

Where's Poor Paddy? The Contrasting Results of Irish Migration to Glasgow and Liverpool, 1790-1850

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Where's Poor Paddy? The Contrasting Results of Irish Migration to Glasgow and Liverpool 1790-1850

Between 1790-1850, over 300,000 Irish men, women and children arrived in Scotland¹. Some came for seasonal employment, but by the turn of the nineteenth century, most came in hope of finding a better life and planned to stay. Many historians have seen this as a migration that led to tales of woe, illness, and overcrowding in an urban environment that resulted in sectarian violence. However, from an economic standpoint, not only did the vast influx of cheap and plentiful Irish labour provide a much needed component in a period of rapid industrial growth, but many of the ills that are associated with this migration have been greatly exaggerated. When examining the state of the Irish in Glasgow, they do not share the negative traits that they have come to be associated with the impoverished Irish Roman Catholic's that flowed to Liverpool throughout the nineteenth century, and principally during the famine times of 1845-1850.

This essay will demonstrate the important contribution to economic gain that was realized by the migration of Irish labour to Glasgow in contrast to the impacts of the migration on Liverpool. The Irish migration to Glasgow came largely from Ulster and as a result was less homogeneous than to other destinations. As a result there was a higher percentage of Protestant Irish, it occurred at a more consistent rate, lacked the extreme religious militancy and fit in better with the industrial structure of Glasgow. The same migration brought sectarian strife and economic misery to Liverpool.

Historiographical Discussion

Primary Sources

The British Parliamentary Papers provided a wealth of statistical evidence. Numerous reports such as on "State of the Irish Poor in Britain" provided valuable contemporary views of the migration situation. The reports of these Parliamentary committees also contained a wealth of valuable testimony as to the occupational habits and roles of the Irish migrants. These however must be tempered by the fact that those testifying were only the employers of these migrants. This limits the breadth of the evidence and tends to provide a voice that speaks from the upper

¹ Brenda Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in Devine, T.M. ed. *Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1991), p.1-8.

and middle class perspective. To balance these opinions it is necessary to consult a variety of secondary sources.

The use of census data provided by the official sources of the Parliamentary Papers was augmented by consulting James Cleland's statistical accounts specifically for Glasgow² to fill in missing data for the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Sir James Sinclair's *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland*³ further augmented this data.

The statistical explosion of the nineteenth century was a unique phenomenon that made available much of this valuable data to allow for socio-economic study. The need for the 'modern' man to seek to know his world through the compiling of 'scientific' evidence combines with the rise of the state's need to exert authority through instruments such as the census have left a rich legacy for study. While there are gaps, we are indeed fortunate that we have the wealth of data that we do.

Secondary Sources

The migration of the Irish has been dealt with most extensively surrounding the period of the Great Famine. A quantitative examination of the diaspora outside of this period has only more recently emerged as a topic for scholarly discussion. Popular books such as Thomas Keneally's *Great Shame*⁴ on the topic have shed new light on the nature of this migration. Donald Akenson has done a significant amount of work looking at the Irish migration both in terms of constituency as well as resettlement destinations in Canada and throughout the world. The challenge with these works is that they focus on destinations outside of Great Britain and consider the movement from Ireland to Scotland, England or Wales as internal migration. Akenson's book, *Small Differences*⁵, particularly does an excellent job of looking at emigration numbers, and occupational analysis before and after migration. He notes that his work is an international perspective and limits analysis to immigration to destinations outside of Great Britain.

More specific to the issues being discussed in this essay, recent works have begun to look at the religious constituency of the Irish exodus as well as the more specialized cases of the west of Scotland, Glasgow and Liverpool during this period. James Handley's original work on the Irish

² James Cleland, *The Former and Present State of Glasgow*. (Glasgow: John Smith, 1840)

³ Sir John Sinclair, *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland*. (London: John Murray, 1826).

⁴ Thomas Keneally, *Great Shame: And the Triumph of the Irish in the English-Speaking World*, (1999).

⁵ Donald Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922. An International Perspective*. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).

migration to Scotland⁶ set the stage for more recent works by Bernard Aspinwall, Graham Walker, Tom Gallagher, and Brenda Collins. While Handley's work has become somewhat dated it remains a very comprehensive study. Aspinwall and Walker have each tended towards different facets of the same picture. Walker has contributed to the work on Protestant migration and occupational assimilation. Bernard Aspinwall on the other hand has published extensively on the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland as well as the effects of the large number of Irish Catholic migrants during the nineteenth century. Tom Gallagher and Brenda Collins have looked at a broader picture examining, in Collins' case, the nature of the migration from a quantitative standpoint. Gallagher has concentrated specifically on Glasgow and the west of Scotland in his works, but provided an excellent survey of the contrast between Glasgow and Liverpool.

Sectarianism has been examined by Gallagher, but remains an infrequent topic of scholarly publishing endeavour. His article contrasting Glasgow and Liverpool⁷ was an excellent jumping off point for further study. In addition to the information on sectarianism from Gallagher, I relied on Frank Neal's Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience⁸. Unfortunately, Neal himself laments the lack of published sources on the Irish experience in Liverpool⁹. Additional source material on Sectarianism was provided Robert Young who defined it as an attempt "...to gain identity by being different."¹⁰ Sectarianism is in effect the diametric opposite of assimilation.

Elaine McFarland's work on Orangeism¹¹ examines Protestant extremism in Scotland. This work was useful in providing a roadmap for use of the Parliamentary report on Report into the Origin, Nature, Extent and Tendency of Orange Institutions in Great Britain and the Colonies of 1835. The combination of these primary and secondary sources provides great evidence for the emergence of Orangeism very early in the nineteenth century in Scotland and England. The incidence and topography of the influence of Orangeism is well documented and presented.

E.H. Hunt has provided excellent information with regard to the socio-economic factors of the pre-famine population. His major contribution is on the effect of the cheap labour supply on the native standard of living in Scotland and England. He concludes that it did exert downward

⁶ J.E. Handley. The Irish in Scotland. (Glasgow: John S. Burns, 1964).

⁷ Tom Gallagher, "Tale of Two Cities: Communal Strife in Glasgow and Liverpool before 1914". in Roger Swift, and Sheridan Gilley, The Irish in the Victorian City (London: Croom Helm, 1985). pp.106-129.

⁸ Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence: The Liverpool Experience, 1819-1914, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.x.

¹⁰ Robert M. Young, "The Psychoanalysis of Sectarianism" Paper presented to Sixth Annual Conference on Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere, University of East London, and to Birkbeck College, London, Course on Racism. <http://www.shuf.ac.uk/uni/academic/N-Q/psysc/staff/rmyoung/papers/paper19.doc> March 28, 2002.

¹¹ Elaine W. McFarland, Protestants First: Orangeism in Nineteenth Century Scotland. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990).

wage pressure. Cormac O Grada in his book, Ireland: A New Economic History¹², as well as subsequent journal articles, challenges the reasoning behind Hunt's hypothesis and disputes this finding¹³.

James Handley, Brenda Collins as well as Cormac O Grada have provided analysis of statistical evidence relating to population, demographics and occupational structure. Much of their work has been based on earlier statistical studies such as that of James Cleland. The absence of good data has led to a lot of supposition on the part of these authors. With population figures in particular, one of the largest areas for error has been shown to be in the use of Parish records for estimating the Catholic population. Amongst the pre-famine Irish, large numbers of persons did not observe the sacraments¹⁴ and would therefore not be included in estimates. Handley raised the number of Protestants counted in his work to allow for some Highland Catholics counted in the non-Irish Catholic migrants. The work of David Miller¹⁵ with regard to pre-famine piety amongst Roman Catholics in Ireland suggests that the number of Catholics within the population may need to be raised as well. This may mean there were some inaccuracies in the actual ratio of Catholics to Protestants in earlier studies.

