundland’s chief port aside from Halifax and Portland was the presence of Irish teaching orders, particularly the Christian Brothers of Ireland. Their presence not only ensured a direct and continuing connection between the native Catholics of Newfoundland and Ireland, but also ensured that many boys in St. John’s were exposed to Irish culture, politics, and history. Judging by the words of Brother Slattery and the passionate testimony of the pupils of St. Bonaventure’s College, the Brothers had a profound role in sustaining and reinventing Irish identities amongst Newfoundland-born Catholics. As in St. John’s, individual Irish-born clerics and interested Irish Canadians sustained transatlantic networks within the Halifax Church. Even more than in St. John’s,
though, the local hierarchy adopted a North American focus. Epitomized by Catholic education in the city, the *modus vivendi* of the local Church was Canadian, not Irish. Portland presents a complex, and somewhat contradictory example when it comes to Catholic identity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In an ethnically-plural environment, a mostly Irish-American clergy, led by Bishop Walsh, promoted American loyalty and a pan-ethnic Catholicism at almost the exact same time that they took a leading, public role in advancing the cause of Irish independence in the city. Despite Walsh’s American outlook, his Church and clergy maintained some of the most direct connections to the old country observed in the three ports.

The ways in which Catholicism influenced ethnicity varied over time and space. The most significant conclusion to draw from this discussion, though, is that ethnic, religious, and national identities overlapped comfortably for many Catholics of Irish descent. Typified by figures such as Archbishop Howley, strong identifications as Catholics, loyalty to one’s place of birth, and to the British Empire did not preclude a romantic, symbolic identification with Ireland. In various ways, the networks and personnel of the Church helped sustain an invented, inter-generational mode of ethnicity for those of Irish descent in the three cities. Ethnoreligion was a mainstay of community and identity, and one of the principal spheres in which it became a factor was in local politics: the subject of chapter four.
Chapter Four

Irish Catholics and Domestic Politics

For some social theorists, the most significant aspect of ethnicity is its use in securing political power and patronage for a community.¹ A comparison of Irish-Catholic politics in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland is therefore a valuable exercise, as it can lead to hypotheses regarding the strength and depth of Irish identity in each locality, and clarify the complex relationship between class, religion, and ethnic identity. Moreover, it can reveal how ethnicity was employed as a political tool in three very different sets of circumstances: in St. John’s, where Catholics of Irish descent made up a majority of the city’s population; in Halifax, where they were a strong minority; and in Portland, where the Irish were a much smaller, more isolated group within a predominantly Yankee-Protestant municipality.²

The focus of this chapter is on how, if at all, Irish-Catholic ethnicity became a distinct factor in local, regional, and national politics. Did Catholics of Irish birth or descent vote as blocs for specific candidates or parties, and, if so, how did this communal commitment change over time? Were Catholic candidates successful? Did election campaigns and political discourse contain identifiably Irish markers? To what extent did the Irish Question become a matter of local significance, or were events in Ireland used as an allegory to inform domestic debates? The answers to these questions remind us that communal and individual Irish identities did not exist in isolation. I argue that, in all three cities, “Irishness” in politics was almost always subservient to class and religion. Occasionally, however, there were

² See Chapter One.
flashpoints, and as a result of circumstances in both old world and new, it became highly significant. As suggested by Alan O’Day’s concept of “mutative ethnicity,” within diasporic communities politics did contain ethnic elements, but these were fleeting and highly dependent on local circumstances. Political campaigns in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland were not affected by strong, self-contained Irish ethnic groups. When ethnicity did find its way into domestic debates, it was usually employed as a short-term tool to win support for a particular party, candidate or issue. This loose, variable relationship between Irishness and politics supports the more general argument that, although an attachment to the old country was strong for many, Irish ethnicity in all three cities tended to be romantic and symbolic rather than part of a day-to-day struggle for political and economic resources.

The discussion here is divided into two broad sections. The first compares patterns of Irish-Catholic political support in the three cities, as well as the success of those of Irish descent in local, regional, and national elections. The chapter’s second part analyzes the Irish Question as it pertained to local politics. Were events in Ireland used as tools by parties to win votes and support, or as allegories to explain and understand domestic issues? These sections should provide a comprehensive overview of Catholic politics and ethnicity, as well as the overall strength and depth of Irish identity in the three cities.

4.1 Catholics, the Irish and ethnoreligious politics in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland

Owing to the nature of Newfoundland settlement, with the overwhelming majority of Catholics being of Irish descent, the first task in understanding Irish political behaviour in St. John’s must be an analysis of how and when sectarian divisions between Irish Catholics and

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Anglo Protestants appeared in domestic politics, and the extent to which such tensions took on distinctly ethnic dimensions. Earlier generations of political historians used the terms “Irish” and “Catholic” more or less interchangeably, but this pre-supposes a degree of ethnic awareness that, for many, may not have existed.\(^4\) By establishing the nature of religious cleavages that existed in local politics, we may then move on to a more nuanced analysis of the relationship between ethnicity and religion.

There is absolutely no doubt that Catholic Newfoundlanders were fully integrated into political processes by the late-nineteenth century, and indeed from the formative phase of organized politics in the colony. Waterford’s Patrick Morris, for example, together with the Scottish-born William Carson, led the agitation for representative government in the 1820s, the Kent-Fleming faction struggled to control it in the 1830s and 1840s, while Prince Edward Island native Philip Francis Little was elected as the colony’s first Prime Minister following the granting of responsible government in 1855.\(^5\) Owing to their large population—a majority within the city of St. John’s, and a significant minority in the whole colony, “Irish Catholic votes were aggressively courted by Catholic politicians, [...] and their support determined the outcome of elections.”\(^6\) In the mid-nineteenth century, those who had supported electoral reform and responsible government, including the vast majority of Catholics, coalesced into the Liberal Party, and were opposed by the mostly-Protestant


\(^6\) Carolyn Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010), 292.
Conservatives. Throughout most of the century, thanks to its high Catholic population, the city of St. John’s remained staunchly Liberal. With three seats available in each of the two urban electoral districts, St. John’s East and West, the Catholics of the city held significant political influence in colonial matters. The district of St. John’s East was described in the 1880s as “the most powerful Catholic constituency on the island,” and, according to the research of Melvin Baker, of the fifty-six men elected from the two urban ridings between 1832 and 1921, forty-three were Catholic. Following a particularly sectarianized campaign in the 1860s, a denominational compromise developed in which both Catholics and Protestants would sit together on the executive. As a result, religious divisions became less influential in Newfoundland politics, and according to Patrick O’Flaherty, after the 1860s, the “spectre of sectarianism [...] was for the moment quietly inured.”

By the 1880s, the old Liberal-Conservative party system was breaking down. Class divisions and new economic issues such as resource development and the railway came to dominate political proceedings. Parties were “mere ad-hoc creations” and “cabals,” recruited from a “narrow political elite.” In the middle of the decade, however, events took place which reintroduced O’Flaherty’s “sectarian spectre” into the politics of Newfoundland. On December 26th, 1883, in the Conception Bay community of Harbour Grace, a group of Orange marchers attempted to pass through the Catholic settlement of Riverhead. A Catholic

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8 *Evening Telegram*, January 2, 1886.
crowd met them, and the confrontation became violent, leaving five dead. The political fallout from the Harbour Grace Affray was considerable. Following the controversial acquittal of several Catholics in the ensuing trials, a motion was made in the House of Assembly condemning the verdict as a miscarriage of justice. The Liberal Prime Minister, William Whiteway, who was supported by a pro-railway, pro-development interdenominational coalition, attempted to tone down the language of the resolution, but it passed with the support of virtually every Protestant member of the House. Whiteway’s Catholic supporters abandoned him, and the colony’s Protestant politicians coalesced into the “Reform Party,” led by Orangeman Sir Robert Thorburn. The 1885 election campaign was bitterly sectarian, with the Reformers promising “no amalgamation” with Catholics.

The political division between Protestants and Catholics was not total, as the Liberal-Protestant editor of the Evening Telegram denounced the sectarian nature of the Reform journal, the Evening Mercury, which labelled itself “the organ of the Protestant people,” and the Liberal opposition as “the Roman Catholic Party.” The Orange Order responded to the non-sectarian Telegram by releasing a circular condemning that paper and its editor for supporting a political compromise which would “give the Roman Catholics a measure of political power.” As the Orangemen and the Mercury appealed for Protestant unity, the Catholic-edited Terra Nova Advocate, while at one point noting that Catholic hostility in the colony was specifically directed towards the Orange Order rather than the broader Protestant population, eventually endorsed the sectarian cleavage in politics, calling on Catholic voters of St. John’s to unite and return Catholic candidates in Catholic districts: “[The Protestants]

14 O’Flaherty, Lost Country, 155.
15 Ibid.
16 See for example Evening Telegram, July 5; August 5, 1884; March 28, 1885.
17 Evening Telegram, December 4, 1884.
have so deeply insulted every Catholic in the Island as to render it impossible for us to accept a Protestant for any district in which we have power to elect a member.”

As the election approached, the *Telegram* continued to preach against the evils of religious divisions in Newfoundland politics. One letter to the editor, signed “A Protestant,” maintained that “such a sectarian feeling in the country cannot fail, in the very nature of our social, political and religious constitution, to produce unspeakable injury to the people of this country, in destroying, instead of fostering, genuine sympathy and forbearance among all classes of Christians.” Clearly, although tensions were high, sectarianism did not permeate the entire population. Election results confirmed the Protestant-Catholic or Reform-Liberal divide, but within the government this was short-lived. Despite Thorburn’s promise of “no amalgamation,” by 1887 he had invited Catholics into his executive and the denominational compromise was restored. The resurrection of the “old Irish-Catholic Liberal Party” disintegrated, and the surge in sectarian politics was, for a time, over.

The key question for this study of Irish ethnicity is to determine what, if any, connection existed between Catholic Newfoundlanders’ sense of Irishness and the politico-religious discord which temporarily divided them from most of their Anglo-Protestant neighbours. The answer, at least for St. John’s, is very little. As noted by Willeen Keough, the sectarian rhetoric of the Orange Order reinforced a unified, British-Protestant identity, characterized by the connection between British-imperial ideals of freedom and justice and a radical defence of Protestantism. This was contrasted with Catholicism, an “anathema to

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18 *Terra Nova Advocate*, September 16, 1885; See also May 2, 1885.
19 *Evening Telegram*, July 17, 1885.
freedom.” Only occasionally, though, were the Catholics assigned any ethnic signifiers. One example may be seen in the trials which followed the Affray, where the offending mob was referred to by Protestants as the “Riverhead Fenians.” Such terminology, however, was hardly ever used by the Catholics themselves. Significantly, in the plethora of editorials and letters that followed the Affray and the subsequent sectarianization of Newfoundland politics, the Irish origins of the colony’s Catholics were seldom mentioned. Despite being more politically unified than at any other point during our period, the St. John’s Irish did not express their political solidarity in ethnic terms. The absence of “Irishness” from debates during this period calls into question the nature of the relationship between ethnicity and religion in Newfoundland politics.

After the mid-1880s, overt sectarianism declined in colonial politics, though it rarely disappeared altogether. The election campaign of 1900, which saw Robert Bond’s Liberal administration come to power, included some sectarian elements. Controversy emerged as Michael Francis Howley, the Bishop of St. John’s, publicly called upon the colony’s Catholics to support the Liberals. This drew an angry response from the Orange Order, who staunchly opposed the party. The debate led to accusations from the anti-Bond Daily News that Howley, Bond and the Liberals were to blame for reintroducing sectarianism into domestic politics, and called upon the electorate not to sanction such divisions. In the end, most Catholics appear to have followed the lead of their bishop, and the Liberals were victorious.

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22 Ibid.; See also Keough, “Contested Terrains,” 44; 54-55.
23 One exception was in a bitter debate surrounding a resolution supporting Irish Home Rule in 1886, which will be discussed below.
24 O’Flaherty, Lost Country, 210; Daily News, August 22; September 3, 1900.
Sectarianism was similarly a feature of the 1908 campaign, which was contested by Bond’s Liberals and the new “People’s Party” of St. John’s-Catholic, Edward Patrick Morris, which included the remnants of the old Conservative Party. This tested the political allegiances of the city’s Catholics, as they struggled between supporting the Church-backed Liberals, or one of their own in Morris, who has been described by S.J.R Noel as “the darling of the St. John’s Irish.”

Morris’ religion was also a divisive issue in Protestant outport communities, where voters were reluctant to back a party with a Catholic leader. To compensate, Morris ran a distinctly anti-sectarian campaign, and (wrongly) accused Bond of enhancing religious discord within the colony. On this occasion, the Catholics of Newfoundland went against the wishes of their bishop, and the Liberal defeat may be “reasonably ascribed to a Catholic ‘bloc vote’ for the People’s Party.”

Sectarianism continued to be a factor in Newfoundland politics after the First World War. It was closely related to the supremacy of class-based politics, epitomized by the Fisherman’s Protective Union (FPU), which held its power base within the mostly-Protestant fishing communities of the island’s northeast coast, as well as by the St. John’s-based Newfoundland Industrial Workers’ Association (NIWA). The 1919 election was contested by the remnants of Morris’ People’s Party, now led by Catholic Michael Cashin, and the newly-formed “Liberal-Reform Party” of Sir Richard Squires, which involved a coalition with W.F. Coaker’s FPU. This party was opposed by the Catholic Archbishop Edward P. Roche, who viewed the FPU as borderline socialists with close connections to the Orange Order.

The 1919 election campaign ended up being sectarianized, with the vast majority of Catholics supporting Cashin and the People’s Party, while many Protestants supported the

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Squires-Coaker coalition. The Liberal-Reformers were victorious, but of the twenty-three government members elected, not one was Catholic. Of the thirteen opposition members, only two were Protestant. The People’s Party was strong in districts where Catholics formed a majority of the population, with the exception of St. John’s West, where the NIWA candidate split the working-class Catholic vote. Ultimately, the spirit of denominational compromise was maintained, as two Catholics, George Shea and Alexander Campbell, were invited to join the executive as ministers without portfolio.\(^{28}\) The sectarian atmosphere continued into the 1920s, exacerbated by the conditions of the postwar recession.\(^{29}\) As will be discussed in chapter six, the sectarianism of the 1920s took on distinctly ethnic dimensions through the Self-Determination for Ireland League and the strong opposition to Irish self-government by the Orange Order, but in the arena of politics, identifiably ethnic questions seldom emerged, as election rhetoric continued to focus on the devotional rift between Catholics and Protestants. At the end of the period, as in the 1880s, sectarianism and religious divisions could still be used to mobilize blocs of voters, though many political commentators continued to loathe the “sectarian bugaboo.”

Only on rare occasions were such references to Catholic voters abandoned in favour of ethnic terminology. In 1890, the *Evening Herald* attempted to derail the *Telegram’s* efforts to win “the Irish vote” by arguing that the journal’s editors were decidedly anti-Irish and anti-Catholic, particularly in their attitudes on Home Rule. The editor of the *Herald* expressed confidence that “Irishmen and Irishmen’s sons [would not] fail to see that the organ of the present government is trying to throw dust in their eyes.”\(^{30}\) Three years later, it was the *Telegram* that was accusing opposition parties of attempting to gain ethnic votes by

\(^{28}\) Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 143-144. See also O’Flaherty, *Lost Country*, 299.

\(^{29}\) Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 153.

\(^{30}\) *Evening Herald*, October 4, 1890.
highlighting the unity of “the rose, the thistle and the shamrock” within its ranks. The
*Telegram*’s editor pointed out that the “shamrock” was represented by Belfast’s Moses
Monroe, and although it did not note his Protestant religion explicitly, focusing instead on his
abilities as a politician, the piece concluded by noting “the indignation with which every
true-hearted Irishman in the colony will spurn and resent Mr. Monroe’s pretentions.”31 Such
instances of ethnicity finding its way into local debates were rare, and had little bearing on
Newfoundland politics. Even when circumstances united the colony’s Catholics behind a
particular party or candidate, their ethnic origins were seldom a feature, as appeals were
almost always aimed at the “Catholic” voters of Newfoundland.

As Irish-Catholic Newfoundlanders continued to achieve success in colonial politics,
the St. John’s municipal council provided new avenues for advancement. While those elected
to the colonial assembly tended to come from an elite class of merchants, lawyers and
physicians, local politics in St. John’s provided opportunities for lower-class Catholics to
forge public careers. Municipal politics in the city, however, was in its infancy during this
period. The council was only established in 1888 – up to that point, city affairs had been the
responsibility of the colonial House of Assembly, who delegated aspects of its administration
to an appointed board of works. St. John’s was, in fact, not officially incorporated until 1921.

The mid-1880s saw increased agitation for local government. The city had,
essentially, outgrown the old system of government, exemplified by its inability to organize
the installation of a new sewer system. The establishment of a municipal council was
delayed, however, as the legislature wrangled over how many members should be elected
versus how many should be appointed in order to safeguard the interest of the wealthy Water

31 *Evening Telegram*, June 10, 1893.
Street merchants. There is some suggestion, moreover, that the power which would be afforded to the city’s Catholics, especially those of the working class, by a popularly elected council was a concern for the Anglo-Protestant elite. The Colonist, a strong advocate of municipal government for St. John’s, noted in an editorial that “some distrustful persons” objected to the measure due to a fear “that we would have Catholic domination in city affairs.” The editor condemned such “deep sectarian feeling,” noting that the bitter atmosphere which had dominated colonial politics throughout 1885 was fading, and that the city’s Irish Catholics were “the most tolerant of all races,” as evidenced by their record of electing Liberal-Protestant representatives, both in St. John’s as well as in Ireland. Such misgivings appear to have been few, however, and had little impact on the legislature’s debates. A council was finally granted in 1888, consisting of five elected members and two appointees.

From its inception, Catholics – particularly those of the working classes – were well-represented on the council. The 1888 elected body, for example, consisted of three Catholics and two Protestants. Catholic representatives included John Carrell, a carriage builder; Michael Power, a master cooper; and Francis St. John, a baker. The Protestants, by contrast, were prominent colonial politicians and members of Thorburn’s government. Scottish- Presbyterian W.D. Morrison was joined by one of the city’s few prominent Irish Protestant, Moses Monroe. The two appointees chosen to represent the wealthy Water Street merchants reflected the system of denominational compromise, as Protestant James Goodfellow was joined by Catholic James Fox. An examination of the council’s members confirms that the

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33 Colonist, July 20, 1886.
35 Ibid.
city’s Catholics continued to have a prominent role in municipal affairs. Based on the biographical database compiled by Melvin Baker, between 1888 and 1921, twenty-eight out of fifty-seven members, or just under 50%, of municipal councillors or commissioners were Roman Catholics.\(^{36}\)

Although they achieved significant representation on the council, municipal politics in St. John’s was by no means “ethnic.” Despite the misgivings of a small number of Anglo-Protestants in the 1880s, the Irish Catholics of the town did not band together to control its affairs. Instead, class divisions dominated the council, and often pitted Catholic representatives against one another. The best example of such a conflict was between George Shea, a Bondite Liberal who served as the city’s first mayor from 1902 to 1906, as well as a minister in the Bond and, later, Sir Richard Squires’ governments. He was opposed by Michael P. Gibbs, a labour candidate, closely involved with the Longshoremen’s Protective Union who would eventually become a minister in E.P. Morris’ People’s Party administration, and also one of the city’s foremost Irish nationalists. The two came head to head in the 1906 municipal election with Gibbs, though a Christian-Brothers educated lawyer, presenting himself as a friend of the working man who would strive to improve conditions in the city’s tenements. The strategy was successful, as Gibbs defeated Shea by over one-thousand votes. For both men, their success in municipal politics set them up for long careers in the colonial legislature, though almost always on opposing sides.\(^{37}\) Catholics of Irish descent, therefore, achieved notable representation in municipal politics. A system of ethnoreligious patronage, as seen in some American cities with large Irish populations, however, simply did not exist.


One of the central arguments of this dissertation is that for many Catholics of Irish descent, a symbolic or romantic attachment to their ancestral homeland existed comfortably alongside class, gender, religious, and national identities. In nineteenth-century St. John’s, however, there is some evidence to suggest that ethnicity, religion, and nationality did not always meld easily together. Political debates from the mid-to-late 1800s occasionally demonstrated a tension between those who advocated a distinct, Newfoundland patriotism limited to those born in the colony, versus a more inclusive, potentially hyphenated identity which included those born abroad. Even as the percentage of individuals born outside the island dwindled, the cry of “Newfoundland for Newfoundlanders” continued to be repeated until well into the twentieth century. Nevertheless, debates in the local press provide some clear evidence as to how Irish identities were understood and contested during this period.

As studies by Carolyn Lambert and John FitzGerald have shown, a distinct, native-born Newfoundland patriotism was present in domestic politics from the 1840s. It was this decade which saw the establishment of the Newfoundland Natives’ Society (NNS), which brought together both Catholics and Protestants and represented “a key evolutionary phase of Newfoundland-Catholic identity.”38 The significant Catholic participation in the society created “conflicting conceptions of Irish ethnicity,” and represented a significant threat in some political circles, as the movement threatened to factionalize the Irish-dominated Liberal Party.39 Because of this, the NNS was opposed by Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming and the Catholic hierarchy in the early-1840s. The society died out in the 1860s, but the spirit of a

38 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 255. See also John FitzGerald, “Conflict and Culture in Irish-Newfoundland Roman Catholicism, 1829-1850,” (PhD Diss., University of Ottawa, 1997), 365-378; 411.
39 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 276-278.
non-ethnic, non-religious Newfoundland patriotism continued until well into the period under investigation here.\textsuperscript{40}

The appeal for Newfoundland for Newfoundlanders was raised in a number of political debates after 1880. In 1883, for example, an argument raged in the local press regarding the appointment of the Irish-born P.J. Kelly as secretary of the St. John’s municipal board of works. The short-lived anti-government publication \textit{Our Country} lamented that a Newfoundland-born resident could not be found for the position, while this attitude drew criticism from the \textit{Evening Mercury}, the \textit{Newfoundlander}, and the \textit{Terra Nova Advocate}, whose editors condemned the “narrow” Newfoundland-for-Newfoundlanders mentality.\textsuperscript{41} Another outburst of native-born patriotism occurred in 1886, following the repeal of Ambrose Shea’s governorship. Shea, who had been one of the colony’s most prominent Catholic politicians in the late-nineteenth century, and represented Newfoundland at the Quebec Conference of 1864, was offered the position of colonial Governor in 1885 – the first native-born individual to be named to the post. When word of his appointment reached St. John’s, however, a campaign to have it repealed began, led by his former political ally, F.B.T. Carter. This agitation was ultimately successful, ostensibly because Shea was not neutral when it came to domestic political issues.\textsuperscript{42} In reality, a number of factors combined to ensure Shea’s position was repealed, but the local press focused on his identity as a native-born Newfoundlander. Shea himself noted a conspiracy against those born in the colony, in addition to a measure of anti-Catholicism, still lingering from the

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\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Our Country}, November 24, 1883; \textit{Evening Mercury}, November 20, 1883; \textit{Terra Nova Advocate}, November 29, 1883; \textit{Newfoundlander}, December 4, 1883.
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fallout of the Harbour Grace Affray, as the reasons for his removal. At no point, though, did ethnicity or any conceptions of “Irishness” enter into the debate.

One of the most concentrated discussions of Newfoundland native identity and the one which is most relevant to a study of ethnicity occurred in 1890. It began with the objections of the Evening Telegram towards the appointment of the Irish-born Joseph Carty as a clerk in the Registry office. This was, in effect, an objection to the patronage practices of the Thorburn government, many of whose members were foreign-born. The Telegram’s perspective drew the ire of the editor of the Colonist, who accused his contemporary of anti-Irishness and anti-Catholicism. The Telegram vehemently denied this charge, and suggested that a romantic, ethnic affiliation to their forefather’s homeland should not prevent Newfoundland-born Catholics from opposing the appointment of foreigners to political offices:

As for Ireland, most certainly the natives of this country, in particular the Roman Catholic natives, have shown the strongest sympathy for that unhappy land. But it is not because we feel grateful to the mother countries from which we are sprung that we are going to allow half-a-dozen immigrants from those countries (or from their colonies) to tyrannize over us [...].

An earlier correspondent to the paper noted that those born in the colony “will naturally care more about Newfoundland than about the countries from which they or their fathers are descended.” Clearly, the Newfoundland-nationalist Telegram and its supporters perceived a significant disconnect between the symbolic, ethnic affiliation to Ireland held by many native-born Catholics, and a form of ethnic patronage which could see Newfoundlander
denied jobs. To support remote old-world causes such as Irish Home Rule was perfectly acceptable, but to support a system in which “Irish Catholics [were] imported into Newfoundland to take the place of natives” was wrong.46

The debate resurfaced in the autumn, in advance of a St. John’s East by-election. A letter to the editor of the Colonist, signed “Irishman’s Son,” equated the Telegram’s pro-native perspective with anti-Catholicism, as so many of the colony’s priests were Irish-born. The Telegram’s response, which took the form of a letter signed “fifty years ago,” attempted to tone down the nativist rhetoric by suggesting that the crusade was not aimed at all those of Irish birth, but more specifically at the Irish-born members of the Reform Party – Maurice Fenelon of Carlow, Michael Carty, who was born in Sligo but came to Newfoundland as a boy, and Belfast’s Moses Monroe. Irishman’s Son continued the attack in a series of subsequent letters, arguing that the nativist perspective was insulting to all those of Irish descent, and concluded with the poignant suggestion that he “was neither a native or an Irishman,” – he was both.47

Although the above exchange was highly politicized, and in the end reflected a fairly weak attempt by the Telegram to win votes through an exclusive Newfoundland patriotism – the Evening Herald in fact referred to the whole debate as the “fight for the Irish vote”48 – the language of the debates does demonstrate how inter-generational identities could be contested. The Telegram’s suggestion that Catholic voters reject a foreign-born candidate drew a furious response from a second-generation Irish Catholic, who decried the separation of Irish- and native-born identities whilst upholding a strong sense of Newfoundland

46 Terra Nova Advocate, April 19, 1890.
47 Evening Telegram, October 13, 1890; Colonist, October 11; October 14; October 20; November 11, 1890.
48 Evening Herald, October 4, 1890.
nationality. The intrusion of ethnicity into domestic politics was rare after 1880, but it was still capable of generating passionate debate. Nevertheless, it was only in isolated cases that “Irishness” became a salient topic of political discussion. For the Catholics of St. John’s, at least in the arena of politics, class, and religious identities were far more significant than ethnic ones. Rather than being a powerful political tool to mobilize the Catholic electorate, the ethnic affiliation to Ireland remained largely symbolic in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

Compared to St. John’s, political discussions and debates in Halifax generally involved fewer instances of sectarianism. Part of the reason for this was a well-worked denominational compromise, often referred to as the “unwritten law,” whereby “one candidate on each Dominion ticket, and one on each local ticket in Halifax County shall be Roman Catholic.” 49 The system continued until well into the twentieth century, and ensured “a fair division of political patronage” between the two denominations, so that “no man was discriminated against because of his religion.” 50 The unwritten law undoubtedly reduced ethnoreligious tensions within the city, but it also made Irish-Catholic voters less politically united than in either St. John’s or Portland, as neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives could offer a monopoly on patronage positions to Catholic supporters. Those of Irish descent in Halifax, therefore, were closely involved with each party.

As in Newfoundland, Catholics of Irish birth and descent generally found themselves allied with the Liberal Party in the pre-confederation era of Nova Scotian politics. In the 1850s, however, a rift emerged between Liberal leader Joseph Howe and his Irish supporters. The renowned imperialist politician travelled to the United States in 1854 to illegally gain

49 Morning Chronicle, May 31, 1882.
50 Halifax Herald, August 27, 1908.
recruits for the British military in the Crimean War. His efforts were exposed by the Halifax-Irish press, which led to a well-publicized anti-Irish diatribe by Howe. At the 1857 legislative session his Catholic supporters deserted him, and voters of Irish descent solidly backed the Conservatives in the election of 1859. Debates over Canadian Confederation in the 1860s enhanced this ethnoreligious divide, as Nova Scotian politics became split between pro-Confederate and anti-Confederate factions. The Archbishop of Halifax, Thomas L. Connolly, was an ardent supporter of Confederation, and his influence brought many Catholics on side. The 1867 election was effectively a referendum on Confederation, and within the city of Halifax, Connolly’s influence and the large population of Catholics in the city allowed the Confederates to carry the urban seats, but the province as a whole rallied behind Howe and the antis. The results set the tone of Nova Scotian politics for almost a century, as anti-Confederate Tories deserted their party, allowing the Liberals to dominate politics in the province until the mid-twentieth century. Howe’s acceptance of a federal cabinet position in 1869 pacified the anti-Confederates, and once again brought many Irish Catholics back into the Liberal fold, making them “a basic core” of the party once more. From the 1880s to the 1920s, therefore, a period of near-total Liberal domination, at least within the sphere of provincial politics, Catholics of Irish descent could be found supporting both major parties. Social class and issues such as resource and railway development were far more pertinent and divisive than ethnicity or religion.

Owing to the non-sectarian nature of local politics, a number of Halifax’s most prominent Catholics managed to forge noteworthy political careers, and perhaps the most

53 Ibid., 171.
successful of these was Thomas Edward Kenny. The son of the Kerry-born merchant Edward, Thomas rose to become senior partner in his father’s dry goods firm in the 1870s. His business interests expanded during the 1880s, as he became a director of the Halifax-based Nova Scotian Sugar Refinery Ltd., in addition to the Nova Scotia Cotton Manufacturing Company, and it was during this decade that Kenny became active in politics. A Conservative Confederate and supporter of John A Macdonald’s National Policy, Kenny successfully ran to succeed his brother-in-law, fellow Catholic-Conservative Malachy Bowes Daly, as one of the county’s two federal representatives in 1887. As will be discussed below, Kenny’s campaign in part focused on his ethnicity and his support for Irish Home Rule. Following his election, he served two terms in Ottawa. According to David A. Sutherland, Kenny “generally restricted his comments to issues of immediate interest to Halifax such as the improvement of terminal facilities of the Intercolonial Railway and the introduction of modern steamship service linking Nova Scotia to Europe,” though in 1887 he was also an advocate for Irish Home Rule within the Canadian Parliament. After representing Halifax County for nine years, Kenny was defeated as the riding returned an all-Protestant split ticket in 1896. At the time, his defeat was blamed on neglect of his own district, though Sutherland’s biography points to rural residents of the district who opposed him owing to “dissatisfaction engendered by a quarter-century of distress and depopulation.” Following his withdrawal from politics, Kenny remained one of the city’s wealthiest and most

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55 See Halifax Herald, April 22, 1887.
56 Sutherland, “Thomas Edward Kenny,” 541-542; See also Halifax Herald, June 27, 1896. He ran again in the federal election of 1900, and was defeated. Halifax Herald, November 8, 1900.
prominent businessmen, eventually serving as president of the Merchant’s Bank of Halifax – later the Royal Bank of Canada – until his death in 1908.\(^5^7\)

Kenny was a staunch Conservative and supporter of Canadian Confederation in an era when Nova Scotian politics was again dominated by the possibility of secession, but Halifax’s Irish-Catholic business elite could also be found supporting the pro-repeal Liberal party in the 1880s and 1890s. One such example was Michael Joseph Power, the Halifax-born son of two Irish immigrants, who sat as a Liberal member for Halifax in the provincial House of Assembly from 1882 to 1894. Power had served as a city alderman, representing the mostly working-class Irish-Catholic Ward Four through much of the 1870s, while he also served as President of the Charitable Irish Society in 1875. Unlike Kenny, Power supported the platform of W.S. Fielding, including the ultimately unsuccessful efforts to have Confederation repealed.\(^5^8\) Kenny and Power are examples of two politically successful, second-generation Irish-Catholic businessmen who found themselves on opposite sides of the political spectrum.

Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Catholics of Irish birth or descent continued to achieve political success in both major parties. One of the city’s most prominent, though not overly successful, Conservatives during this period was John Call O’Mullin. Born in Derry in 1857, he came to Halifax with his family as a boy, and eventually became a well-respected lawyer in the city. Throughout his career, O’Mullin remained a proud Irishman, serving as president of the CIS from 1904 to 1909. Before, during, and after his presidency, he consistently pushed the society towards more direct involvement with

\(^5^7\) Sutherland, “Thomas Edward Kenny,” 541-542. See also his obituary, *Halifax Herald*, October 26, 1908.

Irish affairs, and he went on to be vice president of the Self-Determination for Ireland League in 1920.\textsuperscript{59} In addition to becoming one of the city’s most vocal Irish nationalists, O’Mullin was a devout Tory. He was president of the Junior Liberal-Conservative Association, and later became president of the senior branch of that organization. His prominence within the local party was not matched by electoral success during our period, however, as he was unsuccessful in the provincial election of 1911. Beyond the period under investigation here, O’Mullin finally achieved success in being elected to the Canadian House of Commons in 1925.\textsuperscript{60}

On the Liberal side, one of the most interesting politicians of the era, at least for the historian of Irish ethnicity, was James Wilberforce Longley. In the latter years of the nineteenth century, he was one of Nova Scotia’s most powerful Liberals. Following Fielding’s departure for federal politics in 1896, Longley was one of the favourites to succeed him as Premier, though the position was eventually taken up by W.H. Murray. Longley served as the province’s Attorney General until his appointment to the judicial bench in 1905.\textsuperscript{61} He was not a Halifax native, but rather had been born and raised near Annapolis, and he represented that district in the provincial parliament. While living in the city, though, Longley was active in its Irish associations. He was president of the CIS from 1909 to 1912, and later served on the executive of the Self-Determination for Ireland League in 1920. Longley’s biographer referred to him as “warm supporter of Home Rule,” but, interestingly, he was not Catholic. His publicly-expressed ethnicity came from his mother’s

\textsuperscript{59} See Chapter Two; Chapter Six; \textit{Charitable Irish Society (CIS) Minute Book}, Feb 17, 1892; November 12, 1913, Provincial Archives of Nova Scotia (PANS), Charitable Irish Society Fonds, MG 20, Vol. 70.


side. On his father’s, he was descended from New England loyalists. Longley’s love for Ireland represents another example of the potential disconnect between ethnicity and religion, as well as how mixed ethnic backgrounds can complicate Irish identities. It is unfortunate that Longley did not contest a seat in Halifax during this period, as campaign rhetoric could provide fascinating insight into whether the Irish-Catholic electors of the city would have accepted a Protestant supporter of Home Rule as one of their own. Annapolis did not possess the same system of denominational compromise as Halifax, however, so Longley’s ethnicity and religion never became the subject of political discussion.

A number of other Catholics of Irish birth and descent attained prominence in Halifax politics in the early-twentieth century. J.C. O’Mullin’s successful Liberal opponent in the 1911 election was the “left-leaning” Liberal, Robert Emmet Finn. He had first been elected to the provincial assembly in 1906, and held his seat in Halifax until the end of this period. Finn was elected to the federal parliament in 1922, and also served as president of the CIS in 1912 and 1913. Liberal Michael Carney, born in county Waterford, represented the city in the federal House of Commons for one term from 1904 to 1908. Likewise, Peter Francis Martin, whose paternal grandparents were born in Ireland, was a Conservative and mayor of Halifax from 1915 to 1918, and also one of the city’s federal members in the Union Government from 1917 to 1921. Clearly, politicians of Irish-Catholic descent achieved prominent positions in both Liberal and Conservative parties. Although the maintenance of a

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66 Ibid., 226-227.
denominational compromise was highly desirable, political allegiances in Halifax depended on neither ethnicity nor religion.

Politics in Halifax was inherently non-ethnic and non-sectarian, but, as in St. John’s, both religion and “ethnic voting” occasionally found their way into local debates. Despite the denominational compromise, the Catholics of the city did occasionally complain of a lack of representation. An example was observed in 1886, when a correspondent to the *Halifax Herald* complained about the lack of Catholics in Premier W.S. Fielding’s cabinet. The author suggested that “surely Mr. Fielding could find among his Catholic supporters a person competent for such a position,” and hoped that the body could be reorganized in a manner “more acceptable to Catholics.”

Religion also, as noted in chapter three, frequently found its way into questions regarding education, such as during the furore surrounding the Russell Street School Question in 1892.

The most sustained discussion of a religious divide in local politics occurred in the 1890s, when the denominational compromise temporarily broke down, as Halifax voters returned all-Protestant “split tickets.” This occurred in the 1893 provincial election, apparently due to fallout from the controversy over Catholic ownership of the Russell Street parochial school, as Haligonians chose to vote along denominational lines. The federal election campaign in 1896 saw T.E. Kenny and R.L. Borden run for the Conservatives against Liberals Benjamin Russell and the Catholic Michael E. Keefe. For the first time since Confederation, a Liberal and a Conservative – Russell and Borden – were elected to Halifax County’s two federal seats. The mainstream press did not blame Kenny’s surprise defeat on either his ethnicity or his religion, suggesting instead that he had neglected his own district

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67 *Halifax Herald*, June 1, 1886.
while in office.\textsuperscript{69} An exchange of letters between Borden and W.J. Butler, the local Liberal Party chairman, written in advance of the 1897 provincial election and reprinted in the \textit{Herald}, demonstrates the significance of the denominational compromise. The leaders of both parties feared another split-ticket was possible in the three-seat Halifax riding. Butler suggested that in the case of three Protestants being elected, one should resign in favour of a Catholic replacement. Borden essentially agreed with this plan, and elaborated, suggesting that: “In the event of three Protestants being elected, that party which has elected two candidates shall within thirty days of the election cause one of its successful candidates to be retired and the Roman Catholic candidate of the same party shall be elected in his stead by acclamation.” Interestingly, Borden went on to discuss measures to be put in place in the event that Catholics won two of the three available seats, which was deemed just as undesirable as three Protestants: “In the event of two Roman Catholics being elected, that party which has elected a Protestant and a Roman Catholic shall within thirty days cause its successful Catholic candidate to retire and the unsuccessful Protestant candidate of the same party shall be elected by acclamation in his stead.”\textsuperscript{70} Clearly, the well-balanced compromise of two Protestants and one Catholic was important to the city’s political leaders, as it ensured a division of power and patronage roughly proportional to the religious composition of the city, while also ensuring that election rhetoric remained non-sectarian. In the end, the compromise between Borden and Butler was irrelevant, as the Liberals returned all three Halifax candidates, including lawyer and Charitable Irish Society (CIS) president W.B. Wallace.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Halifax Herald}, May 1; May 20; June 24; June 27, 1896.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Halifax Herald}, April 19, 1897.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Halifax Herald}, April 21, 1897.
Only on rare occasions, almost all of which were before 1890, did distinctly “Irish” questions find their way into election rhetoric in Halifax. Scattered references to the city’s “Irish voters” appeared in the columns of local papers in the early 1880s. A letter to the editor of the Herald in 1882, for example, complained that a French Catholic from Arichat, Hyacinth Fuller, was running for the Liberals in the city. The correspondent, who was born in Ireland, was under the impression that “an Irish Catholic should always be elected as one of the representatives for the county of Halifax.” Because of this perceived ethnic betrayal, the author, who signed “Irish Catholic,” was going to vote for the Conservative candidate, Malachy B. Daly.\(^{72}\)

A more in-depth discussion of ethnicity in Halifax politics occurred during the 1887 federal election campaign. Irish identities had been roused by local branches of the Land League and, subsequently, the Irish National League throughout the 1880s. Prominent, public discussions of Irish Home Rule meant that ethnic passions were high. In his campaign, T.E. Kenny attempted to use ethnicity to his advantage by appealing directly to the “Irish voters of Halifax.” During a campaign speech directed at local Catholics, Kenny condemned the Liberal’s attempts to “induce the Irish electors of this city to vote against us.” He played up local Catholics’ interest in their ancestral homeland by characterizing the Nova Scotian Liberals as a party which had “done much to retard the advancement of Home Rule,” and later referred to it as “an enemy of Ireland.”\(^{73}\) On the eve of the election, the Conservative Herald re-issued its call to Irish voters, identifying Kenny as the only acceptable candidate for those interested in the affairs of Ireland.\(^{74}\) Such ethnic appeals were at least partly successful, as Kenny and his Conservative colleague were both elected. Kenny delivered on

\(^{72}\) Halifax Herald, June 9, 1882.  
\(^{73}\) Halifax Herald, February 16, 1887.  
\(^{74}\) Halifax Herald, February 21, 1887.
his promise to support Irish Home Rule, becoming an advocate for the cause in the federal parliament the following spring.\textsuperscript{75} His exploitation of Irish Catholics’ ethnic sentiment in the 1887 campaign was an isolated case, however. It should not be viewed as an example of sustained ethnic politics or of ethnic voting in the city. Rather, it demonstrates the variability of Irish ethnic identity. The Home Rule Question, together with institutions such as the Land League and Irish National League, had inflamed interest in the Irish Question amongst Catholics in the city, as it did throughout the British Empire. The rise in ethnic awareness due to the political circumstances of the ancestral homeland united those of Irish birth and descent, and this provided the Irish-Catholic Kenny with an opportunity to exploit their elevated ethnic feelings. Significantly, in Kenny’s subsequent bids for re-election, distinctly Irish issues were never mentioned.\textsuperscript{76} Ethnic politics in Halifax, like St. John’s, was fleeting – a response to a temporary rise in Irish identities, rather than engagement with a long-term ethnic voting bloc.

