Songs of Pride:

How the Irish told their Story in the mid-19th Century

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Abstract

During the Irish Potato Famine, Irish immigration to the United States skyrocketed, peaking in the 1860s and 1870s. Ireland is one of several countries with a strong historical connection to music and oral tradition. When the Irish immigrated to America, they brought their musical storytelling tradition with them. Ireland also had a very low literacy rate at the time, around 50 percent on average. As a way to get around their illiteracy in a country that prioritized the written word, Irish immigrants sang. By singing of their struggles, ambitions, and accomplishments, Irish immigrants found a way to tell their story.

During the Irish Potato Famine, or the Great Hunger, Irish immigration to the United States skyrocketed. The Great Hunger itself lasted from 1845 to 1852, but the emigration it caused continued into the 1870s. When traveling to "the land of the stranger," wherever it was, the Irish carried a musical storytelling tradition with them and sang songs about their struggles, ambitions, and accomplishments.[168] Ireland is one of several countries with a strong historical connection to music and oral tradition. This long oral tradition partly explains their low literacy rate in the mid-19th century.[169] When coming to America specifically, this musical tradition became important because it was the only way illiterate Irish immigrants could tell their story, including their struggles, political ambitions, and their role in becoming American.

Throughout the hundreds of songs the Irish sang during this time in America, one theme repeats itself: pride. This theme of pride is most notable in the Civil War era, when entire brigades of Irish Americans fought and died. The 19th-century Irish immigrant and Irish American communities used songs to express their pride in themselves, their heritage, and the struggles they faced and overcame as a people. Even in songs not directly tied to the Civil War, figures like Michael Corcoran and Thomas Meagher, both Civil War generals of Irish ethnic units, continued to represent the Irish population.

Irish culture has a long history of storytelling through songs. Even before they had written language, and continuing after they became colonized by England, the Irish sang songs to remember and tell one another their history.[170] Songs and music are so deeply embedded in Irish culture that relatively few studies have been published focusing solely on music.

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[168] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 135
[169] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 89
[170] Moloney, Mick. *Far From the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration Through Song.* New York: Crown Books, 2002. 4

In the late 18th century, when the Irish first began coming to America specifically because of their ideals of citizenship and equality, they sang songs, both new and old, that expressed their pride in their struggle for democracy.[171] They often used these songs and the motifs in them to show their dual loyalty to both their homeland and their adopted country. But even after settling in America and trying to become citizens in their own right, the Irish still showed great pride in their original home.

Music and songs are important to history, largely because they help humanize the people we study by, quite literally, giving them a voice and helping historians hear their emotions more easily than simply reading memoirs and diaries. Especially since only about 50 percent of Ireland could read, songs become even more important, since they were among the only ways the average Irish immigrant could speak out.[172] The instruments used and the singer's inflection, among other elements of a song, help convey the artists' emotions. Even in songs with a more melancholy tone or subject matter, they still find ways to demonstrate Irish pride through their symbolism.

The historiography on Irish American music history is lacking overall, and throughout researching, only a handful of sources that are entirely focused on Irish American music within this time frame came to light. This lack of secondary sources is actually not surprising, given how commonplace music is throughout the world. Catherine Bateson even mentions in the intro of her book, *Irish American Civil War Songs: Identity, Loyalty and Nationhood,* that music was so prevalent on the front lines of the Civil War that letters to and from Irish soldiers rarely mention it. She insists that this absence in the historical record does not reflect an absence of music, but

[171] Lohman, Laura. "Virtual Citizenship and Revolutionary Transatlantic Republicanism in the Musical Lives of Exiled United Irishmen." *American Music (Champaign, Ill.)* 40, no. 2 (2022): 180–210. 186
[172] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 17

instead reflects the normalization of it.[173] Because of this, most of the secondary sources used are not directly related to music but instead provide context for various events within the period of focus.

This lack of attention in the contemporary record also affects the available primary sources, all of which are songs published in the 1860s. With only the relevant context, I want to let these songs of pride speak for themselves, just as they did when they were written. Unfortunately, this means that authors will be credited where possible but largely ignored. A normal practice of the day was for songs to be "written" and published anonymously, more for a quick paycheck than for lasting fame.[174] While Irish immigrants and Irish Americans who could write would do this, it was just as common for someone to sing a song they had made or already knew, and for another to publish it anonymously after hearing and transcribing it.

This research includes both original publications and modern recordings where possible. Modern musicians, such as David Kincaid, have helped to keep these emotions alive even after 160 years. Since music is meant to be listened to, not just read at tempo, the ability to convey the emotions these songs are meant to carry is undeniably important, especially for a study like this, where emotion is a main factor. While most of the songs mentioned in this study do have recordings, they are not always reliable. 20th-century artists would often record only part of the original song, and while these partial recordings are accurate to the lyrics they include, by cutting out half or more of the song, cover artists can leave out a large part of the original intent. These partial records are still important, however, as they can show how society changes its expectations and norms.

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[173] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Introduction

[174] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 5

Before starting on this topic, a note on publication is required. In the 19th century, publishers printed music in three main formats. The first, and most specialized, is sheet music. These are sheets of paper that have both the lyrics of a song and the musical notes of the accompanying instrument, or the notes that the singer would hit. This was the most expensive way to have music, since it was not only sold at a higher price, but the owner also had to be able to read the song lyrics or the music notes, preferably both. This meant that the owner of sheet music had to be more educated than the average, working-class American.