The Magnitude of the Migration

In the early nineteenth Century, there was a massive outflow of population from Ireland to destinations throughout the world. In 1800, the population of Ireland was 5.8 million. It ballooned to a peak of over 8 million prior to the 1845¹⁶. Overpopulation of Ireland resulted from the shift to cereal crop production from pasturing; the subdivision of leases that caused for more families being supported on single leaseholds; and finally from the decrease in mortality by the regularization of the diet through increased dependence on the potato¹⁷. Following the Potato famine of 1847-48, the population of Ireland eventually fell to under 3 million. As starvation and economic readjustment ravished the land and the people, many Irish sought migration as a solution. From 1800-1850, it was estimated that over 300,000 Irish made their way to Scotland seeking permanent exile¹⁸. Prior to the famine, Irish immigrants were seeking self-improvement

¹² Cormac O Grada, Ireland: A New Economic History 1790-1939, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹³ Cormac O Grada, "Some Aspects of Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration" L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, eds. Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History 1600-1900. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1977). p.66.

¹⁴ David Miller, "Irish Catholicism and the Great Famine", Journal of Social History 9 (1) 1975, pp.83-84.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.

¹⁶ Specifically rising to 8.2 million in 1841 according to L.M. Cullen and T.C. Smout, Comparative Aspects of Scottish and Irish Economic and Social History, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1977) p.11.

¹⁷ Collins, "The Origins of Irish Immigration to Scotland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", pp.2-3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.7-12.

and chose to emigrate, but following the famine, “self-preservation drove him from his native land”¹⁹. Both Scotland and England were prime destinations of the migration as “the nearest place that wasn’t Ireland” as Ruth-Ann Harris titled her work on this migration.²⁰ As we will examine subsequently, there were many facets that drew the Irish to these destinations in addition to geographic proximity.

Despite the common perception that these were times of impoverished scurrying, for the bulk of the early part of the nineteenth century, “the great majority of the Irish who migrate to England or Scotland come with a view of improving their condition by working for higher and more constant wages than they can obtain in their own country.”²¹ The population migrating to Scotland sought a better life, to work hard, and improve their existence. In concrete terms, non-agricultural labourers in Scotland earned nearly 4 times their counterparts in Ireland and agricultural wages were twice as high in Scotland as in Ireland in 1800. The disparity between wages and incomes in the two countries increased from 1830-1850²². In the first part of the nineteenth century, Handley states that wages in Scotland were five to six times higher than those in Ireland²³. The Irish who emigrated were motivated to improve their existence and were in many cases, not mere beggars without any choice. Scotland offered increased wages and was a conscious choice not merely a refuge.

Scotland was a Chosen Destination

Scotland was in fact a lot more than just the nearest place. Throughout history, there were constant flows of population back and forth across the North Channel. There were three principal types of migration during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The frequent seasonal journeys of migrant farm workers following the harvest patterns were one form of migration. In the 1820s, 6,000-8,000 Irish a year were making the harvest migration. By the 1840s this had grown to 25,000 over the agricultural season.²⁴

Short-term temporary migration to accumulate capital was a second type. These Irish, termed “the Irish navvy”²⁵, hoped to spend a few years working (principally in the construction trades)

¹⁹ Handley, The Irish in Scotland, p.1.

²⁰ Ruth-Ann Mellish Harris, The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland: Early Nineteenth Century Labor Migration. (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1994).

²¹ BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p.42. Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee, Evidence of Dr. Kay of Manchester.

²² Louis M. Cullen, “Incomes, Social Classes and Economic Growth in Ireland and Scotland, 1600-1900”, in T.M. Devine and Dickson, David, eds., Ireland And Scotland 1600-1850: Parallels and Contrasts in Economic and Social Development. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1981). p.250.

²³ Handley, The Irish in Scotland, p.8.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.16.

and then return with enough money to establish them back “home”. The decrease in cost of transportation with the advent of efficient steamer ferries and increased competition in the early nineteenth century increased the likelihood for Irish labourers to consider short-term work engagements in Scotland²⁶. Construction projects such as canals and railways²⁷ were a great attraction to the unskilled Irish labourers. The bulk of Scotland’s artificial waterways were constructed between 1790-1820. During this period, up to 90% of the labourers employed in canal construction in Scotland were Irish.²⁸ Those Irish temporarily abroad as a labour force composed of agricultural seasonal labourers and trade-oriented short-term labourers constituted approximately 1,523,200 Irish in 1851 according to Henry Mayhew.²⁹

In the early nineteenth century, however, the Irish making the trek across the North Channel were starting to put down roots in record numbers. This permanent migration was the third and increasingly predominant type of migration that occurred.

Scotland offered much more to the Irish migrant than simply seasonal employment. There was a booming economy for much of this period as rapid industrialization took place. As Gallagher notes, “Glasgow had been influenced by the reformation and was transformed by the industrial revolution,”³⁰ something he feels created a cultural and developmental gap between Scotland and Ireland. The population of previously dispossessed Irish in Scotland, however, offered the potential for a sense of community for the more recently arrived Irish. This networking process was voiced in testimony to the 1836 Select Committee, “I know that the Irish constantly invite their friends and relations in Ireland, and when they come receive and entertain them in their habitations for a certain period, or until they can obtain work.”³¹

Nowhere in Scotland was this rapid pace of industrialization as prevalent as it was in Glasgow. As a result this was where the bulk of the dispossessed Irish were to be found in Scotland. However the study of Scotland and Glasgow in particular during the period of early

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.27.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.12.

²⁷ The employment on the railways and canals did in fact put the Irish in direct competition with native labour. As E.H. Hunt cites in his discussion of the violence surrounding the battle for jobs, the following notice appeared: “Notice is given that all Irish men on the line of railway in Fife Share must be off the ground and out of the country on Monday the 11th of these month or else we must by the strength of our arms and good pick shaft put them off. Your humble servants, Schots men.” E.H. Hunt, British Labour History 1815-1914. (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1981). p.169.

²⁸ Handley, The Irish in Scotland, p.28.

²⁹ Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, vol. 2, pp.297-300, as cited in Ruth-Ann Harris, The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland, p.124.

³⁰ Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.107.

³¹ BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p.42. Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee, Evidence of Dr. Kay of Manchester.

industrialization is one of a society in flux. There was rapid change not just economically, but socially and infrastructurally as well.

Liverpool was a city most often compared with Glasgow during this period. Liverpool was the destination for the largest amount of Irish migrants to England and is described as possessing the greatest proportion of its population being born in Ireland in 1851 throughout Britain³². This is accounted for by the fact that much of its industry required unskilled labour as well as its proximity to the Irish ports of Dublin, Wexford, Waterford as well as Belfast. In Liverpool, as in Glasgow, the Irish made seasonal migration, especially around harvest time. However, in the early nineteenth century, as in Glasgow, the size of the permanent Irish community in Liverpool began to increase³³. There were two identifiable groups of Irish in Liverpool, the Irish-born and the 'Liverpool Irish'. The latter group were members of the Irish cultural communities that were born in England of Irish parents. In Liverpool, unlike Glasgow, this is considered an identifiable group due to the segregation and lack of assimilation of the Irish migrants over time³⁴.

It is difficult to establish exact numbers of Irish immigrants within Great Britain. Prior to the creation of the Irish Free State, movement from Ireland to "mainland" Great Britain was interprovincial and simply not measured. While birthplace became a question asked by the census takers in 1841, this only tells the researcher who stayed in a city. Raw migration numbers are simply unavailable. During the famine, there was some attempt to ascertain these numbers officially and example was contained in the Parliamentary Papers on "Correspondence Relative to Recent Immigration of Destitute Irish into Liverpool 1847"³⁵. Specific attention was paid to poor relief and the Irish migrants, but these numbers were focused on a non-productive population that moved through original ports of debarkation, such as Glasgow, to other destinations. So we are forced to rely on static census figures that only provide a single generational picture of immigration. The ethnic component of a community will extend down several generations, but we cannot get this information from a census.