Irish-Catholic political life in Portland was characterized by a strong loyalty to the Democratic Party. It reflected trends observed throughout the northeastern United States, as Irish-Americans had long-standing, symbiotic relationships with the party. Kevin Kenny has noted that in antebellum America, the increasing numbers of impoverished Catholic immigrants arriving in the United States in the 1840s and 1850s were welcomed only by two organizations: the Catholic Church and the Democratic Party.\textsuperscript{77} The Republicans were the anti-slavery party, but they also opposed immigration, and the huge influx of poor Catholics did not meld with their vision of a self-sustained workforce motivated by the Protestant

\textsuperscript{75} Halifax Herald, April 22, 1887.
\textsuperscript{76} In 1900, his campaign speeches focused on railway development, economic nationalism and the maintenance of the imperial connection with Britain – a feature motivated by the patriotic response to the South African War shared by both Catholics and Protestants. See Halifax Herald, October 22; October 31, 1900.
work-ethic.\textsuperscript{78} The Democrats, meanwhile, courted Irish voters and provided avenues for social mobility and patronage that were not available elsewhere.\textsuperscript{79} This pre-Civil War relationship was sustained, as Irish Catholics “voted overwhelmingly” Democratic until the 1960s.\textsuperscript{80}

Ethnic politics in the northeastern United States in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was most obvious in cities with large Irish-Catholic populations. In such cases, the Irish were able to dominate municipalities through Democratic machines. New York City’s Tammany Hall remains the best-known example, where up to 15,000 jobs could be distributed to supporters, while Irish-dominated political machines also existed in Albany, Jersey City, and elsewhere. They functioned, in short, by exchanging jobs and financial relief for votes.\textsuperscript{81} In Albany, for example, the Democrats distributed coal and turkeys at Christmas, while being a registered Democrat was a significant advantage in any dealings with the municipal government.\textsuperscript{82}

Cities with smaller Irish-Catholic populations did not develop the same sort of ethnic politics as New York and Albany. In Worcester, Massachusetts, Irish support of the Democrats offered “only meagre rewards, as there was simply not enough patronage to go around.”\textsuperscript{83} In the late-nineteenth century, those of Irish descent allied with elite Yankee-Protestants – mostly merchants and bankers – within the Democratic Party in order to influence domestic politics. Towards the end of the century, the Irish population of Worcester increased dramatically, and the party became more exclusively Irish. By 1901,

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{80} Kenny, \textit{The American Irish}, 82-83.
\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, 209; 213.
\textsuperscript{82} Byron, \textit{The American Irish}, 175-176.
\textsuperscript{83} Timothy J. Meagher, \textit{Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnicity in a New England City, 1880-1928} (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 44.
when Philip O’Connell was elected mayor, Catholics of Irish descent were “powerful enough to run Worcester without Protestant help.” Politics was never truly “ethnic,” at least in a public sense, but the community was still able to exert significant local influence through their widespread support for the Democratic Party.\(^84\)

Many of the patterns observed in other New England cities were repeated in Portland. While the vast majority of Irish-American Catholics supported the Democrats, the city was dominated by Yankee Protestants, most of whom were staunch Republicans. The Democrats were dominant in only two of its nine twentieth-century urban wards – wards two and four, located around the heavily-Irish locales of Munjoy Hill and Gorham’s Corner.\(^85\) The Democrats could count on Irish votes, but unlike in Worcester, the party continued to incorporate a sizeable Yankee element. City-wide electoral success was only possible when local, regional or national trends moved disaffected Republicans to support them. As such, the Irish Catholics of Portland were never in a position where they could control municipal affairs or monopolize political patronage.\(^86\) Those of Irish birth or descent did achieve some political success, though this was generally restricted to wards two and four. At state and federal level, Irish-Catholics rarely thrived. As in St. John’s and Halifax, true ethnic politics did not materialize in Portland during this period.

Despite the lack of a sustained ethnic dimension political discourse in Portland occasionally engaged directly with the Irish, particularly during the 1880s. Throughout this decade, Republican campaigners attempted to win Irish votes from the ranks of the newly-naturalized citizens who were settling in the port. Accusations of Republican coercion

\(^{84}\) *Ibid.*, 146; 239; 289.  
\(^{85}\) See Chapter One.  
appeared in the Democratic *Eastern Argus* in advance of the 1880 election. One letter to the editor decried Republican tactics in the city, noting that “it is a well-known fact that for the last four of six years, from ten to twenty Irish Americans in each of ward of this city – who have always been (and are now) Democrats – have been marched to the polls, sometimes in squads, and have voted the Republican ticket under the supervision of their street bosses.”

The author concluded by re-emphasizing the “well-known fact that that the Irish Americans of Portland, when not under the pressure of circumstances like the above, are almost to a man Democratic.”87 A subsequent letter called on the Republican press to name the apparently growing number of Irish-American supporters in the city, stating that there could be no more than a handful, while another attacked the Irish-American Republican Club as “being composed of people who don’t exist.”88

The state election campaign of 1882 did not possess the same level of ethnic campaigning as in 1880, but appeals were aimed at the Irish from both major parties. The editor of the *Argus* again denounced the efforts of Republicans to win Irish votes, and reminded its readers that the party’s candidate for Governor, Frederick Robie, had been one of the leading anti-Irish Know-Nothings in Portland several decades earlier. He “was now asking Irishmen to vote for him, but no Irishman with any self-respect can give him his vote.”89 The 1884 presidential election, which pitted Maine’s own Republican representative James G. Blaine against Grover Cleveland, again saw the Irish-Catholic vote become a significant campaign issue. Many of America’s most prominent Irish nationalists were calling for Catholics to desert the Democrats, seeing their “unswerving loyalty” as overly

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87 Eastern Argus, August 14, 1880.
88 Eastern Argus, August 25; September 1, 1880.
89 Eastern Argus, September 11, 1882.
passive – both a “symbol and cause” of their relative inferiority in the United States. In response to this national campaign, Democrats in Portland worked hard to characterize Blaine and the Republicans as anti-Irish and anti-Catholic. The Argus calmly asserted that Portland’s Irishmen were not turncoats, and would as a whole remain loyal to the Democratic Party. Much of the ethnicized rhetoric was rendered moot in the final days of the campaign, as an ill-timed anti-Catholic slur by a prominent Republican mobilized Irish-Americans against Blaine, particularly in New York, and this ended up being a crucial aspect of Cleveland’s victory.

Despite the election rhetoric of some Republicans, the fact remains that most Irish Catholics retained their loyalty to the Democrats during this period. Republicans continually attempted to gain Irish votes into the mid-1880s, as Blaine, for example, gave a pro-Home Rule speech in Portland in 1886 when passions regarding that issue were at their highest, but this was dismissed by the Democratic press as mere electioneering. It was the Democrats who made the most direct, concerted efforts to maintain Irish support in Portland. The best example of their efforts was the Irish American Union, founded in 1890 by prominent Catholic Democrats in order to naturalize newly-settled Irish voters. It was also the party which provided the city’s most prominent Catholics with careers in public life. One of the city’s wealthiest Irishmen of the 1880s, Charles McCarthy Jr., was also a leading Democrat.

90 Thomas N. Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott and Company, 1966), 139-141. Much of the Irish-American dissatisfaction with the Democrats was a result of their frustrated efforts to gain more power within its structures. Nationalists were upset with Cleveland’s position on economic tariffs, which would reduce protectionism and flood the United States with British goods. Nationalist newspapers strongly supported the Republican campaign, and as a result many Catholics of Irish descent temporarily shifted their allegiance to that party.

91 *Eastern Argus*, June 25; July 25, 1884.


93 *Eastern Argus*, June 11, 1886.

McCarthy Jr. was born in Ireland in 1834, and settled in Bangor as a boy before coming to Portland in 1855. He became a successful clothing merchant, and was elected to the city’s Common Council from the largely-Irish ward four in 1868, before being elected as an alderman in 1870. During this period, he was also one of the city’s most active Irish nationalists, being closely involved with the Irish National League in the 1880s. In 1884, McCarthy Jr. was chosen as presidential elector at large, a position which demonstrated “the esteem with which he [was] held by the Democrats of the state.” His most ambitious venture into Portland politics, though, was his mayoral candidacy in 1887. The campaign against incumbent Republican mayor Charles J. Chapman focused on railway and economic issues, and at no point did McCarthy’s ethnicity or religion become an item of public debate. Ultimately, however, he was unable to win Republican votes. Chapman carried the election by 3,743 votes to 2,572. Of the city’s seven urban wards at that time, McCarthy Jr. was only able to gain a majority in wards two and four – those with the highest Irish-Catholic populations. It would not be until well into the twentieth century that a candidate of Irish descent would again run for mayor.

By the twentieth century, the American-born generation of Irish Catholics were beginning to achieve political success. Joseph E.F. Connolly, for example, a leading Portland judge, was elected as a ward four alderman in 1901, following a narrow defeat in 1900. He retained his prominent position in the local Democratic Party, and in 1915 rejected appeals that he run for Congress. In 1920, however, Connolly did accept the Democratic mayoral nomination. As was the case with Charles McCarthy Jr.’s 1887 bid, however, he was unable

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95 *Eastern Argus*, February 15, 1887.
96 *Eastern Argus*, February 15, 1887; March 8, 1887; See also McCarthy Jr.’s obituary, *Evening Express*, April 2, 1921.
97 *Eastern Argus*, March 5, 1901.
to win votes from Republican Yankees, and Charles B. Clarke won comfortably. Connolly only gained a majority in wards two, four, and five.99

Away from the realm of municipal politics, perhaps Portland’s most successful Irish-Catholic politician during this period was Edward F. Flaherty. A lawyer, born in Portland in 1875, Flaherty was highly active in the city’s Irish-nationalist and Catholic associations. He served as Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus as well as state president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Flaherty became one of the few Portland-Irish Catholics to achieve success in Maine state politics during this period, when he was elected as a Democratic state representative in 1907, and was subsequently elected to the state senate in 1914 where he served two terms.100

While a significant majority of Portland’s Irish Catholics supported the Democratic Party, there were a few notable exceptions. During the debate over Irish voting patterns in 1884, one correspondent attacked James Cunningham, a successful, Leitrim-born contractor, for his Republican support. Prior to our period, Cunningham had served as a city alderman, and it was at this point, according to the anonymous author, that he “got into bad company” and “has been the companion and tool of the [Republican] ring ever since.” The letter went on to accuse Cunningham of not allowing his Irish-American workers time off to vote, as they were all Democrats, and named him a traitor to the “Irish race.”101 A more active and prominent Catholic-Republican, William H. Looney, was also one of the city’s foremost Irish nationalists. Like Cunningham, Looney, who was Maine State Solicitor—a position that

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99 *Eastern Argus*, December 7, 1920. The campaigns were devoid of any ethnoreligious rhetoric, so it is impossible to determine whether the candidates’ Irishness truly played a role in their defeats.
100 *Portland Sunday Telegram*, January 11, 1925. Thanks to Matthew Jude Barker and the Maine Irish Heritage Center for this reference. See also *Eastern Argus*, September 15, 1914.
no doubt owed much to his Republican allegiance – was frequently attacked as a turncoat by the Democratic press. In 1880, it was Looney who established the Irish American Republican Club, and was ridiculed in the Argus for being its only member. He toured the state that year, attempting to win Irish votes for the Republicans, but met with little success. Following his appointment as state solicitor, Looney served for two terms in the Maine House of Representatives in 1888 and 1890.

Despite these exceptions, most Irish Catholics in Portland were Democrats. On a few occasions, however, the long-standing alliance between the party and the community was tested, usually in response to national trends. We have already noted the example of the 1884 presidential election, when a large proportion of Irish Americans seemed set to support Republican presidential candidate James G. Blaine, only an unfortunate anti-Catholic slur pushed them back into the Democratic fold. Later in our period, the 1916 and 1920 national elections presented a similar dilemma to the Portland Irish. In 1916, the Irish Question was emerging as a significant issue in American national politics. Many Catholics of Irish birth and descent resented Woodrow Wilson’s refusal to make an official declaration regarding the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent execution of its leaders, while others were suspicious of his pronouncements regarding hyphenated Americanism. Two of the country’s leading Irish-American newspapers, the Irish World and the Gaelic American, became increasingly hostile to Wilson and the Democrats, while Republican presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes aggressively campaigned for Irish votes. Although Wilson was

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102 Eastern Argus, August 14; August 25, 1880. See also Eastern Argus, October 20, 1884, when Looney gave a lecture on Republican support amongst the Irish in New England in Dover, Delaware.

ultimately victorious, he maintained that the Irish had voted against him.\textsuperscript{104} The ethnic and sectarian aspects of the 1916 campaign were rarely present in Portland. Republican rallies in the city exhibited no mention of the Irish or of Catholicism, and a survey of the Republican \textit{Evening Express} for the fall of that year reveals no appeals to Irish voters. The Democratic \textit{Argus} condemned “any attempt to encourage religious intolerance or prejudice,” though this was likely in response to the national campaign. The results were not unusual, with the city’s vote being strongly Republican, aside from the normal exceptions of the “Democratic strongholds” of wards two and four. The national campaign aimed at the Irish may have had some impact, as the \textit{Express} noted a substantial slump in the Democratic vote in ward four, but it seems as though few Catholics of Irish descent abandoned their traditional party allegiances.\textsuperscript{105} The fact that Portland was so reliably Republican may explain why an ethnicized campaign never took off in the city. It was safe Republican territory, regardless of the Irish vote, so there was no need for campaigners to introduce the unsavoury aspects of ethnicity and religion into local politics.

The presidential election of 1920 does seem to have featured some Irish abandonment of the Democrats in Portland. As in 1916, the national campaign was notable for the efforts of Irish nationalists to thwart the Democrats, particularly due to opposition to Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations. The Republican candidate, Warren G. Harding, though, was comfortable without the Irish vote, so the broader campaign never took on distinctly ethnic elements, either in Portland or nationally. On election day, it is difficult to determine the extent to which Irish-American Catholics turned to the Republicans. Some undoubtedly did,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{105} \textit{Eastern Argus}, September 18, 1916; \textit{Evening Express}, November 7; November 8, 1916.
\end{itemize}
but an ethnic bloc vote “failed to materialize.”

In Portland, many Irish Catholics do seem to have supported Harding, who opposed the League of Nations. On the eve of the election, the *Express* noted that “numbers of Democrats of Irish descent have decided to shift in this national election to support Harding. [...] Both of Portland’s Democratic precincts, wards two and four, are heavily populated with voters of Irish extraction, and in tomorrow’s voting it is expected that a strong swing to the Republican preference will be in evidence.”

In the end, ward two stayed Democratic by the strong margin of 744 to 457, while ward four slightly favoured the Republican candidate by 586 votes to 490. Perhaps more than at any other point during our period, the political allegiances of Portland’s Irish Catholics were split, largely thanks to the Democrats’ failure to manage the Irish Question.

Despite the temporary shift in party alliance observed in 1920, the Irish Catholics in Portland were too small in number to have a significant, sustained impact on local politics. Although several prominent Irishmen managed to forge noteworthy political careers through the Democratic Party, the city remained devoutly Republican. True ethnic politics could not take hold, as the Irish in the city, in addition to its other ethnic minorities, simply did not possess the population to challenge the Anglo-Protestant establishment. Portland’s Yankees were obviously concerned about the city’s rising ethnic population – not just the Irish, but also Italians, Poles and Scandinavians. A new nativist movement emerged in the postwar years, epitomized by the local establishment of the Ku Klux Klan, which functioned as an anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant association. Led by the aging Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh, American Catholics of all ethnicities attempted to fight the growing prominence of the Klan.

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107 *Evening Express*, November 1, 1920.
and its sympathizers. An attempt to alter Portland’s city charter was blocked in 1920, but in 1923 Anglo-Protestant reformers succeeding in changing the old ward system, which had at least given Catholics of Irish descent some political voice, to a city manager system, consisting of five councillors elected at large. Voting rates plummeted in subsequent elections, and the city’s Irish Catholics, as well as its other minorities, had been effectively disenfranchised when it came to civic affairs. Despite a prominent minority of Irish Catholic voters, almost all of whom tended to vote Democratic, local politics in Portland was decidedly non-ethnic by the 1920s.

4.2 The Irish Question in Domestic Politics

Thus far, this chapter has noted how circumstances, both external and domestic, have at times moved Catholics of Irish descent to support particular parties or candidates in each of the three cities. Another way in which “Irishness” intervened in domestic politics during this period was through the discussion and debate of Ireland’s political destiny. Did politicians and parties exploit the Irish Question for politician gain, and was Ireland used as an allegory to understand local issues? The extent to which the Irish Question became a matter of political discussion can clarify how ethnic passions remained relevant in the day-to-day lives of Irish Catholics. In St. John’s and Halifax, references to Ireland were fairly common in the 1880s and 1890s, then declined after 1900, suggesting that inter-generational ethnic identities were rarely considered strong enough to sustain discussions of Ireland in local politics. At least after the ethnicized campaigns of the 1880s, Ireland was hardly ever an issue of local concern in Portland. This was partly owing to Irish Catholics’ relatively

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small population, as well as the region’s political independence from the British Empire. The politics of Ireland was perceived by politicians in St. John’s and Halifax as an imperial question, while for those of Portland it was distinctly foreign.

In St. John’s in the 1880s, Ireland and the Irish Question were frequently part of political discussions. In the early years of the decade, much of this had to do with the Irish land question as it pertained to Newfoundland, as the relationships between Irish landlords and their tenants was seen as relevant in a number of ways. Those who – optimistically – continued to advocate for the agricultural development of Newfoundland’s interior highlighted the Irish example as a situation to be avoided.\textsuperscript{110} Individuals who opposed the power and position of the absentee landlords that still owned substantial quantities of urban property in St. John’s, drew inspiration from the Irish Land League. The Advocate used the affairs of Ireland to inspire tenants on Water Street, while the Evening Telegram denounced attempts to “make political capital [...] of the national afflictions of a great people in the attempt to popularize our detested local government.”\textsuperscript{111} The editor went on to point out that there were few parallels between the Irish agrarian situation and that of St. John’s, but this did not stop the establishment of a tenant’s league, described by the paper as “our Land League.”\textsuperscript{112} Although the Irish situation was used as inspiration for local tenants, this episode does not necessarily reflect a sense of Irish identity creeping into local politics, or an attempt to mobilize distinctly ethnic concerns for domestic purposes. The land question in Ireland was the most significant imperial issue of the era, and was easily comparable to the situation in Newfoundland. Its use as an allegory for the rights of St. John’s tenants reflects a

\textsuperscript{110} See for example Terra Nova Advocate, January 19, 1881.
\textsuperscript{111} Evening Telegram, July 25, 1881.
\textsuperscript{112} Evening Telegram, September 8, 1881.
knowledge and concern with the affairs of Ireland and the broader Empire, but reveals little about the ethnic sentiments of the city’s Catholics.

A far more intense debate on Irish affairs engulfed Newfoundland politics in the spring and summer of 1886. It surrounded the colonial legislature’s almost farcical attempts to pass a resolution supporting Home Rule for Ireland. The passion of the debate and its significant political fallout demonstrates how, in the mid-1880s at least, events in Ireland were able to temporarily raise ethnic identities in Newfoundland to a fever pitch. Conversely, however, the episode shows how political alliances and party affiliations could trump ethnicity for the colony’s Irish-Catholic representatives. William Ewart Gladstone’s Home Rule Bill of April, 1886, spawned enthusiastic responses from Catholics throughout the diaspora. In St. John’s, as will be discussed in chapter five, support for the measure was widespread amongst both Catholics and Anglo-Protestants. Throughout April and early May, local papers were inundated with letters supporting Irish Home Rule. In the second week of May, a letter appeared in the Advocate chastising the Liberal-Catholic opposition party – Newfoundland was reeling from the aftermath of the Harbour Grace Affray, and politics was still divided largely along ethnoreligious lines – for not proposing a pro-Home Rule motion, as was being done by colonial assemblies throughout the Empire. The author stated that in failing to introduce a resolution in the assembly, “the politicians of Newfoundland of Irish blood and race have proved themselves recreant to the high principles of their forefathers in their disgraceful and temporizing attitude on a question that the liberalism of the world is in favour,” and further attacked “those of the Liberal interest in our House of Assembly [for] making no effort to arouse public sentiment on the matter, and to telegraph resolutions from

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113 See Evening Telegram, April 14; April 15, 1886; Colonist, May 10; May 11; May 13, 1886; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 365.
the people of Newfoundland to strengthen Mr. Gladstone’s hand.” On May 10th, as the bill was set to undergo its second reading at Westminster, George Emerson, a Protestant-Liberal member for Placentia and St. Mary’s, proposed the Home Rule resolution the Advocate’s correspondent had called for. The Protestant-Reform opposition had provided assurances that they would not oppose the bill, but, astonishingly, at a special meeting the Catholic-dominated Liberals resolved not to support their own member’s motion. The reasons for this action remain unclear, but, as will be discussed below, both personal rivalries and politicking were factors. On May 13th, Michael Carty, likely under pressure from his father, informed the opposition leader, Ambrose Shea, of his intention to defy the party’s wishes and second the resolution. As Emerson introduced it on May 13th, the Reform party left the house, choosing to abstain rather than actively support or oppose Irish Home Rule. When Carty seconded it, the Liberals followed the Reformers out of the chamber. Only Emerson, Carty and five Reformers remained, and owing to the absence of a quorum, the motion was defeated. The response in the local press and amongst Catholics of Irish descent generally was indignant. The Advocate blasted the government, noting that “spite and political jealousy are no justification for this barbarous and vandal-like act of striking at the land of our fathers.” A correspondent to the Telegram lamented the cowardly, humiliating actions of the legislature, and aimed particular vitriol at the leading Liberals of Irish descent for opposing resolutions to which only the most “anti-Irish, Conservative bigot” could object. The

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114 Terra Nova Advocate, May 8, 1886.
116 Terra Nova Advocate, May 15, 1886.
117 Evening Telegram, May 14, 1886.
editor of the *Colonist* was similarly outraged, essentially portraying the Liberal members as traitors to their ancestral homeland, and called for a public meeting to accomplish what the assembly “had neither the gratitude to Ireland, the love of liberty, nor the respect due itself to perform.”

Letters attacking the Liberals continued throughout the second half of May and into June. The Clare-born parish priest of Placentia, Rev. M.A. Clancy, sent a letter to the *Colonist* which succinctly explains the attitude of most Irish Catholics regarding the episode:

> I do not care what notion of expediency or of party exigency influenced the Liberals in their actions on Mr. Emerson’s resolution. To sympathize with and, if possible, to second the efforts of a nation struggling to be free, and the efforts of a great statesman striving to give a new life and constitution to a long-enslaved race, should have been sufficient to raise the Liberal Party above any petty considerations or personal malice.

The situation clearly evoked a great deal of shame and embarrassment amongst Catholics of Irish birth and descent. Echoing Clancy’s sentiments, a letter to the *Telegram* opined that “Newfoundland, through the treachery of the Liberal Party leaders, stands in unenviable isolation among all the other British colonies,” and suggested that the party’s members, “placed there by the descendents of the Irish in Newfoundland have proved themselves recreants to the land of their forefathers in her hour of anxiety and misgiving.” Some commentators even went so far as to call for the Liberal members to be dismissed, and a new, pro-Home Rule party set up in its place. Despite clearly having the support of the colony’s Catholics, however, Carty was expelled from the Liberal Party for his dissension,

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118 *Colonist*, May 15, 1886.
119 *Colonist*, May 20, 1886.
120 *Evening Telegram*, May 17, 1886.
121 *Evening Telegram*, May 19, 1886.
and would run as a Reformer in subsequent elections. In response to the widespread indignation, the Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) called a special meeting to pass its own pro-Home Rule resolutions. Ironically, its executive was dominated by many of the same Liberals who had walked out of the House of Assembly, but on this occasion the resolutions were unanimously passed and sent to Gladstone and Parnell. The Catholics of St. John’s did formally support Home Rule, but the associational resolution did not possess the strength of a formal, governmental one.

As Carolyn Lambert has noted, “there was no reason for the Liberals to oppose Emerson’s moderate resolution.” Why, then, did the party refuse to do what their constituents demanded? Some explanations have focused on petty jealousy – in short, Liberal leaders like Shea and BIS president Robert Kent were outraged that a Protestant member on the fringes of the party would have the audacity to introduce the resolution. This was quite likely a factor, though Lambert has put forward a more nuanced, political explanation. She contends that Liberals like Shea and Kent were aware that the sectarianized political divide of post-Harbour Grace Affray politics could not last, and that their future political careers would depend on alliances with Protestant-Conservative Reformers. Given the tensions of 1885 and 1886, it is possible that the Liberal Leaders did not want to condone any action, such as actively supporting Irish self-government, which could alienate them from politicians such as Thorburn, who was a member of the Orange Order. This is certainly plausible, though it must be remembered that, like Emerson, many Anglo-Protestant Newfoundlanders

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122 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 367.
123 Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) Minutes, May 20, 1886, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), Benevolent Irish Society Fonds, MG 612, Reel 76; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 367.
124 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 366.
125 Ibid., 369.
supported Irish Home Rule (see chapter five), and the Reform Government had at no point formally opposed the resolutions.

Regardless of the reasons why the Liberals chose to reject Emerson’s motion, the most significant aspect of the debate for the historian of Irish ethnicity is the widespread anger and passion the episode engendered. That their political representatives turned their backs on Ireland was perceived as a heinous, shameful act by the Irish Catholics of St. John’s. At a point when interest in Ireland was heightened throughout the diaspora by Gladstone’s bill, the fact that Newfoundland’s “Irish Party” had run so strongly against these trends was deemed to be deplorable, and put the colony’s Catholics shamefully out of step with those in other jurisdictions. Irish ethnicity in 1886 was strong enough to become a major issue of contention in local politics, but the circumstances which brought about the incident were temporary.

At no other point during our period did Ireland become such a significant domestic issue, but on several occasions the affairs of the old country did find their way into local political discussions. One of the most debated questions of the era was Newfoundland’s potential Confederation with Canada, and, as was the case in the late-1860s, Irish allegiances and identities were directly relevant. The 1869 Newfoundland election was fought between Confederate and anti-Confederate factions. Most of the debates surrounded questions of economic and resource development, but the Catholic-oriented Liberal Party was strongly anti-Confederate, so aspects of their rhetoric developed distinctly Irish characteristics. The Liberals paralleled Newfoundland Confederation with the 1801 Act of Union between Britain and Ireland in order to rally ethnic passions against the measure. The appeals were tailored to a native-born Catholic electorate, with the principal thrust of the argument
designed to rouse a sense of Newfoundland, rather than specifically Irish, nationalism. The sons of Irishmen were called upon to “right historical wrongs,” and ensure that Newfoundlanders did not find themselves in the same situation as their compatriots in the old country.  

As noted by Lambert, “Newfoundland nationalist arguments [were] based on the Irish example.” Catholic pro-Confederate leaders such as Ambrose Shea, meanwhile, countered such rhetoric by arguing that the Union had been forced upon Ireland, and was therefore an illegitimate comparison to the democratic choice now facing Newfoundlanders. The ethnic campaign against union with Canada seems to have been at least somewhat successful, as most Catholics opposed the measure, and Shea was given a cold reception in many Catholic communities. The anti-Confederates were victorious, and Newfoundland did not join Canada until 1949.

The Confederation question resurfaced on a number of occasions during this period. A potential union with Canada was discussed in the local press in 1888, and, as in 1869, the Irish example was central to the debate. When the possibility of Confederation was examined, one correspondent to the anti-Confederate Colonist referred to Newfoundland as the “Ireland of America,” and called upon those of Irish descent to unite against Canadian union, as they had done in 1869. The Confederate Evening Telegram, meanwhile, repeated the rhetoric employed by Shea in the 1860s, suggesting that the Irish example was not applicable to Newfoundland owing to the coerced nature of the 1801 Act of Union.

The debate had taken on this ethnic dimension on St. Patrick’s Day, when the Benevolent Irish

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127 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 323.
128 Ibid., 321-322.
129 Colonist, March 21, 1888.
130 Evening Telegram, March 19, 1888.
Society declared itself opposed to Confederation. The society had met for its annual St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, and, following the usual parade, the members assembled at St. Patrick’s Hall to pass a series of resolutions which president Robert Kent claimed were supported “by every Irishman in the hall.” The resolution contained four sections, with the first three supporting Home Rule for Ireland, while the fourth addressed the political destiny of the colony. Members declared their “loyalty to the free institutions under which we live in Newfoundland,” and suggested that they would “prove that we cherish the liberties we enjoy, under the flag of imperial Britain, by rejecting any and every attempt to deprive us of our independence.”

The resolution caused quite a stir, and was a major departure from the normally non-political stance of the BIS. The apparently anti-Confederate statement provoked an angry response in the *Telegram*, as letters and editorials continued to argue against any parallel between the domestic situation and Ireland’s. One example cited prominent Irish nationalists such as William O’Brien, who had praised Canadian federalism. This editorial concluded with a direct attack on the anti-Confederate BIS, stating that “these sentiments from the pen of one of Ireland’s most devoted patriots strangely contrasts with the utterances of those who moved that resolution on [March] 17th.”

Some correspondents loudly proclaimed their inter-generational Irish identities while still arguing in favour of Confederation. One called upon St. John’s Catholics to abandon the romantic parallels between the two political situations:

A native of Newfoundland of Irish descent, taught at my mother’s knee to pray for Ireland, lingering oft as a fair-haired boy at the side of an old hero of ’98 and eagerly drinking in his sorrowful stories of that dark yet glorious period, reading the story of O’Connell’s sorrow, his daring and his broken heart. I feel myself as much an Irishman as if my first sight had been

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131 *Colonist*, March 19, 1888.
132 *Evening Telegram*, March 31, 1888. Original emphasis.
gladdened where the Shannon, the Barrow and the Blackwater flow; and I can with every fibre of my heart unite with the sentiment and patriotic feeling which impel the Irishmen to resist Confederation. At the same time I have too much knowledge of their good sense [...] to imagine for a moment that they will allow themselves to be influenced solely by sentiment in a matter that appertains to their children’s welfare.

The author, who signed the letter “Tullamore,” pleaded with those of Irish descent to consider the question carefully, and to remember that “Canada is a land where thousands of their kith and kin have won a highly distinctive place, such as Irishman are able to achieve by the inherent genius of the race.” Letters aimed at Irish anti-Confederates continued to appear throughout early April, though by the end of the month the issue had gradually faded from the press.

The passionate language employed by “Tullamore” and other correspondents on the Confederation question shows how ethnic appeals could be a powerful political tool in the late-nineteenth century. Rather than suggest that Irish identities were consistently strong in this era, however, a comparison of the 1888 debate with a similar one in the 1890s reveals how ethnic affiliation to the ancestral homeland varied, and that the utility of ethnicity in local politics was fleeting. In 1894, a bank crash in St. John’s brought discussions of Canadian Confederation to unprecedented heights, and a delegation was despatched to Ottawa to discuss potential terms of union. Although Canadian currency was adopted, the attempts to negotiate Confederation were ultimately unsuccessful. Unlike 1869 and 1888, the 1894 Confederation debates rarely referred to the Irish example. Part of the explanation for this lies in how discussions of Home Rule and the Irish Question had changed between 1888 and 1894. As will be analyzed in chapter five, the late-1880s saw the pinnacle of

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133 Evening Telegram, April 3, 1888.
134 See for example Evening Telegram, April 4; April 6, 1888; Terra Nova Advocate, April 7, 1888.
135 O’Flaherty, Lost Country, 185-193.
Charles Stewart Parnell’s parliamentary battle for Irish self-government. Thanks to the communication networks of the local press, ethnic associations such as the BIS, as well as the Catholic clergy, Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s were kept up to date with events in Ireland. Passions regarding Home Rule were at their peak, and this provided an opportunity for those who opposed Confederation to exploit the ethnic attachment to Ireland.

A close connection was perceived between Newfoundland nationalism and Ireland’s fight for self-government, as evidenced by the BIS’s 1888 anti-Confederate resolution. By 1894, Parnell was dead and disgraced, and the Home Rule movement was in disarray. The Irish example could no longer be used to mobilize the colony’s Catholics against Confederation, so the debates of the 1890s did not involve ethnic appeals to those of Irish descent. When passions regarding Ireland were at a low ebb, Irish allegories lost their political effectiveness.

An interesting counterpoint to this argument is the lack of ethnicized political rhetoric in St. John’s after the First World War, when popular interest in Ireland was again on the rise. The Irish Question did occasionally find its way into domestic politics in the twentieth century. In the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising, for example, the Legislative Council passed a lengthy resolution praising Irish-Catholic loyalty to the Empire and the War effort. Rather than a ploy to gain political capital by exploiting ethnic passions, however, this was an effort to foster unity and prevent any potential ethnic or sectarian divisions from emerging, as they had in some other colonial settings such as in Australia. In 1917, the St. John’s Municipal Council passed a resolution supporting Irish self-government which drew sarcastic responses from the press, which suggested that the body had no right to comment

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on imperial or international affairs. From 1919 to 1921, however, as politics was becoming increasingly sectarian in the midst of a tense economic downturn, and as interest in the Irish Question peaked through organizations such as the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland, political debates seldom took on any Irish dimension. It is possible that by the 1920s, the effectiveness of political allusions to Ireland was diminished by an added generational gap between Catholic Newfoundlanders and the land of their forefathers, though the enthusiasm with which Irish affairs were discussed during this period suggests that ethnic identities could still be inflamed. A more likely explanation is that in the economic- and class-driven politics of the 1920s, old-world events no longer provided convenient allegories which could mobilize those of Irish descent for or against a particular issue. In order for the Irish Question to be a significant factor in local politics, interest in the affairs of Ireland had to be high amongst Catholic generally, and the old-world example had to be directly applicable to local debates.

The case of Halifax supports this conclusion. In that city, despite a substantial Irish-Catholic population, the affairs of Ireland entered into domestic debates less frequently than in St. John’s. The most significant question in late-nineteenth century Nova Scotian politics was the potential repeal of the province’s Confederation with Canada. J. Murray Beck has noted that the example of Irish nationalism and Home Rule was used to legitimate secessionist agitation, but an examination of pro- and anti-repeal newspapers during the period reveals relatively few references to Ireland or direct ethnic appeals to Nova Scotia’s Irish Catholics. On the eve of the “repeal election” of 1886, for example, the pro-Confederate Herald printed class-based pleas to Halifax’s businessmen, blacksmiths, and shoemakers, but

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137 Daily News, April 7, 1917; Mannion, “Newfoundland Responses to the Easter Rising and the Rise of Sinn Fein,” 17.
this critical period of debate involved no ethnic language.\textsuperscript{139} Although the general lack of references to Irish Home Rule is rather surprising, when local interest in Ireland peaked, such as in October, 1886, ethnicity entered into domestic politics. It was at this point that Justin McCarthy, one of the Irish Parliamentary Party’s most prominent members, arrived in Halifax as part of his Canadian tour. As will be discussed in chapter five, his arrival caused great excitement amongst those of Irish descent in the city, and Irish examples suddenly appeared in the secession debates. Nova Scotia’s anti-Confederate Liberals portrayed the fight for Irish self-government as analogous to their own arguments for repeal. Such rhetoric drew angry criticism from the editor of the \textit{Evening Mail}, who, on the eve of McCarthy’s speech, chastised the secessionists, claiming that they would “pose as Parnells and McCarthys,” and countered any use of the Irish example, calling on W.S. Fielding and J.W. Longley to “point out one single grievance which Ireland suffers, of which even the shadow can be found in Nova Scotia.”\textsuperscript{140} The \textit{Herald}’s editorial following McCarthy’s speech used his words to bolster their argument that Irish Home Rule and Nova Scotian repeal were unrelated. His talk had highlighted the Canadian federalist system as an admirable example of a Home Rule-style scheme already in practice within the Empire. This allowed the Tory press to counter “certain erroneous ideas which have been so frequently advanced [...] on public platforms in this city”: the parallel between Home Rule and secession. McCarthy’s speech not only served to advance the cause of Irish self-government, but also exposed “the thorough dishonesty of the secession tacticians.”\textsuperscript{141} Subsequent editorials went on to re-emphasize the idea that McCarthy, Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party wished to gain for Ireland what Nova Scotia already possessed: a local parliament. The use of Ireland as a

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Halifax Herald}, June 15, 1886.
\textsuperscript{140} This editorial was reprinted in the \textit{Halifax Herald}, October 28, 1886.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Halifax Herald}, October 30, 1886.
basis for pro-repeal arguments was, therefore, false.\footnote{142} Within a few weeks, however, Irish examples faded from the debate. It is surprising that Irish allegories were not a more significant feature of the secessionist debate in Nova Scotia, as interest in Irish affairs remained high amongst the province’s Catholics throughout this period. The lack of sustained ethnic appeals may be explained by the fact that the example of Ireland did not lend itself easily to either side of the question, as evidenced by the attempts of both pro- and anti-Confederates to use McCarthy’s visit to their advantage in late-October. Furthermore, the presence of large numbers of Catholics on both sides of the political divide may have negated the effectiveness the Irish comparison. As such, the example of Ireland only became a primary feature of the repeal debate when public Irish ethnicity was at its highest peak, in the days before and after Justin McCarthy’s lecture.

Not long before the repeal debate surfaced in the Halifax press, the Irish Question had been the subject of discussion within the provincial assembly. A pro-Home Rule resolution was introduced on May 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1886, by Attorney General A.J. White. It focused in large part on Irish Catholics’ loyalty to the Empire, and declared the body’s unequivocal support for Gladstone and his Home Rule Bill. On May 10\textsuperscript{th}, the resolution was discussed during the afternoon session. A number of speeches in favour of self-government for Ireland were made by both Liberal and Conservative politicians, including J.W. Longley, Murdock McRae, W.S. Fielding, and the French-Acadian member from Richmond, Isidore LeBlanc. Not a single member opposed the resolution, and it carried unanimously.\footnote{143} There was no hint whatsoever of the debates and dissension which had wrecked Newfoundland’s attempt at a
similar motion. Irish Home Rule was perceived as an important imperial concern, and support for the measure transcended ethnicity and religion.

While Nova Scotia’s provincial parliament passed the pro-Home Rule resolution without any drama, the Irish Question was becoming a contentious issue in the Canadian Parliament, and this occasionally evoked responses in the Halifax papers. The debates of 1886 and 1887 were not the first time the affairs of Ireland had become a national political issue in Canada. In April, 1882, John Costigan, an Irish-Catholic Conservative Member of Parliament from New Brunswick, introduced a pro-Home Rule resolution in the House of Commons. Prime Minister John A. Macdonald feared that the “Costigan Resolutions” could become a major source of embarrassment for the federal Conservatives, as opposing them could alienate Irish-Catholic electoral support, while an endorsement could spark disharmony between Ottawa and Westminster.\(^{144}\) Rather than allow a potentially divisive debate, Macdonald had the resolutions toned down such that they did not call for immediate Home Rule to be granted to Ireland. On April 20\(^{th}\), 1882, the amended versions were introduced and passed unanimously.\(^{145}\) In Halifax, the city’s Catholics supported the federal government’s action on Home Rule. The Charitable Irish Society held a special meeting on March 24\(^{th}\) to discuss a potential House of Commons resolution on Irish affairs. The members pledged that the Irish people were entitled to the same system of government which Canadians enjoyed, and requested “that the House of Commons [pass] a resolution in favour of Home Rule.” Furthermore, they specifically called upon Halifax’s federal Members of


Parliament to support the measure. The 1882 debates set out the manner in which the Irish Question would be discussed in Ottawa over the coming years. Those who supported the Canadian government’s calls for Home Rule believed in extending the political benefits of Canadian federalism to Ireland, while those opposed – such as the editor and correspondents to the Halifax *Morning Chronicle* in 1882, claimed that imperial issues were beyond the purview of the federal House of Commons.

In 1886, the Irish Question again came before the Canadian Parliament. In this instance, it was one of the country’s most prominent Liberals, Edward Blake, who took the lead in introducing a strong, pro-Home Rule resolution. Blake was the Canadian-born son of an Anglo-Irish landlord, and over the course of his political career had become a staunch advocate of self-government for Ireland, resembling in many ways a “Canadian Parnell.” For him, the Irish Question was central to Canada for a number of reasons. First, a resolution on Ireland would be an example of Canadian independence and symbolize Canada’s influential voice in the affairs of the Empire. Moreover, support for a Dublin parliament would represent an endorsement of Canadian federalism in an era when federal-provincial relations were very much at the forefront of national political consciousness. Blake and the Liberals, therefore, promoted Irish Home Rule as a non-ethnic question that was relevant to all Canadians, regardless of ancestry or religion. Macdonald, who advocated a strong, centralized federal government was keen to avoid all discussions of the Irish Question in Ottawa, as support for Home Rule would parallel support for enhanced provincial rights.

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146 *CIS Minute Book*, March 24, 1882.
147 See for example *Morning Chronicle*, May 31, 1882.
148 Shanahan, “The Irish Question in Canada,” 89.
149 *Ibid.*, 94-95; 137; 159-160; 167.
within Canadian Confederation. In a reversal of 1882, it was John Costigan, motivated by his close ties to Macdonald, who introduced an amendment downplaying the calls for Irish self-government. It was this amended version which was passed by the house. In Nova Scotia, the 1886 federal debates about Ireland were quickly overshadowed by the furore over repeal which, as noted above, rarely took on any Irish dimensions. What little comment there was on Blake’s resolutions tended to fall along party lines. Both sides claimed to support the principles of Home Rule, with Liberals supporting Blake’s original motion, stating that as an imperial issue, colonial assemblies were well within their rights to debate the question. The editor of the Morning Chronicle did concede, however, that both parties probably aimed to influence “the powerful Irish vote.” Conservatives, meanwhile, supported Costigan’s amendments.

Nova Scotia’s federal representatives were more directly involved when the Irish Question was again debated in the House of Commons in 1887. As noted above, T.E. Kenny had made his support of Home Rule a feature of the campaign which saw him elected as a member for the city earlier that year. In this session, it was J.J. Curran, a Conservative-Catholic Member of Parliament from Montreal, who introduced pro-Home Rule resolutions. Support for the motion on this occasion was not influenced by party, as the Conservatives were split on the issue. Kenny was praised in the Herald for his eloquent speech in defence of Curran’s resolutions. He praised Canadian federalism, and stated that “it would be a wise, prudent and gracious act to give Ireland the same privileges and local government as Canada enjoys.” Kenny went on to condemn British coercion in Ireland, and concluded with his hope that “the dark days of Ireland’s trouble were passing by, and a brighter day was beginning to

150 Ibid., 160.
151 Ibid., 163-167.
152 Morning Chronicle, May 7, 1886.
This was the last time that Irish affairs were debated in the Canadian Parliament, and Blake left the country in 1892 to take a seat at Westminster representing the Irish Parliamentary Party. His links to Canada were maintained, however, and it was he who approached the Halifax CIS in 1897 to solicit contributions to an Irish Parliamentary Fund.

Many of the situations examined above had little to do with influencing the political behaviour of the Irish-Catholic ethnic group. The Irish Question, being the most significant imperial issue of the 1880s, was used as an allegory to understand Newfoundland, Nova Scotian and Canadian political debates. Most of these example were brought about almost entirely by domestic circumstances. Occasionally, however, discussion of affairs in Ireland appears to have been brought about by the desire to win Irish-Catholic votes. This was the case as late as 1917, when George E. Faulkner, a Halifax Liberal Member of the Legislative Assembly, introduced a pro-Home Rule resolution in the Nova Scotian House of Assembly. In the midst of the discussions surrounding the 1886 and 1887 federal resolutions on Ireland, occasional comments suggested that the motions were designed to win Catholic support, though politicians like Edward Blake worked hard to portray the Irish Question as one relevant to all citizens of the Empire. Faulkner’s 1917 resolution, by contrast, was thoroughly condemned by both Irish and non-Irish as politically motivated. In the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising, interest in Ireland was again on the rise amongst Halifax- and Nova Scotian-Irish Catholics, though it would not peak until 1920. It was in this context of rising ethnic awareness that Faulkner introduced his Home Rule motion. His intentions were first reported in the *Herald* on St. Patrick’s Day. The language of the resolution was similar to its federal counterparts of the 1880s, as well as many other societal declarations in favour of Irish self-

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153 *Halifax Herald*, April 22, 1887.  
154 Shanahan, “The Irish Question in Canada,” 195  
155 *CIS Minute Book*, November 17, 1897.
government observed in British North America during this period. It focused on granting Home Rule for Ireland for the security and unity of the Empire, and also for the sake of extending the freedom and harmony enjoyed in Canada to the Irish people.\textsuperscript{156} Three days later, the paper’s editor discussed the proposed resolution, expressing sympathy with the principles of Irish self-government, but accusing Faulkner and the Liberals of attempting to gain Catholic votes. Faulkner, he suggested, was using Ireland “for the purposes of party,” and called on him not to “play politics with so important a question at such a vital time in the Empire’s life.”\textsuperscript{157} Other opponents, such as the members of the Orange Order, attacked Home Rule itself, but these declarations will be analyzed in chapter six.

