

CREATING CANADIAN  
HISTORICAL MEMORY

The Case of the  
Famine Migration of 1847



Mark McGowan

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Celtic Cross, Grosse Ile, Quebec  
Monument erected in 1909 by the Ancient Order of Hibernians  
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# CREATING CANADIAN HISTORICAL MEMORY

## The Case of the Famine Migration of 1847

Until the early 1980s when Donald Harmon Akenson published *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History*, there was little debate in historical circles, the media, or Irish communities about the character and role of the Famine migration in Canadian history. In the past two decades, however, writing about the Irish in Canada and the Famine moment has involved painstaking historical research and passionate scholarly debate, as is the case in many areas of ethnic history. Much of the discussion on Irish migration and settlement, however, has taken place within a broader, more public, conversation that harnesses a very influential collective historical memory, nourished by the most recent wave of Irish migrants, the media, Irish descendants, and others simply interested in the Irish diaspora. The resultant interplay between Irish nationalist historians, scholarly revisionists, and the various popular proponents of “the Irish story,” has revealed competing narratives that sometimes overlap, but more often work at cross purposes. An impartial observer might be tempted to see this Famine debate as highly polarized, pitting the academics wedded to empirical historical study against the guardians of the collective memory. Such an assessment is rather simplistic in that it ignores the range of debate among academics themselves, the sympathies shared by scholars and the Irish communities, and the long and complex way in which the Famine memory has taken shape in Canada.

Revisionist narratives have attempted to reconstruct the Irish migration experience, using a variety of sources, often in reaction to what they consider to be the ideologically driven histories of an earlier generation. Their new hypotheses have challenged some of the treasured strands of the popular narrative, frequently provoking hostile reaction from Irish immigrants and descendants. Other historians, either professional or amateur, have used their skills to validate the central principles of the collective historical memory. Given the layering of various narratives of the Famine, and the sometime visceral debate among proponents of these narratives, all participants need to step back to attempt to understand one another’s positions.

Recent research on Irish migration has produced a great deal of controversy and even acrimony in Canada. Regional studies, such as those in central Canada by Donald Harmon Akenson, Cecil Houston and William Smyth, Bruce Elliott, Glen Lockwood, Murray Nicolson, Mark G. McGowan, Robert Grace, and Brian Clarke, and those in the Atlantic region by Peter Toner, John Mannion, Terrence Punch, Scott See, and John FitzGerald have altered our image of Irish migration and settlement and raised issues and questions of national significance. Social scientific studies relating such factors as wealth, religion and ethnicity have rescued Irish Catholics from the simplifications and stereotypes of an underclass, images sometimes given academic credibility by hasty applications to Canada of theories by the sociologist Max Weber or by the historian of capitalism R.H. Tawney. Peter Baskerville, of the Canadian Families Project, has

recently concluded: “The wealth and status achievements of Irish Catholics underpinned significant social and political developments in urban Ontario and possibly urban Canada as a whole at the beginning of the twentieth century. Status distinctions were no longer so obvious. The middle class had increasingly become a crowded place.” In his assessment of nineteenth-century census and probate records, Livio Di Matteo adds: “Religion and birthplace may have been important determinants of economic progress in the early part of the nineteenth century, but by the end of the nineteenth century, they were not.”

Quite simply, current historical scholarship, including revisionist histories, has recast the image and development of Irish communities in Canada. Far from being “God’s unfortunate people,” many Irish communities in Canada, particularly Catholic ones, have been redefined historically and new evidence has accentuated the number of the Irish migrants and settlers arriving in Canada prior to the Famine migration of 1846 to 1849. This re-examination of the evidence confirms that, despite variations from colony to colony, Protestant Irish migrants outnumbered Catholic ones by a margin of 2:1, a circumstance not altered appreciably by the Famine. Historians have also cast considerable doubt on stereotypical images of the Irish Catholics as pugnacious, landless, indolent “paddies,” who comprised some sort of ethnic underclass, the fodder of the industrial revolution. In fact, second- and third-generation Irish Catholics, particularly in central Canada, seemed to have integrated themselves with great facility into the social, occupational, demographic and political structures of Ontario, particularly in the city of Toronto, notoriously identified as the “Belfast of North America.”

In this new historiographical assessment of Irish immigration, the Great Irish Famine and its migrants have been cast in a much broader context. Although it unleashed a virtual flood of immigrants in a very short period of time, the Famine has become an endpoint of a much longer migratory movement from Ireland to British North America, rather than the focus of Irish migration. The tragic loss of life and horrific tales of human endurance and suffering do not necessarily make it typical, nor should it be the lens through which to view the whole of the Irish diaspora. Outside of the provinces of Canada (united in 1841) and New Brunswick, both of which already had significant numbers of Irish settlers, the Famine had a negligible demographic effect on the rest of British North America. Moreover, revisionist research suggests that far fewer Irish were assisted in their passage to Canada, even during “Black ‘47.” While the evidence supporting this newly reconstructed historical narrative is compelling, other narratives originating in the collective memory of the Irish must also be considered. Such narratives, although varying in character and detail according to their place of origin and their proponents’ individual perspectives, share common elements: the “potato famine heritage” is integral to the Irish; the Irish are Catholic; they have emerged from poverty, ignorance, and social degradation; the Famine was created artificially by British conquerors and landlords who were determined to rid Ireland of her Catholic vermin; God made the potato rot, though the British created the Famine; evicted from their homes, the Irish migrants were cleared from the land; Irish Catholics are the Famine’s children who passed through “Hope’s Gate” in Canada.

At least six significant factors help to explain the pervasiveness of these strands of the collective memory of the Famine, which to this day casts a long shadow over scholarly accounts. First, the horror of the singular event of “Black ‘47” left an indelible impression on both the host society and Irish Canadian settlers. The massive influx of over 100,000 migrants in a single year, the spread of typhus, and the horrific conditions engendered by hunger, disease, trans-Atlantic travel, and quarantine stations at Partridge Island and Grosse Ile, created negative images of the Irish. Such images could be used as a weapon by the host society, and could be adapted by the Irish themselves as a badge of courage amidst adversity – a people more sinned against than sinning. Second, beginning in the 1860s, the Irish nationalists in Canada used the Famine as a weapon in their propaganda war against Britain, and their continuing advocacy of Irish independence. Third, these nationalist images were reworked by some Irish Catholic clergy into a providentialist vision, featuring Irish Catholics as evangelizers of the “true faith” in the English-speaking world. Fourth, much of this image making and memory shaping developed without much critical response from Canadian historians who, until the 1960s, placed very little emphasis on the study of social history. When they did pay heed to Irish issues, they often slavishly followed US models. In fact, the increasing presence of the US media, cultural images, and historical trends constituted a fifth factor, reinforcing Irish Americans’ belief that the Famine marked the beginning of their mass migration to the United States, which they saw as an exile. Through US film, television, literature, and scholarly work, the Famine image of the Irish was seared into the collective Canadian consciousness.