While quantitative historians, such as Donald Akenson in the case of the Irish in Upper Canada, can develop statistical models that approximate the ethnic composition of a community at various points, the scope of such an exercise is beyond the means of available data in this case.

³² Neal, Sectarian Violence, p.8.

³³ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³⁵ BPP 1847, (193) vol.LIV. Correspondence Relative to Recent Immigration of Destitute Irish into Liverpool.

Akenson had the advantage of specific immigration numbers between British ports to an entity, such as British North America, which is regarded as a separate country for statistical purposes.

The best picture we have of Irish presence therefore is from the various census reports following 1841 and data available from private sources that examined the Irish within the urban milieu prior to this point.

Figure 1
Percentage of Irish-Born Residents
in the Population of Glasgow 1820-1851

Glasgow	1820	1831	1841	1851
Total Population	147000	202426	274533	329097
Irish-Born Population	25000	35554	44345	59801
Percentage Irish	17%	18%	16%	18%

Sources: BPP. Report on the Census of Scotland 1841, 1851, James Cleland. *The Former and Present State of Glasgow*, 1840 and Sir John Sinclair, *Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1826.

Figure 2
Percentage of Irish-Born Residents
in the Population of Liverpool 1811-1861

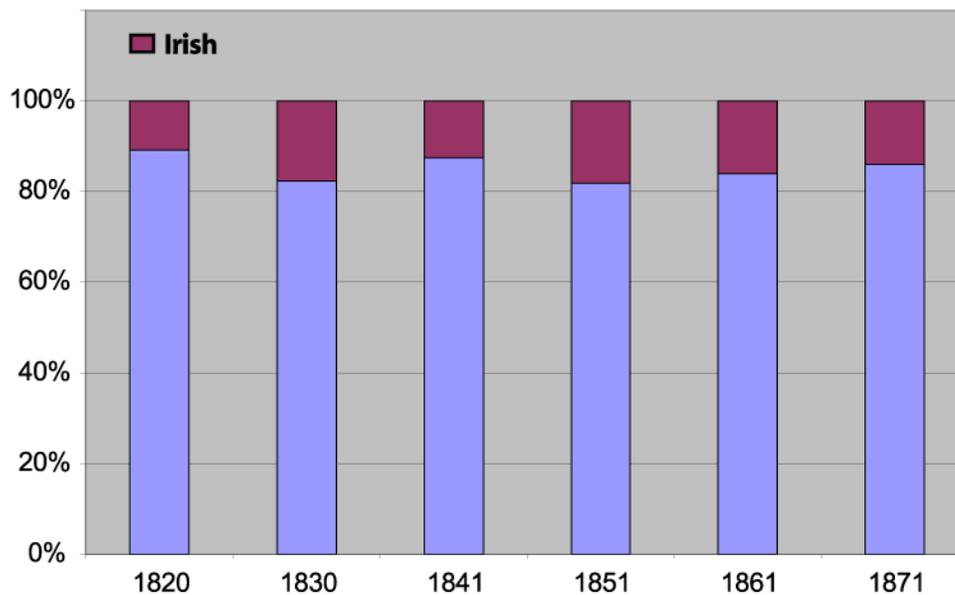
Liverpool	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861
Total Population	100240	131801	189242	286487	375955	443938
Irish-Born Population	8,019	10,544	18,924	49639	83813	88,800
Percentage Irish	8%	8%	10%	17%	22% ³⁶	20%

Sources: BPP. Report on the Census of Great Britain 1831, 1841, 1851, 1861. And E.H Hunt, *British Labour History 1815-1914*, 1981.

³⁶ In point of fact, Frank Neal estimates that 33% of the working class was Irish-born in 1851. Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, p.8.

Chart 1

Percentage of Irish in Glasgow Population 1820-1871



Sources: Statistical Account of Scotland, Censuses and James Cleland

The Composition of the Migration

The standard perception of the migration from Ireland to Scotland is that it was composed of a homogenous group similar to that which ‘washed’ up in countless ports up and down the English coast and around the world. This is a picture of the impoverished dispossessed Irish migrant, landless, penniless and shiftless. Unlike most other destinations for the Irish migration, Ulster tended to be the primary source of the Irish that found their way to Glasgow³⁷. As a result, the migrants arriving were not as predominantly Roman Catholic as elsewhere. In 1819, the number of Irish Catholics in the city was 8,245 out of a total number of 15,208 Irish in a population of about 140,000³⁸. As the census of 1821 revealed a total of 25,000 natives of Ireland within a population of 147,000, the 1819 figures are probably considerably short of the actual numbers of immigrants in 1819. By 1831, when the population of the city was 202,426, Handley lists the total number of Irish as 35,554 of which number 19,333 were Catholics.³⁹ These data demonstrate the diversity of the Irish coming to Glasgow is gained. The Protestant element of this migration while known has not been appreciated for its magnitude. In 1831, just less than half of the Irish in Glasgow were Protestant. This composition has a significant impact on assimilation,

³⁷ I.C.G. Hutchinson, “Glasgow Working Class Politics” R.A. Cage, ed. *The Working Class in Glasgow 175-1914*. (London: Croon Helm, 1987) p.129.

³⁸ Cleland, *The Former and Present State of Glasgow*, p.21.

³⁹ Handley. *The Irish in Scotland*, p.55.

occupational destination and the value of the migrants to the economy in question. More discussion of this will follow later in this paper.

As well, utilizing these figures it is apparent that the number of Irish in Glasgow was relatively consistent over time, unlike the figures for Liverpool. As figure 2 shows, the percentage of Irish-born throughout this period fluctuated much more in Liverpool. This consistency of migration to Glasgow would suggest that the population was less frictional to the infrastructure.

The Nature of the of Glasgow and Liverpool Society

Glasgow at the turn of the century was a strong mercantile and growing industrial hub. While it had a clear need for cheap and plentiful labour to fill factory jobs, the burgeoning economy also required skilled labour and commercial positions. The Scots themselves were first in line for these skilled positions. In fact, in “Glasgow, with its high ratio of skilled jobs, there was less economic friction [than in Liverpool], since the poorly educated immigrants, totally lacking local connections, simply could not compete for them.⁴⁰” It was to the less skilled positions that the bulk of the Irish migrants applied. There was a tremendous call for labour in the mills and coal mines that Scots were reluctant to undertake due to poor work conditions and low pay.⁴¹ In the Glasgow area in particular, trades such as construction, transportation, dockside labour, food distribution and domestic service attracted the Irish⁴².

Glasgow was also a city of migrants. Unlike other cities whose populations grew consistently and stably over time, Glasgow’s growth was so rapid that from 1800-1830, it was a city largely composed of newcomers. As John Smith noted in his evidence to the select committee, “In my opinion the population of Glasgow may be divided into five parts, of which the native inhabitants would be one fifth, the lowlanders two fifths, the Highlanders one fifth and the Irish one fifth.”⁴³ So instead of being the few visible migrants, the Irish fit into what was largely an urban milieu of newcomers. This would eventually change, but at the outset as a community is built, the Irish were largely just one more group of newcomers.

Liverpool, dissimilarly to Glasgow in this respect, was more the product of its locality. More significantly, it was largely Catholic. Liverpool was a natural Irish Catholic destination, being situated in “...one of the few parts of England not wholly converted to Protestantism in the

⁴⁰ Tom Gallagher. Glasgow the Uneasy Peace: Religious Tension in Modern Scotland 1819-1914. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).p.14.