The debate surrounding the incident faded away through late-March and early-April, and at the end of that month, Faulkner formally withdrew the resolution. It does not seem as though it was ever debated in the legislature. His reasoning had nothing to do with the accusations of ethnoreligious politicking, but instead, he claimed, was due to the increased attention the Irish Question was finally receiving from the British government. Faulkner maintained that he had been “justified in bringing the attention of this house to the subject,” and that it was a critical question which was relevant “all over the world wherever there are people of Irish birth or descent.”\textsuperscript{158} The polite withdrawal of the motion still failed to placate some Catholics of Irish descent. W.P. Buckley, a city alderman and leading Irish nationalist in the twentieth century, sent a letter to the \textit{Herald} disparaging Faulkner. Buckley accused him of attempting to “hogg” the issue for political purposes, and that he had “prevented others who would have been at least sincere from the first in presenting a similar resolution.” The Halifax representative was not genuine, “or he would have pressed his resolution and not

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\item \textsuperscript{156} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 17, 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{157} \textit{Halifax Herald}, March 20, 1917.
\item \textsuperscript{158} \textit{Halifax Herald}, April 26, 1917.
\end{itemize}
held it out as bait to catch the so-called Irish vote.” The letter concluded with the quip:
“come on, Mr. Faulkner, you may jolly some of the Irish people all of the time, all of the
Irish people some of the time, but not all the Irish people all the time!”¹⁵⁹ This debate over
Home Rule amounted to very little. The fact that a politician, though, attempted to use an
Irish issue to gain political support, in addition to the indignant responses his actions
prompted, suggests that Irish identities and interest in the politics of Ireland were again on
the rise amongst Halifax Catholics. As in St. John’s, however, the Irish Question did not lend
itself to domestic politics in the period of heightened ethnic engagement after the First World
War. By and large, political discussions in Halifax remained non-ethnic from the 1880s to
the 1920s. Irish Catholics’ romantic attachment to their ancestral homeland was rarely
exploited.

In his analysis of the Irish Question in Canadian politics, David Shanahan briefly
compared the situation in British North America to that of the United States. Because of that
country’s position outside of the Empire, “the Irish Question in the US was quite divorced
from the political milieu.”¹⁶⁰ At the federal level, there were some exceptions as the United
States Senate passed resolutions on Ireland in the 1880s as well as in the postwar period. In
Portland and in Maine, however, events in Ireland at no point become politically significant
during our period. In election campaigns, tactics similar to those used by T.E. Kenny in
Halifax in 1887 were observed in the 1884 election. Republican papers such as the Press, for
example, pointed out to Irish voters in Portland that the Democratic Party’s opposition to
protective tariffs bolstered English industry, which in turn damaged Irish economic

¹⁵⁹ Halifax Herald. May 2, 1917.
¹⁶⁰ Shanahan, “The Irish Question in Canada,” 126.
development. The Democratic papers strongly denied such arguments. This was merely an example of election rhetoric, however, and the fact remains that neither municipal nor state bodies discussed affairs in Ireland.

On rare occasions, political networks, particularly those of the Democratic Party, were a factor in how the Irish Catholics of Portland engaged with Irish nationalism. An example of this may be seen in 1882, when both men’s and women’s branches of the city’s Land League unanimously selected Darius H. Ingraham to be their representative at the national convention in Washington. Ingraham was a Yankee Protestant, but also prominent in the local Democratic Party. His involvement with Irish nationalism was not ethnically motivated, but, rather, was political. Like many Yankees, it is possible that Ingraham broadly sympathized with the Land League and Irish Home Rule, but it was almost certainly a desire to forge friendly relations with the city’s Irish population that moved him to actively represent the League at the convention. It appears as though the strategy was at least somewhat successful, as in 1892 Ingraham served as one of Portland’s few Democratic mayors during this period.

Ethnic identities and Irish nationalism also motivated large numbers of Portland’s Irish Catholics to oppose certain domestic political issues. As noted above, Woodrow Wilson’s League of Nations was resisted by many Irish-American nationalists, and though the ethnic aspects of the debate were scarcely mentioned in the editorial columns of the local newspapers, the Cumberland County Ancient Order of Hibernians passed a resolution in 1919 bitterly condemning the League, as it would strengthen Britain’s hold over Ireland. The

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161 Eastern Argus, February 28, 1884.
162 Eastern Argus, March 21, 1892. His success was largely due to the support of disaffected Republicans, rather than Irish Catholics.
motion, furthermore, called on Maine’s congressional representatives to oppose it.\textsuperscript{163}

Generally, though, events in Ireland had no bearing on the politics of Portland or of Maine, and as in St. John’s and Halifax, “Irishness” only entered into domestic debates in rare and exceptional circumstances.

**Conclusion**

In St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, the connection between the Irish and politics was observed in a number of ways. There is certainly no question that Catholics of Irish descent were able to forge successful political careers in all three cities, although in Republican-dominated Portland, few were able to gain access to the upper echelons of government. In terms of election rhetoric, ethnicity was sometimes used to mobilize an Irish-Catholic voting bloc. In St. John’s, debates in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries tended to revolve around class and economy, while religion and ethnicity were rarely prominent factors. On a number of occasions, however, such as in the aftermath of the Harbour Grace Affray from 1884 to 1886, politics became divided along ethnoreligious lines, as sectarian tensions were exploited by politicians in order to gain votes. We cannot assume, however, that a neat correlation between religion and ethnicity existed in St. John’s, as some political historians have done. Even when divisions between Irish-Catholics and Anglo-Protestants were at their most intense, only on rare occasions did the language of debates take on ethnic dimensions. Politicians and political commentators hardly ever focused on the “Irishness” of Catholic voters. Episodes such as the *Evening Telegram*’s Newfoundland-nativist attack on the foreign born further suggests that, at least within the realm of politics, ethnic unity and identity amongst the Catholics of St. John’s must not be taken for granted.

\textsuperscript{163} *Eastern Argus*, September 15, 1919.
Occasions when the affairs of Ireland did enter directly into domestic politics were rare, and, such as during the furore over the assembly’s 1886 Home Rule resolutions, came about at times when ethnic passions were particularly high. Only when local interest in Ireland peaked, and Irish affairs could inform local debates, was the Irish Question present in local political discourse.

The links between politics and Irishness in Halifax were quite similar to St. John’s. There, the “unwritten rule,” or denominational compromise, reduced the possibility of ethnic or sectarian political divisions, and Irish Catholics could be found supporting both Liberal and Conservative parties. Nevertheless, some election campaigns, such as T.E. Kenny’s in 1887, contained discernible ethnic rhetoric and appeals to Irish voters. As with St. John’s, such cases were unusual, but political engagement with Ireland emerged when passions regarding the ancestral homeland were highest, such as when Justin McCarthy visited the city in 1886 and Ireland’s relationship with Great Britain was compared to Nova Scotia’s place within the Canadian Confederation. Ireland informed local debates, but Catholics of Irish descent should not be considered a distinct political bloc.

In Portland, the smaller Irish-Catholic community generally supported the Democratic Party, but because of their situation within a predominantly Yankee and Republican milieu, few members of the population rose to the top levels of domestic politics between 1880 and 1923. As in the two British-North American ports, in close elections and when popular interest in Ireland was high, ethnic appeals focusing on the Irish Question were aimed at Catholic voters. In general, though, politics in the city was overwhelmingly non-ethnic, and the Irish Question hardly ever found its way into local discussions, though this
was partly due to Portland’s position outside of the British Empire, where issues such as Home Rule were foreign.

In all three ports, then, ethnic politics was exceptional, and Irishness and the affairs of Ireland were rarely present in political discussions. Questions such as economic and resource development, labour relations and, later, women’s suffrage dominated the era, and these debates tended to be divorced from ethnicity. Even discussions surrounding Canadian Confederation in Newfoundland, or federal-provincial relations in Nova Scotia, where the example of Ireland may have been directly relevant, only occasionally featured Irish aspects. The tenuous link between Irishness and politics in all three ports suggests that ethnicity was not employed by Irish Catholics as a political tool on a consistent basis. Instead, Irish identities were symbolic, consisting of an emotional attachment to the old country, rather than a central aspect of day-to-day life. The fleeting nature of ethnic politics in the three ports, moreover, demonstrates the variable nature of Irish identities in the diaspora. In the sphere of politics, ethnicity remained subservient to class, religion, and gender, but that is not to say that the romantic attachment to Ireland lacked strength. As the next two chapters on nationalism will make clear, Irish-born Catholics and their descendants remained passionately involved with the struggles of their forefather’s country, even if these struggles were seldom directly relevant to the politics of their adopted homelands.
Chapter Five

Responses to Irish Nationalism, 1880-1911

No feature of the diasporic experience has attracted as much scholarly attention as responses to Irish nationalism. Engagement with the politics of the ancestral homeland was the most direct, unambiguous manner in which those of Irish birth and descent expressed their ethnicity. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the Irish abroad contributed substantial sums of money to movements in Ireland, joined nationalist organizations, and commented extensively and enthusiastically on affairs in the old country. By studying how the Irish Catholics of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland engaged with nationalism, it is possible to obtain a clearer impression of the strength, depth, and variety of their ethnic identities.

This chapter argues that up until 1911 support for constitutional nationalism, with the objective of a self-governing Irish Dominion within the British Empire, was prominent in all three cities, but its intensity varied considerably over time and space. It was generally non-sectarian, involving not only Catholics of Irish birth or descent, but also their Anglo-Protestant neighbours. Public opposition to Home Rule during this period was relatively rare, and was restricted to St. John’s and Halifax, with such attitudes hardly ever observed in Portland.

Diasporic nationalism has its own distinct historiography. Several generations of historians have investigated the reasons why so many Irish Catholics took a keen interest in the political destiny of their ancestral homeland, as well as how expressions of nationalism varied through time and from place to place. A majority of this scholarship has focused on the United States, where interest in the Irish Question was particularly strong. The classic
thesis, put forward by Thomas N. Brown, suggests that Irish nationalism in America was deployed for American, rather than Irish, purposes, emerging as a consequence of “the realities of loneliness and alienation, and of poverty and prejudice” experienced in the United States.\(^1\) Even the second generation, and beyond, remained isolated from American corridors of power and prestige, and this communal loneliness and alienation contributed to a stronger sense of Irish ethnicity and fostered diasporic nationalism.\(^2\) Since its publication, a number of historians have built upon Brown’s American-centred explanation for diasporic nationalism. Lawrence McCaffrey and T.J. Rowland have highlighted American engagement in Irish affairs as a “cry of vengeance, and a quest for respectability,” in which immigrants’ fortunes in America, as well as their ability to gain respect from the Anglo-Protestant majority, were closely linked to Ireland’s fight for national sovereignty.\(^3\) Many Irish Americans believed they could only obtain respect in the republican United States if their homeland possessed self-government. In his influential book, *Emigrants and Exiles*, Kerby Miller examined emigrant letters in order to expand upon the links between nationalism and the Irish-American search for respectability. In addition to a sense of isolation from mainstream society, passionate participation in nationalist activity was due to a communal memory of the Irish famine experience, and the sense that emigration to the United States was a form of involuntary exile, forced upon Catholics by British misgovernment. For Miller, “American

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experiences and Irish legacies converged to mould Irish-American consciousness and nationalism.⁴

Recently, historians such as Alan O’Day have revised these conventional models of Irish-American nationalism, while also introducing a comparative dimension and engaging more directly with ethnic theory. O’Day maintains that the idea of the United States as a “hotbed” of nationalism has been exaggerated. Studies like Brown’s and Miller’s are “static representations,” in that they fail to account for how expressions of nationalism rose and fell throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Furthermore, they cannot be applied to other parts of the diaspora where social and political alienation may not have been prevalent.⁵ By examining the tours of Irish nationalist politicians in the 1880s and 1890s, he concludes that the degree of nationalist support varied substantially depending on time, place and location, and as such a strong communal ethnic identity was “largely ephemeral” during this period. Instead, events in the old country, such as the Land War in the early-1880s, or the Anglo-Irish War of 1919 to 1921, could produce a short-term surge in Irish diasporic nationalism. Such “knee-jerk” responses have many of the hallmarks of Herbert Gans’ model of “symbolic ethnicity,” where political circumstances in the homeland could temporarily result in a widespread, communal expression of identity. O’Day concludes that this sort of symbolic identification with Ireland was present in the United States from an early stage.⁶

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Although the overall strength, depth, and spatial spread of Irish-American nationalism may have been overestimated by some historians, the fact remains that hundreds of thousands of individuals took an active interest in the political destiny of their ancestral homeland. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, responses to Irish nationalism varied considerably, and many of the organizations formed to assist Ireland in its fight for self-government were plagued by debate and divisions tactics and objectives. The principal tension was between those who advocated radical, physical-force nationalism versus those who supported Charles Stewart Parnell and, later, John Redmond in their attempts to secure Home Rule for Ireland within the British Empire by peaceful, constitutional means. Elements of both visions were identifiable in the United States throughout the period. The revolutionary nationalists were led by John Devoy, Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa and groups such as the Clan na Gael and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, while newspaper editor John Boyle O’Reilly and the Irish National League (INL), later the United Irish League (UIL), were the main proponents of constitutional methods. Although supporters of the two philosophies occasionally cooperated, such as during the “New Departure” of the early 1880s, the general consensus is that most Irish Americans tended to support Parnell, Redmond and constitutional nationalism up until the 1910s, after which point the Home Rule crisis, increased support from the Irish-American Catholic clergy, and, especially, the aftermath of the 1916 Easter Rising turned opinion on the Irish Question towards Sinn Fein and an independent Irish Republic. Following the conclusion of the First World War, new republican organizations such as the Friends of Irish Freedom and the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic thrived in the United States, with the latter

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attracting over 800,000 members by 1921, and selling over $5.5 million in Irish Republican bonds.\(^8\)

When Irish-American experiences are placed next to examples of nationalism from elsewhere in the diaspora, the significance of local political circumstances becomes clear. In the United States, the republican political tradition, in addition to the legacy of famine memory and its associated Anglophobia, produced support for radical Irish separatism, especially after 1916. In the British world, Irish-Catholic loyalties often coincided with an affinity for the Empire, so adherence to physical-force nationalism was rare. In Australia, for example, responses to Irish nationalism were moderate and remained firmly within the constitutional mould. Although some radical expressions did exist, such as the views held by the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix, Australia’s domestic situation, particularly during and after the First World War, “precluded such open defiance.”\(^9\) While Irish Americans upheld their own republican government as a model for Ireland, those in Australia promoted the example of dominion Home Rule. Irish self-government within the British Empire would allow “Irish Australians to reconcile, without difficulty, their various loyalties, old and new.”\(^10\) In Great Britain, participation in Irish politics was similarly defined by “the need of the Irish migrant community to gain acceptance by the host community.”\(^11\) In cities like Liverpool, where an Irish nationalist member of parliament, T.P. O’Connor, was

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8 Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 543.
continually re-elected during the period by the Catholics of that city, support for constitutional nationalism remained in the ascendancy.¹²

Expressions of Irish nationalism in British North America followed similar patterns to those in Britain and Australia. Although radical republicanism was not unknown, the vast majority of Irish Catholics who engaged with the homeland’s politics supported Home Rule within the Empire. The historiography of Irish nationalism in Canada has advanced considerably in recent years, particularly thanks to the publication of David Wilson’s edited volume, *Irish Nationalism in Canada*, which successfully demonstrates the depth and variability of both Catholic- and Protestant-Canadian responses to affairs in Ireland from the early-nineteenth century to the twentieth.¹³ Prior to Wilson’s work, there has been considerable debate regarding the extent to which Canadians of Irish descent maintained an interest in Ireland’s political destiny. In examining Catholic identity in Toronto, both Mark McGowan and Brian Clarke concluded that by the twentieth century, concern with Irish nationalism was waning, as their Irish loyalties became subservient to Canadian and imperial ones.¹⁴ More recent investigations, however, have suggested that the interest in Irish affairs has been underestimated. Although his analysis is rather speculative at times, Robert McLaughlin has concluded that Catholics of Irish descent in Canada “most definitely maintained an interest in events in Ireland during the years 1912-1925,” and succeeds in pointing out that the language used by Catholic correspondents discussing politics in the

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homeland reveals a strong emotional attachment to the old country. McLaughlin’s recent monograph on Irish-Canadian responses to nationalism and unionism does provide a thorough discussion of how organizations like the Orange Order and the Self-Determination for Ireland League engaged with events in the old country. His study still struggles, however, to grasp the temporal and, especially, spatial variability of Irish ethnicity during this period, leading him to rather grandiose conclusions regarding the depth of Irish identity in Canada.

Regional studies have further enhanced our understanding of the strength and variety of Irish nationalism in Canada, particularly those that examine Quebec, where expressions of republicanism were strongest. In studying Irish nationalism in Montreal during the 1880s, Rosalyn Trigger found evidence of constitutional, or what she refers to as “embedded nationalism,” which focused on holding up Irish-Canadian harmony and prosperity within a British dominion as an example for potential Irish Home Rule. Existing alongside these constitutional expressions, however, was a more radical “diasporic” nationalism, which advocated cooperation with republican Irish-American groups in order to achieve an independent Ireland. Simon Jolivet’s studies of the links between Irish- and French-Canadian nationalism in Quebec have yielded similar conclusions. Although constitutional nationalism predominated, a strong republican minority existed within organizations such as

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18 Rosalyn Trigger, “Clerical Containment of Diasporic Irish Nationalism: A Canadian Example From the Parnell Era,” in *Irish Nationalism in Canada*, 86. Although her research is excellent, the distinction between “embedded” and “diasporic” nationalism is somewhat problematic. Trigger contends that the constitutional brand of nationalism was “embedded” because it drew inspiration from Canadian politics, while republicanism was “diasporic” because it engaged much more directly with Irish-American currents. All engagement with Irish nationalism, whether constitutional or republican, was to some extent diasporic. Both modes were constructed by a combination of domestic and external factors, and both brought individuals of Irish descent into close cooperation with other communities throughout the diaspora. Nationalist networks transcended space, so one should not rigidly differentiate between embedded and diasporic forms.
the Self-Determination for Ireland League, formed in Montreal in 1919.\textsuperscript{19} Despite such variability, however, expressions of Irish nationalism in British North America were mostly constitutional, and reflected a strong emotional attachment to Ireland as well as loyalties to Canada and the Empire. At least up until the early 1920s, a “closer integration into Canadian society did not necessarily mean a concomitant loss of their sense of Irishness.”\textsuperscript{20}

Owing to its significance in reconstructing diasporic identities, as well as the substantial quantity of material collected for the three ports studied here, the analysis of nationalism is divided in two. The division is essentially chronological, with chapter five comparing responses to Irish affairs from 1880 until 1911, when constitutional nationalism predominated throughout the diaspora. Chapter six examines 1912 to 1922, when Irish-American opinions tended to become increasingly radical and republican, diverging from Irish Catholics in the British world. The most significant comparison will be between how Catholics of Irish birth and descent in British North America expressed their nationalism versus their compatriots in the United States. Chapter five reveals a great deal of symmetry in how the Irish Catholics of St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland engaged with the Irish Question, while chapter six focuses on an increasing discrepancy as the Catholics of St. John’s and Halifax continued to advocate constitutional methods, while those of Portland became increasingly republican, particularly after the First World War.

Protestants of English, Irish and Scottish descent come into the analysis in these two chapters more than at any point previously. This reflects another prominent theme in Irish-Canadian historiography, which addresses Irish-Protestant unionism, as expressed through

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institutions such as the Orange Order. In St. John’s and Halifax, especially, Protestants – most of whom were in fact not of Irish descent – participated extensively in local responses to the Irish Question. Many publicly supported Ireland’s fight for Home Rule, while others, especially after 1912, vociferously opposed Irish nationalism.

Finally, these two chapters will conclude one of this dissertation’s most prominent themes: the role of regional, national, and transnational networks in sustaining Irish identities. The focus here is on how organizations such as the Land League, Irish National League or, later, the Friends of Irish Freedom and the Self-Determination for Ireland League became established in each locality, and how they linked the Irish-Catholic communities to movements which spanned the diaspora, as well as how they provided key local mechanisms for public engagement with Irish nationalism. The conclusions tend to support the arguments of Alan O’Day: responses to Irish nationalism were inconsistent in all three ports. Dramatic events in Ireland or visits by prominent nationalist speakers could briefly inflame passions and provoke widespread responses, but these tended to fade quickly. The number of generations removed from Ireland does not seem to have significantly affected responses to nationalism: the third-, fourth- and fifth-generation Irish Catholics of St. John’s and Halifax could participate in the affairs of their ancestral homeland just as passionately as the first- and second-generation Catholics of Portland. Far more important were the institutional and organizational frameworks in each city that allowed for local populations to participate in nationalist movements. As we shall see in chapter five, St. John’s was somewhat isolated from North American Irish networks in the late-nineteenth century, but by the twentieth became more directly involved alongside Halifax and Portland.

Chapter five begins with an analysis of the efforts in 1880 to relieve poverty and rural distress in Ireland, which were prominent in all three ports. Although this is not strictly an expression of nationalism, much of the language used in discussing the problems of Ireland contained nationalist rhetoric. The discussion then goes on to address the activity of the Irish National Land League in the early 1880s. Branches of the League were officially established in Halifax and Portland, so the local organizations can be directly compared, while in St. John’s League activity was fairly limited. Next, the chapter examines responses to Charles Stewart Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party’s efforts to obtain Home Rule for Ireland. The analysis focuses on the Irish National League, which organized official support in Portland and Halifax, as well as tours by nationalist speakers and fundraising endeavours, which took place in all three centres. Opposition to Home Rule is another important theme of this chapter, and is analyzed before an analysis of responses to Parnell’s fall and death in 1890 and 1891. Chapter five concludes with an overview of nationalist activity from 1891 to 1911. As was the case throughout the diaspora, Irish nationalist activity did not reach the same intensity as it has in the 1880s, but Ireland remained a frequent topic of discussion in local newspapers, and tours by nationalist speakers continued. A particular focus of this section will address the ways in which the 1898 centenary of the United Irishmen’s Rising was marked in each city. Together, this discussion allows us to compare the variety of ways in which Irish Catholics maintained an interest in their ancestral homeland, and in turn provides a strong indicator of the strength of their ethnic identities.

5.1 The Irish Relief Fund, 1880

In 1880, poor harvests created a fear of famine amongst Ireland’s small tenant farmers. In response to the threat of mass-starvation, the Lord Mayor of Dublin established a
fund to relieve rural distress in Ireland, and appeals for aid were sent throughout the United Kingdom, North America, and Australia. The movement to relieve Irish suffering began in St. John’s in late January, 1880. Several local newspapers reprinted the appeal “to the people of Newfoundland” from the Dublin Mansion House Committee for the Relief of the Distress in Ireland. The telegraphed call for aid was sent throughout the diaspora, and appealed to “Irishmen and friends of Irishmen” to help alleviate the famine conditions which abounded throughout Ireland. Official response to the appeal was not immediate, and a relief committee was not formally established until a month later, largely due to a lack of leadership. Before this, though, some steps were taken to raise funds. An evening of songs, recitations and dialogues was set for February 6th, while on February 9th, a performance of the H.M.S. Pinafore was staged before a large audience, with the proceeds being donated to Irish relief.

On February 21st, a public meeting was held at the court house to officially organize an Irish relief drive. Many of Newfoundland’s most prominent politicians attended. Governor Glover chaired the meeting, and a relief committee, consisting of both Catholics and Protestants, was established. By that evening, £386 had been subscribed. The meeting demonstrates cooperation between those of Irish descent and their Anglo-Protestant neighbours, but the most important figure in organizing the relief drive in St. John’s was Bishop Thomas Joseph Power, a native of New Ross, county Wexford. Power was a member of the Dublin Mansion House Committee, and it was he who wrote to the Lord Mayor of

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23 Terra Nova Advocate, January 21, 1880; Evening Telegram, January 21, 1880.
24 Carolyn Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers: Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Newfoundland,” (PhD Diss., Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2010), 373.
25 Evening Telegram, February 2; February 10, 1880.
26 Evening Telegram, February 21, 1880; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 371.
Dublin informing him that a local relief committee had been established.\textsuperscript{27} For the Catholics of St. John’s in the 1880s, the clergy – particularly those born in Ireland – provided key links to the ancestral homeland, as noted in chapter three. Local ethnic and benevolent associations were also involved. The Fisherman’s Star of the Sea organized their own collection, the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society held entertainments, while the Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) pledged over £300 for Irish relief.\textsuperscript{28}

The 1880 relief fund was not necessarily an expression of Irish nationalism. Both Irish and non-Irish were involved, and although the language used to justify the efforts occasionally contained some nationalist rhetoric, most support was rooted in the idea of “Christian charity.”\textsuperscript{29} The movement produced significant non-political opposition within the community, and the debates surrounding the propriety of sending monetary aid to Ireland provide some insight into intergenerational Irish identities in St. John’s, and how they overlapped with a sense of Newfoundland patriotism. Opposition to the relief drive emerged shortly after the call for aid reached St. John’s. A letter in the \textit{Morning Herald} signed “Another Irishman’s Son” argued that “charity begins at home,” and that it was wrong to send financial aid overseas when so many Newfoundlander were suffering as a result of a poor fishery. A response in the \textit{Evening Telegram}, signed “A Celt,” conceded that local populations were in difficulty, however the distress in Ireland far outweighed that at home, and those who opposed the fund were motivated by a misguided sense of Newfoundland patriotism.\textsuperscript{30} The brief exchange demonstrates how, even for those of Irish descent, engagement with the affairs of the old country could be a contentious issue when it clashed

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Evening Telegram}, February 23, 1880; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 373.
\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Terra Nova Advocate}, February 25, 1880; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 371.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Evening Telegram}, February 6, 1880; Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 374.
\textsuperscript{30} \textit{Evening Telegram}, February 6, 1880.
with domestic concerns. In response to the call that Newfoundlanders were similarly in need of relief, a member of the Irish Relief Committee sent a letter to the treasurer, Joseph Little, pledging £25 to purchase coal for impoverished St. John’s families, and several similar contributions followed.\(^{31}\)

Despite an increased concern with local poverty, the controversy over the Irish Relief Fund was just beginning. On March 18\(^{th}\), the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, a Protestant, conservative press organ, published a piece condemning “local Irish beggary,” and called for any further appeals for aid be answered only by “local Irish wealth.”\(^{32}\) Responses to this editorial in other newspapers vociferously defended both the Irish relief fund, as well as efforts to relieve the local poor, of Irish descent or otherwise.\(^{33}\) The language of the debates suggests that, for many, there was still a close association between “Irishness” and Catholicism in 1880s St. John’s, while the fact that so many of the correspondents signed their letters with “Irishman’s Son,” or “A Newfoundlander of Irish descent,” demonstrates a lineal ethnic awareness. It is important, though, that not all Irish Catholics in St. John’s supported the relief fund. Local suffering and poverty were a far more pressing concern for most, and those who did contribute may have been motivated as much by charity or philanthropy as by a sense of Irish identity. The question is not whether local patriotism outweighed or surpassed a sense of Irish identity – undoubtedly for most it did – but rather how ethnicity existed alongside such loyalties. Finally, the St. John’s Irish relief fund of 1880 reveals the important role of the clergy in maintaining transatlantic networks during this period. It was the Wexford-born Bishop Power who was a key instigator of the movement, and it was he who received a personal letter of thanks for the Lord Mayor of

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31 *Evening Telegram*, March 18, 1880.
33 *Newfoundlander*, March 19, 1880; *Evening Telegram*, March 19; March 22; March 23, 1880.
Dublin in mid-April for the efforts of the Newfoundland population. Despite the controversial nature of the fundraising endeavours, they were successful. A letter to the *Telegram* reflecting on the campaign noted that over £2,000 had been raised for the cause.

Halifax’s response to the Mansion House call for aid was quite similar to that of St. John’s, although the movement did not spur the same level of debate due to Nova Scotia’s more secure economic position. The initial meeting was called by the Mayor of Halifax, Stephen Tobin, and held at the Temperance Hall on January 12th, 1880. The meeting involved members of the community from “all sects, nationalities and creeds.” Speeches were made by the Mayor, Reverend Hill, a member of the Church of England clergy who himself was of Anglo-Irish descent, and M.B. Daly, a Catholic Member of Parliament for Halifax. In St. John’s, occasional references were made to the Irish land question, but in Halifax any Irish political affiliation was explicitly rejected, and the fundraising effort was characterized as purely philanthropic. Daly referred to Irish Land League agitation, stating that “with that [...] this meeting has nothing whatsoever to do.” He went on to say that regardless of one’s own opinions on the land question in Ireland, “sympathy cannot be refused to the present movement.” Reverend Chancellor Hill, meanwhile, focused on the Irish as fellow citizens of the Empire, noting that they were brothers, “living under the same flag, and ruled by the same sovereign.” Clearly, a conscious effort was being made to distance the relief fund from any nationalist rhetoric in order to include all citizens of Halifax in the spirit of charitable relief.

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34 *Evening Telegram*, April 16, 1880.
35 *Evening Telegram*, October 14, 1880.
By the end of March, almost $1,200 had been collected.\(^{37}\) Most of this was from voluntary donations, but cultural events, such as a play on the life of Robert Emmet, also raised money.\(^{38}\) It is not clear whether this sum included a $500 pledge by the Charitable Irish Society (CIS), which was raised in keeping with the members’ desires “as Irishmen and sons of Irishmen to show sympathy by action as well as words.” The sum appears to have been sent directly to John MacHale, the Archbishop of Tuam, rather than to the local relief committee.\(^{39}\) The language of the CIS resolution shows that an identification with the ancestral homeland was a key motivation for their generosity. Nevertheless, the fact remains that in Halifax, consistent and deliberate efforts were made to distance the 1880 Irish relief fund from any association with Irish politics and nationalism, and to focus only on charitable objectives.

In Portland, similar relief efforts were organized, though these do not appear to have been directly as a result of the Mansion House appeal that instigated the efforts in St. John’s and Halifax. The first mention of Irish relief efforts was on February 3\(^{rd}\), 1880, when the Irish American Relief Association (IARA) announced that it would pledge $500 to alleviate distress in Ireland.\(^{40}\) The following day, a letter appeared in the *Eastern Argus* calling on the citizens of Portland to attend a meeting at City Hall to organize an official Irish relief drive.\(^{41}\) James Cunningham, a successful Leitrim-born contractor, called the meeting to order, and Mayor George Walker, a Yankee Protestant, was named chairman and made the first speech. In stark contrast to Halifax, Walker placed the blame for the Irish crisis squarely on the “oppression of the landlords.” The official resolutions passed at the meeting noted that “the

\(^{37}\) *Halifax Herald*, March 31, 1880.

\(^{38}\) *Halifax Herald*, March 11, 1880.


\(^{40}\) *Eastern Argus*, February 3, 1880.

\(^{41}\) *Eastern Argus*, February 4, 1880.
land laws are fatal to the prosperity of Ireland and to the interest of the Irish people. They breed famine, poverty and wretchedness [and] the permanent welfare of Ireland is imperilled as long as they exist.” At the close of the meeting, $1,700 was collected.\textsuperscript{42} Despite these overtly nationalist tones, fund updates in the Argus later pointed out that the effort was “not for any political purpose,” but rather for the poor and suffering of Ireland.\textsuperscript{43}

As in St. John’s and Halifax, both Irish and non-Irish contributed to the fund. The original call for a meeting was signed by sixty-four individuals, including some of the city’s most prominent Yankee-Protestant citizens, as well as non-Irish Catholics such as the German tailor, William H. Kohing and the French consul to Maine, Edward P. LeProhon.\textsuperscript{44} The funds raised were sent to a selection of bishops in Ireland for distribution throughout their diocese, with further remittances being sent to the relief committee in Ireland – likely the Mansion House. The local effort raised almost $4,500, in addition to $800 collected at local Catholic churches.\textsuperscript{45}

The most significant conclusions to draw from this comparison relate to the differences in how relief efforts were rationalized in each of the three centres. In St. John’s, although some nationalist rhetoric was present, most of the discussion characterized the movement as an exercise in Christian charity. Those who organized the Halifax fund explicitly rejected any political overtones, and residents were called upon to help their fellow imperial citizens, regardless of opinions on the Irish land question. In Portland, however, organizers highlighted the link between landlord oppression, British misgovernment and Irish suffering. This rhetoric was not confined solely to those of Irish birth or descent, as

\textsuperscript{42} Eastern Argus, February 7, 1880.  
\textsuperscript{43} Eastern Argus, February 9, 1880.  
\textsuperscript{44} Matthew Jude Barker, “The Time we Shared Stone Soup,” Portland Monthly Magazine, (October, 2000).  
\textsuperscript{45} Eastern Argus, March 2, 1880.
even the Yankee Mayor of Portland condemned landlords in his speech. This foreshadows a
trend that will be seen frequently in this chapter and the next: expressions of Irish
nationalism were tolerated more openly and evoked less controversy in Portland than in
either of the two British-North American centres.

5.2 The Land League

In 1880, Irish nationalism was dominated by the land question. The vast majority of
late-nineteenth century Irish farmers did not own the land they cultivated. Instead, they
rented it from the almost exclusively-Protestant landed gentry, many of whom lived in
Britain. In the late-1870s, a series of poor harvests coupled with dropping prices resulted in
widespread agrarian economic distress, particularly in Connaught. Throughout 1878, a
growing number of tenant farmers approached landlords for rent abatements, many landlords
were reluctant to grant relief. As a result of the growing agrarian unrest, political
organization on the part of the farmers increased, and both revolutionary and constitutional
nationalists saw the potential of a mass agrarian movement to alter the political relationship
between Great Britain and Ireland. Many ex-Fenians and republicans, such as John Devoy
and the Irish-American *Clan na Gael*, believed that the British government would be
unwilling to grant land reform, and that the resultant outrage could finally mobilize Ireland’s
peasant masses into a widespread revolt culminating in the establishment of an Irish
Republic. Constitutional nationalists like Charles Stewart Parnell perceived the political
benefits of a unified agricultural class, and believed that if land reform could be obtained by
parliamentary methods, so too could Home Rule. With comparable objectives, radical and

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constitutional nationalists cooperated in the “New Departure” of 1879, with a “vigorous agitation of the land question” highlighted as one of the central aspects of the agreement.\(^4\)

The Irish National Land League emerged largely thanks to the organizational efforts of Michael Davitt – himself a radical nationalist – in county Mayo, and aimed to politically unite tenants of that county against the landlord classes. It was formed as the National Land League of Mayo in Castlebar on August 16\(^{th}\), 1879, and by October 21\(^{st}\), Parnell established the national Land League organization in Dublin to represent the various tenant associations being formed throughout Ireland.\(^4\) Its objectives have been referred to as the “three f’s”: fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale of improvements. In a mass-agrarian campaign, rents were withheld, evictions were resisted, landlords were socially ostracized, and in some cases those who supported the landed interests were attacked or killed.\(^5\) The Land League had a strong diasporic element. Both Parnell and Davitt toured the United States in 1880 to gain popular and financial support, and in New York, Parnell oversaw the establishment of an American branch of the organization. The American Land League expanded rapidly, and by September, 1881, there were more than 1,500 branches throughout the United States.\(^5\)

Although there was no official Land League in St. John’s, the Irish land question was a frequent topic of discussion in the press, and the Catholics of the city sent money to Ireland to support the movement. Carolyn Lambert’ research on late-nineteenth century nationalism suggests that the local press were generally supportive of the ideas and principles of the Land

\(^{5}\) *Ibid.*, 3.
League, if not their tactics. Debates on Irish affairs did take place, however. Many of these were between newspaper editors, as it was the press that kept the Catholics of St. John’s up to date with the situation in their ancestral homeland through both editorials and telegraphed reports from Britain. In December, 1880, following the decision of the British Government to deploy additional troops in Ireland, the St. John’s Morning Chronicle described the Land League agitation as the actions of a “misguided people.” This phrase inspired a stinging response from the Catholic-edited Terra Nova Advocate, which argued that the Irish were “misgoverned,” rather than misguided. The Advocate’s editor produced a lengthy summary of British land laws and their effects on Ireland, and praised Charles Stewart Parnell’s efforts to correct the government’s “deplorable wrong and injustice,” and concluded by noting that what was needed was not military intervention, but rather to coerce “England to do justice for Ireland.”

Despite the objections of the Chronicle’s editor, most St. John’s newspaper men seem to have agreed that the British government was mishandling the situation. The Liberal-Protestant editor of the Evening Telegram, for example, also castigated the government’s role: “the fact is that the Irish people have suffered and are suffering from the variations of treatment received from successive political administrations in England. [...] In such circumstances, it is difficult to blame the people altogether for a state of matters to which the government itself has partly conduced.” Although there was never any overt support of agrarian violence, sympathy with the Irish tenants was widespread, and was not limited solely to Catholics of Irish descent. Certainly, most do not appear to have perceived the Land League as a disloyal or seditious organization.

52 Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 352.
53 Terra Nova Advocate, December 18, 1880.
54 Evening Telegram, October 28, 1881.
Support for the League in the press was mostly rhetorical, and examples of more
direct action on the part of St. John’s Catholics are rare. No branch of the League was
officially established in the city, unlike many other North American centres. On at least one
occasion, though, fundraising for the Land League did take place. The Advocate published a
list of subscribers in August, 1881, in addition to a report from the Dublin Weekly News
which acknowledged £60.7s from the “old stock” Irish of St. John’s, Newfoundland, as noted
in chapter three. The report referred to the “St. John’s, Nfld, branch of the Land League,”
though the collection appears to be an isolated endeavour, given the lack of any other
organized League activity in the port. The list of subscribers suggests that the local Catholic
clergy had a prominent role in leading the movement. Furthermore, the fund was not only
raised in St. John’s, but rather involved communities from across the eastern half of the
island. Of the fifty-seven names that appear on the list, sixteen were priests. Most were based
in St. John’s, though contributions came from clergymen as far away as Bonavista and
Renews, and the top clerical contributor was Rev. Richard O'Donnell, a native of Cahir,
county Tipperary, and the parish priest at St. Mary’s. Most lay contributions were from St.
John’s, though some came from Conception Bay communities such as Brigus, Harbour
Grace and Harbour Main. Higher clergy were generally absent from the list, and most
clerical contributions seem to have come from parish priests. Bishop Power, for example,
who had an important role in organizing relief for the Irish poor the previous summer, did
not contribute to the fund, while only two of the priests listed – Jeremiah O’Donnell of
Harbour Main and W. Forristall of St. John’s – possessed the title “Right Reverend.”
Michael Francis Howley, the Newfoundland-born priest who would eventually become
bishop in 1894, contributed one pound. The funds raised were not sent to the League
organization in Dublin, but rather to the Archbishop of Cashel, T.W. Croke. This further suggests that the fund was clerically inspired, and that in the late-nineteenth century, Catholic Church networks remained the most direct connections between the Catholics of St. John’s and their ancestral homeland. \textsuperscript{55}

Land League activity in Halifax was more consistent and organized than in St. John’s, but also evoked greater controversy and opposition. On January 23\textsuperscript{rd}, 1881, a meeting was held at the Halifax Lyceum to organize a local branch of the Land League. It drew a large attendance, and was chaired by Patrick J. O’Brien, an Irish-born butcher who resided on Brunswick Lane. \textsuperscript{56} O’Brien had organized the gathering based upon the “earnest solicitations of many persons.” A preliminary meeting had drawn up a constitution and a set of bylaws, so all that remained was for those present to ratify them. Once this was accomplished, most attendees paid an unspecified amount of initial dues, and signed the roll to become members, resolving to “assist, by any lawful means, their fellow countrymen in Ireland.” The \textit{Halifax Herald}’s report on the meeting praised the Land League in Canada, noting that branches had “been formed in nearly every city and town in the Dominion.” It concluded by highlighting the intergenerational nature of the Halifax branch, stating that “many of the old stock have disappeared from this earth, but their offspring are impressed with the spirit of their ancestors and appear to be determined to assist their friends across the Atlantic.” \textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Terra Nova Advocate}, August 13, 1881. Thanks to the biographical research of Monsignor Francis A. Coady, fifteen of the sixteen clerical contributors to the fund can be identified by place of birth. Of these, twelve were born in Ireland and three in Newfoundland. See Francis A Coady, ed., \textit{Lives Recalled: Deceased Catholic Priests Who Worked in Newfoundland, Mini-biographies: 1627-2010} (St. John’s: Knights of Columbus, 2010).

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Halifax Herald}, January 24, 1881; McAlpine’s \textit{Halifax City Directory}, 1881-1882 (Halifax: McAlpine’s Publishing Co, 1882).

\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Halifax Herald}, January 24, 1881.
As was the case for many American branches, the Halifax Land League seems to have been primarily concerned with raising funds for the movement in Ireland. In the spring and summer of 1881, the League organized lectures covering a variety of Irish historical topics, as well as current affairs.\(^{58}\) At a meeting on January 5\(^{\text{th}}\), 1882, the members of the local branch agreed to support the call of the Chicago national convention to raise $250,000 by February 1\(^{\text{st}}\). A large amount of money was collected at the meeting, while the members resolved to solicit contributions from the broader Halifax and Nova Scotian community. Several outside contributions were passed on to members, but the precise results of these efforts are not clear.\(^{59}\)

Very little information on Halifax Land League membership has survived. It is not known how many individuals were part of the organization, though in 1882 it was said to be “in a favourable condition.”\(^{60}\) Executive lists for 1881 and 1882 were printed in the *Acadian Recorder* and *Halifax Herald* respectively. The lists rarely gave full names, instead printing first initials, so only a handful of individuals could be definitively traced using a combination of city directories and nominal census records. Despite the tiny sample, the few identifiable members provide some insight into the origins of the membership. As mentioned above, the founder and president in both 1881 and 1882 was Patrick J. O’Brien, a butcher, born in Ireland in 1829. O’Brien lived in Halifax with his young family, who, according to the 1881 Canadian Census, consisted of a wife, Margaret, born in Newfoundland, seven-year old twin boys born in the United States, and a two-year old daughter, also born in Newfoundland. The children’s places of birth suggest that O’Brien was a relatively recent arrival in Halifax. Furthermore, his presence in the city appears to have been brief – records of him in city

\(^{58}\) *Halifax Herald*, March 17; August 11; October 28, 1881.