Finally, recent Irish immigrants to Canada have brought with them their own nationalist collective memory and have been scandalized by Canadian ignorance and insensitivity to the Irish story. They have difficulty understanding why, for instance, a major Catholic archdiocese would find it inappropriate to erect a large Celtic cross in a recently opened cemetery, filled mostly by the re-interred remains of pre-Famine migrants and their descendants. They have added new energy to the Famine moment as the central experience of the Irish in Canadian history by insisting that Grosse Ile be made a national memorial to Irish migrants, especially those of “Black ‘47”, and popularizing reprinted Famine diaries and new histories. The convergence of Ireland’s nationalist ethos, which according to historian Brendan Bradshaw “continues to exercise a tenacious hold upon the historical conscious of the national community,” and the five above mentioned factors, has brought this collective memory to the centre of the national stage.

## **The Famine, Black ‘47, and Contemporary Perception**

The year 1847 certainly marked an extraordinary moment in Canadian history. A combination of an outmoded landholding system, falling agricultural prices, a population explosion, and finally the failure of the potato staple from 1845 to 1849, created an unprecedented demographic upheaval in Ireland. The failure of the agricultural system, the indifference of small farmers and landholders, and the prevailing influence of the ideology of “laissez faire” economics among local and imperial politicians worsened an already bleak situation. The poorest Irish died of starvation where they had lived; those

of minuscule means fled to English and Scottish cities; and those of modest income left Ireland for British North America, the United States, and the Antipodes. By 1861 the population of Ireland stood at 5.2 million — 3 million less than in 1841. Accounted in this loss were one million dead, and nearly 2 million emigrants. Of the 97,492 that set sail for British North America in 1847, one fifth would not live to see the new year. They succumbed to disease on board ships that were, in some cases, substandard for passenger travel or, upon arrival, to one of numerous outbreaks of typhus. While few migrants went to Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, or Nova Scotia, with 17,074 arrived in New Brunswick and nearly 80,000 in the central colonies of Canada West and Canada East. Of the latter, as many as 5,424 died and were buried at the quarantine station on Grosse Ile, in the St. Lawrence River just downstream from Quebec City. Over 600 children were orphaned. Within a year, most of the migrants joined relatives among the half million Irish already in British North America, found refuge in some Canadian towns or, as in the case of the majority, moved on to the United States. Colloquially known as “Black ‘47” this year marked the end of mass Irish migration to Canada; in future cheaper fares would make the United States more attractive.

The sight of haggard, vermin-infested, and diseased travellers disembarking after their harrowing trans-Atlantic voyage undertaken in sub-human conditions left indelible images on the society that hesitatingly received them. As Irish Famine migrants moved inland from Saint John, Quebec, and Montreal, symptoms of typhus, unnoticed in quarantine, began to show themselves, and the dreaded disease spread rapidly among the migrants and their hosts. Reminded of the cholera epidemic of 1832, many panic-stricken British North Americans fled the cities in the hope that isolated rural areas would spare them from disease. The Catholic weekly in Canada West, *The Mirror*, commented on 20 August 1847 that “Nine tenths of the community have been frightened, not only out of their wits – but what is still worse – out of their humanity.” Editors and clergy alike begged their followers to show mercy and charity to the stricken migrants. *The Mirror* urged readers on 5 August 1847 to “shun dirt, but do not run away from your fellow creature, smitten by the hand of Providence with a disease, which is the product of destitution and privation of every shape. Better to die in performance of duty, than to preserve life by cowardly desertion of the afflicted.”

These Irish arrived at a time when mounting denominational tensions threatened to tear apart several regions of British North America. To local Protestants, they were swelling the ranks of the papists, whose presence extended the reach of the pope to the “dominions” of a Protestant king. In the early 1850s the religious tolerance that had underscored Canadian society for decades was destroyed by domestic conflict, as well as by the new hostilities erupting between Catholics and Protestants in Europe. Protestant fears that the Oxford movement within the Church of England was essentially a fifth column undermining the heart of the English Reformation were transmitted to Upper Canadians through their daily and weekly papers. The violent re-conquest of Rome by papal and French forces who defeated republican troops in 1849, and the re-establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Great Britain and Holland in 1850 and 1853 respectively awakened Protestant Canadians to the fact that ultramontaniam was revitalizing Catholicism, thereby threatening the dominion of the Bible and individual religious con-

science. The ongoing debate over Catholic separate schools in Canada West and their imposition on an unwilling Protestant majority thanks to the vote of French Canadian legislators from Canada East, made Protestant leaders fear that Canada was also the victim of “Papal Aggression.” Considered as enemies of progress and accused of being inherently disloyal to the Crown, Catholics sustained both verbal and physical assaults in Toronto, Kingston, Saint John and Halifax.

Famine refugees, especially the Catholics, became easy, visible targets of Protestant intolerance because of their deplorable physical condition on arriving in British North and their inability to establish farmsteads in the hinterlands as quickly as previous waves of Irish migrants. Here was living proof that the pope’s church was the breeding ground for the unprogressive, the poor, the illiterate, and the criminal. On 1 February 1858 the *Toronto Globe*, official organ of Clear Grit members of the Canadian legislature, vilified these “Irish beggars [who] are to be met everywhere and are as ignorant and vicious as they are poor. They are lazy, improvident and unthankful; they fill our poorhouses and our prisons, and are as brutish in their superstitions as Hindoos.” Irish priests were also targets of editorial venom as the following extract from the *Globe* of 5 November 1856 indicates:

Springing from the lowest class of poverty, ...they are notoriously illiterate and immoral. So deeply rooted has this notion become in the popular mind, that when a boy is unruly and his parents have failed in persuading him to learn some honest trade, they frequently consider the Church the last and only recourse. The idea is embodied in the current proverb, which may be rendered in English by the couplet: — Vicious and ignorant gluttonous beast, Nothing remains but to make him a priest.