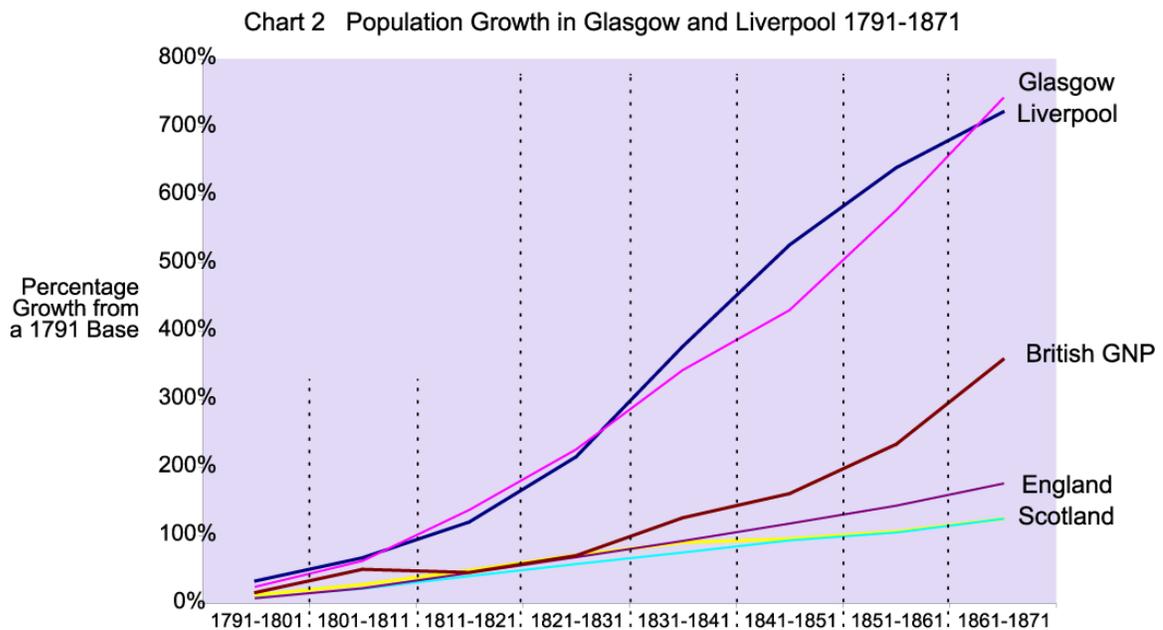
⁴¹ Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.109.

⁴² M.A.G O Tuathaig, “The Irish in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Problems of Integration”, cited in Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.109.

⁴³ Evidence to the Select Committee on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, 1836. Appendix G, p.455 (xxix)

Reformation.”⁴⁴ The economic structure of Liverpool was quite different from that of Glasgow. As a largely mercantile and transshipping city, it demanded unskilled labour for most of its employment. Unlike Glasgow, the native population was employed in unskilled positions. New arrivals from Ireland were direct competition. It was also located much closer to the Irish ports of Dublin, Drogheda, Wexford and Cork. The distance between Belfast and Liverpool was slightly more than that between Belfast and Port Glasgow or Greenock. As a port, Liverpool handled twice the tonnage of Irish shipping than did the Scottish ports.⁴⁵

As was the case in both Glasgow and Liverpool, the rate of growth of the population was much greater than that of the economy that was supporting it. As Chart 2 shows, the differential between growths of population far exceeded that of the economy and this disparity increased over the period in question.



Source: Hunt, E.H. British Labour History 1815-1914.

Factors Supporting the Positive Influence

The Native Population of Glasgow Avoided Low-Skill Jobs

Throughout the testimony presented to the Commissioners on the Select Committee on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain in 1834, the overwhelming conclusion was that “...for

⁴⁴ Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.107.

⁴⁵ Frank Neal, Black '47: Britain and the Famine Irish, p. 53-54.

much of the labour that they undertook, the Irish had no competitors amongst the native population."⁴⁶ It was stated repeatedly that Scottish employers "...decidedly prefer the Irish as labourers, either to the English or the Scotch (sp); they work with more heart and good will, and are more civil and attentive. Highlanders could be got in sufficient numbers, but we do not like them so well; they are not so willing and obedient, nor so hardworking and industrious."⁴⁷ The Irish from Ulster were especially well suited to hand loom weaving as many had experience in the linen industry in Ireland. Employers found that they required little or no apprenticeship and picked up the task quickly⁴⁸. The mines were not available occupations in England at this time. Legislation forbade them from employment in these trades in England, due to a surplus of English labour.⁴⁹

In terms of whether the Irish were there to replace the Scots, testimony demonstrates that "we find them useful labourers, and their services are of considerable importance to us; at present we could not do without them. In this part of the country, the Scotch (sp) do not show too much disposition for labouring work; they would rather go to trades. Even the hand-loom weavers, whose wages are so low, do not either themselves attempt to be labourers, or bring up their children to it."⁵⁰ This further establishes the predominance that Ulster played as the source of Irish migration to the west of Scotland as the bulk of the Irish linen industry was located there⁵¹.

The native supplies of labour that moved from rural or northern regions to the rapidly industrializing south, however, did not offer what the employers required. "The Highlanders are largely a pastoral, a fishing, or an agricultural people, and are not suited to the work of factories or to weaving; they are moreover, less ready and willing to work than the Irish and show themselves less facility in adapting themselves to new kinds of labour."⁵²

This is not to create the impression that there was not competition for employment. In the iron industry and in coal mining, the Irish were in direct competition with the native population. However, due to the economic growth demand for labour in these industries usually exceeded

⁴⁶ Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, p.74.

⁴⁷ BPP, Evidence to the Select Committee on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, p.456. Evidence of Mr. Sinclair of Greenock.

⁴⁸ Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, p.48.

⁴⁹ Hunt, *British Labour History 1815-1914*, p.165.

⁵⁰ BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p.456 (xxx). Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee, Evidence of Dr. Kay of Manchester. Evidence of William Dixon.

⁵¹ O Grada, *Ireland: A New Economic History*, p. 61.

⁵² BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p.455. Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee,

supply and the Irish were not taking jobs away from natives.⁵³ The fact that there was a surplus demand for labour is key to appreciating the economic value of the Irish migrants.

It is clear that the Irish were not displacing native labour supply. They were augmenting it through acceptance of positions that were unwanted by the native population⁵⁴. In fact, more recent conjecture points to this increase in employment in menial trades as being crucial to the creation of skilled jobs elsewhere. This linkage implies that, not only were the Irish not taking jobs elsewhere; they were essentially creating openings for the native population. "It was not a case of Scots abandoning types of unskilled labour to the strangers in favour of the skilled branches, because both the skilled and unskilled forms of labour were new ones, created and being created by the requirements of the industrial revolution that was underway. The Irish in Scotland made that revolution in part possible and by their labour established jobs for Scottish workers."⁵⁵

The occupational structure of Glasgow during the first half of the nineteenth century was significantly different from that of Liverpool. Liverpool was predominantly a mercantile and commercial port city, with a far higher ratio of menial and unskilled jobs. Like Glasgow, the Irish arrived to work on the Liverpool-Manchester railroad and displaced native workers. Unlike Scotland, however, only about one tenth of 'navvies' were Irish, because the English adopted violent means to prevent them from taking up jobs⁵⁶. The natives were already working in the areas that the new arrivals sought employment in. Liverpool, as a result was less able to absorb a large number of migrants who were better suited to industrial tasks where they wouldn't compete with skilled natives.⁵⁷ The arrival of the Irish brought them into direct competition with the native population.

In Glasgow, there was a large mercantile class as well, but it was involved heavily in the industrial trades where it required cheap unskilled labourers. There was a high ratio of skilled jobs to unskilled and economic growth only opened up opportunity for migrants to enter at the bottom rung of the social scale. The Irish filled these positions providing no competition to the more skilled workforce⁵⁸.