\(^{59}\) *Halifax Herald*, January 5, 1882; February 8, 1882.

\(^{60}\) *Halifax Herald*, February 8, 1882.
directories disappear after 1885. Of the 1881 executive, only one other, John Connolly, an Irish-born shoemaker, could be positively identified. In 1882, the first vice-president was John J. Murphy, who was probably a jeweller born in Ireland in 1846. Recording secretary Simon Cummings was an Irish-born grocer, corresponding secretary Daniel J. Sullivan was likely a fish dealer born in Nova Scotia of Irish parents, while finance committee member Richard Kinsman was a “tinsman” (probably a tinsmith) from Newfoundland, and his colleague Arthur Monoghan was either a dried goods merchant or a carpenter. Although this sample is extremely limited, it does suggest a few trends. First, compared to other Catholic associations in Halifax such as the Charitable Irish Society, the Land League had a more working-class membership, with even the executive positions being filled by butchers, grocers, tinsmiths and fish dealers. The Catholic elite of Halifax – doctors, lawyers, and merchants – do not appear to have been involved, nor was the Catholic clergy. Second, despite only comprising a fairly small percentage of the Irish ethnic population of the city, the Irish-born appear to have had a strong representation on the executive. Although the identities of those of Irish descent in Halifax were praised by the League’s founders, it is possible that it was the Irish-born, who had direct experiences of the suffering of Irish tenants, that were the key individuals involved in setting up the local branch. Once this institutional framework was in place, the “latent ethnic constituency” of Nova Scotia-born Catholics could be mobilized to participate directly in Irish affairs. This conclusion, though, must remain speculative, as the majority of the executives for 1881 and 1882 could not be traced.61

61 Executive lists may be found in the Acadian Recorder, March 7, 1881; Halifax Herald, February 8, 1882. Occupational data is taken from McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory, 1881-1882 (Halifax: McAlpine’s Publishing Co, 1882); McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory, 1882-1883 (Halifax: McAlpine’s Publishing Co, 1883). Places of birth and further biographical details are taken from the www.familysearch.org database, with
The opposition it engendered remains one of the most interesting features of the Halifax Land League. While in St. John’s, most editorials on the Irish land question expressed sympathy with the objectives of the League, this was not the case in Nova Scotia’s capital. Shortly after the suppression of the Land League in Ireland by the British Government, the city’s Liberal press organ, the *Morning Chronicle*, published celebratory editorials. The paper referred to the action as “an extreme step, but one which [...] most sensible men will admit was called for,” and went on to suggest that all friends of Ireland should rejoice at the League’s suppression. Several days later, John Murdoch, an editor from Inverness, Scotland, who had recently assisted in the establishment of a Land League branch in Charlottetown, PEI, was in Halifax to give a lecture to the local organization. While there, he wrote a scathing letter to the *Chronicle*’s editor, attacking his attitude regarding Irish affairs and accusing him of “upholding a vicious and violent system.” The paper printed the letter, but appended a sarcastic editorial note at the end, proclaiming that they “need not waste space in a reply.”

A more concentrated debate about the local Land League occurred in 1883 in the *Halifax Herald*. On March 27th, a letter to the editor attacked the League and its supporters on both sides of the Atlantic. The author made a direct connection between the organization and lawlessness, blaming it directly for the murders of Lord Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke in Dublin’s Phoenix Park in 1882. He accused Land League leaders in Ireland of “uttering language from the public platform only calculated to incite deeds of outrage and crime against the peace of the country,” and that it was the duty of people in both Britain and

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*the original information coming from the *Census of Canada*, 1881. The idea of a “latent ethnic constituency” being mobilized by events in the ancestral homeland comes from Kathleen Conzen’s model of invented ethnicity. See Conzen, “The Invention of Ethnicity,” 16.

62 *Morning Chronicle*, October 24, 1881.
63 *Morning Chronicle*, November 5, 1881.
Canada to “hold these men, this association, responsible for the fruits of which the seeds sown has produced.” The letter drew a response two days later from an “Irishman,” who claimed that he was not a member of the local branch, repudiating any connection between the Land League and physical-force nationalism. Highlighting the implied connection between the League and the Phoenix Park murders, he noted that this was “a terrible charge to bring against any body of men,” while also pointing out that branches in Ireland, Great Britain and Canada had passed resolutions condemning the violence. The final word in this exchange came from the Halifax Land League itself in an April 3rd letter to the Herald. It pointed out that the branch had recently sent $100 to a priest, Father F.W. Gallagher in Donegal, in addition to another hundred sent to Father William Fitzgerald of Cork, for the relief of the Irish poor. The letter concluded “the work of the Land League is that of charity, although some unprincipled beings would have people think that the work of the League is that of wickedness, [...] we work only for one subject, and that is for the amelioration of the suffering misgoverned of Ireland.”

By August, however, support for land agitation in Halifax ceased, as the local organization was transformed into a branch of the Home Rule-oriented Irish National League, with Patrick J. O’Brien again installed as president.

Land League activity in Portland was more organized than in either St. John’s or Halifax. It provided social opportunities for the Irish Catholics of the city, and, crucially, involved women directly in the movement. The initial meeting to establish a Portland branch of the Land League was held on November 22nd, 1880. Frank Cunningham, an Irish-born stonemason and one of Portland’s leading Catholics, whose company “constructed many of

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64 Halifax Herald, March 27, 1883.
65 Halifax Herald, March 29, 1883.
66 Halifax Herald, April 3, 1883.
67 Halifax Herald, August 13, 1883.
the largest structures of the city and state,” called the meeting to order. Maine-born attorney William H. Looney, who would go on to become a state representative in 1888 and 1890, and a state senator in 1908, acted as secretary. The procedure was quite similar to the establishment of the Halifax branch. A constitution, which had been prepared in advance, was ratified by those present, and forty-one men paid initial dues of one dollar and signed the membership roll. Any resident of Portland was eligible to join the local branch, following payment of the initiation fee and a monthly rate of ten cents. Regular meetings were set for the third Monday of each month at the Irish American Relief Association’s hall on Plum Street. The meeting closed with a short address by Charles McCarthy Jr., a wealthy clothing merchant and another of the city’s most prominent Irishmen, in which he highlighted the respectability and legality of the Land League. McCarthy stated that “the revolution that is sought to effect must be a bloodless one. That man is no friend of Ireland that would plunge her people into the horrors of civil war. The work of the Land League is done under cover of law, and not by resisting it.” He concluded by establishing the principal goal of the Portland branch: to raise funds in order to support a “peaceful settlement of the matter.” As in Halifax, the founders of the Portland Land League were keen to distance themselves from any association with revolutionary Irish nationalism, or even agrarian unrest.

In its early months, the League’s activity was focused on increasing its membership and, as in Halifax, on organizing lectures on Irish affairs. Many of the addresses were by local members, but several prominent speakers from outside the city were invited to give public talks in order to raise funds. One of the first was by American journalist William

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70 *Eastern Argus*, November 23, 1880.
Redpath, who had been covering the situation in the west of Ireland. The event raised almost $50 for the League, allowing the treasurer to forward $100 to the American Land League’s national organization.\textsuperscript{71} The most prominent speakers to come to Portland were nationalist politicians T.P. O’Connor and T.M. Healy, who gave lectures in front of large crowds in the autumn of 1881.\textsuperscript{72} Such lectures not only served to keep Portland’s Irish Catholics up to date with the land agitation in Ireland, but also forged connections between the local community and the broader diaspora.

The Portland Land League also organized an array of social functions in order to raise funds. A ball was held at City Hall on March 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1881, and involved over 350 couples. Dances, dinners and balls continued on behalf of the League for the next two years. One of the most significant events was held in July, 1882, and transcended the local organization, bringing together Irish Catholics from across Maine. Branches from throughout the state combined to organize a mass excursion to Lake Maranocook, where dancing and amusements were combined with speeches by Irish-American nationalist leaders. It was hoped that up to five thousand would attend, but rain on the day kept the attendance closer to one thousand.\textsuperscript{73} Through large social events, the Land League was able to engage a sizeable proportion of Portland’s Catholics in Irish affairs. Through either membership in the organization itself, or, more likely, through participation in its sponsored events, support for the Land League and Irish tenant farmers was widespread.

The Portland branch also attempted to take advantage of local Catholic associational networks in order to raise funds for Ireland. Following the 1881 Chicago convention’s call to raise $250,000, the League’s financial committee organized a meeting with representatives

\textsuperscript{71} Eastern Argus, January 11, 1881
\textsuperscript{72} Eastern Argus, October 27; November 26, 1881.
\textsuperscript{73} Eastern Argus, July 19; July 20, 1881.
from Portland’s most prominent Catholic societies to organize a drive. The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), the Montgomery Guards, the Irish American Relief Association, the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society, the Boilermaker’s Association, and the Grattan Literary Association were all involved, though the precise outcome of these discussions is unclear.74

From the outset, the members of the Portland Land League made a close association between land agitation and the fight for Irish self-government. At a December 21st, 1880, meeting, Elliott King, a Portland-born Catholic lawyer, addressed the assembly, arguing that “with the force of global opinion against [Britain], she will be compelled not only to give the land to the people of Ireland at a fair price, but she will be forced to give the Irish people a parliament in their own country.” Newspaper editor F.M. Fogg followed up this comment by calling on the members to “help the cause of Irish freedom.”75 The Land League continued to discuss the national question alongside their support for tenant farmers. In April, 1881, debates were held over two meetings on whether Irish self-government should take the form of Dominion Home Rule or an independent Republic. Both sides were presented by local members, with neither side reportedly winning over a majority of opinion.76

The League’s most direct discussion of the land question itself occurred in the wake of Prime Minister William Ewart Gladstone’s 1881 Land Act. Although the legislation did not meet all of Parnell and Davitt’s demands, it did provide relief and additional security for many of Ireland’s tenants. In America, its passing raised questions as to what direction the movement should take. On August 16th, 1881, the Portland branch held a meeting at which the merits of the bill were debated at length. Charles McCarthy Jr. argued that it was a

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74 Eastern Argus, December 20, 1881.
75 Eastern Argus, December 21, 1880.
76 Eastern Argus, April 12; April 26, 1881.
positive outcome, and though not all demands were met, it constituted a vital step in the relief of Ireland’s Catholic tenants. Thomas F. Sheehan, a shoemaker, argued against the Act, taking issue with McCarthy’s views, though “in a very gentlemanly manner.” Sheehan questioned whether Gladstone had any real interest in the wellbeing of the Irish tenants. Despite the disagreement, one month later the League resolved that the Act failed to “effect a permanent settlement of the land question, and the agitation should continue until landlordism was a thing of the past.”

Full membership rolls for the Portland Land League have not survived but the Democratic press organ, the *Eastern Argus*, frequently provided lists of executives and sub-committees. At its peak, the League probably did not exceed three-hundred members. From the pages of the *Argus*, forty of these could be definitively identified using city directories and the 1880 United States Census, and this sample size should be sufficient to provide some reliable conclusions regarding the origins of Land League members. In terms of place of birth, the members appear to have been split more or less equally between Irish- and North American-born. Twenty of the forty members traced here were born in Ireland, one in England of Irish parents, and nineteen in the United States and Canada. Only seven of those born in North America did not possess at least one Irish parent. Unlike the Halifax branch of the League, the Catholic elite of Portland fully participated in the movement. The membership reveals a broad range of occupational diversity, as attorneys, bookkeepers, editors and clerks sat on committees alongside labourers and skilled tradesmen.

Involvement with the League was also not exclusively Irish-Catholic. As introduced in

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77 *Eastern Argus*, August 16; September 26, 1881.
78 *Eastern Argus*, January 16, 1883.
79 Occupational data was taken from *Portland Directory and Reference Book, 1881* (Portland: S.B. Beckett, 1881); places of birth and other data was gleaned from the www.ancestry.com genealogical database, with the original information coming from the *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880*. For a full list of the forty members, see Appendix C.
chapter four, political affiliations and opportunism could bring individuals into the organization. This was the case in 1882 when Darius H. Ingraham, an Episcopalian member of the Democratic Party who would go on to become mayor in 1891, was chosen to represent Portland at that year’s national Land League convention. It is likely that Ingraham participated in order to gain support amongst the Irish-Catholic electorate of the city.  

In sum, the Land League brought together individuals from a wide range of backgrounds. Both the American-born and Irish-born generation were more or less equally represented, and members were drawn from all socioeconomic strata.

Perhaps the most significant factor that separates Land League activity in Portland from the two British-North American ports is the active role played by women in the movement. On January 27th, 1881, a meeting was held to establish a branch of the Ladies’ Land League in Portland. Mrs. Springer, whose husband, Richard, ran a local publishing company, was chosen as president. The Ladies’ Land League was established by Fanny Parnell, the New Jersey-based sister of Charles Stewart. In the autumn of 1880, she believed that the American Land League was not growing fast enough, and that a women’s organization would add critical momentum. In Portland, as in many other American centres, the Ladies’ Land League appears to have operated independently from the men’s organization. The two cooperated closely, with members of one branch often attending the meetings of the other, but the women organized their own assemblies, elected their own executives, and remitted their own funds to Ireland. The ladies engaged with the Catholic clergy in Portland more directly than the men, such as in May, 1881, when Bishop James

80 Eastern Argus, March 21, 1882.
Augustine Healy sent an address to the Ladies’ Land League praising their efforts and expressing his support for their objectives.\textsuperscript{82}

The Ladies’ Land League’s most prominent role was in the organization of social events. It was they who sponsored the grand ball of 1881, and for over two years they continued to plan dances, musical evenings, promenade concerts, and dinners.\textsuperscript{83} The ladies’ branch was also important in fostering links between Portland and broader Irish-American networks. At the 1882 national Land League convention in Washington, Mrs. Springer was named a vice president of the national organization.\textsuperscript{84} It is not clear why the ladies’ branch flourished in Portland, but not in Halifax. The proximity of other branches elsewhere in New England likely eased the diffusion of the organization into southern Maine, while the individual leadership of women like Mrs. Springer was undoubtedly significant. In some centres, such as Cleveland, Ohio, the Catholic clergy opposed the Ladies’ Land League, with Bishop Richard Gilmore even threatening to excommunicate members.\textsuperscript{85} As noted above, however, in Portland Bishop Healy fully supported the women’s organization, and there is no evidence to suggest that clerical opposition was a factor in the failure to establish a branch in Halifax.

In the aftermath of Parnell’s Kilmainham Treaty, Land League activism in the United States was drawing to a close. Nevertheless, the organizational frameworks of both men and women’s institutions remained in place well into 1883, though with the cessation of agitation in Ireland the movement in America lacked direction. The Portland branch held a meeting on January 15\textsuperscript{th}, 1883, to discuss its future, where after a lengthy debate, it was decided that the

\textsuperscript{82} Eastern Argus, May 17, 1881.
\textsuperscript{83} Eastern Argus, September 2; December 16, 1881; February 17, 1882.
\textsuperscript{84} Eastern Argus, April 13, 1882.
\textsuperscript{85} Moloney, “Land League Activism,” 71-72.
League should continue to hold regular meetings until a national convention in the spring could provide leadership and direction for the local branches.\textsuperscript{86} The Ladies continued to organize social events, including a well-attended ball on February 1\textsuperscript{st} to celebrate two years of Land League activity in the city. Fundraising also continued, and one week later the women’s branch sent $110 to Ireland, though on this occasion it was for the general relief of the poor rather than to promote land agitation.\textsuperscript{87} Acting on a call from the national organization, the men’s League also raised funds for the Irish poor that winter – though W.H. Looney expressed disappointment at the $80 raised for the cause. In April, local president John A. Gallagher attended the national convention, which established the Home Rule-oriented Irish National League. In June, this organization was officially established in Portland, and Land League activity ceased.\textsuperscript{88}

Comparing Land League activity in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland reveals the different ways in which Catholics of Irish birth and descent engaged in the affairs of their homeland. Portland undoubtedly saw the most concentrated League activity. Through both men’s and women’s organizations, Irish- and American-born Catholics from all social classes came together to help the tenant farmers of Ireland. There are several reasons for the high level of involvement, compared to Halifax and St. John’s. First, about half of the Portland branch were Irish born, and although this does not necessarily translate into increased interest in the politics of the old country, many would have had first-hand experience of the suffering of Irish tenant farmers in the west of Ireland, which likely made the cause seem more immediate. A second factor was the absence of a British-imperial political context in Portland. Although the Land League did flourish in some British,

\textsuperscript{86} \textit{Eastern Argus}, January 16, 1883.
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Eastern Argus}, February 1; February 9, 1883.
\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Eastern Argus}, April 30; May 1, 1883.
Australian and Canadian settings, the absence of ardent Tory imperialists in the city undoubtedly reduced public opposition. Although some anti-Land League sentiment no doubt existed in Portland, it was rarely publicly expressed as it was in Halifax and, to a lesser extent, in St. John’s. This lack of opposition allowed Portland’s elite Catholics, such as W.H. Looney, F.W. Cunningham, and Charles McCarthy Jr. to participate in the League and lend it considerable credibility. In Halifax, by contrast, the elite tended to shy away from Land League involvement, perhaps fearing that an association with a group perceived by some as disloyal could hinder respectability or political aspirations. Finally, the Portland Land League thrived thanks to its proximity to Irish-American institutional and organizational networks. Branches were established throughout Maine and New England, and the local League had close relationships with these as well as with the national movement through circulars and national conventions. Although the day-to-day activity of the Land League was highly local, the Portland branch brought the city’s Irish Catholics into a broader, pan-diasporic movement. The Halifax branch also participated in such networks, both in Canada and the United States, but isolation from North American currents was likely a factor in why no formal Land League was established in St. John’s. Press reports and fundraising activities suggest a strong interest in Irish affairs amongst St. John’s Catholics, but in that city, due to the absence of a secular organization, it was the clergy who provided the most direct, tangible links to the old country.

5.3 The Irish National League and Charles Stewart Parnell

For Charles Stewart Parnell, the land agitation of the early-1880s was just one part of a greater campaign to bring legislative independence to Ireland. He was never a radical land reformer, and remained committed to the principles of non-violent, constitutional
nationalism. The Land War was a essentially a mechanism through which support for Home Rule could be mobilized.\textsuperscript{89} In 1881, vociferous opposition to Gladstone’s Land Act resulted in Parnell’s arrest, and his subsequent imprisonment elevated his status to that of a national hero. A lengthy period in jail would ultimately have curtailed his influence, however, so by April, 1882, he began to negotiate a compromise with government authorities. The resulting Kilmainham Treaty of April 25\textsuperscript{th} provided for Parnell’s release on condition that he speak out against agrarian violence, bringing him back “within the parameters of parliamentary and constitutional politics.”\textsuperscript{90}

On May 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1882, the murders of the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his undersecretary, Thomas Henry Burke, by radical nationalists in Dublin’s Phoenix Park shocked the English-speaking world. The widespread reaction against physical-force nationalism allowed Parnell to further consolidate support for constitutional methods. In October, he formed the Irish National League, which was characterized by an “almost autocratic structure,” giving himself tremendous control over the organization. The spirit of the New Departure was over, as Fenian or radical influence within the new organization was severely limited. Instead, Parnell forged an alliance with the Catholic Church in which the Irish Party would support the clergy’s stance on educational questions, while Ireland’s priests became key agents in mobilizing the Irish-Catholic electorate.\textsuperscript{91} At Westminster, Parnell presided over a unified Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), now committed to voting as a bloc. Electoral reforms in 1884 and 1885 expanded the Catholic franchise in Ireland, and the general election of 1885 saw eighty-five IPP members elected. The close

\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid.}, 45.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}, 45-48.
result between Liberals and Conservatives gave Parnell the balance of power, and from this point, the relationship between William Ewart Gladstone’s Liberals and Parnell’s IPP would dictate the course of Irish nationalism for the remainder of the decade.⁹²

Like its Land League predecessor, the INL was established throughout the diaspora, essentially functioning as a “propaganda and money-collecting agency.”⁹³ Many Land League branches were converted into National League ones, with the American organization boasting 58,000 members at its peak in the in mid-1880s.⁹⁴ Although in some instances, the radical Clan na Gael retained influence within the organization, it was mostly an association of conservative, parliamentary nationalists. The constitutional focus lent the movement considerable respectability, and as a result wealthy Irish Americans supported Parnell and the struggle for Home Rule to an extent not seen during the land agitation. As was the case elsewhere, numerous Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland became staunch supporters of Parnell and constitutional nationalism during the 1880s.⁹⁵

Enthusiasm for Parnell and Home Rule in St. John’s was strong, although as with the Land League, there was no official organization to mediate local responses. Instead, the Catholics of the city, as well as many Protestants, expressed their support through letters to the local press, societal resolutions, and occasional fundraising efforts. As has been argued by Carolyn Lambert, St. John’s Catholics’ sense of loyalty to the British monarchy and Empire existed comfortably alongside their expressions of Irish nationalism.⁹⁶ Through organizations such as the Orange Order, there was also stern opposition to Parnell and Home

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⁹² Ibid., 48-51.
⁹⁴ Ibid.
⁹⁵ Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 540; Brown, Irish American Nationalism, 164; 168.
⁹⁶ Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 354.
Rule, so the decade reveals a full range of debate and passionate responses to the Irish Question.

Following the cessation of land agitation in 1882, many newspapers, including those edited by liberal Protestants, were not shy about expressing their support for Parnell. In a New Year’s editorial looking forward to 1883, the *Evening Telegram* noted that “we should like to see old Ireland as she ought to be, great, glorious and free!” A more detailed expression of support appeared in the *Terra Nova Advocate* following Parnell’s release from Kilmainham in May, 1882. The editor said that his release “cannot fail to prove gratifying to those friends of constitutional liberty, especially those bound by ties of kindred and descent to the Emerald Isle.” He went on to highlight the news as being “like a ray from the glorious traditional sunburst of [Ireland’s] time honoured national banner, bursting through the impenetrable gloom.” Such language suggests a strong emotional attachment to Ireland and support for Parnell and self government, in addition to highlighting the intergenerational nature of such sentiment in St. John’s.

At the same time that newspapers printed pieces supporting Parnell and constitutional nationalism, the people of St. John’s expressed their abhorrence of physical-force methods. In reference to the Phoenix Park murders of May, 1882, the editor of the *Evening Mercury* lamented that the optimism for Home Rule had been “blighted by the awful crime perpetrated by cowardly assassins,” and also regretted the government’s attempts at coercion, which “gave boldness and impunity to Fenianism and Ribbonism – two systems which aim at securing their end by violence and crime.” The Catholic-edited *Newfoundlander* echoed similar sentiments, regretting that “these awful crimes should be

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97 *Evening Telegram*, January 2, 1883.
98 *Terra Nova Advocate*, May 4, 1882.
perpetuated in the very noon-day is a calamity unspeakable, deplorable for Ireland, and the bare thought of the consequences is enough to blight hope for the present and fill men’s minds with dismay for the future.”

Condemnation of the murders went beyond the press. In late-May the Benevolent Irish Society – perhaps inspired by similar action taken by Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society which was reported in the Newfoundland press – passed resolutions deploiring the tragedy. The resolution, which concluded with the hope that “the cowardly assassins may be detected and brought to speedy justice,” was to be forwarded to Ireland. The comments on the Phoenix Park murders reveal that widespread support, even from Protestant-Conservative newspaper editors, existed for Home Rule. At the same time, condemnation of physical force nationalism appears to have been universal.

The most concentrated discussions of Irish nationalism in St. John’s surrounded Gladstone’s 1886 Home Rule Bill. Chapter four has already investigated how the Bill became a politicized issue in Newfoundland, but here the focus is on what the responses reveal about interest and engagement in Irish affairs. In the local press, initial responses to the Bill were positive and optimistic. The editor of the Telegram celebrated its proposal by suggesting that it would end Anglo-Irish hostilities and ultimately strengthen the British Empire: “Irish discontent in the colonies and at home has been forever silenced. Henceforth, the Celt and the Saxon shall meet on terms of equality and grasp each other’s hand in undisguised friendship. Differences in national race and feuds are forever laid to rest and entombed in the history of the past.” The piece went on to address Catholics of Irish descent living within the Empire directly, rejoicing that the rights and privileges of Responsible Government, which those of Irish descent has been so involved in winning, could now be

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100 Newfoundlander, May 9, 1882.
101 Evening Telegram, November 19; November 26, 1882.
extended to the ancestral homeland. Finally, the editor concluded by bringing in the Irish Catholics of Newfoundland:

The sons of Irishmen and all other patriotic natives of this colony will rejoice with unbounded joy in the good fortune of that land that in days gone by sent so many hardy pioneers to our shores, [...] and the snows and frosts of three or four generations have not in the least frozen the ardour and fire of rejoicement which their descendants now experience in Newfoundland at the great privilege conferred by England’s greatest statesman.\(^{102}\)

This passage concisely introduces the key themes which characterize Newfoundlanders’ responses to the Irish Question in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Home Rule was seen as a desirable outcome, not only due to the benefits for Ireland, but also because it would increase imperial strength and unity by reducing Anglo-Irish tensions, while also keeping the territory within the Empire. For this reason, support for Home Rule went beyond Catholics of Irish descent. The Irish Question was also an imperial one, and as such attracted support from many Liberal Protestants, including most of St. John’s Protestant newspaper editors. The author of the above passage also referred to the political structures of the overseas dominions, whose benefits Irish Catholics had fought to obtain and had enjoyed for generations, as a model that could be applied to the old country. Finally, the Telegram’s editor highlighted the intergenerational nature of St. John’s Irish-Catholic identities by praising their enthusiasm despite being “three or four generations” removed from Ireland. This is a feature that would continue into the twentieth century, as for many a romantic, ethnic affiliation to the old country remained.

The broad support for Parnell and the Home Rule Bill was also highlighted by the editor of the Terra Nova Advocate, who, in chiding the local legislature for its failure to pass a pro-Home Rule resolution, noted that “in Newfoundland we have seventy-five thousand of

\(^{102}\) Evening Telegram, April 13, 1886.
Irish race and Irish blood favouring Home Rule. The clergymen of the Wesleyan Church are in favour of it. [...] The organ of the [Conservative] government, the *Evening Mercury*, has given its concordance.”

Perhaps the most direct evidence for widespread Home Rule support appeared in the pages of the *Colonist* in early May, as the paper printed a series of letters in favour of the 1886 bill, penned by some of Newfoundland’s most prominent men, both Catholic and Protestant. The correspondents included Rev. Moses Harvey, an Ulster-born Presbyterian minister and the editor of the *Evening Mercury*, Rev. L.G. Macneil, a minister at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Rev. George Boyd of George St. Methodist Church, Rev. D. Beaton, a Congregationalist pastor, Thomas Talbot, the High Sheriff of Newfoundland, Rev. M.A. Fitzgerald of St. Bonaventure’s College, Hon. James McLoughlin and Edward P. Morris of the Legislative Council, and Hon. Frederick White, a Protestant member of the House of Assembly from Bonavista. The themes reflected in these letters parallel those in the *Telegram*’s initial editorial. The people of Ireland had a right to enjoy the political benefits that their descendants throughout the Empire had enjoyed for so long, while Home Rule would also considerably strengthen imperial unity by resolving the most divisive question of the era, and securing harmonious relations between Britain and Ireland.

Support for the Home Rule Bill also went beyond the press. In the wake of the colonial legislature’s failure to pass a resolution in favour of Gladstone’s measure in 1886, the BIS assembled to pass their own declaration of support. Two resolutions were passed, with one being sent to Gladstone and the other to Parnell. Replies were received, though they were subsequent years.
were not made public, likely due to the political furore that surrounded the local government’s failed bill.\textsuperscript{106}

A theme of this dissertation has been how ideas and information about Irish affairs flowed in and out of communities. In St. John’s the press was key, but lecture tours by Irish nationalist speakers represented another way in which local Catholics engaged with the broader diaspora. In 1886, the most notable speaker to come to the city was Courtney Kenny, a Gladstonian Member of Parliament from Barnsley. His lecture on Home Rule was given in front of a large crowd at the Athenaeum, and provided a thorough recounting of the parliamentary debates that had surrounded the bill, and gave detailed arguments in favour of Home Rule. Following the talk, Reverend Macneil thanked Kenny, noting that all those present “with the exception of a few out-and-out Tories,” were in favour of Irish self-government.\textsuperscript{107} Following his departure from St. John’s, the BIS passed a resolution thanking Kenny for his eloquent support of Home Rule, while emphasizing the strength of Irish identity in St. John’s:

This society is comprised not alone of Irishmen by birth, but of the descendants of those whom misgovernment in the land of their nativity expatriated to seek a home in this portion of the western world. [...] You may well then believe, dear sir, that the grand effort on behalf of Ireland, of your ever-to-be-honoured leader, Mr. Gladstone, and your own noble utterances in his support have awakened within us feelings of gratitude to which our words fail to give adequate expression.\textsuperscript{108}

As was the case with the Land League, there was little in the way of organized, institutional support for Home Rule in St. John’s, though fundraisers did occur. Shortly before the 1886 Home Rule Bill was tabled, the Dublin \textit{Freeman’s Journal} published a list of

\textsuperscript{106} Lambert, “Far From the homes of Their Fathers,” 367; \textit{Evening Telegram}, August 28, 1886.

\textsuperscript{107} \textit{Evening Telegram}, September 17, 1886.

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Evening Telegram}, September 29, 1886.
Newfoundland contributions to the Irish National League totalling £60.10s. Again, the clergy led the movement, though on this occasion the higher clergy were more directly involved, with Bishop Power, thanks to his seven-pound donation, the top contributor. The Colonist’s correspondent lamented the fact that the collection only represented a small number of individuals, and hoped that a general, public fundraising campaign could be organized in the city.\footnote{Colonist, March 30, 1886.}

While it did not happen in 1886, a more public collection did take place in 1888, in the shape of the Parnell Indemnity Fund. The Times of London had printed reports implicating Parnell and other prominent nationalists in the 1882 Phoenix Park murders. The accusations threatened the respectability of the Parnellite movement, and in the interest of seeking out the truth, the government set up a special commission to investigate the accusations. In order to defray the costs of his defence, Parnell set up the National Indemnity Fund. Contributions arrived from throughout the diaspora.\footnote{Jackson, Home Rule, 73.} In Newfoundland, participation was again Church-driven, as introduced in chapter three. On September 22\textsuperscript{nd}, Father Michael Clancy, parish priest of Placentia, wrote a letter to the Colonist calling for a local subscription.\footnote{Colonist, September 22, 1888.} The Colonist’s editor agreed, and the fund was established with John J. O’Reilly as treasurer.

As was the case with the Irish Relief Fund of 1880, the Indemnity Fund caused some controversy in St. John’s. A correspondent to the Evening Telegram complained that money should not be sent overseas when there were causes at home worthy of public subscriptions. This drew several responses in the Colonist defending the efforts. One letter argued that an Irish fundraising drive need not draw support away from local charity, with the principal
objective of the fund not to raise a vast sum, but rather “to show Mr. Parnell and his followers our sympathy with the cause they advocate is not mere gas and humbugs.”

Another letter called on the Catholics of St. John’s to contribute, despite the objections, hoping that “the Irishmen in Newfoundland and their sons will nobly respond to the call which is now made, and show that in Terra Nova the fire is not alone unextinguished, but is burning brightly as in the days of old.”

Over the following months, numerous updates appeared in the pages of the Colonist. As with the Land League, Catholic priests from all over Newfoundland gave generously. Some of the most prominent Catholic members of the Legislature subscribed, such as future Prime Minister E.P. Morris, the Irish-born James McLoughlin, Michael H. Carty, and Irish-educated Robert J. Kent. Most lay contributions were from St. John’s, though some came from outport communities.

In the winter of 1889, the Times’ letters were proven to be forgeries. Father Clancy wrote a letter to the Colonist celebrating the victory, and the paper published an amount of $462.20 as the final tally. In April, a letter from the national treasurer in Dublin was published, acknowledging £94.4s.1 in remittances from St. John’s, and the results of the Newfoundland fund were published in the Freeman’s Journal. Treasurer O’Reilly noted that some money was still in his possession, and would be sent to Ireland shortly. The 1888-1889 fundraising efforts demonstrate considerable interest in Irish affairs. Again, through Clancy’s involvement, it reveals the influence of the Catholic clergy in leading engagement with Ireland during this period. The language of the letters defending the fund, though, as

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112 Evening Telegram, September 27, 1888; Colonist, September 28, 1888.
113 Colonist, September 28, 1888.
114 Colonist, October 5; October 11; October 12, 1888.
115 Colonist, March 11, 1889.
116 Colonist, April 26, 1889.
well as the wide range of contributors suggests support for Parnell was still strong in St. John’s as late as 1889.

Opinions in favour of Irish Home Rule were widespread in 1880s St. John’s, but some organized opposition did exist. In Great Britain and Ireland, unionism gained momentum during this period. Many opponents to Home Rule were Irish Protestants, who felt as though a Dublin parliament would place them at the mercy of the Catholic majority. In Britain, Conservative opinion held that the concession of self government to Ireland would be a sign of imperial weakness.117 Because the Irish Question concerned the whole British Empire, attitudes for and against Home Rule spread throughout the Dominions. In Canada and Newfoundland, one of the key organizations in promoting anti-Parnell sentiment was the Orange Order. The Order was a fraternal, Protestant organization formed in Ulster in 1798, and came to British North America with Irish-Protestant migrants, particularly those involved with military garrisons. Its creed emphasized a defence of Protestantism and loyalty to the British monarchy and Empire. Unlike parts of mainland Canada, in Newfoundland the Orange Order was not comprised of Irish Protestants, since few ever settled there, but rather those of English descent.118 Despite the lack of Irish membership, the Newfoundland order was influenced by branches in Ireland as well as in Canada, and developed a staunchly anti-Home Rule stance, which was articulated in a July, 1886 resolution:

Resolved: That we, the citizens of this loyal and ancient colony, feel the deepest interest in the unity and integrity of the British Empire, and hereby enter our earnest protest at any measure which would tend toward dissolution or weakening of the union which has existed between Great Britain and Ireland. We, the members of the Loyal Orange Association of Newfoundland, in Provincial Grand Lodge assembled, realize the obligation which rests upon us to

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117 Jackson, Home Rule, 62.
resist by all lawful means all attempts which may be made to weaken British influence and dismember the British Empire. This provincial Grand Lodge regards with the feelings of utmost pride and sympathy the resolute and patriotic attitude assumed by the Loyalists and Orangemen of Ireland in the present crisis, and we pledge ourselves to afford them such assistance as may be in our power.\textsuperscript{119}

This resolution was sent to the Earl of Enniskillen, and also printed in the \textit{London Mail}.

Although it contained strong language supporting their Orange Order brethren in Ireland, it does not seem as though the local branch ever impeded, by lawful means or otherwise, local support for Parnell and Home Rule.

A response to this resolution appeared in the \textit{Colonist} on July 12\textsuperscript{th}, and provides some rare insight into the opinions of a St. John’s Irish Protestant. The letter, simply signed “Irish Protestant,” presented another strong argument in favour of Home Rule, based mainly around the idea that it would lead to Anglo-Irish harmony, thus strengthening the Empire. The author focused particularly on the non-sectarian history of Irish nationalism, noting that many of Ireland’s most prominent leaders had been Protestants, such as Henry Grattan, Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet. He concluded by expressing his belief that “when an Irish Parliament again sits in Dublin, it will be a signal to all religious sects in my unhappy country to lay aside their mutual hatred, and to live in peace as equal men should live under equal law.”\textsuperscript{120} This letter, together with other evidence, strongly suggests that the Irish Question in late-nineteenth century St. John’s was not a sectarian one. Instead, differences in opinion seem to have existed more along Liberal-Conservative lines, with

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Evening Telegram}, July 2, 1886.  
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Colonist}, July 12, 1886.
particular anti-Home Rule sentiment entering the community through the institutional
networks of the Orange Order.\textsuperscript{121}

In December, 1889, Captain W.H. O’Shea filed for divorce from his wife, Katherine,
who was Parnell’s mistress. The two were found to have committed adultery in November
1890, and the resulting scandal shook the British world. Parnell lost crucial clerical and
popular support in Ireland and abroad. In early December, following an ultimatum from
Gladstone calling on Parnell to resign as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Justin
McCarthy led forty-four members in a split from the main body, leaving twenty-eight loyal
to Parnell.\textsuperscript{122} In St. John’s, reaction to the scandal was muted, but it seems as though a great
deal of the popular support evident in the late-1880s was lost. Editorials in the \textit{Evening}
Telegram in February and July, 1891, called for his resignation.\textsuperscript{123} A more detailed debate on
Parnell’s legacy occurred following his sudden death later that year. Although the tragic
circumstances were universally regretted, a letter to the \textit{Colonist}, signed “Home Rule,”
described him as “the greatest living obstacle to Home Rule in his final year,” while a
subsequent letter praised the decision of the Irish Party to abandon him.\textsuperscript{124} A response,
signed “Another Home Ruler,” lauded Parnell’s legacy, claiming that he had done as much to
further the cause of Irish self-government as Daniel O’Connell, Isaac Butt, and Robert
Emmet.\textsuperscript{125} The \textit{Colonist}’s correspondent deemed Parnell’s supporter a “foolish and ignorant

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\textsuperscript{121} The exchange also demonstrates the danger of uncritically labelling all popular engagement with
Irish politics as “ethnic.” Opinions on the Irish Question may have been political, or, as in the case of the
Newfoundland Orange Order, motivated by institutional rather than ethnic connections. It is the language of the
many examples in this chapter and the next, specifically those that mention the passion or love for the old land
held by those of Irish birth or descent, that is indicative of a distinctly ethnic connection to Ireland.

\textsuperscript{122} Jackson, \textit{Home Rule}, 74-76.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Evening Telegram}, February 6; July 10, 1891.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Colonist}, October 21, 1891.

\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Colonist}, October 31, 1891.
scribbler,” who pretended that the late Irish leader “was what he was not.” Anti-Parnell editorials also appeared in the pages of the *Evening Herald*, while a final, eloquent defence of his legacy appeared in the *Colonist*, concluding that Parnell “was slain by ingrates in Ireland, and [his] memory is assailed by the ingrate sons of Irishmen in Newfoundland. He was human and, even as Achilles, was vulnerable, but he is above reproach.” The passion of the debate shows that, for some St. John’s Catholics at least, interest in the political affairs of their ancestral homeland was substantial.

There were many similarities between responses to Parnell and Home Rule in Halifax and St. John’s. They key difference between the two ports was the presence of the Irish National League in Halifax, which formally organized local responses to the Irish Question. As compared to Land League activism, the mid-to-late 1880s saw growing involvement of Halifax’s Catholic elite, as well as the clergy, who were drawn by the respectability and legality of Parnell’s constitutional nationalism.

On August 13th, 1883, the *Herald* included a report on a meeting of the Irish National League. P.J. O’Brien was elected president, and the first- and second-vice presidents, as well as the treasurer, were identical to those chosen for the 1882 Land League executive, suggesting that the new organization was essentially a continuation of the old. At the meeting, the members pledged their support for Parnell and his parliamentary agitation, and praised the active role taken by Irishmen in Canada, the United States and Australia. One of the speeches concluded by calling upon “the descendants in Nova Scotia” to do likewise. Meetings were set for the first Sunday of every month, before the assembly disbanded.

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126 *Evening Telegram*, November 3, 1891.
127 *Colonist*, November 7, 1891; See also *Evening Herald*, November 4; November 10, 1891.
Late-1883 and 1884 saw little engagement with Ireland on the part of the Irish National League, but in 1885, when the IPP was running its election campaign, and subsequently found itself with the balance of power in Westminster, interest in the Irish Question spiked. On October 7th, the Halifax INL announced a fundraising drive to “enable members of the Irish Party to devote their full time to the political affairs of the country, and to obtain for Ireland that right which we enjoy, making laws and management of our own affairs.” The public was urged to submit their donations to any member of the local branch. An initial list of subscribers was printed, though the amounts seem to have been relatively small, with most individuals only pledging one dollar. The language of the call for funds again reflects a theme common to diasporic Irish nationalism, especially those in the British Dominions: Irish self-government was necessary to give the old country the political rights enjoyed by those of Irish descent overseas.

On October 27th, an interview with John P. Sutton, a Quebec-based INL member who was in Halifax to help organize the local branch, detailed the immediate goals of the organization. It existed to “assist in the election of Parnellite members and to pay them for their services after election.” Sutton went on to praise the growing strength of the organization in Canada, where fifteen branches had been established. Perhaps most significantly, he strongly denied any connection to radical Irish nationalism, stating that “ours is purely a constitutional movement to give moral and financial aid to our struggling brethren in Ireland, and this is all we are asking of Halifax Irishmen. Ireland is only asking for what Nova Scotians obtained nearly half a century ago – responsible local government.

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129 *Halifax Herald*, October 27, 1885.
130 *Halifax Herald*, November 27, 1885.
The Irish National League’s endeavours to support Irish nationalism went beyond fundraising. On November 28\textsuperscript{th}, 1885, a “mass meeting” was held at the city’s Academy of Music to build popular support for Irish Home Rule. The meeting was organized by Sutton, and involved many of the city’s most prominent residents, both Catholic and Protestant, suggesting broad support for the movement. The stage was occupied by the province’s leading clergy, including Archbishop Cornelius O’Brien, as well as politicians such as Halifax’s federal Member of Parliament M.B. Daly, and Premier W.S. Fielding. The purpose of the meeting was to express “the sympathy of the citizens of Halifax with the people of Ireland in their struggle for self government.” Lengthy speeches by Sutton and M.B. Daly on Irish affairs followed, and the central theme was again the extension of the benefits enjoyed by Irish Catholics in the diaspora to the ancestral homeland. The meeting concluded with a resolution: “We, the citizens of Halifax, in mass meeting assembled, do hereby extend to our fellow subjects our heartfelt sympathy and material support in every legitimate effort to obtain for Ireland some form of self government as ourselves in the Dominion of Canada: a government of the people, by the people and for the people.”\textsuperscript{131} As in St. John’s, support for Irish Home Rule was strong, involving both those of Irish descent and those who were not. Those involved hoped for a Dominion-style government, similar to Canada’s or Newfoundland’s, to be granted to Ireland for the benefit its people and to enhance imperial integrity.

As suggested by their prominent position on the stage at the mass meeting, Halifax’s Catholic clergy were more actively involved in the support for Home Rule than they had been during Land League agitation. Further evidence for clerical support comes from a lecture given by Archbishop O’Brien in December, 1885. Following a historical talk on

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Halifax Herald}, November 28, 1885.
Daniel O’Connell and the Repeal movement, O’Brien urged “those present to put forth untiring efforts to help gain for Ireland a local parliament.” The INL acknowledged the Archbishop’s support in 1887, presenting him with a resolution of thanks, which expressed “their earnest gratitude for the position Your Grace has taken up in the consideration and discussion of the Irish Question in this city.” In appreciation for his support of Home Rule, the League’s executive presented him with a wooden desk.