Such images were conveyed even more vividly by cartoonist John Wilson Bengough in *Grip* and, later, the *Globe*. Bengough, a Toronto-born protégé of American caricature artist Thomas Nast, personified “hard times” in all of his cartoons as a rather ragged and neanderthal-like Irish hobo. Bengough’s images of the Irish continued to be featured in his work well into the 1890s. Thus in print and in lithograph, the image of the Famine migrant was revisited for decades and, in the process, Canada’s Irish collectively came to be identified by the Famine moment.

However, in the wake of Black ‘47, the Famine had sparked no sustained editorial comment in Catholic newspapers and in the following decade it was simply not a central theme in their discussion of their Irish coreligionists. While developments in Ireland and the migration to British North America were covered, reports in the *Toronto Mirror* and Montreal’s *The Pilot* were merely updates of migrants’ activities and a chronicle of the problems experienced at Grosse Ile. It is true that a 5 August 1847 editorial in *The Mirror* held the British government responsible for the Famine debacle. As well, Francis Hinck’s reform paper, *The Pilot* in its 8 July 1847 issue pointed a finger at the Anglo-Irish landlords, whose “short-sighted and odious policy” shipped “to our shores these unfortunate sufferers for whose wants and necessities they should have provided at home.” But these were isolated and momentary outbursts.

Similarly, St. Patrick's Day was not at first an event used to promote political or nationalist causes. Celebrations of March 17th in Bytown (later Ottawa), Montreal, Quebec City, Toronto, Saint John and in numerous small towns across British North America in the mid 1850s, were usually peaceful and focussed on the religious significance of the day. In Hamilton, the day was celebrated in 1848 by Catholic and Protestant alike. Even the local highland pipe band made a parade appearance. In 1852 Bishop Armand de Charbonnel of Toronto wanted the feast day marked in order to draw the laity into the ultramontane revival that he was championing. Speeches reflected upon the religious gift of St. Patrick to the Irish people and the subsequent flourishing of the Celtic church. The numerous addresses of clergymen, that were central to the celebration of Mass on the feast day, emphasized the theme of renewal for the Irish in Canada. Priests and lay speakers alike retold the saga of Irish Catholic suffering throughout history. In Montreal the Sulpician priest, Patrick Dowd, claimed, for instance, that they had "learnt under the lash for ages." Rarely was the Famine mentioned. But it was suggested that as a result of these times of sorrow, the Irish people had become stronger, more faithful, and better prepared to emulate the missionary actions of their patron saint.

Many Irish migrants appeared ready to "move ahead" and build a future. On 26 March 1852 Montreal's *True Witness and Catholic Chronicle* suggested that:

Every Irishman should have a homestead, something tangible whereon to ground his right to a voice and a vote in public matters. We must not be the wandering Arabs of this continent any longer, who, not content with having every man's hand against them, and their's against every man, must needs turn one upon the other. It is time to change all this. Let us commence the struggle – we can raise one another up. Let those who have been fortunate, teach, and aid the aspiring; and let all who can do anything, foster the idea of improvement ... Let our poor be sustained and comforted by united efforts and associations, wherever practicable. We must make ourselves respected before we can exercise influence.

In the decade or so after Black '47, clergy, journalists, and prominent laypersons focussed less on meting out blame for the Famine, or "reliving" the tragedy in story or song. Although not completely purged of the Famine moment, the collective memory of Irish immigrants and settlers refused for a time to be overwhelmed or driven by it.

## **The Famine, Nationalist History, and Collective Memory**

In the fifty years following Black '47, however, Irish Catholics themselves come to identify the Famine as central to their sense of identity in British North America. The delay between the event itself and the emergence of a powerful set of images of the Famine is related to the rise of new nationalist movements in Ireland, and the creation of a new Irish historical narrative. This focus on the Famine manifests itself in British North America by the late 1850s and early 1860s in several ways: Irish Catholic newspapers begin to articulate a radical Irish nationalism; St. Patrick's Day festivities generate a renewed

enthusiasm, particularly among Irish Catholic nationalists; Irish priests, bishops and religious express a new nationalist spirit. These developments nurtured accusations of genocide against British authorities in Westminster and Dublin, as well as against Protestant landlords, and celebrations, at least by clerical nationalists, of Irish Catholic survival as a sign of God's favour and plan to make Irish Catholics the instruments for the conversion of the English-speaking Protestant world. Nationalists transmitted their history of the Famine through the newspapers and bookstores of British North America, the United States, and Ireland.

Irish priests, editors, orators, and rank and file Catholics in British North America drew their inspiration from the writings and published speeches of former members of the Young Ireland movement who, in 1848, had failed to overthrow British rule. In the late 1850s and early 1860s, Thomas D'Arcy McGee's *History of the Irish Settlers in America* (1858) and John Mitchel's *The Last Conquest of Ireland* (perhaps) (1860) cast the Famine in a new light. Although McGee would renounce his radical views, only to incur the wrath of his former colleagues, Mitchel's book, his earlier *Jail Journal* (1854), and his subsequent *History of Ireland* (1868), formed the core of the nationalist reinterpretation of the events of the late 1840s. For Mitchel and many of those who built upon his work, such as Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, Michael Davitt, Charles Gavin Duffy, the Sullivan brothers, and John Francis Maguire, the Famine was a British atrocity perpetrated against the Irish people. Two points of great emotional weight were key to the interpretation of the "artificial famine": first, Ireland had a robust harvest of crops other than the potato that were exported in 1847 while the Irish starved; second, the Irish landlords, desperate for cash and greedy to increase their incomes, wilfully evicted their Catholic tenants, condemning them to death or emigration. These nationalist interpretations have permeated Irish historiography and popular thought until the present day. In fact, historian James Donnelly has commented "so strong are popular feelings on these matters in Ireland and especially in Irish-America that a scholar who seeks to rebut or heavily qualify the nationalist charge of genocide is often capable of stirring furious controversy and runs the risk of being labelled an apologist for the British Government's horribly misguided policies during the Famine." In his *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making it Up in Ireland*, Roy Foster comments that much of this interpretation passed from professional and amateur historians to the popular commemorations of the disaster one hundred and fifty years later, a feat that certainly attests to the staying power of the arguments of Young Ireland, its organ *The Nation*, and John Mitchel. The ease with which the ideas of Mitchel and others crossed the Atlantic, through reprints of books and formal speaking tours is truly remarkable.