The second form of publication, and on the opposite side of the scale, was broadsides. These were the cheapest option, published as individual songs, with just the lyrics. The owner would either have already heard the song to know what tune to carry or know what "air" the song was meant to be sung to. An air would be a note at the top of the page, denoting what other song this one was to be sung to. This is much like how children are taught to sing their ABC's to the tune, or air, of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star".

The last publication of music was songsters. These align with what a modern audience would consider an album. Songsters would have dozens of songs all in one book, roughly small enough to fit into a pocket. These songs, however, just had lyrics sometimes with airs, like a broadside. Like albums or custom playlists today, songsters were collections of songs performed by the same person or sharing the same theme. One of the songs in this study comes from *Joe English's Irish Comic Songster: Containing a Fine Collection of Irish, and Other Popular Songs, as Sung by Joe English, the Celebrated Comic Vocalist*. This title indicates that the 49 songs it contains are Irish, some of them funny, and that all were performed at some point by Joe English.[175]

[175] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 7-9

No matter what form a song was published in, all of the songs presented here are songs of Irish pride in various forms. Starting with general pride in their Irish roots, to the everyday struggle to obtaining a job, the turmoiled years of the Civil War, and the attempts to unite their homeland under freedom, Irish Americans wore their pride on their sleeves.

"...for the wearing of the green."

Ireland is a country of colonialism, and its people have been oppressed for centuries. They were most heavily oppressed by their closest neighbor, England. This oppression showed itself in many ways, and followed the Irish population even in their exodus from their homeland. While I will not touch on the Great Hunger in detail, it is an important example of the English treatment of those they ruled in Ireland. When the blight killed more than half of the potatoes, the staple of the Irish diet, the English felt this was a trial by fire the Irish needed to endure to become more civilized, and it is felt that the British government let Ireland starve for the first years of the blight.[176]

One song that shows Irish rebellion even in the face of death is the 1865 "Wearing of the Green," written by S. Behrens. It uses not only the color green, but also the shamrock, to symbolize the pride and strength of the Irish diaspora. These national symbols were already used as identifiers in the 19th century. The song, on the whole, describes the country's current state and the repression felt from the English.

It opens without delay as its first lyric informs the listener,

> Oh! Paddy dear, and did you hear, the news that's goin (sic) round,
> The Shamrock is forbid (sic) by law, to grow on Irish ground;[177]

[176] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 31
[177] LSMC 239.4

Not only is green clothing outlawed, but the penalty is death, and according to the narrator, "they're hanging men and women there for wearin' of the green." This connects to the multiple instances that Irish people were killed by the English for showing pride or asking for equal treatment.

At the end of each of the three verses, the song drives home the pride the Irish have in Ireland's nationality via symbols like the color green. The last verse brings to focus the lack of options the Irish have and the potential consequences of them.

> But if at last our color should be torn from Ireland's heart,
> Her Sons with shame and sorrow from the dear ould (sic) soil will part;[178]

The verse mentions going to America, though reluctantly, "where, thank God, we'll live and die, still wearin' of the green," as opposed to dying without their nationality. The Irish are so proud of their heritage and their national symbols that some would rather flee their homeland carrying those symbols with them than shelter themselves in English oppression.[179]

The second verse shows the narrator's natural inclination towards Ireland. He states that "when the law can stop," grass from growing or leaves from changing with the seasons, then he will stop wearing green in his hat.[180] This implies that it would be completely unnatural for an Irish person to discard their national color. It also shows the absurdity in England's attempts to eradicate Ireland's national pride and what symbolizes it.

If there were only one quote to show the pride this song carries, it would be easy to point out.

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[178] LSMC 239.4
[179] LSMC 239.4
[180] LSMC 239.4

You may take the Shamrock from your hat, and cast it on the sod,
But 'twill take root and flourish still tho' under foot 'tis trod,[181]

Again, the shamrock had already been established as an Irish symbol at this time, and this particular lyric essentially summarizes Irish history after English colonization. More importantly, it shows their perseverance in the face of oppression, since, no matter what hardships they face, the Irish will find a way not only to survive and adapt but to "flourish".[182]

Pride in the Face of Adversity

The Irish have immigrated to the United States even before the American Revolution, but the Great Hunger increased this migration to levels America had never seen before.[183] Because of this, during the mid-19th century, the Irish became the first major ethnic immigrant block the United States would see.[184] A combination of factors, including the Irish being Catholic in a Protestant country and the Irish-British relations that carried over to America, led to widespread discrimination against the Irish population.

During the 1840s, a movement had become vocal against immigration overall and, to a lesser extent, against Catholicism; this movement was known as the Nativists. The group had been present in American politics on and off since the American Revolution, and with Irish refugees coming to the United States because of the Great Hunger, Nativism was on the rise.[185] This discrimination by the Nativists and the American population on the whole is notable in the working conditions the Irish faced, and in the prejudice they faced before working. While the

[181] LSMC 239.4
[182] LSMC 239.4
[183] Williams, W. H. A. *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream : The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996. 1
[184] Moloney, Mick. *Far From the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration Through Song.* New York: Crown Books, 2002. 14
[185] Johnson, Tyler V. *Devotion to the Adopted Country : U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War*. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 2012. Introduction

Irish made up a huge percentage of domestic workers and unskilled laborers overall, the idea of "no Irish need apply" or NINA was prevalent throughout the 19th century. It was so common, in fact, that multiple songs are titled "No Irish Need Apply" directly and indirectly, three of which will be brought up here. These songs show that the Irish population still had pride in themselves even when facing anti-Irish sentiments.

