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Sons of Exile: The United Irishmen in Transnational Perspective 1791-1827

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SONS OF EXILE:
THE UNITED IRISHMEN IN TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
1791-1827

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In

HISTORY

by

Muiris A. MacGiollabhuí

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The Dissertation of Muiris A. MacGiollabhuí is
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<u>Abstract</u>

**Sons of Exile: The United Irishmen In Transnational Perspective,
1791-1827**

Muiris MacGiollabhui

My dissertation produces a transnational history of the United Irishmen and
recasts them as Atlantic, rather than solely Irish, revolutionaries. The United Irishmen
were formed in 1791 as an organization dedicated to reform initiatives, one of which
was Catholic emancipation, but by 1795, as a result of their criminalization by the
British Government, their existence became clandestine, and their means violent. In
1798, they rebelled against an oppressive British Government and instead of facing
the hangman's noose, although many United Irishmen did, they were subjected, en
masse, to exile. Their expulsion brought an end to rebellion in Ireland and flung them
into Atlantic geographies still in revolt. My dissertation maps the transnational exile
of the United Irishmen throughout the Atlantic world, including the United States,
Eastern Canada, and Jamaica. This project is informed by historians' calls to
internationalize Irish history and integrates Irish migrants into the "Green Atlantic": a
network of Irish people spread throughout the Atlantic world.

By studying the exile of the United Irishmen, it is possible to ask a question
that is pertinent to the late eighteenth century generally: what did it mean to be
revolutionary during the "Age of Revolution"? This dissertation shows that on
matters of race, gender, and democratic participation, the political ideology of the
United Irishmen was fraught with inconsistencies and contradictions. Each chapter
addresses this theme, querying how the United Irishmen in exile addressed matters of

race, gender, imperialism, and political participation. The history of the United

Irishmen, seen more acutely outside of Ireland, shows the messy nature of political

ideology and the inconsistencies with which the United Irishmen participated in

world events.

Smith, Taylor Kirsch, Bristol Cave-La Coste, and Dr. Ben Pietrenka, who all read drafts of my chapters and gave insightful feedback. Dr. Adam Thomas, a fellow academic whom I met in Jamaica in 2014, was there to give advice at any turn with the dissertation and job market. Dr. Esther Sahle, whom I was a fellow alongside at the Library Company of Philadelphia, always ready to lend an ear to the qualms of a disgruntled graduate student. Close friends, Elliot Smith, Colin Carney, Dr. David Fryxell, Dr. Justin Cummings, Omar Kutbi, and Hayley Neutzel reminded me what life looks away from a laptop screen and gave me a sense of balance. A special debt of gratitude is reserved for Dr. Lindsay Weinberg who drove me to be as accomplished an academic as possible. I am forever grateful to have had her support during the final years and months of research and writing.

My family inspired me to pursue a career in academia. My father, Seán, fostered my love of history by furnishing me with history books starting at a young age. To this day, he organizes trips for the two of us to visit historic sites—his excitement to continue learning is unbounded. My brothers, Niall, Shane, and Naoise, all older than me, always inspired me with their intellectual curiosity for knowledge, which we applied during family holidays spent debating and sparring, lovingly, with one another. Máire was always there to chat through life as a graduate student, reveling in the moments of success, and softening the blows of failure.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

A Map of Ireland
Thomas Lynch (1799)

Library Company of Philadelphia

Introduction

The cause it is good, and the men they are true,
And the Green shall outlive both the Orange and Blue.
And the triumphs of Erin her daughters shall share
With the full swelling chest, and the fair flowing hair.
Their bosoms heave high for the worthy and brave,
But no coward shall rest in that soft-swelling wave;
Men of Erin! awake and make haste to be blest!
Rise! arch of the ocean, and queen of the West!

William Drennan, "When Erin First Rose" (1795)

Theobald Wolfe Tone sat alone in his jail cell on November 12, 1798, and

decided, rather than allowing his executioner the satisfaction of hanging him, he

would cut his own throat. While the death of Wolfe Tone did not signal the end of the

1798 rebellion in Ireland, it was symbolic of the great aspirations of a revolutionary

moment that had been building for a decade, only to collapse within three months.

Between June and October 1798, the Society of the United Irishmen set about

rebelling against British rule in Ireland, at times with the assistance of revolutionary

France, but the rebellion ended in the consolidation of power for British rule with the

Act of Union in 1800.[1] Although ending in failure in Ireland, the history of the United

Irishmen transnationally did not end in the final months of 1798, but instead

continued, away from Irish shores, in the armies of the British Empire, in the

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[1] In part, and ineffectively, it did continue in Ireland with a failed rebellion under Robert Emmet, a
brother of an exiled United Irishman, that occurred in 1803. See Ruan O'Donnell, *Robert Emmet and
the Rebellion of 1798* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003).

publishing houses of Democratic Republicans in Philadelphia, and in the steerage of

English transportation vessels. Banished to the frigid cold of Newfoundland, exiled

United Irishmen found solidarity with one another once again, and fomented

conspiracies against the British Empire from within: as soldiers in its regiments

abroad. They were complicit in systems of Atlantic slavery in the American South,

pushed back against the institution in cities like New York and Philadelphia, and may

have fought against slavocracy in the mountains of Jamaica alongside the rebellious

Trelawny Maroons. In Ireland, the crushing defeat of 1798 meant the end of

significant revolutionary agitation against British rule for two generations, but the

impact of the United Irishmen on the Atlantic world was tremendous and enduring.

The consequences described refer to both the tangible effects they had on the political

landscape of the Atlantic world by promulgating rebellion, promoting slavery, and

fomenting a limited "genteel" kind of revolutionary ideology that exemplified the late

eighteenth century's European rebels, broadly.[2] Wherever the United Irishmen found

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[2] For a detailed overview of the United Irishmen in exile, see Thomas Bartlett, (ed.) *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2003); David Brundage, "Recent Directions in the History of Irish American Nationalism," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, 4 (July 1, 2009): 82–89; David Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America: The Politics of Exile* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016); Nancy J. Curtin, *The United Irishmen: Popular Politics in Ulster and Dublin, 1791-1798* (Dublin: Clarendon Press, 1998); David Dickson, Daire Keogh, and Kevin Whelan (eds.). *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion* (Dublin, Ireland: The Lilliput Press Ltd, 1993); Michael Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 1997); Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988); Aidan O'Hara, "'The Entire Island Is United…': The Attempted United Irish Rising in Newfoundland, 1800," *History Ireland*, (2000): 18–21; Trevor Parkhill, "The Wild Geese of 1798: Emigrés of the Rebellion," *Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society* 19, no. 2 (2003): 118–35; Fergus Whelan, *Dissent into Treason: Unitarians, King-Killers and the Society of United Irishmen* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2010); Anne-Maree Whitaker, *Unfinished Revolution: United Irishmen in New South Wales, 1800-1810* (Sydney: Crossing Press, 1994); David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

themselves, they carried with them their "Green Bough"—the ideological statutes of their revolutionary politics—in all its complexity and contradiction.

The United Irishmen were formed in 1791 with three goals. First, the United Irishmen rejected continued interference by the British Government in Irish affairs, especially those affecting the merchant classes. Second, they wanted parliamentary reform, which had been a political theme in Ireland during the 1780s, most notably part of the political platform of the Volunteers. Finally, the United Irishmen called for greater union between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland and the dismantling of artificial boundaries that had been created by British policies such as the Penal Laws, which had made Catholics into second-class subjects. In short, they called for the abolition of "the differences that had long divided Irishmen."[3] The United Irishmen became frustrated by a failure to realize these goals and the increased criminalization of radical societies by 1795 forced the United Irishmen to become more clandestine and secretive. This frustration with their limited gains pushed them toward violent insurrection. In 1795 with the intention to garner a broader, more populist base of support, they merged with the overtly violent and often sectarian Defenders. During the winter of 1796 they invited the French Directory to invade Ireland, a plan which was eagerly pursued by the French leadership. However, due largely to terrible weather, as well as poor communication, of the 15,000 French soldiers that left Brest in 1797, not one landed in Ireland, except as prisoners of war. By involving the French who were at war with Britain, British officials now realized that the United

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[3] S. J. Connolly, *Divided Kingdom: Ireland 1630-1800* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 438.

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Irish movement needed to be stopped. Between 1796 and 1798, the British Government introduced more widescale punishment for involvement in the United Irishmen, notably the exiling of key figures. By 1798, seeing little other choice than outright rebellion, the United Irishmen revolted openly against the British Government.

Several of the key leaders, including Theobald Wolfe Tone, were sentenced to death, but the primary method of punishment for the United Irishmen found guilty of involvement in the 1798 Rebellion was exile. Instead of facing the hangman's noose, although many did, they were subjected, en masse, to forced expulsion from Ireland. Their expulsion brought an end to rebellion in Ireland and flung them into Atlantic geographies still in revolt. Revolutionary actions were still under way in places like St. Domingue, and yet to occur, but brewing, in Spanish colonies in Latin America. My dissertation maps the transnational exile of the United Irishmen from Newfoundland, Canada, to Jamaica, and explores the transoceanic web of United Irish exiles throughout the Atlantic world. While this dissertation accounts for the inconsistencies and continuities of the United Irish ideology transatlantically, it is not a comprehensive history of the United Irishmen in all these locales. Instead, it investigates what it meant to be a United Irishman in the Atlantic world in the years following their exile. Moreover, the legacy of the United Irish ideology was different in every place they settled, or were forced to settle in. Finally, while the state features prominently in this work, there is an effort, in the words of Kevin Kenny, "to extend the boundaries of inquiry beyond the nation-state, to internationalize the subject and

render it more cosmopolitan."[4] Over five chapters, the United Irishmen are examined

then in a transnational framework.

Dissertation Intervention and Historiography

This dissertation's intervention is to reframe and internationalize a critical

moment in Irish history, but the primary question it asks is critical to the past more

generally: what did it mean to be revolutionary during the "Age of Revolutions"?[5]

The reframing of the United Irishmen as international revolutionaries not only

positions Irish history within the broad expanses of world history, but it also reveals

how the traditional categories of radicalism, generally used to describe the "Age of

Revolutions," can mask how conservative revolutionaries could be on matters of class,

race, and gender. The history of the United Irishmen, seen more acutely outside of

Ireland, shows the messy composition of political ideology and the inconsistencies

with which the United Irishmen participated in world events. The United Irishman

utilized their revolutionary ardor in varying and sometimes contradictory ways. For

example, on slavery—the focus of the fourth chapter of the dissertation—they

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[4] Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 134. According to Kenny, applying the most recent scholarship on the topic of Irish migration history, there are two possibilities: one that stresses the applicability of the diasporic approach, concentrating on "reciprocal interactions and the sensibilities they nurture among globally scattered communities." The other option is a comparative approach that focuses more on the "similarities and differences of different migrants" who find themselves in different locations around the World. However, Kenny goes on to suggest that neither these two approaches suffice, but instead, a combination of both, or "a migratory history that combines the diasporic or transnational with the comparative or the cross-national" is necessary moving forward, 134-136.
[5] Michael Zuckerman in a book review of Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* referred to Gordon Wood's conception of the American Revolution as a "genteel revolution," See "Rhetoric, Reality, and the Revolution: The Genteel Radicalism of Gordon Wood," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 51, no. 4 (1994): 693–702.

rejected the institution of slavery prior to the rebellion against Britain in 1798. In exile, however, many United Irishmen accepted the institution as the law of the land in the United States, while others became active as slave traders or slave owners. Some stayed loyal to their prior convictions though, such as William Sampson and Thomas Addis Emmet. Likewise, in the fifth chapter, the United Irishmen believed in the utility of women in the revolutionary struggle—as the symbolic keepers of national virtue, to aid the revolutionary movement—but were less enthused to extend suffrage to them in the event of a successful revolution. By questioning the rigidity of the United Irish political ideology during the long eighteenth century, while also comparing United Irish ideology to radicals during the period broadly, this dissertation stresses the contradictions within the United Irishmen's approach to the century's political themes, including slavery, religion, the place of women, and democratic participation.

The first chapter details the features of exile as applied to the United Irishmen through British policies, what it meant physically and emotionally to be banished, and the legal basis for banishment. Here the locations of their exile are detailed, and the conditions of their punishment explored. Moreover, this chapter explains how exile was advantageous as a means to quell a radicalized population, while also furnishing the British military with much needed labor. The United Irishmen, seen as disposable subjects, were banished to unenviable parts of the British Empire, into "Condemned Regiments" in the West Indies and Eastern Canada. The second chapter queries how the United Irishmen transitioned into the United States during its post-revolutionary

era. When confronted by Federalist resistance in 1798 to their entry into the United States, the United Irishmen aligned themselves with the Jeffersonian Democrats so as to secure a future in their new adopted home. Moreover, while there were several attempts made to block entry of the United Irishmen into the United States, they were all unsuccessful. All that Federalists were successful in doing was blocking some leaders of the society from entering until 1803. In cities like Philadelphia, the United Irishmen chose to use the power of the pen and pamphleteering, non-violent means, much akin to their pre-1795 tactics, in an effort to curb and resist the smear campaign started against them by Federalists such as William Cobbett and John Fenno. This chapter orbits around one court case, which was the result of a skirmish in Philadelphia in 1799 between four United Irishmen and congregants at a local Catholic church. Imbedded in the language of the court case were the details of how the United Irishmen wanted to be seen in their new homes, and how in turn they were constructed in popular understanding: as Jacobins intent on the collapse of the American republican state. Moreover, this chapter queries the requirements for citizenship in the Early Republic and who was eligible for it. Chapter Three details how the exiled United Irishmen fomented conspiracy after their exile in 1798. In this instance it was in British-controlled Newfoundland in 1800. This chapter explores where religion, especially for an organization that prided itself on the "united" composition of its ranks, fit into the ideology of the United Irishmen.[6] In

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[6] The United in the United Irishmen was exactly that: the willingness to cast aside religious difference which had, and would, mark Irish history, in an effort to be united against the British Empire, the United Irishmen attempted to de-naturalize the divisions between Irish Catholics and Protestants. See

Newfoundland, the United Irishmen enjoyed a tense relationship with Catholicism and the Catholic Church, much as they had in Ireland leading up to rebellion. Chapter Four examines the relationship of the United Irishmen to slavery in the Atlantic world during the early nineteenth century. Here, the United Irishmen exhibited varied responses to slavery that fall along a continuum that ran from active participation in the institution of slavery to its outright rejection. This chapter asks how a revolutionary society that prided itself on anti-slavery politics in Ireland and compared the case of African slavery with Irish bondage under Britain, could interact with it in such a plethora of ways while in exile. Finally, Chapter Five queries how revolutionary the United Irishmen were when it came to gender politics by using the 1798 Rebellion and the War of 1812 as case studies. In 1798, as in 1812, they believed in the utility of women as active members of the revolutionary movement but without giving any recognition for these efforts other than as the standard bearers of national virtue, or other prescribed roles. The importance of the women affiliated with the United Irishmen, while substantial through the 1790s, was purposefully written out of subsequent histories by early historians of the society, such as R. R. Madden, in order to maintain a sense of innocence on their behalf, but without their consent. Moreover, for the United Irishmen, their conception of political participation was conceived as a militaristic, male one—at the expense of women. The transition

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Marianne Elliott, *When God Took Sides: Religion and Identity in Ireland—Unfinished History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009).

from subject to citizen was possible only for men according to the ideology of the United Irishmen.

Traditional narratives of the revolutionary period, 1775-1849, have focused disproportionately on the British Colonies in North America, especially those that became the United States, and France, but the geographic spread of the United Irish exile encourages a broader spatial consideration for revolutionary events. The book that sparked my interest in the period was Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker's *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (2000), which exposed me first to the "Red Atlantic," but is also informed by David Armitage's critique of the authors' argument and use of sources, which he states is a "a triumph of hope over evidence."[7] In much the same vein, Laurent DuBois's *Avengers of the New World* (2004) detailed how the field of the "Black Atlantic" centers the experiences of Black enslaved peoples, and has taught me to move beyond what are conceived of as the popular revolutions. Other works that have had an effect on how this dissertation has been written include Hugh Gough's *The Terror in the French Revolution* (2010), which helped me to understand the role that violence played in revolutionary events. Finally, perhaps the work that my own dissertation is modeled on is Janet Polasky's *Revolutions Without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World.*[8] Polasky's ability to weave the interconnected nature of the revolutionary period, and its thematic structure, affected

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[7] David Armitage, "The Red Atlantic," *Reviews in American History*, 29 (2001): 485.
[8] Janet Polasky, *Revolutions Without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

how my dissertation would be written. Moreover, it was the absence of the United

Irishmen from Polasky's scholarship, with few exceptions, such as Theobald Wolfe

Tone and Archibald Hamilton Rowan, that drove the writing of a transnational history

of the United Irishmen. All of these works have helped me formulate my argument

that the Atlantic Revolutions can be understood in new and exciting ways by

following the movement of political exiles, the end goal of which is to underline the

impact of the United Irishmen on the Atlantic world during the Revolutionary period.

Finally, these works also helped me to produce my own contribution to the color-

coding of revolutionary movements or diasporas around the world, but I also rely

heavily on older scholarship that details what defined Irish diasporas through the

eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Kevin Whelan, in an important essay entitled "The Green Atlantic," examines

the relationship of Irish peoples in the long eighteenth century to the broader Atlantic

world by exploring the exchanges and reciprocities that existed between Ireland, the

Americas, and the Caribbean.[9] Whelan is the scholar who first discussed the

importance of integrating the United Irishmen into a network of Irish diaspora in the

Atlantic world. In a chapter in Kathleen Wilson's *New Imperial History* (2004),

Whelan lays out how the United Irishmen form an important component in what he

titles the green (Irish) Atlantic.[10] More a starting point, and only one chapter in a

larger body of work, Whelan notes the relationship between the United Irishmen and

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[9] This is developed further in Kevin Whelan's unpublished article, Kevin Whelan, "Liberty, Freedom, and the Green Atlantic" (Unpublished).

[10] Kathleen Wilson, *A New Imperial History* 158-159, also see Kevin Whelan, "Ireland in the World-System 1600–1800" in Hans J. Nitz, *The Early Modern World-System in Geographical Perspective* (London, UK: Coronet Books, 1993), 204-218.

a revolutionary Atlantic. While the experience of Irish Catholics and African slaves are entirely different, they are comparable. In much the same way that those in favor of slavery stressed that Africans deserved to be enslaved, so too did British officials suggest that the Irish Catholics deserved to be suppressed under the Penal Laws.[11] Whelan is also one of the few historians who brings to the table the prevalence of the United Irishmen in the Caribbean. Moreover, Peter Linebaugh concludes his essay in *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective* (2003) with a thought provoking analysis of three United Irishmen who became officers in the British military around the Atlantic Ocean but without necessarily comparing their experiences.[12] This is a narrative revolving around an officer class, without giving much insight into the lives of the rank and file United Irishmen and women. This dissertation expands on Kevin Whelan's scholarship, and touched upon by Peter Linebaugh, and introduces the United Irishmen into the larger Atlantic world. Special attention is given throughout this dissertation to the Caribbean and Eastern Canada as a result. On Newfoundland, there have been two speculative essays by Aidan O'Hara and John Mannion detailing the existence of a possible United Irish rebellion in 1800, but without placing it fully within a revolutionary Europe.[13] Both allude to the events that occurred in Newfoundland and point to the role of the Catholic Church in relation to Irish radicalism. However, my work goes further in that it explains the instability that

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[11] Whelan, "Liberty, Freedom, and the Green Atlantic," 4.

[12] Bartlett, *1798*, 642-65.

[13] Aidan O'Hara, "'The Entire Island is United...': The Attempted United Irish Rising in Newfoundland, 1800," *History Ireland* 8, no. 1 (2000): 18-21; John Mannion, "'Notoriously Disaffected by the Government….' British Allegations of Irish Disloyalty in Eighteenth-Century Newfoundland,"' *Labrador and Newfoundland Studies* 16, No 1, (2000): 1-29.

revolutionary action meant for the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and abroad. Moreover, it also explains the tense role that religion played in the history of the United Irishmen. Ruma Chopra's *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (2018) was essential reading to understand the relationship the United Irishmen may have had to the Jamaican Maroons.[14]

While Whelan stresses the importance of globalizing the United Irishmen, no scholarship has accomplished such a project completely. In order to internationalize the United Irishmen, this dissertation integrates them into a globalized diasporic network of Irish people through the long eighteenth century: the "Green Atlantic."[15] In 2003, Kevin Kenny, the pre-eminent historian of the Irish diaspora, stressed that scholars of Irish history needed to extend the boundaries of inquiry beyond the nation-state to render its inhabitants more "cosmopolitan."[16] While this call has been broadly realized over the past decade, in part by historians such as Kevin Whelan, a transnational history of the United Irishmen has yet to be written. This is the intervention of this dissertation: to write the United Irishmen into the history of the world, not just Ireland.

In the United Irishmen, we have the opportunity to construct a history of the Irish political ideology that transcends national boundaries. Past histories of the

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[14] Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018.

[15] Kevin Whelan, "The Green Atlantic: Radical Reciprocities between Ireland and America in the long Eighteenth Century," *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (London: Cambridge University Press 2004), 216.

[16] Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison,"134.

United Irishmen have laid the groundwork for such a project, but the aim now is to complicate the present narrative by drawing several locations together and sewing together the transnational experience of the United Irishmen. This scholarship, excellent in its execution, has focused on a relationship between the United Irishmen in Ireland, and a series of pertinent, but singular locations globally. That is, it is "inter-national"— portraying the United Irishmen in one locale, usually Ireland, and then another. The United Irishmen were in Ireland, but also in Hamburg as is seen in Paul Weber's *On the Road to Rebellion: United Irishmen and Hamburg* (1997) or likewise in David Wilson's *United Irishmen, United States* (1998) and Marianne Elliott's *Partners in Revolution: The United Irishmen and France* (1982). Finally, there is Anne-Maree Whitaker's *Unfinished Revolutions: United Irishmen in New South Wales* (1994) which charts the effects the United Irishmen had on the political landscape of Australia and their role in labor upheavals during the period. These are all excellent works on the United Irishmen, and indispensable for my own research, but they can be put into conversation with one another. This is what my dissertation does. Broadening the scope that has been set down already, my scholarship incorporates the more far-flung locations of a connected world. This will include both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in Canada, and the British and French Caribbean. Much more than the United States and Europe, the incorporation of the Caribbean and Eastern Canada makes this study vastly more broad than previous studies that focus exclusively on British Empire radicalism. This approach allows for the inclusion of seismic events such as the Haitian Revolution and the War of 1812.

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Through the lens of revolutionary political theory and with the United Irishman as a focal point, I understand the "Age of Revolution'' as a more expansive transnational phenomenon, not one grounded exclusively in Europe or the United States.[17] The exiled United Irishmen provide an ideal vantage through which to study the evolution and consistency of Irish revolutionary politics. Wherever they landed, the United Irishmen carried the "green bough"—their own unique brand of revolutionary politics—with them. Elizabeth Richards, an Irish Protestant woman, records how she wore the green cockade in support of the United Irishmen in 1798 and also carried with her a green bough, that is the symbolic emblem of unity that theoretically bounded the country's population.[18] Its use also found popularity in the circulated, but uncredited catechism of the same name:

> *What have you got in your hand?*
> *A green bough.*
>
> *Where did it first grow?*
> *In America.*
>
> *Where did it bud?*
> *In France.*
>
> *Where are you going to plant it?*
> *In the crown of Great Britain.*

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[17] While the field has moved to different locales since Hobsbawm conceived of the period's title, further scholarship is still to be produced. Joanna Innes, and Mark Philp's edited volume serves as a model, which includes Ireland alongside France, Haiti, and the United States, but further scholarship could draw the Latin American Wars of Independence into the framework more, Joanna Innes and Mark Philp (eds.), *Re-Imagining Democracy in the Age of Revolutions: America, France, Britain, Ireland 1750-1850* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013). The term, "The Age of Revolutions" is used to describe broadly the period from 1776 and 1848 in Eric J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848* (London, UK: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

[18] Elizabeth Richards, *The Diary of Elizabeth Richards (1798-1825): From the Wexford Rebellion in Ireland to Family Life in the Netherlands* (Hilversum, Netherlands: Hilversum Verloren, 1999), 12.

Michael Durey and Richard Twomey have laid a template for understanding the United Irishmen as political radicals in an Atlantic world, but both construct a heterogeneous account of Anglo-American radicalism in the period, stressing a radical form of politics that was mixed with social conservatism, which made the radicalism of the United Irishmen "limited" in substance.[19] In agreement with David Wilson, I believe that the ideological framework of the United Irishmen was more dynamic than this and was malleable depending on the situation and society.[20] Accordingly, I approach the United Irishmen by acknowledging that their revolutionary ideology was built along a spectrum that ebbed and flowed depending on the circumstances of their exile, the location of their exile, and the issue itself. By the end of this dissertation, it will be clear that no coherent United Irish ideology was evident. Their ideology in Ireland was a patchwork quilt of differing opinions as to what the world should look like and was only kept intact by a shared commitment to resistance to British rule. This consortium of views fragmented further in exile, which exposes the limitations of studying societies such as the United Irishmen along lines of ideology. The opportunity to study the United Irishmen in a variety of locations, charting this spectrum of opinion and thought along the way, allows for a more nuanced interpretation of how radical, or in fact conservative, the United Irishmen actually were.

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[19] Michael Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals and the Early American Republic* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1997); Richard Twomey, *Jacobins and Jeffersonians: Anglo-American Radicalism in the United States, 1790-1820* (New York, NY: Garland, 1989).
[20] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 133-40.

An intention of my dissertation is to re-introduce those left behind in prior histories of the United Irishmen, especially women and working-class members. I am aware that there is at times an absence of the voices of the United Irishmen who were implicated in the 1798 Rebellion, as well as in the years leading up to it. Moreover, I also rely on sources that interpret the actions and voices of people who have been lost in the archive. This omission requires a methodological corrective in order to explain the capacity with which the historian can introduce their voice and action into the narrative. According to Ann Laura Stoler, the colonial archive is wood, which can either be read along, or against, the grain. Reading against the grain is to be conscious of the limitations of manuscripts that are written within colonial spaces, which value the voice of the colonizer over the colonized.[21] Such an approach is a necessary corrective lens that helps historians consider their archival materials' historical context and to unearth the deeper significance of archival documents, which is brought into relief by considering the underlying power structures that produce knowledge. This is evident in Chapters Three and Five, especially in Newfoundland, and also during the 1798 Rebellion and the War of 1812. Reading against the grain is necessary for this project as it accounts for voices that have been erased by narratives that value enfranchised revolutionary leaders. Instead, at times we have little more on those court martialed than their names, occupations, ages, and what they looked like. The United Irishmen, who were often literate and from middling class backgrounds, actively created their own historical traces by writing memoirs and keeping property.

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[21] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1-10.

Moreover, the names of prominent United Irishmen appeared in public records in reference to political upheaval and rebellion. And yet, for the vast majority of the United Irishmen, their names are absent from public records. In order to understand their omission within historical narratives, I ask why their names were not documented by British officials in the first place, and what was gained by colonial powers when the voices of dissenting subjects went unaccounted for. Moreover, I interpret the class composition of these dissenting voices and why they chose to rebel by addressing their varied socio-economic positions and respective political circumstances at the moment of rebellion.

The United Irish Diaspora

Whether cognizant of the fact or not, the exiled United Irishmen held in common membership in an early Irish diasporic community. Much like the famine-era Irish who sought refuge in the new world, the United Irishmen belonged to a diasporic community, albeit one much smaller in size, but comparably spread around the world. The provenance of "diaspora'' within academic inquiry has a relatively recent history, only becoming commonly used through the 1990s. The archetypal example of the diaspora remains the Jewish diaspora, which stresses one of the fundamental concepts inherent in the term: a longing for the homeland. The relationship of the subjects to the "homeland'' was subsequently applied to groups of peoples, such as the African diaspora, or Armenian diaspora. Speaking in relation to borderlands histories, James Clifford stresses that "diasporas usually presuppose

longer distances and a separation more like exile: a constitutive taboo on return or its postponement to a remote future.'' Centers of diasporic analysis were incorporated especially with the foundation of the *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, but the editors, after just five years noted that the meaning of diaspora had become convoluted by its overuse in academic discussion. Rogers Brubaker in a 2006 article lamented that diaspora as a term of analysis had lost coherence and a certain degree of utility. I intend to use diaspora more as a category of analysis, rather than "reduce diaspora to a countable entity," and while Kevin Kenny critiques the use of typology as little more than a checklist, I argue that typologies also allow the reader to visualize the strain of migration that is diasporic in character.[22]

As such, I intend to apply my understanding for the diaspora of the United Irishmen through a strict definition. According to William Safran, diaspora should be defined as "expatriate minority communities'' who (1) from a common center, are dispersed to at least two "peripheral spaces''; (2) that these communities see this center as their "ancestral home," and although their return may not be possible, that at some point in time they will return; (3) there is a common and communal myth about the homeland, and one that is informed with shades of nostalgia and longing; (4) a belief that their host countries cannot, or cannot fully, accept them; (5) they are committed to the well-being of the homeland, and its prosperity, or separation from colonial power; and (6) that this community's' consciousness is defined by its

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[22] James Clifford, "Diasporas," *Cultural Anthropology* 9, no. 3 (August 1, 1994): 304; Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 28:1, (2005): 1; Kevin Kenny, *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1-15; For a broad discussion of diaspora, see Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction* (London, UK: Routledge, 2008), 1-21.

relationship to the homeland.[23] There is also a final characteristic that defines

diaspora, building on Clifford's work, and that is the belief of victimhood at the hands

of a more dominant power.[24] Using diaspora in lieu of dispersal or migration when

referring to the exile of the United Irishmen provides a more complex analytic

framework and as a result lends itself to understanding the psychological effects of

exile and banishment on the United Irishmen, and in turn how they conceived of

themselves within the Atlantic world. Moreover, the forced component of their

diaspora enables us to understand how they developed a longing for home, which at

times manifested itself abroad into nationalist tendencies, such as the foundation of

societies in Hamburg or the United States that were dedicated to fomenting further

rebellion at home. While migration or dispersal provides the basis for understanding

the experiences of the United Irishmen, recognizing these seven characteristics gives

more depth when analyzing them as a group. Moreover, it stresses the singular nature

of the United Irishmen as both products of the revolutionary Atlantic world, as well

as exiles within it, and as part of a larger Irish diaspora in turn. The exile of the

United Irishmen began shortly after court martial, and in the interim, the United

Irishmen confined to the growing penitentiaries of the British Empire. Following their

temporary imprisonment, the United Irishmen were exiled to three corners of the

Atlantic world.[25]

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[23] William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return." *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 6, 2011): 83–84.
[24] Clifford, "Diasporas," 303-305.
[25] There has been speculation that some United Irishmen migrated to Southern Africa, but it is yet to be confirmed.

Today, the realities of Brexit mean the possibility of a united Ireland, or at least greater cooperation between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. As such, it is imperative to produce histories that acknowledge the sectarian conflicts endemic to Irish history, such as the "Troubles," the period of civil unrest between 1968 and 1998, while also acknowledging moments of cooperation between Catholics and Protestants. The "United" in the United Irishmen refers to exactly that; a non-sectarian political body, although mostly Protestant in membership, established to resist a larger colonial power—the British Empire. Radicalized by an oppressive British Government, the Society of United Irishmen emerged in 1791 with the aim of enacting constitutional reform in a country divided along religious and class lines, and with the goal to bring about Catholic emancipation. They radicalized and took up arms in 1795 when it became evident that constitutional efforts could not affect greater rights for Catholics, and eventually they rebelled in 1798. Their exile, while placating the immediate threat of insurrection at home, led to the transplantation of radical Irish sovereign figures disaffected with colonial power throughout the British Empire. In turn, the memory of exiled comrades, which would become a primary motif of Irish nationalism, fueled further nationalist movements through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Irish migration and nationalism became intertwined as greater numbers of Irish peoples were forced to leave the island for political or economic reasons. The study of the United Irishmen, and the highlighting of the similarities between peoples from the island of Ireland serves as much purpose as the study of what has, and continues to, divide them.

Chapter One: "Carrying the Green Bough": The Transnational Exile of the United

Irishmen, 1791-1806

Atlantic World by Thomas Bowen (1788)

Introduction

This chapter interprets the motivation for exile as an effective and

advantageous form of punishment for the British government, both in the expulsion

of rebellious subjects and the utility in using said subjects as cheap labor, generally in

the British military. The process of exile suffered by the United Irishmen, while

singular in its application to them, was applied throughout the British Empire to quell

rebellious subjects. In this chapter, I examine the features of exile as a phenomenon

of the colonial state and how the exile of the United Irishmen occurred as British

society was trying to reinterpret what justice and punishment looked like. Finally, this chapter compares the case of the United Irishmen with the Penang rebellion in India in 1799, as well as the exile of the Jamaican Maroons in 1796 to Nova Scotia and eventually Sierra Leone in 1800.[26]

A revolutionary movement in Ireland had been brewing since the 1780s but accelerated through the 1790s as significant portions of the Irish population radicalized. Inspired by the successes of the American Revolution, which proved the feasibility of republicanism at the expense of the British Empire, as well as the rhetoric of writers like Thomas Paine, the United Irishmen were exposed to a viable alternative to British monarchical rule. Similarly, the French Revolution, starting in 1789, proved that the reign of monarchs could be toppled, especially when oppressive conditions brought the people into opposition against their government. In Ireland, the United Irishmen had planned two French invasions of Ireland to aid its liberation, both of which ended disastrously. The latter, in 1796, ended with a French fleet strewn along the Irish coastline after stormy weather. Between 1795 and 1796, prominent United Irishmen found themselves the focus of forced exile, mostly to the United States. The outcome of the 1798 rebellion brought the death of between 25,000 and 30,000 people, the failure of radical Irish republican politics, but also the dispersal of United Irishmen throughout the world—the main focus of this chapter.[27]

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[26] Though not discussed here, the expulsion of the French Acadians in the eighteenth century is also an appropriate source for comparison. See John Mack Faragher, *A Great and Noble Scheme: The Tragic Story of the Expulsion of the French Acadians from Their American Homeland* (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

[27] Figures generally stand between 20,000 and 30,000. See James G. Patterson, *In the Wake of the Great Rebellion: Republicanism, Agrarianism and Banditry in Ireland after 1798* (Manchester:

The British Empire employed transportation and exile, much like other imperial powers through the eighteenth century, to control their colonial spaces and subjects.[28] My scholarship addresses the physical effects of exile and how their exile should be considered a diaspora.[29] Moreover, I highlight the consistencies with which exile was applied to other colonial subjects. While similar, as we will see later in this chapter, the scale of United Irishmen exile by numbers was far greater than either the Jamaican Maroons or Tamils in the same period.

Exile is much more than the forced movement of people. It should also be understood as an altered state of mind caused by dislocation from the home. Moreover, banishment and exile are not the same thing. Instead, exile is a condition and a noun. Banishment is the term that is often used to describe the process through which exile occurs. Banishment also does not captivate the diverse ways that exile occurs. For the United Irishmen, exile occurred in a multitude of ways as this chapter

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Manchester University Press, 2013), 30-60. However, Jim Smyth suggests that figure to be too high, and instead claims it to more like 10,000 dead in *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Union: Ireland in the 1790s* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 100. Anne-Maree Whitaker suggests it to be 30,000 in *Unfinished Revolution*, 67. One of the first scholars to suggest the figure 30,000 is Thomas Pakenham, *The Year of Liberty: The Great Irish Rebellion of 1798* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), 342.

[28] See Stuart B. Schwartz, "The Formation of a Colonial Identity in Brazil," in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (eds.), *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1987), 15–50 (esp. 21); Timothy J. Coates, "Crime and Punishment in the Fifteenth-Century Portuguese World: the Transition from Internal to Imperial Exile," in Donald J. Kagay and L. J. Andrew Villalon (eds), *The Final Argument: The Imprint of Violence on Society in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 1998), 119–39, noting a 1903 statement by a Portuguese author, 139; for France see James D. Hardy, "The Transportation of Convicts to Colonial Louisiana," *Louisiana History*, Issue 7 (1966): 207–20, 220; for the later French practice, see Richard Price, *The Convict and the Colonel* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998); Stephen P. Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).

[29] See Michael Durey, "The United Irishmen and the Politics of Banishment, 1798-1807," in *Radicalism and Revolution in Britain 1775-1848: Essays in Honour of Malcolm J. Thomis* (London, UK: Macmillian Press, 2000), 96-110.

will explore. The United Irishmen were exiled, that is put on a ship and sent to a distant location. In contrast to banishment, United Irishmen could be exiles on their own terms: they could escape justice and flee by their own means and with their own destination in mind. Finally, exile could be the best option when economic or religious persecution made life so difficult that they should leave, but perhaps did not have to. While some of the United Irishmen may have been banished by the British Empire, and some left willfully, they were all exiles.

Policies of Exile in British History

Colonial states used the regulation of spaces and populations as a common practice to maintain a sense of order, exercising the right to eject, or re-place, peoples for the greater prosperity of the empire. Under the umbrella of social control to combat threats, real or imagined, of migration, disease, social unrest, and general disorder, states, then and now, employ regulations that limit the proliferation of dangerous forces that threaten their stability or legitimacy. Under these circumstances, two broad choices exist in how states discipline their rebellious subjects—one is containment, the other expulsion.[30] Expulsion helps manufacture various binaries, such as the wanted and the unwanted, the citizen and the non-citizen, or in twentieth-century parlance, the "alien.'' And not surprisingly, historical analysis has demonstrated that there exists an uneasy and tense relationship between binaries

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[30] Katherine Beckett and Steve Herbert, "Penal Boundaries: Banishment and the Expansion of Punishment," *Law & Social Inquiry* 35, no. 1 (2010): 1.

such as these.[31] Home and away, inclusion/exclusion, citizen/foreigner are categories

in a state of constant flux, or re-interpretation. Many exiled United Irishmen found

citizenship and a sense of belonging outside of their traditional "home,'' Ireland,

while others found legal residence elsewhere, but could not translate this legal

standing to a tangible feeling of belonging.[32] The state's banishment of subjects was a

powerful tool for the assertion of state sovereignty against the diminished potential

for power of the exiled person or persons, stressing its ability to manipulate and alter

the spatial location of the sovereign subject. Due to its effectiveness during the 1790s,

banishment became normalized as state policy as a "self-evident recourse of

statecraft'' and emerged as a primary method of control through the early nineteenth

century in place of punishment that chastised the body of the subject, such as

hangings, decapitations, etc.[33]

The effects of such expulsion or banishment, whilst normalized as more

humane than capital punishment, produced long term implications, such as the

construction of affective memory among those left behind, which often led to the

foment of subsequent resistance movements. According to Ines Hasselberg and Heike

Drotbohm, "deportation, the forced removal of foreign nationals from a given

national territory, is not a singular event. It is a process that begins long before, and

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[31] The examples are limitless, but starting with the United Irishmen, their fluid position in American society during the early nineteenth century is evident in Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 36-58.
[32] Heike Drotbohm and Ines Hasselberg, "Deportation, Anxiety, Justice: New Ethnographic Perspectives," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 41, no. 4 (March 2015): 552.
[33] Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz. *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 1.

carries on long after, the removal from one country to another takes place.''[34]

Because the consequences of exile endured for so long after, it had the effect of a

dragnet of the memory of the affected population. While Hasselberg and Drotbohm's

assertion is located in a more contemporary moment, their reading of exile and its

after effects align effectively with how the United Irishmen experienced exile. The

exile of the United Irishmen, while suppressing the immediate threat of insurrection

at home, led to the transplantation of radicals, disaffected by colonial power,

throughout the British Empire. Finally, the memory of exiled comrades, which

became a primary motif of Irish nationalism, fueled further nationalist movements,

for both Catholics and Protestants.[35] Political oppression in this case served the

purposes of controlling British and Irish populations – a trend had been in effect for

the prior two hundred years.

The exile of the United Irishmen needs to be understood within a broader

history of expulsion enacted by the British Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries. By the 1600s, "rogues'' and "vagabonds'' were key targets for

transportation, and the final Elizabethan vagrancy statute made the primary

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[34] Drotbohm and Hasselberg, "Deportation, Anxiety, Justice," 552.

[35] The major contention that historians work against in *Exiles and Emigrants* by Kerby Miller relies on the conception of Irish culture abroad, namely the passive fatalism that Irish Catholic immigrants felt in their new homes. Stressing exile as the key motif and emotional marker of these migrants against one of opportunism, historians such as Akenson have tried to address this. Working from a perspective of the Irish-Canadian experience, Akenson stressed that Miller foregrounded the cultural hegemony of Anglo-Irish and Scotch-Irish experiences at the expense of Irish Catholics who were painted as a people whose "values were antiquated in a modern world.'' Finally, Akenson criticizes the geographic focus of Miller's work, expressing the urban focus of his scholarship, and noting that had he studied the rural landscape in such a fashion he would have found similar socio-economic outcomes for both Catholics and Protestants through the nineteenth century. See Patrick Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Montreal QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), xxviii; Patrick J. Hayes (ed.), *The Making of Modern Immigration: An Encyclopedia of People and Ideas* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Press, 2012), 536-37.

punishment transportation to populate emerging colonies. By 1603 the descriptive terms of what constituted a vagabond or gypsy were defined in clearer language, while the primary regions of transportation were identified. Newfoundland, the West and East Indies, as well as France, Spain and the Low Countries were noted as the chief destinations for the unwanted British and Irish masses. Perhaps the first instance of institutionalizing transportation as an alternative punishment occurred in 1615, when James I, as the English Catholic King, gave local judges the option to forego applying the death penalty in favor of employment "in foreign discoveries or other services beyond the seas.''[36]

Charles I accelerated the use of transportation through the 1630a as an institutionalized practice of the British Empire. As King of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, Charles I, later executed during the English Civil War, believed in the supreme authority of royal power and envisaged a kingdom free from the ravages of dependent subjects. By way of transportation, "social undesirables'' from England were sent to the sugar plantations of the West Indies and utilized as cheap labor in the burgeoning sugar market.[37] Oliver Cromwell too, a parliamentarian during the English Civil War (1641-52), and one of those fighting against Charles I, ran a campaign of conquest in Ireland from 1649-50, devastating the local population. Unlike Charles I, who concentrated on vagrants and "rogues,'' Cromwell was prepared to banish political insurgents to the West Indies. The exile of Irish Catholic

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[36] Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, *Eighteenth Century Criminal Transportation: The Formation of the Criminal Atlantic* (London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 6-7.

[37] Still the dominant literature detailing the rise of sugar in the Caribbean and the Americas, see Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York City, NY: Penguin, 1986).

dissidents from 1649 to 1653, precipitated by the 1641 rebellion in Ireland, became a precursor to the 1798 banishments. The thought of Irish dissidents banished to the colonies in the seventeenth century deeply worried those already established there, especially in the West Indies, as they could rebel there too. Colonial governors reluctantly accepted involuntary servants but protested the transportation of Irish political prisoners to the Caribbean. Colonial officials on the islands believed that Irish radicals were unfit to perform manual labor and that they were untrustworthy in the militias due in part to their presumed unwillingness to further the imperatives of the Protestant ascendancy.[38] Governor Daniel Searle in 1657 refused eighty-seven "Irish rogues'' due to their assumed refusal to further "English Protestant interests'' in Barbados.[39] Much like the southern American colonies, conditions of employment in the Caribbean were treacherous, and disease rampant, and the life of indentured servants in the Caribbean was one of exploitation and subjugation, with limited exceptions.[40] In an act of mutiny, Cornelius Bryan, an indentured servant in Barbados in 1657 attested (while eating a plate of meat) that if "there was as much English blood on the tray as meat he would eat it.''[41] For this act of rebellion, Bryan received twenty-one lashes on the bare back.