The late 1850s marked a noticeable change in both the rhetoric of the Famine and Irish Catholic behaviour on St. Patrick's Day. In 1856, in Saint-Sylvestre, Quebec, the murder of Robert Corrigan, an Irish Catholic convert to Protestantism, and the subsequent acquittal of his alleged Catholic assailants, left Canadian Protestants hotly indignant. As they saw it, there was one law in Canada for Protestants and another for Catholics. After Catholics assaulted a family the following year after the July 12th celebrations in Toronto, Protestants retaliated by stoning St. Michael's cathedral and the local convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph. As well, a homemade bomb exploded at the House of Providence.

The troubles continued the next year, when a small riot erupted at the St. Patrick's Day parade, and a Catholic, Matthew Sheedy, was impaled, likely on a pitchfork, and died two days later.

The violence of 1857 and 1858 prompted a shift in Irish Catholic strategy, including the formation of the Hibernian Benevolent Society, a group dedicated to the defence of Irish Catholics. The leaders of this new society, founded in Toronto, but established across the province of Canada, were inspired by an emerging radical nationalism in both the United States and Ireland, as expressed by the Young Ireland Movement and the Fenian Brotherhood. Members of these groups, and other like-minded nationalists in Ireland, were in the process of reconstructing the Famine memory for their specific political ends. In the early 1860s the Hibernians were seen as Canadian operatives for the Fenian Brotherhood, although this was never conclusively proven. It is at this point that two important foci of Irish Catholic life converge — St. Patrick's Day and radical nationalism — producing a robust Famine memory. Meanwhile the community actively identified with and reflected upon the Famine memory through its involvement in planned marches, banquets, and speeches of the St. Patrick's Day festivities. In the 1860s St. Patrick's Day was transformed from an essentially religious event, to one that united Catholicity and the radical nationalist cause to free Ireland. The revival of the Famine event provided the foundation for a new sense of Irish identity.

The *Irish Canadian* emerged as one of the most important Catholic weekly newspapers in province of Canada, although it was read in other colonies as well. Its founder and editor, Patrick Boyle, was born in county Mayo in 1832 and migrated to the United States with his family in 1844, before the Famine. He arrived in Canada in the 1850s, and after working as a printer with several papers, became the founder, became the principal voice with the *Irish Canadian* in January 1863. Although disavowing any formal connection with the American Fenian movement, Boyle and his journal clearly represented a radical Irish nationalism that advocated the end of British colonial rule in Ireland and the defence of Irish Catholic communities in British North America. The two issues for Boyle were inextricably linked: freedom in the old country would engender greater respectability and acceptability of Ireland's sons and daughters in the new world. The *Irish Canadian* served as a colourful mouthpiece for the Hibernian Benevolent Society, making the Famine “the” touchstone of Irish Catholic self-identification, even among the pre-Famine Irish. Although the paper faced several local rivals, from 1863 to 1892 it still attracted the largest number of paid subscriptions of any Catholic weekly, increasing from several thousand in its earliest years to over 14,000, in 1892. That year Archbishop John Walsh of Toronto forced Boyle to shut down because he had grown tired of Boyle's ongoing war with *The Catholic Weekly Review*. The archbishop determined that central Ontario needed only one Catholic organ.

The way the *Irish Canadian* shaped a new sense of the Famine is noteworthy. On the front page of the first issue dated 7 January 1863 Boyle featured Michael Power, the founding bishop of Toronto, and, by coincidence, a heroic figure during the Famine. Boyle depicted a youthful Power (he was just shy of 43) who ventured into the fever sheds of Toronto,

contracted typhus, and died within ten days. Boyle praised him as a “a great and good man ... the father of his flock, the counsellor of the poor, and the comforter of the exiled.” Not only did Power represent Catholicity and Irishness (in fact he was born in Nova Scotia, trained and served as a priest in Quebec, and became an Ontario bishop), but he was a “martyr” of the Great Famine. This image of Power became the lens through which his entire episcopate and life would be viewed. The Famine moment could thus be used to define the lives of individuals, not just cultural and religious communities.

The *Irish Canadian's* reflections on the Famine produced a new vocabulary for discussing Irish Catholic identity. Irish Catholics had been “wronged”, repeatedly “oppressed,” “starved,” “crushed,” “evicted,” “banished,” and “exiled.” Theirs was a life of suffering caused by deliberate acts of the British government. In a 7 March 1866 editorial Boyle reached new creative heights:

Where are the friends of our youth, the classmates of our schoolboy days? Alas! Some are laid beneath the green turf of their native soil, or slept at the bottom of the Atlantic wave, the victims of an unnatural and unchristian system of government, which dried up their vitals by the horrid process of starvation, or drove them in search of new habitation, to encounter and amid the perils of the deep. Others wander the four corners of the globe, seeking recognition for their talents and labour denied them by the paternal government of England, and making for themselves a home and competence by ancient toil and preserving and unwearied industry. To this latter class the Irish of America belong. ... Assemble then fellow countrymen, and testify to your unalterable love for the land that bore you, and show by your presence that it is still your pride and proud privilege to participating the glories of St. Patrick's Day.

Boyle's editorial brought together the religious and nationalist strands of thought: the idyllic past of Ireland cruelly and deliberately devastated by the Famine, and the death and wandering of the Irish people. At the same time, the piece appeared amidst fears that American Fenians were poised to invade Canada and calls by leading politicians, such as Thomas D'Arcy McGee, and clerics, such as Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto, that the St. Patrick's Day procession be cancelled that year.

In New Brunswick, Timothy Warren Anglin, editor of the *Freeman* of Saint John, also used the Famine as a badge of his Irish identity. While in politics he differed greatly from fellow countrymen Patrick Boyle of Toronto and D'Arcy McGee of Montreal, he was overcome with emotion when he recalled the Famine of his youth to fellow colonial legislators:

now a child expired in its mother's arms, then a woman, a strong man, worn away to a skeleton now departed. When he looked back and saw these groups, sitting on a lock of straw, with nothing but tattered rags

to protect them from the winds of heaven, he would be less than a man and an Irishman, to speak harshly of the men who took steps which they believed would remedy this state of things...  
(*Freeman*, 12 April 1866).

On the twentieth anniversary of the 1848 migrations, Anglin reminded a Montreal audience that “no people had ever endured as the Irish endured” particularly when the “destroying angel swept away millions” during the Famine. Anglin’s words evidently won praise from the local crowd, as well as from Boyle in the *Irish Canadian* (25 March 1868).