The Irish responded to the NINA attitude in part by singing about their better qualities, such as their hospitality to strangers. This is evident in two songs, "No Irish Need Apply," from 1863 by Kathleen O'Neil, and "What Irish Boys Can Do: Answer to - No Irish Need Apply," an undated song - published sometime between 1850 and 1870 - by William Sutherland. O'Neil and Sutherland's songs mirror each other almost phrase for phrase. The songs are so similar, in fact, that it is hard to believe the lyrics were drawn from each artist's personal experience and opinion. More likely, the ideas and imagery used were drawn from general talking points and counterarguments of the day. This can be compared to today, when a political argument or counterargument is made and then quickly picked up by everyone who agrees with it. The similarity between Kathleen O'Neil's and William Sutherland's songs mirrors this copy-paste practice.

In O'Neil's "No Irish Need Apply," published at the height of the Civil War, multiple references are made to the general hospitality that the Irish are known for. Lyrics such as…

> Pat would give his last potato, yes, and give it with a will,
> Nor whisky, which he prizes so, in any case deny,[186]

lean into established stereotypes while also highlighting the Irish people's kind, giving nature. This is reflected in Sutherland's undated song "What Irish Boys Can Do - Answer to: No Irish

[186] LSMC no plate number

Need Apply". Not only does Sutherland present almost the exact lyrics regarding Pat giving out his last potato and his best whiskey, but also,

> If you were sick and weary, and had no place to rest,
> The bed you'd get, thought poor perhaps, would be Pat's very best.[187]

Both verses show different examples of how Irish people respond when asked for generosity. This emphasis on hospitality shows the general disdain toward NINA attitudes. and hint at the disappointment immigrants had when faced with NINA when they had done nothing to deserve it.

The mirroring of lyrics continues in notes of the Irish fighting experience throughout both songs. Both mention the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, an Irish noble who fought in the Battle of Waterloo and played a significant role in Britain's victory. O'Neil relates Wellesley directly to the hypocritical idea of NINA when she says,

> They think now of their hero, dead; his name will never die,
> Where will they get another such if 'No Irish need apply,[188]

while Sutherland is more subtle and keeps with his song title with the lyric

> And didn't he badly whip the French on the plains of Waterloo?
> Which plainly showed to the whole world what Irishmen can do.[189]

Wellesley is not the only Irish war hero that either artist mentions, but the references between the two contribute to the idea that these songs, in particular, were not wholly original.

As an Irish noble who fought on the British side, Wellesley was most likely a Protestant or Orange Irishman. There were tensions between Orange Irish and Green, or Catholic, Irish, but this relationship does not play any part in the music of the 19th century. This is due to the taboo of discussing religion in general. In fact, "if…songs were our only surviving documents about the 19th century American Irish, we would scarcely know that most of them were Roman Catholic,"

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[187] LCP Wolf 2558
[188] LSMC no plate number
[189] LSMC and LCP Wolf 2558

at all.[190] The nuances of the Green/Orange religion were also mostly lost on Americans. They prioritized nationality first when determining an immigrant's place in America.[191]

O'Neil's and Sutherland's songs have an overall calm tone when talking about NINA and the Irish opinions of it, but this is less so the case in John Poole's "No Irish Need Apply". Written in the early 1860s, this version describes a specific instance in which the narrator, a newly arrived Irish immigrant, confronts the person who advertised their job as "no Irish need apply". In the song, the Irishman goes to see the advertiser, who is casually reading the newspaper. After both men confront each other, the Irish immigrant "gave him such a welting as he'd get at Donnybrook," and after they come to something of an agreement, the Irishman reiterates "When next you want a beting (sic), add: no Irish need apply!" [192, 193]. Not only does Poole's song have active violence, but it is also the main focus of the song.

While the three artists pull from different stereotypes, Poole from the pugilist image of the Irish as fighters, and O'Neil and Sutherland from the drunkard image, all three still have similarities. Poole does not mention Wellesley but does bring up two other Irish war heroes. Both he and Sutherland mention Meagher and Corcoran, Irish generals in the Civil War, who helped improve the Irish population's reputation. The publications used for Sutherland and Poole do not have exact publication dates, only a range of 1850 to 1870, but it is clear that they were written during or possibly shortly after the Civil War.

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[190] Williams, W. H. A. *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream : The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800-1920*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996. 6

[191] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 2

[192] LCP Wolf 1607

[193] The Donnybrook Fair took place for several centuries outside Dublin, Ireland. During that time the fair became especially known for the number of fights and brawls that took place there. Here the narrator uses the phrase "a welting as he'd get at Donnybrook" to stress how bad the physical fight was between himself and the advertiser.

Poole also uses the same hospitality image as O'Neil and Sutherland in his second-to-last verse…

> Sure, Paddy's heart is in his hand, as all the world does know,
> His prates (sic) and his whiskey he will share with friend or foe;
> His door is always open to the stranger passing by;[194]

And like O'Neil, Poole brings attention to the hypocrisy of NINA with the last few lines of his song…

> And when for freedom and the right they raise the battle-cry,
> then the Rebel ranks begin to think: No Irish need apply.[195]

The similarities and the near-exact copying of phrases across these three songs further show the Irish population's overall disapproval of NINA.