By the eighteenth century, greater emphasis was placed on North America as the destination for many indentured and exiled migrants, with the thirteen colonies, as

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[38]Hilary McD. Beckles., "A "Riotous and Unruly Lot:" Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644-1713," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1990): 507.
[39] Beckles, "A "Riotous and Unruly Lot," 507.
[40] Kristen Block and Jenny Shaw, "Subjects Without an Empire: The Irish in the Early Modern Caribbean," *Past & Present* 210, no. 1 (February 1, 2011): 34.
[41] Block and Shaw, "Subjects Without an Empire," 34.

well as Australia, taking center stage, but during this period the number of convicts

exiled was still quite small. While transportation existed as a form of punishment

through the period, 1660-1716 figures show little more than one hundred convicts a

year leaving Great Britain and Ireland for these locations. The 1717 Transportation

Act transformed the legal basis for transportation which made it more attractive to

local officials than the death penalty. What the act did was create a bonded, regulated

system through which convicts could be indentured through the British Empire.

Between 1718 and 1776 roughly 50,000 Irish and British convicts were transported to

North America.[42] Gwenda Morgan notes that "banishment has been a constant force

since the colonization of the thirteen colonies, but truly became a business in itself in

1717 with the passage of the Transportation Act.''[43] The Transportation Act was

introduced as a response to the perceived ineffectiveness of contemporary

punishments as deterrents, such an execution or carceral punishment, but the primary

motivation for transportation was a shortage of labor in the American Colonies that

would be filled with those prosecuted for crimes such as burglary, robbery, and

larceny. Later, this same logic would be applied to the United Irishmen.

 The British Empire took advantage of this new form of punishment, but it was

not alone in this practice. Several other nations and empires availed of this

punishment as a deterrent for crime and filling labor shortages. In Portugal, civil

criminals were at first banished to the mountainous areas of the Iberian Peninsula,

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[42] Roger A. Ekirch, "Bound for America: A Profile of British Convicts Transported to the Colonies, 1718-1775," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1985): 188.

[43] Morgan and Rushton, *Eighteenth-Century Criminal Transportation*, 3; Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton, *Banishment in the Early Atlantic World* (London, UK: A&C Black, 2013).

such as the Serra de Estrela, a mountain range in central Portugal. Eventually, Portuguese officials recognized the utility in sending criminals to Brazil, which at one point was populated by penal criminals. For criminals in France, transportation to Louisiana in the late eighteenth century was considered equivalent to a death sentence due to disease and high mortality rates.[44] Moreover, the definition of transportation differed between empires—for the British Empire, transportation meant movement outside of the country of residence, whereas for the Han Dynasty in China, transportation often meant internal forced migration to work in salt and iron mines.[45] The British Empire may not have been alone in their use of exile and banishment as a form of punishment, but they institutionalized it and "made it their own, and the effects economically and culturally were profound . . . the most striking characteristic was the persistence through which it was performed.''[46] Perhaps it is less how British policy institutionalized transportation and more the scale and geographic expanses of the endeavor that made transportation synonymous with the British Empire.

Ending only in 1945, the history of transportation in British history is a substantial one, lasting almost three hundred and thirty years, and the effects of its practice have had long-term economic and social implications. These include the displacement of people, which has led to the confiscation of property and title as well as the mobilization of a radicalized population as a result of exile as policy. They

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[44] For French mortality rates to Louisiana see Hardy, "The Transportation of Convicts to Colonial Louisiana," 220.

[45] Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, "Convict Transportation from Britain and Ireland, 1615-1870," *History Compass*, Volume 8, Issue 11 (November 2010): 1221-1242.

[46] Gwenda Morgan and Peter Rushton. *Banishment in the Early Atlantic World: Convicts, Rebels and Slaves* (London, UK: A&C Black, 2013), 3.

were treated, according to many United Irishmen, as common criminals as opposed to political dissidents, which fueled their feelings of injustice. Through the 1790s, the United Irishmen occupied two overlapping spaces, one as revolutionaries within the "Revolutionary Atlantic," and the other as criminals in the eyes of the British legal system, the result of which was often banishment.[47] Within the paradigm of the what Gwenda Morgan calls the "Criminal Atlantic," the United Irishmen held a tenuous position, which was due primarily to the political classification of their crimes. Neither did they fall into the anomalous category of "uncontrollable poor, masterless men, gypsies, and vagrants."[48] This broad category could theoretically only be applied to some United Irishmen, given that significant numbers of those punished were a part of the educated, middle-class population. For United Irishmen like Wolfe Tone, Napper Tandy, and Hamilton Rowan, their class position meant that in reality only the category of the revolutionary Atlantic existed. These United Irishmen were treated with contempt, but more as political dissidents than as criminals. The same could not be said for the majority of United Irishmen who were sentenced by court martial but punished as criminals. Holding this uneasy position within the British legal system, the United Irish Rebellion also occurred at the same time that British society was undergoing vast changes relating to what it conceived of as appropriate punishment for criminals.

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[47] The term "Revolutionary Atlantic" was made popular by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker in *The Many Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London, UK: Verso, 2000).

[48] Morgan and Rushton, *Eighteenth Century Criminal Transportation,* 9. This is the language used to describe vagrants in the final Elizabethan Vagrancy Statutes in the 1590s.

During the early eighteenth century, a shift occurred within English society

that stressed the "reformation of manners'' as part of a broader reshaping of cultural

identity within the period. Moving away from punishments that caused physical pain,

and in the context of the "bourgeois civilizing process," reformers advanced the

concept that a reluctance to cause pain was civilized in nature.[49] In turn, punishment

administered through physical pain was labeled as barbaric and uncivilized. The

eighteenth century English culture of sensibility promoted a "modern'' society in

which pain could be reduced, or in fact eradicated entirely. In this context,

transportation, or even banishment, was a civilized and modern method to discipline

subjects while maintaining the state's veneer of a compassionate appearance. The

practice of quartering no longer served a political goal. Instead of executing most

Irish rebels, they could, in theory, be humanely removed from the continent, thus

nullifying their troublesome existence. This push to develop an "empire without pain"

for British and Irish subjects was mirrored by the late eighteenth century imperative

to find adequate and effective forms of anesthesia to numb the horrors of surgery as

well as a move toward imprisonment in lieu of capital punishment.[50] By the mid-

nineteenth century, the pain of the patient became overwhelming to those operating,

and its effects worried surgeons. This consciousness led to the discovery of nitrous

oxide gas in medical procedures in 1773 by Joseph Priestley, as well as William T. G.

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[49] Karen Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (1995): 303.
[50] Halttunen, "Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture," 309-310. Halttunen goes on to suggest that pain had been historically linked to the healing process, and thus necessary for a full recovery. On the history of pain, see David B. Morris, *The Culture of Pain* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).

Morton's administration of ether anesthesia to a patient in 1846. Much as emotional well-being was a guiding intention for the discovery of anesthesia, the same could be said for the hangman and the move toward incarceration.

In Ireland, the British administration opened Kilmainham Gaol in 1796. While some hangings initially occurred there, by 1820, the practice had all but ended. Much like in Ireland, the Milibank Prison in London was commissioned in 1799, but only completed in 1816. There too capital punishments were ended in favor of confinement and surveillance through its panopticon physical structure. The United States government started to evaluate its systems of punishment, especially after independence from the British Empire. This is relevant as it explains a broader move away from capital punishment and not just one orchestrated by Britain. Starting in 1786, the state of Pennsylvania abolished its public whipping post, limited the number of capital offences, and experimented with the introduction of penal labor in the streets of Philadelphia. The conditions for capital punishment would in the end be reserved for first degree murder, starting in 1794. Pennsylvania eventually moved toward penitentiary punishments. The Eastern State penitentiary, started in 1821 and completed in 1829, ushered in a fifty-year movement to imprisonment from capital punishment.[51] Exile ran parallel to imprisonment as a more humane type of punishment. Starting in 1791 with the formation of the United Irishmen, but

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[51] For more on corporal punishment in Pennsylvania punishment, see Michael Meranze, *Laboratories of Virtue: Punishment, Revolution, and Authority in Philadelphia, 1760-1835* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 2-4.

accelerating in 1795 as they became more militarized, the British state applied its new conventions of punishment to Irish subjects.

The Early Exile of the United Irishmen, 1791-1795

Between 1791 and 1795, a British policy of punishment of exile was instituted against revolutionary organizations and individuals that were seen as a threat to British sovereignty and power. These included the London Corresponding Society, the United Englishmen, and finally, the United Irishmen. This policy of exile ran concurrently with the seizure of power by the Jacobins in France in 1793, and the ensuing "Terror" that followed, which, to British officials, vindicated their actions and justified their fears. According to E. P. Thompson, most of the British radical bodies recanted their support for Jacobinism by 1794/1795, with one exception: the United Irishmen.[52] After 1795 there were two options for United Irishmen: join secret revolutionary cells in Ireland or go into exile and maintain their commitment to revolution from abroad. France became a primary destination for those who wished to embrace revolutionary action, but by 1793/94, it was a perilous destination. For example, Thomas Paine came close to execution by guillotine in France in 1793. Moreover, the sight of daily political violence in France dissuaded many United Irishmen, who valued structural change without violence. Even by 1795, when the violence of the Terror started to subside, there was still a reluctance among some less radical members of the United Irishmen to take a risk moving to France. As such, the

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[52] Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York City, NY: Random House, 1963), 162-164.

United States became a popular option for those exiled, due in large part to greater personal security and employment opportunities, but also the reputation of the United States as the site of revolutionary, constitutional action at work.[53]

Archibald Hamilton Rowan was a founding member of the Dublin branch of the United Irishmen. Charged with high treason in 1794, Rowan was imprisoned temporarily in his own home pending transportation. Convincing his guard that he be allowed to visit his wife in the adjacent room, Rowan jumped from the window, took a horse from below, and rode to the south coast of Ireland. There he boarded a ship for France, dressed as a woman, staying in Paris temporarily, but then moved to Philadelphia in July 1795 due in part to the subsequent charge of high treason against him.[54] Rowan's account of exile in 1795, taken from his own memoir, while painted romantically, points to the criminalization of the United Irishmen and the necessity for the United Irishmen to leave Ireland or face imprisonment or death. By the middle of the 1790s, this policy of exile which was applied to some high profile United Irishmen started to be used en masse to punish the United Irishmen.

The more systematic exile of the United Irishmen began as soon as they were perceived by the British Empire as a serious threat. Starting in 1795, when they merged and militarized with the Catholic Defenders, and continuing through the late 1790s, British officials conceived of the United Irishmen as the Irish equivalent of the French Jacobins: dangerous bloodthirsty levelers, intent on the collapse of the status

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[53] Michael Durey, "Thomas Paine's Apostles: Radical Émigrés and the Triumph of Jeffersonian Republicanism," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 44, no. 4 (October 1, 1987): 669.
[54] Archibald Hamilton Rowan, *Autobiography of Archibald Hamilton Rowan, Esq: With Additions and Illustrations* (London, UK: T. Tegg and Company, 1840), 216.

quo. Federalists in the United States and Conservatives in Britain used anti-Jacobin sentiment to discredit and demonize the United Irishmen in Ireland, and later in the United States. This language cast radical organizations through the 1790s, like the London Corresponding Society and the United Englishmen, as threats to society. The same divisive language was used to tar the United Irishmen and was applied to several high-profile individuals of the United Irishmen prior to 1798.[55] This made introducing policies of exile easier to justify in the British Parliament. Exile became formalized as practice and was expanded upon from 1795 until 1803. This new policy focused on the forced transportation of United Irishmen to places like the West Indies, Eastern Canada, and Newfoundland, rather than simply pressuring them to leave the country. Notable early victims of the policy of exile were Theobald Wolfe Tone in 1795, prior to his suicide, and Archibald Hamilton Rowan in the same year, but many more were affected by these policies in the years leading up the 1798 Rebellion.

The rise of the United Irishmen plateaued with their failed rebellion in 1798, which marks the most numerically and symbolically significant period of United Irish exile from Ireland. Starting in May 1798, a proclamation was issued by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Camden, which called for the arrest of anyone conspiring against the British Empire, or anyone aiding the revolutionaries known as the United Irishmen. The 1798 Rebellion justified British fears that the United Irishmen had broad appeal and had been building for years. Those who were spared

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[55] Wilson, *United Irishmen*, 22.

execution or imprisonment in 1798 in places like Fort George in Scotland—the primary site of imprisonment for United Irish leaders—saw the failure of revolutionary republicanism in Ireland as a moment to leave for the United States or France. The aspirations they held for a freer and more just Ireland evaporated in 1798. These feelings were assured with the Act of Union signed on January 1, 1801, which bound Ireland to Great Britain legally.[56]

Some had the choice, generally determined by their ability to pay bail, and were able to choose the destination of their exile. Then there were those who fell into a category of self-exile, who found their lives immensely difficult in the wake of rebellion, due in part to religious persecution or economic discrimination, and saw migration as the only alternative to staying in Ireland. They were not necessarily involved in the fighting that occurred in 1798 but may have had economic or personal ties to the United Irishmen and were marked as such in their communities. The majority of the United Irishmen, however, were forcefully transported into the navies of the British Empire, or banished to anywhere other than Britain, Ireland, or revolutionary France, which was then at war with Britain. The reasons for such policy implemented by the British Empire are manifold.

The Exile of the United Irishmen, 1795-1803

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[56] Prior to 1801, Britain and Ireland were bound under a personal union, but after 1801, they were now legally understood as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Ireland and Great Britain had been separate kingdoms prior to this. The Act of Union integrated them. The intention was to create stability and trust between the two Kingdoms, but Irish nationalists during the period and beyond saw it as a British attempt to further enslave the Irish people. See Linda Colley, *Acts of Union and Disunion* (London, UK: Profile Books, 2014); Michael Brown, Patrick M. Geoghegan, and James Kelly (eds.), *The Irish Act of Union, 1800: Bicentennial Essays* (Dublin, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2003).

While the numbers alluded to next are not as stark as those that illustrate the effects of the Irish Famine in the nineteenth century, what is important to remember is that those who were exiled were generally radicalized and ready to transfer their revolutionary ideology to others while in exile. As such, their impact on the places they inhabited was intensified through the possibility of ideological transmission. Of the 850 convicts officially transported between 1791 and 1799 from Ireland, roughly 200 were Defenders, the radical militant Catholic organization that would eventually merge into the United Irishmen in 1795.[57] These men and women were transported on ships such as the *Cornwallis* and the *Britannia*. Of the 1,196 convicts that were transported from Ireland between 1801 and 1806, 400 were United Irishmen.[58] 318 United Irishmen were sold to the Prussian Crown to fight and die in their military or labor in the Silesian salt mines.[59] Roughly 1,500 United Irishmen were impressed into the British military between 1791 and 1800 and sent to the West Indies and to Eastern Canada.[60] Those sent to the Caribbean were known as the "condemned regiments" due in part to the high mortality rates brought on by disease.[61] 400 United Irishmen were legally banished from the British Empire, finding themselves exiles in the United States and France. 500 were transported to Botany Bay, Australia, in its early

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[57] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 38.

[58] Kevin Whelan, "Introduction to 'The Poor Man's Catechism' (1798)," *Labour History*, no. 75 (1998): 22.

[59] Paul Weber and Patrick C. Power, *The Court Martials of 1798-1799* (Dublin, Ireland: Irish Historical Press, 1997), 34.

[60] Michael Durey suggests about 1,500 were sent to the West Indies in Michael Durey (ed.), *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal: An Epilogue to the 1798 Rebellion* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1998).

[61] Miller, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 641.

colonial years.[62] According to David Brundage, roughly 2,000 United Irishmen migrated to the United States in the aftermath of the 1798 rebellion.[63] Locally observed, almost 400 Irishmen and women were "vomited forth" from ships in Norfolk, Virginia in 1799.[64] 900 more "volunteered" into the British army in place of transportation or the death sentence.[65]

These figures account for the official numbers of exile from Ireland, but what is absent from the official archives are those United Irishmen who had little choice but to leave Ireland after the 1798 rebellion or in the years prior. We have the records of those who either had the education to write their exile into history or the capital to have them printed. Harman Blennerhassett and his wife Margaret exiled themselves from Ireland in 1794 as the United Irishmen, of which Harman was a member, became more militant. Both Blennerhassetts believed that their safety in Ireland was no longer possible while Ireland was ruled by an oppressive foreign power. Their marriage also caused tension in Ireland as Margaret was Harman's niece. They chose the Ohio River Valley as their new home and would eventually own several dozen slaves through their lifetime. The Blennerhassetts would go on to fund Aaron Burr's failed expedition into Mexico in 1806, only to lose everything they owned in the endeavor. Historical figures like Margaret and Harman Blennerhassett show up in the archives due in part to their class position: they came from the Dublin gentry and could afford to exile themselves rather than facing punishment by court martial.

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[62] Kevin Whelan, *Fellowship of Freedom: The United Irishmen and 1798* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1998), 113.
[63] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 39.
[64] *Salem Gazette*, September 18, 1798.
[65] Kevin Whelan, "Introduction to Section VII," *The 1798 Rebellion*, 597.

Matilda Tone, wife of Theobald Wolfe Tone, like the Blennerhassetts, exemplifies the uncertainties of life after 1798. Already exiled in 1796 after a failed rebellion, Matilda along with Theobald were exiled to France. There she stayed until 1817, through the death of her husband, when she eventually re-married and moved to New York City. She wrote from New York City on her exile from Ireland in the years prior to 1798 and lamented that "here I am for thirty years in this country, and I have never had an easy hour, longing after my native land."[66] Tone spoke these words to a stranger in 1849, two weeks before her death. Hundreds fled the country in the wake of the failed 1798 rebellion to avoid punishment for involvement in the fighting, such as John Devereux, a young Catholic who fought at Vinegar Hill in 1798 and who later became a commissioned officer in the Venezuelan military during the Latin American wars of independence. Many others have been lost to history, including those whose records were burned when the Public Records Office in Dublin was shelled in 1922 during the Irish Civil War, which destroyed large sections of the public records dating from the thirteenth to the twentieth century.

For United Irishmen like Andrew Bryson, who was sentenced to serve involuntarily in Martinique, we have descriptive narratives of their journey through exile, but lack the justifications for their banishment. Bryson was forced aboard a ship in Waterford in 1798 without any knowledge of the crime he had been accused of, or law broken.[67] These men and women became the targets of an oppressive British

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[66] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 1.
[67] Durey, *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal*, 10. Durey suggests that the likely charge was for rebellion and treason, but it is unlikely that Bryson knew that. Instead he left Ireland not knowing what he had been accused of.

Government that saw displacement of its subjects as the ideal solution to quell a radicalized Irish population. The result was the loss of identity and home for United Irishmen and women, but for the British Empire it meant relative peace in their Irish colony.

For a lucky few United Irishmen, the destination of exile was a matter of choice, but for the vast majority of United Irishmen, local magistrates made the choice for them. Three outcomes usually occurred: with sufficient money for bail, the defendant could pay the bailiff and then take a ship to wherever they pleased; second, the defendant was told that they could choose where they wished to be exiled to; third, and most commonly, local magistrates decided the location of their exile. In one example where choice existed, "the undersigned persons now prisoners in Kilmainham (Dublin) having received notice through you that they are at liberty to emigrate to any part of the European continent not at war with his majesty. I inform you that they will be ready to sail for Hamburgh.''[68] Of those who were sentenced to imprisonment, or death, many availed themselves of the option to petition their imprisonment, some of which were successful. However, the result of a petition from imprisonment was often transportation. In a letter dated May 9, 1799, to Lord Castlereagh, his esquire, his legal attendant, acknowledged that "several persons now in the provost in the Barracks in Dublin who have offered to 'serve abroad in any manner his excellency shall order, provided they are discharged from prosecution for their crimes' so long as they 'take the confessions of these peoples and their consent

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[68] Houghware, Court Martials 1798, *NAI Rebellion Papers.*

to leave the Kingdom.''[69] The esquire went on to note that the majority of these "criminals" were without families and of "very bad character." During a general court martial in County Cork, the following extract detailed the standard practice for the majority of captured United Irishmen and women. In this case, the accused, Bryan O'Connor, Florence McCarty, and Denis McCarty, were charged with "aiding in the Rebellion now existing in this kingdom.''[70] For their crimes, the accused were sentenced to "seven years banishment in any of his Majesty's plantations beyond the sea, and the prisoner Denis McCarty to twelve months of close confinement and furnishing sufficient security in his good behavior for seven years after.''[71]

A similar fate awaited Frank Huey on November 27, 1798. Huey was originally sentenced to death for his part in the 1798 rebellion and for joining the uprising when the French landed in Ballina, participating as part of the Longford militia acting as a corporal. His sentence was eventually commuted to "service for life in some regiment abroad.''[72] Much like Huey, James Lyons consented to commutation for life for joining the French as a private on their landing. Geographically, Ballina was host to one of the few moments of United Irish victory during the Rebellion of 1798. As a result, some of the harshest sentences of exile and death penalties were applied in the west of Ireland. In part, this was a reaction to French forces who landed there near the end of fighting in 1798. British officials wanted to make an example of those who helped and fought alongside the French.

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[69] B. Littlehale to Lord Castlereagh, May 9, 1799 *NAI Rebellion Papers*.
[70] Unsigned letter to Natt Mallory, July 3, 1798, *NAI Rebellion Papers*.
[71] Unsigned letter to Natt Mallory, July 3, 1798, *NAI Rebellion Papers*.
[72] Ballina Court Martials, November 27, 1798, *NAI Rebellion Papers*.

Landing in the northwest of Ireland and moving slowly southward, French forces

under the leadership of General Humbert brought a sense of optimism to the faltering

rebellion. The thousand soldiers who landed in Ireland were soon joined by 5,000

Irish militia, including Huey and Lyons, and inflicted a humiliating defeat on British

forces at Castlebar (later to be referred to as the Castlebar races, due to the speed of

the retreating British forces). Under John Moore, a temporary Republic was declared

in the province of Connacht but would last only a few weeks.[73] The British

administration saw the invitation given to the French to land in Ireland as a devious

act and while insurrection was scurrilous, involving the French, whom the British

were currently at war with, was despicable. Although thousands were exiled and

banished from the west of the country, hundreds were executed. This became known

as *Bliain na bhFrancach* in Irish, or the "Year of the French''—a colloquial reference

that would add fodder to the nationalist movement in Ireland for generations

afterward. While exile was still used broadly in places like Ballina, there was a higher

propensity for capital punishment to be used.

The trial of Patrick Mason and Andrew Gleahey on July 24, 1798 resulted in a

sentence of transportation, which they avoided by escaping and sailing to America. In

Newry, Reverend Sam Barber was apprehended and sentenced for his intention to

"excite his majesty's subjects to rebellion,'' for which he was punished with seven

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[73] The island of Ireland has traditionally been split into four provinces. Ulster in the north, Connaught in the west, Munster in the south, and Leinster in the east. Dublin is in Leinster. While the primary headquarters of the United Irishmen were in Dublin and Belfast (Ulster), much of the fighting occurred in the west and south of the country. Some fighting did occur in Antrim and Down. See A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Summer Soldiers: The 1798 Rebellion in Antrim and Down* (Dublin, Ireland: Blackstaff, 1995).

years of banishment from "his majesty's dominions." Within the same period, on

July 14, 1798, Daniel McPolin was sentenced to transportation for life from Newry

for administering illegal oaths to new United Irishmen.[74] Angus Mills, captured in

Glenarme, County Antrim, was convicted for being a rebel in 1798, tried on June 28,

1798, and sentenced to serve in the navy. James Tommins, tried the same day, was

tried for "forcing people into the rebel army" and sentenced "mercifully" to

transportation, but imprisoned in Belfast in the interim. On July 17, 1798 James

Fullerton was tried on charges of high treason and sentenced to service abroad for life

in the 60th regiment, a regiment stationed in Jamaica during this period.[75] With a bail

set at £500, only the wealthiest members of the United Irishmen could avoid

transportation. On the same day, July 31, two United Irishmen, William Clokey and

Hans Weaver, were sentenced to high treason and sedition for identical offences, but

Clokey exiled himself upon paying bail, while Weaver was detained at New Geneva,

before being sent abroad "to serve his majesty."[76] For the two brothers, William

Craig and Thomas Craig, tried on July 12, 1798 for robbing a guard in Cookstown,

Co. Tyrone, both brothers received the same punishment: to serve in any of the

battalions serving in the 60th regiment in the West Indies.[77] The outcome of such

sentences were often as effective as a death sentence at home due to the prevalence of

diseases in the West Indies that Irish people were not resistant to, but furnished the

British Empire with much needed resources abroad.

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[74] Court Martials, Glenarme, County Antrim, 1798, *Rebellion Papers*, NAI.
[75] Court Martials, Newtownards, 1798, *Rebellion Papers*, NAI.
[76] Court Martials, Downpatrick, 1798, *Rebellion Papers*, NAI.
[77] Court Martials, Cookstown, 1798, *Rebellion Papers*, NAI.

If a sentence of penal transportation was passed, the convicted United

Irishman was then sent to one of the larger facilities, generally in the company of

convicts waiting to be transported. These penitentiaries were in County Wicklow,

County Cork, and the Dublin facility, Kilmainham. As vessels were chartered for

their transportation, the convicts were then separated by sex, brought to port, and kept

in large decommissioned ships off the coast, not dissimilar to the "factories" on the

western coast of Africa built to hold slaves prior to their departure for the "New

World."[78] The confinement of these convicts could last months as preparations,

financial and bureaucratic, were finalized. The conditions on these hulks were

uncomfortable at best, and treacherous at worst. Magistrates from County Clare

acknowledged the "number of prisoners now confined in the jail of Ennis – many of

whom are committed for and charged with many heinous offences."[79] Diseases such

as dysentery and cholera were rampant, as well as tuberculosis, in such cramped,

damp environments. With the coast in sight, rebellion was always a possibility, which

in turn meant that guards strictly disciplined prisoners. Some were relieved when

transferred to ships destined to leave port for unknown destinations, just to leave their

state of purgatory.

The destinations of exile were arbitrary to a point; journeys could be extended

by weeks or months depending on the weather. Travelers could be kept in port for

lengthy periods of time, with merchants hoping for more cargo to be loaded and

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[78] Eleanor Conlin Casella, "Prisoner of His Majesty: Postcoloniality and the Archaeology of British Penal Transportation," *World Archaeology* 37, no. 3 (2005): 454.

[79] Magistrates of County Clare, dated July 17, 1798, *Rebellion Papers*, NAI.

increase the overall windfall of a voyage.[80] Longer time at sea and at port in turn

pushed food and water stores to their limits. Passengers were then forced to purchase

rations at a high premium, filling the coffers of captains and merchants aboard.

Weather conditions and general sea sickness brought discomfort, and frequent storms

terrified passengers who had never set foot on a ship before, never mind a

transatlantic voyage. Overcrowding plagued those aboard ships due in part to

shipowners and agents who exaggerated the capacity of their ships, often by 100%, to

entice travelers.[81] Moreover, the majority of ships during the eighteenth century and

early nineteenth century were built less for passengers than for cargo, so the

conditions were generally cramped. Usually living spaces were four to five feet high,

with two to a bed, which were only eighteen inches wide.[82] Portholes and ventilation

systems were still uncommon in the 1790s, so the damp, cramped conditions often

meant disease such as typhus and smallpox could break out and spread through the

ship quickly. There were more dangers at port beyond disease and cramped

conditions: there was also the fear of impressment by the British military.

The United Irishmen experienced their physical exile in a variety of ways, but

Wolfe Tone understood his transportation, in particular the possibility of

impressment, in fearful terms. Impressment in this context refers to the apprehension

of men and forcing them to serve aboard military vessels. Wolfe Tone details the fear

his family suffered in vivid terms aboard the vessel of their exile. In his memoirs he

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[80] Miller, *Exiles and Emigrants*, 90.
[81] Miller, *Exiles and Emigrants*, 91.
[82] Miller, *Exiles and Emigrants*, 91.

explains that their transport vessel was stopped by a British vessel of war: "After treating us with the greatest insolence, they impressed every one of our hands save one, and near fifty of my fellow passengers….as I was in a jacket and trousers, one of the lieutenants ordered me into the boat as a fit man to serve the king, and it was only the screams of my wife and sister that induced him to desist."[83] Very likely, Tone's class background saved him rather than the pleas of his family. That he would be impressed aboard a British vessel to fight for the British Crown would mean a devastating emotional blow to him, and a high likelihood of death.

For Tone, the experience was scarring, but for the thousands of exiles who were forced into military vessels to serve, the experience was infinitely worse. Tone and his family found their way to the United States, and although disillusioned with the "land of freedom," as he sarcastically referred to it, the experience was generally sufferable, due in large part to his class background.[84] Although Tone would travel in lavish conditions across the Atlantic, the majority of those exiled journeyed in steerage, far from the luxury of first class. Others commonly forgotten in narratives of the United Irishmen, and especially in exile, are the women involved in republican movements in Ireland through the 1790s. Matilda Tone, the wife of Wolfe Tone, experienced exile to three different locations; first America, then France, and the United States finally again, losing her native land and husband in the process. More than representing virtuous "republican womanhood," Matilda Tone was in large part

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[83] Miller, *Exiles and Emigrants*, 169.
[84] Tone referred to the United States in such a sarcastic tone due to Federalist policy. David Brundage notes that Wolfe Tone "hated America." Brundage, *Irish Nationalists*, 8.

responsible for documenting in detail the struggles of the United Irishmen, especially their struggles while in exile. By 1826, Matilda Tone compiled all her husband's writings, pamphlets, and recollections, and published them as the *Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone* in Washington, D.C.[85] Documenting the journey to new homes, Wolfe Tone described a narrative of their physical exile aboard ships crossing the Atlantic Ocean that resonated with other United Irishmen at least emotionally, if not mirroring the physical conditions of their own journeys. [86] Andrew Bryson, coming from the impoverished classes of Ireland, described his time aboard a ship from Ireland to Martinique in 1799, writing "the decks were as dirty as anything possibly could be & 3 out of 4 Vomitting till their hearts were like to come up."[87]

In 1803, the British legislature passed the first Passenger Act, which laid the standards for steerage conditions, the number of passengers that could be taken on per tonnage of the vessel, a fixed figure for cargo allowed to be carried, and finally a required quantity of provisions per number of passengers. Although these regulations in theory improved the passage of migrants, the real reason for such legislation was to limit emigration by raising the costs for migrants beyond that of laborers and

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[85] Brundage, "Matilda Tone in America," 102.
[86] Matilda Tone's role in editing these memoirs has only been credited in large part to her son, the official editor. By compiling and publishing these accounts, and shipping them to Ireland, they inspired nineteenth century Irish revolutionaries who were inspired by Wolfe Tone's attempts at rebellion. Through Matilda Tone's dedicated work to promote the life of her husband both in Ireland and in exile, the memoirs provided a counter-point to histories in Ireland, both nationalist and loyalist, that rejected Wolfe Tone as an inspirational Irish revolutionary. His descriptions of exile were highlighted to a new audience in Ireland and the United States, some of whom would experience exile in the 1840s and 1850s as a result of British policy. While the Tones detail the emotional effects of exile, the physical conditions for poor United Irishmen were not explored in the memoirs.
[87] Durey (ed.), *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal*, 70.

artisans.[88] However, even after 1803, the conditions for Irish migrants were hazardous.

John O'Raw, writing home to Ireland from Charleston in 1809, described the terrifying conditions at sea in 1806. He was part of the northern campaign in County Antrim in 1798 under Henry Joy McCracken and was ordered to be hanged from his front door when captured. He escaped and remained in hiding until 1806 when life as a fugitive became too much. In 1806 he boarded a ship via Bermuda, known for its unpredictable weather, bound for Charleston, South Carolina. O'Raw describes the terrible diseases that broke out on board and the feelings of uncertainty when traveling through stormy weather,

> Our passage now was the most disagreeable that imagination can conceive from… the accommodations in so Small a Vessel & the greatest danger we ever yet was in at sea happened on the 14th of April, (1806) …. when we were in a Violent Storm hove down almost Keel up——2 inches more would have Consigned us to Watery graves, as the Hatches was open & the water running into them.[89]

Moreover, O'Raw witnessed the impressment of fellow travelers just as Wolfe Tone had: "We had now to go through difficulties on land almost as distressing as the dangers we had encountered at Sea….6 of the passengers immediately on landing was pressed."[90] Luckily, O'Raw avoided impressment and moved permanently to Charleston. Almost three years later, he still remembered the details of crossing the Atlantic Ocean alongside fellow Irish migrants.

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[88] Miller et al. (eds.), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 89-90.
[89] John O'Raw, Charleston, South Carolina, to Bryan and Nellie O'Raw, Ballymena, County Antrim, April 1, 1809, in Miller et al. (eds.), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 97.
[90] John O'Raw, Charleston, South Carolina, to Bryan and Nellie O'Raw, Ballymena, County Antrim, April 1, 1809, in Miller et al. (eds.), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 96.

Economically, exile into the British military produced a cheap source of labor

for the British Empire. Those transported during the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries were generally put to work on plantations in the American Colonies and the

British Caribbean. British convicts started to arrive in Virginia in the 1620s, but by

the early nineteenth century the practice had all but disappeared, with slavery as a

replacement.[91] The periodization of transportation to North American colonies can be

geographically defined, with the Chesapeake (Maryland, Virginia) experiencing high

levels of indentured migration between 1620 and 1700, and subsequently the

Delaware Valley undergoing a similar labor transformation between 1710 and the

1770s.[92] It is necessary to differentiate between the three classes of indentured, two

freely negotiating a contract of indenture to pay their way to the Americas, and the

third class, especially relevant to this study, who had contracts forcibly produced by

third parties.[93] British colonial fears of disgruntlement stemming from a landless,

unfree white labor force were constant through the colonial American years, and were

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[91] Henry A. Gemery states that between 1630 and 1780, between 50-60 percent of labor flows to its colonies were indentured servants or in a state of indenture-like conditions, "Markets for Migrants: English Indentured Servitude and Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in *Colonialism and Migration; Indentured Labour Before and After Slavery*, *Comparative Studies in Overseas History* (New York City: Springer, 1986), 33-43.

[92] Christopher Tomlins, "Reconsidering Indentured Servitude: European Migration and the Early American Labor Force, 1600–1775," *Labor History* 42, No. 1 (2001): 5-43. Although Tomlins states the significant numbers of indentured migrants, the author stresses that the greater labor importance of such migration is less than previously suggested.

[93] Marcus Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), 45-50. Perhaps the architect of studying indentured servitude, Jernegan stresses that the legacy of slavery, indenture, etc., were directly responsible for the social and economic ills of the United States in the original year of publication, 1931. The two "free'' classes of indentured servant were those who negotiated with a ship captain prior to embarkation, and those who were given fourteen days on land in the Americas to ascertain a buyer to compensate the ship captain. "Redemptioners,'' as they became known, were seen generally in Pennsylvania, usually in the Eighteenth Century. See Farley Grubb, "Colonial Labor Markets and the Length of Indenture,'' *Explorations in Economic* History 24, No 1 (January 1987): 236-38. Grubb discusses in detail the complexities of the redemption system of indenture.

realized with Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. As a result of this rebellion, white plantation

owners recognized the necessity for an economic model that indefinitely maintained

an "unfree" labor force. Black chattel slavery provided a more lucrative economic

model for plantation owners and merchants and eventually eclipsed indentured

servitude. Indentured servitude re-emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as Asian

migrants were transported to Caribbean islands to work on sugar plantations, but the

preferred system of labor in the Atlantic world through the first half of the nineteenth

century was Black slavery.

Socially, the effects of indentured labor through transportation created a more

hierarchical society along lines of race, class, and gender. Karl Marx questioned the

humane capacity of transportation as policy by stressing that the practice created an

artificial labor surplus by putting convict labor directly into competition with free

labor.[94] Much as Bacon's Rebellion shows the stratifying effects of the practice of

indentured labor, the British Caribbean experienced widespread discontent and

disaffection because of its labor conditions through the late seventeenth and early

eighteenth century.[95] According to Hilary Beckles, "the behavior of most servants and

freemen was typically restless and insubordinate, sparked by their awareness that

West Indian indenture offered extremely limited opportunities for social or material

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[94] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1936), 746.

[95] Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World* Slavery (New York: Verso, 1998); David Eltis, Frank D. Lewis and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, *Slavery in the Development of the Americas* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004). See also David Eltis, Rise of African *Slavery* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 203–12; David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1987), 235-236; Robert W. Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York City, NY: Norton Press, 1987); and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (New York City, NY: Norton Press, 1974).

advancement,'' while financially benefiting the state.[96] There also existed a divide

between the skilled and unskilled convict laborer that manifested itself in the

frequency with which unskilled laborers were flogged or part of chain gangs, evident

in North America and Australia.[97] This is unsurprising; it was in the interest of the

master to treat the skilled laborers better than the unskilled to maintain a racial

hierarchy. By the early nineteenth century, relations between convict men and women

were discouraged and marriage effectively outlawed. Women who became pregnant,

could give birth, wean the child for six months, then were separated permanently and

subjected to six months of further punishment. This in turn led to limited birthrate

among convicts in Australia in the early 1800s. Finally, while conditions of convict

laborers were dire at times, comparisons with chattel slavery are inappropriate at best;

while the seven-year period, common for convicts, was performed under difficult

circumstances, and the conditions harrowing, the children of these laborers were

ultimately born free. Moreover, even on plantations that had both indentured

laborers and slaves, white laborers were invariably treated better. It is within these

contexts that United Irishmen found themselves at the end of the eighteenth century.

In the words of Andrew Bryson, on the prospect of life among slaves and Maroons:

"when I began to think that I was doomed to live 14 years among them, my heart

sickened at the very idea. The only thing with which I could console myself was that

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[96]Hilary Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot,' Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644-1713," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1990): 503.
[97] Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 232.

there was little probability of my living so long."[98] Perhaps unknown to Bryson, he held something in common with Jamaican Maroons: they were both subjected to a British policy of exile.

The exile of the Jamaican Maroons and Tamils, 1795-1800

The policy of exile employed by the British Empire was applied not only to the United Irishmen, but to all rebellious subjects in its empire. During the 1790s, the British Empire had to contend with rebellion not only in Ireland but also in Jamaica and Penang. The effectiveness of such practices was not lost on British officials, who, at the same time as the United Irish Rebellion, had to contend with how to punish Tamil revolutionaries. Those responsible for the Penang Rebellion in 1799 were banished to Penang, Malaysia today, from southern India. Moreover, an entire community of Jamaican Maroons were uprooted following an unsuccessful rebellion in 1795 and transported first to Nova Scotia, and then Sierra Leone.[99]

Much as the exile of the United Irishmen produced an important historical memory for future nationalists, it did the same for the Tamils and their descendants. Historian Anand A. Yang believes that the exile of the "Little Kings"—seventy-three local Tamil leaders of a rebellion in 1799—and the execution of their leader,

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[98] Bryson. *Andrew Bryson's Ordeal,* 80.
[99] For detailed histories of the Jamaican Maroons see Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018); Ruma Chopra, "'Wayward Humours' and 'Perverse Disputings': Exiled Blacks and the Foundation of Sierra Leone, 1787–1800," in B.N. Lawrance and N.R. Carpenter (eds) *Africans in Exile: Mobility, Law, and Identity, Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018); Ruma Chopra, "Maroons and Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia: 1796–1800," in *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region*, XLVI, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2017): 5–23.

Veerapandiya Kattabomman, was one of the first moments of nationalist awakening

for Tamils in Southern India, and the start of an independence movement. This is

similar to how exile as a concept helped foment the concept of Irish nationalism.[100]

Moreover, Kattabomman and Wolfe Tone are respectively remembered in public

memory as the central architects of early Tamil and Irish nationalist movements. In

the case of the Tamils, the conflict revolved around the refusal of the *Poligars*—

chieftains or "little kings"—to accept the East India Company's (EIC) sovereignty

over the territory held in the Tirunelveli province of southern India. The Poligars in

question resisted other leaders who claimed fealty to the EIC, and subsequently

withheld taxes due to the British company. In the end, Kattabomman gained the

support of other local Poligars, who in turn fought the EIC's forces, only to fail in

1799. His relatives were imprisoned, but escaped in 1801, recaptured the fort of

Panchalankuricci (the center of Tirunelveli), and continued rebelling against the EIC.

In October 1801, the rebelling Poligar leaders were caught and hanged, and the fort of

Panchalankuricci was razed to the ground, covered in castor seeds, and finally erased

from local registries, expunging its existence from colonial records. A December

1801 proclamation heralded a cessation of warfare, and an end to hanging, due in part

to the British forces' self-perceived lenient nature. Instead of hanging those "now

under restraint, whom it is the intention," it was instead decided by British officials

"to punish (them) by banishment beyond the seas."[101] Much like the shared

[100] Anand A. Yang, "Bandits and Kings: Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 4 (2007): 883-4.
[101] Yang, "Bandits and Kings: Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India," 884.

experience of exile, which held tremendous emotional power for the United Irishmen, and was responsible for an exile motif so important in later nationalist movements, it had the same effect on the Little Kings. The Little Kings saw the crossing of the "Black Waters," that is the strait between present-day South India and Sri Lanka, as an inherently fearful and permanent odyssey, due to their Muslim religious beliefs.[102] The crossing of the "Black Waters" had a profound effect upon the exiles sent; they feared the journey and resisted a return voyage. Seventy-three of the principal rebels were deemed too dangerous to the stability of the region and were subsequently perpetually banished.[103]

Although on a lesser scale, the "Little Kings" were subjected to the same punishment as the United Irishmen. In the same language, the punishment of transportation had a "quality of mercy," focusing solely on the reduction of corporeal violence, disregarding any emotional pain or suffering. The conditions of exile also mirrored those of the United Irishmen. On February 11, 1801, seventy-three rebels set sail aboard the *Admiral Nelson* to Penang. All inhabitants were handcuffed in pairs and exposed to horrendous conditions. Two died from exposure during the seventy-six-day journey while one drowned. Seventy exiles landed in Penang on April 26, and of those who arrived, twenty-two died within five months of banishment. No records exist for those who survived.[104] Similarly, minimal records exist for the 400 United Irishmen who arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, only to disappear into the countryside, and

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[102] Yang, "Bandits and Kings: Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India," 884.
[103] Yang, "Bandits and Kings: Moral Authority and Resistance in Early Colonial India," 885.
[104] K. Rajayyan, *Rise and Fall of the Poligars of Tamilnadu* (Chennai, India: University of Madras Press, 1974), 110-111.

for the hundreds of United Irishmen who were sold to the Prussian government to work in the Silesian salt mines.

The process of exile as applied to the Trelawny Maroons of Jamaica is similar to that "Little Kings" and the United Irishmen, although the nature of their exile was more comprehensive and destructive. This is due to the transplantation of an entire community to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and then Sierra Leone, as opposed to the exiling of only the leaders in the case of the Tamils. Having won limited political autonomy during the First Maroon War (1739-40), the Jamaican Maroons were allotted their own territorial boundaries and a legal code they could apply within them. Jamaica enjoyed relatively peaceful relations with British officials on the island. With the treaty that ended fighting, the Maroons were afforded certain legal autonomy, especially in cases of punishment. These freedoms were impinged upon when a Black slave flogged two Maroons for stealing a pig from an outlying plantation in 1795. Incensed, six Maroon leaders voiced their dissatisfaction with British officials, only to be taken as prisoners. The Governor of Jamaica Alexander Lindsay, terrified of the destructive forces unleashed by the Haitian Revolution, feared the possibility of similar insurrections in Jamaica. Tasked to hunt down escaped slaves, Maroons were essential in the maintenance of the slavocracy. As a result, and to make explicit the consequences for dissent during a turbulent period, Lindsay called for British forces to attack the Trelawny Town Maroons. Outmatched by sheer numbers, the Maroons relied on an effective campaign of guerilla warfare, which in the early days of the conflict produced spectacular results against British forces unprepared for the

mountainous terrain. The introduction of dogs to track the Trelawny Maroons

eventually leveled the forces, and after eight months of fighting, a stalemate was

called between both forces.