Owing to its proximity to New England and major Canadian centres like Montreal and Quebec City, as well as the existence of rail links to these places, Halifax was less isolated from North American networks of communication and transportation than St. John’s, and was therefore able to attract more prominent Irish nationalist speakers. The most significant figure to spend time in the city was Justin McCarthy. McCarthy came to Halifax to give two lectures on the Irish Question in October, 1886, and arrived to a hero’s welcome. The visit raised considerable interest in Irish affairs, and was an example of cooperation between Halifax’s elite ethnic association, the Charitable Irish Society, and the nationalist-oriented INL. McCarthy arrived on the Quebec City express train, and was met by both the INL and CIS executives before a welcome banquet at the prestigious Queen Hotel. T.E. Kenny, one of the city’s wealthiest and most influential Catholics, escorted him during his stay. The local press reported considerable excitement in the town during the visit, and his lectures, which again focused on extending the rights of the British Dominions to Ireland,

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132 *Morning Chronicle*, December 31, 1885.
133 *Morning Chronicle*, July 6, 1887.
134 A letter from the INL president to the CIS affirmed the organizations’ cooperation in McCarthy to Halifax. See *CIS Minute Book*, August 17, 1886.
were well-attended. As was the case when Courtney Kenny came to St. John’s, the arrival of an Irish nationalist politician significantly increased local interest in Irish affairs.

The final public act of Parnellite support in Halifax paralleled that of St. John’s, taking the form of participation in the Indemnity Fund of 1889. The initial appeal for funds was made in late-January. The fund was said to be in keeping with efforts taking place elsewhere in Canada, and although door-to-door canvassing would not occur, the residents of Halifax were encouraged to do their share and donate liberally. The *Herald* published letters by some of the city’s leading Catholics, led by Archbishop O’Brien and including T.E. Kenny and mayor Patrick O’Mullin, calling on the people to subscribe. The Archbishop pledged $50, as did T.E. Kenny and his father, Sir Edward. James Butler, who was the treasurer, was the top subscriber with $100. The fund appears to have been a success. A letter to the *Herald* from the treasurer boasted that the fund “greatly surpassed any Irish political collection yet made in this province,” apparently raising “three or four times as much money as has henceforth been raised by the most pressing appeal.” The fund closed on March 20th, 1889, and though the final amount sent to the Dublin treasurer was not given, the success of the fund suggests that Parnell remained a popular figure in Halifax even after the failure of the 1886 Home Rule Bill.

Most of the evidence suggests broad support for Home Rule in Halifax, generally transcending class and ethnoreligious boundaries. Opposition to the measure did exist, although it lacked the institutional support of an organization like the Orange Order, which, though it was active in the city, remained publicly silent on Irish affairs throughout this

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135 *Halifax Herald*, October 28; October 30, 1886; *Morning Chronicle*, October 22; October 28, 1886.
136 *Halifax Herald*, January 26, 1889.
137 *Halifax Herald*, February 18, 1889.
138 *Acadian Recorder*, March 12, 1889.
period. Most anti-nationalist sentiment that appeared in the local press specifically opposed revolutionary Irish nationalism. In the wake of a series of Fenian dynamite attacks on London in late January, 1885, the *Morning Chronicle* published a series of blistering editorials condemning the atrocities. One passage argued that it was the “duty of all Irishmen to constitute themselves detectives to help bring the criminals to justice,” and “to purge the world […] of those that have brought disgrace against their good name.” The tensions that existed throughout the Empire as a result of the dynamite attacks peaked in Halifax a month later when rumours of an impending Fenian attack on the city spread. Stories that the Lieutenant Governor had received threatening letters, and that shadowy figures had been observed hanging around the powder magazines abounded, but no violence ever took place. Despite consistent condemnation of radical nationalism, anti-Parnell opinions were rarely expressed publicly. The *Chronicle* occasionally attacked the National League in Ireland, noting on one occasion that “a majority of the people earnestly desire to be freed from the grinding tyranny of the League, and would rejoice at its suppression,” but editorials and letters condemning Home Rule were extremely rare.

Responses to Parnell’s fall and subsequent death were scarce in Halifax. The Irish National League fell silent, perhaps suggesting some disillusionment with events in the old country. The *Chronicle*’s editor lamented that his “patriotism did not match his pluck, and that he did not voluntarily and at the right moment give up his personal position for the sake of the cause to which he had previously rendered such brilliant service.” The most significant local response in Halifax came from Archbishop O’Brien, who had previously

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139 *Morning Chronicle*, January 27, 1885.
140 *Morning Chronicle*, February 26, 1885.
141 *Morning Chronicle*, November 3, 1885.
142 *Morning Chronicle*, December 4, 1889.
been a strong supporter of Parnell and the IPP. In an interview with the *Herald*, O’Brien stated that although Parnell had been a tremendous servant to Home Rule, “there is no consideration under which he can continue to lead the Irish people,” and that he would find it “impossible to succeed against the moral forces now arrayed against him.” Responses to his death were almost entirely limited to narrative, telegraphed press reports. Local debate over his legacy, as had taken place in St. John’s, was absent in Halifax.

In Portland, support for Parnell varied considerably throughout the 1880s. There were episodes of widespread popular enthusiasm, while at the same time attempts to organize a local branch of the Irish National League stuttered. Those who did express public support for Irish self-government were keen to emphasize the respectability of the Home Rule struggle, and adherence to physical-force nationalism was almost non-existent during this decade. As pointed out by a *Portland Press* editorial, which was reprinted in the *Halifax Herald*, the city’s *Clan na Gael* branches were essentially defunct by the late-1880s.

Land League enthusiasm in Portland continued well after the Kilmainham Treaty. It was not until April, 1883, when League president J.A. Gallagher returned from the national Land League convention in Philadelphia that a change in the organizational framework was discussed. At a meeting on April 30th, a committee was formed to organize a new branch of the INL. It was formally established at an assembly on June 8th, where a constitution was adopted and new executive elected. J.J. Lynch, an attorney, was selected as president. The new organization would not possess a separate women’s branch, but members of the Ladies’ Land League were invited to join the new INL. The association went quickly to work, and on August 1st a lecture on Home Rule was given by Dublin’s Thomas Brennan, who had

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143 *Halifax Herald*, December 19, 1890.
144 *Halifax Herald*, June 27, 1889.
145 *Eastern Argus*, May 1; June 8, 1883.
been giving similar talks throughout the United States. The event was well-attended, and many were said to have signed the membership roll of the INL.146

After 1883, the fate of the Portland INL becomes somewhat murky, as references to the organization led by Lynch disappeared from the local press. In late-September, 1884, a letter appeared in the Argus calling for the residents to attend a meeting to organize a new branch of the Irish National League in Portland to provide “moral and financial aid” to those fighting for Ireland’s freedom.147 The following day, the paper printed a memo from the Nebraska-based national executive of the INL, detailing how a local branch should be organized, and calling for a parliamentary fund to be held in each community. Again, though, the renewed calls for a Portland branch of the National League do not appear to have been successful, as no further references to a local organization were made that year.148

Late-1885 finally saw more successful efforts to organize the Irish nationalists of Portland. A committee led by J.A. Gallagher, the former Land League president, calling itself the “Irish American Union of Portland” attempted to establish a fundraising drive to assist Parnell’s “heroic struggle” for Home Rule. Collectors were named for each of Portland’s urban wards. On November 14th, an appeal for funds was issued in the Argus from the executive of the new society, calling on Irish Catholics to provide their share of monetary aid, as was being done in cities and towns throughout New England.149

This movement was again slow to gain momentum, and no initial list of subscribers was published. Sufficient interest in Irish affairs was generated, however, to revive the old 1883 INL branch. A key factor in the re-establishment of the League was the presence of

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146 *Eastern Argus*, May 1, 1883.
147 *Eastern Argus*, September 25, 1884.
148 *Eastern Argus*, September 26, 1884.
149 *Eastern Argus*, November 9; November 14, 1885.
Quebec’s John P. Sutton, who had been essential in the organization of the Halifax mass meeting several weeks earlier. Sutton arrived in Portland and gave a public talk, at which he urged all present to join the reformed INL. Sutton’s presence is particularly interesting, since it suggests that Portland was connected to Irish-Canadian nationalist networks via the links of the Grand Trunk Railroad. The meeting closed with a number of generous subscriptions to the parliamentary fund.\footnote{Eastern Argus, December 9; December 10, 1885.}

A meeting of the INL took place a few days after Sutton’s lecture, and it was declared that all those who had donated to the parliamentary fund were members of the new local chapter, and that an official charter would be sought from the national executive.\footnote{Portland Press, December 17, 1885.} By Christmas, treasurer W.H. Looney had sent $127 to the national organization for a charter, and by January 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1886, it had been received. The results of December’s fundraising drive saw $443.25 raised for the IPP, with Bishop James Augustine Healy and other Catholic clergymen being amongst the top subscribers.\footnote{Eastern Argus, December 18, 1885; January 1, 1886.}

From this point, local support for Parnell and Home Rule increased. As was the case with the Land League, liberal Yankee newspaper editors, such as the Argus’ Herbert Adams, pledged their support, praising Parnell’s “magnificent generalship” in one editorial.\footnote{Eastern Argus, February 12, 1886.} The most significant example of popular support for Irish nationalism in Portland, though, took the shape of a mass-meeting on June 1\textsuperscript{st}, 1886. The event was called “for the purpose of expressing the feelings of the people of Portland regarding Home Rule for Ireland.” The organizers – the local branch of the INL – hoped that it would command broad interest. Although the question was a foreign one for most residents, all of them were “bound to the
mother countries – England, Scotland and Ireland – by the strong ties of kinship.” The assembly was organized by some of the city’s most influential Catholics: Charles McCarthy Jr., William H. Looney and J.J. Lynch. Speeches in favour of Home Rule were made by a number of prominent speakers, including the Governor of Maine, Frederick Robie. His talk focused on a theme frequently observed in British North America: that self-government should be a universal right, as had been the case for the citizens of Maine for generations. Following a number of other patriotic lectures, including one by Boston’s John F. Fitzgerald, maternal grandfather of President John F. Kennedy, a general resolution of support was unanimously passed. It pledged Portland’s sympathy for Parnell and Gladstone, for the “double reason that it released a people from bondage, and practically asserts the American doctrine upon which our union was founded – that states have the right to regulate their own domestic affairs.” Other ethnic associations followed suit, with the state AOH convention passing a pro-Home Rule measure several days later.

As was the case in Halifax, the most significant nationalist speaker to come to Portland in the 1880s was Justin McCarthy. He gave a lecture at City Hall on “the cause of Ireland,” in which he asked that Irish Americans support “that which is the birthright of every American state,” the ability for Ireland to control its own domestic affairs. The lecture was well-received by a large audience, but by this point the Home Rule Bill had failed, and as the surge in enthusiasm for Irish nationalism waned, so too did INL organization in Portland.

A final attempt to revive the Portland branch of the National League occurred in 1888. As in 1885, it was an outside speaker who reinvigorated the movement and, again, he

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154 Eastern Argus, June 1, 1886.
155 Eastern Argus, June 2; June 9, 1886.
156 Eastern Argus, December 23, 1886.
had recently spoken in Halifax. Sir Thomas Esmonde, a nationalist Member of Parliament for South Dublin, gave a lengthy talk to the Irish American Relief Association in favour of Home Rule. He specifically appealed to the younger generation of Irish Americans to reorganize Portland’s branch of the INL, and to ensure an energetic executive.157 Immediately, steps were taken to re-establish the organization. A meeting was called to officially establish a new branch on January 30th. W.H. Looney gave a pro-Home Rule address, before T.F. Donahue was elected president. Fifty people signed the new membership roll, and a fundraising drive, consisting of the sale of “Irish coercion certificates” was planned.158 Collecting agents were named for each ward, and five-hundred coercion certificates were procured from the national INL organization for sale in Portland. Sales seem to have been slow but steady. By June, $200 had been remitted to the national treasurer. A list of subscribers was later published, with Bishop Healy again a top contributor, with his $10 only exceeded by the $25 pledged by an Irish-born saloon keeper, Cornelius Connolly.159 On St. Patrick’s Day, 1889, new INL president Daniel O’Connell O’Donoghue, who had previously been the head of Portland’s Fenian Circle, gave a lecture on the history of the Ireland’s fight for self-government for the benefit of the INL, while a final lecture on Home Rule was organized by the League on May 1st.160 After this point, organized activity declined.

Local commentary on Parnell’s fall was extremely limited. One editorial in October, 1890, noticed that the national organization of the INL had effectively disbanded, and it certainly seems as though no formal, organized responses to Irish affairs occurred in Portland

157 Eastern Argus, January 20, 1888.
158 Eastern Argus, January 30, 1888.
159 Eastern Argus, February 25; March 14, 1889.
160 Eastern Argus, March 18; May 1, 1889.
from 1890 to 1891. A letter to the editor of the Argus defended the disgraced Irish leader, lamenting the fact that his associates had abandoned him when “the great cause for which he had laboured demanded their unanimous support.” Upon his death in October, the Argus’ editor chose to reflect on the positive aspects of his legacy, rather than the ignominy of his final years. With Parnell’s passing, the enthusiastic but inconsistent support by the Irish Catholics of Portland for Home Rule ceased to be a public matter. It would be decades before explicitly Irish-nationalist associations were again formed in the city.

5.4 Responses to Irish Nationalism, 1892-1911

Following the death of Parnell and the split in the Irish Parliamentary Party, the struggle for Home Rule was in disarray, both at home and abroad. In St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, enthusiasm for Irish nationalism waned in the 1890s and 1900s. Fewer editorials and letters to the editor appeared in local papers, while nationalist organizations which had led local responses in the 1880s disappeared. Engagement with Irish affairs did not cease altogether, however, and incidents took place in each city which demonstrate a continued, albeit diminished, interest in self-government for Ireland.

In St. John’s, the first Irish event to elicit a local response was the second Home Rule Bill of 1893. Gladstone had been re-elected with a small Liberal majority in 1892, and despite the disintegration of the IPP he continued to press the agenda of Home Rule. The bill was submitted in February, 1893, but due to his small parliamentary majority, the failure to address many of the weaknesses of the 1886 bill, and continued opposition in the House of Lords, it had little chance of success. Compared to the flurry of local activity that

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161 Eastern Argus, June 1, 1891.
162 Eastern Argus, October 8, 1891.
surrounded the first bill, reaction in the city was muted. Its full details were published in the *Evening Telegram* following “several letters of inquiry,” while a few pieces supporting the measure appeared. Most of these were written in response to a local political scandal, which saw two Irish-born Conservative members of the opposition party come out against Home Rule, much to the consternation of the Catholic population. One letter, signed “Clonmel,” condemned Moses Monroe and Maurice Fenelon, stating that “they are about the only two native born Irishmen in any of our colonies who would refuse to Ireland that Home Rule to which our brethren at home, outside of Mr. Monroe’s birthplace in Ulster, are fighting for.”

Editorials addressing this political controversy – which mirrored that of 1886 – reaffirmed the broad support for Home Rule in the colony. Monroe and Fenelon opposed Irish self-government in order to appease Protestant-Conservative politicians like A.B. Morine, whose “antagonism to the dear little shamrock [was] well known.” Realizing their political miscalculation, Fenelon, “with tears in his eyes,” reversed his position, declaring that from now on he would be “the most ardent Home Ruler,” while Monroe seconded this sentiment.

Responses were fairly limited, however, and the drama did not reach the heights of 1886. Interestingly, at no point was it acknowledged that Monroe came from an Ulster-Protestant background, while Fenelon was a Carlow-born Catholic. Both were equally vilified for betraying the principles of Dominion self-government. The overall reaction to the Home Rule Bill was quiet in St. John’s, as no public meetings or speeches in favour of the measure took place. When it was predictably defeated in the House of Lords on September 164

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164 *Evening Telegram*, June 27, 1893.
165 *Evening Telegram*, July 1, 1893.
8th, Newfoundland was in the midst of an election campaign, and no local comment was made.\textsuperscript{166}

The most direct involvement of St. John’s Irish Catholics in the politics of their ancestral homeland during the 1890s was their participation in the Irish Race Convention of 1896. The Convention was largely inspired by Irish Americans and Irish Canadians who had come to be “dismayed at the bickering in Ireland and concerned with the impact of feuding on Home Rule’s prospects.”\textsuperscript{167} The assembly met in Dublin from September 1st to 3rd, 1896, though in the end its effectiveness was limited as members of the Parnellite faction, as well as supporters of T.M. Healy refused to attend.\textsuperscript{168} In St. John’s, a meeting was called for August 12th to discuss the colony’s participation. As in the 1880s, the clergy took a leading role, with Bishop Howley presiding. It was decided that there would be one clerical and one lay representative from Newfoundland. Placentia’s Fr. Clancy, who had organized the Parnell Indemnity Fund in 1888, was eventually chosen as the Church delegate, while the long-time BIS president, Tipperary-born merchant James D. Ryan, was elected as his companion. A committee was created to draft an address on behalf of the Catholics of Newfoundland which included Bishop Howley, Brother Fleming of the Irish Christian Brothers, and Maurice Fenelon – apparently recovered from his anti-Home Rule stance of 1893.\textsuperscript{169}

The address, printed in Dublin’s \textit{Freeman’s Journal} and the St. John’s \textit{Evening Telegram}, was given by Fr. Clancy, and presented an eloquent appeal for unity in the struggle for Home Rule. Though the population of Newfoundland was small, Clancy

\textsuperscript{166} O’Day, \textit{Irish Home Rule}, 167.
\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Ibid.}, 184.
\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid.}, 179.
\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Evening Telegram}, August 13, 1896.
maintained that the people were “animated with the same impulsive love of Ireland, the same great desire for Ireland’s freedom that the most bold-hearted in Ireland can possibly feel.”

The speech went on to express the hope that a government similar to that of Newfoundland and other Dominions could be established in Ireland. The colony’s participation in the 1896 Convention is an example of a continued, active participation in transnational Irish networks by those of Irish descent. Although public enthusiasm appears to have waned, thanks in large part to the leadership of the clergy, the Catholics of Newfoundland continued to be part of the broader, pan-diasporic fight for Home Rule.

In 1898, Catholics of Irish birth and descent in many communities celebrated the centenary of the 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion. Commemorative events were held on St. Patrick’s Day, as well as in June to mark the peak of the fighting. Unlike Canadian centres such as Montreal, St. John’s saw no public occasion to memorialize the rising. A lack of organization and leadership may have contributed, as well as the absence of organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians which led the Montreal celebration, but a strong aversion to physical-force nationalism also seems to have been a factor. As noted in chapter three, Bishop Howley provided the only public acknowledgement of the centenary in his St. Patrick’s Day sermon, citing a nationalist poem in proclaiming that unlike some in the city, he was not one who “feared to speak of ’98.” The Bishop claimed he could not understand the attitudes of those “calling themselves descendants of Irishmen who would attempt to decry or make little of that glorious struggle for liberty, and the resentment of centuries of oppression by an outraged people.”

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170 *Evening Telegram*, September 14, 1896.
172 *Evening Telegram*, March 18, 1898.
Catholic elite, there was a reluctance to publicly mark the anniversary, perhaps due to the social and political ramifications of any accusations of disloyalty. This conclusion is somewhat speculative, but certainly the anniversary of 1798 passed in St. John’s with little fanfare.

After 1900, despite the reunification of the Irish Nationalist Party under John Redmond, there was little public engagement with Irish affairs in St. John’s. Lectures on Irish history and nationalism continued in the early-twentieth century, with the most notable examples surrounding the 1906 centenary of the Benevolent Irish Society. Several addresses on Irish affairs took place, including a lengthy historical talk on the legacy of 1798 by Bishop Howley. Though enthusiasm for Ireland’s political destiny was less than it had been in the 1880s, it had not altogether disappeared by the 1910s, and the stage was set for a younger generation of Catholic Newfoundlanders to respond to the changing nature of Irish nationalism during the First World War and after.

Of the three cities examined here, Halifax saw the most sustained involvement with Irish affairs in the twenty years after Parnell’s death. In the 1880s, nationalist organizations like the Land League and the Irish National League had flourished in the city, but by the 1890s these had ceased to exist. Instead, it was the Catholic elite of the Charitable Irish Society who were foremost in Haligonians’ engagement with Irish affairs.

As was the case in St. John’s, responses to the 1893 Home Rule Bill were few. Numerous telegraphed reports from London and occasional narrative editorials appeared in the local papers, but these hardly ever contained any distinguishable local reaction. The first organized involvement with the politics of the old country occurred in 1894, when a special

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173 See for example Evening Telegram, March 7, 1902; February 7, 1904; Daily News, March 27, 1906.
meeting of the CIS was called to organize an Irish Parliamentary Fund. The attendance was quite different from the meetings of the Land League in the early 1880s, with the clergy and elite dominating the proceedings. Archbishop O’Brien presided and gave an address on Home Rule, before collectors were named for each of the city’s urban wards. An organizing committee was named, and included the Lt. Governor, M.B. Daly, T.E. Kenny, Senator Lawrence Geoffrey Power, and Mayor Michael Edwin Keefe. In addition to the CIS members, representatives from Halifax’s other Catholic societies were represented, including the Catholic Mutual Benefit Association, the Total Abstinence and Benefit Society, and the St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s Young Men’s Societies.174 Unfortunately, the outcome of these efforts was reported neither in the newspapers nor the CIS Minute Book. It does, however, point to the leading role Halifax’s oldest Irish ethnic society was taking in mediating responses to Irish nationalism.

Like St. John’s, Halifax sent representatives to the 1896 Irish Race Convention in Dublin. The delegates were James J. O’Brien, a prominent businessman and city alderman, and the long-time secretary of the CIS, and Father William J. Foley, who would go on to serve as the rector of St. Mary’s Cathedral from 1908 to 1926. O’Brien was born in Halifax of Irish parents – his father, Daniel, had emigrated from Cork – and was described as being “to the end of his life the uncompromising champion of Ireland, and passionately loyal to her.”175 Like Clancy, Revered Foley addressed the Convention on its opening day. His speech emphasized the commitment of Nova Scotia’s Irish population to Home Rule, their love for the ancestral homeland, and begged the assembly to overcome the divisions of the

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174 *Halifax Herald*, February 19; February 24, 1894.
175 O’Brien’s participation in the Convention is detailed in his obituary, see *Halifax Herald*, February 28, 1911.
past in order to build a “platform on which all nationalists can stand.” As with Newfoundland’s, Halifax’s involvement demonstrates a continued, direct engagement in Irish-diasporic networks on the part of the Catholics of that city.

The next example of public engagement with Ireland took place in 1897, when Edward Blake, a Canadian-born Irish Nationalist MP, wrote to the CIS executive calling on them to arrange another Parliamentary Fund. A drive was to be organized, but no record of it appeared in the newspapers, so its scope must have been quite limited, perhaps only being taken within the CIS itself.

While the centenary of 1798 in St. John’s was quiet, in Halifax commemoration was virtually non-existent. Given the continued interest in Irish affairs on the part of the CIS, this is somewhat surprising. It seems likely that, as in St. John’s, an aversion to physical-force nationalism and a desire to emphasize imperial loyalty on the part of the city’s Irish-Catholic elite were factors. At St. Patrick’s Day banquets across North America, Irish societies respectfully acknowledged the United Irishmen. Not only did the CIS fail to recognize the rising, they celebrated a different centenary, that of a 1798 visit by the Duke of Kent to Halifax, where he was honoured at a societal dinner. That the CIS appear to have deliberately shunned the United Irishmen’s centenary in favour of marking a royal visit suggests a strong condemnation of the physical-force tradition. The society’s continued participation in Ireland’s struggle for Home Rule through the 1890s suggests that enthusiasm for the cause of the old country was high, but this support existed in a staunchly imperialistic

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177 *CIS Minute Book*, November 17, 1897.
178 *Halifax Herald*, March 18, 1898.
framework. Backing for revolutionary nationalism certainly did not exist, at least among those who registered their opinions publicly, such as the middle-classes members of the CIS.

The 1900s was a quiet decade for Irish nationalism in Halifax. A branch of John Redmond’s nationalist organization, the United Irish League, does not appear to have been established in the city, with the CIS continuing to lead local responses to the Irish struggle. The most significant event to occur in Halifax before the Home Rule crisis of 1912-1914 was the visit of Liverpool’s Irish Nationalist Member of Parliament T.P. O’Connor in November, 1910. Enthusiasm for Home Rule was growing again in Ireland and throughout the diaspora. A budgetary crisis at Westminster, precipitated by the Liberal Party’s desire to eliminate the veto of the House of Lords, resulted in elections which gave John Redmond’s Irish Nationalist Party the balance of power. An agreement with Prime Minister Herbert H. Asquith, in addition to the passing of the 1911 Parliament Act, made the prospects for Home Rule very bright by the beginning of that year. In the midst of this growing enthusiasm, O’Connor came to Halifax on the last stop of his Canadian tour. Like Justin McCarthy twenty years before, the Liverpool Member of Parliament was given a lavish welcome by the CIS. On November 3rd, he gave an address to a large crowd at the city’s Academy of Music. Many of Halifax’s most notable citizens were present on the stage, including Archbishop Edward McCarthy as well as most of the city’s Catholic clergy. The mayor, Halifax’s federal Members of Parliament, Archdeacon Armitage of the Church of England, Nova Scotia’s Chief Justice, several senators and the executive of the CIS were also involved. The Acadian Recorder called it “one of the largest and most representative crowds ever brought together for a public occasion.” O’Connor’s speech passionately supported Home Rule, praised Canadian federalism, and echoed a theme of McCarthy’s talk in the city in 1886, and a

179 O’Day, Irish Home Rule, 240.
common facet of British-North American responses to the Irish Question, by highlighting the applicability of a Canadian-style Dominion government to Ireland.\(^{180}\)

One of T.P. O’Connor’s final acts in the city was to attend a banquet in his honour by the Scottish ethnic association, the North British Society, where his passion and commitment to Irish Home Rule were praised.\(^{181}\) As in Newfoundland, support for self-government for Ireland was broad and non-sectarian. The excitement generated by his visit moved the CIS to organize another fundraising campaign for Redmond’s Irish Nationalist Party. In February, 1911, $625 had been sent to Ireland, with a further $100 remitted in the following weeks.\(^{182}\)

While Halifax saw the greatest participation in Irish affairs between 1892 and 1911, Portland appears to have had the least. Interest and engagement in the old country’s politics undoubtedly existed, but due to the city’s position outside of the British Empire, the Yankee-controlled newspapers perceived Irish Home Rule as a foreign issue, and therefore hardly ever published letters or editorials on the subject. Furthermore, the absence of associational records such as those of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, means that Portland’s responses to Irish nationalism in this period are difficult to assess.

Reaction to the 1893 Home Rule Bill was limited to telegraphed press reports from Britain and narrative newspaper editorials. Like Halifax, the 1798 centenary does not seem to have been publicly marked. St. Patrick’s Day was observed “in a quiet manner” that year, with no additional parades or celebrations planned. Instead, a delegation of four-hundred Portland Hibernian Knights – the uniformed division of the AOH – went to Montreal to

\(^{180}\) *Acadian Recorder*, November 4, 1910; *Halifax Herald*, November 4, 1910.

\(^{181}\) *Halifax Herald*, November 4, 1910.

\(^{182}\) *CIS Minute Book*, February 17, 1911.
participate in that city’s grand event on June 26th. This further demonstrates how, through the links of the Grand Trunk Railroad, Irish-Catholic networks in North America extended across national boundaries.

Lectures on Irish affairs continued throughout this period, such as an address by the former Fenian and INL president Daniel O’Connell O’Donoghue in 1905. A branch of the Redmondite UIL does not seem to have been set up in Portland, unsurprising given the struggles of the INL to maintain an active presence in the city. For some Irish Catholics, passion for nationalism and Home Rule was undoubtedly maintained, but in the wake of Parnell’s death there was no leadership or mechanism to facilitate its public expression. Portland, then, despite seeing the greatest levels of nationalist organizations and support in the 1880s, does not appear to have maintained such public support during the twenty years thereafter.

**Conclusion**

The strength of Irish nationalism in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland depended in large part on local leadership, as well as the associational and organizational networks that brought Irish Catholics in the three cities into the greater, transnational fight for Home Rule. The evolution of these networks varied from place to place. In St. John’s, nationalist associations never took hold, with the Catholic Church, through bishops Power and Howley, as well as the Clare-born Fr. Clancy, taking the lead in supporting Irish nationalism after 1880. In Halifax, the Land League and the Irish National League dominated local responses to events in Ireland, with the Charitable Irish Society guiding them thereafter. An interesting

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184 [Eastern Argus](#), January 8, 1905.
feature of the Halifax case is that as the contentious Land League agitation ceased, the Irish-Catholic elite as well as the clergy became increasingly involved with the Home Rule movement. In Portland, one sees the significant influence of the city’s most prominent Catholic laymen, such as Charles McCarthy Jr, Frank Cunningham, and W.H. Looney, as they were part of virtually every nationalist organization observed in the port. As in Halifax, associations such as the Land League, Ladies’ Land League, and the stuttering INL were essential in organizing public involvement with events in Ireland.

In St. John’s and Halifax, expressions of Irish nationalism took place within a strong imperial context. As such, support for physical-force methods or for an Irish Republic was non-existent, to the point where local Catholics shied away from marking the centenary of the 1798 Rebellion. Portland nationalists were also quite conservative and tended to be constitutional, as leaders were keen to emphasize the respectability and legality of both the Land League and Parnellite nationalism. Although the United States provided a more hospitable environment for republican support, such views were rarely observed before 1911. Even ex-Fenian Daniel O’Connell O’Donoghue came to support Dominion Home Rule during this period. Opposition to Home Rule, meanwhile, was only publicly expressed in the two British-North American centres, and only in St. John’s did this have any institutional backing, through the anti-nationalist resolutions of the Orange Order. In Portland, where the Irish Question was seen by most as a foreign one, opinions against Irish self-government were hardly ever observed.

Nationalist networks in the three cities further demonstrate how the local communities connected to the broader diaspora. Surprisingly, for three Atlantic port cities where direct shipping links to Ireland existed, most of these networks were continental.
Nationalist groups like the Land League and the INL were part of larger Irish-American and Canadian organizations, while prominent speakers almost always, in the cases of Halifax and Portland, arrived by train from larger centres like Boston or Montreal. Such networks rarely crossed the Cabot Strait into the Newfoundland Dominion, which accounts for the lack of formal institutional nationalism there.

Support for Home Rule in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland between 1880 and 1911 was broad, involving Catholics of Irish birth and descent, as well as many of their Anglo-Protestant neighbours. Among the Irish, although expressions of nationalism in all three ports could involve considerable passion, responses varied widely depending on time and local circumstances. The inconsistency suggests the presence of a symbolic ethnic identification with the Irish homeland, rather than a strong, cohesive ethnic community. The percentage of Irish-born residents within each city does not appear to have been a major factor in determining the extent to which each engaged in Irish affairs. This conclusion is illustrated by the considerable fluctuation in Irish nationalism observed in Portland, where the early-1880s saw the highest levels of organization in any of the three ports, but the period after 1890 saw the lowest.

By 1911, Home Rule for Ireland seemed simply a matter of time. From this point, though, the course of Irish nationalism changed. Both unionists and nationalists began to militarize through the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Irish Volunteers, respectively. Cultural nationalism and republicanism gained strength in Ireland, and this concurrently affected expressions in the diaspora. Responses to these changes in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland are the subject of chapter six.
Chapter Six

Responses to Irish Nationalism, 1912-1923

After 1911 the nature of Ireland’s fight for self-government began to change, with far-reaching consequences for both Ireland and the diaspora. Throughout this period both Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism became increasingly militant, with the threat of civil conflict broken only by the outbreak of the First World War. An uprising in Dublin at Easter, 1916, and, especially, the execution of its leaders by British military authorities, pushed Catholic popular opinion away from constitutional, Home-Rule nationalism towards physical-force republicanism. These trends eventually led to the Anglo-Irish War, 1919-1921, the partition of the north, and, in 1922, the establishment of the Irish Free State.

Chapter six examines responses to this era of Irish nationalism in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. It is essentially a thematic continuation of chapter five, only with a greater focus on radical republicanism. It argues that passion for Ireland remained strong, particularly during the Anglo-Irish War, when interest in the politics of the old country surged dramatically in all three ports, as occurred elsewhere in the diaspora. Although support for an independent Irish Republic undoubtedly existed, this chapter suggests an increasing divergence between nationalist expressions in Portland, where Irish-Americans became increasingly radical and republican, and Halifax and St. John’s, where support continued to be framed within a constitutional, pro-imperial context. Catholics of Irish birth and descent in each city remained connected to the movement in Ireland and elsewhere through nationalist associations such as the Friends of Irish Freedom and the Self-Determination for Ireland League. In St. John’s, Halifax, as well as in Portland, where
immigration from Ireland continued into the twentieth century, it was those born in North America who led engagement with Irish affairs, with the middle classes predominating.

Widespread intergenerational responses to Irish nationalism strongly suggest that, for many, ethnicity remained a part of Irish-Catholic identity well into the twentieth century. Despite such a high level of engagement with Ireland, however, one must remember that most individuals of Irish descent remained unmoved by events in the ancestral homeland. The sudden resurgence of interest amongst those of Irish descent is reminiscent of Herbert Gans’ concept of symbolic ethnicity, as well as Kathleen Neils Conzen’s invented model, where sentimental affiliation to the old country was strong, but tended to be romantic rather than part of a daily struggle for economic and political power. Meanwhile, opposition to Irish self-government continued, but as in the 1880 to 1911 period, it was only publicly expressed in Halifax and St. John’s, where the Orange Order took an increasingly active, anti-nationalist role after 1919. While opposition to an Irish Republic likely existed within the Yankee population in Portland, as it did in many other New England cities, it was never public. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first examines Irish nationalism from 1912 to the Easter Rising in 1916, the second section analyses the diverging responses from 1916 to 1918, and the concluding analysis ranges from the beginning of the Anglo-Irish War in 1919 to the end of the Civil War in 1923.

6.1 The Third Home Rule Bill, the Ulster Crisis, and the First World War, 1911-1916

Between 1911 and 1916 both Irish nationalism and Ulster unionism became increasingly militant, epitomized by the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Irish Volunteers in 1912 and 1913, respectively. Prior to the Easter Rising, however, a
large majority of Irish Catholics, both at home and abroad, continued to support John Redmond and the Irish Party’s struggle for self-government within the British Empire. Indeed, the Home Rule movement reached “the pinnacle of its success between 1912 and 1914.”¹ In the diaspora, as in Ireland, Redmondite support remained strong.

During the opening decade of the twentieth century, although John Redmond’s reunited Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) retained broad popular support, its influence at Westminster was limited. Many Edwardian Liberals were sympathetic to Home Rule, but most had become preoccupied with questions of British social welfare rather than the situation across the Irish Sea. It was a far cry from the Gladstonian party of the 1880s and early-1890s.² Beginning in 1909, however, events took place within British politics which would make the implementation of Irish Home Rule a virtual certainty. David Lloyd George, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith’s Chancellor of the Exchequer, submitted a budget containing a number of social welfare provisions. It passed the House of Commons, but was promptly vetoed by the House of Lords. The resultant elections produced a tiny Liberal majority, and, when negotiations during the summer of 1910 failed to produce a Liberal-Conservative compromise, renewed elections gave Redmond and the IPP the balance of power.³ In return for Redmond’s support of Liberal measures, Asquith agreed to make Irish Home Rule a priority. In 1911 the Parliament Act removed the House of Lords’ veto, eliminating the final constitutional obstacle to Irish self-government. The Third Home Rule Bill, introduced on April 11th, 1912, could only be delayed, not blocked, by the Lords, and

² Ibid., 109.
was set to be implemented by 1914 unless the Unionist opposition could force an election before then.  

With Home Rule looming large, the Irish Question began to shift. The position of Ulster within a self-governing Ireland became the predominant issue. Ulster unionism was nothing new, as from the nineteenth century many Protestants in the northern province had opposed Home Rule. They believed that in a self-governing Ireland, the Protestant minority would be placed at the mercy of the Catholic majority. Home Rule would, in effect, represent “Rome Rule.” Led by Sir Edward Carson and James Craig, Ulster Unionism evolved into a mass political movement and became increasingly militant. The importation of guns and ammunition from continental Europe occurred at least from 1910, and after 1912 efforts to arm the unionists increased dramatically. The most significant event was the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force at the end of 1912. One year later, the UVF had grown to over 100,000 members and represented a considerable paramilitary force. Faced with the very real possibility of civil war, the government attempted to negotiate a settlement with Redmond and Carson that would provide for the exclusion – either temporary or permanent – of some part of Ulster from the impending Home Rule scheme.

As unionism militarized, similar changes were affecting the nationalist movement. The formation of the UVF was not only a “physical expression of Ulster unionist intent, but also a stimulus for the hawks within the nationalist tradition.” To counter the unionist movements, a nationalist paramilitary organization, the Irish Volunteers, was formed in

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6 *Ibid.*, 120; 132; Duffy, *The Integrity of Ireland*, 34.
7 Jackson, *Home Rule*, 120.
November, 1913. By the end of 1914, its ranks had risen to 160,000 men. The Volunteers imported arms, and on July 25th, 1914, 1,500 Mauser rifles were intercepted by police and the military at Howth, just north of Dublin. On their way back to their barracks following the incident, members of the King’s Own Scottish Borderers fired upon an unarmed but hostile crowd at Bachelor’s Walk. Three people were killed, and many others wounded. Even as Redmond was attempting to negotiate a favourable compromise, popular opinion in Ireland was beginning to turn away from constitutional, Home Rule nationalism.

The First World War began in August, 1914, and significantly affected the Irish situation. Home Rule was enacted on September 18th, but was immediately suspended for the duration of the conflict. John Redmond saw the War as an opportunity to prove Ireland’s loyalty to the Empire, and therefore its suitability for Dominion status. Many Irish Volunteers did join the British military, and up until Easter, 1916, most Catholics supported the War effort. It was only after the Rising and the draconian executions of its leaders that popular opinion in Ireland began to swing away from constitutional nationalism and began to favour an independent Irish Republic.

In St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, interest in Irish affairs increased as Home Rule again became a major feature of British politics. Before the Easter Rising, however, popular engagement with Ireland did not approach the levels observed in the 1880s and early-1890s. In St. John’s, many of the patterns seen in earlier periods were repeated between 1912 and 1916 as the Irish Question was extensively discussed in the local press through editorials and letters to the editor, while clerical and associational support were also present. As in the

10 Jackson, *Home Rule*, 152.
earlier periods, opinion was broadly in favour of Home Rule, with the militancy of the Ulster
unionists frequently condemned. Discussions of Irish affairs became less common during the
War. Newfoundlanders, both Catholic and Protestant, became swept up in the jingoistic
response to the British Empire’s effort.

Editorials on Home Rule reappeared in St. John’s newspapers early in 1912. The
prevailing themes were contentment at the brightening prospects for Irish self-government
and disdain for the increasingly sectarian atmosphere of Ulster. W.F. Lloyd, the editor of the
*Evening Telegram*, summarized much of the local sentiment in a February 3rd, 1912 editorial,
noting that “it is a thousand pities that racial and religious animosities are being stirred up
and aggravated over the proposed grant of Home Rule to Ireland.”11 Further editorials that
summer repeated such opinions. On May 2nd, the *Daily News*’ editor suggested that the
popular strength of Ulster unionism was considerably exaggerated, and the same message
was repeated next to a piece highlighting local, St. John’s support for Home Rule, and
opposition to unionism: “no colony in the enjoyment of Home Rule, such as Newfoundland,
can afford to do other than sympathize with Ireland in her desire for self-government and no
imperialist, be he Liberal or Tory, can look with approval upon any movement which savours
of disloyalty to King and Constitution.”12

The anti-unionist attitudes displayed in the St. John’s press demonstrate how the Irish
Question could generate interest beyond those of Irish descent. It was seen as an issue which
not only affected Ireland, but was relevant to the integrity and unity of the entire Empire. As
was the case in the 1880s, many Protestants of English descent supported Home Rule. It was
seen as being able to stabilize British and imperial politics through the granting of self-

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11 *Evening Telegram*, February 3, 1912.
12 *Daily News*, August 12, 1912.
determination, as enjoyed by the other overseas Dominions. Sir Edward Carson and the militant pronouncements of the unionists, meanwhile, were characterized as disloyal, seditious and dangerous. Furthermore, Ulster unionism was rejected as it was seen as a product of sectarianism, which was generally abhorred in Newfoundland. The *Daily News* editorial following “Ulster Day” in late-September, 1912, confirms this mentality: “The proceedings in Belfast, happily, do not concern us in Newfoundland to any great extent. Here the era of dissention has long since passed away, and whatever our differences may be, Newfoundlanders have learned mutual tolerance and respect.”

Although it was Catholics of Irish descent who had a particularly emotional connection to the Home Rule crisis, responses in St. John’s involved the entire community.

As noted in chapter three, the Catholic clergy continued to provide public support for Irish self-government. Between 1912 and 1916, this took the form of lectures by an Irish-born priest, Father Daniel P. O’Callaghan, which drew wide interest, particularly amongst those of Irish descent. On the eve of one of the lectures, a letter to the *Daily News*, signed “Erin Go Bragh,” called upon the Irishmen of St. John’s to attend, stating that “it is only natural to expect that those of us who are descendants of Irishmen should feel a touch of sympathy with the ‘land of martyrs,’ and have an interest in its welfare.” The correspondent concluded by arguing that a large attendance would be a small, but significant expression of Irish-Newfoundlanders’ support for Home Rule. The lecture itself, given at the Total Abstinence Society’s hall and chaired by Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) secretary W.J. Higgins, highlighted the overwhelming support for Home Rule in Ireland, criticized Carson and his deputies for “misleading” Irish-Protestant opinion, and suggested that Irish self-

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14 *Daily News*, March 21, 1912.
government could only strengthen the people’s devotion to the Empire. A second lecture on Home Rule, this time given to the Society of the Holy Name, was delivered by Fr. O’Callaghan in January, 1913. The themes of this talk were similar, again highlighting Ireland’s loyalty to the crown and therefore its suitability for self-government.

The Benevolent Irish Society likewise remained involved in leading local responses to the situation in the old country. In its annual report from 1913, the society’s members expressed their “joy at the heightened prospects of Home Rule,” and that they, “as members of the oldest national society in Britain’s most ancient colony, would soon be able to take our part in the rejoicings in honour of the old land becoming ‘a nation once again.’” Indeed, plans for a celebration were well underway by the winter of 1913. At a meeting in early February, the members – most of whom had never set eyes on their ancestral homeland – decided to organize an excursion to Ireland once the Home Rule measure was passed into law. Although both Anglo-Protestants and Irish Catholics supported Home Rule, the responses of the BIS demonstrate a romantic, ethnic attachment to Ireland which was not present in newspaper editorials on the Irish Question. That the members were willing to travel to Ireland to celebrate Home Rule suggests that, for some, the affairs of the old country were able to evoke a passionate response.