Poole's version of "No Irish Need Apply" became "the most celebrated song among Irish Americans in the 1860's," despite taking advantage of several negative stereotypes.[196] Even though NINA was a facet of life more than 100 years ago, the "No Irish need apply" mentality remains a hallmark of Irish American history and of 19th-century America. Meaning that preserving the Irish reaction to this blatant discrimination, especially via song, an important part of Irish culture and a way to work around their literacy, is a way to take back this time period for Irish history. These three songs also show the pride that the Irish population maintained despite the hardships of the job market and their attempts to push back against it.

The Civil War

The Civil War is an important part of both American history and Irish-American history. During the Civil War, Irish Americans reversed some of the negative stereotypes and were closer

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[194] LCP Wolf 1607
[195] LCP Wolf 1607
[196] Moloney, Mick. *Far From the Shamrock Shore: The Story of Irish-American Immigration Through Song.* New York: Crown Books, 2002. 16

to "becom[ing] true Americans," than in the past decades.[197] During the 1860s, Nativist prejudices were still prevalent, and discrimination against the Irish had become somewhat normal, as can be seen above with the experience of NINA. This would lead to Irishmen enlisting in the American army in huge numbers, in part to show their "willingness to sacrifice for their new country," and hopefully gain the equal treatment they wanted.[198]

The fastest way for an Irishman to show his merit was to join the 69th, or the New York 69th Volunteer Regiment. It was an all-Irish unit that became one of the five Irish ethnic units that made up the Irish Brigade, and is the most famous of the five. Led first and most famously by Michael Corcoran, but largely by Thomas Meagher, the 69th plays a significant role in Irish songs. Scarcely an Irish song directly connected to the Civil War would not at least mention the men of the 69th, and at least four different songs mention the regiment in the title.

The New York 69th would earn its reputation as dauntless soldiers early on. They became a regiment after the First Battle of Bull Run, when they protected the retreating Union Army.[199] During all the major battles of the Civil War, the 69th was a boon to the Union. "Their discipline under fire, their ability to complete complex manoeuvres in the face of the enemy, and their self-control," throughout the Civil War all contributed to their lofty reputation.[200] Their actions on the battlefield certainly did not diffuse the "fighting Irish" stereotype, but it did at least change the perception of that stereotype to something more pride-inducing for all of America.

One song that shows the pride and bravery of the sons of Erin is "The Irish Volunteer" by Joe English. This version is from *Joe English's Comic Songster*, as mentioned in the introduction. The songster was published in 1864, but by then, all the songs had been associated with Joe

[197] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 121
[198] Johnson, Tyler V. *Devotion to the Adopted Country : U.S. Immigrant Volunteers in the Mexican War*. Columbia, Mo: University of Missouri Press, 2012. 2
[199] Kenneally, Ian. *Courage and Conflict: Forgotten Stories of the Irish at War*. Cork: The Colins Press, 2009. 114
[200] Kenneally, Ian. *Courage and Conflict: Forgotten Stories of the Irish at War*. Cork: The Colins Press, 2009. 115

English's performances of them. "The Irish Volunteer" is most likely from 1861 or 1862. I date the song itself to those years because the last chorus mentions George McClellan, "whom the army now reveres - He'll lead us on to victory." McClellan led the Army of the Potomac from July 1861, after the battle of Bull Run, until late 1862, when he was replaced by Ambrose Burnside.[201] Even though McClellan was widely revered by the Irish American community, and some songs call for his return, the short period during which McClellan actually led the army dates the song to his tenure.

Of all the songs presented, "The Irish Volunteers" has the heaviest focus on community pride. It does not have a repeated chorus, each one instead refers to different points of pride that the whole Irish community can support. Phrases such as "the harp of Erin… the flag we all revere," "the land of our adoption," and three choruses that touch on fighting for the Union combine to bring all of the Irish American community into focus, and the pride they have in their journey and fight to become Americans.

The first verse and a half is about the narrator's life before immigrating to America, and importantly, tells the listener about his father, who "fell upon old Vinegar Hill, like an Irish volunteer.".[202] This is a reference to the 1798 uprising, in which the United Irishmen fought for, but failed to secure, equal representation in their government. This specific reference connects the Irish fight for democracy with the American reputation of democracy. It also shows the family and community lineage that the Irish had with equal and fair citizenship. By starting with a family member who died fighting for liberty, the narrator naturally calls attention to the current Civil War and its fight for continued democracy, in which the Irish were a large part of the force.

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[201]Kenneally, Ian. *Courage and Conflict: Forgotten Stories of the Irish at War*. Cork: The Colins Press, 2009. 116; 126

[202] English, Joe. *Joe English's Irish Comic Songster : Containing a Fine Collection of Irish, and Other Popular Songs, as Sung by Joe English, the Celebrated Comic Vocalist.* New York. Dick & Fitzgerald. 1864. 16

The fourth verse briefly recounts the Prince of Wales's visit to America, a major source of moral pride for the Irish community. Almost exactly six months before the start of the Civil War, Prince Edward, heir to the British throne, visited New York City. Part of his welcome to the city was "some 6,000 or 7,000 men" standing in parade dress when he exited his ship.[203] Among those who should have been there was the New York 69th Volunteer Militia, but they were noticeably absent.[204] Justified publicly as an extra and unnecessary duty for "a part-time militia unit," the Irish hostility for England on the whole, and especially for the monarchy that had left many Irish starving only a few years before, was the unspoken main factor for the units' absence.[205]

The verse mocks the way so many New Yorkers came to welcome the Prince "in gold and tinsel too," even though less than 100 years earlier Americans had fought to expel British rule.[206] Since the Irish had such a long and bloody history of trying to resist English oppression, the visit by the monarchy was seen as an insult. The last line of the verse and the chorus highlight the Irish view of the Prince and the absence of the 69th from his visit.