What was perhaps most impressive was the resistance of the Trelawny

Maroons against the British even without the support of the Windward Maroon

communities in the east of the island. Moreover, the Accompong Maroons chose to

side with the British in the suppression of the Trelawny Maroons. The British General

George Walpole made a pledge to the Maroon Chief Montague James that if the

Maroons laid down their arms, they would not be deported from Jamaica.

Furthermore, their landholdings would be expanded, and the rights accorded after the

First Maroon War would be secured.[105] For the Jamaican Governor, this pledge was

simply a tactic to allow his forces to surround the Maroons, who were duly rounded

up and imprisoned. For Lindsay, the decision to do so was an easy one: the Trelawny

maroons could not be allowed to remain on the island while the specter of slave

uprisings loomed. In the language of leniency, the decision to deport the Maroons

was one of mercy, as they would be assailed by the other maroon communities for

their rebellious behavior.[106]

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[105] Kathleen Wilson, "The Performance of Freedom: Maroons and the Colonial Order in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica and the Atlantic Sound," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 66, no. 1 (2009): 65. For an overview of the eighteenth-century relationship between the Maroons and the British officials, see Mavis Christine Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration & Betrayal* (Westport, USA: Bergin & Garvey, 1988).

[106] Moreover, there was a split amongst the white planters, with some vehemently in favor of the maroon deportation, while others saw the utility in keeping good relations with the Trelawny Maroons. See Helen McKee, "From Violence to Alliance: Maroons and White Settlers in Jamaica, 1739–1795," *Slavery & Abolition*, 39:1, (2018): 40-43.

Instead of allowing disruptive subjects to remain in Jamaica, 568 Maroons

from Trelawny Town were forcibly exiled to Nova Scotia, Canada in July 1796.

Owing in part to the devastating effects of cold winters on the population of the

transplanted Maroons, they were granted transport to Sierra Leone, and on September

30, 1800, 551 Maroons arrived in Freetown.[107] Much like the Little Kings and the

United Irishmen, the Maroons were afforded notoriety as a contagious, mutinous

rabble; rhetoric made especially potent in the shadow of the slave rebellion in St.

Domingue which started in 1791. In fact, before violence broke out between the

Jamaican Maroons and British forces, the Lord Balcarres noted at the Jamaican

Assembly that the Trelawny Maroons "were actuated solely by motives of

treachery."[108] The fact that the maroons were descended from escaped slaves marks

their experiences as different to that of the Tamils and the United Irishmen. The

Accompong Maroons remained loyal to the British through 1795 and 1796 and

presented themselves as the antithesis of the Trelawny Maroons who rebelled.

Conclusion

The deportation of the United Irishmen, Little Kings, and the Trelawny

Maroons exhibits a greater reliance on the use of exile to defuse radical communities

during the Age of Revolution. Exile in turn acted as a measure to maintain a sense of

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[107] Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York, NY: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011), 269-270.
[108] *The Proceedings of the Governor and Assembly of Jamaica: In Regard to the Maroon Negroes, Jamaica Assembly*, 1795-96, xlv, National Archives of Jamaica (NAJ).

propriety by extending intended lenient sentences in lieu of capital punishment to people who were not yet "civilized," such as the Jamaican Maroons and the Little Kings of South India, or radicalized beyond salvation, like the United Irishmen. However, the long-term effect would be the beginning of nationalist identities that flourished during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For the United Irishmen, their exile brought them into contact with places grappling with their own sense of rebellion or revolution, which influenced how they conceived of national identity.

In their new locales, the United Irishmen had to forget their native home and try to adapt to their new environments. The result was acceptance of their situation but also a deep sense of hatred for the British state that instituted their banishment. Cast into the Atlantic world still in revolt, the United Irishmen lost their exclusively Irish identity and became something else: transnational revolutionaries. In Philadelphia, the United Irishmen saw an opportunity to move beyond their exile and create a sense of community. However, conservative forces that worked to affiliate them with the horrors of the French Revolution rose to make that transition as difficult as possible. Forced from their homes in Ireland, they were at times prevented from entering countries such as the United States. As a result, they quickly had to find their feet in their adopted homes and challenge the Federalist measures implemented that made their transition into American society more difficult. In the United States, the United Irishmen hoped to stake their claim as legitimate participants in the American political system.
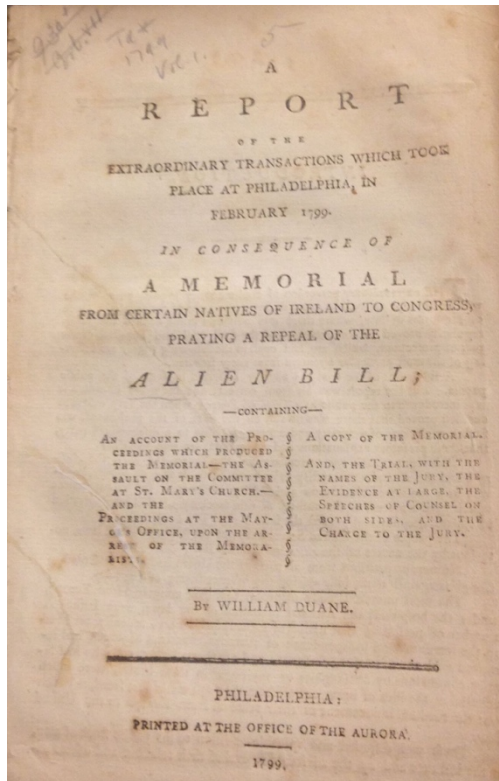
A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions Which Took Place At Philadelphia in February 1799 by William Duane (1799)
Library Company of Philadelphia

Introduction

When Dr. James Reynolds raised his pistol into the air outside a Catholic church on a cold February morning in 1799, he justified the fears of many Federalists—that the French Revolution had not only found its way to St. Domingue but also to the United States. Pointing his gun into the sky, in an act of desperation, he attempted to protect himself and his three compatriots. His attempts were

unsuccessful. Several men surrounded Reynolds and his three companions, William Duane, Samuel Cuming, and Robert Moore, despite his raised weapon. A melee eventually ensued, and the crowd of Catholics gathered around the four men, incensed by Reynolds's appearance outside this Catholic church. The congregants disarmed Reynolds and assaulted him, leaving him dazed on the ground, and the Philadelphia police brought the four men into custody to await trial, which began the next day. All four men were charged with "disturbance of the peace," while Reynolds was also charged with attempted murder.[109] All four men would later be found innocent of any crimes. These four Irish migrants had gathered outside St. Mary's Church that morning to post a petition to repeal the Alien and Sedition Acts that had come into law the previous year—legislation that restricted citizenship for migrants, while also curtailing free speech for all Americans. Moreover, St. Mary's was not the only church where petitions were hung. Across Philadelphia, petitions were posted at Catholic and Presbyterian churches, but nowhere else did it end in violence. With the political climate reaching a boiling point during a tense election year between Democratic Republicans, championed by Thomas Jefferson, and Federalists under John Adams, the slightest shift could unhinge a young nation finding its political identity.

While the actions of these United Irishmen seem on first glance to represent radicals using violent means to seize political control as Jacobins did in

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[109] Of the four Irish migrants involved, this chapter focuses on Reynolds and Duane; the latter published an account of the trial. Finally, although Mathew Carey was absent during the event, he more than most represented the interests of the United Irishmen in the United States. Due in large part to an absence of source material, there will be limited reference to the two other United Irishmen that day, Robert Moore and Samuel Cuming.

Revolutionary France, what is actually evident through this period is a return to non-violent politics, akin to their organization's pre-1795 strategies, when pamphleteering and political agitation were more effective than violent rebellion. In fact, what the United Irishmen wanted most was to be considered American citizens, not Irish radicals.

The United Irishmen made a choice in 1799. So as to secure their place within the burgeoning United States, they used their own class and racial privileges to question the legitimacy of the state's choice to institute the Alien and Sedition Acts.[110] Reynolds raised his weapon in an act of desperation to defend himself without knowing if he would have to shoot it or not, but the United Irishmen made a conscious decision in 1799 to strategically dissent against the government using legitimate means to do so. In response, the state, and those invested in the continued prevalence of a Federalist government, sought to de-legitimize these same actions, likening them to those radicals of France. Opponents of Thomas Jefferson, the Democrats, and the United Irishmen, saw the arrival of the United Irishmen and the events at St. Mary's Church as an act of revolution, akin to the Jacobin seizure of power in 1793 in Revolutionary France. To de-value the legitimacy of the petition made by the United Irishmen, the majority of whom were naturalized citizens, the spectacle of the "riot" was manufactured and sensationalized by the Federalist Press to justify the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts.

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[110] While this chapter does not address the racial positioning of the United Irishmen, the fourth chapter of this dissertation does.

This chapter is an analysis of the role that political strategy, and an absence of violence, played in the political ideology of assimilation of the United Irishmen in exile, in cities like Philadelphia. Could the United Irishmen maintain a commitment to revolutionary agitation and reform without a platform that relied on violence to overturn state infrastructure? Did the parameters with which violence would be utilized change outside of Ireland, and in response to a non-British aggressor in the form of the Federalist Party? Could the United Irishmen be radical and non-violent in the same instance?

In Philadelphia, Federalists imagined French revolutionaries looking on at events such as those at St. Mary's Church in 1799, wishing for the same anarchy and civil war that had afflicted revolutionary France. The culprits at the center of this "riot," as it was referred to in popular Federalist representations at the time, were known in Philadelphia, however, not as French revolutionaries, but as United Irishmen, who as political refugees from Ireland were forced from their country as part of repressive British policies intent on extinguishing Irish radicalism. The British exile of the United Irishmen in 1798, after their failed rebellion in Ireland, saw their banishment throughout the Atlantic world, as explored in the previous chapter, but nowhere were they more visible than in Philadelphia.[111] Their exile brought them

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[111] Philadelphia proved the most suitable location for these revolutionary exiles, due in part to its accessibility as a port city, and reputation for radical politics, Moreover, Philadelphia, as a port, experienced a significant flow of travelers through the city, often from places affected by revolutionary turmoil. Many Scottish and English radicals, such as James Callender saw Philadelphia, acting as the temporary capital of the new republic (1790-1800), as a perfect haven. Moreover, because of its political function, Philadelphia was a primary location for political debates between Federalists and Democrats through the Early Republic years, not only in formal venues, but also in the streets. For

straight into the imagination of Americans at a moment of transition in U.S. history. Arriving in the United States as the political ascendancy shifted from Federalism to Jeffersonian Democracy, the positioning of the United Irishmen in the United States saw them occupy overlapping identities; they were radical bogeymen in the minds of Federalists, while also influential cogs in the Jeffersonian Democratic machine that was emerging during the period. The 1799 encounter at St. Mary's Church, which Federalists labeled as the "United Irish Riot," marks a critical juncture in the Atlantic history of the United Irishmen, when the embers of Irish radicalism met with the counter-revolutionary realities of the Early Republic.[112] Federalists like William Cobbett, an English émigré, and John Ward Fenno, editor of the *Gazette of the United States*, prominently opposed the actions of Reynolds and his comrades, seeing the petitioning of the Alien and Sedition Acts as politically destabilizing, while also illegitimate: they feared such resistance could send the nation into a state of anarchy just as it was stabilizing after the War of Independence and the retirement of George Washington. But also, how could these men, who had only arrived in the United States two years prior, make claims to petition against the will of the government?

This chapter starts by analyzing the United Irishmen within their own moment of exile and explaining why Philadelphia was such an attractive destination. The migration of the United Irishmen is then considered in relation to Irish migration to the United States through the eighteenth century more broadly to stress how they

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more, see Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 108-144.

[112] "The United Irish Riot" is interchangeably referred to as the "St Mary's Riot," but for the purposes of this dissertation, I will rely on the latter.

represented a more middle-class trend in migration history from Ireland. Then, I expand upon the American and Atlantic contexts of the 1790s, stressing the years 1798-1800 as a transitionary watershed moment not only in the United States, but also throughout the Atlantic world, and position the St. Mary's riot as a microcosm of the anxieties that existed in cities along the Atlantic basin, like Philadelphia. Moreover, as revolutionary ardor started to diminish in countries such as Ireland, Haiti, United States, and France, a counter-revolutionary swing occurred that exhibited itself in the United States in the form of restrictive legislation: the Alien and Sedition Acts. Finally, I examine the historical actors involved in resistance against the Alien and Sedition Acts, paying special attention to how United Irishmen positioned themselves in relation to legislation that threatened continued Irish migration to the United States. By stressing the legitimacy of their own citizenship of the United States, the United Irishmen hoped to de-legitimize claims made by Federalists that they had arrived on American soil as ciphers of French subterfuge.

France, and French radicals, remains an important focus when interpreting the Alien and Sedition Acts, with French Jacobins perceived as evident threats to American democracy, but it was Irish radicals who played a more legible role, both as the targets of the acts, and as those who *resisted* its implementation. The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 were the first attempt to codify the fears felt by many Americans of the migratory "other,'' but also brought significant occasions of resistance against such legislation, coming in large part from those affected by such

repressive measures.[113] Exiled United Irishmen played a paramount role in resisting such legislation, with the St. Mary's Riot being just one example of many forms of their resistance, that ranged from pamphleteering the public to petitioning the government. While the incident at St. Mary's led to violence, it was the last option for Reynolds, and the worst possible outcome of what was intended to happen. The brandishing of a weapon that day verified what many Federalists suspected of the United Irishmen and as a result verified their perceived illegitimacy, to Federalists, in their capacity as American citizens. This theme of illegitimacy for migrants starts with the Alien and Sedition Acts and exists to this day: it can be seen from the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act to President Trump's 2017 Executive Order 13769.[114] So as to stress this moment of scrutiny of the United Irishmen and their right to be citizens in

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[113] The "other," be it Native American or slave, has been in existence through the entirety of American history. I stress the ''migratory other'' as an important differentiation.

[114] Terri Diane Halperin, *The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798: Testing the Constitution* (Baltimore, MY: Johns Hopkins University Press 2016). Halperin's account is the most thorough reading of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Halperin's reading is that although no deportations occurred, several French radicals felt inclined to leave, and while there were only fourteen indictments, all were against Democrats, and often those involved in the press. Therefore, the author suggests that the acts cannot be understood through statistics, but rather the feelings created on the streets and the anxiety they created, especially for immigrants, 5-7. David Jenkins argues that the Alien and Sedition Acts were the first time that the press clause of the First Amendment was challenged, but because it was repealed, it never went to the Supreme Court and no formal decision was made in "The Sedition Act of 1798 and the Incorporation of Seditious Libel into First Amendment Jurisprudence," *American Journal of Legal History* 45 (2001): 156. Daniels states that "the Aliens Act was never enforced against anyone, although some who felt threatened left the country and others went into hiding" and that "when the turn of the political tide put the Jeffersonians in power in 1801, they rolled back most, but not all, of the Federalist anticline legislation." In contrast to Halperin, Daniels's interpretation downplays the totalizing effect the acts had in limiting free speech in the United States and muzzling the Democratic press. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 115-116. Carol Berkin argues that the Alien and Sedition Acts were important moments of crisis that bound the nation together and fomented an early American nationalism that ensured the continued survival of the country. Moreover, all crises, including the Whiskey rebellion, Genet Affair, and XYZ Scandal and how the Federalists reacted to them ensured the survival of the nation. See Carol Berkin, *A Sovereign People: The Crises of the 1790s and the Birth of American Nationalism* (New York City, NY: Basic Books, 2017).

the United States, I focus on the petitioning that occurred at St. Mary's Church in 1799.

St. Mary's Riot within the Historiography

Historians have addressed the events at St. Mary's Church in passing, but it has never been analyzed comprehensively within the context of the considerable political shifts of the period, in an American and Atlantic sense, or in an expanded fashion from the perspective of Irish radicals.[115] Moreover, past histories do not stress this as a moment of de-radicalization for the United Irishmen. My intervention is to stress this moment as one of attempted legitimization by the United Irishmen and staking their claim as American citizens. Moreover, this action was met with resistance from Federalists who saw these actions as illegitimate and radical, with no place for them in the United States.

David Brundage acknowledges the St. Mary's Riot as a starting point of radical involvement for the Irish in Philadelphia. David Wilson provides the most complete interpretation of the riot from the vantage of United Irishmen; he places it briefly within the context of political divisions between Federalists and Democrats but does less to address the legislation itself and the its importance in defining American citizenship, and the significance of the subsequent United Irish resistance to it. The intervention of this chapter is to stress the importance of non-violence for

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[115] Kerby Miller speaks briefly on the subject and focuses more on the schism within the Catholic Church, between the working-class component of the congregation being swayed, with the established, wealthy Catholics of St. Mary's pushing back against secularism and radicalism as exemplified by the United Irishmen. Miller, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of* Canaan, 594.

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United Irishmen, some of whom were without the benefits of citizenship, resisting the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts, and in doing so, making them appear as legible American citizens.[116] Current scholarship generally gives minimal attention to those migrants who were involved in resistance against the Alien and Sedition Acts, with few exceptions.[117] Dale B. Light sufficiently details the riot, and places it within an intra-Irish dispute that was split along party lines, but does not address in detail the motivations behind such petitions.[118] Carol Berkin's *A Sovereign People: The Crises of the 1790s and the Birth of American Nationalism* (2017) acknowledges that migrant radicals were in mind with the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts, and does justice to the efforts made people like William Duane, but does little to stress Duane's Irishness, or his affiliation to the United Irishmen.[119] Moreover, Berkin does not address the St. Mary's riot in any meaningful sense. Douglas Bradburn demonstrates the spectrum of disaffection felt by Americans regarding the Alien and Sedition Acts but offers limited analysis of the immigrants who rejected this legislation.[120] This chapter goes further in that it stresses the importance of the United

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[116] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 44; Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, Wilson when referring to the "St Mary's Riot," places it effectively within the Federalist-Democratic skirmishes of the period, and acknowledges the significance of religious conflict, but could do more to address the relationship of citizenship and free speech to St. Mary's and the resistance against the Alien and Sedition Acts. See Wilson, *United Irishmen*, 53-54

[117] Halperin, *The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798,* Halperin stresses the importance of Irish migrants, but within the broader migration of radicalized persons. Moreover, St. Mary's is spoken of only briefly, 30-49.

[118] Dale B. Light, *Rome and the New Republic: Conflict and Community in Philadelphia Catholicism between the Revolution and the Civil War* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 1996), 53-55.

[119] Berkin, *A Sovereign People,* 201, 221-223.

[120] Douglas Bradburn, "A Clamor in the Public Mind: Opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2008): 595–600. Bradburn stresses that "what 1798 really reflects, however, is a competing mobilization of different groups of Americans," 595.

Irishmen as a focus in the production and popularization of legislation like the Alien and Sedition Acts and furthermore describes the ways the United Irishmen resisted this restrictive legislation. So as to understand the importance of the United Irish exile, it is important to put this diaspora in conversation with the larger history of Irish migration to Philadelphia. The class position of these United Irishmen, in contrast to earlier Irish migration, made the petition of the Alien and Sedition Acts possible.

Irish Migration to Philadelphia

The exile of the United Irishmen differs from earlier Irish migrations to the Pennsylvania area in that there was a visible middle-class component which inflected their relationship to the state. The United Irishmen were able to leverage these class privileges to oppose certain provisions of the Alien and Sedition Acts. This composition contrasted with Irish migration to North America through the latter half of the eighteenth century. Migration from Ireland to North America through the 1760s and 1770s was primarily Protestant, specifically Presbyterian, and rural. Between 1771 and 1774, of the 26,000 migrants coming from Ulster, the northern province of Ireland, roughly 18,600 migrated to the Delaware Valley.[121] Many continued to travel from points of entry such as Philadelphia and Baltimore to different colonies, but most of these Irish migrants remained within colonies of their

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[121] Maurice Bric, "Philadelphia's Irish, 1790-1850," *The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Legacies* 14, No.2 (2014): 8; Timothy J. Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2005), 45. Both Meagher and Bric agree that Protestants made up about two thirds of total migration to what would become the United States.

disembarkation, generally in rural spaces. Although the number of Irish Catholics

migrating started to increase during the late eighteenth century, Protestants would

remain the dominant force by way of numbers until the 1830s, when Catholic migrant

numbers started to swell. By and large, migration to this point represented a more

rural population, with limited settlement in the major cities of the United States. The

American Revolution put a halt to the consistent movement of Irish migrants that

existed through the eighteenth century. Roughly 4,000 Irish immigrants had entered

Pennsylvania in the five years leading up to 1776 but the number of Irish migrants

receded during the revolutionary period to 20-30% of that figure.[122] Following the

cessation of fighting between Britain and the American colonies, migration increased

from Ireland, but immigration statistics show a changing ethnic and class

composition.

  Patterns of migration through the 1780s demonstrate a changing demographic

and one less dominated by "Scotch-Irish" migrants.[123] According to Kerby Miller, in

1783, roughly five thousand Irishmen and women left Ireland for the United States.

The following year between 15,000 and 20,000 people from Ireland migrated. The

Peace of Paris in 1783, heralding the end of hostilities between Britain and the United

States, would see migration from Ireland rise once again, but it would not be until

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[122] George E. Pozzetta, *Law, Crime, Justice: Naturalization and Citizenship* (New York: Garland, 1991), 50.

[123] Scotch-Irish as an historic label can in the North American context be problematic because those who fell under it through the eighteenth century often rejected it, affiliating neither with the "Irish," which to them implied Catholicism, nor the "Scotch," which denoted radicalism associated with the United Irishmen. For the purposes of this work, it refers to Protestant migrants, often in more rural American spaces in the late eighteenth century. For more, see Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 2-3.

1791 that migration levels would return to their peak during the mid-1780s. From 1784 until the start of the Napoleonic Wars in 1812, figures averaged between 3,000 and 5,000 Irish migrants annually. Through the 1790s, the population of port cities like New York and Philadelphia increased, in part due to migrants remaining in urban locations, in contrast to 1770s and 1780s migrants who sought out the western frontiers. By the 1790s, as Maurice Bric notes, "new Irish immigrants who poured into Philadelphia were more substantial, self-assured, discriminating, and politically experienced'' than those who had arrived before the American Revolution commenced.[124] While Irish migration to rural America still dominated, through the 1790s a more visible urban demographic became evident in the cities of the United States.

The composition of these Irish migrants traveling across the Atlantic Ocean changed from agricultural workers who intended to settle in rural spaces to those who wished to live and work in urban ones. While the United Irishmen mirrored an urban, middle class, or "professional class,'' far more Irish migrants came from poor backgrounds, especially to cities like Philadelphia. What differentiates the United Irishmen is their clear class markings. This is important to note so as to differentiate the United Irishmen from the larger Irish migration that was occurring through the 1790s. By 1795, the yearly influx of Irish persons into Philadelphia reached almost

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[124] Maurice J. Bric, "The Irish Immigrant and the Broadening of the Polity in Philadelphia, 1790-1800," in Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 159. Most Irish migrants chose rural spaces over urban ones between 1790 and 1850, yet there remained a vocal, urban Irish component in advance of these changes. See David Noel Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers in the United States, 1850-1870," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 10, no. 1/2 (1990): 36–59.

3,000.[125] By 1799, 12% of the population of the Philadelphia area were originally

born in Ireland.[126] Mathew Carey, a United Irishmen, and eventually a major figure in

the 1800 American election, informed a fellow Irishman that in the summer of 1791,

between 3,000 and 4,000 Irishmen and women entered Philadelphia alone.[127]

Through the 1790s, roughly 27,000 Irish migrants arrived on the Delaware River,

swelling the population of Philadelphia from 44,096 to 61,559. Those who entered

the United States came from a vastly different class background than United Irishmen

like James Reynolds and William Duane. One Customs officer in Newry, a town

which served traditionally the religiously mixed South Ulster, noted that those who

left the port were "no people of real property," and that they were "the lower order of

tradesmen that went as servants."[128] Moreover, on entry to the United States, the

New York City Council demonized the "prodigious influx of indigent foreigners"

who would become reliant on municipal charities.[129] The United States became a

popular destination for those wishing to escape the rigid class structures of Ireland.

The Belfast *Northern Star*, the newspaper of the United Irishmen, declared that the

"lowest inhabitants of the United States were well-fed, well dressed and happy,"

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[125] These figures are from James Carey, the younger brother of Mathew Carey. He claimed that between 1783 and 1787, an average of 3,000 arrived from Londonderry alone. Moreover, Carey suggests that roughly 2,700 Irish migrants arrived in Philadelphia from Londonderry and Belfast between 1787 and 1795. These figures are open to question, as they were used in an article as a rebuttal to William Cobbett and the *Porcupine*. HSP*, Balch Collections.*
[126] Miller, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 585.
[127] Mathew Carey to John Chambers (Undated), HSP, *Balch Collections*, 1791. Moreover, Mathew Carey's position as the secretary of the Hibernian Society in Philadelphia during this period meant that he witnessed firsthand the migration of Irish people into the city. One of the requirements for the office he held was to visit all incoming vessels that had Irish migrants aboard and aid those destitute upon arrival.
[128] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 170-190.
[129] Edward Rodney Green, *Essays in Scotch-Irish History* (London, UK: Routledge & K. Paul, 1969), 56.

unlike those in Ireland.[130] For the Scottish radical James Callender, British and Irish migrants during the 1790s came "not in search of a republic, but of bread.''[131] Reflected in Callender's observation was that the majority of those entering the ports of the United States were less concerned with political freedoms in their new home, and more the opportunity to economically satisfy themselves.

While economic opportunity beckoned those entering the United States, the United Irishmen arrived when their political affiliation, for many, defined them. And even though only 2,000 United Irishmen migrated permanently to the United States, they quickly became enmeshed in the politics of the period.[132] The United Irishmen stood out from the crowd of Irish migrants arriving in the United States in both the professions they pursued and the wealth of written records they left behind. The professions they entered into were varied. In New York City, William Sampson and Thomas Addis Emmet both became lawyers, with Emmet becoming deeply involved in the Manumission Society there. William Duane, as we will see, became a prolific editor of the *Aurora* newspaper in Philadelphia. John Binns, who arrived in Pennsylvania, started first the *Republican Argus* in Northumbria, Pennsylvania. Then he became editor of the *Democratic Press*, the primary newspaper in the state of Pennsylvania from 1807 until 1829. William MacNeven who settled in New York City was a physician throughout his life. Moreover, he also became deeply involved in chemistry, gaining plaudits for his work on atomic theory and hailed as the "Father

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[130] Belfast's *Northern Star* (undated) accessed in Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 183.
[131] Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, 1.
[132] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 39.

of American Chemistry."[133] Robert Adrain fled to Philadelphia and became a teacher from 1808 until 1834. Teaching at Rutgers, Columbia, and the University of Pennsylvania, Adrain is remembered among other things as one of the pioneers of the study of mathematics in the United States.[134]

Finally, the United Irishmen arrived at an important moment of transition as the political ascendancy shifted from Federalism to Jeffersonian Democracy. During this political moment, the United Irishmen wanted to position themselves as ambassadors of Irish migration alongside the Democratic Republican Party but were marked as political radicals upon entry to the United States.

The Jacobin in America, 1791-1800

Politically, the American Republic became increasingly polarized along party lines through the 1790s, between Federalists and Democratic Republicans. The Federalist Party attracted New Englanders and urban voters who saw the party as a beacon of stability that promised a strong, centralized government, while rejecting the lures of expanding enfranchisement to others unable to vote. For Republicans, Federalists were specters from an older world, monarchists moonlighting as patriots, intent on bringing monarchy back to the United States. Republican support came from southern states, farmers, and eventually immigrants. In contrast to Federalists, Republicans favored weaker government, and were amenable to the expansion of the

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[133] Twomey, *Jacobins and Jeffersonians*, 59.
[134] David N. Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen, and Revolutionary America 1760-1820* (Dublin, IRL: Mercier Press, 1981), 207.

vote beyond its current breadth. This in turn led them to being characterized as "wild demagogues'' by the Federalists.[135] The "Revolution of 1800'' concluded with the inauguration of Jefferson in 1801, but the ascendancy of the Democratic Republicans had been building since Thomas Jefferson's failed presidential run in 1796. Initially distraught at his loss and resigned to a "wait and see" policy, Jefferson, as Vice-President in 1797, started to push back against the Federalist Party, headed by President John Adams. Philadelphia became the site for this backlash, and along with cities like Baltimore and New York, would play host to one of the most dramatic popular splits in American political history. It was the seaports of the Atlantic coast that would provide the support for Jeffersonian democracy. New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia became focal points of this support, in part because these were the points of disembarkation of Irishmen entering the United States, and the primary American destination for United Irishmen.[136]

Upon arrival, Jefferson's party appealed to the United Irishmen who quickly became involved in it. The Democratic Republican party was constructed in direct opposition to Washington's policy of neutrality in the war between Britain and France, the Hamiltonian banking system, and the Jay Treaty of 1795, the latter of which enraged many Irish-Americans, who saw it as a concession to the British Empire, their oppressor. James Madison and John Beckley became the architects of

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[135] Joanne Freeman, "Explaining the Unexplainable,'' in *The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 20-50.
[136] During the election, the traditionally Federalist state of New York swung in favor of Thomas Jefferson's Democrats, while Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland remained battlegrounds in an election that saw a three-way tie, that was eventually settled by Congress in favor of Jefferson. See Susan Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism* (New York City, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2004), 175-190.

this new party through the 1790s, drafting its structure and format, as well as its policy ambitions. In addition to the formation of an attractive political platform, both Beckley and Madison were charged with delivering the message of the Republicans to a substantial and varied political body. Within this message, Beckley and Madison stressed one crucial idea—the expansion of democracy in American politics. The idea of expanded suffrage for men without property, and a rejection of the Jay Treaty appealed to the United Irishmen.

The United Irishmen arrived at a moment when the future of the American political structure was being theorized. At the heart of the American political system during the Early Republic stood a glaring contradiction—in a democratic state theoretically founded on ideals of liberty and participation, the thought of pure democracy terrified the incumbent generation of leaders. For Federalists, full political participation was equated with "civic disorder and popular unrest."[137] From 1789 to 1800, the Republic was a fragile political entity and its existence was far from guaranteed.[138] Internationally, the United States held little sway on the world stage in the way that it would in the twentieth century. International trade was controlled by the French and British Empires, and the Spanish Empire to a lesser extent. The American navy was bullied, its sailors impressed at will, and the diplomats of the young nation perceived as petulant upstarts in royal courts. The effects of this national standing had domestic repercussions that were paired with a liberal-

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[138] Freeman describes the political state in the United States as "remarkably undeveloped and unsteady,'' Freeman, "Explaining the Unexplainable," 20.

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democratic tradition that limited the franchise of political participation to those with property, white and male, while excluding women, property-less males, free people of color, and slaves. The thought of radical politics allowing the franchise to expand terrified those who wanted to secure their class and educational privilege within the United States to secure a legitimate role within the political process. One result of this political environment was to manufacture a climate of crisis that produced conflict between those who wanted to maintain homeostasis and those who wished to expand the democratic capacity of the fledgling United States to many of those excluded. [139] The late 1790s saw what Rosemarie Zagarri refers to as "revolutionary backlash," and far from the seemingly inclusive rhetoric of liberty, the United Irishmen arrived in the United States as civil liberties were being stripped from Americans.[140] The greater possibilities of the American Revolution started to fade by the time the United Irishmen arrived in the United States.

The United Irishmen were inspired by the successes of the American revolutionaries and expected that same fervor that drove them to revolt to be present

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[139] For the United Irishmen, they had little interest in involving women and people of color in the political process, but that detail was ignored. See Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 133-153.

[140] In France, the Terror enacted by Robespierre saw a moderate counter-revolution, when the revolutionary regime was overthrown. This became known as the Thermidorian Reaction. In the United States, the principles that had been expounded in 1783 were cast aside by 1800. Democracy came to represent the ability to cast a vote, not the equality of wealth and property. The democratic system in the next generation would be expanded to some, white voters, only at the expense of all others. For a detailed examination, see Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011).161-211; Larry E. Tise, *The American Counterrevolution: A Retreat from Liberty, 1783-1800* (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 1998), 499-528; Rosemarie Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 148-181.

through the 1790s.[141] The life of Thomas Paine exemplifies the changing relationship of the American people broadly to radical politics. Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) laid out in clear accessible prose the rationale for the separation of the thirteen colonies from the British Empire. Much of the profit he received from its purchase he sent directly to the Continental Army and he was lauded as a hero when the war ended. By the 1790s, and speaking from France and England, Paine became disillusioned with the American leadership and at one point suggested that George Washington had instructed Robespierre to arrest Paine in France. Moreover, Paine criticized institutionalized religion which was an unpopular stance in the United States by 1800. Paine died on June 8, 1809 with only six mourners present for his funeral. The *American Citizen*, a Federalist newspaper, wrote on his death that "He had lived long, did some good, but much harm."[142] Paine was cast aside by many of the American people because he represented the radical possibilities of continued revolution that were still ongoing in parts of the Atlantic world, while most Americans now wanted security and prosperity in a moderate, non-radical state.[143] This mirrored a changing political environment of which the United Irishmen were late participants.

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[141] Uncredited, but a popular catechism spread through the ranks of the United Irishmen: "What have you got in your hand? A green bough. Where did it first grow? In America. Where did it bud? In France. Where are you going to plant it? In the crown of Great Britain.'' This served as a catechism for children taught by the United Irishmen in Ireland. Kevin Whelan stresses the importance of the American Revolution, while acknowledging the French Revolution, in the formation of the United Irishmen. See Kevin Whelan, "The Green Atlantic,'' 217-229.
[142] *American Citizen*, June 10, 1809.
[143] Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, 4.

By 1800, revolutionary sentiment was suppressed and eventually extinguished around much of the Atlantic world.[144] The political establishment of the United States would exhibit its own form of revolutionary "backlash'' by the start of the nineteenth century (to borrow Rosemarie Zagarri's terminology), limiting the informal political opportunity that was afforded to women in the years during and after the American Revolution.[145] In the Caribbean, Haitian revolutionaries, initially inspired by the French Revolution in 1789, were suppressed by French forces in 1802. Napoleon, gaining power and expanding the French state despite the encroachment of other European nations, ordered the putting down of the Haitian Revolution, the imprisonment of its leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, and the reintroduction of slavery that year. The unsuccessful Scottish Rebellion of 1797, similar to but smaller than the United Irish one in 1798, resulted in the transportation of its leaders throughout the British colonies. The Batavian Revolutions, though initially successful, devolved into a senseless scramble for power, and the Dutch Republic, weakened by successive coups, would be annexed into Napoleon's expanding empire. The Atlantic Revolutions would continue in a more limited capacity in the Spanish colonies, but for North America and Europe, revolutionary enthusiasm had hit its high-water mark. In the United States, the United Irishmen

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[144] The exceptions were the Wars of Independence in Latin America from 1808 to 1829 as well as the unsuccessful 1803 Rebellion under Robert Emmet. The Haitian revolution would also continue until 1804, when it was suppressed. However, the Wars of Independence were more conservative, focusing on an anti-colonial struggle rather than the liberation of their people from economic inequality, racial prejudice, etc. While several republics emerged from the fighting in Latin America, there was still an unequal relationship between its white minority and its majority indigenous and Black populations. See Anthony McFarlane, *War and Independence In Spanish America*, (London, UK: Routledge, 2013); John Charles Chasteen, *Americanos: Latin America's Struggle for Independence* (London, UK: Oxford University Press 2008).

[145] Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash*, 1-5.

wanted to remember their United Irish past, but become legitimate citizens of the American political system.

The United Irishmen, upon entry to the United States, became active participants in the Democratic Party. United Irishmen, notably James Reynolds, Mathew Carey, William Duane, and Thomas Addis Emmet, became linchpins of Jefferson's political organizing. For William Cobbett, James Reynolds's conduct in Ireland made evident that he was the ring-leader of the St. Mary's disturbance, and the type of individual that the Alien and Sedition Acts were intended to silence. In Ireland, Dr. James Reynolds found himself on the radar of the Secret Committee of the Irish House of Lords in 1793, in what became the first steps in the suppression of the Catholic Defenders, as well as the United Irishmen. A physician from County Tyrone, who was an active member of the United Irishmen, Reynolds was asked to testify on his involvement in the radical societies of Ireland but refused. In a moment of defiance, Reynolds gave the British officials an ultimatum – liberation or imprisonment. William Drennan, one of the founding members of the United Irishmen, noted on the outcome, that "they think they will terrify this very young man, but they are mistaken."[146] Incarceration radicalized Reynolds, and on release, Reynolds found sanctuary with Archibald Hamilton Rowan and his wife, Sarah Rowan. Within eighteen months, both Reynolds and Hamilton Rowan would be together again, but this time as political exiles in Philadelphia. Much like Hamilton Rowan, who fled Ireland under fortuitous and adventurous circumstances, Reynolds

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[146] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 20.

escaped from the clutches of British officials, hanging an effigy off George III from the yardarm of the departing ship as a symbolic gesture against British rule.[147] For Cobbett, Reynolds was the go between for French officials and Republicans in Philadelphia, and in his view, he was still involved in revolutionary machinations "in the pay of France."[148]

Correctly, Cobbett was aware that Reynolds had represented the United Irishmen in Paris in 1794, when convincing French officials to invade Ireland, in league with Irish revolutionaries. In part, Reynolds's prominence as an opponent of Federalism began when he arrived in the United States, opposing the Jay Treaty vehemently, as well as criticizing Washington's tenure. In fact, upon Washington's departure from the Presidency in 1796, Reynolds proclaimed in the *Aurora* that "this is the moment—every heart, in unison with the freedom and the happiness of the people ought to beat high with exultation that the name of WASHINGTON from this day ceases to give a currency to political iniquity; and to legalize corruption."[149] In the same vein, Reynolds furiously resisted the Alien and Sedition Acts. Cobbett was especially worried that Reynolds had a radicalizing influence on the population of Philadelphia. William Cobbett, writing sarcastically, referred to Reynolds as "Citizen Reynolds," and implied that he was a citizen in the French conception of the term,

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[147] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 21. Rowan escaped from his would-be capturers, and escaped to France and then the United States dressed in women's clothes.
[148] William Cobbett, *Porcupine's Works: containing various writings and selections, exhibiting a faithful picture of the United States of America ; of their governments, laws, politics, and resources ; of the characters of their presidents, governors, legislators, magistrates, and military men ; and of the customs, manners, morals, religion, virtues and vices of the people : comprising also a complete series of historical documents and remarks, from the end of the war, in 1783, to the election of the President, in March, 1801*, Volume 8 (Philadelphia, 1801), 227.
[149] *Aurora*, March 6, 1797.

implicating him with the collapse of government and slaughter of innocent people on the streets of Paris.[150] Reynolds "is not only a citizen," Cobbett wrote, "but the political father of other citizens."[151] Reynolds, for Cobbett, acted as a lightning rod for migrant radicals who would become naturalized American citizens.[152] John Ward Fenno saw Reynolds's potential for revolutionary upheaval, routinely questioning his loyalty to the United States in his *Gazette*. In one example on February 21, 1798, the *Gazette of the United States* implicated Reynolds without much substantial details given, in an act of extortion involving Democrat James Madison.[153] In rebuttal, Reynolds referred openly to Fenno in the *Aurora* as "a liar, a scoundrel, and a coward."[154] Dr. Reynolds felt the ire of the Federalist Party to such a degree that it was common knowledge throughout the city that an assassination attempt was possible.[155] As such, Reynolds deemed it prudent to arm himself with a pistol in the event of an attack: the same pistol that he produced outside St. Mary's Church.[156] Reynolds's lawyer, known to us as Mr. Dunkin, stressed the animosity with which Federalists conceived of his client, "political or personal animosity has proceeded so

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[150] Cobbett, *Porcupine's Works*, 220.
[151] William Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen (to Form Themselves into an Association, under the Name of "The American Society of United Irishmen,"* (Philadelphia, 1799), 46.
[152] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen*, 46.
[153] *Gazette of the United States*, February 21, 1798.
[154] *Aurora*, January 17, 1799.
[155] Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions Which Took Place At Philadelphia in February 1799. In Consequence of a Memorial From Certain Natives of ... to Congress, Praying Repeal of the Alien Bill* (Philadelphia: Aurora, 1799), 14.
[156] Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions*, 14. This detail is explained by the witness Matthew Clay, an associate of Reynold's, who had heard of several assassination plots against Reynolds. The message had been passed on through Clay from an unidentified person who warned Reynolds of said plot. The reliability of said information is debatable, in part because Reynolds needed a convincing rationale to be in possession of a pistol at the scene of the crime.

far against him, as to menace his life in a manner that cannot be too strongly deprecated. In this city that gentleman has been threatened to be assassinated."[157] While it is prudent to suggest that this was a suitable defense for the possession of a weapon during the St. Mary's Riot, it also points to the disdain many held for Reynolds in Philadelphia.

Standing alongside Dr. James Reynolds outside St. Mary's Church that morning was William Duane, a radical who exemplified the possibilities of global movement in the 1790s. Born in what would become Vermont in 1760, Duane spent his early life in Ireland, before moving to India, founding two newspapers. He was heavily involved in dissent against the government in British India, and was banished in 1794 for libel, after which he spent a short stint in Latin America. He played minor roles in the London Corresponding Society in the 1790s and he was banished from Ireland in 1796 due to his membership with the United Irishmen. If ever there was a United Irishmen who claimed the title of "Citizen of the World" it was Duane who had a press career in that spanned four countries and held three nationalities through his lifetime.[158] Duane eventually travelled to Philadelphia and continued his interest in printing. Finding employment alongside the grandson of Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Franklin Bache, Duane became a major driving force in turning the *Aurora* newspaper from a local digest into the most vocal Jeffersonian newspaper in the nation. When Bache died in 1798 during a yellow fever epidemic, and while also

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[157] Lawson, *American State Trials*, 691.
[158] Nigel Little, *Transoceanic Radical: William Duane: National Identity and Empire, 1760-1835* (London, UK: Routledge, 2015), 179.

under trial for charges of sedition, Duane took formal control of the *Aurora.* During

the late 1790s, Duane became a critic of the Federalist Party, while also a primary

target of Federalist ire. Duane was arrested four times for seditious libel during the

period and by 1806 had been sued for libel over sixty times. Without exception, for

each court case, every plaintiff was a Federalist, and yet Duane persevered with his

resistance against the Federalists.[159]

Federalists such as William Cobbett and John Ward Fenno framed the rise of

these men as a threat to the establishment and the advent of populist democracy. The

fear of greater democratization in the Early Republic can be placed alongside the

fabrication of the "American Jacobin." French émigrés were seemingly marauding

alongside exiled United Irishmen with the intention of causing havoc in the United

States. Cobbett, an English Tory and émigré, and Fenno, editor of the *Gazette of the*

United States, illustrated this assumed state of pandemonium and were partly

responsible in associating political refugees from Europe with Jacobinism and

presenting this conflation to the American public. Cobbett started his career as a

champion of British soldiers in England, demanding improvements in pay and

conditions, and when he felt a rebuke forthcoming, fled England for Revolutionary

France.[160] There he witnessed the magnitude of the French Revolution and, feeling

imperiled, sailed to the United States in 1792, first to Wilmington and then

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[159] Carol Sue Humphrey, *The Press of the Young Republic, 1783-1833* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1996), 74.

[160] Many were amazed that Cobbett transformed from a political reformer to an anti-democratic advocate between 1791 and 1792, for more see Michael Durey, "William Cobbett, Military Corruption and London Radicalism in the Early 1790s." *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 131, no. 4 (1987): 348-50 and Ian Dyck, "From 'Rabble' to 'Chopsticks': The Radicalism of William Cobbett." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 21, no. 1 (1989): 47-50.