By the end of 1913, and into the spring of 1914, as the Home Rule Bill approached its third and final reading in the House of Commons, interest in the measure amongst the Catholics of St. John’s increased. Letters and editorials in the St. John’s press became more frequent, with some providing evidence of anti-Home Rule sentiment that was beginning to

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15 Daily News, March 22, 1912
17 Evening Telegram, February 19, 1913.
18 Evening Telegram, February 6, 1913.
appear in the town. An editorial in the *Daily Mail*, which was the temporary title of the daily press organ of William F. Coaker’s Fisherman’s Protective Union, attacked Irish nationalism as being disloyal, and defended the partition of Ulster claiming that Irishmen were not, and could never be truly united.\(^\text{19}\) This piece drew a strong response from a correspondent to the *Daily News*, who defended Irish loyalty and highlighted the role of Irish troops in the Relief of Ladysmith during the South African War. Unionists, on the other hand, were slated as disloyal for opposing “what the British Empire is today demanding for Ireland.”\(^\text{20}\) Again, the theme of loyalty was invoked on both sides of the debate, and the discussion centred around the significance of Irish Home Rule to the broader Empire.

Further letters were sent to the St. John’s press, but not all were printed because of a fear of inflaming sectarian tensions within the local community. The press, especially the *Daily News*, overtly tried to dissuade any discussions which contained sectarian overtones, and refused to acknowledge the escalating crisis in Ireland as a religious one. The editor explained:

> We decline to regard all Roman Catholics as Home Rulers, and all Protestants, or even Orangemen, as anti-Home Rulers. It is for this reason that many letters on the subject have been refused publication in our columns. Discussion of the [Irish] problem on its merits we welcome, but for its discussion from the Protestant, Catholic, Orange or any other sectarian standpoint, the columns of the *Daily News* have no room. [...] In Newfoundland, Orange and Green have worked together in harmony for many years, and sectarian bitterness has been almost eliminated. To represent the Home Rule cause as a Catholic one, and the opposition as Orange, is to invite divisions, which are as undesirable as they are unnecessary.\(^\text{21}\)

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\(^{19}\) *Daily Mail*, March 19, 1914


\(^{21}\) *Daily News*, March 27, 1914.
This suggests that both nationalist and unionist opinions existed in St. John’s, but the press was unwilling to address any debate which may increase sectarianism within the city.

In late May, 1914, the Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the Commons, and was on the verge of being implemented. Despite the lack of a settlement of the Ulster Question, the Catholics of St. John’s celebrated as if Home Rule was an accomplished fact. The *Daily News* published a glowing editorial, rejoicing that the “herculean task” was finally accomplished. It conceded that further trouble was likely, given the position of the North, but it would not be long before all Irishmen would cooperate and make Ireland “the most devoted daughter in the imperial household.” The imperial connection was key, as the passage finished with two exclamations: “God save Ireland!” and “God prosper the Empire!”

The joyous response to the news went beyond the press. The BIS held a special meeting at the end of May, where a congratulatory resolution was drafted and sent to John Redmond on June 2nd, while the emotional response of the students of St. Patrick’s Hall, introduced in chapter three, shows how interest in the ancestral homeland was passed to younger generations of Catholics. Although the Irish Question was also an imperial one, and drew responses from both Catholics and Protestants in St. John’s, the passionate celebrations of its imminent success were almost exclusively restricted to those of Irish descent. For many, including the students of the Christian Brothers, the celebration of Irish Home Rule reflected a strong, emotional, ethnic attachment to the old country. That Ireland was set to be “a nation once again,” while retaining its imperial status, was a reason for joy, even amongst those several generations removed from their ancestral homeland.

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23 *Benevolent Irish Society (BIS) Minutes*, May 31, 1914, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), Benevolent Irish Society Fonds, MG 612, Reel 76.
The First World War significantly changed how those of Irish descent in St. John’s engaged with the Irish Question. With Home Rule suspended, local commentary on affairs in Ireland virtually ceased in late-1914 and 1915, as Newfoundlanders, both Catholic and Protestant, were swept up in the patriotic response to the European conflict. As was generally the case elsewhere in British North America, Catholics of Irish descent enthusiastically supported the War effort.24 In St. John’s, this was clearly evidenced by Catholics’ strong involvement with the Newfoundland Regiment. In her unpublished analysis of the Newfoundland Patriotic Association – the body which oversaw the colony’s War effort – Patricia O’Brien suggests that religion was not a factor in recruitment in the capital city.25 Led by the pro-imperial Archbishop Edward Roche, young Catholics joined up in numbers equivalent to their Protestant neighbours. Of the first 442 recruits in St. John’s, 130, or almost 30%, came from the Catholic Cadet Corps. Later, a denominational breakdown of the Regiment from June, 1916, stated that out of 2,687 soldiers, 830, or just above 30%, were Roman Catholic – a number roughly proportional to their population in the colony.26 They were underrepresented, however, among the officers of the regiment, where only 18 out of 72, or 25%, were Catholic. This was obviously a source of some dismay in the colony, as a letter from Roche to Governor W.E. Davidson noted the “widespread dissatisfaction amongst Catholics generally” at the composition of the officer corps.27

26 “Religious Denomination, Newfoundland Regiment,” June 12, 1916, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s, (ARCASJ), Edward Roche Papers, 107/2/5.
Despite some disillusionment, virtually all St. John’s Catholics appear to have supported the War effort. The BIS enthusiastically endorsed the conflict, and held a special meeting to celebrate the first naval victory of the War on August 7th, 1914. Later, in its 1915 annual report, the society’s minutes praised the twenty-four young men from its ranks who had volunteered to give “their all for the cause of Empire.” While many Newfoundland Catholics were committed constitutional nationalists, they were likewise proud citizens of the British Empire.

Discussion of the Irish Question decreased dramatically with the coming of War, but it did not cease altogether. The patriotic Newfoundland newspaper editors held up the example of John Redmond and the Irish-Catholic contribution to the War effort to highlight imperial unity. Radical republicanism, meanwhile, was acknowledged but deemed seditious and pro-German. One Daily News editorial from early-1915 decried “revolutionary Irishmen,” but celebrated the fact that “those who preach sedition are few, infamous and cowards. [...] These men compare themselves to the men of ’98, as will compare a ferret to a lion. [...] The struggle is now over, and Irishmen and Englishmen have entered into fellowship, and are sealing their compact with their blood to the common defence of their common Empire.” Such commentary was rare, however, and with Newfoundlanders embroiled in the European War, the position of Ireland was, for a time, largely forgotten.

Although Halifax saw the greatest involvement with Irish affairs during the 1892 to 1911 period, responses to the Third Home Rule Bill and the Ulster crisis were muted. Events in Ireland were frequently reported in the local press, but local commentary on the situation

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28 Evening Herald, August 7, 1914.
29 Evening Telegram, February 19, 1915.
30 See for example Evening Telegram, January 15, 1915.
was rare. Instead, it was the Irish ethnic associations – the Charitable Irish Society (CIS) and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), and, to a lesser extent, the Catholic clergy, who led local engagement with the Irish Question throughout this period. As in St. John’s, the discussion was always placed within a devoutly loyal, imperial context, though some letters to the Halifax newspapers demonstrate stronger sympathy with Ulster unionism.

Unlike St. John’s, editorials discussing events in Ireland rarely appeared in the spring of 1912. Instead, the growing tensions and the details of the Home Rule Bill were extensively reported through telegraphed reports from Britain. Despite a lack of local commentary, the citizens of Halifax were generally aware of the situation in Ireland.\(^\text{32}\) What few locally-written editorials existed tended to demonstrate support for Home Rule. A _Halifax Herald_ piece, for example, rejoiced that “the heart of the Empire [was] shivering on the brink of greater freedom and larger liberty.” The editor went on to chastise the unionists, calling the struggle against Home Rule “utterly ridiculous and grotesque.”\(^\text{33}\) This editorial drew a response three days later in the form of a letter from a Mr. Hughes, in which he defended unionism. He argued that the current measure was contrary to the interests of the Empire, and equated Home Rule to “Rome Rule” which would destabilize the United Kingdom.\(^\text{34}\) Such examples of public anti-Home Rule sentiment were rare during this period. As in St. John’s, most popular opinion, both Irish- and non-Irish, was in favour of self-government for Ireland. Organizations such as the Orange Order did not mobilize against Home Rule until after 1914. It is interesting, however, that many of the arguments made in favour of the measure – that it would enhance imperial harmony – were also suggested by its

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32 See for example _Halifax Herald_, April 8; April 11; April 12, 1912.
33 _Halifax Herald_, August 17, 1912.
34 _Halifax Herald_, August 20, 1912.
detractors. The Irish Question was an imperial one, and in Halifax, as in St. John’s, interest in it went beyond those of Irish birth or descent.

Rather than through the press, it was the city’s Irish ethnic associations which publicly pledged support for Irish self-government. At the St. Patrick’s Day banquet of 1912, the newly-elected president of the CIS, Robert E. Finn, expressed the hope that Home Rule would soon be achieved. The assembled members concluded by singing God Save Ireland “in good style.”\(^{35}\) In September, the AOH convened to elect a new executive, and they too proclaimed their support for the Home Rule Bill. A unanimous resolution was passed in favour of self-government for Ireland, and was forwarded to John Redmond in Dublin.\(^{36}\)

Associational responses to Irish affairs continued through 1913 and 1914. At the CIS’s 1913 St. Patrick’s Day celebration, Rev. Dr. William J. Foley of St. Mary’s gave an address on Home Rule, noting that the quarrel was between Ireland and the English Government, rather than the English people. He concluded by highlighting the fact that the Irish did not desire outright separation from the Empire, but rather to assume their rightful place within it.\(^{37}\) Foley’s speech shows how the clergy, too, expressed their support for Irish self-government with loyal, pro-imperial language. Later that year, the CIS passed yet another pro-Home Rule resolution, and again forwarded it to Redmond.\(^{38}\) The most interesting action on the part of the society, however, took place in the winter of 1914, when another resolution suggested that anti-Home Rule sentiment was growing in the region. Members resolved “to unite with the Irish people of Nova Scotia in any action that may be deemed advisable to offset any movement that may be started in this province in opposition

\(^{35}\) *Halifax Herald*, March 19, 1912.
\(^{36}\) *Acadian Recorder*, September 4, 1912.
\(^{37}\) *Halifax Herald*, March 25, 1913.
Evidently, there was a concern that opposition to Irish self-government was coalescing into an organized movement. This may have been led by the Orange Order who, as will be discussed below, dominated anti-nationalist sentiment after 1919. More likely, it was directed at the Toronto-based Canadian Unionist League, who had earlier expressed hopes of expanding into Nova Scotia. There were some Irish Protestants in Halifax in this period, but their numbers were small. Popular opposition to Home Rule tended to be an expression of imperially-minded conservatism, rather than an ethnic or sentimental attachment to Ulster. For many, to be a good Tory was to oppose Home Rule. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of the Unionist League becoming established in Halifax, and there does not appear to have been any organized opposition to Irish self-government in the city during this period. Like its counterpart in St. John’s, the CIS planned a celebration to mark the enactment of Home Rule in 1914. The society’s minutes do not, unfortunately, provide details of what shape such an event was to take, and the outbreak of War postponed it indefinitely.

War affected Haligonians’ responses to Irish affairs in a similar manner to St. John’s. Like Newfoundland and elsewhere in Canada, the Catholics of the city responded enthusiastically to the conflict. The local clergy occasionally highlighted Redmond’s support for the imperial effort in order to encourage young Catholics to volunteer for service in Europe. In a talk near the beginning of the War, for example, Rev. Dr. Foley, who had recently extolled the imperial benefits of Home Rule, praised Redmond and highlighted Ireland’s integral status within the Empire by asking “why should not Irishmen be true to the

39 CIS Minute Book, February 17, 1914.
40 Halifax Herald, November 5, 1913.
41 CIS Minute Book, November 18, 1914.
[British] flag? It [is their] flag!” His remarks were followed by loud, prolonged applause and a chorus of “Rule Britannia.”

The city’s Irish-Catholic associations supported the War effort in much the same way as the St. John’s BIS. Leading the way was the CIS. At their annual dinner in 1915, the Dalhousie Professor H.L. Stewart, who would go on to write a history of the society in 1949, gave a lecture on Ireland’s enthusiastic participation in the War. The members’ ancestral homeland was praised for “taking her full share in the battle with the German Hun.” The CIS took more direct action in supporting the Canadian cause by organizing one of the largest collections in its history to contribute to the Machine Gun Fund, as well as the Red Cross and the Soldier’s Disablement Fund in the summer of 1915. A total of 167 members donated $1,119 to the cause. A subsequent letter from the acting Minister of the Militia, James A. Lougheed, notified the society that funds for Canadian machine guns were no longer required, so the full sum was diverted to the Red Cross and Soldiers’ Disablement Fund. The AOH, too, adopted a patriotic, pro-imperial stance during the War. It featured the Union Jack prominently at its conventions, and promised to pay the insurance premiums for all Halifax Hibernians fighting in Europe. It went so far as to cancel the 1918 assembly due to there being “so many overseas.” This mentality on the part of the Halifax AOH is particularly noteworthy as it represents a break with the American organization. In the United States, at least up to America’s entry into the War in 1917, the Hibernians tended to

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42 *Halifax Herald*, August 12, 1914.
43 *Halifax Herald*, February 16, 1915.
44 *CIS Minute Book*, August 17, 1915.
45 James A Lougheed to John A. Gillis, August 31, 1915, PANS, CIS Fonds, MG 20, Vol. 64, No. 9.24.
46 *Halifax Herald*, March 18, 1915; December 7, 1915.
47 *Halifax Herald*, August 24, 1918.
oppose the British War effort, and endorsed radical, physical-force republicanism.\(^{48}\) As was the case in St. John’s, Halifax’s Catholics of Irish descent seem to have universally supported the British Empire’s War effort.

From the 1890s to 1911, there had been little public reaction to Irish affairs in Portland, and, generally, this remained the case for the 1912 to 1916 period.\(^{49}\) Events in Ireland were extensively covered through telegraphed reports in local newspapers, so the Irish-Catholic community was likely aware of what was happening in the old country. Nevertheless, the meetings, rallies and speeches that were so prominent in the 1880s were not repeated. The lack of public support or engagement with Home Rule does not necessarily reflect a lack of passion on the part of Portland’s Irish. The shortage of letters to the editor, compared to St. John’s and Halifax, can be partly explained by the city’s relatively small Irish-Catholic community, as well as its situation in the United States. Much of the broad interest generated in the other two centres was due to the Irish Question being such a vital imperial one. In Portland, this was not relevant, as most Yankees would have perceived it as a foreign issue. The lack of meetings and rallies, compared with the 1880s, was due to the failure of a nationalist organization such as the United Irish League to take hold in the city. This cut off Portland’s ties to the broader nationalist movement in Ireland and elsewhere in the United States. The activities of the UIL were covered in the local press, but there was no Portland or Maine involvement at, for example, the UIL’s annual conference in Philadelphia in 1912.\(^{50}\) Large Home Rule meetings were held in Boston, and were covered in the *Eastern Argus*, but again it does not seem as though there was any Portland participation.\(^{51}\)


\(^{49}\) For examples of Irish coverage, see *Eastern Argus*, April 12, 1912; January 18; July 18, 1913.

\(^{50}\) *Eastern Argus*, September 26, 1912.

\(^{51}\) *Eastern Argus*, October 2, 1912.
Irish-Catholic associations, such as the AOH and the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS) remained silent on events in Ireland during this period. From 1912 to the Easter Rising in 1916, no public resolutions were made, though members undoubtedly discussed Irish affairs in the confines of their respective societal rooms. There is a possibility that a rift between the conservative-nationalist Catholic clergy and the more radical AOH may have curtailed the latter’s public engagement with events in Ireland. From the early years of the century, American Hibernians had increasingly tended to support radical, physical-force nationalism. Portland’s clergy, led by Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh, remained loyal to John Redmond’s constitutional methods, at least until the Easter Rising. At the children’s annual St. Patrick’s Day concert in 1915, Walsh addressed the crowd and praised Irish soldiers’ “great contribution” in the European conflict.52 Two months later, in one of the few public engagements with Irish affairs during this period, the national president of the AOH visited Portland as part of a cross-country tour. Addressing all five local divisions, he spoke out against the British War effort, and condemned Irish-Catholic youths who volunteered to fight for the Empire. Interestingly, he concluded by expressing his regret that for the first time in the seventy-three cities he had spoken in, no Catholic clergymen had attended his talk.53 The clergy’s refusal to acknowledge the AOH president was likely an objection to the anti-imperial messages he preached. Whether a disagreement between clergy and AOH impeded the latter in leading responses to the escalating tensions in the ancestral homeland remains an open question, especially in the absence of Hibernians’ associational records. This episode, however, may partly explain why the Portland divisions made no public comment on affairs in Ireland from 1912 to 1916.

52 Eastern Argus, March 18, 1915.  
By the beginning of the First World War, passion for Home Rule in Ireland had reached its peak. Between 1912 and 1914, however, the crises that affected Irish politics slowly facilitated the revival of popular separatism. Although supported by only a tiny minority, the Supreme Council of the IRB agreed that a rebellion should be staged before the end of the War. The vast majority of the Irish Volunteers had become part of Redmond’s National Volunteers, with many seeing service on European battlefields. About 15,000 remained under the control of the IRB, and were committed to Irish independence. It was this paramilitary force, alongside James Connolly’s Irish Citizen’s Army, that would be mobilized at Easter, 1916.

The Rising itself was initially set for Easter Sunday. In the days leading up to the planned rebellion, rumours of impending mobilization began to spread throughout the ranks of the Volunteers. Some leaders, most notably Chief of Staff Eoin MacNeill, opposed the plan. When news that Roger Casement and a shipment of German guns and ammunition had been intercepted by the British military off the coast of Kerry, MacNeill issued a countermanding order to halt the mobilization. The other IRB leaders resolved that the Rising should proceed regardless, and its date was postponed until Monday.

On Easter Monday, April 24\textsuperscript{th}, 1916, about 1,600 Volunteers were mobilized and occupied locations across Dublin. At 12:45 in the afternoon, Patrick Pearse proclaimed an Irish Republic from the entrance of the General Post Office (GPO) on Sackville Street (now O’Connell Street). The confusion created by MacNeill’s countermanding order resulted in

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56 Ibid., 117-118.
only a small percentage of Volunteers turning out to fight, so the chances of achieving any military success were negligible from the start.\textsuperscript{57} Street fighting lasted in Dublin for six days. On Saturday, Pearse surrendered unconditionally to General John Maxwell, who had been sent from England to command the British forces. Much of central Dublin lay in ruins, and over 450 people had been killed, about half of whom were civilians.\textsuperscript{58}

During and immediately following the Rising, the vast majority of popular opinion was against the rebels. As they were being marched to internment camps, many Dubliners turned out to pelt the Volunteers with refuse and to shout abuse.\textsuperscript{59} The rebels, rather than the British soldiers, were blamed for the havoc wreaked upon the city, as well as for the high number of civilian casualties. The subsequent actions of the British authorities, however, would sour and eventually change Catholic-nationalist opinion in Ireland. As the bulk of the Volunteers were deported to prisons in England, General Maxwell tried the Rising’s leaders in Dublin by court martial. On May 3\textsuperscript{rd}, Pearse, Tom Clarke, and Thomas MacDonagh were executed by firing squad at Kilmainham Gaol. By May 12\textsuperscript{th}, fourteen of the rebels had been shot in Dublin, in addition to Thomas Kent in Cork. Roger Casement, who had been captured in Kerry with the shipment of German arms, was hanged at Pentonville Prison in England on August 13\textsuperscript{th} after a well-publicized trial. The speed and number of the executions outraged nationalists throughout Ireland.\textsuperscript{60} By May 12\textsuperscript{th}, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith ordered the executions halted, and travelled to the city to negotiate a compromise on Irish self-government with Redmond and the Ulster Unionists. Massive damage to pro-imperial

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 127; 133.  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 188; Townshend, \textit{Easter 1916}, 246.  
\textsuperscript{59} McGarry, \textit{The Rising}, 252.  
\textsuperscript{60} Townshend, \textit{Easter 1916}, 279.
opinion had been done, however.\textsuperscript{61} As one commentator noted, a “few unknown men shot in a barrack yard has embittered a whole nation.”\textsuperscript{62} As early as mid-May, the Royal Irish Constabulary reported that a “sudden unfriendliness” now abounded throughout the country. By June, they noted that separatist opinion was in the ascendancy.\textsuperscript{63} A shift in opinion was by no means immediate, but in the months that followed, the curfews, mass-arrests and the heavy-handed British military occupation gradually radicalized nationalist opinion in favour of an Irish Republic.\textsuperscript{64} Negotiations to bring about a Home Rule settlement failed in late-1916 and 1917, and with Sinn Fein’s victory in a North Roscommon by-election, which had been a safe Home-Rule seat, John Redmond’s fight for Dominion Home Rule within the British Empire was effectively over.\textsuperscript{65} Redmond died suddenly on March 6\textsuperscript{th}, 1918, and the final blow for constitutional nationalism came later that month as the British government attempted to enact conscription in Ireland. Support for Sinn Fein and republicanism was overwhelming amongst Catholics at the end of the War, and the party won seventy-three seats out of 105 in the 1918 general election.\textsuperscript{66} Dominion Home Rule was now widely perceived as an unacceptable compromise, which would not bring about independence, but rather partition of the country, and devolved government within a context of wider British patriotism.\textsuperscript{67}

Changes in Irish-Catholic popular opinion were not only confined to Ireland. The Easter Rising and its aftermath affected responses to Irish affairs throughout the diaspora. As will be argued below, a growing divergence began to appear between how those of Irish birth

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 289.
\textsuperscript{63} Townsend, \textit{Easter 1916}, 301; McGarry, \textit{The Rising}, 281.
\textsuperscript{64} McGarry, \textit{The Rising}, 281.
\textsuperscript{65} Jackson, \textit{Home Rule}, 176-177.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 180.
\textsuperscript{67} Boyce, \textit{Nationalism in Ireland}, 288.
and descent in the British world responded to these events, versus those in the United States. Reactions to the Rising were strongly influenced by local contexts, with the Empire’s involvement in the First World War being the predominant factor in the British Dominions. In Australia, for example, most Catholics of Irish birth and descent initially reacted against the Rising, labelling it foolish and disloyal.\(^68\) Led by a small number of radical clerics, such as Melbourne’s Archbishop Daniel Mannix, however, some Irish-Australians came to support the republican cause, and by St. Patrick’s Day, 1918, the “martyrs” of the Easter Rising were celebrated, and marchers carried pro-Sinn Fein flags and banners.\(^69\) In Canada, Catholics of Irish birth and descent tended to be less inclined to publicly support Irish republicanism in the wake of the Easter Rising. Responses varied by region, though almost all Canadians initially abhorred the rebellion. In Toronto, for example, Catholic newspapers described the events in Dublin as a “colossal act of folly,” and similar responses were echoed throughout the Dominion.\(^70\) In Montreal, which would later become the centre of Irish-Canadian nationalism, rallies took place where speakers emphasized support for the War effort, and distanced themselves from Sinn Fein and republicanism.\(^71\) In the Catholic press, although the number of letters and editorials on Irish affairs increased after the Rising, possibly suggesting an enhanced interest in the political destiny of the ancestral homeland by the “children and grandchildren of the diaspora,” nationalist support remained largely constitutional.\(^72\)

Throughout 1917, Catholics of Irish descent from British Columbia to the Maritimes called for Irish Home Rule. Support for Sinn Fein and an independent Irish


\(^71\) Mark McGowan, “Between King, Kaiser and Canada, 110.

\(^72\) Ibid., 110.
Republic was seldom articulated, while enthusiasm for the Canadian War effort was maintained.\textsuperscript{73}

Unlike the British Dominions, the United States was a neutral power in the spring of 1916. Irish-American responses to the Rising and its aftermath were not directly affected by the wartime context, and hostility to Britain after the executions became widespread.\textsuperscript{74} The Irish-American press initially condemned the Rising, portraying it as a foolish, isolated incident. As news of the executions spread, however, the tone of editorials and comments became increasingly anti-British.\textsuperscript{75} Indeed, outrage at Maxwell’s “stupid and vengeful acts” on behalf of the British administration went well beyond those of Irish birth or descent – American opinion was generally shocked. Many editors who had been supporters of moderate, constitutional nationalism now published radical, pro-Sinn Fein editorials. Irish-Catholic communities throughout the United States organized fundraising events to relieve the distress in Dublin.\textsuperscript{76}

Although constitutional nationalism was far from eliminated altogether, public opinion amongst Irish Americans was largely in favour of Sinn Fein after 1916. America’s entry into the War in April, 1917, however, changed the context in which engagement with Irish affairs could take place. Radical, anti-British expressions of Irish nationalism were replaced by American patriotism. Most Irish Americans “postponed consideration of Ireland’s future until the end of the War.”\textsuperscript{77} Both the Catholic press and Irish-American leaders such as New York Judge Daniel Cohalan urged loyalty to American war aims, and suggested that President Woodrow Wilson’s objectives should include some measure of self-

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 110-111.
\textsuperscript{74} Campbell, “Emigrant Responses to War and Revolution,” 83.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 80.
\textsuperscript{77} Campbell, “Emigrant Responses to War and Revolution,” 84.
determination for Ireland. It was this theme that dominated Irish-American engagement with the old country until the end of 1918.  

As was the case in central Canada, responses to the Easter Rising and its aftermath in St. John’s continually reflected Catholics’ strong loyalty to the British Empire alongside a sentimental attachment to their ancestral homeland. The fighting began in Dublin on April 24th, and was extensively reported in the Newfoundland press by April 26th. Most initial reports were in the form of censored cablegrams from London’s press bureau. Predictably, these adopted a virulently anti-rebel tone. Headlines in the wake of the outbreak included “Is [Roger] Casement a Lunatic,” and “Traitors Shot!” Despite the slanted nature of the reporting, the fighting itself, the executions, the subsequent trial of Roger Casement and the government’s attempt to negotiate a Home Rule compromise were all well covered in the St. John’s papers.

Editorials and letters to the local press demonstrate how the jingoistic, First World War context overrode all responses to the Rising. As was the case in many parts of the British world, the Daily News portrayed the rebellion as a German plot designed to destabilize the Empire:

The madmen who are striving to undo the work of O’Connell, Butt, Parnell and Redmond, are not only traitors to the Empire, but traitors first and before all, to Ireland. It is incomprehensible that any can be found so infamous as to join in thought or deed with the assassins of Belgium, the murderers of Priests and Nuns, the destroyers of Louvain. Irishmen, the world over, will to-day, bow their heads in sorrow.

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80 Daily News, April 26; May 4, 1916  
The *Daily Star*’s editor, meanwhile, echoed similar sentiments, characterizing the Sinn Feiners – the term erroneously used to describe the rebels – as “agents of Germany, caught by German persuasions, backed by German money, [and] assured of German support.”

Regarding the executions, most St. John’s papers were quiet. As many press organs in Canada, the United States, and Australia expressed their dismay at the continued shootings, the *Evening Telegram*, which had strongly supported Irish Home Rule in previous years, argued that the Rising’s leaders should be made examples of to dissuade further disloyalty.

Letters to the editor expressed continued, broad support for Irish Home Rule, but only within an imperial framework. Sympathy for an independent Irish Republic was hardly ever publicly articulated, and no shift in popular opinion took place in Newfoundland. A letter to Redmond which had actually been penned just before the Rising by health inspector William O’Brien was reprinted in the *Daily News* in early May, 1916. It praised the *News*’ editor, James Alexander Robinson, as a “Home Ruler of the first water,” and pledged that “all Irishmen here are with you in the struggle for Home Rule.” Subsequent letters to the local press, however, suggest that anti-Home Rule sentiment may have been on the rise in the city, and there was a perception, at least among some Catholics, that this was a result of sectarian, anti-Irish bigotry in the community. A letter to the *Evening Herald* from May, 1917, for example, lamented the fact that:

> Many good people in our midst, who have enjoyed all the benefits of Home Rule for nearly a century and who would fight to the death before they would give it up, oppose Home Rule for Ireland. They have never considered the merits of the question, and they oppose it on principle. Their

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82 *Daily Star*, April 26, 1916.
83 *Evening Telegram*, May 13, 1916.
opposition is based on ignorance, and I might add, that is in many cases intensified by blind prejudice.  

Another example, submitted to the Catholic-edited *Plaindealer* in 1918, also subtly suggested that bigotry and sectarianism were to blame for growing anti-Home Rule sentiment in the colony. The author noted that those opposed to the cause of Ireland were becoming increasingly vocal in St. John’s, and that they gave “as an excuse for their hostility to Home Rule, their opinion that Irishmen are not united enough to take charge of their country’s affairs, and therefore, to grant self-government to Ireland would be a great mistake. What a sorry excuse, Mr. Editor, to hide their true reasons.” The reference to their “true reasons” undoubtedly implies that anti-Irish or anti-Catholic sentiments were at the heart of local opposition to Home Rule. The Rising itself, and the associated disloyalty, may have been a factor in enhancing local anti-Irishness, as a bitter letter to the *Daily Star* demonstrates:

> Every sane person knows that Home Rule for Ireland is impracticable politically, financially, and commercially. I will only lightly touch on the events of last Easter as these are but all too fresh in everyone’s memory. The treacherous blow of the Irish aimed at England’s back when she was fighting for her life will never be forgotten. Never will England forget, though she may forgive, that dastardly and cowardly attempt at her life.  

The hostility towards the rebels of 1916 is evident in this passage, and it is certainly possible that the traitorous act of rebellion during wartime may have moved many Anglo-Protestants in St. John’s to oppose self-government for Ireland.

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85 *Evening Herald*, May 5, 1917.
86 *Plaindealer*, April 20, 1918. The *Plaindealer* was a small St. John’s publication, owned and edited by W.J. O’Neill, and specialized in Irish and Catholic news. Unfortunately, few issues have survived, but a number of scattered examples may be found in the Sir Robert Bond Collection, Archives and Manuscript Division, Memorial University. COLL-237, Box 37.
Politicians in the colony were keen to play down the significance of the Rising, treating it as a disloyal but isolated incident, while emphasizing the loyalty of Irish Catholics in Ireland, Newfoundland and throughout the Empire. A long statement on Irish loyalty was read in the Legislative Council by John Anderson, a Scot, known for his efforts to bring daylight savings time to the colony. His speech stated in part that:

Ireland’s allegiance to the British Crown is stronger to-day than at any time during the history of the Irish nation. John Redmond, the idol of the Nationalist Party of Ireland, and the future peacemaker and Premier of a United Ireland under Home Rule. […]

In this House, we have Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Newfoundlaniders. In no part of the British Empire will you find a race more loyal to the British crown than the Irish and their descendants in Newfoundland. 88

Unlike some colonies, such as Australia, 89 the loyalty and patriotism of Irish Catholics was never publicly questioned in Newfoundland, and this may be an important factor in why pro-Sinn Fein attitudes failed to take hold. A sense of alienation and political isolation did not exist, and Catholic Newfoundlanders maintained their strong sense of imperial loyalty until the end of the War in 1918.

In his address, Anderson noted the loyalty of the Benevolent Irish Society. The city’s foremost Irish-ethnic association had been quite vocal on the Irish Question in previous decades, but it remained silent regarding the Easter Rising and its aftermath. Instead, the society’s minutes continued to reflect the Newfoundland-Catholic contribution to the War.

89 In both Australia and New Zealand, pro-Sinn Fein sentiment was partly a response to events in the old country, but strongly influenced by perceived anti-Irishness and anti-Catholicism in each colonial establishment. See Patrick O’Farrell, The Irish in Australia (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1987), 252; Rory Sweetman, “Who Fears to Speak of Easter Week?: Antipodean Irish Catholic Responses to the 1916 Rising,” in The Impact of the 1916 Rising Among the Nations, ed. Ruan O’Donnell (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008), 74.
effort. Resolutions for fallen members who died “nobly upholding the cause of Empire” were frequent between 1916 and 1918.\(^9^0\)

Generations of contentment within a British-imperial context, the jingoistic response to the First World War, the ultra-loyal Catholic clergy (see the words of Archbishop Edward Roche in chapter three), and the absence of an anti-Catholic political framework combined to prevent support for Sinn Fein and an Irish Republic from coalescing in St. John’s between 1916 and 1918. Interest in the ancestral homeland was maintained, as many Irish Catholics, along with many Anglo-Protestants, continued to support John Redmond’s objectives of Dominion Home Rule, even as such ideas were becoming less and less popular in Ireland and elsewhere in the diaspora. Perhaps the most succinct comment on Newfoundland-Catholic responses to the Irish Question during this period was made in early-1919 by the Governor, Sir Charles Alexander Harris in a letter to Colonial Secretary Walter Hume Long. He noted that the Roman Catholics in the colony were “generally loyal,” but “coloured by that tendency to lament the wrongs of Ireland, which seems to have become inherent in the Irish character, especially on this side of the water.”\(^9^1\) The end of the War, however, changed the context in which St. John’s Irish Catholics responded to affairs in the old country, and amidst a great upsurge in interest in Ireland, reactions in the city became increasingly radical and sectarian from 1919 to 1922.

Responses to the Easter Rising and its aftermath in Halifax were quite similar to those in St. John’s, although fewer editorials and letters on Irish subjects appeared. Initial reports were virtually identical to those in the Newfoundland press. The fighting in Dublin was mostly covered through cablegrams from London which characterized the rebellion as a

\(^{90} \text{See for example, } \textit{BIS Minutes}, \text{ February 10, 1917.} \)

\(^{91} \text{Harris to Long, March 18, 1919. CO 194/296, quoted in O’Brien, “The Newfoundland Patriotic Association,” } 134. \)
German plot, while highlighting Irish loyalty. Locally-produced responses repeated these trends. A letter to the editor or the *Herald* noted that “the uprising in Dublin was the result of a carefully laid German plot [...] to shake Ireland to its very foundations in order to distract the attention of the British from the Western Front. [...] It failed because the vast majority in Ireland are still loyal to the British Empire.”

As was the case in St. John’s, no widespread shift in popular opinion in favour of Irish republicanism occurred. Instead, the Irish Catholics of the city remained loyal to John Redmond and Dominion Home Rule. The local branches of the AOH, whose American counterparts tended to endorse Sinn Fein, passed an anti-rebel resolution, even after news of the executions had been reported in the Halifax papers. The members expressed:

> absolute disapproval of the riotous and rebellious character of the uprising; be it therefore resolved that the Halifax Hibernians express their profound regret at the recent unfortunate uprising, and further express their confidence in that great Irish tribune, John Redmond, whose leadership and qualities as a statesman more than ever before appeal to the Irish race.

The public support for Redmond and the failure to acknowledge the executions which caused shock and outrage throughout the English-speaking world demonstrates a continued loyalty to the Empire, and a desire to see Ireland remain within its bounds. It is possible that, as in some other colonial settings, the Hibernians’ public expression of loyalty was to silence any whispers of Irish-Catholic disloyalty which may have been present in the town. Such sentiments were never made public, however, and conclusions on this matter must remain speculative. The Charitable Irish Society, meanwhile, which had been the predominant

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92 See for example, *Halifax Herald*, April 26; April 27, 1916.
93 *Halifax Herald*, May 12, 1916.
organization in leading responses to affairs in Ireland in the years before the First World War, was completely silent on Irish affairs from 1916 to 1918, as was the Catholic clergy.

Pro-Home Rule, anti-Sinn Fein opinion continued to abound towards the end of the War. Redmond’s death in March, 1918 was met with sorrow. Eulogists in the local press praised his support of the British War effort, and his marriage of “British principles of liberty and justice [with] Irish national ideals.”95 The loyal, pro-imperial sentiments held by many of the city’s Irish Catholics were nicely summarized in a short *Halifax Herald* piece on Melbourne’s Archbishop Mannix: “the loyal Catholics of Nova Scotia have nothing but contempt for the firebrand tactics and treacherous teachings of disloyal Catholic bishops in other parts of the Empire.”96 As in St. John’s, those of Irish descent in Halifax were proudly loyal to King and country, and republican ideals never took hold.

Halifax’s most concentrated public discussion of Irish politics occurred in the spring of 1917, when an Anglo-Protestant member of the Provincial Legislature, Hon. George E. Faulkner of Halifax, proposed a pro-Home Rule resolution in the Nova-Scotian assembly. The political ramifications of this motion have been discussed in chapter four – in short, Faulkner was accused of merely attempting to curry favour with the Irish-Catholic electorate – but the debate reveals a great deal about support for Irish self-government and, especially, the growing opposition to Home Rule amongst some in the city. The proposed resolution, introduced on St. Patrick’s Day, called for a measure of Irish self-government, comparable to those that existed in Canada, Australia and South Africa, and which would be agreeable to “a majority of her people.” The central argument behind the motion paralleled those often

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95 *Halifax Herald*, March 7, 1918.
96 *Halifax Herald*, April 5, 1918.
employed to defend Home Rule in the 1880s and 1890s – that it would ultimately strengthen the integrity and unity of the Empire.97

It was not long before opposition to the proposal began to appear in the local press. Most commentators argued that, although they were in favour of self-government for Ireland, the Provincial Legislature had no business debating imperial affairs.98 Others, though, denounced the principle of Home Rule itself. One letter, signed “A Supporter,” accused Faulkner of not only being ignorant of the position of Ulster unionists, but also claimed that he “viewed with favour the actions of the Sinn Feiners at this, possibly, the most critical time in the great conflict.” The letter concluded by re-emphasizing the rights of Ulstermen to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom.99 This piece drew a reply from the Tralee-born W.P. Buckley, who denounced any connection between those advocating Dominion Home Rule and Sinn Fein republicanism, and also highlighted the pre-War seditious musings of Carson and the unionists. The strong language of the retort shows the anger and frustration of one of Halifax’s Irish Catholics when nationalists were universally portrayed as separatist radicals. The final, most interesting response to the proposed Home Rule resolution was a formal letter from the provincial Orange Order denouncing Irish self-government. At their annual session in Sydney, the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia unanimously passed an anti-Home Rule resolution which was sent to the Halifax newspapers as well as to the Provincial Assembly. The Orangemen maintained that while they supported the ideals of Home Rule in Canada, such a measure was impractical for Ireland, “owing to the incompatibility of the people.” The resolution continued, “the facts are there are two distinct races dwelling [in Ireland], differing in their ideals of social, religious and political aspirations, making

97 Halifax Herald, March 17, 1917.
98 Halifax Herald, March 20, 1917.
99 Halifax Herald, March 22, 1917.
impossible the fusion of the two races.”100 In the end, Faulkner’s proposal was quietly withdrawn. Opposition to Home Rule appears to have been more public and more structured than in previous decades, particularly thanks to the organizational strength of the Orange Order. The measure still commanded broad support from both Irish Catholics and British Protestants. As in Newfoundland, however, the debate on Ireland’s political destiny intensified in the years that followed.

In Portland, Irish-Catholic responses to the Easter Rising and its aftermath were remarkably muted. The common perception is that the rebellion and the executions began an Irish-American nationalist frenzy, but some studies of localized responses, such as Timothy Meagher’s work on Worcester, have revealed more subdued, short-lived reactions.101 Nevertheless, in Portland, the near-total absence of any identifiable reaction to the events in Dublin is surprising, especially given the passion devoted to Irish affairs in the late-nineteenth century. The Rising was well-covered in Portland newspapers, but editorial comment was almost non-existent, with a brief condemnation of the executions in the Eastern Argus the only locally-produced piece.102 The county board of the AOH did call a special meeting on May 14th, but no public resolution was ever released. The Hibernians and other Irish-Catholic associations made no comment on the situation throughout 1916.103

The most noteworthy local response to the Rising appeared in the organ of the Catholic Church. It suggests a shift in opinion was underway in Portland shortly after the Easter Rebellion – though it was almost certainly slower to take hold than in some other Irish-American settings. The Maine Catholic Historical Magazine, in the absence of a

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100 Halifax Herald, March 24, 1917.
101 Meagher, Inventing Irish America, 358-359.
Catholic newspaper, served as the chief press organ for Bishop Walsh and his clergy. In the May, 1916 issue, a bitterly anti-British report on the Rising and executions appeared. It denounced the draconian executions and the British War effort, stating:

The cold blooded executions which quickly followed the ill-starred Sinn Fein Insurrection in long suffering Ireland, clearly shows that the spirit which actuates the rulers of the British Empire is to all intents and purposes the same as has prevailed during the many years that have witnessed the pitiless tyranny, the heartless oppression exercised by perfidious England over the destinies of a sister Isle. [...] Pearse, [and his comrades], who while ill advised, may easily rank among the most intelligent and upright minds of their race, men in every way deserving of due consideration and mercy in the day of their failure.104

The author’s anger towards Britain and the Empire is obvious in this passage, and the tone is remarkably different from reactions observed in St. John’s and Halifax. The Maine Catholic Historical Magazine was largely inspired by Bishop Walsh himself, and it seems unlikely that any articles would have been printed which did not meet with his approval.105

Considering that, only a few months prior to the Rising, Walsh and his clergy refused to attend a talk by the national president of the AOH in which the British War effort was denounced, and the Bishop himself had praised the Irish contribution to the conflict, the change in opinion seems drastic. The language of the article, though, may be an emotional response to the sudden and dramatic execution of the Rising’s leaders, rather than being representative of a true shift in opinion. Based on this evidence alone, it is impossible to conclude that a rise in republican sentiment occurred throughout the Irish-Catholic community of Portland in the wake of the Rising, and the lack of any associational response would seem to confirm this. It is significant, though, that the Church’s chief organ, which

undoubtedly had a significant influence on popular opinion, would publish such a virulent piece.

America’s entry into the First World War in April, 1917, tempered expressions of nationalism in Portland, as most of Irish birth or descent appear to have wholeheartedly supported the American effort. Distinct, identifiable examples of ethnic support, though, were absent, suggesting that the Irish Catholics of Portland did not feel the need to loudly proclaim their loyalty, or, alternatively, no longer perceived themselves a cohesive ethnic community. There were numerous examples of Catholic loyalty to the American War effort in the early months of the country’s involvement. Bishop Walsh led the pro-War response, encouraging Catholics to fight for the country, and deeming the purchase of a Liberty Bond the “duty of every Catholic.”¹⁰⁶ The Irish-dominated Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society purchased a large Liberty Bond and extended full insurance benefits to any members who volunteered, while, as in Canada and Newfoundland, the Knights of Columbus prominently displayed their patriotism.¹⁰⁷ As far as the Irish Catholics were concerned, however, public support had no ethnic dimension. Catholic loyalty was never framed as being “Irish.” This contrasts notably with Portland’s other Catholic ethnic groups, such as the Italians, who held their own patriotic rallies and marches.¹⁰⁸ Unlike their counterparts in Halifax, the city’s Hibernians made no comment on the War. At a massive parade in April, 1918, which involved almost every associational group in the city, including Italian and Armenian ethnic organizations, the AOH was conspicuous by its absence.¹⁰⁹ Nor did they pass any pro-War resolutions during the conflict. It is possible that Catholics of Irish birth or

¹⁰⁶ *Eastern Argus*, April 7; May 21; June 21, 1917.
¹⁰⁸ *Eastern Argus*, April 10; April 18, 1917.
¹⁰⁹ *Eastern Argus*, April 6, 1918.
descent, given the backlash against perceived “hyphenated” Americanism, did not wish to appear as having divided loyalties. Alternatively, it is possible that a sense of ethnic community and identity was truly being eroded in Portland, but the lack of ethnic responses to the War must be analyzed next to the surge in republican Irish nationalism, led by the American-born generation of Irish Catholics, which reached its peak intensity after 1918.