The frequent publication of providentialist pastoral letters and the speeches of clerico-nationalists, particularly on St. Patrick’s Day, strengthened the Famine identity. Regardless of the colony, priests frequently depicted Irish Catholics as God’s instrument in the world, a people who had inherited St. Patrick’s mission to convert the world to the true faith. Sometimes the Irish were likened to the Jews. Homilies cited the Book of Exodus, wherein the Chosen of God were released from bondage and called upon to do mighty deeds. In the period around Confederation, the climate of excited Irish nationalism enhanced this providentialist message. Although churchmen distanced themselves from the Fenian Brotherhood, insinuating that it was a branch of the condemned Freemason movement, some prominent clerical historians and authors, such as Dean William Richard Harris of St. Catharines, approved of Mitchel’s ideas. In a more general way, the clergy’s providentialist rhetoric added a transcendent ingredient to the nationalism cultivated by Boyle, Young Ireland, the Fenians, and others. The most noteworthy clerical nationalist was John Joseph Lynch, a native of Monaghan, Ireland, and bishop of Toronto from 1860 to 1870 and its archbishop until 1888. He was famous for his providentialist discourse. From 1864 to 1885, at least five of his St. Patrick’s Day pastorals drew upon the Famine memory. In 1871 he was particularly poignant:

In speaking of the Irish famine, we must raise our voice and protest again in the face of heaven and earth, against the crime of starving a people in the country that produced ample provisions of corn, wheat and all cereals, quite sufficient to feed double the number of those who perished ... This fearful hecatomb to foreign rapacity has caused, and still causes a shudder of horror throughout the civilized world.  
(*Irish Canadian*, 22 March 1871).

While the most vocal of the nationalists faded before the end of the century and Boyle’s loyal readership dried up, as evidenced by his attempt to resurrect the *Irish Canadian* in 1900-1, the communal memory of the Famine outlived its architects. The climax to nationalist rhetoric in Canada came on 15 August 1909 when the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Quebec City unveiled a grand memorial to the Irish dead at Grosse Ile. The organization had come to Canada from the United States in 1887. Members had to be male, of Irish blood through at least one parent, and Roman Catholic, thereby solidifying the image of “Irish” as Catholic. By 1909 the Order was in decline across the country for failing to draw younger recruits, who seemed more inclined to join the Knights of Columbus, another US-based fraternal benevolent association for Catholic men. But in

Quebec City, under the guiding influence of Jeremiah Gallagher, the Order retained its strength and actually commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of Black '47. The visit to nearby Grosse Ile revealed the neglected state of the cemeteries and prompted new efforts to keep the Famine memory alive.

The inauguration of the memorial at Grosse Ile brought together AOH members from Canadian and US branches, clergy and hierarchy from Quebec and the United States, and politicians from every level of government. Noted Canadian professor and poet, Thomas O'Hagan, even penned a verse for the occasion. In the official booklet, *The Grosse Isle Monument Commemorative Souvenir*, a US author declared the day to be "a most desirable opportunity ... not only to visit the terrible Golgotha of the Irish race in America and to do honor to the memory of the dead ... but also to enjoy the charms of the Canadian scenery." The booklet included references to James M. O'Leary's sketch of the Famine from the 11 September 1897 edition of the *Quebec Daily Telegraph*, sections of Stephen de Vere's report on famine conditions, an emotive lecture by the cleric, Bernard O'Reilly, comparing Grosse Ile to the "dungeons of Naples, and the cruelties of Sicily," and selected passages from Robert Whyte's *The Ocean Plague* (1848). The most significant event was the unveiling of the monument itself, a stone Celtic cross measuring forty-six feet in height and eight feet in width at the span, erected on Telegraph Hill, the highest point on the island. At its base, inscribed in three languages – English, French and Irish – a message commemorating the Irish who "to preserve the faith, suffered hunger and exile in 1847-8, and stricken with fever, ended here their sorrowful pilgrimage." Interestingly, the Gaelic inscription differed significantly from the other two; reminiscent of the Irish nationalism that nourished the Famine memory, it proclaimed that these "children of the Gael" died at the hands of "foreign tyrants and an artificial famine."

The Famine moment now extended from those who had lived through the event as adults and who were quickly passing from the scene, to their children who were now seniors, as well as to those descendants of pre-Famine immigrants who came to embrace it as their own. The presence of US Irish, clerical and lay, gave the event an international status and underlined a "shared cultural experience." Moreover, the inclusion of so many Catholic clergy, including the Archbishop of Quebec, Louis-Nazaire Bégin, and the Apostolic Delegate, Donato Sbarretti, strengthened the idea that this was also a Catholic event as did indeed the monument's fourth plate listing the names of Irish and French-Canadian priests who had died while serving the victims of Black '47. The number of persons of Irish descent from across the Dominion, who crowded on Telegraph Hill, hiding under parasols from the mid-day heat, highlighted the fact that this memorial knew no region; it was for all Canadians of Irish Catholic descent. Thus the essential ingredients of the Famine memory were now formally engraved in the popular culture: the Famine was the Irish migration event; these Irish were Catholics, who had suffered their "time on the cross;" these Irish were the oppressed, the poor, the victims.

## The Famine Memory, Famine Diaries, and Contemporary Developments

Before the 1960s, Canadian historians did relatively little to challenge the existing versions of the Famine memory. The Irish experience in Canada, as well as the whole immigration process of most Canadian cultural groups, was ignored by both popular and professional Canadian historians. This was less a conspiracy to cover up the Irish experience than a noble attempt to inculcate Canadian youth with the values of parliamentary democracy, progress, respect for British law, and the triumph of ministerial responsibility. Some textbooks actually mentioned the Irish migrants, but always represented the Famine as the “Irish moment.” One book, used in several provinces, summed up the Irish experience in one sentence: “Ireland was suffering from the effects of a terrible Famine, and thousands of Irishmen were fleeing from the plague-stricken island to the United States and to Canada, bringing with them disease and death.” Others offered a perfunctory nod to the Irish as “ill clad”, “ill fed”, “sick”, “homeless” paupers whom famine had “cast on to Canadian shores.”