⁵³ Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, p.75.

⁵⁴ Hunt, *British Labour History*, p.164.

⁵⁵ Handley, *The Irish in Scotland*, p.74.

⁵⁶ Harris, *The Nearest Place that Wasn't Ireland*, p. 157.

⁵⁷ Gallagher. "A Tale of Two Cities", p.110.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.110.

Migration to Glasgow coincided with a Booming Economy

The Famine is often held up as the cause of the great number of migrant Irish. This was not the case in Glasgow. Other than the fact that Glasgow experienced more immigration prior to the famine years than after, the famine migrants largely did not head for the west of Scotland. Handley estimates that approximately 115,000 Irish migrants arrived permanently in Scotland during the period 1840-1851⁵⁹. As figure 1 demonstrates, the pace of migration to Glasgow from Ireland was largely constant throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. While there was some increase, on a ratio with the burgeoning population of the city it was hardly significant. Even though there was a significant temporary increase in the number of arrivals during this period, it did not have the impact that it had elsewhere. This can be attributed to two principal reasons: Ulster was always the chief source of Irish migration to Ireland and it was not as badly affected by the famine. Secondly, the industrial economy of west-central Scotland was at the peak of its expansion and was able to cope with large amounts of cheap unskilled labour.⁶⁰ Without specific business cycle numbers it is difficult to chart the specific case of Glasgow.

Figure 3

Irish-Born as a Proportion of Population of Scotland, England and Wales, 1841-1861

1841	No. of Irish-Born	% of Population
England & Wales	291,000	1.8%
Scotland	126,000	4.8%
1851		
England & Wales	520,000	2.9%
Scotland	207,000	7.2%
1861		
England & Wales	602,000	3%
Scotland	204,000	6.6%

Source: Frank Neal, Sectarian Violence, p. 8.

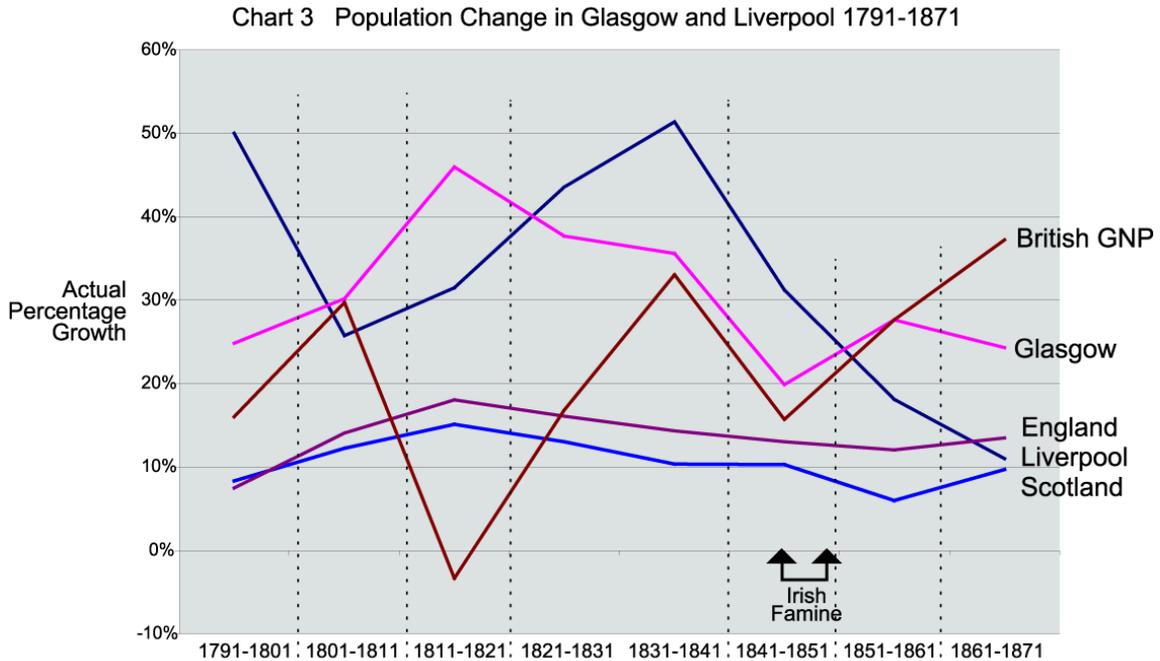
The famine migration to Liverpool is in stark contrast with Glasgow. “300,000 Irish arrived in Liverpool during the first half of 1847 alone.”⁶¹ This exodus came to a city with a total population of around 300,000 permanent inhabitants. The situation was tense and despite the fact that the bulk of those same migrants quickly took ship for places further a field, the friction with the existing population was intense. “Many moved on...but many stayed, so that by 1851...[Irish

⁵⁹ Handley, The Irish in Scotland, p.198.

⁶⁰ Gallagher. “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.107.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.107.

were] making up 33% of the working class.”⁶² At this same time Liverpool was experiencing a trough in its business cycle. There was already rampant unemployment among the native population.



Source: E.H. Hunt, British Labour History 1815-1914.

The coincidence in Glasgow with migration arriving at times when the economy was booming made a huge contribution to its ability to absorb immigration. As Gallagher tells us, “The famine did not overwhelm the amenities or living space in Glasgow as it did in Liverpool”⁶³ As figure 3 shows, even in raw national numbers, the rate of growth of the Irish population of Scotland was not as rapid, and even began to fall in the decade following the famine migration.

Industrial Growth in Textile Industry

Key to the success of industrial growth in Glasgow and in Scotland as a whole in the nineteenth century was the availability of cheap and plentiful labour supply. In the case of Glasgow, the Irish migrants were a significant supply of this labour. Two industries placed principal demand on this labour supply: textiles and mining.

⁶² Ibid., p.107.

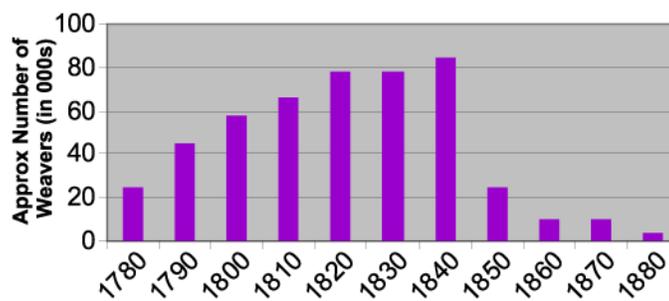
⁶³ Ibid., p.107.

The textile industry was the single largest employer of labour in the country. Sir John Sinclair, in his Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, claims “Scottish textiles employed nine-tenths of the occupied industrial labour force in the 1820’s.”⁶⁴ This is an enormous amount. The second largest industry by employment was that of the iron industry. It was, however, dwarfed by that of textiles as it “occupied only one-half, one sixth and one-twelfth of the numbers employed in woolens, linens and cottons respectively.”⁶⁵

The handloom weaving industry of Scotland was concentrated upon Glasgow and the west of Scotland. This area offered a damp environment and ready access to raw materials via the Clyde ports. The industry itself had evolved from processing woolens to working with flax spinning (linen) and finally by the early nineteenth century, cotton was the primary raw material. Increasingly after 1800, semi-finished cotton wool was being sent to the weavers in Scotland from Lancashire in England⁶⁶. Scotland dominated this industry with much of the capital that had been accumulated in the Tobacco industry being re-invested in the rapid growth of the textile industry.

With this huge demand for labour in the textile industry, we can expect that growth in this sector would account for a significant majority of labour demand in the country. The following chart demonstrates the explosive rise and decline of the Hand Loom Weaving industry.