6.3 The Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, 1919-1923

Following their victory in the December, 1918 general election, republican Sinn Fein members refused to take their seats at Westminster, establishing instead the first Dáil Éireann, which acted as the parliament of the re-proclaimed Irish Republic. The Dáil first met on January 21st, 1919. On the same day, a small group of Irish Volunteers – by this point frequently referred to as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) – killed two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) officers in an ambush as Soloheadbeg, county Tipperary. This incident is often seen as the first act of the Anglo-Irish War, also known as the War of Independence, though small skirmishes between republican and British forces had been taking place since 1917. Soloheadbeg undoubtedly represented an escalation of the conflict, particularly in that it elicited a more concerted, organized response from the RIC and the military. The banning of fairs and markets in parts of Ireland, as well as the implementation of curfews, caused resentment among the local populations. Paralleling the responses to the Easter Rising, IRA attacks, which were initially condemned, were now widely tolerated and

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110 After April, 1917, expressions of Irish nationalism were undoubtedly seen as negative in the Yankee press. The Evening Express, for examples, produced an editorial on the “treasonous” Sinn Fein movement in 1918. See Evening Express, May 20, 1918. That Irish nationalism was perceived so negatively may be why those of Irish birth or descent chose to downplay their ethnicity, while Italians, for example, whose ancestral homeland was fighting on the Allied side, were able to triumphantly display both their ethnic identities and their American patriotism.

eventually admired, while anger and hostility was increasingly projected onto the British authorities.\textsuperscript{112}

Sporadic violence continued through 1919, and by early 1920, the IRA had emerged as a “mature guerilla force.”\textsuperscript{113} Fighting intensified through the spring and summer, prompting the government to deploy the Black and Tans and the RIC Auxiliaries – paramilitary units, mostly recruited from World War One veterans in England. The period between July 1920, and July 1921, was the most brutal period of the conflict. The Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries gained a reputation for ill-discipline, and their policies were marked by savage “reprisals” for IRA attacks, often perpetrated against the civilian population.\textsuperscript{114}

The death of the nationalist Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, of a hunger strike in a British jail in October, 1920, outraged nationalist opinion, as did “Bloody Sunday,” when British forces fired upon a civilian crowd during a Gaelic football match at Dublin’s Croke Park on November 21\textsuperscript{st}. In December, much of central Cork was burned by the Black and Tans, while sectarian violence raged in Ulster.\textsuperscript{115}

The government attempted to quell the escalating violence by passing the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. This effectively granted Dominion Home Rule to Ireland, but, significantly, partitioned the country by granting a parliament to the twenty-six southern counties of Ireland, and another to six counties of Ulster, where unionist support was greatest. This placated the Ulster unionists by granting them “the largest possible area they thought they could control.”\textsuperscript{116} Faced with increasingly hostile public opinion in Britain, and with the unionists satisfied, Prime Minister David Lloyd George was able to negotiate with

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{112} Laffan, \textit{The Resurrection of Ireland}, 274.
\textsuperscript{113} Hart, \textit{The IRA at War}, 18.
\textsuperscript{114} Laffan, \textit{The Resurrection of Ireland.}, 294-295.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Ibid.}, 295; 340.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid.}, 333.
\end{footnotesize}
the Irish nationalists. A truce was declared on July 11th, 1921, and formal negotiations began in London in October, with the Irish delegation led by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins.117

The Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed on December 6th, 1921, establishing an Irish Free State as opposed to an Irish Republic. Partition was confirmed, and the southern twenty-six counties would constitute a self-governing Dominion. Ireland would remain within the British Empire, with elected members having to swear an oath of allegiance to the monarchy. This outraged many republicans, who maintained, that the Treaty represented an unacceptable compromise. Sinn Fein, split into pro- and anti-Treaty factions, with the republicans led by former leader Eamon de Valera. The Dáil debated the Treaty from December 14th, 1921 to January 7th, 1922, and eventually ratified it in a close vote, sixty-four to fifty-seven.118 This victory was upheld by the Irish population in the Free State’s first election in June, 1922. A desire for peace overrode the desire for an independent Republic, and the anti-Treaty delegates were soundly defeated.119

De Valera and many within the IRA refused to accept this outcome. On April 14th, 1922, a group of Volunteers occupied the Four Courts in Dublin in an effort to re-start Anglo-Irish hostilities. After the June election, Michael Collins ordered the Four Courts bombarded, an act which kicked off eleven months of bitter Civil War between the anti-Treaty IRA and the newly-formed Free State Army. The fighting eventually ended in May, 1923, with the defeat of the republican forces.120 The Free State – and partition – were upheld. A twenty-six county Irish Republic would eventually follow, but not until after the Second World War.

117 Ibid., 350.
118 Ibid., 355-360.
119 Ibid., 404-405.
120 Ibid., 412-415.
The Anglo-Irish War was a transnational event. Although the violence was mostly confined to Ireland, the republican effort was sustained through the cooperation of nationalists across the globe. Organizations such as the Friends of Irish Freedom in the United States, the Irish Self-Determination League in Britain, and the Self-Determination for Ireland League in Canada and Newfoundland raised funds and disseminated propaganda for the nationalist cause. How Catholics of Irish birth or descent responded to the tumultuous events in the old country varied widely from place to place. In his study of the Friends of Irish Freedom, Michael Doorley highlighted three factors as being essential to the evolution of diasporic nationalism during this period: the socio-economic status of the Irish-Catholic population, the local political context, and events in the country of origin.\(^{121}\) Certainly, these factors were significant. In the United States, Irish nationalism was increasingly led by the American-born middle classes. As suggested by Lawrence McCaffrey and others, disillusionment at their continued isolation from the top rungs of Anglo-American social and political power enhanced ethnic consciousness, and a desire for their ancestral homeland to take its place amongst the nations of the world was part of a struggle for respectability within American society.\(^{122}\) The argument here is that in addition to these factors, the local, regional, and transnational networks that were established by Irish-nationalist organizations were essential in determining responses to Irish affairs. Through such organizations as the FOIF and the SDIL, what may have remained private ethnic indignation became popular, public movements that frequently produced controversy in their local settings. Furthermore, these groups were responsible for disseminating nationalist propaganda in their respective


localities, and must be viewed as having a significant impact on Irish-Catholic opinion – temporarily heightening ethnic consciousness among many for whom a sense of Irishness was no longer a mainstay of day-to-day identity. Finally, nationalist organizations also provided the point of contact between local responses to the Irish Question and the broader, transnational fight for Ireland’s freedom.

In St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, the story of Irish nationalism between 1919 and 1923 was largely the story of three associations: the Friends of Irish Freedom and its successor, the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic (AARIR) in the American port, and the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Canada and Newfoundland. It was these groups that led the dramatic resurgence in Irish ethnic identity that occurred in all three cities, and provided the link between these isolated Catholic communities and the greater diaspora. The comparative study allows us to see how different groups in each local setting managed to rally comparable levels of engagement with Ireland, and helps us understand the nationalism of the era as being a combined local, national, and transnational phenomenon.

In the early 1920s, the Irish-born population of St. John’s was miniscule, numbering fewer than 130 persons. The broader Irish-Catholic ethnic group, however, consisted of more than 18,000, just under 50% of the city’s inhabitants. For some of these men and women, a loyalty and ethnic affiliation to their ancestral homeland existed comfortably alongside their identities as Newfoundlanders and, often, as citizens of the British Empire. The Catholics of St. John’s had consistently engaged in Irish affairs between 1880 and 1919 through participation in fundraising endeavours, debating the issues in the local press, and passing resolutions on Irish affairs through the city’s foremost Irish ethnic association, the BIS. This

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123 See chapter one.
type of public support continued in 1919 and 1920, but towards the end of that year, St. John’s engagement with Ireland reached its apogee with the visit of Katherine Hughes and the establishment of the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland (SDILN).

Following the conclusion of the First World War, the jingoistic, pro-imperial fervour that had dominated all reactions to Irish politics was diminishing, though by no means did it disappear, and the Catholics of the city continued to express their hope that self-government would be granted to Ireland. Having been silent for the duration of the War, the BIS again began discussing events in the old country. A speech by Brother Ryan in February, 1919, praised the nationalist spirit that abounded in Ireland. 124 A more formal resolution by the society was passed several weeks later. Mirroring a trend common in Irish-American nationalism during and after the War, the BIS passed a resolution calling on President Woodrow Wilson to uphold the principles of Irish “self-determination” at the Versailles peace conference. A vote on the resolution was delayed, though, and it seems as though it was never sent to Paris. 125 The BIS’s Irish nationalism continued to exist within an imperial framework as one of the resolution’s central arguments was that Irish self-government would lend strength and unity to the Empire. Support for an Irish Republic had clearly not taken hold.

Engagement with Ireland continued in other ways through 1919 and 1920, as lectures and letters to the press became increasingly common. On April 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1919, for example, Thomas Kelly, who would become a prominent member of the SDILN, gave a lecture on the Sinn Fein party to the Star of the Sea Society. 126 As the situation in Ireland escalated, P.J.

\begin{itemize}
\item[124] BIS Minutes, February 17, 1919.
\item[125] BIS Minutes, March 14; April 6, 1919. On Irish-American support for Ireland at Versailles, see Doorley, Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism, 95-98.
\item[126] Evening Telegram, April 8, 1919.
\end{itemize}
Kinsella, a regular *Telegram* correspondent, submitted a piece attacking the British government’s handling of Irish affairs. He concluded by reproducing the full lyrics of the republican anthem, the “Soldier’s Song,” deeming it “no more objectionable than the French Marseillaise.”\(^{127}\) Such responses to Irish affairs do demonstrate an interest and engagement with Ireland amongst some St. John’s Catholics, particularly amongst the members of the BIS, but these were still limited and involved only a tiny percentage of the community. There is some evidence to suggest that a branch of the republican Friends of Irish Freedom may have been active in St. John’s, but their activities were never reported in the press, so it is safe to conclude that it was not a significant presence in the town.\(^{128}\) The arrival of Irish-Canadian nationalist Katherine Hughes in October, 1920, and the subsequent establishment of the SDILN precipitated the most popular, concentrated engagement with Irish nationalism observed at any point in St. John’s during the period under investigation here.

The Self-Determination League of Canada and Newfoundland was formed in Montreal in May, 1920. In that city, a division existed between the republican Friends of Irish Freedom, and the more moderate Irish-Canadian National League. The latter publicly refused to support an independent Irish Republic, opting instead for the less-controversial “self-determination” concept in order to avoid provoking Anglo-Canadian opposition and alienating the support of Montreal’s wealthy Irish Catholics. In the midst of his United States tour, Eamon de Valera sent Prince Edward Island native Katherine Hughes to Montreal to set

\(^{127}\) *Evening Telegram*, March 11, 1920.

\(^{128}\) A short piece in the *Evening Herald*, October 27, 1920 suggested that a branch of the FOIF was set to merge with the newly-formed Self-Determination for Ireland League. It appeared to be referring to a local body. Furthermore, Michael Doorley’s research on total FOIF membership suggests that one branch was active in the Newfoundland Dominion from December 1919 to at least September, 1920. See Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism*, Appendix 4, Table 9, “Regular Branch Development,” 189-190.
up an independent, Canadian, pro-Sinn Fein organization.\textsuperscript{129} By mid-May, 1920, Hughes had succeeded in uniting the two Montreal groups, and, with the help of former-Orangeman Lindsay Crawford, formed the Self-Determination for Ireland League. Despite being sanctioned by the republican leader, the new organization was to serve primarily as a propaganda machine, and its leaders were keen to avoid alienating potential support, so the SDIL adopted the neutral, non-committal concept of “self-determination” for Ireland, rather than calling for Dominion Home Rule or an Irish Republic. Once the formation of the League was complete, Hughes embarked on a cross-Canada tour to spread the organization.\textsuperscript{130}

Hughes first came to St. John’s in early October, 1920, towards the end of her tour. She arrived by train from the west coast of the island, and was met by some of the city’s most prominent Catholics.\textsuperscript{131} Her first public lecture was given to over one-thousand people at the Methodist College Hall, Long’s Hill, on October 5\textsuperscript{th}. She immediately emphasized that the question was not a sectarian one, and that both Irish Catholics and British Protestants should support Ireland’s fight for self-determination. The arguments were cautious, with Hughes focusing on the idea that the freedom of small nations such as Ireland had been a central aspect of the Empire’s objectives in the Great War.\textsuperscript{132}

The day after her initial lecture, the SDILN was organized. Customs Inspector R.T. McGrath took the oath, and it was decided that a provisional committee would govern until


\textsuperscript{130} Jolivet, “Entre Nationalismes Irlandais et Canadien-Français,” 57.

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Evening Herald}, October 2, 1920.

\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Evening Telegram}, October 6, 1920; \textit{Daily News}, October 6, 1920.
elections in the new year. The Canadian branch would supply literature which could be disseminated locally, and would also send nationalist speakers. J.M. Devine and John T. Meaney, a tailor and the colony’s liquor inspector, respectively, were selected to represent the Newfoundland branch at the upcoming national convention in Ottawa, while McGrath was named chairman of the Dominion Council. On October 19th, the SDILN met to elect its provisional Council. Its composition, listed in Appendix D, demonstrates that the movement was led by the middle classes, and that some of the city’s most influential Catholics were involved. Chairman R.T. McGrath was a former politician, and the colony’s chief customs inspector, while W.J. Higgins was a prominent lawyer, President of the BIS and member of the House of Assembly. St. John’s native Philip F. Moore owned and operated his own plumbing company, was a respected member of the BIS dramatic company, and also represented Ferryland in the House of Assembly from 1909 to 1928. John T. Meaney was the chief liquor inspector, and several other Catholic lawyers were also involved. Their presence must have lent the League considerable credibility amongst those of Irish descent.

The SDILN remained closely connected to its Canadian counterpart. Meaney and J.M. Devine both gave passionate addresses on behalf of the Newfoundland Dominion at the

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133 Evening Herald, October 7; October 8, 1920. The relationship between the Newfoundland and Canadian of the SDIL was somewhat ambiguous. Documents produced in Montreal and Ottawa referred to the broad organization as the “Self-Determination for Ireland League of Canada and Newfoundland,” but members in St. John’s seem to have treated its mainland counterpart as a sister, rather than parent, organization. At meetings, the “assistance” of the Canadians was often praised, and the existence of Newfoundland’s “Dominion Council” suggests a degree of independence. Much of the material released by the SDILN, however, came from the larger institution in Canada.


135 Meaney, a former journalist, would eventually become a controversial figure in Newfoundland. He was found to have diverted almost $24,000 for “the purposes of [Prime Minister] Sir Richard Squires” in 1924. The scandal would eventually lead to the collapse of the Squires government, though Meaney was never formally charged. He eventually became a St. John’s city councillor in later life. See B. Wade Colbourne, “John Thomas Meaney,” Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador, Volume Three, 489.
Ottawa convention. Devine rejoiced that “this Dominion [has] linked hands with Canada in the noble cause for which Irishmen were fighting,” while Meaney’s speech represents some of the most direct evidence that, at least for some St. John’s Catholics, the pro-imperial outlook was beginning to erode when faced with the draconian actions of British forces in Ireland. The liquor controller stated that his only son had been killed fighting for the Empire during the Great War, but that now he “would not have permitted [his] son to fight for the British flag, because of what had been perpetrated under its aegis. Ireland never could and never should trust the word of a British statesman.”  

Such strong words from a Catholic Newfoundlander, particularly one who held public office, would have been unthinkable prior to 1918.

Lobbying and the dissemination of propaganda remained the primary objective of the SDILN. From early November, 1920, letters were submitted to the local press dealing with various aspects of the Irish Question, all providing nationalist arguments. British mismanagement of Ireland, especially Black and Tan reprisals, were highlighted and vilified – though letters were always careful to avoid overt support for republicanism. The concept of self-determination was left intentionally vague so as to evoke as little controversy as possible and to draw support from beyond St. John’s Irish-Catholic community.

The SDILN held regular meetings, at which the nationalist movement was discussed. Women were prominent at these meetings, frequently giving addresses, singing songs and reciting poetry alongside their male counterparts. Both men and women engaged with Irish politics and expressed their ethnic identities through the League’s structure.

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137 For examples of letters, see *Evening Telegram*, November 4; November 15, 1920; *Daily News*, November 2; December 2, 1920.
138 *Evening Telegram*, February 2, 1921.
their lack of involvement was the Catholic clergy. In the opening decade of the century, it was often St. John’s Irish-born churchmen who led responses to events in the old country. As discussed in chapter three, however, there does not seem to have been any clerical representation in the SDILN organization, however, nor did priests give addresses at their meetings, almost certainly due to the organization’s controversial status.

One of the most significant public events organized by the League was the visit of national president Lindsay Crawford in late-November, 1920. Crawford spoke to a full house at the city’s Majestic Theatre, with many of his arguments focusing on how the fight for Irish self-determination was neither “racial nor religious in its origin.” His central objective appears to have been to appeal for “a broader spirit of toleration in the discussion of the Anglo-Irish problem.” Like the letters printed in the papers, the SDILN was attempting to gain support from the entire community. One did not have to be Catholic or of Irish descent to support the righteous cause of Irish self-determination. The meetings finished with a display of loyalty, as the assembly sang both God Save Ireland and God Save the King.\(^\text{139}\)

Despite the best efforts of Crawford and the SDILN executive to gain general support, the movement was met with more organized opposition than any other nationalist endeavour in the city during this period. This hostility was led by the Orange Order. The first public pronouncements against the SDILN, however, were made by a Presbyterian minister, Rev. Dr. Jones, during a lecture on the position of Ulster. Jones called for the League to be disbanded, accusing it of being “admittedly anti-British,” and of inciting “sectarian and racial animosity” within the colony.\(^\text{140}\) Chairman R.T. McGrath responded immediately to these accusations, “emphatically” denying the charge of anti-Britishness, and arguing that the

\(^\text{140}\) \textit{Evening Telegram}, November 5, 1920.
principles of Irish self-determination were in line with British ideals of justice and were implicit in the Empire’s War aims. He also denied that the League was creating sectarian discord within the community, stating that it would “never willingly give rise to any division among the people of Newfoundland,” and pointed out that the League welcomed men and women from all sects and that its meetings were public.\textsuperscript{141}

Further public denouncements of the SDILN continued through the next month. T.B. Darby, a regular correspondent to the \textit{Telegram}, argued that the League was indeed augmenting sectarian hostility in the community, and because of this, the affairs of Ireland should be ignored.\textsuperscript{142} Reverend Jones, in a lecture to the Llewellyn Club in early December, criticized the League regarding the vague concept of “self-determination.” He argued that the SDILN should overtly support Dominion Home Rule, and rule out any adherence to republicanism so as to create a support base among St. John’s Protestants. As it stood, all those “who were imperial in their mindset would strongly and openly oppose it.”\textsuperscript{143}

Evidently, there was a widespread belief that the League was a republican organization, and for the first time since the 1880s, the Irish Question in Newfoundland seems to have taken on a sectarian dimension. Although there were likely some exceptions, few Anglo-Protestant Newfoundlanders appear to have supported the SDILN.

Around the same time that Reverend Jones gave this speech, the Orange Order was mobilizing against the League. On December 1\textsuperscript{st}, a special meeting of the Provincial Grand Lodge was convened to discuss the local situation. Orangemen from St. John’s and the outports attended the meeting, and the roll showed “the largest number registered at a regular

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Evening Telegram}, November 5, 1920.
\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Evening Telegram}, November 26, 1920.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Evening Telegram}, December 3, 1920.
meeting of [the] body.” The Order’s public resolutions were printed two days later, and primarily objected to what they perceived as disloyal and seditious acts by members of the Colony’s legislature and civil service. It stated that:

Whereas meetings of the [SDILN] have been held in the city of St. John’s, at which anti-British propaganda has been disseminated [...] and whereas certain persons who occupy positions of employment under the Crown are prominently identified with the [SDILN] and have been guilty both at home and abroad of utterances which we regard as disloyal to the British Empire, be it therefore resolved that the Provincial Grand Lodge of Newfoundland now in session and representing over 20,000 loyal citizens, believes that the object of the SDILN and similar organizations is to have Ireland secede from the British Empire and become a Republic, and regards the League as a disloyal movement [...] and wholly unworthy of men and women who are enjoying the liberties and privileges of the British Empire.

[...]

The Association regards as seditious the pledge made by the members of the [SDILN], pledging themselves individually and collectively to spare no effort to ensure that MacSwiney, and those with him, have not died in vain.

The resolution concluded by calling on the government to dismiss disloyal civil servants and politicians.  

Arguments for and against the SDILN appeared in the local press throughout the following months. Thomas Kelly and the League’s press committee continued to publish letters on the Irish situation, and at no point was support for an Irish Republic openly articulated. Other commentators continued to identify the League as disloyal and seditious, and accused it of promoting sectarianism. The pro-imperial Archbishop Edward Roche, who had ridiculed any suggestion that republican sentiment existed in Newfoundland during the War, wrote to R.T. McGrath regarding Orange Order opposition to the League. He urged

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144 *Evening Telegram*, December 2, 1920.
146 See for example, *Evening Telegram*, March 11; April 16; May 18, 1921.
the League and its members to be cautious and tactful in responding to the accusations in order to avoid “the throes of a sectarian war.” The concern in this letter is evident, and passions regarding the Irish Question were clearly running high.

The truce, negotiations and the Anglo-Irish Treaty were debated at length in the local press and by the BIS, but not by the SDILN. Most commentators expressed their hope that Ireland would remain within the British Empire. J.T. Meaney wrote to the Daily News, expressing his support for de Valera as the Dáil debated the Treaty, but noted that he expected it to be passed. Archbishop Roche, who clearly had been following the Irish situation closely, was cautious, and rejected calls for public Masses of thanksgiving to welcome Irish peace, since so many opposed the Treaty and a return to armed conflict was distinctly possible. The BIS staged a public debate on the measure, in which the pro-Treaty arguments were supported by a large majority. Its ratification, and the establishment of the Irish Free State, was widely celebrated.

The SDILN itself made no public pronouncement on the Treaty, and was generally quiet after the truce was declared. Its organization remained in place, however, and following the ratification it continued to act as the mechanism through which Irish Newfoundlanders participated in the transnational nationalist movement. Chairman R.T. McGrath selected W.J. Browne, a young St. John’s law student at Oxford, to represent the organization at the Irish World Race Congress in Paris, 1922. Browne, one of the youngest representatives at the Congress, was noted for his vigorous defence of open, public proceedings when it came to

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149 See Evening Telegram, March 11; March 18, 1922; Daily News, December 21, 1921; March 18, 1922.
the Irish economy.\footnote{Evening Telegram, March 11; March 18, 1922. Browne’s interest in Irish affairs is a particularly interesting case. In his autobiographical memoirs, he describes his interest the affairs of Ireland as “latent” prior to his arrival at Oxford, but his membership in the University’s St. Patrick’s Society instilled a keen interest in the Irish Question. His love of Ireland, though, was natural, as he notes: “I was of Irish extraction and had been brought up in the Catholic Church, many of whose priests and bishops in Newfoundland were Irish or had trained in Ireland. I had also been educated by the Irish Christian Brothers in whose schools we used Irish readers. In a word, even before visiting Ireland, I thought of it as my second home.” Browne read nationalist literature during his time at Oxford, including works by John Mitchel, Patrick Pearse, George Bernard Shaw and William Butler Yeats; and travelled through Ireland in the spring and summer of 1920, witnessing Black and Tan reprisals first hand. See William J. Browne, \textit{Eighty-Four Years a Newfoundlander: Memoirs of William J. Browne, Volume I, 1897-1949} (St. John’s: W.J. Browne, 1981), 71-86.} Participation in pan-diasporic events continued with Newfoundland’s attempted involvement in the Irish Race Olympics – \textit{Aonach Tailteann} – in 1922. The games were supposed to bring together athletes from throughout the global diaspora to celebrate Irish culture, heritage and nationality. Again, it was R.T. McGrath and the SDILN who led the movement for Newfoundland involvement. Together with BIS president W.J. Higgins, and with assistance from Father Daniel O’Callaghan, the wealthy Catholics of St. John’s came together to provide funds for a marathon runner, Jack Bell, to represent the Dominion at the games. He arrived in Dublin in August, 1922, only to find the meet cancelled owing to the escalating circumstances of the Civil War, and returned to St. John’s without competing.\footnote{Daily News, February 17; July 8; August 12, 1922. On \textit{Aonach Tailteann}, see Mike Cronin, “Projecting the Nation Through Sport and Culture: Ireland, \textit{Aonach Tailteann} and the Irish Free State, 1924-32,” \textit{Journal of Contemporary History} 38.3 (2003): 399-400.} References to the SDILN gradually disappeared from the St. John’s papers through 1922, and a final meeting was held to formally wind up its affairs in May, 1923.\footnote{Daily News, May 18, 1923.} From this point, it was the BIS and, later, the Gaelic League which would sustain Irish ethnicity in the city.

Although no data exists to suggest the overall size of the League, the passion of the debates surrounding it, and the fact that Orangemen travelled from across Newfoundland to oppose it, suggests that it was far from an isolated movement. Many of St. John’s most prominent Catholics were involved, and thousands more would have participated in the
SDILN’s meetings and lectures. More than at any point since the 1880s, thanks to the organizational networks and nationalist literature of the SDILN, the Catholics of St. John’s were aware of being part of a broader diasporic movement for Irish freedom. Not all, probably not even a majority, of those of Irish descent in the city were caught up in this ethnic resurgence, but it was a tangible phenomenon that manifested itself in other ways, most notably through the dramatic increase in applications for BIS membership, and the success of the Gaelic League in 1923.\textsuperscript{153} The ways in which Irishness was understood and expressed in St. John’s evolved considerably in a remarkably short time.

The structure and function of the SDIL in Halifax was almost identical to the St. John’s branch. The city was the first stop on Katherine Hughes’ cross-Canada tour. Her initial lecture there on July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1920, was poorly attended, but following several successful days in Cape Breton, she returned to Halifax and gave a talk on July 11\textsuperscript{th} attended by more than one-thousand people.\textsuperscript{154} Hughes adopted the same tactics that she would in Newfoundland several months later, couching her arguments in imperial terms. She praised the role of Irish Catholics in the War, with particular emphasis on Irish Canadians who died fighting for the self-determination of small nations. Enthusiasm was high, as “the fear of being stigmatized as disloyal and of jeopardizing political, social and economic gains clearly failed to stop sizeable numbers of Irish Catholics from participating in the SDIL.”\textsuperscript{155} By July, one local paper reported that six-hundred people were willing to join.\textsuperscript{156}

The League was clearly designed to link local, Halifax passion for Irish self-government into a regional, national, and transnational movement. A provincial council,

\textsuperscript{153} See *Evening Telegram*, February 3, 1921; See Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{156} *Ibid.*, 21.
involving both men and women, was named to coordinate efforts throughout mainland Nova Scotia, while a local council was established to lead activity within the city. W.A. Hallisey, a Halifax insurance agent, was appointed to supervise inter-provincial matters. As was the case in St. John’s, many of the city’s most respectable Irish Catholics were involved. The first president of the Halifax branch was Judge Meagher, and a prominent lawyer and Conservative politician, the Irish-born John Call O’Mullin, was vice-president. Mrs. W. Smith and Ruth Kavanagh were second vice president and treasurer, respectively. Some of the city’s wealthy Catholics were also named to the organization’s provincial council, including Judge J.W. Longley, city aldermen E.J. Scanlan, E.J. Kelly, and Tralee’s W.P. Buckley, as well as well as a physician, Dr. Foley. W.F. Burns, who owned his own plumbing company, was elected provincial chairman.\textsuperscript{157} Whereas in the late-nineteenth century, the middle-class Catholics of Halifax shied away from supporting Irish nationalism, they were now prominently involved in leading the SDIL. A final, critical difference between the SDIL in Halifax and the SDILN in St. John’s was the presence of Catholic clergymen in the organization. The Irish-born priest Fr. Thomas O’Sullivan maintained a prominent role within the League, while three priests, Fathers Gerald Murphy, M. Cole, and J. Foley, represented the Halifax branch at the first provincial convention in the autumn of 1920.\textsuperscript{158} The society’s general membership is impossible to reconstruct, but there is some evidence to suggest that, in at least some cases, it transcended ethnic boundaries. Herbert Aucoin, a clerk for the Worker’s Compensation Board was named second-vice president, and at one meeting gave a stirring address on francophone-Acadian support for Irish self-determination in Nova

\textsuperscript{157}Halifax Herald, July 17, 1920; McAlpine’s Halifax City Directory, 1921 (Halifax: McAlpine Publishing Company, 1920).

\textsuperscript{158}Halifax Herald, August 14, 1920; October 9, 1920. O’Sullivan’s involvement with the League is fully analyzed in chapter three.
Scotia. It is safe to assume, however, that the vast majority of League members and supporters were Catholics of Irish descent.

The SDIL in Halifax functioned in much the same way as the St. John’s branch of the League. Its objectives were clarified in a letter to the Herald from chairman Burns on August 10th, 1920. The piece reflected a pro-imperial outlook, focusing on the principles of British justice and liberty being extended to Ireland. Burns clearly stated that the Halifax SDIL was neutral regarding whether Ireland should be granted Dominion Home Rule or a fully-independent Republic, insisting only on a measure of self-determination which would be acceptable to its people. Letters were sent to local papers highlighting British atrocities in Ireland, and lectures featuring Irish-American speakers were organized through the autumn of 1920. The League raised funds by selling Terence MacSwiney calendars for fifty cents each, with many being sold. A provincial convention was held at the end of August, before Hallisey, Burns, and Mrs. M. Durand – listed in the city directory as a real estate agent – represented the city at the national convention at Ottawa in October. The organization appears to have grown rapidly, by the autumn of 1920 it claimed 1,500 members in Halifax alone.

As part of his national tour, SDIL president Lindsay Crawford stopped in Halifax in mid-November. A large public meeting was held, where Crawford, in addition to Fr. Thomas O’Sullivan and W.P. Buckley, gave lengthy addresses. Like his speech in St. John’s,

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159 O’Siadhail, “The Self-Determination for Ireland League,” 27. French-Canadian support for Irish nationalism was not unusual in this period. In Quebec, prominent French-Canadian nationalists like Henri Bourassa were closely involved with the SDIL. See Simon Jolivet, Le Vert et le Bleu: Identité Québécoise et Identité Irlandais au Tournant du XXe Siècle (La Presse de L’Université de Montreal, 2011), 213-248.

160 Halifax Herald, August 20, 1920. See also McLaughlin, Irish Canadian Conflict, 131.

161 For example, Arthur Upham Pope gave a talk to a large audience in early-September. See Morning Chronicle, September 11, 1920; A lecture on Black and Tan atrocities was given in early January, see Halifax Herald, January 3, 1920.

162 Halifax Herald, January 7, 1921.

163 Halifax Herald, October 9; October 19, 1920.
Crawford made every effort to portray the SDIL as loyal and respectable. Crawford noted that Irish-Canadian nationalists had no quarrel with the English people, but rather with the government and its mismanagement of Ireland. The meeting concluded with the singing of God Save Ireland and O Canada. Lectures and meetings continued through the winter and spring of 1921, and included a specific appeal from W.F. Burns for Anglo-Protestant support. He called upon “the Protestant people not to stand indifferent to the cause of Ireland, the sore spot of our Empire. [...] This patriotic work will bring blessings to our own land, and will weld together this Empire more fairly than ever.”

The loyal proclamations of SDIL leaders in Halifax seem to have had little effect on how the organization was perceived. As in St. John’s, widespread opposition to the League was organized in the city, with the first resolution against the movement being passed by the Orange Order. At a large meeting in Halifax, the Irish Question was discussed, and the members passed a motion denouncing the city’s Catholic associations as disloyal: “[with] organizations such as the Knights of Columbus, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Self-Determination for Ireland League and other organizations of a Roman Catholic character, united as they are to dismember the greatest Empire in the world, surely we in our loyalty to the King and Empire should do all we can to unite Protestant Christians to defend our British and free institutions.” The inclusion of the invariably-loyal Knights, who at no point during this period passed any public comment on Irish affairs, foreshadowed the sectarian paranoia which was to follow at precisely the same time that it was being played out in St. John’s.

166 Morning Chronicle, September 11, 1920.
In the wake of the Orange Order’s resolution, Irish nationalists in the city quickly began to defend their cause. A letter to the *Chronicle*, almost certainly written by Fr. O’Sullivan, argued that he had served in the Canadian Expeditionary Force – as a chaplain – during the War in order to help secure the freedom of small nations like Belgium. Agitation for Ireland was no different. He lamented that in Halifax “the Self-Determination League is avoided because a few flag-flappers raised the cry of disloyalty.”167 Organized opposition to the SDIL continued to mount, and by late-November it had gone beyond the Orange Order. A large crowd attended a “mass meeting” to proclaim their support for imperial unity, and decry the “organization within our midst whose insidious aim is the destruction and disunion of the British Empire.” Speeches proclaimed the justice of British rule in Ireland, and decried all those who opposed it.168 This meeting was organized by the British Empire Alliance, which led anti-SDIL activity for the next few months. Members resolved to “no longer allow the slanderous abuse of our wonderful Mother Empire,” while at a second rally on December 10th, Lindsay Crawford was denounced as disloyal.169 These events drew a strong response from the League’s new president, W.A. Hallisey. In a letter to the *Herald* he challenged “any person to quote one phrase offered by our speakers that can be styled slanderous.” He maintained that the SDIL’s only objective was to promote the right of the Irish people to govern their own affairs, and concluded by stating that League’s members would not have their rights to free speech “curtailed by the machinations of any clique operating under the guise of loyalty.”170 Debates in the press continued, with some comments bordering on outright bigotry. Dr. Charles E. McGlaughlin attacked Fr. O’Sullivan’s writing style, noting

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169 *Morning Chronicle*, November 29; December 11, 1920.
that his shortcomings were not surprising, “coming as he does from that part of Ireland where mongrel language is spoken and his kind are doing their utmost to exterminate the finest and most extensively spoken language in the world.”

With passions evidently running high in Halifax, it is no surprise that, as in St. John’s, those of more moderate opinion wished to emphasize cooperation and conciliation to avoid a spike in local sectarian tensions. Central in this regard was the Charitable Irish Society. On November 4th, 1920, a meeting was called to discuss the escalating situation in the city. The members condemned all efforts to identify the Irish Question as an “irreconcilable feud between different religions,” which were likely “to produce incalculable disaster.” Many members of the SDIL were also CIS members, and gave short speeches, including W.F. Burns, Justice Longley, W.P. Buckley, and J.C. O’Mullin. Colonel Hayes of the British Empire Alliance also spoke at the meeting. The CIS emphasized that it brought together Catholics and Protestants in the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

The CIS, although it publicly repudiated British reprisals, maintained its pro-imperial outlook throughout this period. Their resolutions on Irish affairs display a passionate concern with Ireland’s political destiny, but also a desire to avoid controversy and any potential suggestion of disloyalty. The society’s minutes refer to the above resolution, and note that the discussions surrounding it were “highly loyal and patriotic in character,” and expressed the hope that the British government should “grant Ireland a measure of self-government which would be satisfactory to the Irish people, but would also preserve Ireland as a partner in the Commonwealth of British nations which we in Canada are a part.”

172 Halifax Herald, November 30, 1920; Morning Chronicle, November 30, 1920.
the CIS continued to be explicit supporters of Home-Rule nationalism. Other Catholic societies also commented on the situation in the old country. The St. Mary’s Young Men’s Total Abstinence and Benefit Society passed a resolution supporting Irish self-determination, while the members of the AOH were also active, organizing a mass meeting of Halifax Hibernians in early-October to declare support for Terence MacSwiney’s hunger strike and Irish self-determination.\(^{174}\) The CIS and the AOH remained concerned with events in Ireland throughout the period, with both associations cancelling St. Patrick’s Day celebrations in 1921 in protest of the British forces’ activities. On that day, many of Irish descent in the city wore special “mourning buttons” consisting of a white shamrock on a black background.\(^{175}\)

The intensity of the debate surrounding the SDIL died down considerably through the winter of 1921, but it did not disappear altogether. In April, the Halifax District Loyal Orange Lodge passed a resolution against any potential Irish Republic. One month later, the British Empire Alliance held a meeting involving a number of other pro-imperial organizations, including the British Empire League, Loyal True Blue, the St. George’s Royal British Veterans, as well as the Orange Order. The assembly was called “to oppose the upcoming provincial SDIL convention in Halifax where treasonable utterances would be made.”\(^{176}\) Their opposition was unsuccessful, however, with the convention going ahead at the beginning of June. Regional cooperation was again in evidence, with delegates from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island taking part.\(^{177}\)

Given the pro-imperial stance of many of Halifax’s Catholics, it is not surprising that the Anglo-Irish Treaty was seen as an acceptable solution to the Irish Question. The CIS held

\(^{174}\) *Morning Chronicle*, October 6, 1920.

\(^{175}\) *Acadian Recorder*, March 1; March 17, 1921.

\(^{176}\) *Morning Chronicle*, April 12, 1921; *Halifax Herald*, May 21, 1921.

\(^{177}\) *Acadian Recorder*, June 2, 1921.
a special meeting in February 1922 to celebrate the Treaty. The SDIL, meanwhile, proclaimed its support, pending the measure’s ratification by the *Dáil*. W.F. Burns stated simply that “whatever suits the people of Ireland, suits us.” Following the passing of the Treaty in Dublin, comments on Irish affairs declined dramatically in Halifax. The SDIL faded away, and the CIS no longer passed resolutions on Irish affairs. The Civil War evoked little local commentary in the city, though the violence was covered by the press. Broad, public engagement with Irish affairs was over, but through the associational networks of the AOH and the CIS, as well as through the ritual celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, Irish-Catholic identity undoubtedly persisted.

The small but enthusiastic Irish-Catholic community of Portland, like their counterparts in St. John’s and Halifax, engaged with the affairs of Ireland to a far greater extent between 1919 and 1923 than at any point previously. Irish nationalism in the New-England city was distinct from the brand observed in British North America. The institutions which fostered public engagement with Ireland, the Friends of Irish Freedom and the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic were unambiguously republican. Clerical support, particularly on the part of Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh, was far more overt than in St. John’s or Halifax. Finally, although anti-Catholicism and anti-Irishness were undoubtedly present, no formal opposition to Irish nationalism was organized in Portland during this period.

Thanks largely to its proximity to Irish-American organizational networks, the nationalists of Portland began to formalize their support much earlier than those of Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. Almost immediately following the end of the War, prominent Irish-American nationalists began to publicly advocate for Irish self-government. Meetings

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178 *Acadian Recorder*, December 7, 1921.
were held throughout the United States, and the movement was given a tremendous boost when Cardinal O’Connell of Boston – the former Bishop of Portland – publicly supported it. Not long after this, the Irish Catholics of Portland met to establish a branch of the FOIF. The meeting took place on January 26\textsuperscript{th}, 1919, at the Hibernian Hall on Congress Street. Attorney Henry C. Sullivan was elected chairman, with Martin Qualters, an Irish-born night watchman and prominent Hibernian, acting as secretary. Approximately fifty people signed the membership roll, and a larger meeting was planned for February 2\textsuperscript{nd} to formally establish the new branch. Another hundred joined at this event, and a nationalist resolution was drafted, which was far more Anglophobic than anything produced in Canada or Newfoundland at this time, noting that the Irish diaspora was the result of “conditions created by [England’s] tyranny.” The members demanded that Irish independence be placed on the agenda at the Paris peace conference, which was the FOIF’s central objective at this point. Subsequent meetings discussed the city’s representation at the 1919 Irish Race Convention in Philadelphia, but it does not seem as though a Portland delegate was sent.

Most of the early FOIF efforts in Portland surrounded a planned mass-meeting to demonstrate public support for an Irish Republic on St. Patrick’s Day, 1919. Up to this point, the feast day had been observed quietly in the city, with no public parade having been held during the period under investigation here. Thanks to rising ethnic passions, the nascent FOIF, in cooperation with the AOH, organized the procession. It was led by the Irish republican tricolour alongside the stars and stripes, and almost one-thousand people

\footnote{179 Doorley, \textit{Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism}, 84-85. \footnote{180 \textit{Eastern Argus}, January 27; February 3; February 17, 1919.}}
marched, despite inclement weather, “displaying their interest in the almost universal movement for the freedom of the green isle.”