Since the 1960s scholarly histories and school texts have offered a more developed examination of the Irish experience as historiography embraced social, cultural, quantitative, ethnic, and gender perspectives. The breadth of Irish migration since the eighteenth century and the regional character of settlement have clearly been showcased. The Famine, while still a feature of that migration, is situated within a larger historical context. But because older scholarly histories, such as *Canada A Story of Challenge* and *Colony to Nation*, are still used as reference tools in non-academic circles, rather dated versions of the Irish experience persist, leading one historian to accuse authors of outright laziness, sloppy methodology, and an uncritical acceptance of US historical models. Some Canadian historians had given speedy and uncritical confirmation of sociological theories that praised Protestants as industrious and progressive, and vilified Catholics as otherworldly, backward, and poor. Even Norman Macdonald’s pioneering study of Canadian immigration, *Canada: Immigration and Colonization 1841-1903* (1966), ignores the fact that Irish migration patterns and the settlement grid had already been well established in all of the colonies for several generations before the Famine. Other scholars merely transferred US images of an Irish Catholic urban proletariat or the notion that the Irish were imbued with an ethos of “exile” to the Canadian context. The Irish of Canada have often been seen as extensions of Boston, New York or Chicago.

This tendency is not difficult to understand. The monumental works of Thomas Brown, Oscar Handlin, and Kerby Miller are standard reading in the study of the Irish diaspora. Miller’s concept of the Irish Catholic as “exile” is particularly seductive, given the weight of US historical evidence he marshals. Many of the numerous studies of the Irish in US cities employ sophisticated methodologies and offer exceptional insight into Irish American life. For the United States, the Famine migrations were a defining moment that marked the beginning of the mass migration of Catholics from Ireland. The resultant historiography, vast and overwhelming, has been reinforced by the influence of the US cinema, culture, and publishing, which continues to offer Canadians colourful images of feisty red-haired Irish women (Maureen O’Hara), drunken buffoons (Alan Hale sr),

political hacks and ward bosses (Spencer Tracy), tough guys (James Cagney), singing priests (Bing Crosby), and cops with a brogue (the most hideous being Chief O'Hara in the 1960s cult series "Batman"). These images of the Irish and the Famine legacy have become equally pervasive in Canadian popular culture.

Recently immigrant scholars and amateurs from Ireland have demonstrated a renewed interest in the Famine moment. In 1988 English professor, Robert O'Driscoll, edited a two-volume anthology titled, *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada*. The volume collected dozens of essays some original, but many reprinted, of Irish migration and settlement in Canada. Featured in the first volume was a special section called "A Hidden Holocaust," which claimed that "because of a subconscious inability to face the hidden holocaust that the Famine Irish were subjected to in the country – [Canadian historians] are in danger of producing a counter mythology, of studying Irish who came chiefly before the Famine, or by ignoring the influence of the Irish altogether." Aside from the problem of characterizing the Canadian Famine experience of the Irish as a *holocaust*, editors hinted at a conspiracy of silence. Without much evidence to support him, the lead author in the section asserted that some 20,000 to 30,000 Irish died at Grosse Ile in 1847. Much of the nationalist rhetoric of an earlier period was startlingly repeated: "callous shipowners", "genocidal famine", and British landlords and parliamentarians who were little more than "the captains of the politics of death." Although *The Untold Story* highlighted the work of many of the brightest scholars in the field, the editors undercut this effort by raising what they termed to be the truth about the Famine.

This reinvigorated version of the Famine memory drew national attention in 1992, when Parks Canada announced that it was going to transform Grosse Ile into a national historical site. The idea behind the project, tentatively named "Canada: Land of Welcome and Hope," alarmed Irish spokespeople in Quebec, Montreal and Toronto. Fearing the plan would subordinate the Irish moment to a general history of migration to Canada in the manner of a Disneyesque "theme park," recent Irish immigrants, Irish descendants, and other interested parties formed Action Grosse Ile. They demanded a public inquiry and inundated Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, himself of Irish descent, with thousands of letters and a petition containing 10,000 signatures. One leader of Action Grosse Ile claimed that the Canadian government was involved in a cover-up of the tragedy of Grosse Ile and was deliberately attempting to rewrite Canadian history. Accordingly, the lobby began piecing together its version of the history of Canada and the Famine, much of which sidestepped the contemporary studies of Canadian migration, revisionist histories, and new developments in Irish historical scholarship, and gave new life to the Famine moment as expressed by the nationalists of an earlier period. In the public consultation that took place in 1992-1993, the vocabulary of the Famine memory was revived. "Cover up", "whitewash", "the death of 15,000 Irishmen, women and children ... buried in mass graves," "race extermination," and "victims of an avaricious foreign power" were expressions used by amateur historians, local Irish associations, and private citizens.

When the acrimonious debate subsided, Parks Canada decided to broaden their project so as to feature the Irish and renamed the park "Grosse Ile Quarantine Station and the

Irish Memorial.” The issue became sufficiently important that two Irish presidents made special official visits to Grosse Ile since 1994, and the CBC produced a documentary that followed Irish descendants and members of Action Grosse Ile on a pilgrimage to the island. In that program Cardinal Emmett Carter, retired archbishop of Toronto, reiterated the idea that the Famine was an act of “genocide.”

Two diaries, considered to be eyewitness accounts of the tragedy at Grosse Ile, have sustained this Famine memory. They are the journal of Irish schoolteacher and Famine migrant Gerald Keegan, and the better-known diary of Robert Whyte, published as *The Ocean Plague*. Discovered by James J Mangan, the Keegan diary appeared in a fictionalized version in 1982 under the title *The Voyage of the Naparima: A Story of Canada's Island Graveyard*. Six years later it was reproduced with great flourish in *The Untold Story*. Characterized as the first North American printing of the supposedly suppressed diary, it occupied the centrepiece of the “Hidden Holocaust” section of the book. A similar version titled *Famine Diary: Journey to a New World* and published by Mangan in 1991, became a best seller in advance of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Famine.

Within months of the Irish publication, the diary was revealed as a fraud. It was a work of fiction published in 1895 as a serial called “The Summer of Sorrow” in the *Huntingdon Gleaner* by its editor, Robert Sellar. Drafts of the original, complete with corrections and revisions, are available in Sellar’s papers in the National Archives of Canada. The Protestant newspaperman from the Eastern Townships of Quebec may have been inspired to write the series after reading snippets of the journal of Stephen de Vere, the scion of an Irish landlord family, who had converted to Catholicism and later made a transatlantic voyage in the wake of the Famine migrants, on which he reported in the House of Lords. De Vere, who was not anti-British, was in fact “favourably disposed towards emigration.” His account was reproduced with other items in April 1892 in the *Catholic Record* of London, Ontario, as part of a four-week retrospective on Grosse Isle. The clippings were appended to Sellar’s own notes. The editor’s fictionalized version, saturated with pathos, highly emotive language, and a nationalist rhetoric, was clearly intended to sell issues of his paper and betrayed De Vere the landlord’s intention. Ironically, Sellar bequeathed the publication rights to the Orange Order, where his own sympathies lay.