> They wouldn't give a d—n for kings, the Irish volunteers!
> We love the land of Liberty, its laws we will revere,
> "But the devil take nobility!" says the Irish volunteer.[207]

These few lines again reference the double standard of America, famously fighting for its liberty against the British throne, but seemingly forgetting that its laws outlaw nobility or a monarchy. They also show the strong opinion that the Irish population held regarding England and its ruling class.

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[203] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 122
[204] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 122
[205] Milner, Dan. *The Unstoppable Irish: Songs and Integration of the New York Irish, 1783–1883*. 1st ed. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2019. 126
[206] English, Joe. *Joe English's Irish Comic Songster : Containing a Fine Collection of Irish, and Other Popular Songs, as Sung by Joe English, the Celebrated Comic Vocalist.* New York. Dick & Fitzgerald. 1864. 17
[207] English, Joe. *Joe English's Irish Comic Songster : Containing a Fine Collection of Irish, and Other Popular Songs, as Sung by Joe English, the Celebrated Comic Vocalist.* New York. Dick & Fitzgerald. 1864. 17

Joe English's songster contains several songs that depict the Irish journey toward becoming American, but "The Irish Volunteer" is a prime example of the Irish's perceived place in the United States. The song shows their long fight for liberty and democracy, and how close they hold it to their hearts. Not only are the Irish immigrants willing to fight and die for their own liberty, but they have also come to America and will do the same for their adopted country.

The Fenians

Among Irish Americans were the Fenian Brotherhood, who took pride in Ireland, their Irish roots, and, most importantly, Irish independence. The Fenians were founded in 1858 in New York, and their main purpose was to free Ireland from British occupation.[208] The Fenians became a large group in America, but their existence was short-lived; their zenith was in the mid 1860s.[209] While largely unacknowledged in American history, they are most infamous for their two failed "invasions" of Canada in 1866 and 1870, which played a significant role in their demise.[210]

The Fenian movement in America drew inspiration from Young Ireland, an Irish movement in the 1840s that advocated for Irish independence. The Young Irelanders wanted a fully united Ireland, based on shared history and regardless of religion or class.[211] To do this, they used newspapers and oral traditions to redefine Irish Nationalism, and they were highly successful. Influencing ideas of Irish identity in three different countries, their newspaper, *The Nation,* became an overnight success and was the most popular paper of its time.[212] The Young

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[208] Padden, Michael. *May the Road Rise to Meet You : Everything You Need to Know about Irish American History*. New York: Plume, 1999. 140-141
[209] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 5.
[210] Padden, Michael. *May the Road Rise to Meet You : Everything You Need to Know about Irish American History*. New York: Plume, 1999. 142-143
[211] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 38; 11
[212] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 38; 11

Ireland movement ended in 1848, with most of its leaders imprisoned and/or exiled from England. Several of those exiled leaders would find their way to America and would have various influences on American history, though none were directly involved with the Fenians.

The Fenian movement itself advocated for military intervention to force Irish independence. Knowing that they needed help from somewhere, the Fenians wanted the United States to lend men and arms to their cause.[213] The American Civil War put a pause on any real action, but did not scrap the Fenians' hopes. Throughout the war and shortly after, the Fenians recruited Civil War Irish soldiers into their brotherhood. The hope was that these soldiers would gain invaluable battle experience. This was a double-edged sword, however, as the soldiers who returned had, in fact, experienced all that a battlefield could offer, making many of them reluctant to fight in another war.[214]

In 1866, the year that the Fenians would first try to invade Canada, *the Fenian War Echoes* collection was published in New York. It is a collection of 11 songs, all of them referencing Irish independence in various ways. They are all by different authors, and several are anonymous. Notably, *Fenian War Echoes* #10, "Our Own Again", was a poem written by Thomas Davis, one of the Young Ireland founders who died in Ireland in 1845, long before *The Fenian War Echoes* was published.[215] This inclusion shows the connection between the Young Ireland movement and the Fenian Brotherhood, as well as the enduring legacy of Irish independence. No doubt an entire dissertation can be written on *The Fenian War Echoes* and the symbolism embedded in each song. Of the 11, only two will be analyzed here.

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[213] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 5.
[214] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 5.
[215] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 23

Fenian War Echoes # 7, "The Memory of the Dead: Who fears to speak of Ninety Eight," is an anonymous song about the uprising of 1798. As the last violent rebellion, "98" is referenced in multiple songs from the 1860s to connect past and present struggles and the pride in them. The 1798 uprising was prompted by the Irish Parliament and how little representation the Irish actually had in it. Hoping "for a new parliament representative of all segments and sects of the Irish population," the Irish were quickly massacred by English soldiers.[216] As the name implies, "The Memory of the Dead" continuously references those killed in 1798 and their enduring memory, as well as the pride men should have in that memory. Each verse has two parts: the start being the memory of 1798 and the deaths it saw, and the end of the verse demanding that "true men, like you men," will remember the event and act accordingly(song).

The first two verses are foils to each other and show that no matter what the popular reaction to 1798 might be, the Fenians will always have pride in it. The song opens with the lines…

> Who fears to speak of Ninety Eight?
> Who blushes at the name?
> When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
> who hangs his head for shame?[217]

These lines show the Fenians' defiance in a Saxon country by remembering their at-times bloody heritage. The second verse reinforces this idea and opposes the imagery from the first verse, when it ends with "All true men, like you, men, Remember them with pride." Despite what England and America might think of Irish independence, the 1798 uprising was a major source of pride and fighting spirit among the Irish diaspora. The continual reference to "true" men shows the belief that if an Irishman is willing to ignore or forget Independence, he is not a true Irishman.