Philadelphia. Starting humbly, Cobbett taught English to refugees of the French Revolution, before turning his time to politics. His famous pseudonym, "Peter Porcupine," would first be seen in *A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats*, in 1795. The moniker stuck, and as his critics would contend, his quills could be stinging at times, especially when aimed at the United Irishmen. Duane more than most felt the ire of Cobbett.

Their verbal assaults, which hit a fever pitch in 1799, would continue through the 1810s. If the St. Mary's Riot is an event that exemplifies this tumultuous period, then the relationship that best defines it is between William Duane and William Cobbett, the chief accuser of the United Irishmen exiled to the United States. Both men had the capacity to produce venomous prose aimed at the other, with Duane citing the Anglophile, Cobbett's, allegiance to the British crown over the American Republic, while Cobbett's aimed rebuke was Duane's presumed support of murderous Jacobins around the Atlantic basin, from Haiti to Paris. More than just a conservative commentator, and certainly more than the "inherent reactionary" he was deemed by some, Cobbett believed in a return to a more harmonious British Empire, which relied less on industrial might and more on agricultural prowess.[161] Duane suffered for his convictions though; in May 1799, thirty soldiers from the Philadelphia Volunteer Cavalry barged into his office and beat him, whipping him

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[161] In fact, Cobbett would go on to champion Catholic Emancipation in Ireland through the 1820s. See John W. Osborne, "William Cobbett's Role in the Catholic Emancipation Crisis, 1823-1829," *The Catholic Historical Review* 49, no. 3 (1963): 382–89.

with a leather whip. This beating was a reprisal for his role in the petition of the Alien and Sedition Acts.[162]

John Ward Fenno, the editor of *The Gazette of the United States* on March 28, 1796 asked on Irish migrants in the United States: "are you *Patriots* because you have nothing American about you? Because most of you are aliens by birth, and enemies to America in principle."[163] On the United Irishmen, Cobbett wrote in his *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen* that the they showed "a complete subjection to Jacobin France."[164] On the United Irishmen, Fenno wrote in the *Gazette of the United States* that they were engaged in "every calumny against the government of the United States and…to incite the people to oppose the laws."[165] On William Duane, he wrote that he "was not an American but a foreigner, and not merely a foreigner, but a United Irishman, and a public convict and fugitive from justice."[166] Moreover, both Fenno and Cobbett documented their interpretations of the tensions that reigned in the United States in a slew of publications that reached the greater public. By 1798, the year of rebellion in Ireland, these accusations against Irish migrants had become commonplace in the United States.

The American minister to the British Empire, Rufus King, was furious when he found out that the British Government was striking a deal with the leaders of the

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[162] Geoffrey R. Stone, *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1798 to the War on Terrorism* (New York City, NY: W. W. Norton & Company 2004), 65.

[163] *The Gazette of the United States* (GUS), March 28, 1796.
[164] William Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy*, 31.
[165] *GUS*, May 23, 1799.
[166] *GUS*, May 19, 1799.

United Irishmen. In exchange for details of the planned French invasions of 1798, many of them would be allowed to become exiles in the United States. On the United Irishmen, King commented that they were certainly not "a desirable acquisition to any nation,'' but in the United States they would be particularly problematic, where "from the sameness of language and similarity of laws and institutions they have greater opportunity of propagating their principles than in any other country.''[167] Furthermore, in a letter dated June 14, 1798, he wrote that "in case the Irish rebellion is suppressed...thousands of fugitive Irish will seek asylum in our country. Their principles and habits would be pernicious to the order and industry of our people, and I cannot persuade myself that the malcontents of any character or country will ever become useful citizens of ours.''[168] King's position on the United Irishmen, while acerbic, was commonplace for Federalists. Performed on the streets of Philadelphia, with exiled United Irishmen often playing the role of political deviants, Fenno and Cobbett brought to life the anxiety and fear attached to incoming migrants. For Federalists, United Irishmen such as Reynolds and Duane were intent on bringing the chaos of the "Terror'' from France to the United States.[169] That the United Irishmen

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[167] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 2.

[168] Bric, *Empire and Nation*, 168.

[169] Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010). Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 206-235; Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 92-111; William Doyle, *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction*, 1st edition (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 81-98; Laurent DuBois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 91-115; David Geggus, *The Haitian Revolution: A Documentary History* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2014), 72-98; C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (London, UK: Penguin, 2001); Thomas O. Ott, *The Haitian Revolution, 1789-1804* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1973), 47-65; Jeremy, D. Popkin, *A Concise*

were incapable of moving beyond their radical past and becoming American citizens was documented in their portrayal: as Irish Jacobins.

The American Society of the United Irishmen, 1798-1800

Fenno and Cobbett had evidence to suggest that the United Irishmen were forming clandestine societies in the United States, but while there is reason to accept this, the scale of the United Irish organization was limited. In 1798, Cobbett published the pamphlet, *Detection of a Conspiracy formed by the United Irishmen with the evident intention of aiding the tyrants of France in subverting the Government of the United States,* edited by Fenno. In it, Cobbett claimed that Mathew Carey, an influential printer and sympathizer of the United Irishmen, had been one of the key conspirators, aligned with French Jacobins to form an "an active and effective force within these United States'' and had succeeded in choosing "instruments more fit for their purpose.''[170]

The instruments in question were the "dark and desperate, unnatural and bloodthirsty ruffians; these were what they wanted.''[171] The pamphlet noted that the United Irishmen, "the wretches known by this name had escaped from their own country to avoid a punishment justly due for their multitude of crimes'' and here (the United States) they expected to find an organized system of perpetual anarchy,'' but,

History of the Haitian Revolution (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2012), 35-62; Hugh Gough. *The Terror in the French Revolution* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 27-60.
[170] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen*, 1.
[171] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen*, 2.

"happily for us, they were deceived."[172] The *Gazette of the United States*, under the leadership of Fenno, went so far in December 1798 as to list seventeen supposed United Irishmen that were members of the clandestine organization—an act that Carey deemed "unprovoked and very unjustifiable."[173] Although Mathew Carey was never explicitly implicated by name, the tip-off received by Cobbett contained the name of the printer in Philadelphia and alluded to the "the villainous publications which have already come from his press" but noted that the evidence was too flimsy to identify to him by name.[174] As the Alien and Sedition Acts had just come into effect, these claims were serious allegations, and ones that Mathew and his brother James furiously denied. The response to these allegations came in January 1799 with Mathew Carey's publication of two pamphlets: *A Plum Pudding.... for Peter Porcupine* (1799). In many ways, Carey in the *Plum Pudding* echoed the same language that Cobbett used for him and the United Irishmen, declaring him a "viperous wretch." While Carey tried to distance themselves from the allegations made by Cobbett, the reality was that an American Society of the United Irishmen did exist, although briefly, in various cities throughout the United States, including Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and Wilmington.[175] But far from Cobbett's

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[172] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen*, 3-4.
[173] Carey, *A Plumb Pudding for the Humane, Chaste, Valiant, Enlightened Peter Porcupine (*Philadelphia: William Cobbett, 1799t*). 49.
[174] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy Formed by the United Irishmen*, 4.
[175] Carey, *A Plumb Pudding*, 17. For a detailed discussion of the American Society of the United Irishmen see Margaret McAleer's article that traces the reasons why exiled United Irishmen, so early after leaving Ireland, came to become embroil once again. McAleer suggests that these United Irishmen "waged their political battles in a trans geographic context of civil society." That is, that regardless of location, some United Irishmen maintained a commitment to revolution, although on a whole, the majority of UI were interested far more in economic stability and societal acceptance,

acerbic accusations, the realities of the American Society of the United Irishmen were certainly humbler than the Irish equivalent. Moreover, there is little to suggest that the intention was to overthrow the American state. Rather, the American Society of the United Irishmen was used to allow conversation on how best to carve out a niche for the United Irishmen in the American political sphere.

The existence of these chapters was no secret by 1799. Their workings, explained by Maurice Bric, all came under the auspices of one larger "directory" that aligned the "exertions...of individuals...in different parts of the United States acting under...one superintending guidance."[176] Daniel Clark, an exiled United Irishman, posted in various Philadelphia newspapers in December 1799 advertisements for the meeting of chapters of the society. The Delaware Valley would become the center of American United Irish activity, with Philadelphia its focal point. Meeting at the African School, a curious choice which is never explained, in Philadelphia, the American Society of United Irishmen, composed of exiled United Irishmen sought the "attainment of LIBERTY, and EQUALITY, to mankind, in whatever nation [they] may be."[177] Its membership was also not limited to Irishmen, nor to those who wished continued revolutionary action. Its constitution appealed "to such persons," "who have suffered in the cause of freedom," "or who have suffered in the rights of mankind, shall have rendered themselves distinguished and worthy of attachment and

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Margaret H. McAleer, "In Defense of Civil Society: Irish Radicals in Philadelphia during the 1790s," *Early American Studies* 1, no. 1 (2003): 176–97.

[176] Bric, *Empire and Nation*, 166.

[177] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy*, 10. While all that Cobbett wrote must be taken with a grain of salt, it is likely that this was part of the manifesto of the United Irishmen. Cobbett discovered records in Reynold's handwriting that alluded to these goals. Moreover, they seemingly are less devious than Cobbett may have hoped for.

trust.''[178] This guiding body was based in Philadelphia and oversaw roughly 1,500 members nationwide. As much as these meetings worried Federalists generally in the United States, a silent minority in Philadelphia worried that these disaffected Irishmen were willing "to aid the French, if occasion should serve, against the Government of the United States.''[179] In some ways, the existence of these societies justified the fears of the Federalists further.

The Gazette of the United States echoed the fears of Cobbett when it declared that the United Irishmen arriving in the United States, either in steerage or first class, were "animated by the same infamous principles, and actuated by that same thirst for blood and plunder, which had reduced France to a vast human slaughter-house.''[180] The United Irishmen "were held in the utmost detestation by everyone,'' Cobbett announced, "except by a few of Jefferson's party.''[181] Uriah Tracy, the Federalist Congressman voiced the same sentiments of Cobbett when he wrote that "I have seen many, very many Irishmen, and with a very few exceptions they are United Irishmen, Free-Masons, and the most god-provoking democrats on this side of hell.''[182] For Carey, the loyalty of Irishmen in the United States had been proven countless times during the American Revolution and was not up for debate during the late eighteenth century.[183] But, for the Federalists, the loyalty of Irish migrants was up for debate, especially the United Irishmen. Mathew Carey suffered the brunt of backlash from

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[178] Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, 45.
[179] Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, 166.
[180] *GUS*, November 15, 1798.
[181] Cobbett, *Detection of a Conspiracy*, 2.
[182] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 1.
[183] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 52.

the Federalists when allegations started to emerge as to his involvement in the American Society of United Irishmen. Painted as Jacobins, the United Irishmen were also associated with the Haitian Revolution.

While the French Revolution terrified Federalists who expressed a desire for a prosperous, predictable future for the young nation, accounts of violence that emerged from the Plaine Du Nord in St. Domingue from 1791 through the decade spoke to another innate terror—the rebellion of slaves against their white, American masters. The reports that travelled to readers in North America described in graphic detail how slaves had risen against their masters, murdered them, and took control of the French colony.

These fears persevered through the decade, but were heightened when in later summer of 1798, a flotilla carrying hundreds of black and white refugees from St Domingue floated up the Delaware River. With the United States on the verge of war with France, many Philadelphians presumed that those aboard the ships were "fully ripe'' to serve as "soldiers of liberty'' for the French Empire.[184] Those aboard the flotilla were in fact white planters who had escaped Port Au Prince, not a Black militia. Federalists sympathized with "royalist'' planters who had been entangled in the furor of the island but warned of the French spies and agents who would make every effort to affect the wellbeing of American lives. These fears were allegedly

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[184] James Alexander Dun, "Black Jacobins: Saint Domingue in American Politics," in *Dangerous Neighbors: Making the Haitian Revolution in Early America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 143-145. The emergence of such a ship occurred once again in 1802, but in New York. See Duncan Faherty, "'The Mischief That Awaits Us': Revolution, Rumor, and Serial Unrest in the Early Republic," in *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States: Histories, Textualities, Geographies* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), *59-79.*

realized when a succession of arson attacks spread across the American states beginning in the winter of 1796-97 and reaching from Massachusetts to Georgia. By December 1796, suspected arson brought panic to the streets of Philadelphia.[185] An enquiry into these fires, and those started in New York, Savannah, and Baltimore, brought countless indictments, but none held any association with Haiti or the French Directory.

As with the 1799 St. Mary's Riot, many Americans believed that arson and subterfuge were used in order to disrupt the American democratic system. Irish, Haitian, or French: they all fell under a universal label of Jacobins. Throughout the nation, cities were gripped by paranoia, in particular the port cities that welcomed migrants to the United States. Philadelphia exemplifies the pressurized atmosphere that existed during the transition from Federalism to Jeffersonian democracy in the United States. Tensions between the American north and south, between migrants and natives, Blacks and whites, created cities that were easily combustible.[186]

Much as the revolutionary ardor of Thomas Paine would be ridiculed, then resented, and ultimately feared, the United Irishmen were demonized by significant portions of the American polity, who called for their expulsion, and restricted their

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[185] Suspected arson and slave insurrection is a prevalent theme in American history. For an excellent example of this, see Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2006).

[186] Padraig Riley, *Slavery and the Democratic Conscience* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 50–93. Riley discusses the importance of Philadelphia to national discussions. Likewise, Gordon Wood a generation ago explained the importance of Philadelphia during the Early Republic. See Gordon S. Wood, "The Significance of the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 8, no. 1 (1988): 1–20. Moreover, it would be the site of a split between Jeffersonians between 1810-1806, see Andrew Shankman, "Malcontents and Tertium Quids: The Battle to Define Democracy in Jeffersonian Philadelphia," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19, no. 1 (1999): 43-72

entry into the country, due to their perceived radical and Jacobin tendencies.[187] For the United Irishmen, French Revolutionaries had numerous admirable qualities that they identified with—such as their secular nature, and promotion of democratic participation. However, many United Irishmen pushed back against the label of "Jacobin'' that they were given, as it pointed to the excesses of revolution with which they wanted no affiliation. Occurring at the same time was the conflation of French Jacobins and Haitian Revolutionaries.[188] In this environment, the Alien and Seditions Acts were introduced so as to create a seemingly more stable political landscape.

The Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798

The tensions that emerged between 1789, when the French Revolution erupted, and 1798, when the United Irish rebellion started, were harnessed by John Adams and codified with the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts. A distrust of full political participation was paired with a fear of radical immigrants entering the country and transformed into legislation that would reflect the feeling of insecurity felt by Americans wary of radicalism in their own country. The Alien and Sedition Acts were not a direct result of the United Irish Rebellion in 1798. Instead, the occasion of the Irish uprising fit perfectly into Federalists plans to both restrict seditious language by limiting the expression of the press, and to curtail the number

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[187] Cotlar's monograph, juxtaposing the life of Paine against the trajectory of American history, masterfully demonstrates how the writer turned from patriots to villain over the course of thirty years, Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America.*

[188] For more, see Gerald Horne, *Confronting Black Jacobins: The U.S., the Haitian Revolution, and the Origins of the Dominican Republic* (New York City, NY: New York University Press, 2015).

of "radical'' migrants entering the country by barring migration from countries at war with the United States. The Quasi-War, as it was referred to, existed from 1798-1800. It was a quasi-war in that it was an unofficial war between the United States and France. Although, the Alien Enemies Act never came into full effect during this period as the United States was never officially at war with any nation until Britain in 1812. The Alien and Sedition Acts were the first pieces of legislation passed in the United States that explicitly banned the entry of migrants based on their nationality and allowed deportation pending enquiry into an individual's politics. This theme of exclusion would be replicated in American history, most notably during the First World War, when similar legislation curtailed the rights of citizens and immigrants. Modern interpretations of the 1798 legislation are damning, with one historian asserting that they are "so repugnant to modern sensibilities that it is difficult to study its logic without any detachment.''[189] But, in 1798, many Federalists believed that the acts were not enough, and that the legislation should be expanded to resist all migration from Ireland, as was the level of anxiety that some held with respect to Irish radicalism.[190]

The United Irishmen who were entering the United States were broadly demonized by Federalist newspapers. As the United States started to drift toward war

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[189] Freeman, "Explaining the Unexplainable," 27. Moreover, I believe that this is an excellent piece of scholarship on the Alien and Sedition Acts, and acknowledgement that discussions of position and reputation, and honor are important when looking at the acts, but fundamentally, I believe that retention of power by Federalists and anxiety over the state of the young nation was the primary cause of its introduction.

[190] William Cobbett *Porcupine's Works; Containing Various Writings and Selections, Exhibiting a Faithful Picture of the United States of America* (London: Crown and Mitre 1801), 25. Cobbett, writing in 1797 suggested that any alien act that only halted migration from countries at war with the United States was not enough, alluding in part to Irish migration.

with France in the summer of 1798, discussions centering around new naturalization legislation started to take on a more polarizing character. Fear of not only United Irishmen, but also spies from France brought many to the conclusion a longer naturalization period, from two to fourteen years, was necessary as a corrective measure. Moreover, commentators at the time such as Fenno and Cobbett believed that full "Americanization" was impossible anyway, due to racial or religious differences that were far from reconcilable. The United Irishmen would not necessarily lose their radical values when they naturalized. In the case of Duane or Reynolds they might even become more radical with the security of citizenship. Robert Goodloe Harper, the senator from South Carolina, suggested that the United States, by introducing stricter immigration legislation, would "recover" from the mistake it made when the constitution was first drafted, of admitting foreigners to citizenship, a mistake that was "productive of very great evils in this country."[191] The irony here is that at the beginning of the 1790s, the Federalists encouraged immigration from Europe for land speculation purposes, while the Republicans were cautious to promote mass migration.[192] Radical thinkers and revolutionaries like James Callender, Joseph Priestley, and Wolfe Tone were those implicated in statements questioning the loyalty or capacity of citizenship for migrants. During a period of desperation in 1798 during the Quasi-War with France, the Federalists introduced legislation that muzzled the Republican press, raised the amount time

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[191] Bric, *Empire and Nation*, 173.
[192] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (London: Oxford University Press, 2009), 247.

necessary for naturalization from five to fourteen years, and required migrants to present themselves to officials within forty-eight hours of arrival. In order to safeguard the security of the United States, Federalists were intent on producing legislation that limited free speech for all citizens and restricted expedited naturalization from migrants.

For the United Irishmen, the threat of the Alien and Sedition Acts was very real. The possibility of physical and legal repercussions explains the lack of correspondence between the Philadelphia radicals and those inciting rebellion in Ireland in 1798, or even after rebellion. The Federal Government forbad state courts from granting citizenship and making it the prerogative of the federal courts.[193] Finally, the Federal Government created a federal registry for all immigrants that required an appearance within forty-eight hours of arrival on American shores. Those deemed "dangerous to the peace and safety of the United States'' could be deported without due process at a whim with the creation of the Alien Friends Act.[194] Harrison Gray Otis, a Federalist from Massachusetts made perhaps the most controversial speech on behalf of an increase in the period necessary for naturalization to citizenship: "I do not wish to invite hordes of wild Irishmen, nor the turbulent and disorderly of all parts of the world, to come here to disturb our tranquility, after

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[193] Naturalization was tremendously important for Irish migrants in Philadelphia. They constituted a significant proportion of alien naturalized, accounting for 55% between 1789-1900, 57% between 1801 and 1806. After 1806, the number of Irish granted citizenship was greater than all other nationalities combined. See Edward Carter III, "A Wild Irishman under Every Federalist's Bed: Naturalization in Philadelphia, 1789-1806," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133, No. 2 (June 1989): 178-189
[194] *The Alien and Sedition Acts* (1798), Part Two.

having succeeded in the overthrow of their own Governments.''[195] Otis, while cognizant of the successes of the French revolutionaries, was equally skeptical of Irish migrants who he believed were complicit in the same global revolutionary moment. Finally, the Sedition Act was the only piece of this legislation that directly targeted citizens—deeming it a crime to criticize verbally or in written form the president, government, or Congress.[196] James Callender, the Scottish radical who, upon expulsion from Britain, lived in Philadelphia, and then Virginia, was one of many high-profile victims of the Sedition Act. On the Adams administration, Callender considered them "a continual tempest of malignant passions," and Callender referred to Adams himself as "a repulsive pedant, a gross hypocrite and unprincipled oppressor."[197] Callender was convicted under the Sedition Act, ordered to pay $200, and sentenced to nine months in prison. The repercussions of the Alien and Sedition Acts were very real for the United Irishmen.

For fear of these sedition acts, no doubt the United Irishmen often burned their own papers.[198] Moreover, international correspondence could be more incriminating in that it vindicated the assumptions made by Federalists such as Fenno and Cobbett that there was indeed a United Irish conspiracy. At least when authored in newspapers and pamphlets, it would appear to be the thoughts of individuals, criticizing the

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[195] Bric, *Empire and Nation*, 173.
[196] Among these acts was the Alien Enemies Act, although it was never enacted because war was never formally declared with France. For the most comprehensive analysis of the Alien and Sedition Acts.
[197] Halperin, *The Alien and Sedition Acts,* 55.
[198] This in part is explained by the absence of material from United Irishmen like Mathew Carey in 1798 and 1799, but not other years. In fact, it was standard practice for United Irishmen to burn any incriminating documents once they were no longer useful. See John T. Gilbert, *Documents relating to Ireland, 1795-1804* (Dublin: Joseph Dollard, 1893), 152.

government, as opposed to a clandestine body plotting its demise. The fear of physical reprisal was also a possibility in the streets of Philadelphia. On the evening of May 7, 1798, several hundred men marched through Philadelphia, set on finding Benjamin Franklin Bache, editor of the *Aurora* until the position was given to Duane, who barricaded himself along with several friends against the torrent of bricks and insults. Only a few days later, a thousand men stood outside of Adams's residence, armed, and angry, pledging their allegiance to him.[199] For the United Irishmen who resisted the Alien and Sedition Acts, there was the constant threat of physical and verbal assault, as well as criminal prosecution for seditious behavior, and the possibility of deportation for unnaturalized aliens, such as Duane. Bache accused George Washington of financial irregularities but held no punches with the President whom he called "the blind, bald, toothless, querulous Adams."[200] For this, Bache was arrested under the Sedition Act in 1798, but never found himself before a jury as he died of yellow fever in the days leading up to his trial. Much like Bache, John Daly Burk, a United Irishman exiled from Ireland in 1796, became the editor of the *Time-Piece*, an anti-Federalist newspaper in New York. Burk, who wrote critically of Adams and Washington was eventually, in 1799, indicted with sedition. Fleeing New York, Burk moved to Virginia where he took an assumed name and took up an academic position, only revealing himself when Jefferson assumed the Presidency.[201]

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[199] Halperin, *The Alien and Sedition Acts*, 3.
[200] David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 500.
[201] Berkin, *A Sovereign People*, 220.

While Federalists feared Jacobins, the United Irishmen saw Federalists as the *real* threat to American liberty, and United Irishmen firmly identified with the Democrats as a result. William MacNeven, a United Irishmen exiled to the United States wrote in his memoirs that "the same virulence of invective, the same violation of truth, and the same distortion of fact that have marked the conduct of the English faction towards the United Irishmen in Europe, have been revived against them here by the retainers and hirelings of the same enemy."[202] MacNeven, reflecting on the 1790s suggested that the Federalists had been bought by the British government and were unkind to the needs of the American republic or the United Irishmen. The *Aurora* suggested in July 1799 that $800,000 had been spent by the British Government to keep the Adams administration in line with British interests.[203]

Adams's Alien and Sedition Acts were seen by the United Irishmen as a rejection of American principles of free speech and dissent against the government. Moreover, that it passed Congress demonstrated that it was popular broadly among Federalists and even some Democrats. Writing to Matthew Carey in 1798, a United Irish sympathizer named Daniel McCurtin threw caution to the wind, writing that the "American character must be singularly pleasing to the friends of tyranny all over the world.''[204] McCurtin, like many United Irishmen, believed that American ideals of liberty were slowly disappearing while Federalists held power. While there was an element of truth to this thought, the reality was that the United States government was

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[202] W. J. MacNeven, *Pieces of Irish History* (New York: Bernard Dornin, 1807), 1.
[203] *Aurora*, July 24, 1799.
[204] Daniel McCurtin to Mathew Carey, Philadelphia, 13 June 1798, *HSP Balch Collections.*

reacting in a similar vein as nations around the Atlantic basin, who started their own counter-revolutionary initiatives. However, the United Irishmen were intent to stake their own claim for legitimacy in the United States despite the Federalist government.

The Plea of Erin

In early 1799, James Reynolds and William Duane presented a memorial to Congress— "The Plea of Erin"—to argue against the introduction of the Alien and Sedition Acts, especially the Alien Friends Law. In it, Duane and Reynolds reminded Congress that John Adams wrote in 1775 to the Irish people as the War of Independence loomed: "We glory in the belief, that of the Irish residents of the United States, a greater proportion partook of the hazards of the field, and of the duties of your independent republican councils, than of the native Americans."[205] That is to say that the involvement of Irish people in the War of Independence and beyond would secure their future migration to the United States. The memorial started by stressing the reasons for the petition sent to the United States government: "A number of the natives of Ireland, residing in places convenient for mutual communications, and affected with great anxiety on account of their situation under "the law concerning aliens," find themselves irresistibly impelled respectfully to address the legislature of the United States, in order to procure its repeal."

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[205] *The plea of Erin. or, The case of the natives of Ireland in the United States, fairly displayed in the fraternal address of the first congress, in the year 1775; and in the respectful memorial of the republican Irish, who had, consequently, sought "an asylum" in America, addressed by them to the congress of the year 1798* (Philadelphia, 1798), Library of Congress.

The document continued by stressing what the aspirations of Irish migrants were in the United States: "We trusted, however, that we could not be individually made to suffer any diminution of our safety, freedom, or peace, but those which, under the operation of general laws, the citizens must also endure, and, that protected equally with them." Moreover, the United Irishmen hoped that "we could not be subjected to any proceeding of the nature of fine, imprisonment, banishment, or other punishment, nor to trial nor judgment, without the usual agency of a well-defined judiciary power, and the benefit of an impartial jury" as they had been subjected to in Ireland.[206] They had not expected to leave one oppressive government just to be oppressed by another. Instead, they wrote, "We tremble at our present situation." Stating their commitment to the current rules of the United States they wrote: "we love and venerate certain and known laws. So far as the rules of our conduct are fixed by record and notified by due promulgation, we can walk with decent confidence, order, and safety, before the public authorities." Here the United Irishmen stated their intention to be law abiding, legitimate citizens of the United States. They tried to separate themselves from the Federalist opinion of all Irish migrants as Jacobins by writing, "To regain and preserve those blessings, we have endeavoured to remove, by a plain representation, apparent misconceptions concerning the natives of Ireland, which might otherwise prevent our relief." The memorial ends with a call for solidarity between Americans and the Irish, finally noting that, "So may it ever continue, and if their political shepherds shall fail to "temper the wind to the shorn

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[206] *The plea of Erin*.

lamb" in the rich pastures of Ireland, may they find in the fold of America the proffered asylum."[207] These radicals were unwilling to accept an oppressive government, either in Ireland or the United States. Their commitment to free speech and democratic participation, although stunted, would continue in the United States, much like other migrants and radicals, and the events on February 10, 1799 outside St. Mary's Church, while just one of many demonstrations in Philadelphia that day, demonstrate their willingness to resist an oppressive American government.[208]

The United Irish "Riot," 1799

On Friday February 7, 1799, local Irishmen in Philadelphia drew up a petition in response to the Alien Friends Act: the act of the Alien and Sedition legislation that affected Irish migration most and mirrored on *The Plea of Erin* presented to Congress.[209] Both Mathew Carey and Henry Carey, as well as William Duane and James Reynolds were in attendance. St. Mary's Church was suggested as one of the ideal locations for the petition to be posted, in part because "three forths" of those

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[207] *The plea of Erin.*
[208] Arthur Sheps, "Ideological Immigrants in Revolutionary America," in Paul Fritz and David Williams (eds.), *City and Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1973), 23I-246; Dumas Malone, *The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 1783-1839* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926); Caroline Robbins, "Honest Heretic: Joseph Priestley in America, 1794-I804," *American Philosophical Society Proceedings*, CVI, (1962), 60-76; Kim Tousley Phillips, "William Duane, Philadelphia's Democratic Republicans, and the Origins of Modern Politics," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 101, no. 3 (1977): 365–87; Colin Bonwick, "Joseph Priestley: Emigrant and Jeffersonian," *Enlightenment and Dissent,* 11, I983: 3-26; Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*, 13-49; Daniel C. Littlefield, *Revolutionary Citizens: African Americans 1776-1804* (London: Oxford University Press, 1997), 6-99; Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2012), 279-313.
[209] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States,* 52-53.

who attended were of Irish descent.[210] On Sunday February 9, Irish migrants, many of them United Irishmen, drew up and distributed petitions to Catholic and Presbyterian Churches throughout Philadelphia. Reynolds and the other three men had been waiting in the courtyard trying to gather signatures for their petition. They had tried this prior to the service outside St Mary's Church, but when two trustees intervened, they ceased, only to start again after the service. When they resumed, the Church grounds devolved into scenes of chaos as United Irishmen came into conflict with members of the Catholic Church who had little interest in migration restrictions, or in fact encouraged the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts. Standing atop a tombstone, according to Cobbett, Reynolds allegedly "harangued'' the congregation, inciting them to riot. According to Cobbett, not only did Reynolds bring about the riot by pamphleteering on a religious day, but he also disrespected the dead by standing on their tombs [211] When several Congregationalists surrounded the United Irishmen, Reynolds allegedly drew his weapon as an act of desperation to avoid physical harm. According to some who witnessed the riot, Reynolds had pulled a revolver on Gallagher as he attempted to push the four men from the courtyard.[212] Everywhere, tensions grew, but nowhere, other than at St. Mary's, did it boil over into violence. This violence, initiated by Catholic congregationalists led to the arrest of four United Irishmen. The ensuing trial asked a jury of twelve if James Reynolds, a Protestant, United Irishman, and physician, had assaulted James Gallagher, a Catholic, "with

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[210] Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 228.
[211] William Cobbett, *Writing and Selections, Exhibiting a Faithful Picture of the United States of America of Their Governments, Laws, Politics, and Resources* (London, UK: Folio Society, 1801), 89.
[212] Cobbett, *Writing and Selections*, 89.

intent to kill.''[213] Gallagher was of Irish descent, but born in the United States to Catholic parents, and came to support the Federalist Party.[214] Gallagher, incensed by the distribution of petitions, singled out Reynolds in particular for his role as ring-leader for the disturbances that day.[215] A plethora of interpretations abounded as to the events of the day, who had initiated it, and to what ends. In response, those United Irishmen involved responded with their own accounts.

According to William Duane, a participant in the disturbances on February 9, 1799, the "riot" began in the courtyard of St. Mary's. It was initiated by George Meade, "a man who was formerly an eminent merchant in Philadelphia, but whose mind is said to not be correct'' who proceeded to attack Moore and Duane for posting the petition.[216] During the violence that followed, Reynolds brought forward his pistol and aimed it into the air, only to be kicked in his head and knocked to the ground. All four United Irishmen were then "taken and some voluntarily before the mayor, where they were detained under a silly species of examination until the dusk of evening.''[217] The next day they were tried for their alleged actions.

At several points during the trial, allegations were made against the four men, in one instance that their petition was indeed inspired by French radicals who wished

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[213] Francis Wharton, *State Trials of United States during the Administrations of Washington and Adams: With References, Historical and Professional, and Preliminary Notes on the Politics of the Times.* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849), 347. The *Aurora* refers to the jury being composed of "frank Germans or their descendants,'' without much other detail to the significance of that vignette. *Aurora General Advertiser*, 22 February 1799.
[214] Generally, wealthy Irish-Americans during the late eighteenth century identified with the Federalist Party. Meagher stresses the anti-religious nature of the French Revolution, which terrified Irish Catholics in the United States. See Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, 42-60.
[215] Lawson, *American State Trials*, 683.
[216] Freeman, "Explaining the Unexplainable,'' 2.
[217] Freeman, "Explaining the Unexplainable,'' 2.

to see a divided United States.[218] Federalist newspapers quickly drew on the event as less a question of the curtailment of rights, and more, an illegitimate riot aimed at garnering attention for the Irish independence movement that had been stymied in 1798 with the failure of the United Irish rebellion, and perhaps even an attempt at revolution akin to that in France. The *Salem Gazette* wrote "is there a government on earth, except our own, in which a set of vagrant scoundrels, escaped from the halter in their country, would dare, after a few years residence, to offer such an open insult to the civil laws and religious institutions? Is not the conduct a better argument in favour of the Alien Bill than a thousand pamphlets and speeches?"[219] Moreover, the *Commercial Advertiser* in New York City wrote that "we are exposed without defence to the intrigues and the corruptions of every nation that may think she can profit from our distractions – With insurrection among the foreigners who are settled in the interior country; with United Irishmen among those of the towns….we must not be surprised if we some day experience the convulsions and horrors so often repeated France, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Egypt."[220] Newspapers dubbed the event the "United Irish Riot'' so as to suggest that the riot was instigated solely by the United Irishmen involved.[221] Among those who tore the petitions from the walls was John O'Hara, a wealthy trustee, who, like Gallagher, was born in the United

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[218] The defense attorney called on Mr. Gallagher to give his account. When asked, "Do you call petitioning for a redress of grievances Jacobinism?" Gallagher responded that "it was indifferent to me what the contents of the paper were. They had no business there," Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions*, 7.

[219] *Salem Gazette,* February 22, 1799.

[220] *Commercial Advertiser*, April 27, 1799.

[221] Maura Jane Farrelly, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 126.

States, and the pastor, Leonard Neale, who had urged members of the congregation individually to resist the Republicans. From the coverage of the upheaval, it would appear that the United Irishmen and their actions with respect to the Alien and Sedition Acts were unpopular in the city, but that was far from the truth.

What gets lost in the fine print, as the four men got hauled away is that the petition that day was in fact quite popular, even among the congregants of St. Mary's Church. Reynolds told the court that they had secured a "great number" of signatures and that there was general interest in the petition, even at St. Mary's Church, but not from upper echelons of the Church hierarchy.[222] In fact, one defense witness, Thaddeus McCarthy, testified that Reynolds was indeed a "great Irish gentleman" and that "great numbers" of Irish congregants had been eager to sign the petition.[223] It is apparent through the newspaper coverage that the spectacle of the "riot" had been manufactured, and then sensationalized for a Federalist audience. The United Irish petition to repeal the Alien and Sedition Acts were popular among most present. However, Federalists produced a counter narrative that stressed the dangerous intentions of the United Irishmen by producing a petition of the Alien and Sedition Acts. This narrative was aligned with the arrival of large numbers of United Irishmen, radicals who rebelled against the British Empire, on to American soil in 1798. The St. Mary's Riot fit perfectly into this narrative of destructive Irish radicals causing upheaval.

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[222] Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions*, 2.
[223] Miller et al., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 394.

In fact, the state prosecutor for the trial spent limited time discussing the events at St. Mary's and was more interested in discussing political participation in the United States. According to Hopkinson in his closing remarks noted that "every citizen" was encouraged to voice that opinion on the government, but in a "proper manner and proper place."[224] However, for migrants and un-naturalized citizens, that was not the case. They, according to Hopkinson, have "have no right whatever to petition, or to interfere in any respect with the government of this country."[225] Hopkinson went on to note that "greatest evils this country has ever endured have arisen from the ready admission of foreigners to a participation in the government."[226]

In response to what William Duane called the "extraordinary perversion of civil authority to party purposes,'' he put together what he considered an honest appraisal of the events that occurred that day during the 1799 riot, and the ensuing trial of the four men.[227] His believed that their apprehension was undue, and uncivil, and moreover a "wicked attempt to weaken or break down the right to petition,'' namely of the Alien and Sedition Acts. To Duane, there "was never a crime defined, nor an irregularity proved or committed'' and the coverage of the trial was wholly inaccurate, barring its outcome, that is, the eventual verdict of not guilty for all four men.[228] With little reference to the nature of the disagreement, Federalists presented the St. Mary's Riot not as a form of political dissent; instead it was described by men like Fenno and Cobbett as a trial of rioters who had the intention to subvert civil

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[224] Francis Wharton, *State Trials of the United States* (New York City, NY: Burt Franklin, 1970), 379.
[225] Wharton, *State Trials,* 379.
[226] Wharton, *State Trials,* 379.
[227] Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions*, 2
[228] Duane, *A Report of the Extraordinary Transactions*, I2.

order, and who also retained jacobinical politics. Much as the British government painted the United Irishmen as criminals rather than political dissidents, so too did the Federalists.

Some Federalists pointed to that fact that the four men standing outside St. Mary's Church were naturalized American citizens, thus proving that naturalization periods were too lenient and ineffective. That these men were allowed citizenship meant in turn that they would have greater protections under the law. Therefore, their naturalization gave them greater license to act freely along political lines, in this case pamphleteering outside St. Mary's Church. For Federalists, that United Irishmen had not only been allowed into the country but also allowed citizenship was a mistake— the Alien and Sedition Acts were intended to rectify that error in judgement.

William Duane in his historical account of the trial took great effort to stress the citizenship of all four men accused, highlighting that some were naturalized citizens of the United States. In doing so, he made the point that the Alien and Sedition Acts were also a direct attack on naturalized citizens, not just migrants. Duane, the only un-naturalized migrant of the four men, made the suggestion that not only un-naturalized migrants, but also citizens, were vulnerable to deportation for seditious behavior against the Federalists. He also made evident that the intention of the Federalists was to limit the political potential of migrants by extending the naturalization process from five years to fourteen years. Duane made his feelings on immigration restriction clear two years earlier.

While Duane and Reynolds pleaded with Congress to abolish the Alien and

Sedition Acts, Duane's critique of George Washington's "Farewell Address" is a

much more damning assessment of restricting citizenship for migrants.[229] More than

just American citizenship, Duane believed openly in a Painite style citizenship:

"What must become of the Jew, the savage, the Mahometan, the idolator (sic), upon

all of whom the sun shines equally, whom the same heat warms and the same cold

chills."[230] Moreover, Duane believed in the power of the individual and the "spirit of

resistance to oppression, the spirit of philanthropy, the spirit of benevolence, of

humanity."[231] On the Federalists, Duane wrote, "Are the peaceable republican

citizens of free America, the men who achieved the blessings we enjoy, to relinquish

social communion, and remain quiescent spectators of the open activity of a party the

most odious and insolent that ever disgraced a free society."[232] Moreover, Duane

stressed the rejected a return to "passive obedience, non-resistance" subjects and

instead that the American government was founded on " the right of the people to

make and alter their constitutions of government."[233] Duane instead championed the

idea of an active citizenry. The St. Mary's Riot and the *Plea for Erin* were ideal

examples of that. Duane asks, a year before the Alien and Sedition Acts would come

into effect: "Are men to remain silent until called upon by their governmental agents?

Who are they that the constitution appoints to restrain private deliberation, and mark

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[229] The original letter is written under the pseudonym of Jasper Dwight.
[230] William Duane, [Originally published under Jasper Dwight], "Letter to George Washington President of the United States," (Baltimore: Printed for George Keating's Bookstore, 1797), 29.
[231] Duane, "Letter to George Washington," 24.
[232] Duane, "Letter to George Washington," 21.
[233] Duane, "Letter to George Washington," 12.

the line beyond which freedom becomes sedition? Where is the law that forbids the exercise of opinion and restrains the conscience from its honesty?"[234] For Cobbett though, it was men exactly like Duane and Reynolds who needed to be silenced.

In 1799, Duane successfully came into the possession of embarrassing correspondence between Robert Liston, the British Ambassador to Canada, and the Federalists, stressing the close relationship between both British and American Governments. Found in the saddlebag of Isaac Swayze, a loyalist who was connected with a slew of horse thefts during the revolutionary war, they were eventually passed to Duane, which he duly published.[235] Charged with seditious libel, Duane escaped punishment by threatening to reveal similar letters written by President Adams in a courtroom. Much like Reynolds, Duane was subjected to physical and verbal abuse to uphold his convictions against what he considered an oppressive Federalist government, which seemingly was vindicated with the Jeffersonian victory in 1800. In 1802, a Naturalization Act was passed that altered the required naturalization length from fourteen to five years. Amongst those naturalized in 1802 was William Duane. Duane's actions, alongside those present outside St. Mary's in 1799 demonstrated that they could be intensely critical of the government, even with the threat of physical reprisal, and prove their legitimacy as citizens of the United States.

Conclusion

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[234] Duane, "Letter to George Washington," 20.
[235] Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* (New York City, NY: Vintage, 2011), 86.

The petition for the repeal of the Alien and Sedition Acts occurred at a moment of tremendous turbulence within the young American Republic. According to John Adams, the Alien and Sedition Acts were meant to unify the country, rather than divide it. Adams encouraged such rhetoric by stressing that "all Americans were united in support of the administration" and that "All America seems to declare, with one voice and one heart," "the determination to vindicate the honor of our nation."[236] The uproar that Adams's Acts caused proved that this was indeed wishful thinking. Moreover, the divisions caused were evident throughout the United States, and not simply Pennsylvania. On Adams's day of "Solemn Humiliation, fasting and prayer," a day which he promoted in May 1798 for Americans to reflect on their sins as people and as a nation, an effigy of him was burned outside of the courthouse in North Stamford, Connecticut, deep in what some consider the Federalist "heartland."[237] In Kentucky, thousands of people swarmed into the small town of Lexington to protest the passage of the acts, deeming them "unconstitutional, impolitic, unjust, and a disgrace to the American name." William Cobbett would ridicule the Kentucky demonstrators as "country bumpkins, illiterates, and savages," less sober than even the wild Irish."[238] Less wild and certainly literate, the actions of the United Irishmen exposed deep cleavages within American society and politics. The petition that found

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[236] Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution*, 565.
[237] Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers: Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (University of Virginia Press, 2002), 280.
[238] Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 566.

its way onto the walls of St Mary's arrived in one historian's words "at the nexus of civil society and partisan politics."[239]

The petition of the Alien and Sedition Acts by Democrats became a truly national event, inspired, in part, by international migrants and exiles. Resistance against the acts occurred throughout the United States, but in cities like Philadelphia, the United Irishmen were primary actors in its petitioning. At the heart of the resistance against this legislation were United Irishmen who saw it as a rejection of the perceived principles of American liberty and tolerance, but also saw its petitioning as an opportunity to legitimize their own citizenship, and unsure access to citizenship for future Irish migrants. An overview of American migration history suggests that rather than anomalous, the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts were in keeping with a general trajectory of restriction from the American Government that had (and has) been produced in response to diverse migration, and in the case of the United Irishmen, exile. We can look back and see that Federalist power was weakening, but in 1798, a victory for Jefferson and the Democrats was far from assured. What is different is that the Alien and Sedition Acts were allowed to expire in 1801. This in part was a result of broad mobilization of citizens and un-naturalized migrants, like the United Irishmen. Suffering oppression at the hands of the British government, their exile brought them throughout the Atlantic world, and in turn they were cast as deviant and dangerous outsiders; construed as "Jacobins," who wanted the chaos of the French Revolution to be replicated in the United States. The reality

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[239] Pasley, *The Tyranny of Printers*, 580.

was that the United Irishmen had fought for liberty in Ireland, and although deflated, they maintained a commitment to free speech and migratory freedom in the United States. Leaving behind the pike in Ireland in 1798, United Irish exiles utilized a more powerful weapon of resistance to oppression in the United States: the pen.[240] However, while the pen became the principal tool of the United Irishmen in cities like Philadelphia, further north in Newfoundland, the pike and gun still played a prominent role.

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[240] Lacking weapons during the 1798 Rebellion, the United Irishmen started to use the pike. It became a symbol of the conflict.

