

Irish/ Irish American Ethnogenesis

Two thousand years ago Ireland was occupied by an indigenous Celtic people who spoke Gaelic and were Druid by religion. When the Roman Armies conquered England in 55 BC, they left Ireland untouched by Roman rule and culture. Saint Patrick brought Roman Catholicism to Ireland about the same time that Saint Augustine did the same thing in England. The Druid religion quickly withered throughout England and Ireland; however, England would eventually extend its world colonial empire to include Ireland but this would occur only after England had cut its ties with Roman Catholicism under King Henry VIII and became a Protestant nation.

- I. **The English Conquest of Ulster** (Northern Ireland) in 1603; the creation of **the Scots Irish** people follows
- II. **The Battle of the Boyne in 1690; Orange Day, July 12th**
- III. **The Penal Laws installed and Irish become minorities**
 - a. no voting rights
 - b. no firearms
 - c. no right to attend university; grammar school compulsory
 - d. no speaking Gaelic; English speech compulsory
 - e. no Catholic Irish allowed to marry Protestants
 - f. no primogeniture; land inheritance requires equal divisions among the male children of Irish
 - g. no Irish may become lawyers or school teachers
- IV. **2 million Scots Irish emigrate to America beginning in 1720**
 - a. Scots Irish become the “frontier shield” in colonial America
 - b. Scots Irish settle primarily in the Appalachian hills of the South
- V. **5 million Catholic Irish** begin emigrating to the US in early 1800s but primarily after 1850---the Great Famine killing millions in Ireland
- VI. **Catholic Irish initially settle in the port cities** of their arrival; namely, Boston, New York City, Charleston, and Philadelphia without any marketable skills or capital
 - a. primarily unskilled labor such as mining, ditch-digging, lifting cargo off ships at the docks, cleaning streets, digging canals, carrying bricks to construction sites, laying railroad tracks, working in the military, cabbies, etc.
 - b. primarily reside in urban shanty towns without plumbing and with high rates of diseases
 - c. prone to drunkenness, fighting, and arrests for such behavior
 - d. disinclined to complete high school education
 - e. the anti-Papist movement targets Irish Catholics
- VII. **Subsequent Irish American social mobility**
 - a. creation of the first successful political machines in America resulting in control of many good city jobs
 - b. creation and leadership in many powerful labor unions in America
 - c. creation of the parochial school system for Catholics