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[216] McMahon, Cian T. *The Global Dimensions of Irish Identity: Race, Nation, and the Popular Press, 1840-1880*. 1st Edition. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015. 14; 26
[217] LSMC 238

The sixth and final verse of the song shows the lengths the Fenians will go to for Irish independence and serves as a direct call to arms.

> Then here's their mem'ry may it be, For us a guiding light,
> To cheer our strife for liberty, And teach us to unite.
> Through good and ill, be Ireland's still, Though sad as their's your fate,
> And true men, be you men, Like those of Ninety Eight.[218]

This verse drives home the Fenians' desire for Irish independence and their demand for fighting bodies to achieve it. Being the last verse of the song, it leaves the listener in emotional turmoil. On the one hand, the song forces its listener to remember the dead and "Alas, that might, can vanquish right," while on the other hand, also make the listener realize that "true men, like you," can, and should, make a stand with pride for the "right" cause, no matter the consequences.[219]

By contrast, *Fenian War Echoes* #2 "The Fenian Girl's Song," does not make a direct call to arms in the same way as "The Memory of the Dead" does. Instead, "The Fenian Girl's Song" is a mix between a call to arms and a love song. This song is also anonymous, being attributed to "a Fenian sister," and is written from a woman's perspective on the movement.

The Fenian girl opens the song saying that she will boast of her Irish identity "with far greater pride than glitt'ring wealth or Fame," even in the face of such material goods that "the Saxon lass" has to show(song). In fact, a Fenian girl needs to have pride in that lack of material goods, as shown by verse two…

> My Linsey dress is plain I know, My hat is humble too,
> But then it shows what Irish girls for Irish rights can do.[220]

This Fenian girl knows that in war she will have to go without certain commodities and is already preparing. She also believes it is better to go without a fancy hat or dress, since dressing more

[218] LSMC 238
[219] LSMC 238
[220] LSMC 232

humbly helps conserve materials that Fenian soldiers will need. This point is continued at the start of the next verse…

> Then English goods we won't receive, Victoria will blockade,
> But Fenian girls will be content with goods that's Irish made;[221]

Not only does this Fenian girl know that a war will mean a lack of goods, but she is perfectly fine with "goods that's Irish made," as opposed to English-made.[222] This first half of the song is part of the call to arms portion, calling women to support the arms that their men take up. Even though women cannot go to the front lines and truly take up arms in the traditional sense, "The Fenian Girl's Song" is an indirect call to arms, urging women to do their part to help the men fight for Irish rights.

Several verses become what can best be described as a love song when this Fenian girl brings men into the equation. Verses three and four show the reciprocal feelings between Fenian men who can soldier on the front line, and their sweethearts back home. She tells her female listeners not to worry about the men going to war because "Your Fenian love, can ne'er forget, the girl he left behind."[223] Verse four then shows men one of the rewards they will get upon their return home. The Fenian girl states that "when my Irish home is free…The Fenian lad, I love the best, shall have by heart and hand."[224] Up to this point, the song fits within the love-song genre and serves as an indirect call to arms for both Fenian women and prospective Fenian men.

The fifth and final verse is the only direct call to arms. This Fenian girl directly addresses both the risk and the reward the men will face in fighting for Irish liberty.

> Go to the field where duty calls, and win your fair one there;
> Remember that our brightest smiles, are for the true and brave,

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[221] LSMC 232
[222] LSMC 232
[223] LSMC 232
[224] LSMC 232

And that our tears are all for those, who fill a Fenian's grave.[225]

This Fenian girl is aware that by going to war many brave men will die, but the song overall shows that the risk is worth the reward of Irish liberty. While verse five is the closest thing to a direct call to arms, it still intwines with the love song of the previous verses. The notes that the women's "brightest smiles" are for those that return and that their tears will be for those who do not, have the unmistakable tone of romanticism.[226]

Placing "The Memory of the Dead" and "The Fenian Girl's Song" in relation to the height of the Fenian movement, as well as being on the eve of their first Canadian invasion, shows the pride that the Fenians felt and their excitement for Irish freedom. Neither song shys away from the reality of a war, but they both reinforce the glory that can be had in fighting. Their Canadian invasion ended in failure and, later, ridicule, but before that, the Fenian Brotherhood stood tall and unflinching in their desire for Irish recognition and independence.[227]

The Fenian War Echoes songs are clearly propaganda, and publishing an entire collection touches on the cultural importance of music for the Irish. By the mid-1860s, literacy among the American-born population was comparable to that of other groups, Irish Americans included.[228] But since Famine immigrants still had a lower literacy rate and were among those with the highest commitment to Irish independence, music was the best way to reach potential soldiers.

The Modern Music Risk

Like with any historical item, removing a song from its intended context can change its meaning. This is a problem that historians have faced for time immemorial, as it introduces

[225] LSMC 232
[226] LSMC 232
[227] Padden, Michael. *May the Road Rise to Meet You : Everything You Need to Know about Irish American History*. New York: Plume, 1999. 143
[228] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 2.

biases, both intentional and accidental, into the interpretation of the item one studies. Songs fall into this category doubly so, as music is so commonplace that the general population has ready access to it without being exposed to the context of the piece, unlike a museum that strives to contextualize its exhibits. Many people in the general population will find a song they like, and it can be easy to simply listen to it without thinking about the deeper meaning of its lyrics. Nowhere is the problem of context more obvious than in "Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade."