Chapter Three: "A Transatlantic Tipperary": The United Irishmen in St. John's,

Newfoundland, 1799-1805

St. John's Harbor,
Newfoundland, 1799, Provincial
Archives of Newfoundland
Labrador

Introduction

Fr. James Louis O'Donel, the Catholic Bishop of St. John's, Newfoundland,

believed, much like others loyal to British rule, that the breeze of revolutionary

politics had spread across the Atlantic Ocean, into the ranks of the British military in

Newfoundland, and was blowing through the local population by April 1800.

O'Donel wrote that "We must earnestly entreat and by all spiritual authority we hold,

ordain that all missioners oppose with all the means in their power all plotters

conspirators, and favourers of the infidel French . . . for the aim of this conspiracy is

to dissolve all bonds, all laws by which society is held together."[241] This fear of conspiracy and the unease it brought had been building for the past two years. In June 1798, Governor Waldegrave of Newfoundland had written to the Duke of Portland, the British Home Secretary, noting the large composition of Irish soldiers stationed in St. John's and suggesting "how little dependence could be placed on the military in the case of any civil commotion in the town of St. John's."[242] While there was a feeling of disgruntlement elicited by laborers and soldiers in the town, unknown to Bishop O'Donel or the Lieutenant General of Newfoundland, John Skerrett, was that there was a mutiny planned for Sunday April 20, 1800. With the intention of intimidating any potential rebels, Skerrett called on the military to parade through the town, making mutiny impossible that day. Four days later, the mutinous soldiers desperately tried to rebel. On the night of April 24, 1800, Irish soldiers attached to the Newfoundland Regiment in St. John's mutinied with the intention, purportedly, of murdering all Protestant soldiers and merchants in the town, overwhelming the British officials on the island, and perhaps even welcoming French invaders into British controlled Newfoundland.[243]

The mutiny was unsuccessful in part down to the role O'Donel in urging locals not to support the mutineers and by urging his congregation against joining the mutiny. Four of the sixteen mutineers caught informed on their fellow conspirators, five were hanged immediately at the Powder Shed where they were captured, and the

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[241] Bishop O'Donel, Diocesan Statutes, 1801, AASJ (Archives of St. John's Abbey).
[242] Governor Waldegrave to the Duke of Portland, June 1798, CO 194/41, PANL (Provisional Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador).
[243] General Skerrett to Duke of Kent, April 30, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.

seven remaining were quickly transported to Halifax, court martialed, then either shot or transported.[244] While there were a series of mutinies throughout the British Empire through this period, the importance of this mutiny for the purposes of this dissertation is that the British officials placed the blame on Irish radicals: the United Irishmen.

The exile of United Irishmen from Ireland following the 1798 rebellion produced a local, radical population in Newfoundland that would later be referred to by the historian of the period, Patrick O'Flaherty, as a "Transatlantic Tipperary;" a reference to an Irish county that produced many radicals for the 1798 rebellion.[245] While O'Flaherty uses this term to contextualize the 1830s in Newfoundland, the term is also useful when interpreting the radical reciprocities that existed between south-eastern Ireland and Newfoundland through the 1790s. Much like the county of Tipperary, Newfoundland became a colony of disaffected Irish radicals who maintained a commitment to rebellion far from Irish shores. And while there was a broad sense of dissatisfaction in Newfoundland, much like in Ireland, only a small percentage of people rebelled openly. The intentions of the United Irishmen were seemingly scuppered as much by the Catholic Church, as by the British officials on the island. In tandem, the church and state quelled the possibility of rebellion in Newfoundland. This at first seems odd considering the subordinate relationship of the Catholic Church to British dominion generally, especially in Ireland and eastern

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[244] Judge Ogden to William Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.
[245] While Patrick O'Flaherty uses the term "Transatlantic Tipperary" to describe the tumultuous political state of Newfoundland in the 1830s, it can be equally applied to Describe the late 1790s. Irish migration from the south east of Ireland to Newfoundland inflected the radicalism that occurred in both time periods. See Patrick O'Flaherty, *Old Newfoundland: A History to 1843* (St. John's, NL: Long Beach Press, 1999), 152-203.

Canada which was home to large Irish Catholic populations. Moreover, the fact that

Bishop O'Donel was Irish and Catholic but retained a fervent rejection of any

rebellion is thought provoking, but entirely understandable seeing how the French

Revolution was understood by the clergy.[246] Once rebellion broke out, O'Donel

maintained a position of loyalty to the British Crown regardless of the nationality or

religion of those involved in the mutiny.

First, the purpose of this chapter is to explain the events in 1800 that

culminated with multiple executions and the transportation of Irish soldiers from St.

John's, Newfoundland to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then, the chapter explores the

existence of a radical political consciousness amongst exiled Irish radicals, that

manifested itself in Newfoundland in 1800. Due to an absence of material written by

those charged, it is necessary to assess the likelihood of United Irish involvement by

reading colonial records against the grain. This radicalism is placed in the context of

radicalization and migration to Newfoundland broadly through the 1700s.[247]

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[246] For a detailed examination of the French Revolution and the Catholic Church see Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France*: *The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Timothy Tackett, *Priest and Parish in Eighteenth-Century France* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977); Ronald Schechter, *Obstinate Hebrews*: representations of Jews in France, 1715-1815 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003); Dale K. Van Kley, *The Religious Origins of the French Revolution*: From Calvin to the Civil Constitution, 1560-1791 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996); Suzanne Desan, *Reclaiming the Sacred*: Lay Religion and Popular Politics in Revolutionary France (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990); Joseph F. Byrnes, *Catholic and French Forever*: Religious and National Identity in Modern France (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010); Nigel Aston, *Christianity and Revolutionary Europe, 1750-1830* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[247] Limited scholarship has been produced that deals with Irish radicalism in Newfoundland through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with one example, Willeen Keough's study of Whiteboyism and Ribbonism in Newfoundland, but gives less emphasis to United Irish ideology. See "'Long looked for, come at last:' Articulations of Whiteboyism and Ribbonism in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *Irish Studies Review* 26, no. 1 (2018): 5-23.

Moreover, I aim to explore a moment in exile when it was imperative for United Irishmen to maintain and continue violent radical action against the British Empire. This runs in sharp contrast to the apparent de-radicalization explored in the previous chapter. The reasons for mutiny were manifold: from disgruntlement over conditions of work; to frustration with the frigid conditions; to a lack of food. However, the primary cause of rebellion, according to Skerrett and O'Donel, was not physical conditions, but ideological compulsions. These elements combined in 1800 and brought rebellion and mutiny to the island of Newfoundland.

Finally, this chapter determines the relationship of the United Irish ideology to religion generally, and in turn how revolutionary ideologies were understood by members of the Catholic Church. The United Irishmen were founded in part to bridge the divide that had been created between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. But, the reality was that there were major gulfs between both that were exacerbated as a result of the United Irish rebellion. Throughout Irish history, the relationship between the Catholic Church and nationalism has been a complicated one. At moments there has been cooperation between the Catholic Church and Irish revolutionaries, such as the 1880s, but at others, such as the Irish Revolutionary Period (1912-1923), there was apathy from the Church. During the 1790s, revolutionaries were broadly remonstrated by the Catholic Church in Ireland and the same was evident in newfoundland. While the events in Newfoundland seem isolated on first glance, the actions of O'Donel as the leading representative of the Catholic Church, at the expense of Irish revolutionaries, follows a traceable trajectory that starts in the 1640s and exists

through to the Irish independence movement of the early twentieth century. Rebellion against British rule in Canada was anathema to the established Catholic Church. In Canada, as in Ireland, the Catholic Church was starting to secure a greater position of authority during the 1790s and were not interested in compromising this position of stability that was hard won.[248] Irish and Catholic Bishops were not ready to throw away these gains due to the compulsions of Irish radicals who, according to the clergy, had little place for religion in their ideology.[249] The Catholic Church in Canada, as in Ireland during the 1790s, was committed against any revolutionary actions, even if Irish independence from Britain meant greater autonomy for the Church. In turn, this resistance to revolutionary action meant that an Irish Catholic Bishop in Newfoundland was more than willing to accept the fate of the Irishmen involved in the rebellion there, so as to ensure the stability of the Catholic Church in Eastern Canada. The tension between rebellious United Irishmen in Newfoundland, and a Catholic Church that wanted to maintain its precarious but stable position in Canada, erupted in the spring of 1800.

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[248] In part, the new relationship of the Catholic Church in Ireland to the British is exemplified by the granting of the university level education at the Royal College of S. Patrick's in Maynooth in 1795.
[249] On this topic see Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760–1830* (Cork, Ireland: Cork University Press, 1994); Dáire Keogh, *"The French Disease:" The Catholic Church and Radicalism in Ireland 1790–1800* (Dublin, Ireland: 1993); Maureen Slattery, "Irish Radicalism and the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec and Ireland, 1833-1834: O'Callaghan and O'Connell Compared," *CCHA Historical Studies* 63 (1997): 29-58; Dáire Keogh, *"The Catholic Church and Radicalism in Ireland in the 1790s,"* (PhD diss., Trinity College Dublin, 1993).

Mutiny in St. John's, Newfoundland, 1800

  Irish soldiers planned a mutiny against British rule on Sunday, April 20, 1800

during religious service, when the "English go to Church," and the "Irish to

Chapel."[250] The timing was ideal as this was the only time when soldiers were not

allowed by their officers to carry weapons as a sign of respect. As such, it would give

those rebelling an immediate advantage. Due to the fair weather that day, soldiers

were pardoned from religious services by General Skerrett and ordered to parade the

town instead. The mutiny would have occurred on Sunday had it not been for this

change in plans. In a letter from Judge Ogden, the head magistrate in St. John's to

William Waldegrave, the Governor of Newfoundland, details the mutiny. On the

following Thursday after the postponed mutiny, Sergeant Kelly, one of those who

allegedly orchestrated the rebellion, and twelve of his men posted at Signal Hill,

deserted their positions and were followed by six members of the Royal Artillery at

Fort Townshend. According to Judge Ogden, those who mutinied were supposedly

followed by thirty more United Irishmen from the town, although these thirty men

were never found.[251] The garrison had been on high alert that week and were ready.

Sixteen of those who mutinied were soon captured in the woods outside St. John's.

But, the two leaders of the mutiny, known as James Murphy and "sergeant Kelly," as

well as one unnamed private, were never caught. Several of those caught decided to

give information on their co-conspirators. Those who provided information

implicated twenty others. According to Morice Pole, the man who would become

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[250] General Skerrett to Duke of Kent, April 30, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[251] Judge Ogden to Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.

Governor of Newfoundland in 1800, those captured "not only agreed to desert but had also taken the oaths of the United Irishmen, administered by the arch-villain, Murphy."[252] The mutiny was put down almost immediately, and the repercussions for those implicated were disastrous. Throughout St. John's, the reasons for mutiny were evaluated by colonial officials.

Quickly, a multitude of rationales for mutiny abounded through St. John's by the Governor, William Waldegrave, Bishop O'Donel, and General Skerrett leading to a sense of paranoia and suspicion throughout the island. According to Skerrett, the intention of those involved at that moment was to kill all of the Protestant soldiers on the island as well as the Protestant merchants. Skerrett on the rebellion noted that it "was under the leadership of some United men in town, aided by that wretched James Murphy and it is of a greater extent than I first viewed it. We are now surrounded by traitors."[253] In the language of the French Revolution, where there was greater emphasis on secularization, Skerrett also believed that the mutineers had been organized *before* the 1798 rebellion and were under the direction of a "directory of five"; similar to the directory that existed in France through 1793/94 in the period known as "The Terror." [254] One of those captured verified these fears that the United Irishmen were responsible for this mutiny. Nicholas McDonald, an informant, described in detail how the United Irishmen had hatched this plot.

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[252] Morice Pole to William Waldegrave, July 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[253] General Skerrett to Duke of Kent, April 30, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[254] General Skerrett to Duke of Kent, April 30, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.

McDonald's information included the passwords and codes that the United

Irishmen supposedly used, as well the number of United Irishmen involved in the

conspiracy, which, according to McDonald, numbered four hundred.[255] McDonald

also provided the British authorities with information on the oaths taken leading up to

rebellion. Interestingly, what the book they have sworn on is never made clear:

> 1st: By the almighty powers above, I do persevere to join the Irishmen in this place—then he kissed the book.
>
> 2nd: I do persevere never to divulge the secrets made known to me—kissed the book.
>
> 3rd: I do persevere to aid and assist the heads of the same, of any religion— kissed the book.[256]

These oaths resemble those taken in Ireland in the years leading up to the 1798

Rebellion. For McDonald then, it is not unreasonable to suggest while the information

he gives points to the existence United Irishmen in Newfoundland, that he could

detail oaths supposedly taken is unsurprising. By 1800, little difficulty was needed to

theorize what language the United Irishmen may have used in oaths they took.

Moreover, we should be suspicious of the number of those implicated by McDonald,

which along with calculations made by Skerrett and O'Donel, were seemingly

inflated, or without warrant for such a high number. McDonald suggested that 4-50

deserted and implicated twenty more.[257] This may have been with the intention of

receiving greater numbers of supplies, men, or finances. Finally, McDonald provided

the justification for the mutiny that took place in April 1800. According to

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[255] Judge Ogden to Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[256] Judge Ogden to Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[257] Judge Ogden to Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.

McDonald, the United Irishmen who mutinied did so as to "honour the old religion," that is, Catholicism.[258] This assumption made by McDonald is plausible. While the United Irishmen started as a non-sectarian revolutionary society, they merged with the Catholic and more militant Defenders in Ireland in 1795. While those who mutinied may have been aligned with the United Irishmen and impressed into the British military as punishment for their involvement with them, they may have also held deep convictions to Catholicism which they carried to Newfoundland.

These sectarian accusations were common in the days after the mutiny. On April 30th, 1800, an English soldier, Thomas Tremlett, of the Newfoundland regiment wrote home to his father on the events that had recently transpired, noting that all the merchants and Protestants of the town were to be killed by some "hundreds of the Irish inhabitants."[259] Tremblett was an eye witness to the mutiny in 1800, and one of the first soldiers to raise the alarm. He noted suspicion of the Irish in his regiment, recommending at one point to his father that all Irish on the island should in fact be sent out of the country every Autumn. Moreover, Adams suggested they the United Irishmen would do everything in their power to kill all of the Protestants on the island. According to Tremblett, the secret password for the evening of the 24th was "liberty or death," suggesting the United Irishmen would do anything to accomplish their goal.[260] Much like Ireland, Jamaica, and India during the 1790s, Newfoundland became a node of revolutionary insurrection against British rule, but

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[258] Rev. Charles Pedley, *The History of Newfoundland: From the Earliest Times to the Year 1860* (London, UK: Longman, Green, Longman, Robert & Green, 1863), 211.
[259] McCarthy, *The Irish in Newfoundland,* 103.
[260] McCarthy, *The Irish in Newfoundland*, 103.

by the end of April 1800, the United Irish mutiny had been quelled. According to

Tremblett, on the end of Irish agitation in Newfoundland, "I fancy Pat in town will be

quiet in future.[261] Tremblett was correct in that there were no further outbreaks of

violence in Newfoundland through the next decade.

On July 1st, 1800, the Nova Scotia *Royal Gazette* recorded the arrival of the

Newfoundland regiment to Halifax, including eleven mutineers who were sentenced

to death.[262] On the morning of July 7th, 1800, eleven mutineers were escorted through

the streets of Halifax, followed closely behind by eleven coffins draped in black

cloth. A military band played funeral hymns as the procession wended through the

city, which ended at Fort George. The entire regiment as well as hundreds of Nova

Scotia residents waited patiently for the public execution. In an act of "mercy,"

execution never came for eight of the eleven, who were subjected instead to life

imprisonment. For the other three, Garrett Fitzgerald, Edward Power and James

Ivory, they were hanged at 6.40am on July 7th, 1800.

Because there are no records from those who instigated the event explaining

why they did what they did, and what motivated them, we cannot be sure what

brought these men to rebel. Moreover, from the limited details in the court martial

records of those charged, it is difficult to ascertain if it was a mutiny—armed

resistance against their legal constituted authority—or rebellion, which is armed

resistance against an established government or ruler. The court martial records state

that they were tried for mutiny, rather than rebellion. Those found guilty of

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[261] McCarthy, *The Irish in Newfoundland*, 104.
[262] *Nova Scotia Royal Gazette*, July 1, 1800.

conspiracy were tried under the "Act of the 37th of George III for enticing H.M.

forces to Mutiny."[263]

Those implicated acted against their officers in an act of mutiny, but also

seemingly in act of resistance against the state that sent them into exile as soldiers in

British regiments abroad. This can be inferred by an appraisal of McDonald's

account, which of course should be taken with a grain of salt. However, the detail

with which he describes the organization of the mutiny and the language of rebellion

used, akin to the United Irishmen makes it likely that United Irish ideology played a

part in fomenting mutiny. While the conditions of those who rebelled pushed them to

mutiny, the political ideology of the United Irishmen gave them the language and will

to do so. In contrast to Philadelphia, where rebelliousness was seen as anathema to

assimilation, rebellion in Newfoundland, due to the conditions the United Irishmen

were exposed to, was necessary to stay alive. The radicalism of the United Irishmen,

and the place of violent rebellion still held a role for Irish radicals while in exile in

Newfoundland. For a moment, Newfoundland hosted the tensions that gripped the

1790s through the Atlantic world between those who wished to resist colonial rule

and those with power. To explain this moment of mutiny, it is necessary first to

explore the role of Newfoundland in the Atlantic world broadly, and the place that

Irish migration had in its history.

Newfoundland and the Green Atlantic

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[263] Whitehall to Waldegrave, July (no date) 1800. CO 194/44, PANL.

This chapter stresses the importance of Newfoundland as a nexus between British authority, fear of French invasion, and Irish migration.[264] Situated in the northeast of the Avalon peninsula, St. John's remains the capital of Newfoundland, as it did in 1800, when it was the site of an expansive fishing network that attracted seasonal work from around the Atlantic world. No migrants took advantage of the work available more than the Irish, who flocked to Eastern Canada, starting in the seventeenth century, making Newfoundland home to one of the oldest Irish diasporic communities that bears its mark today. By the middle of the eighteenth century, British officials considered Irish migrants disruptive subjects, leading to their characterization as "notoriously disaffected" as well as "wicked and idle," who could at any moment rebel against the British Crown.[265]

The Irish migration that occurred through the eighteenth century was mostly working-class laborers, a small number of whom eked their way into middle class mercantile positions, but the vast majority scrapped by on low wages and labored in dangerous conditions. Migration to Newfoundland was more dominated by men for a variety of reasons. First, due to the seasonal nature of the work there, it was usually single men who labored there. British authorities wanted Newfoundland to be organized around the commodity they could extract and less about building a

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[264] Newfoundland rarely appears in Atlantic histories. The role of fisheries is one of the major exceptions, with Peter Pope exploring how Newfoundland was a cosmopolitan center for fisherman all around the Atlantic World because of its abundance of cod. See Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004). Margaret Conrad delivering the David Alexander lecture in 2003 also called for a greater appraisal of the role that Newfoundland played in "Atlantic Canada," in "Mistaken Identities: Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region," David Alexander Lecture, Memorial University, 27 March 2003.
[265] Sir Francis Drake, "Answers to the Queries Contained in His Majesty's Instructions," 22 November 1751, and related correspondence, fol. 107–11, vol. 25, CO 194/94, PANL.

colony.[266] Moreover, the Catholic Church attempted to keep the small number of women who migrated to Newfoundland close to the "hearth," so as to deter what was conceived of as "pre-Christian tendencies that were supposedly affecting Irish male migrants."[267] That is, British officials believed that the men who worked seasonally in Newfoundland were untamed, uncouth, and uncivilized. The thought of women outside of the domestic space in Newfoundland was terrifying for the Catholic officials and British authorities.[268] As a result, male migration to Newfoundland is far more visible, either as convict labor or seasonal labor.

Convicts, much like those sent to Australia from other British colonies, started to arrive in the late 1780s into Newfoundland. Those who arrived in the late 1780s were different from the political radicals who arrived in the mid to late 1790s. The first accounts of convicts arriving in Newfoundland started in 1789, the same year as the French Revolution. Newfoundland locals witnessed large numbers of men and women travelling from the port in Petty Harbor in Newfoundland into St. John's. Locals were immediately worried that their arrival would be disruptive to the local community. The number of convicts who arrived in 1789 totaled 102 men and 12 women.[269] The Governor of Newfoundland was adamant on the negative effects such migrants were bound to have on the island, and also the effects they were already having: "until the arrival of these wretches in the country open and professed villainy

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[266] Efforts were made by the Newfoundland authorities starting in the 1760s not to allow women to stay on the island unless they were suitable for the island: "no women are to be landed without security being first given for their good behavior," GN2/1/A PANL in In O'Flaherty, *Old Newfoundland*, 87.
[267] Willeen G. Keough, "Unpacking the Discursive Irish Woman Immigrant in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *Irish Studies Review* 21, 1 (2013): 55-70.
[268] These concerns had been raised in the 1760s by then Governor, Hugh Palliser.
[269] McCarthy, *The Irish in Newfoundland,* 94.

was it seems totally unknown, among the lower order of people employed in the fishery, but since their arrival frequent punishment for crimes, unknown before their arrival, had taken place."[270] Those who landed were questioned immediately by local magistrates upon arrival. These convicts told officials that passengers, barring those with money, were chained in pairs for the duration of the trip. This trip could take up to four months to complete. Upon arrival, a detainment camp was constructed at Signal Hill, above the harbor of St. John's, to hold the convicts temporarily. Local merchants agreed to feed the convicts temporarily, but after ten days, threatened to cut off the supply of food. In a letter written by the wealthiest merchants of St. John's to the British administration on the island, they professed their belief that these convicts presented a very real threat to the island, and as a deterrent, promoted the raising of funds to furnish their return to either Ireland or England. British authorities awarded Robert Coysh with a contract to transport these convicts back to Ireland. Of the 122 people who arrived, only 80 made the return trip.[271] Several died due to malnourishment and sickness, while several others escaped. The Governor provided shackles for the prisoners, while Captain Coysh provided the guards.[272] The merchants provided necessary food. Just one month after they arrived, they were exiled once again, leaving St. John's on October 8th, 1789.[273] This experience seemingly left an indelible mark on locals in Newfoundland shown in how quickly the convicts were transported from Newfoundland. This ejection of convicts also had

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[270] Governor Milbanke to W.W. Grenville, Sept 20, 1789, PANL, CO 194/38, fos. 86-87.
[271] Governor Milbanke to W.W. Grenville, Sept 20, 1789, PANL, CO 194/38, fos. 86-87.
[272] Governor Milbanke to W.W. Grenville, Sept 20, 1789, PANL, CO 194/38, fos. 86-87.
[273] McCarthy, *The Irish in Newfoundland,* 96.

repercussions for future migrants there who were treated with similar distrust and skepticism. Through the decade following the deportation of these convicts, Newfoundland experienced the migration of United Irishmen who were impressed into the British military. Much like the convicts who came in 1789, the United Irishmen sent to Newfoundland were treated with the same mistrust.

By the 1790s, the local population took on a new, different demographic: Irish radicals.[274] By 1800, St John's population of 3500, was said to be composed in large part by 1800 Irish migrants.[275] Of these 1800 Irish migrants, the vast majority came from a thirty-mile radius around Waterford City in Ireland. The reason for this is that those who found their way to Newfoundland came often from the military jail, called New Geneva in Ireland. New Geneva was converted from a colony in 1784 that was constructed to house disaffected citizens from Geneva in Europe, to a jail for those convicted after the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. Moreover, those who escaped from New Geneva by bribing officials, or were sentenced to exile, travelled through the ports closest to New Geneva. The closest port from New Geneva was Waterford and one of the primary destinations from Waterford Port was Newfoundland. Why the United Irishmen ended up in Newfoundland did not happen by coincidence. Newfoundland and Ireland held deep cultural ties through migration. Irish Catholics had retained strong ties to Newfoundland since Lord Falkland's attempts to create a settlement there in the seventeenth century just at the moment where Catholics were being subjected to the penal laws in Ireland. Paired with the migration of exiles and

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[274] Jed Martin, "Convict Transportation to Newfoundland in 1789," *Acadiensis* 5, no. 1 (1975): 84–99.
[275] O'Hara, "'The Entire Island Is United...," 18.

those forced into the British military and sent to eastern Canada, were hundreds of

seasonal workers who came from Ireland to Newfoundland in the Spring and left in

turn in the Fall.[276] For both Irish migrants who willfully arrived, and the United

Irishmen exiled there, Newfoundland presented a harsh environment, especially

during the long winter months.

The Conditions for Mutiny

While the introduction of the United Irishmen into Newfoundland during the

late 1790s was an important factor in fomenting rebellion, the conditions of St. John's

leading up to April 1800 demonstrate a broader population that was unhappy with the

faltering fishing industry, worsening weather, and depleted food reserves. There were

employment opportunities in Newfoundland, but the conditions beyond the summer

were tremendously difficult, in part because of weather and a lack of food supplies at

times. Outside of the military, there was a general sense of disgruntlement among

laborers in St. John's, with such difficult conditions for fishermen in the port and

laborers that were kept in perpetual debt year after year. For soldiers, though, it could

be even worse. For those who were forced into military service in Newfoundland,

these conditions were even more difficult to accept because often they had been

unwillingly sent to Newfoundland. David Webber notes "how the repressive policies

of the British Government of the day affected every aspect of the social and military

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[276] Shannon Ryan, "Fishery to Colony: A Newfoundland Watershed, 1793-1815," *Acadiensis* 12, no. 2 (1983): 51.

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life in Newfoundland."[277] Broadly speaking, these conditions created a feeling of discontent.

In a letter delivered in the spring of 1799, just prior to the mutiny in 1800, Charles Morice Pole, the incumbent Governor received a letter, written by five men but representing seventy others, detailing the extent of these men's grievances. Pole in turn described the contents of the letter to the Duke of Portland. Among the complaints were that "the wages for fishermen were very low" as well as the low price they were receiving for their fish in the fall. Moreover, Pole relayed that "the prospects on their remaining on the island were so discouraging that they beg'd permission to go to some other part of the World where they were likely to receive a livelihood."[278] That they needed permission suggests that they were contracted to work in Newfoundland and perhaps the breaking of their contracts would have negative effects on gaining future employment. According to Pole, those who delivered the letter were buoyed by supposed successes in Ireland in 1798, and were willing, if necessary to replicate such action in Newfoundland. Pole went on to suggest that he believed these men were hopeful of a refusal of demands, that included leaving the island, if necessary, so as to warrant "some Act of violence." These events took on a more "serious complexion" in February 1800. As a result of the laws introduced which limited the sale of pigs in St. John's, a person or persons posted two advertisements on the night of February 21. In these advertisements the

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[277] Webber, *Fencibles*, 1.
[278] Charles Morice Pole to Duke of Portland, St. John's, Newfoundland, 1800, 14 August, CO 194/44. PANL.

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"person and property of the magistrates are daringly threatened" unless conditions were eased for locals.[279] From these advertisements it is evident that there was a general disillusionment with the local authorities. A subsequent reward of one hundred guineas was offered by the Newfoundland officials for the identity of the author or authors, not none were forthcoming. According to Judge Ogden on a meeting of the magistrates, local merchants, and Church officials in Newfoundland, he wrote that they all agreed that this instance of disobedience "was the first step towards the destruction of all order and Government."[280] In April 1800, Pole witnessed the outbreak of further resistance to authority on the island, and what he registered as "a link of the same chain": the mutiny of United Irishmen impressed into the British military.[281]

The United Irishmen and Mutiny, 1800.

It is difficult to assess the exact role that United Irish ideology had in the mutiny in 1800, but its high likely that many of those who mutinied were United Irishmen and brought with them a mentality of resistance. Colonial estimates of how many soldiers were involved in the mutiny range from 40-50, but only nineteen were discovered at the Powder Shed outside of the town of St. John's, the site where ammunition was held, and where they had intended to begin their mutiny.[282] According to witness testimonies as described in letters by local magistrates like

[279] Judge Ogden to William Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.
[280] Judge Ogden to William Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.
[281] Governor Charles Pole looks back on it in a letter written to the Duke of Portland, October 25, 1800, CO194/42, 213-217v, PANL.
[282] Judge Ogden to William Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.

Judge Ogden, all of those who were involved in the mutiny were certainly all from Ireland.[283] And, they were not only Irish, but "the very worst sort: United Irishmen."[284] According to Ogden, local informants in St. John's suggested that there were upwards of 300 United Irishmen in the local garrison.[285]

Colonial concerns, especially those of William Waldegrave, who preceded Pole as Governor of Newfoundland, existed throughout the period that due to the increased transportation of United Irishmen from Ireland to Newfoundland between 1798 and 1800 that the area would be at greater risk of insurrection. Moreover, Waldegrave noted in a letter during 1798 as the rebellion in Ireland was starting, that Newfoundland was vulnerable also, due to the large Irish population there.[286] However, British officials did little to offset the possible negative repercussions associated with the forced transplantation of radical revolutionaries. Generally, Irishmen who were sentenced to serve in the British military abroad ended up in two places: the Caribbean and Eastern Canada.

Following the 1798 United Irish rebellion in Ireland, Deputy Naval Officer, Thomas Tremlett Jr., noted that the United Irishmen had been sending dignitaries and insurgents to Newfoundland so as to foment conditions of revolution and disaffection long before the mutiny broke out. While implausible, it does point to a broader belief among officers that there was a conspiracy in the works in Newfoundland

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[283] Thomas Tremblett to Thomas Tremblett Senior, April 30, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.
[284] Skerrett to the Duke of Kent, May 12, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL. Supposedly this information comes from the wife of a "Mr. Baker's wife," who the letter notes, "is a woman of this country." The second letter, written on December 18th, 1800, questions the extent to which the garrison can in its present state, be maintained, due to the large number of supposedly United Irishmen still in the ranks.
[285] Judge Ogden to William Waldegrave, July 2, 1800, CO 194/44, PANL.
[286] William Waldegrave to the Duke of Portland, June 18, 1798, CO 194/40, PANL.

orchestrated by the United Irishmen. Tremblett, an eye witness to the mutiny in 1800, and one of the first soldiers to raise the alarm, wrote that "since the rebellion began in Ireland their emissaries have been administering oaths in every part of the island. If the miscreants go to extremities you shall have no cause to blush for me."[287] Here Tremblett means that it is little surprise to him that the mutiny in Newfoundland occurred and it would surprise him less f it were to happen again. According to British officials, these alleged United Irish infiltrators came armed with the same mentality and mindset that was exulted by revolutionaries in Ireland in 1798: one that stressed "liberty or death."[288] For Tremblett, the United Irishmen justified their violent methods because for them the emancipation of their compatriots in Ireland and Newfoundland was essential. Even in Newfoundland they would go to such lengths. For Tremblett, Ireland was only the start of tumult that would occur throughout the empire. Moreover, all Irish on the island of Newfoundland were complicit in the attempted rebellion. They had all been affected by the United Irish ideology.

According to Skerrett, the majority of those who had rebelled had taken the United Irish oath in Ireland, or indeed retaken it in Newfoundland, and were conscious of the rebellion that was stirring in the period leading up to the mutiny in 1800. For Skerrett, "the management of this conspiracy appears to have been under the direction of the same United men in town and is of greater extent that I first

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[287] Thomas Tremblett Jr. to William Adams, April 30, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.
[288] Several United Irishmen such as Napper Tandy borrowed this term from the American War of Independence. See Madden, *Literary remains of the United Irishmen*, 108.

viewed it. If I was at this moment empowered to declare martial law, I would say that the standard of rebellion was erected in this island. The magistrates are fearful to do their duty, and the United villains are no longer restrained by fear, supported by the conviction that they will be supported by many of the military."[289] Here Skerrett expressed the worries of the administration in the wake of mutiny. Moreover, it's important to note that he referred to the upheaval as a rebellion as opposed to a mutiny. However, in that only twenty men mutinied perhaps suggests that in fact the number of United Irishmen who were involved was lower than Skerrett suggested. This may have been with the interest of requesting further troops for Newfoundland. Due in part to the significant numbers of United Irishmen who found themselves in Newfoundland, it is likely to assume that a portion of the local population were aware of the United Irishmen, their aims for parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation, and with military force, their final intention to rebel against the British Empire so as to realize these objectives. However, it is unlikely that hundreds of people were prepared to mutiny as United Irishmen.

Skerrett was also intimately aware of who the United Irishmen were, their aims, and as well their methods. Skerrett served in Ireland, through the 1798 Rebellion, until July 1799 when he was transferred to St. John's, Newfoundland. Skerrett had been in charge of the Durham Fencibles, different to the Royal Fencibles in Newfoundland, during the battle of Arklow in 1798 when Fr. Michael Murphy led

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[289] Skerrett to the Duke of Kent, May 12, 1800, CO 194/42, PANL.

a charge against British forces, only to be shot while advancing.[290] The Fencibles were infantry and cavalry regiments that were from soldiers in Great Britain and Ireland from the Seven Year's War through the French revolutionary Wars. They also played an active role putting down the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland. Skerrett's role in the Fencibles during the 1798 rebellion showed him first-hand how potent radical politics could be in mobilizing local populations. It is highly likely that Skerrett was brought to Newfoundland specifically because he had fought in Ireland and had experience dealing with rebellious Irishmen and women. Moreover, Skerrett believed that the 1798 rebellion was not the end of militant Irish republicanism, but in fact Newfoundland was a target for continued resistance to British rule.

Skerrett was convinced that in the lead up to the 1800 mutiny that he had seen forty United Irishmen, who he himself had prosecuted in New Geneva, in the vicinity of St John's, Newfoundland. His anxiety over the possibility of a United Irish rebellion in Newfoundland continued beyond 1800. By 1805, Skerrett continued calling for vigilance over the possibility of Irish rebellion and for added finances and protection. Skerrett was prone to exaggeration though. Levelling such a call he noted that he had ensured loyalty on the island "in the midst of 50,000 United Irishmen," while at the same time, there only being 25,000 inhabitants on the island.[291] Moreover, he was mistrustful of the military in Newfoundland broadly. His distrust of the Fencibles remained through the period from 1795-1802. These were not the same Fencibles that he had fought under in Ireland. Rather they were a separate unit under

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[290] Mannion, "Notoriously disaffected to the Government," 7.
[291] Skerrett to the Earl of Camden, July 5, 1805, CO 194/44, 164-164v, PANL.

the command of Thomas Skinner. They remained in existence from 1795-1802. His

skepticism of the Royal Fencibles regiment in Newfoundland came from their high

number of Irish infantrymen that were recruited into its ranks in the aftermath of the

1798 rebellion. Moreover, he believed that large numbers of the Irish soldiers were

actually United Irishmen.[292] During the XYZ affair, he was worried that because of

the United Irish composition of the regiment, that should the French invade, the

Fencibles could not be relied upon to protect the island. Newfoundland, if it fell into

French hands, could in theory be a strategic location where the French could launch

attacks on the pro-British United States.

This same wariness of the military in Newfoundland was expressed by others

in St. John's. In a letter from John Ogden, the local judge in St. John's, to William

Waldegrave, the Governor of Newfoundland as well as an admiral in the British

Navy: "we knew not who we could depend upon for support in case of resistance,

having every reason to believe the defection was very extensive not only through the

Regiment, but through the Inhabitants of this and all the Out Harbours, particularly to

the Southward [who] almost to a Man have taken the United Oaths."[293] The oaths

were similar to those taken by the United Irishmen in Ireland. To become a United

Irishman, it was required to wear an oath of fealty to the society. From these

accounts, it would seem that every Irishman and woman in Newfoundland was

complicit with the United Irishmen. But, there was a wild exaggeration of how many

United Irishmen were involved in Newfoundland in April 1800. There are a variety of

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[292] Skerrett to the Earl of Camden, July 5, 1805, CO 194/44, 164-164v, PANL.
[293] John Ogden to Waldegrave, July 20th, 1800, CO 194/42, 167-168v, PANL.

reasons why Skerrett, O'Donel, and Ogden seemingly over-estimated the number of

active United Irishmen in Newfoundland. Ogden's deep misgivings about the 1800

mutiny and his over-estimation of how many were involved is difficult to ascertain.

He may have believed that the island was indeed over-run by United Irishmen. For

Skerrett, the fear of rebellion could prompt British authorities to send more supplies,

men, or finances to bolster. In the years leading up to 1800 there were several letters

written to the Colonial Office in London requesting more assistance.[294] But, at the

same time, Skerrett maintained a consistent apprehension to have Irish soldiers

protecting the island, at times calling for Welshmen to replace them.[295] For O'Donel,

he may have also believed that there were a larger number of United Irishmen than

existed. This could be due to his own apprehension over revolutionary ideologies

broadly. But, O'Donel also requested a larger pension to the amount of 50 pounds per

annum to be paid to him for his service in quelling rebellion on the island in 1800.[296]

Much like Philadelphia, Newfoundland became in the late eighteenth century a space

synonymous with the United Irishmen. Newfoundland, and its colonial authorities,

especially those affiliated with the Catholic Church felt a deep sense of distrust for

anyone who could be described as a radical. Figures such as Bishop O'Donel felt

such deep misgivings for rebellious actions, even with the intended goal of Catholic

emancipation. Here in the "Transatlantic Tipperary," the diverging intentions of Irish

Catholics affiliated with the church and Irish radicals met.

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[294] General Skerrett to E. Gower, 11 September, 20 December 1804, CO 194/44, PANL.
[295] General Skerrett to Lord Pelham, 22 September 1801, CO 194/44. PANL.
[296] Magistrates & Merchants of St. John's to E. Gower, 9 August 1804, CO 194/44, PANL.

<u>United Irish Ideology and Religion</u>

One of the assumptions of the United Irishmen, due in part to their name, was their secular nature. The "United" in their name pushed a non-sectarian agenda, but the realities of their varied religious and geographic membership insured that the organization's relationship to religious matters was far more complex, and their commitment to anti-sectarianism less defined.[297] Moreover, when the United Irishmen merged with the Catholic Defenders, they also paired two oppositional ideologies for a common nationalistic cause. Prior to this, the United Irishmen prided themselves on their anti-sectarian views and a commitment to a common, secular society. The Defenders on the other hand were inherently sectarian and prided themselves on protecting Catholic laborers from Protestant militant organizations. From the formation of the United Irishmen in 1791, they had little interest in producing a coalition with the agrarian, militant Defenders, but by 1793, they required a greater membership base as military intervention became even more possible and necessary. Due in part to their commitment to Catholicism, it seems on first viewing that the Defenders would, like the Church, resist French radicalism. Instead, Defenderism identified with French radicals who they saw as "God's chosen" who would usher in a new millennium. In fact, one Defender catechism in 1798 goes, "Are you concerned? I am. To what? To the National Convention. What do you

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[297] While many United Irishmen believed in catholic emancipation, others such as William Drennan were very skeptical of it. Moreover, other Protestants believed, looking at the French Revolution, that once they became liberated they no longer be dogmatic Catholics and as a result become more secular. See Wilson, *United Irishmen*, 13.

design by that cause? To quell all nations, dethrone all Kings and to plant the true religion that was lost at the reformation. Who sent you? Saint Peter. The Head of the Church."[298] Also, the Defenders frequently used scapulars, which traditionally were religious symbols, often associated with the Virgin Mary, but also utilized by French revolutionaries. The Catholic Church pushed back against this practice and forbade their used, especially the Archbishop of Tuam, James Little, who produced statements that rejected the religiosity of scapulars and relegated them from Catholic divine practice.[299] By 1798, the gulf that existed ideologically between the Defenders and the United Irishmen had been patched over, and a cooperative framework pushed nationalism as the primary agenda over religious liberty.

The eighteenth century was witness to the sweeping militarization of Catholics and Protestants through Ireland, and perhaps the conflict is best illustrated in Ulster, where there was an equivalent population of Catholics and Protestants. The population of Ulster doubled between 1750 and 1790 and saw areas with sizeable Catholic populations, such as in upland areas in Armagh and Tyrone pushed out by Anglicans. Frustration started to build between Catholics and Protestants in these areas. As the economy commercialized, and competition for work grew, frustrations spilled or into fairs—these generally split along lines of religion. In order to protect themselves, The Peep O'Day Boys and the Defenders were established initially to protect laborers but enlarged into volunteer militias. The Yeomanry acted as a part time policing force, but when Ulster devolved into moments of crisis, it was used as a

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[298] Defenders Oaths found at the National Archives of Ireland, *Rebellion Papers*, 620/22/19.
[299] O'Brien, *Ancestral Voices*, 18.

full-scale military force. Concurrently, the Yeomanry, charged with keeping peace were enlisted exclusively by Protestants, which led to a Catholics being punished disproportionately. Moreover, they often hired entire lodges of Orange Order men to serve.[300] For example, in 1793, when the Defenders were outlawed, they saw twenty-one death sentences passed and eighty-one banishments.[301] By 1795, fighting in Armagh and Tyrone eventually spilled or into Louth, Monaghan, Antrim and eventually led to the establishment of the Orange Order the same year. Thousands of Catholics were forced from Ulster in what became known as the "Antrim Outrages," which in turn led to a significant increase in United Irish members. Inter-religious feuds started to radicalize the Irish population and those entering the United Irishmen sought protection from religious persecution from an organization that in theory sought a more secular society.[302] The United Irishmen in turn stressed that the British Government was doing little to help those embattled Catholics, which likewise bolstered membership rolls of the United Irishmen. While the United Irishmen pushed for a diverse membership, in areas that traditionally had animosity since the Jacobite wars, there was little that could ease tensions. Only in counties such as Antrim, where Catholics as a minority posed little threat, could there be lasting cooperation. Moreover, only in counties that witnessed limited land confiscation could there be peace through the period.

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[300] Marianne Elliott, "Religious Polarization and Sectarianism in the Ulster Rebellion" in *1798: A Bicentenary Perspective*, 281.
[301] H. T. Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1989), 97.
[302] Elliott, "Religious Polarization and sectarianism in the Ulster Rebellion," 280.

The rebellion in 1798 was broadly rejected by the Catholic Church in Ireland but in Newfoundland Catholicism and dissent against the government were thought of as conjoined. Every bishop in Ireland repudiated the 1798 rebellion and anyone involved, and only a few dozen priests were involved in the actual fighting. Some historians suggest about eighty priests out of 1,700 on the island participated in the 1798 Rebellion.[303] Historical figures such as Fr. Michael Murphy, who would later be killed at the battle of Arklow, gained notoriety among British forces during the 1798 Rebellion. General Skerrett, following the 1800 Newfoundland mutiny alleged that it was a Catholic priest from Ireland, who played a primary role in the mutiny. "Father John" was the most "ardent missionary to this place" and was complicit in the upheaval by using his "boisterous eloquence endowed with (sic) of talent to do the most upmost deterrent to society."[304] Moreover, Skerrett believed that Father John was in Ireland during the 1798 rebellion and that Skerrett himself was charged with sentencing Father John. But, Father John's supposed appearance in Newfoundland, or involvement with the mutiny, does not appear in any records produced that correspond with the rebellion. What is clear, however, is a persistence within the minds of British officials with linking Catholic dissent within the ranks of Irish Catholicism, with upheaval in Ireland and places like Newfoundland. This is partially due to old sectarian rivalries re-emerging during the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland The most notable example of which being the massacre of Protestants by Catholics at

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[303] Clive Emsley, *British Society and the French Wars, 1793-1815* (London, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 48.
[304] Skerrett to Lord Pelham, 22 September 1801, 189-198v. CO 194/4, PANL.