There has been less controversy over the origins and authenticity of Robert Whyte’s oft-cited *The Ocean Plague*, published in 1848 by Coolidge and Wiley of Boston. Yet this diary is not above suspicion. The origins and life of its reputed author, Robert Whyte, are unknown. But in 1846 a certain Doctor Robert White of Boston made an impassioned anti-British plea for the relief of Ireland to the editor of the Boston Pilot. Two years later in the same newspaper White expressed public support for Young Ireland. While these two Whytes/Whites may or may not be the same person, they share a common nationalist theme.

*Ocean Plague* appeared in at least two versions: the first in London and the second, including several additions, in Boston. The journal raises many questions and suspicions as to its authenticity. For example, Whyte never mentions by name the ship on which he is

sailing, its captain, any member of the crew, or indeed any of the passengers. They are simply identified by their Christian or nicknames. This is troubling in light of the praise he heaps upon the captain and his wife. The diary is replete with details about Canadian history as the ship passes by notable landmarks west of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This suggests that either Whyte had acquired an encyclopaedic knowledge of Canadian history while in Ireland (he notes that there are few books in his cabin) or that the diary was richly embellished after the fact. Most troubling is the fact that no vessel landed at Quebec in the week indicated by Whyte. Only the *George* roughly corresponds in size and number of passengers to his ship. But even here there are problems. The *George* spent only one day in quarantine, not five as he maintains. Nor did the *George* carry assisted immigrants or cabin passengers. Port authorities did not list Whyte as being on board the ship, a rather curious fact since he himself writes that he handled the official port documents and assisted the captain with their completion. It is therefore difficult to proclaim with great confidence the diary's authenticity. At best it may be an embellishment after the fact, at worst it may be part of the growing "nationalist" literature of the period, a work of fiction used as a weapon against authorities in Ireland and Westminster. For our own time it has become both "excellent television" ("Hope's Gate" in Episode Eight of CBC's *Canada: A People's History*) and important testimony underpinning the contemporary inheritance of the Famine memory.

## **Collective Memory and Competing Historical Narratives**

This case study regarding the development of popular historical memory in an ethnic community does not seek to destroy or erase the Irish Famine migration from the Canadian historical record, nor to denigrate those persons who feel strongly about its importance in understanding the Irish Canadian experience. There is plenty of historical evidence that the Irish Famine migration was a tragic and moving episode in Canadian history, meriting rigorous historical study, particularly in its social and demographic implications for the colonies. Nevertheless, the Famine moment should be placed within its appropriate historical context as one segment of a much larger narrative of Irish migration and settlement. Students of the Famine must be vigilant in the way they approach and understand the "collective memory" of the Famine, and how that memory, or collected memories, were shaped and enlivened over time. The efforts of clerics and nationalists to mould the memory for their own purposes; the ease with which non-Irish and non-Catholic Canadians summoned Famine images when it suited their purpose; the historiographical trends that either ignored or uncritically accepted the nationalist versions of the Famine; the slavish acceptance of US images of the Irish or the theories of US historiography; finally, the impassioned new history created by Irish expatriates have all been very successful building blocks in preserving the notion of the Famine as the defining moment of the Irish Canadian experience. Certainly, the historical research of the last twenty years cannot sustain this image of victimization. The Irish experience, particularly in Atlantic Canada, had a rich and varied history dating back to the mid-eighteenth century—long before the first lumper potato rotted in the ground near Skibereen.

Canadian historians should note that this ongoing tension between the narratives of professional and amateur historical reconstruction and those generated by collective historical memory is not exclusive to Irish Canadians. Other cultural groups have had their own debates over competing versions of their past. Many have identified historical moments that serve as touchstones of ethnic identity and explanations of their development in Canada. For generations, Anglo-Canadians in Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick cultivated a sense of their own identity through the experience of the United Empire Loyalists, who fled the emerging United States as refugees and sought to uphold British rule of law, the balance of the British constitution, and the ideal of freedom under the crown. These images inspired the identity of English Canadians at a time when nation-building, the evolution of responsible government, the liberty provided by an open Bible, and the glory of the British Empire, were cherished values in Victorian Canada. Recent historiography has been less kind to the Loyalists, or at least to this image of the Loyalists, characterizing them as multicultural, responding to different motives, and perhaps more opportunistic than earlier generations of English Canadians imagined. Nevertheless, the collective popular memory of the Loyalists helps contemporary historians understand the people who perpetuate these memories. Interestingly, one often learns less about the “historical moment” itself, than one does about the dreams, desires, fears, self-identification, and ethnicity of those who embrace the moment as their own, weaving it into their own sense of peoplehood.

Old and new Canadians too have such reference points. The story of Canadian Scots cannot be told without reference to the “Highland Clearances” in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Scotland. Currently such historians as J.M. Bumsted and Marianne MacLean question the Clearances as a central reference point to Scots migration. The internment of enemy aliens during both world wars has become the distinctive moment every bit as relevant to the self-understanding of Ukrainian, Japanese, and Italian Canadians. For a new generation of Chinese Canadians, the head tax and exclusion act of 1923 constitutes their defining moment for which they are seeking compensation and redress. The questions raised in each case are similar to those relating to the Irish: how does a significant “moment” in the history of a people define future generations? How is history used to shape a peoples’ self-identification? How can historians deal with the problem of the historical record coming into conflict with the collected memories of a people? This fact is made more painful when the historian is a member of that particular group and faces hostility when an alternative narrative is suggested.

By the nature of their discipline, and the constant interplay of fact and interpretation that constitutes the bone and sinew of historical study, historians have come to know there are many possible answers to the historical questions they pose. The key to a better set of responses to those questions lies in the way the evidence is gathered, weighed, and marshalled to answer them. The quest to examine and uncover the stories of a “people” is as varied as any other pursuit within historical study. There are competing narratives. As a people come to identify themselves – their beliefs, their historical past, their culture, their sense of common purpose, in other words, their sense of peoplehood — there will emerge commonly accepted strands of what might be called a collective memory. As can be seen in the case of Irish Catholic Canadians, this collective memory can be nourished, formed

and informed by historical writing, just as it can stand in resistance to professional historical study. It would be presumptuous and simplistic to characterize the relationship between professional history and collective memory as a simple “either/or” proposition, or a confrontation between sets of data that establish “manichean” alternatives for public or professional consumption. The Famine memory is as much part of the Irish Catholic Canadian historical experience as the variety of other narratives that rest on shipping records, routinely generated sources, or statistical profiles. But it is not the only narrative.