The song is about "honest Pat Murphy, of Meagher's Brigade,"[229] and his last day in the Civil War. The main purpose of the song is to show the sacrifices Irish soldiers made and their opinions of those sacrifices and of the war itself. Pat Murphy has heroic ideas and explicitly says to himself in the second verse, "I'll fight till I die - if I shouldn't be kilt (sic) - For America's bright starry banner."[230] Towards the end of the song, Pat Murphy dies in an unnamed skirmish, and with an untold number of other soldiers.

While the song lacks specifics, it likely was written in response to the Battle of Fredericksburg. The start of the second-to-last verse, "The battle was over - the dead lay in heaps," has a striking similarity to how Ian Kenneally describes the Irish Brigade's march up Marye's Heights in his book *Courage and Conflict: Forgotten Stories of the Irish at War.*[231] Regardless of the specific battle, the point of "Pat Murphy" remains in its anonymity, as it is meant to show pride in "Meagher's Brigade" and the brave Irishmen in it. The publication used here has no publication year, but the seemingly casual mention of Jeffery Davis and the abolitionist movement clearly dates it to the Civil War years. The song was published in a

[229] Kincaid, David. *The Irish Volunteer-Songs of the Irish Union Soldier 1861-1865.* Sound recording. Salem: Rykodisc, 1998. Spotify. (2026)
[230] LCP Wolf 1849
[231] Kenneally, Ian. *Courage and Conflict: Forgotten Stories of the Irish at War*. Cork: The Colins Press, 2009. 130

broadside with an air noted - but with no sheet music directly connected to it, it is understandable that not all musicians will go searching for it.

The song has been recorded a handful of times, but this study will focus on the recordings done by David Kincaid in 1998 and by Mick Moloney in 2002. Kincaid's recording of "Pat Murphy" comes from his album *The Irish Volunteer*. Kincaid is something of a historical preservationist, so his recording gives listeners a better sense of what the song sounded like to its intended audience.[232] His version is more upbeat, so the death of Pat Murphy towards the end of the song is somewhat glossed over. This makes sense in the original context as, despite the title, Pat Murphy is not the actual focus of the song. Moloney, however, uses a slower tempo and more mournful tone from the beginning, which prepares the listener for Pat Murphy's inevitable death. This difference greatly affects how the song impacts its listeners and the interpretation they derive from it, depending on which artist plays it.

The biggest difference between these two recordings, however, is the actual content of the lyrics. Kincaid's recording is timed at four minutes and 40 seconds, while Moloney's is only four minutes and 16 seconds. This 24-second discrepancy is explained in part by the omission of an entire verse from Moloney's version of the song.

> Jeff Davids, you thief, if I had you but here,
> Your beautiful plans I'd be ruinin':
> Faix (sic), I'd give ye a taste of me bayonet, bedad (sic)
> For trying to burst up the Union,
> There's a crowd in the North, too an' they're just as bad –
> Abolitionist spouters (sic) so scaly –
> For throubling (sic) the naigers (sic) I think they deserve
> A whack from a sprig of shillaly (sic).[233]

Moloney most likely omits this verse because of the political and racial connotations it brings in. He recorded it in the early 21st century, when disagreeing with abolition and using such strong

[232] David Kincaid (@david_kincaide_official), Instagram
[233] LCP Wolf 1849

language to refer to African Americans had a different level of acceptance than it did in the 1860s when the song was originally published. In Kincaid's recording, this verse contains the only major revision: changing "naigers" to "negros". "Negro" was still a taboo word in 1998, but by including it, Kincaid preserves the song's overall spirit.

This verse shows the complex relationship between Irish Americans and the Civil War on the whole. On the one hand, the Irish were fighting and dying by the hundreds "in defence (sic) of the flag of [the] Union" and became lauded as some of the bravest soldiers on the battlefield.[234] On the other hand, they were also one of the lowest classes of people in the American social hierarchy and had a vested interest in the continual enslavement of African Americans. Given the original listener's context, this verse is unassuming. But when the context is more than 130 years removed, not only is the chosen phrasing controversial, but the whole verse throws Pat Murphy - and by extension the whole Irish population - into a less-than-heroic light.

The omission from Moloney's 2003 recording shows the problems that can occur when taking a historical item, in this case a song, out of and away from its intended context. While songs are an easy and accessible medium for the general public, listeners are at the mercy of the artist. In this case, Moloney's aversion to racial language and implications erases the complexity that Irish Americans had. Kincaid's version, while potentially offensive, prioritizes the historic reality of the 19th century.

Conclusion

When faced with Nativism and the hardships that being Catholic in a Protestant country entailed, the Irish held onto the one thing that could not be taken from them: their pride. Both their ability to take advantage of their illiteracy through musical word rather than spoken word,

[234] Kincaid, *The Irish Volunteer,* and Milner, *The Unstoppable Irish,* 133

and their pride in themselves, led the Irish to use music to make their voices heard when they otherwise would not have been. In seeking support for their independence, the Fenians used songs to show their pride and to persuade men to join their cause. During the Civil War, songs rallied support to the Union cause and reminded the Irish population of the democracy they had already been fighting for for decades. When faced with discrimination in the job market and with the difficult choice to leave their homeland, the Irish sang of their pride even during hardships.