Scullabogue in May 1798 when between one hundred and two hundred Protestants were locked in a barn that was subsequently set alight by Catholics associated with the United Irishmen.[305] While United Irishmen deplored such actions and stressed that those killed were counter-revolutionaries, the realities were that those killed, which included women and children, were unarmed and defenseless. In moments such as these, the atrocities of the French Revolution were realized alongside the threat of Protestant massacre that had been whispered through the 1790s. Through much of Ireland, what started as a decade of progress and secular togetherness ended with a more bitter divide than before, especially in Ulster, according to Marianne Elliott.[306] Much like in Ireland, Newfoundland, and especially St. John's had a majority of Catholics in October 1800. In the town of St. John's, of the 4062 inhabitants, only 1041 were Protestants.[307] Nowhere would Catholics overwhelm Protestants statistically anywhere else in the British Empire, except for Ireland and Newfoundland. But, much as in Ireland, these fears were used to build sectarian tensions between Catholics and Protestants. The Catholic Church used sectarian divisions to highlight how revolutionaries were intent on causing destruction by fueling religious conflict.

French Radicalism and the Catholic Church

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[305] See Madden, *The United Irishmen*, Volume 4, 491.
[306] Marianne Elliott, "Religious Polarization and sectarianism in the Ulster Rebellion,"279, According Elliott, the irony was that the breaking down of social, political and religious boundaries made eventual divisions in the nineteenth century even more stark.
[307] A return of the fishery and inhabitants at the under mentioned Ports, in the island of Newfoundland, 1800, PANL.

In Ireland as in Newfoundland, the Catholic Church was desperate to condemn radicalism. Whether intention or not, the 1800 mutiny took on religious overtones that the Catholic Church wished to reject, such as the murder of Protestants. Men like Bishop O'Donel as such wished for the Catholic Church to be associated with the stability of the British Empire and not the upheaval of the revolution. French radicalism presented a doctrinal and existential threat to Catholicism not just in France, but all-around Europe. Moreover, the reasons that the Catholic Church opposed the French Revolution were much different than the rationale for the British Empire to oppose it. British officials saw the spread of the French Republic more as a threat to the political fabric of Europe. By the early 1790s, Bishop O'Donel was worried that revolutionary migrants would have the same infectious effect on the seemingly loyal, but unpredictable Irish Catholic population in Newfoundland as the French had on the Irish in Ireland. For O'Donel, the first instance of radicalism to Newfoundland came from France and not Ireland.

O'Donel wrote in 1793 on French prisoners being kept on the island of Newfoundland that "We had 300 prisoners here during the summer; their officers were at liberty, & I must own I did not like to see them coming every Sunday to my Chappel with large emblems of infidelity and rebellion plastered on their hats; it was much more pleasing to see 3 companies of our volunteers headed by their Protestant officers with fifes and drums coming to the Chappell to be instructed in the duties of religion and loyalty."[308]

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[308] Troy II, O'Donel to Troy, December 27, 1793, Archives of the Archbishop of Dublin, (AAD).

After 1794, when the United Irishmen started to radicalize further and sought military assistance from the French, the Catholic Church reacted. Henceforth, opposing the French Revolution equated primarily to one goal—opposing the United Irishmen. The Catholic Church conceived of the United Irishmen as heretical and dangerous. The existential threat represented by the French Revolution was quite real, due in part to the narratives describing the bloody streets of Paris, the seizure of ecclesiastical property, and finally, the execution of priests during the Terror. Moreover, the clergy in Ireland had connections with fellow continental European clergy members that few others had, so they felt their exposure to the French Revolution was an accurate one. The "French Disease," the degenerate and immoral nature of the French Revolution, as members of the clergy referred to it, had found its way to Ireland on board vessels with Irish revolutionaries like Theobald Tone, Napper Tandy, and Archibald Hamilton Rowan. As a result, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church stressed the necessity of loyalty of Irish subjects to the British Crown. Moreover, Irish priests were actively dissuaded from involvement in the fighting that occurred in 1798.

O'Donel likewise looked on at the emergence of the United Irishmen with contempt and distrust as they gained popular momentum by 1795 and rebelled openly in 1798. On the rebellion, O'Donel noted that "the rebellion in Ireland has been productive of disgrace to our religion."[309] He does, however, stress that the bulk of

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[309] O'Donel to Plessis, May 12, 1799, Archives of the Archbishop of Quebec (AAQ).

those enticed by the ideology of the United Irishmen were led astray for vindictive

ends that preyed upon their religiosity:

> The deluded wretches who were taught to believe by their evil-minded
> designing leaders, that they were fighting for their religion, while they were
> transgressing the Laws of God and their Lawful Sovereign . . . thus, have
> those hotheaded Republicans lately returned from France imbibed Jacobin
> principles and brought indelible infamy on our holy religion that breaths
> nothing more than loyalty and obedience to the Laws of God and the
> constituted authorities.[310]

For Bishop O'Donel, while the United Irishmen were the culprits at the heart

of the mutiny in Newfoundland, it was French radicals and the United Irish leadership

who were the architects of rebellion around the Atlantic world. Terrified by events in

France, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church conceived of the United Irishmen as

Irish Jacobins, much as Federalists did in the United States, who were capable of the

same atrocities that were occurring on the European continent.[311] Rather than assume

the risk of revolutionary ideology, the Church instead maintained consistent loyalism

to the British crown through the late 1790s.[312]

According to O'Donel, the fear of a secularized society was real, especially

when considering the effects of the French Revolution.[313] Moreover, for priests in

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[310] O'Donel to Plessis, May 12, 1799, (AAQ).

[311] See Wil Verhoeven, *Americomania and the French Revolution Debate in Britain, 1789–1802* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 270-307.

[312] Frank Tallett and Nicholas Atkin (eds.), *Catholicism in Britain & France Since 1789* (London, UK: A&C Black, 1996); Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies: Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth century English Culture* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Mark G. McGowan, "Canadian Catholics, Loyalty, and the British Empire, 1763-1901," in *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World, 1775-1914* (Suffolk, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2014); Mark G. McGowan, *Michael Power: The Struggle to Build the Catholic Church on the Canadian Frontier* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

[313] The effects of the French Revolution were delivered first-hand to clerics in Britain and

Newfoundland, emissaries of the French Revolution were presumably already present on the island in the form of exiled United Irishmen. For members of the clergy, like Bishop O'Donel, the mutiny of United Irishmen was hardly surprising in the wake of events in Ireland, but wholly terrifying for the stability of the island of Newfoundland. Moreover, it was especially terrifying to the clergy on the island, judging by what would no doubt occur to them were a rebellion successful, according to O'Donel.[314]

While the Catholic Church rejected the United Irish rebellion completely in 1798 and abhorred the relationship of the leadership to French radicals, historians have in the past teleologically assessed this reaction and superimposed in onto the 1790s broadly. In reality, the period can split between an ambivalent reaction from the Catholic Church and a reactionary one to the rise of the United Irishmen. This split can be explained through the viceroyalties that were present pre and post 1795. This is important because it informs how the Catholic Church moved beyond helping its congregants in order to maintain the stability and prevalence in Ireland. The same was evident in Newfoundland. Earl Fitzwilliam, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from

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Ireland who arrived as exiles. See Kirsty Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution: Émigrés in London, 1789-1802* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillian, 1999); Kirsty Carpenter, "London: Capital of the Emigration," in *The French Emigres in Europe and the Struggle against Revolution, 1789-1814* (New York City, NY: Springer Publishing, 1999), 43-68; Dominic Aidan Bellenger, "'Fearless Resting Place:' The Exiled French Clergy in Great Britain, 1789-1815," in *The French Émigrés in Europe and the Struggle against Revolution, 1789–1814*, 214–29 (New York City, NY: Springer Publishing, 1999); Alexandra Walsham, *Catholic Reformation in Protestant Britain* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016); Joseph F. Byrnes, *Priests of the French Revolution: Saints and Renegades in a New Political Era* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2014), 88-100; Seamus Deane, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England, 1789-1832* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).
[314] Raymond J. Lahey, *James Louis O'Donel in Newfoundland, 1784-1807* (St. John's, NL: Creative Publishing, 1984) According to Leahy, O'Donel considered all French radicals to be consumed by "deism and unbelief," 25.

1794-95 believed wholeheartedly in the emancipation of Catholics. He believed that the upheavals that were occurring in the northern counties of Ireland were less the work of political radicals and more that of "banditti."[315] By emancipating Catholics, Fitzwilliam believed, was the only avenue through which to gain the complete trust of the Catholic population of the island. Lord Camden in contrast, was a firm opponent of emancipation and his heavy-handed tactics when dealing with the United Irishmen, in particular the sentencing of William Orr with specious evidence for treason. Hopes for Catholic emancipation were dashed with the introduction of the Earl Camden as Lord Lieutenant. Camden adamantly rejected Catholic relief. Furthermore, under his leadership, the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland was offered the first Catholic seminary in the country, in Maynooth, a town outside of Dublin to train Catholic clergy.[316] Before the construction of the Maynooth Seminary, Irish Catholics priests had no other option that to study in other European cities, such as Salamanca in Spain. The granting of the seminary quelled any discontent that the Catholic Church had and further widened the gap between the Irish Catholic hierarchy and the United Irishmen. Henceforth, the Catholic Church would approach radicalism from the United Irishmen with disdain, and to the British Government they exhibited consistent loyalism. In Newfoundland, Bishop O'Donel maintained a consistent line with how the Catholic Church would address United Irish radicalism.

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[315] Ernest Anthony Smith, *Whig Principles and Party Politics: Early Fitzwilliam and the Whig Party, 1748-1833* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1975), 195.
[316] John McCourt, *Writing the Frontier: Anthony Trollope Between Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 175.

The Catholic Church in Newfoundland held a precarious position in relation to the British State and did everything to appear loyal to the British Crown. As such, this relationship is important in interpreting why Bishop O'Donel rejected Irish mutiny outright. Only in 1783 was the first Catholic chapel built in Newfoundland, commissioned by then Governor, John Campbell. Moreover, only then were Catholic priests allowed to take residency on the island. This marks the establishment of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland, exactly three hundred years after its formation as a British colony by Humphrey Gilbert, the English explorer, in 1573. In reality, control of the island only came in 1713 when the French ceded their rights to the island, and instead focusing on the smaller island holdings of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The religious tolerance evident during the 1780s in Newfoundland stands directly at odds with the circumstances that were at play through the 1740s and 50s. During the 1740s, there was a deeply held suspicion by the local Protestant community in Newfoundland that the migrant Irish Catholic were "most notoriously disaffected to the Government," in part due to their strict restrictions placed against the Catholic Church. In one example in 1755 was a priest, given religious faculties by then Bishop Challoner, Vicar-Apostolic, who was hunted down throughout the island for giving mass. The locations at which he served communion were supposedly burned to the ground by British forces in his wake in Conception Bay, though he was never caught. While the priest in Conception Bay was never caught, those who ventured to attend his sermons were at best fined, and at worst exiled from the island.[317] Parallels

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[317] Raymond J. Lahey, "James Louis O'Donel in Newfoundland 1784-1807: The Establishment of the

can be made between the persecution of the clergy in Ireland under the penal laws. In fact, Newfoundland was bound to many of the same tenets of the Penal Laws that were enacted in 1641 following an unsuccessful Irish rebellion which was supported by the Papacy. These laws were introduced to affirm the Protestant Church as the primary power holding denomination of Christianity through the British Isles with social and political curtailments that enforced limited citizenship for Irish Catholics. In 1757, the Catholic Convention was formed to repeal the penal laws that restricted citizenship from Catholics and excluded them from public life. Lying dormant after limited success, the organization re-emerged through 1790s, and in 1793 won limited loosening of the penal laws, however Catholics were still barred from holding public office. While the United Irishmen championed this cause at first it lost traction through the late 1790s. Full catholic emancipation would not occur until in 1829.

Due in part to the longstanding migration of Irish peoples to Newfoundland, the laws were in part enforced there also. In part this legislation was inspired by the perceived threat of Catholic sympathy for the Stuart cause in England during the English Civil War. Moreover, sympathy for the Stuarts was expressed by supporting French claims to the island of Newfoundland. Anxieties or Roman Catholics on the island were further heightened by the robbery and murder of William Keen, a prominent Protestant merchant in Newfoundland, at the hands of several Irish Catholics in 1753.[318] Through the 1760s and 1770s, larger number of Irish Catholics

Roman Catholic Church," *Newfoundland Historical Society*, Pamphlet Number 8, (1984): 5.
[318] Frederick William Rowe, *A History of Newfoundland and Labrador* (New York City, NY: McGill-Hill Ryerson, 1980), 207.

migrating to Newfoundland brought about a more tolerant spirit of religious tolerance. During the American War of Independence, Irish Catholics remained loyal even when the opportunity to rebel, due in part to the garrison being emptied of soldiers to fight in the south, was reneged upon. Echoing calls for religious tolerance in Ireland and Britain, the Newfoundland Governor, Edwards, introduced religious tolerance of Catholicism in 1779. Armed with assurances of tolerance, St. John's Catholics now had a new representative to guide them forward starting in 1783: Fr. James O'Donel.

The Catholic Church's Response to United Irish Mutiny

Bishop O'Donel, a Franciscan priest from County Waterford in Ireland, and also a native Irish speaker, would never have allowed a member of his congregation to be wrapped up in something as tumultuous as rebellion, even by a group that had long standing ties to Catholic emancipation in Ireland. O'Donel came from a farming family but included a prestigious education which drew he and his brother to the clergy after which he received training at St. Isidore's College in Rome. Following his training, the O'Donel spent several years teaching both theology and philosophy in Prague, in what is now the Czech Republic. Returning to Ireland in 1767, O'Donel eventually became a member of the Franciscan Order for a three-year period, ending in 1782, at which point he was sought after by the Catholic hierarchy for the bishopric in Newfoundland. The appointment of O'Donel for the Catholic hierarchy was appealing in part due to the relationship that he held with many of the Irish Catholic

inhabitants of Newfoundland, especially because of his ability to speak Irish his

background growing up in Ireland. In fact, it is suggested that seven out of eight of

Irish Catholics in St. John's came from the same diocese as O'Donel: Waterford.[319]

Building a niche for Catholicism in Newfoundland, O'Donel was confronted by a

new concern by the early 1790s—the specter of revolution looming from France.

In early April 1800, Bishop O'Donel allegedly had words of rebellion

whispered into his ear in the sanctity of the confessional box by an Irish woman who

was, like the Bishop, also concerned by a radical population mulling insurrection.[320]

This is the interpretation of historian Charles Pedley which paints a romantic telling

of subterfuge and betrayal. But, it is likely that the military was tipped off to the

mutiny due to the military parade that occurred on April 20, 1800, but it is unclear if

that tip off came from O'Donel's confessional box. Charles Pedley suggests that

O'Donel uncovered the mutiny, but was not at liberty to have that information

divulged by letter so as to maintain his faithfulness in the eyes of his congregation.

Pedley, in his history of Newfoundland, was adamant in O'Donel's role during the

1800 mutiny, "the knowledge of the Bishop concerning it was doubtless derived from

the confidential communications of the confessional, it was not to be expected that it

would be published by him."[321] While it is unclear the exact role that Bishop

O'Donel played, what is clear is that the Catholic Church under his direction was

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[319] Catholic Representatives to Talbot, January 14, 1784, Archives of the Archbishop of Westminster (AAW) A, 42.

[320] Pedley, *History of Newfoundland*, 216. Pedley suggests that to maintain the faith of the community in the sanctity of the confessional box, that it would never divulged that this is where he came across the knowledge of the rebellion. Aidan. O'Hara agrees with Pedley's assessment in, "The Entire Island Is United...:" 18.

[321] Pedley, *The History of Newfoundland*, 216.

intent on sabotaging the mutiny in Newfoundland. Moreover, O'Donel perceived the

United Irishmen, as he did in 1798, as a threat to the stability of the island, and the

Catholic Church, and moved to render them visible to the British authorities.

Recalling the mutiny in 1805, O'Donel wrote that his role in the attempted rebellion

was "to bring the maddened scum of the people to cool reflection," and subsequently

to dissipate "the dangerous cloud that was ready to burst on the Heads of the principle

Inhabitants of this town and even the whole island."[322] For O'Donel, rebellion had

afflicted Ireland in 1798 to disastrous effect and could not be allowed to happen in

Newfoundland.

There is a reason why General Skerrett, when condemning the United

Irishmen responsible for the 1800 mutiny, referred to their political ideology as an

"informal religion."[323] This is important because Skerrett may have tried to exonerate

the Catholic Church from any involvement in the mutiny by downplaying the

Catholicism of the rebels. British officials, politicians, and some of the British

population believed that "Jacobinism," a catch all term for political radicalism

inspired by the French Revolution, would replace religion with a godless, unsacred

populace. What men like Skerrett and O'Donel feared most is what historian Mona

Ozouf as the "transfer of sacrality," that is, the replacement of religion as sacred, with

the sanctity of revolution, and those involved.[324] The old order would be

unceremoniously ousted and replaced with a secular new one. However, the advent of

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[322] O'Donel to Gower, October 11, 1805. CO 194/44, PANL.
[323] General Skerrett to the Duke of Kent, St. John's, May 10, 1800, GN 2/1/A [5] Vol. 15 1798-1800, PANL.
[324] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 281.

revolutionary politics ushered in by the French Revolution was not the death of religion and its control on Atlantic societies, but instead its recalibration and alteration so as to adapt and survive the existential crisis that ensued. The period witnessed the modernization of religious organization in the wake of secularization, which was perceived as more modern. In fact, in the words of Edmund Burke, "atheistic fathers," as Burke referred to French revolutionaries, "learned to talk against monks with the spirit of a monk."[325] And while the image of clerics fighting in the Vendee, under a Bourbon flag and bearing a crucifix, conjures up an interpretation of an archaic, stubborn response to revolution, the revolutionary period was also witness to the Church entrenching itself within the state. There was also the case of United States where the first amendment to the Constitution ensured the separation of church and state. The relationship of religion to the state during the revolutionary period is a complicated one. But in places like Ireland and Eastern Canada, the Catholic Church aligned with the state as a method of survival. The mission of the United Irishmen by 1798 though was the collapse of British control in Ireland.

Conclusion

It is likely that those who rebelled against the British garrison, while unsuccessful, were United Irishmen who were disgruntled with the manner of their exile, that they were fighting on behalf of the British Empire, and the terms of their

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[325] Edmund Burke, *Burke: Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, UK: Clarendon Press, 1881), 131.

service were so poor. Moreover, this chapter exemplifies the necessity at times to continue armed revolution against the British Empire even when the chances of success were so slim. The United Irishmen, nameless often, were complicit in mutiny and revolt that harkened back to their attempt at rebellion in 1798. Moreover, during this brief rebellion in Newfoundland, the United Irishmen were scuppered by the hierarchy of the Catholic Church there who saw the stability of their position, already impacted by the 1798 Rebellion, as more important than rebellion.

The United Irishmen, in an attempt to not alienate its diverse members, tried to position itself through a cooperative religious framework, but one that also championed the enfranchisement of Catholics, which in theory should have made them popular among members of the clergy. For O'Donel, however, Catholic emancipation was overwhelmed by the relationship of United Irish ideology to French radicalism, starting with the French Revolution in 1789. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* and texts like it stressed the inevitability of secular millennialism, to which many of the United Irishmen subscribed.[326] Many radical Presbyterians ministers in Ireland believed that the French Revolution would usher in a new period where secular cooperation would reject religious sectarianism that had split the country since the reformation.[327] One minister, and United Irishman, Thomas Ledlie Birch, believed that the victory of the American revolutionaries against British forces

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[326] In part, according to Crawford Gribben, many of the United Irishmen used secular millennialism in their political ideology for a flexible pragmatic purpose. It could be used to express their enlightenment values while also being attractive to rural United Irishmen. See Crawford Gribben "Antichrist in Ireland – Protestant Millennialism and Irish Studies," in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism and Irish Society, 1790-2005* (New York City, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 9.
[327] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 113.

was the first blow for civil and religious liberty in the New World, and that in Europe, the struggle between the royalist, religious forces against a secular revolutionary France, was indicative of a secular tide slowly overcoming an ecclesiastical one. The same revolutionary moment arrived in theory through the 1790s and culminated in 1798, according to Birch's prophecy. The realities of Irish radicalism, and its relationship to religion were far more complex and disjointed. But in order to explain this relationship, it is necessary first to explore the interconnected histories of Ireland and Newfoundland.

Not just for the Catholic Church, stability in foreign lands was very important for the United Irishmen. And just as the United Irishmen had a complicated relationship to religion, they also had a complex relationship to slavery in the Atlantic world.

Chapter Four: "Negro Slavery is Contrary to the Sentiments of Humanity":

The United Irishmen and Slavery, 1791-1817
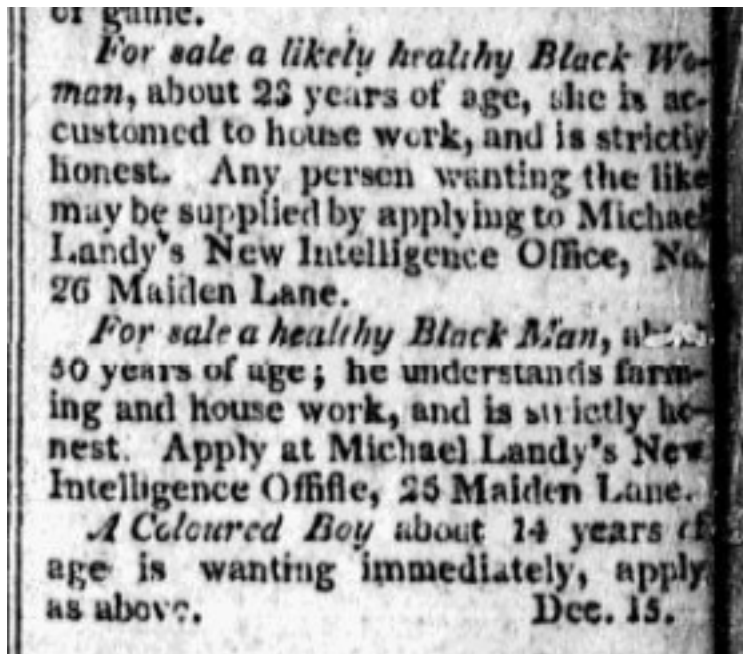
Shamrock, December 15, 1810

Introduction

Denis Driscol, arriving in the United States as an exiled United Irishman in 1799, immediately became embroiled in the racial politics of the period. As one of the most outspoken advocates of anti-slavery politics in the United Irishmen, Driscol criticized the institution of chattel slavery everywhere it existed, not just in the United States.[328] He believed that "slavery is odious, wherever it is practiced."[329]

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[328] In 1794, Driscol wrote a pamphlet on behalf of the "Persecuted Sons of Africa." See Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 90.

Announcing his convictions loudly upon entry to the United States, Driscol

denounced the institution of slavery as a "disgraceful stigma" of the United States. In

particular, Driscol stressed that "their practice," that is of slaveholding, "is at war

with their theory," of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.[330] But much as the

American founding fathers accepted slavery as part of American life, so too

eventually did Driscol. By 1803, Driscol's ideological position on slavery had shifted

dramatically; he now conceded that "slavery was freedom, comparatively

speaking."[331] Moving to Georgia in 1804, Driscol became a champion of slaveholder

rights while at the same time advocating for Ireland's ongoing struggle against the

British Empire, which he saw as one of enslavement of a colony under an unjust

empire. Frequently, advertisements ran in his newspaper, the *Augusta Chronicle*, for

runaway slaves, alongside poems lamenting the enslavement of the Irish people.

While Denis Driscol's racial politics seem contradictory and hypocritical, they mirror

the inconsistencies of the United Irish racial ideology that prospered from

comparisons with African slaves. The comparison between the enslavement of

Ireland and Black Africans was used to metaphorical effect. With only a few

examples, such as Thomas Addis Emmet and William Sampson, the rejection of

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[329] *American Patriot*, October 13, 1802.

[330] *American Patriot*, October 2, 1802.

[331] Irish radicals who owned slaves or condoned slavery included John Cormick and John Binns. Cormick, a Dublin feather merchant, who had hidden Lord Edward Fitzgerald in 1798, escaped to Guernsey, but when captured had given up all his secrets, was with his brother Joseph friendly with Driscol in Augusta. John Cormick owned a slave plantation. According to Michael Durey, Driscol held a flexible opinion of slavery before his eventual move to Maryland and then Georgia. In fact, the platitudes he used when referencing slavery in the early years of Jeffersonian democracy in the north were merely superficial. It is unknown whether Driscol became a slaveholder in the south, but it would be wholly in keeping with Irish radicals who settled in slaveholding southern states after 1798. Durey, "Irish Deism and Jefferson's Republic," 75.

slavery, which was relatively intact in Ireland, splintered while in exile. Broadly

speaking, the United Irishmen understood slavery along a continuum while in exile:

there were those who rejected it, those who accepted it, and those who prospered

from it.

This chapter charts the evolution of the Society of United Irishmen's racial

ideology from their formation in 1791 through the 1810s, with respect to Black

slavery. First, this chapter explores how the Enlightenment informed how many of the

United Irishmen understood slavery and racial formations during the long eighteenth

century. Using slavery as a litmus test, the progressive capacity of the Enlightenment

with respect to slavery is assessed.[332] Then this chapter queries how the United

Irishmen understood slavery prior to exile between 1791 and 1798. Through the

1790s, how the United Irishmen imagined slavery was grounded in abstract terms

because the institution was not evident in Ireland. There were no slaves in Ireland and

no slave markets. Slave-produced goods were visible but not the labor that was

necessary to grow, harvest, or manufacture them. However, even without the

immediate visibility of slavery in Ireland, United Irishmen made explicit, both to the

sympathetic Irish and British populations, that the plight of the Black slave could be

compared with the enslavement of the Irish under British rule. The United Irishmen

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[332] On ideology, a sometimes amorphous and misleading term, I mean the set of assumptions and beliefs that are integrated into a body of thought for attaining certain goals and needs. The central tenets of the United Irish ideology were Catholic emancipation as well as economic opportunity for the Presbyterian middle class. Importantly, ideology is often flexible, due in part to the changing realities of society. Therefore, affected by the material changes in their world view, the needs and interests of the exiled United Irishmen and the conditions of their racial ideology, altered how they addressed their new environments.

prospered from making such comparisons by stressing another ill perpetrated by the British Empire. Briefly, this chapter highlights how Olaudah Equiano, the author of *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789)*,* and the United Irishmen came into dialogue in Belfast. It was at this moment that the rhetorical "slavery" of the Irish was juxtaposed most clearly alongside that of Black chattel slavery. Much as the international slave trade had forced Africans across the Atlantic Ocean, according to United Irishmen, so too would the exile of the United Irishmen cast the Irish from Ireland. The forced diaspora of Black men, women, and children, at least according to men like Denis Driscol, was comparable, perhaps not in scale, but certainly in emotional effect. This relationship to slavery shifted from a theoretical evil in Ireland to a lawful reality as United Irish exiles came in contact with slaveholding societies outside of Ireland.

Then, this chapter shifts to the relationship that the United Irishmen held to slavery while in exile. The United Irishmen exiles landed in American cities such as New York and Philadelphia, two centers of anti-slavery fervor, where prominent members of the United Irishmen, such as William Sampson and Thomas Addis Emmet, championed anti-slavery initiatives. United Irishmen also landed in Charleston, South Carolina—one of the great southern American ports for slavery until 1807—and became slaveholders there. As impressed soldiers in the British military, they were sent to spaces where slavery was prominent, such as in the Caribbean. In Jamaica, there is speculation that the United Irishmen took up arms in defense of Jamaican Maroons, initiated by working-class exiles who identified with

the plight of the Maroons. While this is difficult to confirm, what is evident is that the United Irishmen were imagined as abolitionists in Jamaica who were hell bent on fomenting the uprising of slaves. In exile, the United Irishmen exhibited a clear continuum of relationship to slavery, much as other revolutionaries during the Revolutionary period did.

The inconsistencies with which United Irishmen approached the institution of slavery is a shared feature in many radical ideologies during the revolutionary period. From French revolutionaries who abolished slavery as a result of the Haitian revolution in 1794, but then re-instated it in 1802, to American Patriots who allowed the practice, to Latin American revolutionaries who outlawed it, there is a clear continuum along which radicals conceived of slavery.[333] The United Irishmen are no different in this respect, and using their racial ideology as a lens, and slavery as the focus, we see what the enslavement of Black Africans meant for them, and how they fit the plight of slaves into their political agenda. Slavery, and resistance to it, in the opinion of Twomey and Durey, was a volatile issue that Irish immigrants, including the United Irishmen, sought to avoid.[334] Taking a stance on the practice in the United States could affect the political legitimacy of the United Irishmen in the United

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[333] On American slavery see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North* America (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 2007); Thavolia Glymph's *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Greg O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619-1807 (*Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Manisha Sinha, *The Counterrevolution of Slavery: Politics and Ideology in Antebellum South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
[334] Twomey, *Jeffersonians and Jacobins*, 102-106; Durey, *Transatlantic Radicals*, 282-288.

States. As such, the anti-slavery stance appropriated by the United Irishmen in Ireland was largely abandoned in the United States and elsewhere. Marianne Elliott, in her study of the United Irishmen in revolutionary France, maintains that the United Irish "demand for universal suffrage did not signify any egalitarian thinking" and notes that "there was no trace of any social programme" in the political ideology of the United Irishmen.[335] David Wilson writes that the United Irish émigrés generally saw anti-slavery as "a dangerous and destructive force."[336] More than just rejecting the abolition of slavery, many of the United Irishmen became active participants in the institution. As such, their relationship to slavery can be understood along a continuum from rejection to ambivalence and acceptance, to the embracing of the institution. This chapter thus aligns itself closely with Wilson's interpretation of how the United Irishmen understood slavery, but with one added caveat—their experience of exile highlighted the atrocities of slavery for some, such as Thomas Addis Emmet, and made them more sympathetic to the plight of slaves, but for others, exile created a sense of desperation to be accepted into a new society which in turn made slavery an acceptable evil for them, or indeed an economic opportunity. Moreover, due to class and race privilege, the United Irishmen were able to purchase slaves and become part of the slavocracy. What then informs this continuum of positions on the institution of slavery for the United Irishmen?

Broadly, the relationship that the United Irishmen had to slavery can be understood along a continuum determined by three conditions. First, how the United

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[335] Elliott, *Partners in Revolution*, 27.
[336] Wilson, *United Irishmen*, 138.

Irishmen understood slavery changed dramatically as they crossed the Atlantic Ocean, as the institution of slavery went from being an unseen and distant evil in Ireland to a visible reality in North America. The primary destination for the United Irishmen were American ports such as Philadelphia, New York City, Wilmington, Boston, and Charleston. They were also exiled to the Caribbean, especially Jamaica. The diverse nature of these locations meant that the exiled United Irishmen were influenced by discussions of slavery throughout the Atlantic world. Events such as the Haitian Revolution would live long in the memory of the population, especially slaveholders, who grappled with the fallout of this slave rebellion. Jacobinism became associated with slave uprisings, and although labeled as Jacobins in Ireland, this connotation had far more negative implications in the United States, given the ways that Federalists labeled the United Irishmen as Jacobins who were proxies for French radicals. Moreover, white slaveholders likewise saw the United Irishmen as abolitionists without any real justification. The spatial dimensions of their migration therefore impacted dramatically how the United Irishmen conceived of slavery. Where the United Irishmen disembarked informed how they viewed slavery.

Second, how the United Irishmen understood slavery was dictated by political motivation. Derided, and initially barred from entering the United States by members of the Federalist Party, such as Rufus King, the United Irishmen quickly became entrenched within the Democratic Party, who, between the two major parties, were

more accepting of slavery as an institution.[337] By affiliating with the Democratic Party and involving themselves in party politics, politically active members of the United Irishmen became involved in a process that pinnacled during the Jacksonian period where the limiting of political enfranchisement for women and free Blacks saw the consolidation of a white-dominated political sphere.[338] Within the United States, presenting the Black population, free and slave, as the "other" helped solidify the place of the United Irishman within the "big tent of democracy." The United Irishmen sought to frame themselves as dependable citizens of the state and become part of the "common man" ideology that would dominate the Jacksonian period.[339] The exiled United Irishmen thus played an active role in the construction of racial markers of difference in early republic American society.

Finally, the labor system within which the exiled United Irishmen located themselves altered dramatically—working class Irish migrants no longer fought

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[337] See Padraig Riley, *Slavery and the Democratic Conscience: Political Life in Jeffersonian America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

[338] For the most comprehensive analysis of whiteness, a term that refers to the process with which non-Anglo whites became accepted, see David Roediger's *Working toward Whiteness* (2005). Although situated in the late nineteenth century, Roediger grapples with how "dark whites" became accepted into the white community. The same principles exist in my narrative, where working class Irish Catholics were at first denigrated upon entry into the United States. Most studies of this are primarily in the mid-nineteenth century, around the time of the Irish famine, but this is also seen quite clearly during the 1810s where the settled population of New York was quite resistant to the entry of these migrants.

[339] For more on this narrative, which became evident throughout the Early Republic, see Cotlar, *Tom Paine's America*; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995); Zagarri, *Revolutionary Backlash*; David Featherstone, *Resistance, Space and Political Identities* (London, UK: Routledge, 2016); David Featherstone, "'We Will Have Equality and Liberty in Ireland': The Contested Geographies of Irish Democratic Political Cultures in the 1790s," *Historical Geography* 41 (2013): 120-136; David A. Wilson, "Comment: Whiteness and Irish Experience in North America," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 153-160. These studies demonstrate that whiteness, like all racial categories was formed over time to meet particular social, economic, and political ends. From a literature perspective see Valerie Babb, *Whiteness Visible: The Meaning of Whiteness in American Literature* (New York City, NY: New York University Press, 1998).

solely amongst themselves for work, but rather, labor competition within cities like

New York City meant a class *and* racially based scramble for work. As such, how the

United Irishmen addressed slavery had real effects on their livelihood. An increase in

the free Black workforce meant fewer opportunities for not only laborers working on

the docks, but also the artisan class.[340] While the United Irishmen are generally

considered as a middle-class organization, composed of professionals, lawyers, etc.,

those who crossed the Atlantic Ocean following the Napoleonic Wars were ''coming

not in search of a Republic, but of bread.''[341] As David Wilson notes, "for every

passenger who crossed the Atlantic as a cabin passenger, there were scores that

travelled by steerage.''[342] The existence, or abolition, of slavery could have

detrimental effects on the ability to gain employment. Moreover, for those running

benevolent societies, such as well-educated United Irishmen and women, the capacity

to provide employment for those in need was impacted by their ability to package

themselves as skilled workers, often at the expense of Black slaves. But, long before

exile, how the United Irishmen understood slavery was in part informed by

Enlightenment thinkers.

The Enlightenment and the United Irishmen

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[340] By artisan I mean carpenters, cooper, thatchers, cabinet makers, sailmakers, butchers, etc. as termed within 1800 and 1810 censuses. For a similar discussion on the scramble for labor in early republic US cities, see Seth Rockman, *Scraping By*: *Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in early Baltimore* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

[341] James Thomson Callender, *A Short History of the Nature and Consequences of Excise Laws* (Philadelphia, PA: Thomas Stephens, 1795), 45-46.

[342] Wilson, United Irishmen, 4.

The United Irishmen were profoundly affected by the impact of the Enlightenment. As such, their inconsistencies with respect to racial politics were rooted partially there—that is, in the flawed conception of the rights of man, who they were designed for, and to whom they were applied. At face value, how could Enlightenment thinkers and revolutionaries be accepting of slavery, a concept that runs contrary to theories of fraternity and the rights of man? With the exception of Jean Bodin, all major thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were able to find justifications for slavery by appealing to its utility and social order. [343] Thomas Hobbes gave a blessing to bondage, acknowledging that slavery was the natural outcome of power differentials.[344] Accepted by John Locke, slavery lay outside of the social compact and remained in the "state of war continued."[345] Enlightenment thinkers had a tendency to promote the continued enslavement of Africans due to their perceived inferiority, their utility, or ethical relativism. By the eighteenth century, the opinion of slavery by some intellectuals started to change. It was Montesquieu and John Hume, more than any other thinkers, who put Black slavery on the agenda for the European Enlightenment. Montesquieu hypothesized a world turned upside down, where slavery was applied to white Europeans. Hume, while rejecting slavery, wrote that "I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all other species of men to be naturally inferior to the whites," suggesting his belief in a strict

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[343] Jean Bodin rejected slavery as neither charitable for the slave, nor profitable for the commonwealth, in part because the fear created with slaveholding would offset any financial benefits. See David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1966), iv.
[344] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or, The Matter, Forme & Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1904), 480.
[345] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London, UK: Whitmore and Fenn, 1821), 339.

racial hierarchy.[346] Francis Hutcheson wrote in his *System of Moral Philosophy* that

slavery violated all sense of natural justice.[347] Voltaire, while a vocal opponent of

slavery, believed that Black slaves lacked the inherent humanity of white Europeans

and were subsequently inferior.[348] Moreover, the relationship of slaves to their

masters was often used as a comparison to the French working class under the

Catholic Church. While French revolutionaries abolished slavery in 1794 under

pressure from the Haitian revolutionaries, they reneged upon this commitment to

outlaw slavery permanently, reintroducing the institution in 1802.[349] Importantly,

neither Montesquieu nor Hutcheson, who both rejected the institution of slavery,

appear in Theobald Wolfe Tone's literary collections.[350] As David Brion Davis

writes, "there were many planters in Virginia, Jamaica, St. Domingue who were open

to the spirit of the Enlightenment. They did not, however, decide to give up their

slaves after reading Montesquieu."[351] The Enlightenment did not produce an end to

slavery, but rather, produced the language through which slavery could be debated,

from planters in the American South to Irish merchants in Belfast.

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[346] David Hume, Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects (London: Millar, 1758), vol. 1, 125.

[347] Francis Hutcheson, A *System of Moral Philosophy* (London, 1755), 200-205.

[348] William B. Cohen, *The French Encounter with Africans: White response to Blacks, 1530–1880* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003), 86; David Allen Harvey, *The French Enlightenment and its Others: The Mandarin, the Savage, and the Invention of the Human Sciences* (New York City, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 135–46.

[349] Louis Sala-Molins, *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xi.

[350] Jim Smyth, "Wolfe Tone's Library: The United Irishmen and 'Enlightenment,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 45, no. 3 (2012): 423-435.

[351] Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 49.

The Irish were not solely consumers of continental intellectual thought, and in fact were active producers of a Protestant Irish iteration of the Enlightenment.[352] As such, the spatial and theological origins of the United Irishmen also inform how their racial ideology was constructed. Starting in 1791 in Belfast, a majority of the early members of the United Irishmen were Presbyterian, which is unsurprising as Belfast's population of 18,000 was largely Protestant. Moreover, the city's commitment to anti-slavery was affirmed by rallies stressing non-consumption of rum and sugar from the West Indies, as well anti-slavery banners during Bastille day celebrations.[353] Scottish Presbyterianism had a lasting effect on how the United Irishmen understood slavery from a purely moral perspective and rejecting the idea of one man's bondage by another. On slavery, some middle class United Irishmen were influenced by Enlightenment thinkers who developed a philosophical and legal rejection of the slave trade.[354] David Bailie Warden, a prominent United Irishman, was clearly affected by John Millar, the Scottish philosopher, on issues of slavery. Warden, while attending a lecture that Millar was giving in Glasgow on civil law, took note a position of slavery that he shared. Warden, paraphrasing Millar, wrote that "the mind revolts at the idea of a serious discussion on slavery. Every individual, whatever be his country or complexion, is entitled to freedom . . . negro slavery is contrary to the

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[352] Sean D. Moore, "Introduction: Ireland and the Enlightenment," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 45, No. 3, Ireland and the Enlightenment (Spring, 2012): 137.
[353] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 14.
[354] These include, but are not limited to James Edward Oglethorpe, Montesquieu, and Jacques Pierre Brissot. The extent to which Locke rejected slavery is controversial. Scholars argue that Locke was in favor of the African slave trade but rejected the enslavement of Europeans under despotic rulers.

sentiments of humanity and the principles of justice.''[355] How the United Irishmen

understood slavery was produced in dialogue with these thinkers, but slavery was also

a commonly utilized metaphor for the condition of the Irish in Ireland. As such, the

rejection of slavery as an abstract institution had practical implications for the United

Irishmen. The United Irishmen used slavery as a metaphor for the plight of the Irish

and used examples of Black slavery to demonstrate that slavery in any guise was evil

and unjust. As such, the use of Black slavery alongside Irish slavery reinforced its

effectiveness by demonstrating the latter, and in turn captivating readers.

The Metaphor of Slavery

The United Irishmen highlighted the persecution of the Irish and stressed that

the connection between the bondage of the African slave and the suffering of the Irish

people under the British yoke was comparable, and that this comparison existed prior

to the establishment of the United Irishmen. Importantly, a distinction between

Catholics and Protestants in Ireland was on occasion made, but generally this

enslavement was defined as Irish broadly rather than Irish Catholic or Irish Protestant.

Moreover, the similarities as explained by the United Irishmen are used as rhetorical

devices, as opposed to holding structural similarities.[356] When a petition was written

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[355] Henri Grégoire, *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral faculties, and Literature of Negroes: Followed with an Account of the Life of Fifteen Negroes & Mulattoes*, trans. David Bailie Warden (Brooklyn: Thomas Kirk, 1810), 9.
[356] There are various examples of the United Irishmen taking an anti-slavery stance. In particular, Nini Rodgers explores this by stressing the background of Waddell Cunningham, Thomas Greg, and Thomas McCabe who are all considered as founding members of the United Irishmen in Belfast. These include the active resistance of McCabe to the introduction of the slave trade, Rosamund Jacob, *The Rise of the United Irishmen, 1791-94* (London, UK; Harrap and Company, 1937); Nini Rodgers,

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by Waddell Cunningham in 1786, one of the wealthiest merchants in Belfast, to introduce slavery into Belfast, it was met with firm resistance by Belfast merchants who would eventually establish the United Irishmen. Thomas McCabe, a United Irishman, and several other merchants were successful in rejecting the introduction of the slave trade into the port of Belfast. In a scathing rebuke, McCabe, on the petition made by Cunningham to the allow the institution of slavery into Belfast, wrote "May God whither the hand and assign the name to eternal infamy of the man who will sign that document."[357] McCabe reveled in his appointed name in Belfast after this incident: the "Irish Slave."[358] Similarly to McCabe's actions, William Drennan, one of the leading United Irishmen in Belfast, attempted a boycott of sugar and rum from West Indies merchants so as to scupper the slave trade.[359] What this did was highlight the atrocities of Black slavery and equate them in similar ways to Irish oppression. This is in turn flattened the experience of Black slaves. These comparisons became more common through the 1790s.

The comparisons between the Irish Catholic and Black slave were used even more by United Irishmen after their formation in 1791. The *Northern Star*, the mouthpiece of the United Irishmen, regularly made comparisons between Irish Catholics and Black slaves. It started printing on January 4, 1792 and garnered the

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Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery: 1645-1865 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Nini Rodgers, *Equiano and Anti-Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Belfast* (Belfast, UK: Ulster Historical Society, 2000), 19; Nini Rodgers, "Equiano in Belfast: A Study of the Anti-slavery Ethos in a Northern Town," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no. 2 (1997): 73–89. David Featherstone, *Resistance, Space and Political Identities*, 103; Wilson, *United Irishmen*, 134.

[357] William Grimshaw, *Incidents Recalled* (Philadelphia,1848), 17.

[358] Whelan, "The Green Atlantic," *New Imperial History*, 232.