**Chart 4
Hand Loom Weavers
in Scotland 1780-1880**



Source: Norman Murray. The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers 1790-1850

This is of particular interest to this study as of the workers employed in this industry in “...some sixty-five percent of all hand looms in Scotland in 1838 were in low grade work, and this

⁶⁴ Sinclair, Analysis of the Statistical Account of Scotland, p.321.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.321.

⁶⁶ Norman Murray, Scottish Hand Loom Weavers 1790-1850: A Social History, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1978), p. 4.

was the sector of the trade to which the immigrant Irish were to above all attracted."⁶⁷ In terms of numbers, "it would not be unreasonable to suggest that by 1838, some thirty percent of Scottish hand loom weavers were born in Ireland. If second generation Irish were included, the percentage would undoubtedly be higher. With declining wages after 1840 the Irish were of even greater importance, as fewer Scots than Irish were putting their children to the handloom."⁶⁸ Even more importantly, this suggests that the wages were a product of something other than the simple fact that the Irish would work cheaper. The value of the Irish to this industry was stated: "I do not think it would have been possible to have got hands for the trade of this town without the Irish,"⁶⁹ and that "In this vast industry [hand loom weaving] where the necessary skill was easy and rapidly acquired numerous Irish women and children found employment."⁷⁰ And supporting the idea that the Scottish tended to avoid employment in these trades, an employer stated that, "The Irish, or descendants of the Irish, are found to predominate in all spinning and weaving mills. This is a great measure owing to the aversion that the Scotch (sp) had of allowing their children to go into a cotton mill."⁷¹

The decline of the Hand Loom Weaving industry in Ireland undoubtedly contributed to the emigration of Irish seeking similar employment elsewhere. The Irish linen industry hit hard times between 1770 and 1790 and many weavers moved to Scotland⁷². The availability of employment in Scotland in an ascendant industry was the obvious destination. In his work on British labour history, E.H. Hunt posits that the large-scale availability of the willing handloom weavers from Ireland probably contributed protracted decline of this industry in Scotland⁷³. Handloom weaving peaked in the 1840s and rapidly declined with the advent of power weaving.

The Lancashire textile Mills in the Liverpool area went through rapid growth in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. In fact, in the early 1830s, there were mills standing idle, lacking operatives. Following the downturn in the trade cycle in 1836, and the shuttering of running mills, the Lancashire weaving industry lost ground and never regained pre-downturn

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.33. Murray accepts a rather dubious assumption in his calculations when he asserts the possibility that because 30% of the hand loom weavers employed at relief work on Glasgow Green in 1819 were Irish-born, then it is probable that 30% of the weavers in Glasgow are Irish born.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p.33.

⁶⁹ Handley. The Irish in Scotland, p.58.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.56.

⁷¹ Ibid., p.57.

⁷² Graham Walker, "The Protestant Irish in Scotland", in T.M. Devine, Irish Immigrants and the Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1991), p.45-46.

⁷³ Hunt, British Labour History, p.164.

numbers⁷⁴. The role of this Irish in this industry has been recognized, but dissimilar work legislation precluded the Irish from making the same inroads in England as they did in Scotland⁷⁵. With a migrant population that was predominantly from the south, experience in weaving was less likely than that to Glasgow.

Industrial Growth in the Mining Industry

The other industry that was experiencing rapid growth and demanded vast supplies of labour was the mining industry. Lanarkshire coalfields grew in importance from the 1780s. Scottish coal, however, was deficient in iron content and when used as coking coal required greater amounts and was thus more expensive. The high costs of transportation, however, allowed for its survival and consumption locally. In the 1830s, the introduction of new smelting processes revolutionized the Scottish iron industry⁷⁶. Industrial output, which had risen 100% between 1796 and 1828, grew 500% between 1828 and 1838. Even with the smelting process efficiencies, the production of iron still required huge amounts of coal and the demand for labour in the coalmines outstripped supply. Demand for labour doubled between 1830 and 1841, and then was triple by 1871⁷⁷. The explosive growth that was largely focused on Lanarkshire and the Glasgow area was an immediate draw for Irish labour. Testimony before the Select Committee again provides that:

The Irish in the coalmines with us bear good character; ... they are fully more obedient and tractable than the natives, and are not so much given to combine; they are lively. They are very much disposed to learn anything you put them to; they do not find so many difficulties in beginning any thing new. An Irishman, who has never seen the mouth of a coal-pit in his life, has no hesitation in going down and commencing what you ask him to do. They are, perhaps quicker at taking anything new than the Scotch (sp).⁷⁸

The Irish were particularly sought after in the mines. Available figures indicate that in the Coatbridge District, the employment of Irish-born rose to just under 50% of the workforce by 1851⁷⁹. The Irish were favoured as they were extremely hard workers who would work the 'ironstone' which was harder to cut than coal veins themselves⁸⁰. As one mine owner testified to the Select Committee: "the boundless coalfields beneath us, and the boundless mines of labour,

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.60.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p.165.

⁷⁶ Alan Campbell, The Lanarkshire Miners: A Social History of their Trade Unions, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1979), pp.93-94.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.94.

⁷⁸ BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p.xxx. Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee, Evidence of William Dixon.

⁷⁹ Campbell, The Lanarkshire Miners, p. 178. This figure, he argues, is probably higher when accounting for second and third generation Irish.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.178.

so to speak, existing for us in Ireland, form together one of the great secrets of the almost unparalleled prosperity of this part of Scotland.”⁸¹

In both of these high growth industries, the factor that emerged was that the Irish were significant players, the demand for labour was high and generally employers attested well to their adaptability and value to the work. They did not take jobs from native workers, in fact the Irish seem to be moving into jobs that the native population generally found to be beneath their dignity or for other reasons had an aversion to. This contribution to a burgeoning economy is ultimately the pivot point of the contribution of the Irish migrant groups in the early nineteenth century.

Downward Wage Pressure Boosted Economy

One of the major charges leveled at the Irish migrants as they found work in Glasgow was that they depressed the wage that was being offered. As mentioned earlier, the fact that the Irish were unaccustomed to high wages and had a lower standard of living was seen as suggesting that they were responsible for a general lowering of the standard of living of native workers. There is clear implication that this was not the case in the handloom weaving industry, following 1850, when a lessening of demand for labour contributed to the lowering of wages⁸². In the coal mining industry, demand for labour stayed ahead of supply and downward wage pressure was not exerted until the late nineteenth-century⁸³.

There are three perceived ways in which the Irish could effect the lowering of the native standard of living: by taking work, by reducing wages, and by weakening trade union movements. While it was determined that many cases existed where natives worked alongside the immigrant for a higher wage, more often, the native was forced to accept what the immigrant was willing to work for, or seek alternate means of employment.⁸⁴ The additional downward pressure arose from the use of Irish migrants as strikebreakers. This occurred predominantly among the Lanarkshire miners, and was exacerbated by the additional dimension of deliberate antagonism amongst the Irish between Protestant and Catholic strikebreakers.⁸⁵ This did not occur, though, until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

⁸¹ BPP 1836, vol. XXXIV, Appendix G, p. xxvii . Report of the Select Committee of the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain. Reports from Committee.

⁸² Murray, *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers*, p. 75.

⁸³ Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners*, p.35.

⁸⁴ Hunt, *British Labour History*, p.167.

⁸⁵ Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners*, p.181.