Following the success of the 1919 demonstration, support for the Irish cause appears to have temporarily ebbed away. Repeating patterns observed in earlier nationalist organizations in Portland, such as the Irish National League in the 1880s, the original FOIF organization died out. The AOH continued to lead local enthusiasm for Ireland, with both state and county boards passing resolutions against the League of Nations. In early 1920, thanks largely to the public support of Bishop Walsh, enduring structures were put into place to bring the city’s Irish Catholics into the broader nationalist movement. Another mass-meeting in favour of Irish independence was organized, and this time the city’s most prominent Irish citizens took the lead. Bishop Walsh was to preside over the meeting, while merchant and Democratic state senator Edward F. Flaherty, prominent in both the AOH and the Knights of Columbus; John J. Cunningham, who was president of F.W. Cunningham and Sons; police captain Hugh F. McDonagh; prominent lawyers W.H. Looney and J.H. McCann; physician Dr. L.A. Derry, and others were on the organizing committee. Irish-nationalist organizations in Portland consistently reflected American patterns, but occasionally its proximity to Canada and links to Montreal via the Grand Trunk Railroad were in evidence. This was the case in 1920, as in addition to FOIF leader Judge Daniel Cohalan, SDIL president Lindsay Crawford was invited to address the assembly. Prominent Yankees such as the Governor of Maine and the Mayor of Portland were also involved. The

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181 Eastern Argus, March 18, 1919.
182 Eastern Argus, August 29; September 19, 1919. Irish nationalist groups like the FOIF virulently opposed the League of Nations, as it was seen as enhancing Anglo-American cooperation, to the detriment of the self-determination movement.
meeting was advertised as being multi-denominational, with the cause being a righteous one that should have appeal beyond those of Irish descent.\textsuperscript{183}

On this occasion, neither Cohalan nor Crawford were able to attend, with two Massachusetts-based nationalists speaking in their stead. Bishop Walsh gave an address supporting de Valera’s plan to sell bonds of the Irish Republic. The upper-middle class leadership, and the participation of local clergy – the meeting was also advertised at Masses in local parishes such as St. Dominic’s – undoubtedly provided the movement with popularity and respectability.\textsuperscript{184} Bishop Walsh’s diary refers to the event as a “good meeting,” and he praised the number of non-Catholics and non-Irish who attended.\textsuperscript{185}

The momentum established through this meeting allowed for the FOIF to be re-established in Portland. Approximately two-hundred had joined the new group by mid-February, and Senator Flaherty was named provisional president until executive elections could be organized.\textsuperscript{186} On February 26\textsuperscript{th}, Flaherty addressed a group of almost one-hundred women, calling upon them to become involved with the FOIF. The local branch was officially inaugurated on February 29\textsuperscript{th} at the Hibernian Hall. About three-hundred members were present, and they expected to have one-thousand by the end of the week, and hoped to eventually exceed three thousand.\textsuperscript{187} The executive is listed in full in Appendix E. Those in charge of the new branch were mostly middle-class, well-educated or in management positions. Furthermore, of the seven members of the executive who could be traced, six were born in the United States. Four of these six had at least one Irish parent. The exception was

\textsuperscript{184} Eastern Argus, February 2, 1920; St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books, February 1, 1920, Maine Irish Heritage Center (MIHC).
\textsuperscript{185} Louis Sebastian Walsh Diaries, February 1, 1920, Archives of the Diocese of Portland (ADP).
\textsuperscript{186} Eastern Argus, February 16, 1920.
\textsuperscript{187} Eastern Argus, March 1, 1920; Portland Evening Express, March 1, 1920.
the organization’s president, John Brown, a longshoreman who was born in Ireland, listed Irish as his native tongue, and had immigrated to the United States in 1895. Brown was a prominent member of the Irish-Catholic community in Portland during this period, serving as president of the PLSBS from 1917 to 1919, as well as president of the Cumberland County board of the AOH. Generally, though, the American-born middle classes predominated. These findings are in line with other studies of Irish-American nationalism in this period, where, in New-England cities such as Worcester, it was likewise the upwardly-mobile American-born generation who led engagement with Irish politics from 1919 to 1923.

The first task of the new, more durable FOIF in Portland was to organize another mass-meeting to rally public support for Irish independence. Bishop Walsh was to preside again, and, to make up for their absence at the last meeting, Judge Cohalan and Lindsay Crawford were the principal speakers. Local parishes urged their members to attend the meeting, while the Irish-dominated PLSBS declared that no work would be done after six o’clock to allow members to attend. The meeting itself was a resounding success.

According to the Argus, “never was more enthusiasm aroused in an audience than was displayed by the immense gathering that packed City Hall auditorium.”

Lindsay Crawford’s speech was presented in a notably different tone than those he gave in St. John’s and Halifax around the same time. He focused mainly on Britain’s economic oppression of Ireland, and called for Irish independence “not because we hate England, but because we hate imperialism.” Judge Cohalan gave a similar address on Irish

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189 Meagher, Inventing Irish America, 362-364.
190 Eastern Argus, March 23; April 3, 1920.
192 Eastern Argus, April 12, 1920.
freedom, and Bishop Walsh inaugurated the Irish Republican Bond Drive. Inspired by de Valera, these bonds were designed to fund Sinn Fein and Ireland’s fight for freedom. A separate committee was named to oversee the drive, led by Senator Flaherty and also involving Dr. Derry, John J. Cunningham, James Leighton, and John H. Dooley. Collectors were named for each of Portland’s wards, and subscriptions were received from both individuals and local organizations. Bishop Walsh led the way by pledging $1,000. The PLSBS had, earlier in the week, decided to cash in their Liberty Bond in order to acquire $2,000 worth of Republican ones. The FOIF itself contributed a further $2,000, as did the Knights of Columbus – a rare example of ethnic involvement on the part of that organization. The AOH divisions each pledged $500, while other labour unions with large Irish memberships – such as the Plasterer’s Union and the Grant Trunk Railroad Elevator Employees – also donated generous sums. By the end of the night, over $20,000 had been raised.

The Irish Republican Bond Drive drew an impressive response from Portland’s Irish-Catholic community. Between April 12th and 30th, the Eastern Argus printed the name of each person who subscribed to the fund. In addition to the associations and labour unions, 835 individuals were listed as having purchased bonds – almost one in ten of the city’s Irish Catholics. A random sample of one out of every five subscribers from the Argus’ list,

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194 See chapter one.
combined with data from city directories and nominal censuses, allows us to investigate what sort of people were willing to donate money for the cause of Ireland. This provides a total sample of 168 individuals. Of these, seventy-six could be identified by place of birth in the 1920 nominal census – a small but likely representative sample of Portland’s Irish nationalists.

Of the seventy-six traceable individuals, the breakdown by birthplace is as follows:

Table 6.1: Places of Birth of Portland Subscribers to the 1920 Irish Republican Bond Drive.¹⁹⁵

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those who were born in the United States and Canada, only eleven (26%) did not have at least one Irish parent. In some of these cases, further census data reveals a different type of connection to Ireland. Arthur J. LeTarte, a French-Canadian conductor who pledged $25, had an Irish-born wife, for example. The same is true for the two foreign-born individuals.

George K. Rogers (surely an adopted name) was Greek, but had a Maine-born wife with two Irish parents. Reverend Fr. Petillo, meanwhile, was the city’s Italian priest, and would likely have had close friendships with the Irish-Catholic clergy. Some benevolent Yankees, such as the former War Secretary and Mayor of Portland W.M. Ingraham, participated, but based on this sample, it is reasonable to conclude that a significant majority of subscribers were either of Irish descent or had some personal connection to Ireland.

In terms of gauging the occupational backgrounds of those who purchased republican bonds in 1920, the sample size is slightly larger (ninety-eight) thanks to additional individuals whose employment could be identified using city directories. Using the same occupational categories that were employed in chapter one, we see an occupational breakdown as follows:

Table 6.2: Occupational Breakdown of Portland Subscribers to the 1920 Irish Republican Bond Drive.\(^{196}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar or Professional</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocers and Shopkeepers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi- or Unskilled</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/Homemakers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The drive clearly brought together individuals from all socio-economic categories. Of the ninety-eight individuals in the above sample, twenty-two were women. Of these, three were clerks, one was an assistant operator, twelve were maids or housekeepers, and six were

\(^{196}\) Figures based on a random sample of ninety-eight subscribers listed in the *Eastern Argus*, April 12 to 30, 1920. Biographical data taken from the genealogical database www.ancestry.com, with the original information coming from the *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920* and the *Directory of Portland, 1920*. The occupational categories are similar to those used in chapter one. As discussed there, the categories are my own, though they closely resemble those used by Mark McGowan and Brian Clarke in their occupational studies of Toronto – originally formulated by Peter G. Goheen. Given the narrower range of occupations recorded in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland and the smaller sample size, clerical and professional occupations were combined, as were semi- and unskilled positions, to produce a more simplified table. A full list of occupations may be seen in Appendix A. See McGowan, *The Waning of the Green*, 295-296; Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism*, 261-262; Peter G. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto, 1850-1900: Pattern and Process of Growth* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, 1970). In the above table, “White-collar and professional” includes bookkeepers, clerks, compositors, managers, lawyers, judges, the Mayor, physicians, merchants, real estate agents and a customs official. “Skilled workers” includes a tire company owner, boilermakers, firemen, mechanics, carpenters, conductors, contractors, estimators, foremen, ironworkers, machinists, masons, melters, millmen, policemen, press feeders, soap manufacturers, stitchers, stovemen and timekeepers. The “Grocers and Shopkeepers” category includes café owners, cigar merchants and a variety store owner. Finally, “semi and unskilled labour” includes butlers, checkers, cleaners, furniture packers, helpers, housekeepers, labourers, letter carriers, maids, packers, painters, ship workers, stevedores, teamsters and waiters.
homemakers. Although the movement was led by the clergy and the American-born middle classes, economic support for Irish nationalism transcended both class and gender. It must be kept in mind, however, that, as in almost every other American community, the majority of Portland’s Irish-Catholics were not involved.

Following the success of the bond drive, the FOIF continued to encourage public expressions of support for Irish nationalism. Social events were held in late-April and in early-June, ending with the society’s first annual ball. As was the case with the Land League in the 1880s, social pastimes were essential in popularizing the movement. Both women and men were prominent in organizing these events, and they drew enthusiastic crowds.197

As in St. John’s and Halifax, the death of Terence MacSwiney caused outrage in Portland. Walsh referred to it as “another crime against civilization,” and called the Lord Mayor a “martyr for the cause of liberty.” A solemn High Mass was held in his honour at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on November 1st. The Mass was deliberately held late in the evening so that the city’s Irish-Catholic workers could attend. The FOIF paraded through the city’s main streets before attending as a body, with, reportedly, nine-hundred members of the local branch participating. Over two thousand attended the service.198

By the end of 1920, as tensions were reaching their peak in the two British North American centres, the Friends of Irish Freedom organization in Portland was on the verge of being shut down. This was not a result of local apathy, but rather a schism within the national FOIF itself. De Valera had, with increasing vociferousness, expressed his opinion that the Irish-American leaders, Cohalan and John Devoy, were too preoccupied with concerns on the western side of the Atlantic. In his opinion, nationalist organizations should only exist to

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197 Eastern Argus, April 15; June 7, 1920.
198 St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books, October 31, 1920; Walsh Diaries, November 2, 1920; Evening Express, October 31; November 2, 1920.
fundraise and lobby for the immediate cause of Irish independence. Tensions reached their peak in September, 1920, when the Sinn Fein leader eventually announced that a new, more Irish-centred organization would be established: the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. Local branches of the FOIF across the United States had to decide whether to join the new organization, or remain true to the Devoy, Cohalan and the old Friends. In the end, the Portland branch, along with most others, supported de Valera and abandoned the FOIF in favour of the AARIR. The old local executive was maintained, and John Brown continued to lead the reformed association.199

The new group continued to agitate publicly for the Irish cause. Lectures were given in February and March, while a public rally and parade were held to welcome the new Lord Mayor of Cork, Donal O’Callaghan, to the city on March 31st. The AARIR was unambiguously republican, as demonstrated by resolution at an early-March meeting which clarified its objectives. In St. John’s and Halifax, principles of British-imperial freedom and justice were used to rationalize support for Irish self-government. Similarly, in Portland, America’s republican heritage was employed to justify the movement for complete independence: “We, as American citizens, urge our government to be true to the principles enunciated by George Washington [...] by recognizing the Republic established by the Irish people.”200 As pointed out by Michael Doorley, domestic political contexts had a significant bearing on how diasporic nationalism was conceived and articulated.201 The AARIR, like the FOIF before it, continued to keep the local Portland movement in contact with the national organization. In 1921, Judge Joseph E.F. Connolly, James H. McCann, James E. Coughlan,

199 Portland Evening Express, January 3, 1921; Doorley, Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism, 134-135.
200 Portland Evening Express, February 23; March 7; March 31, 1921.
201 Doorley, Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism, 159.
and John Brown were selected to represent the city and state at the association’s national
convention in Chicago. Enthusiasm had been high in the preceding months – Maine was said
to have 3,000 AARIR members in several localities throughout the state.\textsuperscript{202}

Although membership was strong and the AARIR continued to promote the
nationalist agenda, there is some evidence to suggest that momentum was beginning to falter
by the autumn of 1921. Efforts to raise money for the Irish Relief Fund – designed to relieve
those affected by violence and distress in Ireland, particularly women and children – fell well
short of expectations, despite strong endorsements from the clergy, the AARIR and the
Knights of Columbus.\textsuperscript{203} Despite the humanitarian nature of the cause, clearly there was
some disillusionment with affairs in Ireland – a trend which was observed in other Irish-
American settings around this time.\textsuperscript{204} The members of the PLSBS, for example, who had so
generously supported the bond drive, refused to approve a contribution to the Relief Fund.
There were limits on how far the Irish-Catholics of Portland would go to aid their ancestral
homeland, and the drama surrounding the FOIF and the AARIR in addition to the failure of
their previous donations to achieve any tangible results dampened the enthusiasm of many.\textsuperscript{205}

There was, however, one final “big day” for the Irish nationalists of Portland: the visit
of Mrs. Muriel MacSwiney, the wife of the late Lord Mayor of Cork, on July 31\textsuperscript{st}, 1921.
Support for an Irish Republic had not disappeared completely, and she gave a lecture in front
of over one-thousand people at City Hall. Bishop Walsh again presided, and in his diary he
praised the talk and the “immense crowd” that turned out to see it.\textsuperscript{206} This, though, was the
last great public expression of Irish nationalism in Portland in the 1920s. With the truce in

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{202} \textit{Portland Evening Express}, March 7, 1921.
\textsuperscript{203} \textit{Portland Evening Express}, May 11; May 16, 1921; \textit{St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books}, May 15,
1921.
\textsuperscript{204} Miller, \textit{Emigrants and Exiles}, 536.
\textsuperscript{205} Connolly, “Nationalism Among Early Twentieth-Century Longshoremen,” 290.
\textsuperscript{206} \textit{Portland Evening Express}, August 1, 1921; \textit{Walsh Diaries}, July 31, 1920.
\end{flushright}
place, news of atrocities in Ireland became scarce in American newspapers, and the popular movement for Irish independence slowly began to die out.

Despite waning interest, the committed nationalists of Portland maintained their organizations until well into 1922. In February of that year, John Brown and the AARIR announced a membership drive to boost their numbers. As part of this effort, a lecture was given to the PLSBS, urging its members to continue to support the cause of Ireland. Following the Treaty and its ratification, the local AARIR continued to support the Republic through resolutions passed at its 1922 state convention. No further public activity was organized, however, and any chance of widespread republican sentiment continuing in Portland was likely ended when Bishop Walsh, who since 1916 had been a staunch supporter of the Irish Republic, spoke in favour of the Free State on St. Patrick’s Day, 1922. Walsh argued that its establishment gave Ireland a crucial measure of self-government which should be acceptable to virtually all nationalists, and represented “the dream of years come true.”

Public engagement with Irish affairs was over in Portland for the time being. The Irish-American generation almost certainly retained some awareness of their Irishness, as associations such as the AOH persisted, but identities as Catholic Americans were in the ascendancy in terms of day-to-day expression. A romantic attachment to Ireland remained, but it was well within the bounds of symbolic ethnicity.

**Conclusion**

Between 1912 and 1922, interest in the political destiny of Ireland rose to unprecedented levels in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. The most obvious conclusion to

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draw from this chapter is the significance of local political contexts in determining how Irish-diasporic nationalism was conceived and articulated. The Catholics of St. John’s and Halifax had grown to revere the freedom and justice of imperial institutions, and even as constitutional nationalism in Ireland died out, the vast majority were incapable of conceiving their ancestral homeland without its British connection. In 1920 and 1921, as reports of Black and Tan reprisals were disseminated in each city, anger towards the British government rose and some were undoubtedly converted to republicanism, but they were a minority. In Portland, by contrast, inspired by the example of their own American Republic, Catholics of Irish birth and descent were far more likely to support separatism, at least after 1918, when the clergy, led by Bishop Walsh, came to publicly support Ireland’s full independence. The Portland case, moreover, with a lack of any ethnic response to the First World War, followed immediately by a surge in Irish engagement in 1919, clearly demonstrates how the intensity of Irish identity could vary considerably depending on circumstances in both old world and new.

Given the general concern over sectarian strife emerging from local debates on the Irish Question in St. John’s and Halifax, as well as the thousands of dollars raised for the cause in Portland, passions regarding the politics of the old country were clearly high. The great surge in interest in the affairs of Ireland could not have taken place without the organizational networks established by the cities’ nationalist associations. In all three ports, it was groups such as the SDIL and the FOIF, as well as its successor the AARIR, that popularized the Irish cause locally through rallies, lectures, parades, and social events. Furthermore, by bringing in prominent nationalist speakers from abroad, as well as leading participation in regional, national, and international conferences, they turned isolated,
domestic responses into part of a pan-diasporic movement for Irish freedom. More than at any point previously, there was a sense of belonging to a broader Irish ethnic group, and for a short time, large numbers of Irish Catholics in St. John’s, Halifax, Portland, and beyond were united, regardless of social origins or gender, in supporting the cause of Ireland.

The ethnic resurgence that took place between 1919 and 1923 must be placed in a broader context. Although passions regarding Ireland were high, most Catholics of Irish descent did not actively participate in the movement. It is not possible to suggest, even during this period, that ethnic identities rivalled national – Newfoundland, Canadian, or American – ones. Instead, they existed comfortably together. Irish ethnic sentiment rose and fell depending on local circumstances in North America and conditions in Ireland. In some settings, like St. John’s, enthusiasm for Ireland was maintained through the BIS and the Gaelic League in 1923 and after, while in others it declined considerably. Judging by continued engagement with Ireland by those a generation or more removed from it, though, a sentimental, ethnic attachment was maintained for many in the three cities between 1880 and 1923.
Conclusion

Understanding Irish-Catholic Ethnicity in the Diaspora

In the autumn of 1920, numerous Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s joined the local branch of the Canadian Self-Determination for Ireland League (SDIL). The Irish Question was hotly debated in the local press, and the League held meetings and lectures in order to forward the cause of self-government for Ireland. The organization and its objectives were opposed by the Orange Order, whose unionism was motivated not by an ethnic or ancestral link to Irish Protestantism or to Ulster, but rather by British North American and transatlantic networks of Orangeism. An almost identical series of events took place in Halifax, as Catholics there also participated in the League’s organization, and were opposed by the Orange Order and the British Empire Alliance. In Portland, organized nationalism likewise gained momentum at this time, led in this case by the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) and the American Association for the Recognition for the Irish Republic (AARIR), with the Catholic clergy playing a more active role in popularizing the movement. Although the Irish population of that city consisted of more Irish-born individuals than either St. John’s or Halifax, the nationalism of the 1920s was led primarily by the American-born generation, making the engagement with Irish affairs an intergenerational phenomenon in all three ports. This broad movement, often led by men and women several generations removed from their ancestral homeland, shows how a latent ethnic consciousness could be transformed into discernible action. The rise in Irish identity was neither universal nor permanent, but it shows how Irish ethnic networks transcended space, and how North American Irish nationalism had a presence even on the northeastern extreme of the continent. Although they lived in relatively isolated communities, the transnational movement for Ireland’s freedom brought
Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland into a broader, interconnected diaspora.

Irish ethnic identities were complex, individual, and did not evolve in isolation. They were generally not passed from one generation to the next in a linear fashion, but, rather, were constructed, invented, and reinvented over time and space by a myriad of forces. Although the interplay between class, gender, religion, and ethnicity is impossible to fully understand, the historian may assess the structures, networks, organizations, and institutions that affected public conceptions and expressions of Irishness. The comparative approach adopted here reveals which common factors affected the invention of ethnicity in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, and therefore which features of Irish-Catholic identity transcended space and were truly “diasporic,” versus those that were locally constructed. Together, we do see an interconnected Irish diaspora, but identities varied considerably from place to place and over time.

One of the most critical aspects of Irish-Catholic identity in the three cities studied here was the close, reciprocal relationship between ethnicity and religion. Unlike Toronto or Saint John, New Brunswick, there was no sustained Irish-Protestant migration to St. John’s, Halifax or Portland, so “Irishness” was almost universally associated with Catholicism, and was juxtaposed with an Anglo-Protestant or Anglo-American “Other.” The clergy, as well as the Church’s institutions and organizations, reinforced a sense of Roman Catholic distinctiveness. Separate orphanages, hospitals, associations, and especially schools created a sense of “otherness” based largely on faith, rather than ethnicity, which differentiated Catholics from their Protestant neighbours. The Church also reinforced national and, in the case of St. John’s and Halifax, imperial identities. A sense of community, if it existed at all,
revolved around Catholic parishes rather than a unity or solidarity based upon a shared Irish ancestry. Nevertheless, the clergy in each port helped sustain a romantic attachment to Ireland until well into the twentieth century. In St. John’s and Halifax, Irish-born priests like Fathers Michael Clancy, Daniel P. O’Callaghan, and Timothy O’Sullivan were essential in keeping alive interest in the old land, and leading public engagement with Irish politics and nationalism. In Portland, identity was complicated by the presence of large numbers of non-Irish Catholics, but despite this, the city’s clergy were the foremost leaders of Irish nationalism in the early 1920s. These clerical connections to Ireland were, by the end of our period, waning, as an increasingly indigenized priesthood epitomized the shift in character and orientation of the Church from Irish to North American. How religion related to ethnicity, then, remains one of the most vital themes for the historian of the Irish diaspora, but exactly how the networks of Catholicism influenced Irish identity differed from place to place.

Like religion, the relationship between class and ethnicity was complicated, and varied widely over space and time. This study’s analysis of associational life shows that public engagement with Ireland, as led by the St. John’s Benevolent Irish Society (BIS), Halifax’s Charitable Irish Society (CIS) and groups in Portland such as the Irish American Relief Association (IARA), was frequently the purview of the wealthier classes. The success of more proletarian organizations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) in Portland and Halifax, however, shows that the lower orders likewise possessed a strong affinity for their ancestral homeland. In terms of the associational structures and networks that linked those of Irish descent to Ireland, then, we do see a rough division along class lines. When it came to a more passionate engagement with Ireland through the networks of
Irish nationalism, however, individuals from a variety of occupational backgrounds cooperated to support the cause, although groups like the SDIL in St. John’s and Halifax and the FOIF in Portland tended to be led by the educated middle classes. Only in Portland, where Irish immigrants continued to occupy the lower rungs of the socio-occupational ladder, was there a direct connection between working-class identity and ethnicity, observed through the structures of an Irish-Catholic labour union: the Portland Longshoremen’s Benevolent Society (PLSBS). On the city’s waterfront, where competition for jobs was intense, labour solidarity incorporated an ethnic element in order to preserve shore work as an Irish-Catholic occupational niche. In St. John’s and Halifax, labour unions rarely possessed any explicit ethnoreligious bias, and class generally transcended ethnicity.

Publicly-articulated Irish identities tended to be masculine in the three cases examined here. The institutions and organizations that facilitated the expression of ethnicity, such as the BIS, the CIS, the AOH, and the networks of the Catholic Church, were dominated by men. In St. John’s, we observed an added dimension to the idea of a gendered ethnicity, as it was the Christian Brothers of Ireland who were responsible for instilling a love for the old land in many of the city’s young men. In all three ports, though, women shared these sentiments. Their active engagement with Ireland was demonstrated through the Ladies’ Auxiliaries of the AOH, as well as through nationalist endeavours, such as the successful Ladies’ Land League in Portland. Beyond these organizations, though, women’s sense of ethnicity is difficult to gauge. A major shortcoming of many historical studies of the Irish diaspora is the inability to understand the ways in which Irishness was transmitted
generationally by family, and this variable lends yet another layer of complexity to the evolution of Irish-Catholic ethnicity.¹

The comparative study, then, reveals how these various facets of identity related to ethnicity over time and space, enhancing our understanding of the complex process of invention. It also allows us to see how Irishness was understood differently from place to place. Like the comparative work of William Jenkins and Malcolm Campbell, this dissertation has shown that Irish-American identities were quite different from those in the British Empire.² Ethnic and benevolent associations such as the BIS and CIS in St. John’s and Halifax frequently and overtly demonstrated their loyalty and affection for the British monarchy and Empire through speeches, toasts, and resolutions. The networks of the Catholic Church, especially ultra-loyal bishops and archbishops like M.F. Howley, Cornelius O’Brien, and Edward Roche, also sustained the imperial connection. Catholic political discourse reflected loyalty to Empire, and, critically, support for Irish republicanism never took hold in either port, even after the Easter Rebellion of 1916. In Portland, by contrast, the American context bred a different understanding of Irishness. Anglophobia and anti-imperial sentiments were far more prevalent, and instead of pro-British sentiment there existed a strong American patriotism amongst those of Irish birth and descent. The best examples of these dissimilar conceptions may be seen in responses to Irish nationalism. A contrast existed

between how Land League agitation of the early-1880s was understood in Halifax, where the
movement was portrayed as lawful, just, and an example of British righteousness, versus
Portland, where the agitation was framed in the anti-imperial language of American
patriotism. Similar differences were in evidence in the twentieth century, between the
cautious, non-committal nationalism of the SDIL and the overt republicanism of the FOIF
and the AARIR. These opposing understandings of Irishness, one of which revered the old
country’s British connection, the other which abhorred it, may have been in part due to
generational differences. The Irish-Catholic population of Portland mostly settled in the city
during and after the great famine of the 1840s. As argued by Kerby Miller, the collective,
cultural memory of the famine created an exile mentality, or an idea of “forced migration” as
a result of British misrule of Ireland. In conjunction with American ideals of republican
government, this ideal fostered an Anglo-phobic, anti-British conception of Irish identity.3
Because the Irish-Catholic populations in St. John’s and Halifax settled largely before the
famine, they were not subject to this construction of nationalist memory. This explanation is
somewhat simplistic, however, as it does not take into account the significant support for
constitutional nationalism that existed in American cities like Portland in the late-nineteenth
century, nor the substantial variation observed in Irish identities both in British North
America and the United States. A more nuanced explanation of Irish-Catholic loyalty in
Canada and Newfoundland was provided by St. John’s Archbishop Edward Roche in 1917.
Catholic Newfoundlanders lived under:

the freest institutions that are to be found in any part of the world. We have
civil freedom, we have religious freedom, and we have educational
freedom. We are absolutely free to manage, or, as the case may be,

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mismanage our own affairs. [...] These institutions have been given to us and preserved for us by our partnership in the British Empire.\(^4\)

His words, cited in full in chapter three, show that Catholic love for the Empire was institutional. For generations, Irish men, women, and their descendants lived happily under imperial institutions, coexisting peacefully with their Anglo-Protestant fellow citizens. Life within the Empire was all they or their ancestors had ever known, and as such the Catholics of St. John’s and Halifax struggled to conceive of their ancestral homeland without its imperial connection. Similarly, Irish Americans revered their country’s republican institutions, and naturally desired a comparable political destiny for the old country.

What is important to note here is that neither of these constructions of Irishness was stronger or weaker than the other. A devotion to nation or Empire did not preclude intense love for Ireland, and, likewise, a devout American patriotism did not necessarily dilute attachment to the old country. In individuals like Archbishop Howley, we see Newfoundland nationalism and imperial loyalty, but also a profound esteem for Ireland. For some individuals, their ethnicity was primary, but for most others it was secondary to class, gender, religion, and nationality. Some Catholics of Irish descent may only have acknowledged their ancestry on occasions like St. Patrick’s Day. Although constructions of Irishness differed considerably both within and between these three cities, none can be deemed more “Irish” than another.

A further conclusion to draw from this work is how both domestic and external factors combined to influence the invention of ethnicity in each port city. Ethnic associations like the AOH were vital in bringing the Catholics of Halifax and Portland into close cooperation with broader, North American Irish networks. The Catholic Church, too, was a

\(^4\) Archbishop Edward Roche, “The Great World War,” no date, 1917, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s (ARCASJ), Edward Roche Papers, 107/30/1, 11-12.
significant agent in forging transatlantic links and leading engagement with Irish affairs. The diffusion of ethnicity from place to place was as important as its transmission from generation to generation, and we see this most obviously in the establishment of nationalist associations. Groups like the Land League, Irish National League and, later, the SDIL and FOIF, were not formed locally. Rather, these organizations were transplanted into our cities from elsewhere in mainland North America. The passion that Irish-Catholics felt for Ireland was locally constructed by family, ethnic associations, education, the Church, and other sources, but the structures through which it was articulated were often external. In the case of the ethnic resurgence of 1919 to 1923, these outside organizations fostered local momentum in support of the cause. They transformed a pre-existing ethnic consciousness into discernible action. This spatial context – how Irish-Catholic identities were transmitted from place to place – must not be ignored by historians of the diaspora. It is particularly interesting, moreover, that these Irish networks, whether nationalist or associational, were almost all North American in origin. Despite the fact that St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland were amongst the continent’s closest ports to Ireland, direct transatlantic links between the old country and adopted homeland were few by the late-nineteenth century. The Catholic clergy provided the most direct connections to Ireland, but even these were waning by the end of our period. The fact that the networks which sustained a knowledge and engagement with Ireland were so often transplanted to our cities from the west shows how even on North America’s northeastern extremity, Irish ethnicity had been thoroughly reinvented in the new world.

At the outset of this dissertation, we examined several theories of ethnicity which have guided the analysis throughout. None may be fully applied to the breadth of Irish-
Catholic experiences observed in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, but some are still useful tools. The idea that ethnicity is “invented” and reinvented in the new world, posited by Kathleen Neils Conzen et al., certainly holds true. This model prioritizes local factors as being essential in the evolution of identity, which helps explain the variation we see between these port cities. Conzen’s invented model also accounts for the rise and fall in ethnicity observed over time. Irish identities oscillated throughout the period, with high points in each observed in the 1880s and again from 1919 to 1923. Events in the old country, coupled with the spread of North American nationalist associations, facilitated this variation in popular engagement with Ireland. What Conzen’s model misses is the broader spatial context in which ethnic identities developed, and how the networks which sustained an identification with the old country could transcend space, with ethnicity diffusing from place to place as well as being reinvented over time. “Invented ethnicity,” though, remains the best model for understanding intergenerational Irishness, and it is not surprising that other scholars of the diaspora, such as Carolyn Lambert and Timothy Meagher, rely heavily upon it.

Alan O’Day’s model of “mutative ethnicity,” conceived specifically with the Irish-American diaspora in mind, may be applied in some instances, particularly with respect to the working-class Irish Catholics of Portland. In this conception, in order for true ethnicity to persist across generations, an affiliation to the homeland must generate a sense of community, which in turn improves access to tangible benefits such as political or economic

resources. In the case of Portland’s longshoremen, the PLSBS did unite those of Irish birth and descent in order to secure employment, but most expressions of Irish identity observed in this study, such as those by the BIS or CIS in St. John’s and Halifax, offered few tangible benefits. Instead, a much older model, Herbert Gans’ “symbolic ethnicity” comes closest to explaining the intergenerational ethnicity observed in those two cities. Like Conzen, Gans accounts for the rise and fall of ethnic identities over time, and characterizes those of successive generations primarily as “leisure activities,” which were romantic and symbolic, and generally subservient to class, gender and nationality, but capable of generating passion for the old country in certain circumstances. It was an “ethnicity of last resort.” In the end, however, no theoretical framework can explain the complexity of Irish identities in the diaspora, even within three small communities on the North American periphery.

Although this study should be read as a unified, comparative whole rather than three separate microstudies, it does contribute significantly to the existing local historiographies of Irish-Catholic identity in each city. For St. John’s, it fits into a growing body of literature that examines how Irishness evolved from generation to generation within the large, well-established Catholic community. It builds upon the work of Willeen Keough on women, gender, family, and ethnicity, as well as John FitzGerald on religion. The most relevant work, however, is Carolyn Lambert’s investigation of Irish identity in the city from 1840 to 1886. Lambert’s dissertation examined many of the same questions as this project, and,

generally, her conclusions are similar to my own. The Catholics of Irish descent in St. John’s were a varied, successful ethnoreligious group who, for the most part, lived peacefully and contentedly alongside their Anglo-Protestant neighbours within the structures of the British Empire. By the late-nineteenth century, connections to the old country were greatly diminished, and other facets of identity – particularly a sense of Catholic distinctiveness and an unhyphenated Newfoundland nationalism – were superseding an ethnic attachment to Ireland.\(^\text{10}\) This investigation of Irish-Catholic identity in the early-twentieth century, however, has revealed that expressions of Irishness rose and fell through time. The romantic and symbolic attachment remained strong for some, while for others it was tenuous at best. The pattern in St. John’s was not one of a general, linear ethnic decline, but rather of popular Irish identity varying throughout the period studied here. Catholics in the city were not isolated from diasporic trends, despite the ever-increasing generational gap between the broader community and Ireland. An active engagement with Irish affairs continued through local organizations like the BIS, as well as through transnational ones like the SDIL, and a peak in Irish ethnic expression occurred in the early-1920s, just as it did in many other communities elsewhere in the diaspora. Although domestic, Newfoundland-oriented identities were undoubtedly in the ascendency, it is incorrect to conclude that they were entirely unhyphenated. Indeed, given the complex, personal and overlapping nature of identity, it is unlikely that any self-conception was truly unhyphenated, and Irish ethnicity remained a feature of Catholic life in St. John’s until well into the twentieth century.

Given the underdeveloped nature of the historiography of Irish Halifax, many of the conclusions offered here with respect to that city must stand alone. It does build upon the research of Terrence Punch on Halifax’s Irish immigrant generation, but focused studies of

\(^{10}\) Lambert, “Far From the Homes of Their Fathers,” 393-394.
intergenerational ethnicity are virtually nonexistent.\textsuperscript{11} The absence of a major scholarly monograph chronicling Irish-Catholic experiences in the city remains a significant lacuna not just for Halifax, but for the broader historiography of the diaspora in Canada. The similarities between how Irishness was articulated and understood in Halifax and St. John’s were many, though because of the Nova Scotian capital’s situation within mainland North America, groups such as the AOH and the Land League were more readily established in that city. The construction of Irish-Catholic identity in Halifax, therefore, had a more varied organizational structure than in St. John’s.

The historical literature on Irish experiences in Portland during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries is more developed than that covering either British North American centre. This study builds upon works by Michael Connolly on working-class identity and longshoremen, Matthew Jude Barker on associational life, Eileen Eagan and Patricia Finn on women, and Kenneth Nilsen on language.\textsuperscript{12} It is the first to place Portland in a broader context, examining how external organizations like the Hibernians and various nationalist associations, coupled with clerical leadership of Irish nationalism in the twentieth century, combined to influence the evolution of ethnicity. Much work remains to be done, however, particularly on Irish-Catholic experiences prior to the 1880s, but, hopefully,


Barker’s forthcoming survey of Portland’s Irish-American history will redress this unbalance. 13

The most significant historiographical feature of this study, though, is its comparative framework. Thanks to this approach, we have highlighted the great variety of identities and experiences within the Irish diaspora. In that respect, it does respond to the appeals by Donald Akenson and Kevin Kenny for more transnational studies. 14 The methodology employed here is strongly influenced by Kenny’s article, “Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study,” where he calls on historians to examine Irish communities using both “transnational” and “cross-national” perspectives. 15 My study is “transnational” in that examines how Catholics of Irish descent were part of a broader, interconnected diaspora, and how structures and networks maintained connections to other communities, as well as to Ireland. It is also cross-national, in that it looks at three communities in different national settings in order to understand how Irish identities were constructed differently in each. The choice of the city as the unit of comparison, rather than region or the nation state, has allowed us to retain the focus of the historical microstudy, and in turn to more fully understand how local, regional, national and international networks combined to influence Irish ethnicity.

The research in this dissertation can be built upon in a number of ways. A greater variety of comparisons, of course, would enhance our understanding of the diaspora’s

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15 Kenny defines the “transnational” approach as those that seek “to transcend the nation state as the primary unit of historical analysis,” while “cross-national” studies “examine specific similarities and differences in the experiences of similar migrants who have settled in different nations or national regions.” Kenny, “Diaspora and Comparison,” 135.
complexity. These could involve both Irish-Catholic and Protestant communities, and compare those from various parts of the world at a local, regional, and national level. The time period may also be extended. By the 1920s, despite the peak in ethnic engagement with Ireland observed early in that decade, many nationalist and ethnic organizations were failing. In St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, though, the BIS, CIS, and AOH remained active, and continued to sustain Irishness beyond our period. Exactly how ethnicity evolved into the mid-twentieth century remains a little-understood process, and should be the subject of future study in all three cities. In order to better-comprehend the diaspora’s complexity and variability, more focused thematic comparisons examining, for example, nationalism or associational life would be useful. Finally, a comparative history of a particular ethnic organization, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians, could clarify the role of transnational associational networks in inventing and reinventing Irish identities.

The Irish-Catholic diaspora was indeed a transnational, interconnected phenomenon. Thanks to local, regional, national, and international networks, Irish ethnicity was invented, reinvented and passed from one generation to the next in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland. Even in three proximate communities, understandings and conceptions of Irishness varied substantially from place to place and through time. Donald Akenson’s metaphor of the diaspora as a Fabergé egg holds true.\(^\text{16}\) The diaspora did indeed possess a wonderful complexity, and this is borne out by the tremendous variety of experiences recorded here. Although they were Atlantic port cities, the Irish ethnic networks that existed in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland were mostly continental: ethnic identities evolved in a North American context even on its northeastern periphery. Whether for a working-class, Irish-born longshoreman in Portland, Maine, or a prominent Catholic lawyer three or four generations

\(^\text{16}\) Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 3.
removed from his ancestral homeland in St. John’s, Newfoundland, a romantic and symbolic attachment to Ireland, created and nurtured through associational networks, the Catholic Church, as well as engagement with local politics and Irish nationalism could evoke considerable passion. Their love for the old country made them part of a transnational diaspora which transcended both time and space.
Appendix A: Occupational Categories.¹

**White Collar and Professional workers:** accountants, agents, auctioneers, automobile inspectors, bank tellers, barristers, bookkeepers, cashiers, clerks, collectors, compositors, customs officials, dentists, editors, insurance agents, law students, managers, morticians, physicians, police captains, politicians, principals, proprietors, public servants, reporters, real estate agents, salesmen, sheriffs, solicitors, teachers, telephone operators and veterinarians.

**Grocers, Liquor Merchants, Shopkeepers, Druggists:** bartenders, book sellers, cafe owners, druggists, dried good merchants, furriers, grocers, liquor merchants, merchants, outfitters, provisions merchants, storekeepers, tobacconists, traders, variety store owners and wholesalers.

**Skilled Workers:** bakers, boilermakers, boot and shoe manufacturers, builders and contractors, butchers, carpenters, conductors, contractors, cooks, coopers, drapers, engineers, estimators, foremen, gas fitters, harness makers, iron workers, locksmiths, machinists, masons, master mariners, mechanics, melters, millmen, painters, plumbers, policemen, patternmakers, press feeders, soap manufacturers, steamfitters, stenographers, stone cutters, stitchers, stove repairmen, tailors, tidewaiters, timekeepers, tire manufacturers, undertakers, upholsterers, watchmakers and wheelwrights and woodworkers.

**Semi/Unskilled Workers:** butlers, caretakers, cabmen, checkers, cleaners, coalweighers, drivers, fishermen, freight handlers, furniture packers, helpers, housekeepers, labourers, letter carriers, maids, night watchmen, packers, painters, ship workers, stevedores, teamsters and waiters.

¹ The categories here are my own, though they closely resemble those used by Peter G. Goheen, Mark McGowan and Brian Clarke in their studies of Toronto. Due to the narrower range of occupations recorded in St. John’s, Halifax, and Portland, as well as for a more simplified analysis, categories such as “clerical” or “white collar” and “professional” have been combined, as have semi- and unskilled labourers. See Brian Clarke, *Piety and Nationalism: Lay Voluntary Associations and the Creation of an Irish-Catholic Community in Toronto, 1850-1895* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 260-261; Peter G. Goheen, *Victorian Toronto, 1850-1900: Patterns and Process of Growth* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, 1970), 229-230; Mark McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 295-296.
Appendix B: Biographical details of Portland Hibernians, 1912.¹

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
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<th>Father’s Place of Birth</th>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Maine</td>
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</tr>
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¹ The membership list was compiled from *Eastern Argus*, January 30, 1912; September 16, 1912; Places of birth are gleaned from the online genealogical database, www.ancestry.com, with most of the information coming from the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Occupational profiles are compiled using the *Portland City Directory, 1912* (Portland: Portland Directory Company, 1912).
Appendix C: Traceable Members of the Portland Land League, 1881-1882.\textsuperscript{1}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Father’s Place of Birth</th>
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\textsuperscript{1} Occupational data was taken from Portland Directory and Reference Book, 1881 (Portland: S.B. Beckett, 1881); places of birth and other data was gleaned from the www.ancestry.com genealogical database, with the original information coming from the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880.
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<tr>
<td>Timothy J. Twigg</td>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Provisional Dominion Council of the Self-Determination for Ireland League of Newfoundland, October, 1920.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>R.T. McGrath</td>
<td>Customs Inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>James O’Neill Conroy</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Miss Rose Donnelly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.M. Devine</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>W.J. Higgins, KC</td>
<td>Lawyer and MHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>Hon. M.P. Gibbs</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.T. Meaney</td>
<td>Liquor Controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>Thomas Kelly</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>P.F. Moore</td>
<td>Plumber and MHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.H. Dee</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>C.J. Cahill</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>C.J. Ellis</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.A. McKenzie</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.P. Crotty</td>
<td>Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>P.J. Berrigan</td>
<td>Cashier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>J.J. Tobin</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>John Ryan</td>
<td>City Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>W.F. Trelegan</td>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>Philip Brown</td>
<td>Dry Goods Merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominion Council Member</td>
<td>P. Hickey</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix E: Names and Occupations of the Portland Friends of Irish Freedom, 1920 Executive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>John Brown</td>
<td>Longshoreman</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Ms. Mary Flaherty</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>James D. Leighton</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fin. Secretary</td>
<td>John J. Maloney</td>
<td>Contractor</td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Patrick A. Mahoney</td>
<td>Owned Plumbing co.</td>
<td>California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orator</td>
<td>Richard E. Harvey</td>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Org.</td>
<td>Joseph D. Walsh</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Publicity</td>
<td>John H. Dooley</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Maine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1168 *Eastern Argus*, March 1, 1920. Occupational details are taken from the *Directory of Portland, 1920*. Birthplace details are taken from the www.ancestry.com genealogical database, with the original information coming from the nominal rolls of the *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920*. 
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   - Thomas Joseph Power Papers
   - Edward P. Roche Papers
   - Michael Francis Howley Papers

Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador [The Rooms] (PANL):
   - Benevolent Irish Society Fonds. MG 612.

**Halifax:**
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   - Cornelius O’Brien Papers
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     *Minutes of the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Halifax, Volume Seven; Volume Eight*. MFM 12550.
     *Nova Scotia Journal of Education*.

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   - *Bishop Louis Sebastian Walsh Diaries*
   - *Charles McCarthy Jr. Diaries*

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   - “Constitution and Bylaws of the St. Patrick’s Benevolent Society, 1871.” M837s.1, 3.

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   - *St. Dominic’s Parish Mass Books*
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Colonist
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Evening Mercury
Evening Telegram
Morning Chronicle
Newfoundlander
Our Country
Plaindealer
Terra Nova Advocate

Halifax:
Halifax Herald
Morning Chronicle
Acadian Recorder

Portland:
Eastern Argus
Portland Sunday Telegram
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Portland Press-Herald

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