For the professional historian, it is necessary to recognize the many strands of narrative and argument that co-exist in the history of a people. It is as important to explore what a people think about themselves, and the central events of their history that serve as touchstones to their identity, as it is to examine more conventional types of data that may provide historical evidence that can be tested and interpreted according to the accepted rules of the profession. When the collective memory speaks at cross-purposes with contemporary historical scholarship, it may be very tempting for the professional historian to dismiss it as unsophisticated twaddle. The historian should resist such temptation and recognize the collective memory (ies) as necessary tools with which to understand the larger experience of a people. Historians may choose to initiate a dialogue between the narratives, in the process helping to sift the fantasy from the fact, the myth from the reality, and the way one might like to see one’s past from the evidence that informs the lived experience of that past. This process is by no means easy and, as has been learned in both Irish-Canadian and Irish historiography, can demand a high cost to one’s reputation or acceptance within the “group.” This task, though daunting, is an invitation to the historian to be skilful, imaginative, judicious, and honest in decoding the various narratives of our past.

## Further Reading

Some helpful general works on the “creation of history,” the development of popular or collective historical memory, and the interplay between the two are: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Susan Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” *American Historical Review* 102 (December 1997) 1372-85; Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *American Historical Review* 102 (December 1997), 1386-1403. Among some excellent monographs probing memory and its creation in Canada is H.V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec’s Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

A number of Irish scholars have been challenging the prevailing nationalist interpretation of their past. The best, and perhaps most humorous of these explorations, is R.F. Foster, *The Irish Story: Telling Tales and Making It Up In Ireland* (London: Allean Lane, The Penguin Press, 2001). A reappraisal of the Famine is found in the concluding chapter of James Donnelly, jr. *The Great Irish Potato Famine* (Phoenix Mill, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2001). The debate between revisionists and nationalists is featured in Brendan Bradshaw, “Nationalism and historical scholarship in modern Ireland,” *Irish Historical Studies* 26 (November 1989) and Ciaran Brady, *Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994.) Recent monographs have added new insights on the Famine by examining nineteenth-century Irish landholding, agricultural production, land use, poor law administration, and the role of British and Irish authorities. See especially Colm Toibin and Dairmaid Ferriter, *The Irish Famine* (London: Profile Books, 2001) and Cormac O’Grada, *Black ‘47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1999).

In Canada traditional nationalist interpretations of the Famine are found in Murray Nicolson, “The Irish Experience in Ontario: Urban or Rural?” *Urban History Review* 14 (1985): 37-45 and his “Irish Tridentine Catholicism in Victorian Toronto: Vessel for Ethno-Religious Persistence,” *CCHA Study Sessions*, tome 2, 50 (1983): 415-36, as well as in Kenneth Duncan, “Irish Famine Immigration and the Social Structure of Canada West,” *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 2 (1965): 19-40. Some historians have challenged the negative stereotypes of the Irish found in these and other scholarly works such as Michael Cross, “The Shiner’s War: Social Violence in the Ottawa Valley in the 1830s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 54 (1973): 1-26 and Clare Pentland, *Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1981). See Donald H Akenson, *Being Had: Historians, Evidence and the Irish in North America* (Port Credit, Ont.,: P.D. Meany Publishers, 1985) and his *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1984). Since the early 1980s there has been a plethora of monographs on the Irish, building on Akenson’s assumptions or criticising and modifying some of his assumptions. New and interesting works include: Donald H. Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988); Brian P. 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); Bruce Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988); Cecil Houston and William Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); Peter Toner, ed. *New Ireland Remembered: Historical Essays on the Irish in New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Ireland Press, 1988); Robert Grace, *The Irish in Quebec: An Introduction to the Historiography* (Quebec City, 1993) and his "Irish Immigration and Settlement in a Catholic City: Quebec, 1842-61," *Canadian Historical Review* 84 (June 2003): 217-51, a useful reminder that there are strong regional variations in Irish migration patterns. See as well Scott See, *Riots in New Brunswick: Orange Nativism and Social Violence in the 1840s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) and David Wilson, *The Irish* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, Canadian Ethnic Groups Booklet, 1989); Mark G. McGowan, *The Waning of the Green: Catholics, the Irish and Identity in Toronto, 1887-1922* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999.)

A few standard Canadian works on the Famine migration include the somewhat dated essay by Gilbert Tucker, "The Famine Immigration to Canada, 1847," *American Historical Review* 36 (April, 1931): 533-549. More recent articles are those by Joy Parr, "The Welcome and the Wake: Attitudes in Canada West to the Irish Famine Migration," *Ontario History* 66 (1974): 101-113 and William Spray, "The Reception of the Irish in New Brunswick," in Toner, ed. *New Ireland Remembered*, 9-26.

There are plenty of works on Grosse Ile, ranging from the nationalistic interpretations of events in Padraic O'Laighin, "Grosse-Ile: The Holocaust Revisited," in O'Driscoll and Reynolds, *Untold Story* and Michael Quigley, "Grosse Ile: Canada's Famine Memorial" *Eire-Ireland*, 32, no. 1 (1997): 20-40. Influenced more by Canadian manuscript, newspaper, and statistical sources are the very useful: Marianna O'Gallagher and Rose Masson Dompierre, *Eyewitness Grosse Isle 1847* (Ste-Foy: Carraig Books, 1995). The Grosse Ile National Park Controversy comes alive in Canadian Heritage-Parks Canada, *Grosse Ile National Historic Site: Report on the Public Consultation Program*, (March 1994) (Ottawa: Ministry of Government Services, Environment Canada Parks Service, 1994).

On the Famine diaries, see Jim Jackson, "Famine Diary – the Making of a Best Seller," *The Irish Review*, no. 11 (Winter 1991/1992), 1-8; Robert Hill, "From Famine to Fraud: The Truth About Ireland's Best-Selling Famine Diary," *Matrix*, no. 38 (1992), 5-12, and Mark G. McGowan, "Famine, Facts, and Fabrication: An Examination of Diaries from the Irish Famine Migration to Canada," in Richard Landon and Marie Corey, eds. *Detecting the Text: Fakes, Forgery, Fraud and Editorial Concerns* (forthcoming University of Toronto Press).

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