[359] William Drennan to Samuel McTier, February 3, 1792, in Maria Luddy (ed*.), Drennan-McTier Letters, 1776-1793* (Dublin, IRL: Women's History Project in association with the Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1998).

most subscribers of any newspaper in Ireland during the 1790s. The *Belfast News-Letter* had 2,750 whereas the *Northern Star* had 4,000.[360] *The Northern Star* noted that "equal rights and equal laws would end slavery, Black and Irish Catholic."[361] In March 1792, on the issue of Black slavery, a poem appeared that read: ''The Angel Freedom, from celestial wings. Cheers the black native of the burning zone and bid to all the rights of all be known."[362] Wolfe Tone used the rhetoric of slavery advantageously—in a sixteen-page pamphlet, Tone used the terms "slavery,'' "slave," "or bondage" to describe the Irish Catholic under British rule as oppressed peoples.[363] In a particularly striking passage, Tone wrote that "we prate and babble, and write books, and publish them, filled with sentiments of freedom, and abhorrence of tyranny, and lofty praises of the *Rights of Man*! Yet we are content to hold three million of our fellow creatures, and fellow subjects, in degradation and infamy, and contempt, or to sum it all up in one word, *Slavery*!"[364] While Tone was speaking about Irish Catholics, the language was comparable with that used by abolitionists during the period in reference to Black slavery.

James Orr, a prominent United Irishman and poet, made explicit the linkages between Black slaves and the Irish. Orr was a weaver during the radical 1790s and became involved with the United Irishmen. The "Bard of Ballycarry," as he was known locally, was forced into exile in 1798 and traveled to the United States.

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[360] Gillian O'Brien, "'Spirit, Impartiality and Independence': "The Northern Star," 1792-1797," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland / Iris an Dá Chultúr* 13 (1998): 7-23.
[361] *Northern Star*, Belfast, 18-21 July 1792.
[362] *Northern Star*, Belfast, March 1792.
[363] Tone, *An Argument*, 28.
[364] Tone, *An Argument*, 28.

However, under an amnesty in 1802, he returned to Ireland. In Ireland, he cast his hand producing poetry. Two of his poems associate political upheaval with racial inequality. Toussaint L'Ouverture plays the Black hero in "Farewell to St. Domingo" which is a poem that denounces Napoleon's imprisonment of him. "The Dying African" was also politically motivated in that it signaled the approaching Whig Government in 1806 and the likelihood of the abolition of slavery: "Africa's Friends are Albion's Glory, Fox, their Chief, in death I bless." [365]

James Orr was not the only United Irishmen who wrote on the similarities of Black slaves and the Irish. *Paddy's Resource* (1798) was an anthology of Irish poetry and stories that was published in 1798 on the eve of the United Irish Rebellion, but appeared as early as 1795 in the *Northern Star*.[366] While the majority of the inclusions, which began with an address by Arthur O'Connor, a United Irishman captured in 1796 and banished in 1802, focused on general themes of British cruelty, imperialism, and early nationalism, there is one poem that sits curiously alongside the "Exiled Patriot." "The Captive Negro," that is the plight of the Black slave, was cast alongside the destitute Irish rebel. In it, the unknown author of *Paddy's Resource* urged both that the people should "appear, appear fair freedom, and set the captive negro free, with scourges whipt, till bleeding, by thy enemies of liberty." While only occupying one portion of the document, the case of Black slavery was intrinsically paired with the enslavement of the Irish people. This, perhaps, was the first example

[365] Donald Akenson and W. H. Crawford, *Local Poets and Social History: James Orr, Bard of Ballycarry* (Belfast, NI: PRONI, 1977), 31-33; 38-39.
[366] *Paddy's Resource, Or, The Harp of Erin Attuned to Freedom: Being a Collection of Patriotic Songs* (Ireland, 1798), Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

of the Black slave used politically to promote the cause of Irish interests, and also the intention of the United Irishmen to propel emancipation for Irish Catholics.

For United Irishmen like Samuel Neilson, Black slavery was morally unacceptable, unjust, and an abomination. These sentiments were echoed through the northeast of Ireland which held a significant Presbyterian population relative to the rest of the country.[367] The Scottish Enlightenment heightened the idea that slavery in any guise was unacceptable, and the concentration of Presbyterians in Counties Down and Antrim worked to secure these ideals, which in turn inspired the ideology of figures such as Samuel Neilson. Neilson, one of the leading members of the United Irishmen and dubbed "the Jacobin" for his radical politics by Theobald Wolfe Tone, was a woollen draper in Belfast, a Presbyterian minister, and an editor for the newspaper aligned with the United Irish cause: *The Northern Star*.[368] Neilson quickly rose to prominence as an outspoken critic of British policy for Ireland and as a critic of the slave trade. Moreover, he believed that the enslavement of Ireland was comparable with the enslavement of Africans.[369] In 1791, Neilson saw the chance to provide a chance for Belfast's population to hear from the most famous ex-slave of the period: Olaudah Equiano.

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[367] Myrtle Hill, "Watchmen in Zion: Millennial Expectancy in Eighteenth-Century Ulster" in *Protestant Millennialism, Evangelicalism, and Irish Society, 1790-2005* (London, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 33-34. In Belfast in 1785 only 8% of the population was Catholic. The remaining population was split between Anglicans and Presbyterians. This population trend is evident in Counties Down and Antrim.

[368] Kenneth L. Dawson, *The Belfast Jacobin: Samuel Neilson and the United Irishmen* (Dublin, IRL: Irish Academic Press, 2017).

[369] Neilson had a tendency to draw upon this in his correspondence. For example, in letters written to Wolfe Tone in 1792, Neilson addressed Tone with "Dear Fellow-Slave" or just "Slave." Samuel Neilson to Theobald Wolfe Tone, December 3, 1792. National Archives of Ireland.

The United Irishmen and Olaudah Equiano, 1791

      The United Irishmen used the arrival of the most famous ex-slave of the period—Olaudah Equiano—to push their own political agenda in Ireland. While not yet fully radicalized in 1791, the United Irishmen still believed that a sympathetic population could help bring about reform in government. The interactions between the United Irishmen and Olaudah Equiano began when Equiano visited Belfast to publicize his new book, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789). Equiano was born in the 1740s in present-day Nigeria, although there is scholarly debate over this.[370] He was eventually sold into slavery around the age of ten after he was kidnapped as a child.[371] He was brought first to Britain and then the West Indies where he was forced to be a sailor and later navigator. By 1766 he had amassed enough capital to pay his purchase price and was manumitted. Following his emancipation, with the constant fear of re-enslavement, insult, and under payment, Equiano soon found that the life he sought to lead was lacking purpose, compensation, and meaning.[372] For the next decade, Equiano found himself in the West Indies and Britain, but would only find his calling when he was introduced to the anti-slavery movement in Britain in the late 1770s. Much as the life of Olaudah Equiano would undergo dramatic change during the 1770s and 1780s, so

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[370] See Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, The African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens, GA, Georgia University Press, 2005); Paul E. Lovejoy, "Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African," *Slavery and Abolition* 27, no. 3 (2006): 317-347. While important to acknowledge, the stakes of these debates do not affect this dissertation.
[371] Rodgers, *Equiano and Anti-slavery*, 1.
[372] Rodgers, *Equiano and Anti-slavery*, 2.

too would the Irish political landscape.[373] Emptied of British soldiers in the period, as they were sent to the Americas to fight the rebelling American forces, the country saw the rise of the Volunteers as local militias, who in turn produced legislative victories that benefited the merchant classes of Dublin and Belfast. The next step would be to address the oligarchical Dublin Parliament, and eventually a push for Catholic emancipation, that would later be taken up by the United Irishmen. The emancipation of Irish Catholics was brought to the fore as a response to the successes of the French Revolution by 1791. Because the Volunteers were unwilling to entertain this initiative, the Society of United Irishmen was formed in Belfast in 1791 as body designed to constitutionally effect legislative reform in the Irish Parliament. It was at this moment of change in Irish society that Equiano arrived in Belfast, in May 1791, for a six-month tour to publicize the *Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African*. Equiano was greeted and patroned by Samuel Neilson and in the years after Equiano's visit to Ireland, Neilson maintained a commitment to publishing anti-slavery narratives in his newspaper. However, not all United Irishmen maintained a commitment to abolition before 1798.

While there was a broad consensus among the United Irishmen that slavery was an ill of society, some United Irishmen held little or no interest in the abolition of the slave trade. One of the twelve men who formed the United Irishmen in October 1791 was William Sinclair, who had an interest in Catholic emancipation, but with a

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[373] Some scholarship has successfully traced the commonalities between the Black and Green Atlantics. The best example is Peter D. O'Neill and David Lloyd (eds.), *The Black and Green Atlantic: Cross-Currents of the African and Irish Diasporas* (New York City, NY: Palgrave, 2009).

gradualist approach, and no interest in the emancipation of slaves. Instead, what leaders of the United Irishmen wanted was the shackles of economic opportunity loosened for middle class Presbyterians. Involved in the textile trade, especially with the United States and the Caribbean, Sinclair saw the role of slaves in picking cotton as essential to linen industry in Ireland.[374] While the links between Belfast and slavery are less obvious than with Bristol or Manchester, the wealth of the town relied on trade with the Caribbean, especially with rope-making, meat packing and salting, and flour milling.[375] In this context it makes sense in terms of Sinclair's self-interest that he was intent on the gradual abolition of the penal laws, but actively against the abolition of slavery. The rejection of slavery was subsumed by economic advantage, as was the case for several of the United Irishmen. While in Ireland, the popular consensus was disapproval of the slave trade, but there was never complete disapproval of the institution. In exile, the consensus that slavery should be abolished became even less clear and defined. In fact, the United Irishmen often became active participants in the reproduction of the slave trade. For Thomas Addis Emmet and William Sampson, however, slavery remained a deplorable institution of imperialism and contrary to the values they held.

The United Irishmen and Anti-Slavery in Exile

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[374] Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery, and Anti-Slavery,* 196.
[375] Bill Rolston, "'Ireland of the Welcomes'? Racism and Anti-Racism in Nineteenth Century Ireland," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 38, No. 4, (2004): 358-9.

While we cannot assess how many United Irishmen accepted or rejected

slavery, it is possible to assume only a small percentage became active agents in its

abolition while in exile. Among those who both rejected the legitimacy of the

institution and labored in its collapse was Thomas Addis Emmet. Emmet was born in

Cork City, took the United Irish oath in 1795, and was sworn into the society. In

1798, as happened to many of the United Irish leaders prior to the rebellion, Emmet

was arrested by British forces and imprisoned. In the aftermath of the failed 1798

Rebellion, Emmet was jailed in Kilmainham and then at Fort George in Scotland. He

was released in 1802 and moved to Brussels. From Paris he learned that his brother's

insurrection in 1803 was unsuccessful. Emmet believed he had to leave Europe at this

point.[376] He moved to New York City in 1804. On slavery, Emmet retained a

fundamental rejection of slavery that he expressed in New York City through his

work in the New York State Manumission Society. He was urged by a close

acquaintance to consider the American south as a viable destination, but that for him

was not a possibility That acquaintance, Joseph McCormick, fled Ireland after the

1798 Rebellion to Georgia and eventually became a slaveholder.[377] Emmet, in

reaction to this, wrote to McCormick in 1805 explaining that "you know, the

insuperable objection I have always had to settling, where I could not dispense with

the use of slaves and that the more they abound, the stronger are my objections.''[378]

Upon entry into the United States, Emmet set up a legal practice and became involved

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[376] Emmet, *Memoir*. 25.
[377] Craig A. Landy, "Society of United Irishmen Revolutionary and New-York Manumission Society Lawyer: Thomas Addis Emmet and the Irish Contributions to the Antislavery Movement in New York," *New York History* 95, no. 2 (2014): 197.
[378] Thomas Addis Emmet, *Memoir of Thomas Addis*, 227.

with the Society of Friends. His first case was representing a fugitive slave. Emmet

subsequently garnered attention for his work with the Manumission Society of New

York. He made his intentions clear upon entry to the United States, but still aligned

with the Democratic Party, even though he vocally opposed the institution of slavery.

Moreover, Emmet became the Irish talisman of the Democratic Party, attracting the

scorn and ire of Federalists. One of the most important cases fought by Emmet was

the 1805 manumission case against a ship captain. It was also one of the most

stunning victories that the New York Manumission Society had in its 66-year

existence.[379] Written on Emmet's cenotaph outside St. Paul's Church in New York

City, it reads "vindicating the rights of man in the person of the African; and that he

closed his brilliant career while defending a most humane bequest to superannuated

seamen; having commenced and concluded his transatlantic life in service of liberty

and charity."[380] Emmet fought for the release of slaves and against the institution as a

whole. This is how he believed slavery should be treated. Much like Emmet, William

Sampson played a key role in the manumission of slaves in the United States.

William Sampson is remembered as the leading lawyer of the United Irishmen

through the 1790s. In 1798, he was arrested and forced to leave Ireland. His ship was

wrecked off the coast of Wales and he then traveled to Portugal. In Lisbon he was

imprisoned once more and forced to travel to Hamburg. As Napoleon's forces

brought warfare ever closer to Hamburg, he tried, unsuccessfully, to petition for his

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[379] Landy, "Society of United Irishmen,"193-94.
[380] Emmet, *Memoirs* I, 543.

return to Ireland. Instead, he left Europe for New York City in 1806.[381] On slavery,

we learn much of his position—his rejection of the institution— in the court records

of an interracial marriage trial, but in his memoirs, he did little to express how he felt

about the institution. Sampson's first major case was in 1809 where he defended a

Black mother and her child who were brutally beaten by their slaveowner, Amos

Broad, and his wife. Sampson was successfully able to get both Betty, the mother,

and her child, Sarah, manumitted.[382] Transcribed from the courtroom, Sampson is

adjudged to have said that:

> What then are this man's crimes? Wherein are they compatible with mercy?
> Where was mercy when he scourged the naked slave, and turned her out to
> smart, exposed to the keen frost? Who talked of pity then, when she lay
> naked, prostate at his feet: where he stood over her, his sleeves tucked up, his
> scourges in his hand. A ruthless, barbarous, brutal executioner? Where was
> compassion, when he kept the shuddering wretch beneath the biting blast of
> searching winds: and fearing that her sufferings were too gentle, drenched her
> first with water and then kept her till the piercing breath of winter had crusted
> her shivering limbs with icicles.[383]

Sampson very clearly saw the humanity of Betty and also the brutality of slavery. A

prominent lawyer in New York City, Sampson, like Emmet, worked tirelessly often

on behalf of black defendants and was a sincere opponent of slavery. In fact, his

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[381] William Sampson, *Memoirs of William Sampson: An Irish Exile* (London, UK: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1832), 277-289.

[382] The trial of Amos Broad and his wife, on three several indictments for assaulting and beating Betty, a slave, and her little female child Sarah, aged three years : had at the Court of Special Sessions of the Peace, held in and for the city and county of New-York, at the City-hall, of the said city, on Tuesday, the 28th day of February, 1809 : present, the Hon. Pierre C. Van Wyck, recorder, Peter Mesier and James Drake, Esquires, aldermen : to which is added, the motion of counsel in Mr. Broad's behalf, to mitigate the imprisonment of his person, and impose a fine, and the reply of Mr. Sampson : also, the prayer or invocation of Mr. Broad, to the court, for mercy, and the address of His Honor, the recorder, on passing sentence on the defendants, Library of Congress (LC).

[383] *The Trial of Amos Broad and his wife,* 20.

defense of an interracial marriage between a black woman and a white man indicates how progressive he was. On the issue he noted that, ''every man must follow his own pleasure . . . neither philosophy nor religion have forbade such mixtures.''[384] Through this period, Sampson subscribed to the Democratic Party, perhaps through necessity and expectation, but as time wore on, he chose to disassociate himself. It is possible to speculate that slavery may have had a part to play in this separation. While these two individuals were visible in their rejection of slavery, organizations linked to the United Irishmen also made clear their feelings on the institution of slavery.

Two organizations founded by members of the United Irishmen in New York City, and dedicated in part to providing employment opportunity to Irish migrants, gave a similar assessment of slavery. The Hibernian Provident Society, which in the opinion of David Wilson was essentially a wing of the United Irishmen, would illustrate this assessment during its yearly celebration of St. Patrick's Day.[385] At the end of the celebration, there were several toasts that called for the separation of Ireland from the British Empire. The comparison was made between the African slave and that of the Irish laborer and from there a toast called for an American society where "negro slavery, that degrading remnant of colonial dependence be speedily abolished."[386] Likewise, the Juvenile Sons of Erin, another organization affiliated by membership to the United Irishmen, painted a similar picture in 1809 when celebrating St. Patrick's Day. As part of the succession of toasts, the chair

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[384] Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*: *African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 110.
[385] Wilson, *United Irishmen,* 64.
[386] Crimmins, *St. Patrick's Day*, 117.

called for ''Universal Emancipation—May despotism and oppression forever cease—May the poor enslaved Africans return to their former joys and may all find protection under the fostering wing of liberty.''[387] For United Irishmen such as Emmet and Sampson, as well as organizations like the Juvenile Sons of Erin, slavery was an unconscionable ill on society. Similarly, Hamilton Rowan, when planning a trip into the interior of the United States from Philadelphia in 1796, wrote a letter to his wife, Sarah, stating his intentions; "I will go into the woods . . . but I will not kill Indians, nor keep slaves."[388] While these sentiments were noble, for every United Irishman who rejected slavery, there were many more who partook, whether grudgingly, or acceptingly, of the institution. The majority of the United Irishmen understood slavery as a legal institution of the United States and had little interest in its abolition.

Slavery and United Irish Ambivalence in Exile

If Thomas Addis Emmet represents the occasion for the rejection of slavery in the United States, then Mathew Carey personifies its acceptance by the United Irish community. Mathew Carey was born in Ireland 1760 and fled to the United States when threatened with reprisal for criticizing the British government. While he was not present in Ireland during the 1790s, he maintained a strong commitment to the United Irish cause.[389] First aligned with the Federalist Party, Carey joined Jefferson's

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[387] Crimmins, *St. Patrick's Day*, 161.
[388] Rowan, *Autobiography of A. H. Rowan, Esq.* 291.
[389] James N. Green, *Mathew Carey: Publisher and Patriot* (Philadelphia, PA: Library Company of Philadelphia, 1985), 1-10.

Democratic Republicans in response to the introduction of the Jay Treaty, which he

was highly critical of. By the 1820s, Mathew Carey, along with Henry Clay, became

the nation's most significant advocate of the "American System," that is, the end to

the over-reliance on the Atlantic trade system, and a move to unify the American

North, South, and West into a more effective trade network: the "Empire of

Liberty."[390] Carey favored a transition to economic nationalism that maintained

slavery in states in Virginia, but pushed for greater industrialization, a move away

from plantations, and the introduction instead of large factories. Slavery in this

domestic economy was an unavoidable obstacle, according to Carey. In contrast,

Denis Driscol believed that immigration would eventually make slavery redundant.[391]

Moreover, Carey wrote on any push for the abolition of slavery: "Can the rest of the

Union submit to be bullied into their terms by a bare majority of less than a fourth

part of the white population of the country?"[392] He did not believe that the small

minority of Americans who were abolitionists should be able to determine the future

direction the country took. Both Clay and Carey proclaimed that in order to align the

economy with Jeffersonian ideals, it required the expansion of the nation-state in its

economic role and the consolidation of the agricultural and manufacturing industries,

which were split along north-south lines. These discussions are seen most starkly

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[390] Maurice J. Bric, "Mathew Carey, Ireland, and the "Empire for Liberty" in America," *Early American Studies* 11, no. 3 (2013): 403-30. See also Andrew Shankman, "Neither Infinite Wretchedness nor Positive Good: Mathew Carey and Henry Clay on Political Economy and Slavery during the long 1820s," in *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 247.
[391] Michael Durey, "Irish Deism and Jefferson's Republic," 75.
[392] Mathew Carey, *A Calm Address to the People of the Eastern States, on the Subject of the Representation of Slaves: The Representation in the Senate: and the Hostility to Commerce, Ascribed to the Southern States* (Philadelphia, PA: M. Carey & Son, 1814), 41.

during the push for statehood for Missouri in the late 1810s. Carey's promotion of white equality and American nationalism purposefully stressed Black inferiority, much as Bacon's Rebellion in 1688 did, which would lead to the consolidation of white identity in the American colonies.[393] Moreover, Carey wrote that "the free negroes are justly considered as a great political evil in the states they chiefly inhabit; they are depraved in their morals, debased in intellect, and unqualified to perform the duties of citizen."[394] On the statehood of Missouri, Carey contended that "the peace and prosperity of eight millions of freemen and Christians, may (not) rightfully be sacrificed to promote the welfare of a million and a half slave."[395] Through the 1820s, Carey spent much time convincing Americans in eastern states that slavery was necessary to the interests of northern merchants and industrialists, but at the same time vouching to Southern slaveholders that a more active federal government involvement in the economy did not imply a greater chance for the abolition of slavery. To avoid the "proletarianization" that was occurring, Americans need to deny Black freedom.[396] While Carey saw slavery as necessary to the continued prosperity of the nation, others saw a peaceful relationship with slavery as essential to the continued survival of Irish migrants.

William Duane had much the same attitude as Carey. Evidenced during the

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[393] James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press, 2012); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*, Volume One (New York City, NY: Verso, 1994).

[394] A Pennsylvanian [Mathew Carey], *Considerations on the Impropriety and Inexpediency of Renewing the Missouri* (Philadelphia, PA: M. Carey & Son, 1820). 54.

[395] A Pennsylvanian [Mathew Carey], *Considerations on the Impropriety and Inexpediency of Renewing the Missouri*, 55.

[396] Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman (eds.), *Slavery's Capitalism*: *A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 26.

1812 War, Duane showed how Black slaves could be used against white Americans, just as the English had used Protestants against Catholics in Ireland: "It is the policy of the British in every part of the globe. They have corrupted and arrayed the Whites of N(orth) Eng(land), against the Whites South of them – they have arrayed the white Protestant against the white Catholic in Ireland . . . the blacks of St. Domingo against the Whites . . . Mahomedans against Hindus in India."[397] Duane believed that "slavery is congenial to the habits of thinking and to the condition of the actual Africans and their immediate descendants.[398] As such, he believed that Black slaves should be allowed into the military with the veneer of equality, but without any sincere intention to make them more equal, noting: "I have known Africans of highly cultivated minds, I never found but one who was not content to be an external imitator of the manners and habits of white men."[399] In this function, and according to Duane, Black slaves would be content imitating white soldiers, rather than actually seeking some equality in society. Later in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, Duane gave his further rationale for why Black slaves should be allowed to serve in the army, "to employ them as soldiers would be to save so many of the whites."[400] For Duane, Black slave soldiers could be used as fodder to the benefit of white soldiers. Elsewhere, the betterment of whites in society was used as justification to maintain slavery.

Not all societies affiliated with the United Irishmen accepted the institution of

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[397] William Duane to Thomas Jefferson, August 11, 1814, *Letters of William Duane*, 384, Massachusetts Historical Society. (MSP).
[398] William Duane to Thomas Jefferson, August 11, 1814, *Letters of William Duane*, 384, (MSP).
[399] William Duane to Thomas Jefferson, August 11, 1814, *Letters of William Duane*, 384, (MSP).
[400] William Duane to Thomas Jefferson, August 11, 1814, *Letters of William Duane*, 384, (MSP).

slavery in the United States, and some rejected it openly, but generally speaking, when it came to securing labor for Irish migrants, the issue was swept under the carpet, only to rear its head when Daniel O'Connell called upon the Irish-American community in the 1830s and 1840s.[401] Until then, the scramble for work meant that slavery, complicated by political affiliations and expectations, was further convoluted by the necessity to provide employment for the laboring poor. Much as in the American northern cities, where economic conditions affected United Irish racial ideology, in the south, where slaveholding was burgeoning, the United Irishmen became active participants and benefactors of the slave trade.

This attitude, where the Irish laborer is central, was supplemented by the Shamrock Society of New York, an Irish-American organization with the prerogative to improve living conditions of Irish migrants within the United States. Notably, Thomas O'Connor, the editor of the *Shamrock* newspaper that carried slave ads in 1810, was heavily involved in this organization. In a letter written by the Shamrock Society in 1817 for newly arrived, or prospective Irish immigrants, O'Connor relayed the labor opportunities available in the United States, particularly in the south "where negro slaves are the only, or principal laborers, some white men think it disreputable to follow the plough."[402] However, the piece continued by noting, "far be it from us to cast censure on our southern neighbors; yet, in choosing a settlement, we would have emigrants take slavery, with all other circumstances, into their

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[401] See Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery, Irish Freedom: Abolition, Immigrant Citizenship, and the Transatlantic Movement for Irish Repeal* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2010).

[402] *Hints to Emigrants from Europe who intend to make a permanent residence in the United States,* (New York, NY: Shamrock Society of New York, 1817), New York Historical Society.

consideration.''[403] The Shamrock Society tried to avoid being too critical of their

southern neighbors and while they were accepting of the institution, they suggested

that perhaps northern, non-slaveholding states were a better option for incoming Irish

migrants. While some United Irishmen tried to avoid discussions over slaveholding,

others encouraged Black repatriation to Africa.

      The repatriation of slaves to Africa became part of the vernacular in American

society during the Early Republic. Many Americans saw this idea of colonization as a

real solution to the "African problem."[404] African repatriation was promoted by the

Shamrock, though, where it stated that "the project of forming a colony of free blacks

on the coast of Africa....Conducted with the good faith and honest views which guide

every view of the American government, the happiest results might be expected. It

would carry civilization among the uncultivated natives of Africa.''[405] The editor,

Thomas O'Connor, continued by stating the reasons why "general freedom" had not

been implemented was that "it would have taken place long since in the southern

States were it not for the apprehension that it would be dangerous to the public peace

in the eastern States."[406] The opinion taken by the editor was that this scenario would

put white citizens in danger, rather than the slaves themselves. This endorsement of

African repatriation was indicative of the greater trend evident within the *Shamrock*,

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[403]*Hints to Emigrants from Europe who intend to make a permanent residence in the United States,* (New York, NY: Shamrock Society of New York, 1817), New York Historical Society.

[404] Andrew Clegg, *The Price of Liberty*: *African Americans and the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005); Marie Tyler-McGraw, *An African Republic: Black and White Virginians in the Making of Liberia* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[405] *Shamrock*, Jan 11, 1817.

[406] *Shamrock*, Jan 11, 1817.

in which slavery was addressed, usually in a theoretical framework, but a solution was never fully developed. The discussion of colonization, in the opinion of the *Shamrock* was intended "not to deliberate upon, or consider at all, any question of emancipation, or that was connected with the abolition of slavery."[407] Colonization would take away the "problem" of slavery out of the United States by simply sweeping it under the rug. This solution would in theory offer greater employment opportunity for arriving Irish immigrants. For some United Irishmen, slavery was no issue to condemn or avoid, but rather, an institution that they could become actively and financially involved in.

The United Irishmen and Slaveholding in Exile

For every Thomas Addis Emmet who rejected slavery entirely and was physically repulsed by the institution of slavery, there were many more who openly became involved in the trade. In 1810, the *Shamrock* carried slave advertisements. The response from many subscribers in the Irish-American community was telling: subscribers wrote to the *Shamrock* remonstrating them for publishing such an advertisement. One such reaction from a writer, using a pseudonym, invoked the memory of Thomas McCabe, one of the United Irishmen who kept the slave trade from entering the ports of Belfast. The writer in response to the advertisement wrote that "Ireland justly boasts of never having participated in the slave trade, and I hope

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[407] *Shamrock*, Jan 18, 1817.

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one of her sons in this land of freedom will countenance this dishonorable trade."[408]

While the advertisement of slaves in an Irish-American newspaper affiliated with the

exiled United Irishmen seems anomalous, in reality it mirrors the different opinion

that many Irishmen and women held to the institution throughout the United States.

While the majority of prominent United Irish exiles found themselves in

northern US locations, large numbers found their way aboard steerage to the

American south. According to the *Salem Gazette,* some four hundred United Irishmen

arrived in Norfolk, Virginia in 1800, "whence they quickly dispersed into the

surrounding countryside."[409] Of those who decided to stay in the south, many became

slaveholders. One such example is James Bones, an Antrim rebel turned Georgia

linen merchant, who by the 1820s owned at least fifteen slaves.[410] In a similar vein,

Anthony Campbell, a United Irishman in Natchez, Mississippi, posted a runaway

slave ad in 1819, noting that the culprit was punished for theft, to which was added

that "the scars had not yet healed."[411] In South Carolina, the United Irishmen were

most visible of all the southern states. Charleston provides us an excellent example of

the influx of United Irishmen into the area in the years after 1798. The foundations of

the Hibernian Society lay in an earlier stock of Scotch-Irish settlers but was inspired

by the political refugees entering into Charleston's port in the years after 1798. On St.

Patrick's Day 1799, eight of these Irish men founded the society. They were John S.

Adams, Edward Courtnay, James Hunter, William Hunter, Thomas MacKean, James

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[408] *Shamrock*, Dec 29, 1810.
[409] *Salem Gazette*, September18, 1798.
[410] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 45.
[411] Brundage, *Irish Nationalists in America*, 45.

Quinn, and Andrew Smylie. The function of the twice monthly meetings was to "converse and contribute toward the fund to relieve distressed emigrants. Between 1791 and 1805, 179 Irish migrants were allowed entry into the port of Charleston, and assuming they stayed in South Carolina, would be naturalized as American citizens. Immigration legislation dictated that "That any alien, being a free white person and a minor, at the age of 21 years, and who shall have continued to reside therein…may after he arrives at the age of twenty one years, and after he shall resided five years within the United States."[412] One curious example of those who entered into Charleston in 1798 was William Broadfoot, who arrived from Galway, Ireland, but likely of Scottish descent, on April 2nd, 1798. By the 1820s, Broadfoot would become one of the most well-known slave merchants in the Caribbean and the American south. One example is the sale of "231 prime CONGO NEGROES," published in the *Charleston City Gazette*, on December 25, 1805. The sale of these Black slaves was orchestrated by Gibson and Broadfoot, a company co-founded by William Broadfoot.[413] Elsewhere in North America, United Irishmen availed of slavery to furnish their labor needs.

Among those who used slave labor was Harman Blennerhassett. Blennerhassett joined the United Irishmen in 1793 when they were less radical and dedicated more to reform politics. In 1794 he married his niece, Margaret Agnew. In 1796, worried by the radical route the United Irishmen had taken, but also to hide his incestuous marriage, the Blennerhassetts migrated to the United States. Due to his

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[412] This was codified in legislation first in 1802 and then in the 1824 Naturalization Act.
[413] *Charleston City Gazette*, December 5, 1805.

large fortune that he had inherited in Ireland, he became an attractive funder for

Aaron Burr during his unsuccessful incursion into Texas in 1806. His mansion along

the Ohio river was plundered and he was arrested and imprisoned in the Virginia

Penitentiary in 1806. Blennerhassett was only released once Burr had been acquitted

in September 1807. Blennerhassett never returned to the mansion and there are

suggestions that slaves of his were responsible for accidentally setting the house

ablaze.[414] From here, the Blennerhassetts moved to Port Gibson Mississippi and used

what little was left of their money to purchase a cotton plantation and several slaves,

although this too was unsuccessful. Both in Mississippi and West Virginia, the

Blennerhassetts used slavery consistently for labor purposes. The Blennerhassetts

eventually moved back to Europe in the 1820s but having lost their entire fortune.

The experience of Hugh Wilson is likewise a similar story of exile and

eventual slaveholding. Wilson was born in 1772. He found employment in a

mercantile house in Dublin and was in correspondence with Oliver Bond, one of the

leading members of the United Irishmen there. He was arrested in Cork for suspected

involvement in the United Irishmen and transported under guard to Dublin. He was

imprisoned in Fort George, like many leading United Irishmen, and when released

moved to New York, much like Thomas Addis Emmet and William MacNeven.

Moving to New Orleans, Wilson embarked on a career moreover of mercantile

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[414] William Harrison Salford, *The Blennerhassett Papers: Embodying the Private Journal of Harman Blennerhassett, and the Hitherto Unpublished Correspondence of Burr, Alston, Comfort Tyler, Devereaux, Dayton, Adair, Miro, Emmett, Theodosia Burr Alston, Mrs. Blennerhassett, and Others, Their Contemporaries; Developing the Purposes and Aims of Those Engaged in the Attempted Wilkinson and Burr Revolution; Embracing Also the First Account of the "Spanish Association of Kentucky," and a Memoir of Blennerhassett* (Cincinnati, OH: R. Clarke, 1891), 308.

business, which eventually led him to St. Croix, marriage to a Danish woman, and the ownership of a sugar plantation on which he owned several slaves. He died in 1829. Slavery would later be abolished in St. Croix in 1833.[415] For the United Irishmen who were exiled to slaveholding states and the Caribbean, such as Broadfoot, Wilson, and the Blennerhassetts, the ownership of slaves was a common practice and one openly accepted. But, for some United Irishmen, especially in Jamaica, their radical past meant that they were abolitionists in the eyes of slaveholders, whether they accepted the institution or not.

Coda: Jamaica, Slavery, and the United Irishmen, 1798-1800
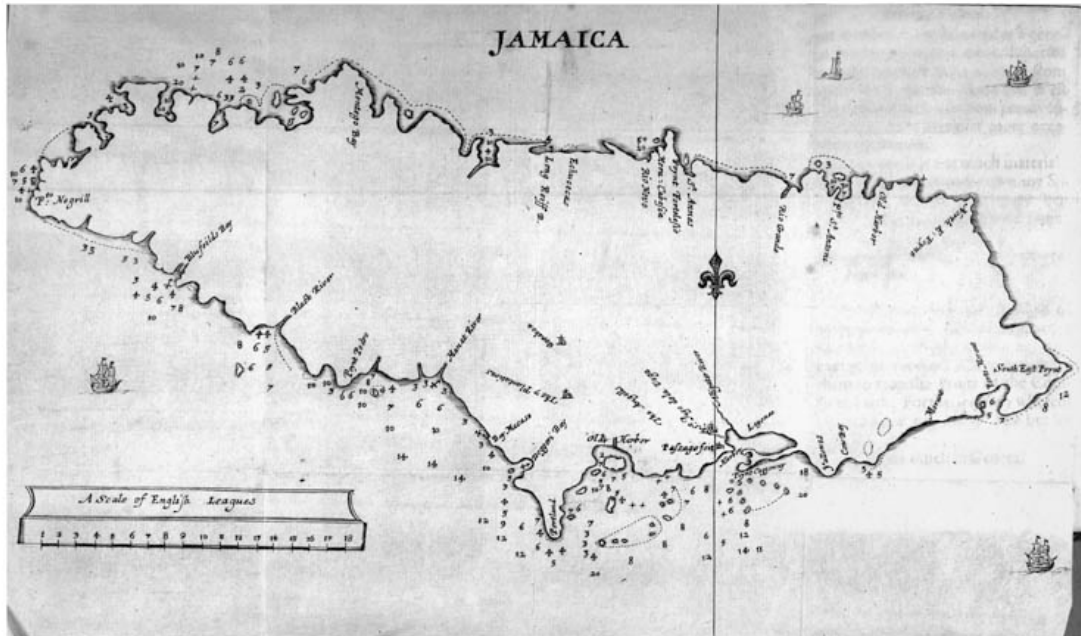
Jamaica, 1799, National Archives of Jamaica

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[415] Richard Robert Madden, *The United Irishmen: Their Lives and Times*, Volume 3, 250.

The fear of United Irishmen emancipating slaves in Jamaica and bringing

rebellion to the island was a real one for white Jamaican slaveholders, merchants, and

local authorities. The Haitian Revolution invoked images of slaves rising up against

their white masters and the existence of United Irishmen on the island heightened

these fears. In Jamaica, British officials already had a difficult relationship with many

of the Maroons there. Since 1655, when the English crown wrested control of

Jamaica from the Spanish, the Maroons had been a thorn in the side of white planters.

Upon leaving the island, Spanish planters freed their slaves, armed them, and set them

on a course of guerilla warfare that endured through the eighteenth century.[416]

Between 1655 and 1800, two maroon wars broke out, the first lasting between 1725

and 1740, and the second between 1795 and 1796. In the years following this failed

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[416] For a greater discussion of the Maroons, see Carey Robinson, *The Fighting Maroons of Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: William Collins and Sangster, 1969); Jean Fouchard, *Les Marrons de la Liberty* (Paris: Éditions de l'École, 1972); Ruma Chopra, *Almost Home: Maroons between Slavery and Freedom in Jamaica, Nova Scotia, and Sierra Leone;* David Geggus, "The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellions," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 44, no. 2 (April 1, 1987): 274–99;
Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, "Maroons of Jamaica" in *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Barbara Klamon Kopytoff, "The Early Political Development of Jamaican Maroon Societies," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (April 1978): 287; Mavis C. Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal* (Trenton, N.J., 1990); Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*; Alvin O. Thompson, "Gender and Marronage in the Caribbean," *Journal of Caribbean* History 39, no. 2 (2005): 262-89; Kenneth M. Bilby, *True-Born Maroons* (Gainesville, Fla: University Press of Florida, 2005); Bernard Marshall, *Slavery, Law and Society in the British Windward Islands, 1763-1823* (Kingston, Jamaica: Arawak, 2007). Many otherwise seminal studies have underplayed the Maroons' contribution to Jamaican intercultural. See for instance Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Kingston, Jamaica: Clarendon Press, 1971), introd. by B. W. Higman, ix-xxiii; Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1997). For the differing registers of whiteness in the eighteenth-century Caribbean, see Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003).

Maroon uprising and the deportation of hundreds of Maroons, the United Irishmen arrived in Jamaica.

Three years after the transportation of the Trelawny Maroons, and in close proximity to the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland, vessels started to arrive in Jamaica carrying United Irishmen to serve in British forces abroad. Specifically, their jobs were often to catch runaway slaves and put down the slew of slave uprisings that had occurred between 1798 and 1800. Writing from Kingston, Jamaica to her brother, the Reverend William Miller in Ireland, the letter eventually found its way to the hands of Lord Castlereagh, who explained the details of the correspondence. It starts by describing the "alarming account of the political state of the island." The sister of Miller, living in Kingston, witnessed "a Vast number of United Irishmen, transported from this kingdom, have been landed there, and incautiously drafted into the regiments on that service." While Miller's sister, who was unnamed, was absolutely correct that United Irishmen were transported to Jamaica and impressed into the navy, it is not obvious at first why she assumed they are United Irishmen. She continued that "as soon as they got arms into their hands, they deserted and fled into the mountains, where they have been joined by large bodies of the natives and such of the French as were in the island." By natives, it is possible to deduce that she means Jamaican Maroons who were once slaves. Not only did these United Irishmen escape from their punishment, but "there have already been some engagements between this party and the King's troops; several have been wounded and killed on both sides." Miller's sister also detailed how a fear of French infiltration and the abolition of

slavery proved a fear for Jamaica's wealthy, white population. Finally, she wrote that

"at the time of the evacuation of St Domingo, several French families followed the

other fugitives to Jamaica, and several of them have been active agents in promoting

among the natives a spirit of discontent and a wish for revolution.[417]

While the details given above suggest the existence of United Irishmen in

Jamaica who mutinied in response to their conditions and fled into the mountains

alongside Jamaican Maroons and escaped slaves, it is impossible to confirm this,

contrary to claims made by historians.[418] Moreover, extensive archival research

produced little evidence beyond this letter to prove conclusively if it occurred or not.

What is evident from this text and from others during the period, is that the United

Irishmen were conceived of by local officials and slave owners as comparable to

French Jacobins in their intentions, much as they were in Philadelphia and

Newfoundland; that was the abolition of slavery in Jamaica and the promulgation of

insurrection akin to that occurring in Haiti. Moreover, similarities between the Irish

and Jamaican Maroons and slaves in the Caribbean were highlighted during the

1790s.

John Sweeney, an acquaintance of Thomas Russell, noted on the similarities

between the Irish and Black Caribbean populations in that "the poor wretches of this

country are reduced to state of degradation below that of the negroes of the West

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[417] Robert Stewart, *Memoir and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry* (London, UK: Henry Colburn, 1848), 417.
[418] See Rediker & Linebaugh, *The Many Headed Hydra*, 279; "Kevin Whelan, "Liberty, Freedom and the Green Atlantic," (Unpublished), 21-22.

Indies.''[419] Likewise, George Cooper, an English student of law on visiting the West

Indies and Ireland suggested that "the condition of the West Indian negro is a paradise

to it (the Irish). The slave in our colonies has meat to eat and distilled spirits to drink,

whilst the life of the Irish peasant is that of a savage who feeds upon roots and

milk.''[420] It is not surprising therefore, that at a time when both Jamaicans and the

Irish rebelled, and with such seemingly similar conditions, merchants and

slaveowners might be wary of their interaction in Jamaica at a time of political

turmoil. To them, the experiences of slaves and the Irish could warrant cooperation in

attacking colonial power in Jamaica.

On the political developments in the Caribbean, the United Irishmen James

Napper Tandy took a strong line against the suppression of the Haitian Revolution in

1799 when he wrote that "we are all of the same family, black and white, the work of

the same creator.''[421] In the same vein, James Orr's work, "Toussaint's Farewell to St

Domingo" empathizes with the Haitian Revolution's collapse as a critique of colonial

intervention around the globe:

> Can ye look without grief, on your land's devastation?
> Can ye think, without rage, on your foe's usurpation?
> Are ye men? Are ye soldiers? And shall the great nation.
> Enslave this, our small one? —No! curs'd be her chain.[422]

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[419] John Sweeney, *Address to the Patriots of Imokilly* (Dublin, 1978).
[420] George Cooper*, Letters on the Irish nation written during a visit to that kingdom in the Autumn of the year 1799* (London: J. Davis, 1800), 72-3.
[421] J. N. Tandy, *Letters to the Irish nation written during a visit to that kingdom in the autumn of the year 1799* (London, 1800), 72-73.
[422] James Orr, *The Posthumous works of James Orr of Ballycarry with a sketch of his* life (Belfast, 1817).

While Jamaica did not experience the upheaval that Haiti did, it did experience Maroon uprisings in 1795 and 1796 as well as small slave insurrections in 1798. By 1798, the atmosphere in Jamaica had become tense for a variety of reasons. The Haitian Revolution had caused Jamaican planters to become wary of armed slave uprisings. Moreover, many of the suspicions of Black insurrection were confirmed as early as April 1797. Writing to the Jamaican Governor, Lord Balcarres on April 28, 1798, two white planters from the Parish of St. Elisabeth described that "in consequences of an alarming intelligence this day received, of a party of fifty, or sixty runaway slaves, well-armed, and coming out of the woods on a mountain settlement, lying about two miles from Oxford estate in this parish, killing a free man of colour and completely destroying the plantation."[423] Simon Taylor, one of the most prominent planters in Jamaica, spoke in detail about the threat posed by a slave uprising when writing to Lord Balcarres in 1798, "I am sorry to tell you that what I have long suspected and dreaded seems to be coming on rapidly, indeed from the encouragement of the negroes to rise in rebellion"[424] Between 1798 and 1803 these fears remained.

These anxieties were exacerbated by the arrival of United Irishmen onto the island. The wife of Governor Nugent—Lady Nugent—gave an insightful glimpse into the fears felt by the establishment when it came to cooperation between United Irishmen and Black slaves. Lady Nugent in an entry on December 13, 1803 wrote that

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[423] John White and Humphrey Colhoun, April 28, 1798. St Elisabeth, Black River, The National Archives of Jamaica.
[424] Extract of a letter received from Simon Taylor Esq, Kingston Jamaica, May 26, 1798. The National Archives of Jamaica.