As to the general charge, one of the first questions to ask is to whether the Irish themselves can be held responsible for the lowering of wages. To a degree, through strike breaking employment in the mining industry in particular, there is evidence of this. From the standpoint of adding surplus labour to the marketplace, thus depressing the value of labour, this has to be contested. Evidence such as that provided to the 1836 Select Committee on the State of the Irish Poor in Great Britain, would suggest otherwise. Repeatedly in testimony we hear that “By the 1830’s the underlying profitability of the Scottish economy was apparent, and the widening of capital proceeded at an unprecedented level, with dramatic growth in the metallurgical and mining industries, followed in the 1840’s by the great expansion in the transport system.”⁸⁶ The Irish migrants were seen as components of a rather scarce commodity due to the rapid growth of the economy. The state’s management of the economy was something that waited for Keynes in the twentieth century, “But population growth of the nineteenth century had to proceed in a most judicious manner to stimulate rapid economic growth. At too fast a rate, it would have put great pressure on capital and other factors of production. Too much of National Income would have been diverted to current consumption and not enough saved for future investment.”⁸⁷

The second question that must be answered is simply; did lower wages adversely affect the economy?

Lower Wages Increased Gross Profit and Potential for Capital Re-investment

Given the nature of the booming economy and the need for capital for expansion, the decreased cost of production could have been timely. In fact, as to the specific industries in Glasgow, its mercantilist base was probably buoyed by this lower cost structure. There may well have been downward wage pressure exerted within local areas by the arrival of Irish workers willing to settle for lower wages. Throughout the report of the Select Committee there is continual testimony to this perception. Employers were quick to establish that “, the Irish undoubtedly helped to depress real wages and conditions by working longer for lower rates of pay.”⁸⁸ The testimony here is somewhat suspect. When one considers that it was employers testifying before the committee, one would have to question why they would complain about downward pressure on wages and conditions. It would seem that such factors would favour their profits. Obviously elements of anti-Irish racism would enter into the picture, but these statements seem in harsh contrast to the compliments paid to the hard-working Irish that were the

⁸⁶ S.G.E. Lythe and J. Butt. An Economic History of Scotland 1100-1939. (Glasgow: Blackie, 1975), pp.104-5.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.101.

⁸⁸ Gallagher. Glasgow the Uneasy Peace, p.14.

backbone of many industries of these same employers. An additional reason for questioning this idea that the Irish lowered wages is that there was a general surplus of demand for labour throughout much of this period⁸⁹. It would have been a convenient scapegoat to look to the Irish as reasons for not getting an expected rise amongst workers, but hardly among employers.

Even if we accept that there was this pressure, the immediate question has to be is this downward wage pressure a negative factor in the economy, as a whole, in a time of rapid growth? Lacking the central bank's ability to attempt to manage the economy, it can be easily argued that the lower wage demand had the potential to allow greater profitability within a market where there was greater scarcity of capital. This allowed for the perpetuation of growth, outside of consideration for external demand. The impact of wages on the profitability is a complex issue that would also introduce additional economic factors such as internal and external demand for the products of Glasgow's industries. Nonetheless, in a general sense, downward wage pressure was probably more beneficial to the economy than it may have appeared to individual constituents within the economy.

Less Residential Religious or Ethnic Segregation in Glasgow

Regardless of whether the charge of wage depression is supportable or not, the perception is enough to lead to labour friction and the possibility of sectarian violence. The evidence we have is that there were limited occurrences of such violence, but this does not become a frequent occurrence until the 1870s⁹⁰. There were a number of incidents reported in the 1830s and 1840s, but it is not until after the 12th of July Orange demonstrations in 1854, that religious overtones started to play a large role. Over the next twenty years, St. Patrick's Day and the 'Glorious 12th' became annual rituals⁹¹. They did not seem to truly get out of hand, however, and with the rise of the power of unions, class as opposed to religion became a more divisive factor⁹².

Liverpool however is a different story. In both the textile and mining industries of Lancashire, the Irish find employment. In the textile mills of Lancashire, the 1830s were a boom time that quickly went bust. Sectarian riots were reported as early as 1819 in Liverpool⁹³. Victorian England as a whole is described as being endemically anti-Catholic. Cases of religiously motivated acts were a common occurrence in Liverpool.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Hunt, *British Labour History*, p.167.

⁹⁰ Gallagher, "A Tale of Two Cities", p.115.

⁹¹ Campbell, *The Lanarkshire Miners*, pp.181-185.

⁹² Gallagher, "A Tale of Two Cities", p.117.

⁹³ Howard Channon, *Portrait of Liverpool*, (London: Robert Hale, 1972), p.74.

⁹⁴ Neal, *Sectarian Violence*, p. 40-41.

One of the biggest differences between the situation in Liverpool and that in Glasgow was the complete lack of religious segregation. While there are references to “Little Irelands” in Tom Gallagher’s discussion of communal strife in Glasgow and Liverpool⁹⁵, there is a clear distinction drawn that, there is an “absence of complete residential segregation in Glasgow.”⁹⁶ This appears to have been the case in Glasgow because of the number of migrants in general that spilled into the city in more consistent numbers (see figure 1). Class distinctions played a larger role in the Glasgow case of determining area of residence. Combined with the more consistent rate of migration, allowed for natural growth of community and did not result in ethnic or religious segregation. The Irish were scattered throughout the central wards of Glasgow, amongst the Highlanders and other working class Scots. The only identifiable ghetto did not develop until the late nineteenth century and even then it was not exclusive, being shared with Polish Jews in the Govan.⁹⁷ It is not the case that there were not “little Irelands” formed in areas of Glasgow, but that they did not have the residential enclaving as happened did in Liverpool.

In Liverpool, “the watertight nature of residential segregation along religious lines...distinguished the Liverpool Irish from Irishmen in Glasgow [as did the Liverpool Irish] hostility to the city.”⁹⁸ In Liverpool, the Irish Catholics were so clustered in the Scotland Road area that they could elect their own M.P. to Parliament⁹⁹. Ghettoization was endemic to Liverpool, with specific areas dedicated to the Welsh, the Irish Protestant and even the ship owners.¹⁰⁰ There were huge concentrations of Irish in particular wards in Liverpool. In the districts of St. Bartholomew’s, Vauxhall and the North-End in 1841, the proportion of Irish-born residents were over 51%, 46% and 42% respectively¹⁰¹. Adding to this mixture the Liverpool Irish, which Neal feels “outnumbered the Irish-born up to 1841,”¹⁰² a picture of the complete ethnic segregation is revealed.

Sectarianism as it was expressed in Liverpool was something that existed far above the simple arrival of the Irish migrants. It was the product of Protestant Catholic tension that stretched back the reformation. Nonetheless the arrival of the famine Irish exacerbated an already tense situation and also provided a visible target for outlet of the building tension. As Neal states, “...the

⁹⁵ Gallagher, “A Tale of Two Cities”, p.108.

⁹⁶ Gallagher, Glasgow the Uneasy Peace, p.101.

⁹⁷ Joan Smith, “Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool”, Workshop Journal 17 (Spring 1984), p.49.

⁹⁸ Gallagher. “A Tale of Two Cities”, pp.108-9.

⁹⁹ Smith, “Labour Tradition in Glasgow and Liverpool”, p.49.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.49.

¹⁰¹ Neal, Sectarian Violence, p.12.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.12.

consequences of Irish immigration into Victorian Britain following the famine of 1845-49 resulted in profound and permanent changes in the social structure of certain towns, Liverpool and Glasgow in particular."¹⁰³

High Proportion of Protestant Irish Assimilated Easier into a Protestant Native Population

As mentioned earlier, over a third of the Irish migrants to Scotland in the eighteenth century were Protestants hailing from the north of Ireland¹⁰⁴. This meant that the Irish migrant could not be seen as simply a homogeneous group. In fact, the religious friction between the two Irish groups was as fierce as that from the host society¹⁰⁵. More importantly, however, large chunks of the migrant population were closer to the culture and values of the native community that aided in their easier assimilation into the host society. While some Protestants from Ulster might even have seen migration to Scotland as a homecoming, many were aware of the familiarity of the society in which they found themselves.