All of these instances show the journey of Irish immigrants being accepted as fellow Americans over the course of just 10 years. Despite arriving in America at a great disadvantage, the Irish found ways to maintain and express their pride via their songs. This ability to interact with society in a way that was both accepted and listened to shows the importance of music to the historical record.

A large part of music in any time, however, is the unspoken social context surrounding the songs. “Pat Murphy of Meagher’s Brigade” is a key example of the social context that is important to fully understanding historical songs. There are several audio recordings for historical songs named here that show the absence or replacement of that context. All examples show how changing seemingly small or outdated parts of a song can drastically change its meaning, sometimes for better or for worse.

S. Behrens’s “Wearing of the Green,” has dozens of modern recordings, but only one that is fully accurate. Patrick O’Malley’s 1961 rendition of “Wearing of the Green” is an almost exact replication of Behrens’s original work. Most other recordings are only partial songs, having only the first two verses. Possibly the most circulated recording of the song is the 1985 version by The Wolfe Tones. Their rendition, however, adds a chorus to drive home the point that Irish people are dying for showing their colors, and changes roughly half of the second verse. The new verse

shows the family lineage and expectation that the narrator has for his country. While this still exemplifies the cultural pride that the Irish have, it erases the natural, embedded pride that the Irish have for their country, which Behrens wanted to highlight.

Conversely, John Poole's "No Irish Need Apply," which was the most popular song addressing NINA in the 1860s, has only been recorded a few times. First by Pete Seeger, a well-known folk singer, in 1954. Seeger records only the first four of six verses, and also adds a chorus

> Some may think it a misfortune to be christened Pat or Dan,
> But to me it is an honor to be born an Irishman.[235]

The addition of the chorus does not take away from the message of the song, however, as it further highlights the nostalgia of Irish discrimination and pride during the 1860s. In 2002, Mick Moloney also recorded the song more completely, with Seeger's chorus, but still leaves out the one of the six verses.

Poole's song is a broadside, and there are no airs listed, so there is no way to know if the mood of either song is accurate to its original intention or how much so. Since Poole's song became the most popular out of the three, there may have been no need to list the air at the time, as a general audience would already know it. It also may have been printed on a different version of the song, as it was normal for broadsides and music sheets to be printed with slightly different notes and visuals depending on when they were published and by whom.[236] This possibility again shows the importance of the unspoken social context that these songs originally belonged in.

Finally, David Kincaid recorded "The Irish Volunteer" and "Pat Murphy of Meagher's Brigade" in his 1998 album *The Irish Volunteer*. Kincaid can be called a musical historical

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[235] Seeger, Pete. *Frontier Ballads* "No Irish Need Apply".of Sound Recording. Washington D.C.: Folkways Recordings, 1954. Spotify. (2026)
[236] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 2.

preservationist and a musical historian, and his songs are extremely accurate.[237] The majority of his songs are from the Civil War, and he strives for period-accurate instruments where possible, changing the lyrics little if at all when recording them. These two songs are no exception, with Kincaid only changing a few words throughout.

All four of these songs and their various recordings are examples of the Irish community making their voices heard, and maintaining their pride, both past and present. The fact that any of these songs have survived for more than 160 years, when their intended audience could not read them and were not meant to read them, is a testament to the ability of the Irish to be heard through untraditional ways, such as music and song. Even when literacy did improve for Irish-Americans, the Irish continued to write songs so that anyone in their community could hear their voice and know their journey.[238]

[237] David Kincaid (@david_kincaide_official), Instagram

[238] Bateson, Catherine V. *Irish American Civil War songs : Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood*. Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Ch 2.

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Music Collections

LCP The Library Company of Philadelphia: American Song Sheets, Slip Ballads and Poetical Broadsides Collection, 1850-1870.

LSMC The Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection

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then examine three recent instances of digitally-documented public image breaking. Here, I argue that Pentecostal iconoclasm in this hemispheric context, seen through the lens of aesthetic discernment and the theology of rupture, constitutes both an action of spiritual warfare and a performative testimony of faith.

Part I

Pentecostal Aesthetic Theology

In this section, I will examine the Pentecostal aesthetic landscape to illustrate Pentecostal attitudes towards art. To do this, I will differentiate Pentecostal semiotic ideologies and ontologies of artwork from both 1. Calvinist Protestantism and 2. Catholicism/Orthodoxy. In the first section, I will situate Pentecostal aesthetics in the context of Calvinist Protestantism to show that while there are clear theological continuities with Protestant iconophobia, Pentecostals carry a variety of theologically-supported positions towards religious images in practice.[242] Here, I will explore where Pentecostalism encourages art, including depictions of the divine via pneumatological imagination and in viewing artists as co-creator with God using examples from prophetic or live worship art. I will then use this analysis as a baseline with which to compare Pentecostal semiotic ideologies and ontologies of artwork itself against those in the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, using examples of a devotional statue of the Virgin Mary and the Byzantine icon, the *Christos Pantocrator.*[243] In doing so, I will show where art transgresses these Pentecostal boundaries of acceptable use.

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[242] Birgit Meyer, "'There Is a Spirit in That Image': Mass-Produced Jesus Pictures and Protestant-Pentecostal Animation in Ghana," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52, no. 1 (2010): 100–130, https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041750999034X; Meyer, "Mediating Absence: Effecting Spiritual Presence Pictures and the Christian Imagination."

[243] *Christos Pantocrator*, n.d., Encaustic on wood, 84 x 45.5 cm, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spas_vsederzhitel_sinay.jpg.`