Many of these Protestant Irish arrived in the seasonal influx that participated in such skilled trades as shipbuilding, and machining in the Clydebank area. This migration also allowed for fluctuations in the business cycles between Belfast and Glasgow where industrial specialization were similar¹⁰⁶.

In Liverpool, there is less available data concerning the percentages of Protestants arriving as migrants. The Irish migrants that arrived in Liverpool were predominantly Catholic.¹⁰⁷ What we do know, however, is that they arrived into a pre-existing situation fraught with religious tension. In addition to this, the "divisions of class, culture and nationality proved greater than the bonds of religion."¹⁰⁸ This created a particularly incendiary situation that worsened significantly following 1847.

In Glasgow, a large chunk of the Irish migrant community looked to their fellow co-religionists in the Protestant community for support and for acceptance when they arrived. The Irish protestant was more likely to find his way into a position of skilled employment and was much more easily assimilated into the native culture¹⁰⁹. A large element of this Protestant culture was the Loyal Orange Order.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.x.

¹⁰⁴ Handley. *The Irish in Scotland*, p.55.

¹⁰⁵ Walker, "Protestant Irish in Scotland", pp.50-51.

¹⁰⁶ John Butt, "Belfast and Glasgow: Connections and Comparisons, 1790-1850" in T.M. Devine and David Dickson, *Ireland And Scotland 1600-1850*, p.198.

¹⁰⁷ Gallagher. "A Tale of Two Cities", pp.107-108.

¹⁰⁸ Hunt, *British Labour History*, p.162.

¹⁰⁹ Handley. *The Irish in Scotland*, p.56.

Nature of Orangeism in Glasgow is Less Militant

The founding of the Loyal Orange Institution in September 1795 in Armagh¹¹⁰ saw the creation of a bigoted militant group dedicated first and foremost to countering the threat posed by Roman Catholics within the British Empire and, secondly, to fostering loyalty to this same Empire. While it flourished in Ulster in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries largely among the ranks of working class Protestants, by the 1820's there was a move to export the order and its ideals to Scotland, England and British North America¹¹¹. While the Orange Order conjures up images of religious intolerance and cries of no-popery, studies of the Order's nature abroad suggest that first and foremost it was a Loyalist order. It was dedicated to the sense of maintaining strong political and cultural link with the Britain¹¹². It was also dedicated to opposing movements such as Home Rule for Ireland in the above-mentioned areas or in North America to ideas of greater affinity with the United States or less close ties with the "mother country".

In Scotland, the anti-Roman Catholic rhetoric was second to the loyalist pledge. This is not to suggest that there were not anti-Catholic tenets. But is it clear in the writings of Elaine McFarland, Ruth-Ann Harris as well as Steve Bruce that the order lacked the outright anti-catholic militancy that it demonstrated in Ulster¹¹³. Elaine McFarland goes as far as to say that not only was Orangeism less militant than Ulster, but it is even less so than any other major transplantation of the order."¹¹⁴

This tendency towards less religious militant action was quite specific to Glasgow. In the eventual case, Joan Smith illustrates the natural bias towards the Independent Labour Party and class affiliation rather than religious in her study of working class culture in Glasgow and Liverpool. While she is looking towards the early twentieth century she points out that Glasgow is seen as the "skilled workers city" and that the vernacular was attached to a liberalism that marginalized both militant Protestantism and in particular the Orange order.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Walker, "The Protestant Irish in Scotland", p.51.

¹¹¹ Neal, Sectarian Violence, p.18.

¹¹² Cecil Houston and William Smith, Sash Canada Wore: A Geographic History of the Orange Order in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

¹¹³ Steve Bruce, No Pope of Rome, (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1984), p.246, "Scots, unlike the Ulster Protestants did not feel themselves surrounded."

¹¹⁴ McFarland, Protestants First, p.207.

¹¹⁵ Joan Smith Commonsense and Working Class Consciousness: Some Aspects of Glasgow and Liverpool Labour Movements in the Early Years of the 20th Century, PhD Thesis, Edinburgh, 1984 in McFarland, Protestants First, p.22.

In Liverpool, where the Order was particularly strong, “ritualistic practices frequently outraged popular feeling in the city.”¹¹⁶ The order found a more homogenous Roman Catholic Irish migrant an easy, available and opportune target in Liverpool. It was a two way street as well, as Orange parades in 1819 and 1820 were attacked by native Catholic and Irish Catholic groups which were numerically superior at this time¹¹⁷. The Orange Order grew much more rapidly in Lancashire in particular. In 1841, there were as many Orange Lodges in Lancashire including Liverpool as there were in all of Scotland¹¹⁸.

The mitigation of Orangeism in Scotland owes much to the Kirk as well, which was largely in support of the Catholic Emancipation. In fact, “The main blow against Anti-Catholicism in the Kirk came from Thomas Chalmers.”¹¹⁹ While the Presbyterian churches could hardly be held up as models of ecumenical charity, their acceptance of the rights of Catholics amongst the church hierarchy went a long way to confining the Orange Order to a margin of mainstream political and religious action in Scotland¹²⁰.

The impact of this marginalization and reduction in militancy on the protestant side of the game contributed to the minimal amount of sectarian violence evinced in Glasgow during this period of time. The existence of a more homogenous and isolated Roman Catholic Irish community along with any marginalizing factors led to the greater amounts of violence that took place in Liverpool.

Glasgow was a City of Migrants

Glasgow in the first part of the nineteenth century one made up primarily of migrants. James Cleland estimated that only about of a fifth of the population of Glasgow in 1919 was actually born in Glasgow or immediate area¹²¹. This lack of homogeneity was not true even in nearby Port Glasgow or Paisley, where the native population remained dominantly native-born who were both physically and occupationally challenged by the newly arrived migrants¹²².

For the first part of the nineteenth century, therefore, the migrant was the common element in Glasgow, and the native was the minority. Although the city was forced to physically expand rapidly to deal with increase in population, and the infrastructure was strained by the inflows,

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.207.

¹¹⁷ Neal, Sectarian Violence, p. 40-41.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.36.

¹¹⁹ Bruce, No Pope of Rome, p.30.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p.30-31.

¹²¹ Cleland, The Former and Present State of Glasgow, p.21.

¹²² Ibid., 21.

most people found themselves newcomers and sharing the same challenges. The Irish, while visible and substantial were facing the same struggles to eke out a living as the bulk of the rest of the population. As would be later echoed in the cross-ethnic appeal to class divisions, the picture was not one of a homogenous single ethnic group seeking to establish a place on its own within a pre-existing structure.

Conclusion

The natural flow of Irish increased at the end of the eighteenth century. Economic constraints forced many to seek a new life outside of Ireland. Both Glasgow and Liverpool, large growing urban centres, offered Irish migrants new opportunities. Through factors such as rate of migration, growth of the cities themselves, and the way in which the Irish situated themselves in their new surroundings, they experienced vastly different situations between these two cities. While the Irish fulfilled a strong demand for cheap and unskilled labour that native Scots were unwilling to accept, the Irish seeking the same employment in Liverpool were in direct competition with the native population. The skilled workers that came from Ireland tended more towards the west of Scotland and Glasgow where they found employment in the mills and mines that were growing so fast that the supply of native labour could not keep up. The cultural makeup of the populations of Glasgow and Liverpool differed significantly in religious composition, which marginalized the smaller Irish Catholic community in the north, but was not threatened by it. Essentially, even though the size of the Catholic community grew substantially, it did not affect the balance of power. In Liverpool on the other hand which was already significantly Catholic, the arrival of a larger group of Irish Catholics threatened and did affect the balance between Protestant and Catholic, and thus served as an incendiary influence on already threatened groups.

The Irish migration of the early nineteenth century was an essential part of the cultural and economic circumstances that shaped Glasgow and Liverpool during their rapid industrialization.

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