"this together with the rumours all day, of an understanding between the French prisoners and the free blacks, and their tampering with the negro slavves, was indeed most frightful." Here Nugent laid out the most pressing concern: the influence of French radicals on their slaves. She continued by noting that "before we went to bed, General Nugent sent to the officer of the guard, and made enquiry respecting the two sentries, placed at the front door of the King's house, during prayers, and found they were Irish convicts, of notoriously bad character." Reading between the lines, Lady Nugent was alluding to their characterization as United Irishmen. The same language is used to describe United Irishmen in Newfoundland as "notoriously disaffected."[425] The rebellion of the United Irishmen was detailed often the *Royal Gazette* through the 1790s, and even detailed attempted mutinies they were involved in throughout the Atlantic world. On July 6, 1799, the *Royal Gazette* detailed the mutiny that the United Irishmen had allegedly fomented in Gibraltar: "a most wicked and treacherous plot was fortunately discovered, a few days before it was put into execution. It appears that a party of the United Irishmen, that surrendered at Vinegar Hill with the French General Humbert, was sent to Gibraltar to recruit the 18th Regiment." The segment continued to explain that "those men having seduced a part of the troops stationed there, to join in their infamous designs, had agreed to rise upon the rest of the troops, to murder them and their officers, and to deliver that important garrison to the enemy."[426] For the slave owners and British officials in Jamaica, they were aware of

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[425] Lady Maria Nugent, *Lady Nugent's Journal,* 242.
[426] *Royal Gazette*, Kingston, July 6, 1799.

who the United Irishmen were and moreover, they were relayed occasions of uprising and upheaval they caused around the Atlantic world.

At the same time as the United Irishmen arrived into the popular imagination of white Jamaicans, desertions started to become a prominent feature of British military life in Jamaica. It is likely that many of the United Irishmen forced into service in the West Indies were sent to Jamaica. Often recruits were forcibly interned into the military for the more hazardous areas of service. For the British military, the harsh climate of Jamaica would prove disastrous, and prompt mass desertion. Significant numbers of the United Irishmen, following the failed rebellion of 1798, were sent throughout the British Empire, including the West Indies. One such example is Andrew Bryson, whom we have already met, who had his death sentence commuted and was sentenced to twenty years of service in the "condemned regiments'' of the British navy in the Caribbean.[427] The conditions within these regiments and the high percentages of death meant that desertion was very common. This is detailed in a letter, dated June 6, 1798, from the captain of the Black Shot: Black soldiers in the British military in Jamaica. Lauchlan McLaine, the captain of the Black Shot regiment, wrote to Major-General McMurdo, that "five of my men deserted me, in a most cowardly manner last night when I expected to come into action with the rebels'' and that "runaways in Windsor in Trelawny, number about 43. He has reason also to think that there is another party, under the command of

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[427] Miller, *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan*, 641.

Peter, a slave of Mr Francklyn's who was out in the maroon insurrection."[428]

Although desertions were rife, this is one of the few examples of a detailed desertion

being discussed in the Jamaican Legislature. By 1799, the Jamaican House Assembly

decided upon a ransom for every deserter caught in Jamaica, with a "reward of

seventeen pounds to any person or persons with any information of deserter from his

majesty's ships and vessels of war." There are several accounts of inhabitants taking

advantage of this offer. Moreover, the apprehension of deserters became endemic and

a logistical problem "whereas the greatest inconvenience has arisen to his majesty's

service from the difficulty of the disposing and forwarding deserters from the several

regiments on this establishment, who have been apprehended in various parts of this

island."[429] Needless to say, desertions were a significant problem for the British

military in Jamaica.

As a result of the desertions, British officials in Jamaica instituted strict rules

on ships taking passengers from the island, likely to avoid the spreading of disruptive

people. In a proclamation made on September 21, 1799, the General Assembly laid

out what these restrictions look like. It read "that no captain, master, or commander of

any ship or vessel, or other person whatsoever, shall entertain, hide on shore, or

attempt to carry off this island, either as a soldier or a passenger, or upon any other

pretence (sic) whatsoever, any soldier of any of the independent companies; or any

white person indented or hired."[430] The last line in particular speaks to those who

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[428]Lauchlan McLaine, to McMurdo, Pantre Pant, June 6, 1799. National Archives of Jamaica.
[429] General Orders, March 2, 1800, *General Orders*, National Archives of Jamaica.
[430] *Proclamation, Jamaican General Assembly*, September 12, 1799, National Archives of Jamaica, (NAJ).

were impressed into the British military or ordered to be transported into the military from Ireland to Jamaica.

Although the United Irishmen and the Jamaican Maroons may never have met, it seems pertinent to highlight how their struggles against British rule were wholly linked. This connection has been alluded to, but never fully delivered, which, perhaps, further research will uncover. What is evident then is that even if an anti-colonial United Irish-Maroon body did not exist, the terrifying specter of it was projected by the Jamaican planter class, which resonated through the personal diary of Lady Nugent and across the Atlantic Ocean into the hands of Lord Castlereagh. The construction of an imagined deviant ran parallel with developments politically in the Caribbean, and it fostered the portrayal of the United Irishmen as international insurgents, perhaps without much justification. The United Irishmen existed in Jamaica, if only as a figment of the planter classes' imagination. In their imagination, they were intent aiding and abetting the downfall of slavery on the island.

Conclusion

The United Irishmen understood slavery in a variety of ways, which ran along a continuum from outright rejection to active involvement. They believed that, seen from Ireland, slavery was an ill of society. Moreover, in Ireland they were also able to make the case for the similarities between Irish and Black slavery. While in exile, however, the relationship that the United Irishmen had to slavery changed dramatically. In New York City, United Irishmen like William Sampson and Thomas

Addis Emmet did everything in their power to attack the institution of slavery through their legal work. In Philadelphia, Mathew Carey looked on as he saw slavery start to tear the nation apart. What he wished for was acceptance of slavery and for the country to move on in a cooperative manner. In Charleston, United Irishmen like William Broadfoot saw the utility in becoming involved in the slave trade. Up until 1807 with the closing of the Atlantic slave trade, it was a lucrative business to be involved in. Finally, in Jamaica, United Irishmen were alleged to have aided Jamaican Maroons and runaway slaves. While difficult to confirm, what is evident is that white slaveholders and the local authorities conflated them with upheaval and abolition. In all cases, the political ideology of the United Irishmen shows a splintering effect. Exile changed how the United Irishmen understood slavery and while the racial politics of the United Irishmen in Ireland may have shown the veneer of progressivism, in exile, these tendencies were scattered, just as they had been, to the four winds.

Chapter Five: "Sons of Erin, Assemble!":

Masculine Identity, the Exclusion of Women, and the United Irishmen, 1795-1814

Hibernian Society of Philadelphia (1799)
Library Company of Philadelphia

<u>Introduction</u>

The Hibernian Society, founded in 1771, served to welcome Irish migrants

into American ports and soften their entry into American society. By 1800, their

membership rolls swelled with United Irishmen, and those sympathetic to the

cause.[431] Their symbol was a ship on the horizon, with four women waiting, beside an

Irish harp, welcoming Irish migrants onto American shores. Above was written "E

Pluribus Unum," the national American motto of assimilation, and atop the

outstretched wings of an eagle. Evident in this emblem is the gendered history of the

United Irishmen. The formation of the United Irishmen was often done with the

assistance of revolutionary women, but always at their expense. The manifesto of the

United Irishmen was a statement of liberatory republicanism, composed with

language of the Enlightenment, by men, for the emancipation of Ireland, broadly

defined. The history of the United Irishmen during the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland and

again during the War of 1812 in the United States highlights the political ambitions of

its leadership, stressing the necessity of male, militarized citizenship, with little space

for a female equivalent. In both examples, the masculinity of the United Irishmen was

foregrounded, first to resist subjecthood under the British Empire, and then again in

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[431] The president of the society from 1800 until his death in 1817, Hugh Holmes, had served as an intermediary between Theobald Wolfe Tone and exiled United Irishmen like Hamilton Rowan in the years leading up to the 1798 Rebellion. Mathew Carey would later become secretary of the organization. See *A Brief Account of the Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick: With Biographical Notices of Some of the Members, and Extracts from the Minutes* (Philadelphia, 1844), 79-80.

1812, when the right to American citizenship was at stake. This chapter details how women in the political ideology of the United Irish leadership were used advantageously to guarantee and promote the idea of masculine citizenship without the same benefits being made available to women. This is evident in how the 1798 Rebellion is remembered, but also in how the United Irishmen positioned themselves in relation to the American state during the War of 1812.

At the heart of the political ideology of the United Irishmen was classical republicanism paired with Lockean ideals of government. This ideology stressed that not all members of the Irish population were being represented, and that would be rectified, even with the possibility of armed uprising. This form of classical republicanism was highly gendered in nature, moreover. With it, the United Irishmen were able to set aside their egalitarianism and rely more on the security of fixed gendered roles, to them, for the assumed benefit of the nation.[432] That is, under civic humanism or classical republicanism, the common good was more important than individual advancement. Moreover, virtue was foregrounded as essential, especially for women in these imagined republics. Paired with this was the necessity for the citizen-soldier that was defined by masculine sacrifice for the nation. Men were called upon to protect the feminized nation that had been under the yolk of the British Empire. This is evident in the metaphor of an elderly woman named Hibernia, Erin, or the Shan van Vocht, calling on young men to protect the nation of Ireland.[433] She

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[432] Nancy J. Curtin in "Matilda Tone and Virtuous Republican Femininity," in Nicholas Furlong and Daire Keogh (eds.), *The Women of 1798* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 29.
[433] Shan Van Vocht is an anglicized derivative of an "old, poor woman." In Irish it is "Sean-bhean Bhocht." See Virginia Crossman, "The Shan Van Vocht: Women, Republicanism, and the

called upon her "generous sons of Erin, in manly virtue bold to avenge her wrongs."[434] As such, men were imagined by the United Irishmen as those who would emancipate the nation.

Nancy Curtin notes that United Irishmen were asking for a "major political revolution."[435] This was not, however, a social revolution. While the political platform of the United Irishmen extended to Catholics, Protestant men were the primary focus of emancipation, in particular the merchant classes. The emancipation of women played no tangible role. In spite of the lofty rhetoric of liberation used by the United Irishmen, such ambitions were never meant for women. Men were cast as the visual champions of the movement, with Wolfe Tone's noble suicide or Robert Emmet's speech in Dublin in 1803 playing central roles in how the United Irishmen are remembered.[436] Rarely is Mary Ann McCracken's anti-slavery rhetoric thought of in relation to feats of masculine heroism. Instead, Thomas Russell's ferocious rejection of slavery in Belfast is highlighted. Elizabeth (Betsy) Gray rode into the battle at Ballynahinch on a white pony with flowing standard only hours after her lover and brother were killed by Yeomen. But, Fr John Murphy's successful campaigns against British forces through June 1798 are instead the focus of military masculine might. The history of the 1790s in Ireland is replete with a multitude of

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Commemoration of the 1798 Rebellion," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 22, no. 3 (November 1, 1998): 128–39.

[434] R.R. Madden, *Literary Remains of the United Irishmen of 1798 and Selections from other popular lyrics of their times, with an essay on the authorship of "The Exile of Erin"* (Dublin, 1887), 86.

[435] Nancy Curtin, *The United Irishmen*, 28-29. Curtin, while saying this, is aware of the limited nature of the United Irish pursuits, especially socially. In fact, Curtin notes that the United Irishmen were reluctant to seek assistance from lower classes, noting the "dangerous" potential for such actions.

[436] Robert Emmet's speech entered into the canon of Irish nationalism, "Let no man write my epitaph" until "my country takes her place among the nations of the world."

secret, fraternal organizations that made explicit their ties to a form of masculine revolutionary citizenship, from the United Irishmen to the Ribbonmen and Peep O'Day Boys. From the perspective of British officials though, Irish republicanism was attractive to both men and women. In a letter from a magistrate in Dublin to the secretary of the Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, Thomas Pelham, the former, wrote that "a republic upon the French plan is the object of all the men and women of this part of Ireland (with very few exceptions)."[437] The reality is somewhere in the middle, where some women valued the possibilities of Irish republicanism. For example, women were crucial agents in the recruitment of soldiers, but these efforts were often exaggerated by British officials. One colonel in the British Army exclaimed that Irish women had convinced fifty members of his regiment to desert and take the United Irish oath. [438] While made invisible in well-known sources by prominent United Irishmen, women were alive and well in the society, playing crucial roles in its efforts against the British Empire. While the ambitions of the United Irishmen were never extended to women, that did not stop "rebel daughters" from taking an active role in the tumultuous 1790s.[439]

This chapter begins by detailing the role that women played in the United Irishmen. The history of the United Irishmen shrouds the history of women involved in the movement and downplays their involvement. While it is difficult to provide a comprehensive overview of the role that women played in the United Irishmen

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[437] James Cuff to Thomas Pelham, 13 April 1797, (National Archives Ireland) Rebellion Papers, 620/35/8.
[438] Col. John Bagwell to Dublin Castle, 28 June 1797, (National Archives Ireland) Rebellion Papers, 620/31/167.
[439] Dáire Keogh and Nicholas Furlong, *The Women of 1798*, 7.

outside of Ireland, it is possible to deconstruct the masculinized history of the United

Irishmen, analyzing the stakes of promoting a masculine identity.[440] Moreover, this

chapter puts the masculinity inherent in the Society of United Irishmen in

conversation with fraternal organizations throughout the Atlantic world to stress the

continuities of such identity broadly. As such, this chapter examines the War of 1812,

and posits how the exiled United Irishmen in North America tailored their identity

abroad along the same lines that they fought the British in Ireland: as a masculine

force of citizens, not subjects, with little room for women. This is important because

while 1798 has been studied through a gendered lens, the War of 1812 and the role

that United Irish ideology played in it has not. Whereas on slavery the United

Irishmen where the United Irishmen acted in a variety of ways, on gender and the

inclusion of women in the revolutionary movement, they remained rigid and

exclusionary. When it came to gender and its role in revolutionary ideology, how

revolutionary were the United Irishmen who excluded women from their ranks?

Within this framework of resistance, there was little place for women, other than as

sisters, daughters, mothers and wives.

<u>The Women of '98</u>

From the archives on the 1798 rebellion in Ireland, what is evident is less the

role of women in the events as victims, and more their role as activists, either as

rebels or as loyalists. Moreover, there is alleged to have been a Society of United

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[440] The excellent study *The Women of 1798* does so in an Irish context, bring in Marianne Elliott and Nancy Curtin too.

Irishwomen, started in Belfast in 1796, but there is scant evidence of its existence.[441]

Women were recorded as having taken the oath of the United Irishmen in the years

leading up the rebellion, court-martialed for their part in it, or conversely, giving

information to British officials on the United Irishmen. [442] Contrary to histories

written through the nineteenth century of the United Irishmen, there was open

sympathy and involvement of women in the United Irish cause.[443] After the fall of the

garrison in Wexford Town, women hung shreds of green cloth outside their doors to

welcome the triumphant United Irishmen. Mrs. John Colclough, whose husband had

been imprisoned in the local gaol, "triumphantly entered Wexford which was in

possession of the rebels, in her phaeton, adorned with green.''[444] According to one

account, on entering Wexford Town, and on every door, "there hung a green

bough.[445] Moreover, women were seen to tear up their petticoats that were green, or

indeed dye ones that were white, and hang them outside their homes. Generally,

wearing green was seen as a public declaration of sympathy for the United Irish

cause. Barbara Lett, who was loyal to the British, and looking for sanctuary during

the upheaval in 1798, approached Mary Lett and her daughters who were "decked in

green, the rebel uniform." [446] Lett addressed her in "supplicating language" and "told

her briefly my distressing situation." However, Mary turned to Barbara in "contempt"

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[441] Catriona Kennedy, "'Womanish epistles?' Martha McTier, Female Epistolarity and Late Eighteenth-Century Irish Radicalism," *Women's History Review*, 13:4 (2004): 660.
[442] *Rebellion Papers,* National Archives of Ireland, 620/30/23, 620/30/211, 620/37/231, 620/30/135.
[443] Keogh, *The Women of 1798,* 7.
[444] Catherine O'Connor, "The Experience of Women in the Rebellion of 1798 in Wexford, "The *Past*: *The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, No. 24 (2003): 95-96, Sir R. Musgrave, *Memoirs of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* (Indiana, 1995), 365.
[445] Musgrave, *Memoirs*, 365.
[446] Barbara Lett, "A 1798 Diary by Mrs. Barbara Newtown Lett, Killaligan, Enniscorthy," J. Ranson, (ed.), *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society* 5 (1949):129.

and told her that "she had taken a voluntary oath to them (the United Irishmen) not to admit any persons but friends to the Cause."[447] While the words of Barbara Lett should be taken with a grain of salt, and her interactions understood as between two persons on either side of the rebellion, the details point to women as active participants in the conflict. Another example of how women were involved is that they acted as vital messengers during 1798.

The delivering of messages was imperative for the functioning of the United Irishmen, and soon after 1795, women played an integral function in this role. Members of the United Irishmen recruited women to deliver letters, with notable accounts of this practice being Martha McTier, wife of Samuel McTier, the first president of the Belfast chapter of the United Irishmen.[448] The nineteenth-century historian of the United Irishmen, R. R. Madden, detailed the role of women in smuggling letters, referring to one woman as "Mrs. Risk," writing that "Risk" was "constantly associated with transactions of the United Irishmen which required the services of an emissary in whose intelligence and fidelity entire confidence could be placed."[449] The wife of Oliver Bond was able to smuggle newspapers, letters, and equipment to write all in a pie that she had prepared for the United Irish rebels who

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[447] Lett, "A 1798 Diary," 129.
[448] Catriona Kennedy, "'Womanish Epistles?' Martha McTier, Female Epistolarity and Late Eighteenth-Century Irish Radicalism," *Women's History Review* 13, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 659.
[449] R.R. Madden (1916 reprint) *The United Irishmen, their Lives and Times*, vol. 9, (London: J. Madden, 1842-1845), 31.

had been imprisoned. Importantly, the occasion of Christmas day meant that the guards were less enthused to search the contents of the baked goods.[450]

Samuel Turner, the notorious spy used by the British to infiltrate the United Irishmen described in detail how all correspondence between revolutionary France and the United Irishmen passed through the hands of Lady Pamela Fitzgerald, wife of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, one of the United Irish leaders. First the letters would be sent from Paris to Hamburg, where Pamela lived, then sent on to London through Pamela's sister, Lucy. They were then conveyed to the United Irishmen. Turner, however, became privy to this method of communication and informed the British intelligence promptly.[451] This is not to suggest, though, that women who acted as messengers for the leaders of the United Irishmen were without agency. In the wake of the 1798 rebellion, Sarah Napier, aunt to Lucy Fitzgerald, asked her to seriously consider the rationale behind assisting the United Irishmen in the wake of Edward Fitzgerald's death. Napier wrote that: "women undoubtedly cannot enter into much Consideration on Political subjects without assuming a consequence in those Events which no man can wish his Sister or Daughter to do in pen, leaving her private opinions (which undoubtedly must originate from attachment to individuals) to the mercy of the Post Office." Napier was clearly worried that the actions of Lucy Fitzgerald should be treated with tremendous attention. Moreover, Sarah Napier stressed that "to treat the Post Office with reserve is surely wise among very young

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[450] Charles Hamilton Teeling, *Personal Narrative of the Irish Rebellion of 1798* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 45-46.
[451] Mary A. Favret, *Romantic Correspondence: Women, Politics and the Fiction of Letters* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 38-40.

Women who have not a Husband's support in the abuse they may get in the Gossiping Circles of the World."[452] Sarah Napier was making clear to Lucy Fitzgerald that if she were to make obvious her allegiance to the United Irishmen, that there would be consequences that her husband would not be able to alleviate. Needless to say, Lucy Fitzgerald's allegiance to the United Irishmen did not change because of this letter. Moreover, she was making this decision out of her own will. There is considerable reason to believe that Lucy's actions were informed more by her belief in the cause of the United Irishmen and less because of the affection she held for her deceased brother. She had planned to publish a tract entitled, *An Address to Irishmen*, in 1798, which called for the continued rebellion by the Irish people. It was never published though, as her stepfather stepped in and suppressed its publication.[453] Likewise, Martha McTier made effort to stress that women needed to be careful because they would be invariably painted with the same political ideology as their fathers, brothers, or husbands. McTier, in a letter to William Drennan, wrote that, "women connected with men whose side is known, ought to be very cautious, as they are supposed to be only echoes."[454] McTier tried to suppress her own political opinions in public, in part because her social networks in Belfast were mixed in support of, but also against, the United Irishmen. Martha McTier's reputation for those loyal to the British Crown and in the Belfast gossip circles was that she was simply a "violent republican" who had single handedly recruited no less than 100

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[452] Sarah Napier to Lucy Fitzgerald, 3 November 1798. Lennox/Campbell/Fitzgerald papers, 35, 004 (7), National Library of Ireland.
[453] Lennox/Fitzgerald/Campbell Papers, 35, 005 (13), National Library of Ireland.
[454] Martha McTier to William Drennan, 1 April 1793, in Agnew, Drennan-McTier Letters, vol. 1, 510.

men to the United Irish cause.[455] Luckily, McTier's letters to her brother were never the subject of scrutiny by British intelligence.

In addition to William Drennan, her brother, Martha McTier also maintained regular correspondence with her close friend, Jane Greg. Greg, the daughter of a wealthy Belfast merchant, never married, and instead found herself living throughout Britain, eventually returning to Belfast in the 1790s. However, it seems that more than just a messenger, Greg was deeply aligned with the United Irishwomen, a group associated with the United Irishmen about whom we know very little. In May 1797, the Belfast Postmaster, Thomas Whinnery, who was instructed with relaying possible rebellious correspondence, contacted the Irish Post Office and alerted them to letters written between Martha McTier and Jane Greg. Whinnery suspected that Jane Greg was "at the head of the Female Societies" in Ireland.[456] Moreover, Martha McTier realized that Jane Greg had radical tendencies but never believed she was as pronounced in radical circles as the Whinnery believed. Worried that she might be sought out as part of the United Irishmen, Martha McTier personally delivered a letter to Whinnery, explaining that she was a United Irishmen in theory, but not in practice. McTier tried to shield her affiliations from Whinnery by positioning herself as sympathetic, but not an active member that needed to be surveilled. She went on to state that, "I flatter myself I am not insignificant enough however to be termed a

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[455] Martha McTier to William Drennan (undated) 1797 and Martha McTier to William Drennan, (undated) 1798, in Agnew, Drennan-McTier Letters, vol. 2, 347, 420. Quoted in Catriona Kennedy '" Womanish epistles?' Martha McTier, Female Epistolarity and late eighteenth-century Irish Radicalism," *Women's History Review*, 13:4 (2004): 660.
[456] Thomas Whinnery to John Lees, 25 May 1797 Rebellion Papers, 620/30/194, National Archives of Ireland, (NAI).

neutral." [457] While Martha McTier may not have been as imbedded in the infrastructure of the United Irishmen as Jane Greg, she still played an important role in its organizing. Moreover, it is telling that the Postmaster of Belfast was informed on her involvements, demonstrating the continued role of women within the United Irishmen.

Women not only played the role of messengers and supporters of the 1798 Rebellion but were also combatants in the fighting. The fact that women were excluded from trial in the aftermath of the fighting points to the tendencies for contemporary observers to remember the events as a masculine domain, with both success and consequences placed solely, in theory, on the shoulders of men. However, there are examples of women involved as combatants during the 1798 Rebellion. Sir Jonah Barrington, KC, observed during the fighting at Vinegar Hill, that "a great many women fought with fury" against the British forces.[458] Sir Richard Musgrave, detailing the events of Vinegar Hill from the vantage of a "gentlewoman," records that she witnessed the existence of "a number of women, more vehement than the male."[459] However, it is pertinent to note from this source that there was an intention to discredit the rebellion in Ireland by presenting women forced to fight alongside men. Because of this, some of the writing needs to be taken with a grain of salt. For example, Musgrave describes how during the fighting, "the people remained

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[457] Martha McTier to William Drennan, 16 June 1796, 319. *Drennan Letters*.
[458] Kinsella, "Nineteenth Century Perspectives," 192.
[459] Richard Musgrave, Quoted in W. H. Hamilton, *History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798: With Memoirs of the Union, and Emmett's Insurrection in 1803* (Dublin, IRL: H. G. Bohn, 1854), 99.

in the open air in vast multitudes, men and women promiscuously."[460] While the

fighting was brief during the rebellion in 1798, the social and political tensions that

existed between Catholics and Protestants were heightened. British interpretations

depicted Catholic women taking advantage of these moments, perhaps to represent

them as jealous of the class position of Protestant women. Looting was very common

during periods of fighting, and women could be seen, according to these sources,

wearing the fineries of Protestant women or their more normal clothes. Some could

be seen on horseback, brandishing a pike, the symbol of the rebellion, wearing the

veil of a wedding dress robbed during the upheaval.[461] Musgrave wrote that "the

wives of the country rebels often made a fantastic appearance, with the elegant

apparel of the Protestant ladies of Wexford put over their own homely dress. Some of

them were seen mounted on horseback, with handsome veils, having at the same time

pikes in their hand."[462] Musgrave commented in no uncertain terms as to the potential

of women during the fighting, with particular emphasis placed on the events of

massacre of Protestants on Wexford Bridge on June 20, 1798. He wrote that "the

mob, consisting of more women than men, expressed their savage joy on the

immolation of each of the victims, by loud huzzas."[463]

   While women did play active roles in the fighting, as rebels started to lose

control of places like Wexford, rape and pillage became common practices as

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[460] Richard Musgrave, *Memoirs of the Different Rebellions in Ireland: From the Arrival of the English Also, a Particular Detail of that which Broke Out the XXIIId of May, MDCCXCVIII; with the History of the Conspiracy which Preceded it,* Volume 1 (Dublin, 1802), 455.
[461] Musgrave, *Memoirs*, 455.
[462] Musgrave, *Memoirs,* 455.
[463] Musgrave, *Memoirs*, 455.

reprisals for the rebellion were made evident. The Irish army, which identified with the loyalist forces, led this systemic "white terror." The defeat of the rebel army at Vinegar Hill was accompanied by the multiple rape of camp followers by the Dunbartonshire regiment.[464] One woman, writing on the fighting recalled that "I was a young girl at the time and remember the terror I felt at the sight of a yeoman's helmet or his black gaiters."[465] While these accounts show the evidence of women involved in the United Irish cause, a pertinent question remains: what did women aligned with the United Irishmen hope to get from a successful rebellion?

Unfortunately, there are limited sources that detail what United Irish women wanted from the movement.[466] Mary Ann McCracken stressed to her brother the absolute necessity for the emancipation of women to be integrated into the United Irish ideology. McCracken wrote that what the liberation of the Irish people should look like was: "for the clouds of error and prejudice to disperse and that the female part of the Creation as well as the male should throw off the fetters with which they have been so long mentally bound?" That is to say that liberation for Mary Ann McCracken should not be confined solely for men, but women also. She went on to say that "I do not hold out the motive of interest as an inducement for man to be just, as I think the reign of prejudice is nearly at an end, and that the truth and justice of our cause alone is sufficient to support it, as there can be no argument produced in favour of the slavery of women that has not been used in favour of general slavery."

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[464] O'Connor, "The Experience of Women in the Rebellion of 1798 in Wexford," 101-102.
[465] P. Kennedy, *Evenings in the Duffrey* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1875), 126.
[466] Nancy J. Curtin, "'A Nation of Abortive Men": Gendered Citizenship and Early Irish Republicanism" in *Reclaiming Gender: Transgressive identities in Modern Ireland* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 45.

She believed that the enslavement of women was self-evident. Finally, McCracken concluded that "I therefore hope that it is reserved for the Irish nation to strike out something new and to shew out an example of candour, generosity, and justice superior to any that have gone before them."[467] The 1798 Rebellion, if successful, according to McCracken should be more revolutionary than those revolutions that had already occurred. But, the 1798 Rebellion was in few ways revolutionary for Irish women.

Only in the past twenty years has the history of women in the United Irishmen through the 1798 Rebellion been recovered. In part, this is due to the nature of the rebellion itself. Conservatives made an effort following the rebellion to claim that the population was not so politicized and that it was all simply a "popish plot."[468] Moreover, Irish republicans also tried to downplay the scope of the radicalism so as to limit repercussions on the island broadly. Rebels stressed that they were forced, reluctantly, into a defensive rebellion, and not one that had been planned for months or, in reality, years, in advance. In this environment, women were cast consistently as the victim, the mourner, and suffering loyalist.[469] They were by proxy reluctant and passive in this narrative. Their role post-rebellion, then, was that of the revered widow of the rebellion. Figures such as Matilda Tone, wife of Theobald Wolfe Tone, played the role of remembrance. Moreover, she played the sacrificial role; not only had she sacrificed her husband for the effort to reclaim the Irish nation from Britain,

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[467] Mary Ann McCracken to Henry Joy McCracken, 16 March 1797, PRONI, McCracken Papers.
[468] Musgrave, *A Concise History of the Material Events and Atrocities that Occurred in the Late Rebellion* (Dublin: J. Milliken, 1799), 33.
[469] Keogh, *The Women of 1798*, 7.

but she had also sacrificed her domestic life for one of constant visibility in the public sphere, with little agency in it, allegedly. The political program subscribed to by the United Irishmen, much like that of the French and American revolutionaries, stressed that the rights of the nation could only be secured in part by stressing individual sovereignty of the person, that is, all Irish peoples. This ran in contrast to the Irish nationalism of nineteenth and twentieth century that was governed by a relationship to religion, language, or geography. Wolfe Tone on the matter wrote that "Ireland would never be free, prosperous, or happy…. *whilst* the connection with England existed.[470] That liberation of Ireland, was not a liberation of traditional gender roles, and the freedom and autonomy of the subject would not be applied to women under this construct. But perhaps it is the relationship between Matilda Tone and Theobald Wolfe Tone that exemplified the power dynamics between men and women involved in the United Irishmen. As a twenty-one-year-old law student at Trinity College Dublin, Tone saw Matilda as the ideal spouse, from impeccable social standing—her father was a well-known woollen draper. But, when they met, her name was not Matilda, but rather Martha. Tone would eventually go on to have his wife to-be change her name to the name of a heroine from literature of the period. He noted that "she was…. not sixteen years of age and as beautiful as an angel."[471]

One of the great ironies of the Enlightenment is that in reflecting upon the given societies written on, gender difference was in fact perpetuated, stressing the

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[470] Theobald Wolfe Tone, *The Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, I, (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1826), 32.
[471] Tone, *The Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone,* I, 21.

inferiority of women to men. The result of this was the maintenance of women as persons excluded from the public realm. Mona Ozouf, historian of the French Revolution, refers to the male militants of the period as "new men" —an illustration of a greater regeneration of French society.[472] Thomas A. Foster's collection on masculinity and the American Revolution queries the very same theme: what did it mean to be masculine during the "Age of Revolution." [473] In the United States, masculinity was defined by three broad categories: the capacity to establish a household; one's ability to craft a career; and one's comportment. While it is difficult to bring to the fore women's experiences in the United Irishmen, examining the construction of United Irish masculinity explains the lack of women's voices. At the same time, we need to take heed that studies on masculinity run the risk of "occluding women and downplaying men's power or women," while at the same time "restoring men—however particularized, differentiated, and socially constructed—to the center of our historical narrative."[474] Rousseau and Montesquieu were both deeply concerned that women could seduce men away from their calling; that is their commitment to the nation. In fact, during the American Revolution, women had played a very active role as described by Mary Beth Norton, Linda B. Kerber, and Rosemarie Zagarri.[475] In the latter's work, Zagarri discusses how the revolutionary

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[472] Mona Ozouf, *L'Homme Régénéré - Essais sur la Révolution Française* (Paris, FR: Gallimard, 1989), 116-157.

[473] Thomas A. Foster (ed.), *New Men: Manliness in Early America* (New York City, NY: New York University Press, 2011), 1-5.

[474] Toby Ditz, "The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History," *Gender & History* 16, No.1 (April 2004): 2.

[475] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (1988): 9–39; Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican

experiment of greater participation for women was abandoned by about 1807. In part because the political split of the Democrats and Federalists, women were cast as agents of their parties, lacking their own agency, an in turn no longer working for the good of the greater nation.

The United Irish exile, John Daly Burk, illustrates the role of women, in relation to, but not part of the United Irishmen. In his poem, "Female Patriotism," Burk makes legible what to him the archetypal female patriot looks like, making comparison to Joan of Arc, her ability to rally men to the French cause, and her capacity to fight against English tyranny. But, Joan of Arc, much as Irish women should be, was able to become fully a "warrior":

> Sometimes the weakness of my sex prevails
> And I do shudder at the noise of arms
> And oft when I have slain some warlike chief
> And seen life's current issue with his wound
> My heart seems broken so intense my grief
> And pity issues gushing from my heart
> As I the fund of sorrow was a spring.[476]

The woman warrior could still weep for the warriors she had slain. She had never over-stepped her gendered boundaries to such an extent that she could never return. In contrast, male warriors would in large part remain in that role.

The "frailty" of women was highlighted in relation to the recruitment techniques of the United Irishmen; the Reverend William Richardson in Country

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Mother: Women and the Enlightenment-An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1976): 187–205; Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800: With a New Preface* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996);.Zagarri. *Revolutionary Backlash.*
[476] John Daly Burk, *Female Patriotism, or, the death of Joan of Arc. An Historical Play in V acts.* (New York, 1798).

Tyrone noted that women's fears were focused upon when encouraging their husbands to swear the oath, suggesting that "their husbands to take this step (of swearing support for the United Irishmen) for the protection of their lives, their children, and their homes."[477]

The concept of Republican Motherhood is one that the United Irishmen wholeheartedly supported. William Duane, on the role of women and educating children in the United States in his book, *The Epitome of Arts and Sciences*, a guide for children and young adults to find solutions to broader life questions, noted on women that upon them they "principally depend the future happiness and virtue of children, and of society at large."[478] Most United Irishmen conceived of Republican Motherhood as something that only concerned middle-class women, and the leadership of the United Irishmen broadly. Therefore, working-class women were excluded from a program that would educate young Irish children. Mathew Carey, on the other hand was concerned, when exiled with the working conditions, and as a result, the domestic sphere of working class women. He brought their plight to public attention by exposing their poor working conditions, making comparison to slave labor at times. Carey had observed these conditions in Philadelphia. In his opinion, employers used the seamstresses ruthlessly to their advantage by not paying them enough and providing poor working conditions. As the seamstresses themselves had no way to address these problems, Carey suggested that education was the only way

[477] Revd. William Richardson to Dublin Castle, 8 April 1797, NAI, Rebellion Papers, 620/29/200
[478] William Duane, *An Epitome of the Arts and Sciences: Being a Comprehensive System of the Elementary Parts of an Useful and Polite Education: Adapted to the Use of Schools in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1811), xii.

for working-class women to address their situation.[479] Republican Motherhood could then be applied to working class women, so as to produce Irish-American children of a certain mold. Moreover, Carey was a key driver for the Sunday School Association, founded in Philadelphia in 1790, whose purpose was to educate working-class children generally, and by result, uplift the entire society. [480] Carey believed that children's minds were tabula rasa on which societal norms could be framed and realized, a concept championed by John Locke. To create a strong republic, the importance of children's education, and the capacity of women to educate them was a priority. Here children learned how to become good citizens of the young republic. The role of the mother therefore was crucial in dictating the composition of the next generation of Irish-American children, some of whom would perish as American soldiers in the War of 1812.

The War of 1812

The War of 1812 provided the United Irishmen in America with two opportunities. First, they could strike a blow against the British Empire, which they saw as the architect of their exile. Second, in fighting the British, the United Irishmen could secure their place in American society, a goal which they had been struggling toward since 1798. In doing so, they became American citizens to the broader

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[479] Mathew Carey, *Address to the Wealthy of the Land, Ladies as well as Gentlemen, on the Character, Conduct, Situation, and Prospects, of those whose Sole Dependence for Subsistence, is on the Labour of their Hands* (Philadelphia: Carey, 1831), 81.
[480] Aki Kalliomäki, "The Most God Provoking Democrats on this Side of Hell: The United Irishmen in the United States," (PhD., Diss, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2005), 82.

American population, not just in their naturalization records. However, the citizenship they exuded was masculine and exclusionary in the rhetoric they used to describe the conflict. In much the same vein, the triumph of United Irish exiles fighting against the British Empire was cast as Irish men protecting their adopted home. Republican citizenship for women in the United States during the War of 1812 meant playing the role of republican mothers: the sacrifice of their brothers, sons, and husbands, while also maintaining propriety in the public sphere.

The War of 1812 is remembered in public memory for the birth of the American national anthem, the burning of both capitol buildings, and naval battles through the Atlantic Ocean, but its range of importance for the United Irishmen is vast and varied.[481] The American Revolution left the semblance of a territorial border along which American and Canadian neighbors defined themselves against the other. The War of 1812 divided the United States population, with Federalists, especially in New England States, disagreeing with a war that was, in their minds, manufactured by Madison's Republicans Democrats. The incumbent Jeffersonian administration pushed back against the British maritime policies, such as impressment. Federalists, however, were sympathetic to British policies to limit French expansion. Following the American Revolution, the Canadian provinces were composed in part by 38,000 Loyalists who had fled the United States during the revolution or in the generation that followed.[482] This produced a situation where there was an unfriendly neighbor to

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[481] For the best and most recent assessment of the War of 1812, see Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*.
[482] Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, 22; Sam W. Haynes, *Unfinished Revolution: The Early American Republic in a British World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010).

the north, and an alienated Federalist element internally. Moreover, neither the British

nor Americans thought that their respective foe's political systems would last in the

long term.

The British believed the American experiment would devolve into anarchy, as

was the case after the French Revolution, and what they were currently dealing with,

in the guise of French imperialism under Napoleon. They also believed that after an

inevitable civil war, the British colonies would plead to be re-allowed back into the

British Empire. Americans, on the other hand, believed that British subjects would

eventually throw off their own yoke, just as the United Irishmen had tried to do, in

attempt to garner power in the political process. Loyalists, in this view, had not lost

their fight against American Patriots. For them, the War of 1812 was the moment

when the American Revolution would unravel.[483] For Americans though, they saw

the conquest of the entire continent as an inevitability, later to be referred to as their

manifest destiny. The crisis that emerged between French, American, and British

interests had been brewing through the 1790s, but started to reach fever pitch in 1806,

during the embargo controversy. In that year, France declared that the British had

been conducting a blockade, and in response, threatened to seize any neutral vessels

that were carrying British goods. In response, Britain ordered that all neutral vessels

that traded with France, or any enemy, must clear British ports first, receive licenses,

and pay duties accordingly. Following this, French officials made it explicit that any

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[483] Peter C. Newman, *Hostages to Fortune: The United Empire Loyalists and the Making of Canada
(*Toronto, ON: Simon & Schuster, 2016), 183-203.

vessels that were amenable with British terms of license would be treated as enemy vessels.

The United States, effectively caught between these two powers, and remaining neutral throughout, had its maritime trade affected throughout the period. In response, the United States introduced a policy of embargo, as well as a non-importation act. It was hoped that these efforts would see Britain and France back down, but they ultimately failed because they were impossible to enforce. These policies, as well as the sinking of American ships and the impressment of Irish sailors into the British Navy, as will be explained in relation to the United Irishmen, brought tensions between the United States and Britain to a head in 1812. Caught between these policies were the United Irishmen. Impressment meant a loss of masculinity as it did a loss of control. The impressment crisis that emerged in the early 1800s drove the United Irishmen to stress their own masculine identity.

Subjects or Citizens? The United Irishmen and Impressment, 1805-1812

As subjects under the British Crown, the United Irishmen lost a sense of masculine identity, but as American citizens, they could retain their masculinity in whatever guise they wished. As such, the start of war with Britain was greeted with jubilation by United Irishmen, who saw the war in 1812 as an ideal opportunity to strike a hammer blow against the old enemy and stress their utility to their adopted nation in the same stroke. The United Irishmen wanted revenge against an empire that forced thousands of Irish people into exile. Between 1795 and 1803, thousands of

United Irishmen were exiled to the United States, with major seaports as their primary points of embarkation, especially New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Wilmington. Further south they arrived in cities like Charleston and Norfolk. By 1812, Irish made up 12% of the population of Philadelphia. Out of the 366,000 migrants to the United States in the years leading up to 1812, 199,000 were Irish.[484] In Canada, their impressment into the British military, and conditions they were subjected to, collided when they turned mutinous in 1800. In Upper Canada, the British remained fearful that the French would attack at any minute. Referred to as "United Columbia," it was seen as a Catholic country with a French twist and open for French-inspired insurrection.[485] In American cities they were organized into battalions, and Irish-Americans had a disproportionately high of those fighting. The same was said for those fighting in British colors in Canada. Alan Taylor suggests that fighting along the Canadian-American border looked more like a civil war than an international one. Exiled Irishmen and impressed ones fought for a land they had little connection to. The United Irishmen played a crucial role in how this war unfolded, especially in how they were punished when captured during the fighting.

When captured, these Irishmen were treated as treasonous subjects which was punishable by the death sentence. No longer American citizens, they were reconstituted back into British subjects temporarily. Shocked, American officials threatened that for every Irish sailor or soldier hanged, a British soldier captured

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[484] George E. Pozzetta, *Law, Crime, Justice: Naturalization and Citizenship* (Boca Raton, FL, Taylor and Francis, 1991), 60.
[485] Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, 78.

would be shot. What followed was a state of impasse where Irish prisoners were held in limbo, as well as British soldiers, for fear that any execution would result in a spiral effect, with both sides seeking retributions. For Alan Taylor, the War of 1812 for the Irish involved had civil war-like characteristics.[486] For the United Irishmen, though, they were firmly aligned with the American war effort.

For the United Irishmen, the War of 1812 was crucial in defining their citizenship in the United States and rejecting their ongoing subjecthood under the British Empire. Long exiled from Ireland, they had taken on the hyphen, transitioning from Irish exiles to Irish-Americans. But, even while this transformation had occurred legally and emotionally for the United Irishmen, they were still considered British subjects for British officials attending to the impressment of American sailors at sea, to bulk their numbers in the British Navy.[487] In the years leading up to the War of 1812 they were the focus of British impressment policies that defined them as British subjects still, and not American citizens. The British policy of impressment was paired with a broader expansion of its naval power in the early nineteenth century. Before the French Revolutionary wars against the British Empire, its navy stood at roughly 16,600 sailors. By 1797, it's navy had grown to 119,000, a colossal force that required constant replenishment, due in large part to disease in the Caribbean, cold temperatures in Canada, and desertion throughout the empire. The *Nore* and *Spithead* mutinies exhibit the feelings of disgruntlement felt by sailors in the British Navy.

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[486] Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, 458.
[487] See Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

While they differed, with the *Nore* more a strike action, and the *Spithead* more political grounded, they demonstrated a population of sailors that was willing to rebel, even during times of war. The United Irishmen notably deserted in large numbers or mutinied in Newfoundland and Jamaica. The rate of attrition by desertion or death measures roughly 10% yearly in the British Navy which meant that constant re-supplying was necessary to maintain the British military forces abroad. This amounts to roughly 2,000 new sailors that were needed each year and while some were available through recruitment, a large percentage came from forceful means, such as impressment.[488] This in part accounts for the impressment of Irish and American sailors as part of an effort to bolster their ranks. Through the early 1800s, the British violated the neutral rights of the American maritime navy, seizing cargo and ships, as well as impressing almost 6,000 sailors.[489]

This policy of impressment ran parallel to the policy to impress United Irishmen into the British Navy following the 1798 Rebellion. In the years leading up to the War of 1812 the distinctions between citizen and subject were blurred for Irish exiles in the United States while aboard American ships at sea. Irish sailors aboard American ships of war were either threatened to be hanged as traitors or impressed into the British armed forces. No matter where the Irish subject had been, wherever he had been naturalized, he was perennially a subject of the British crown, capable of treacherous acts despite American citizenship. On the opposite side, American forces

[488] Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*, 103.
[489] Francis D. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America, 1763-1815: A Political History* (London, UK: Routledge, 2008), 151.

tried to convince British soldiers, many of whom were Irish, to defect from British

ranks, promising citizenship as an eventual gain from it. By 1807, British warships

not only impressed sailors from American ships, they started to fire upon them. In

1807, the American frigate, the *Chesapeake*, was fired upon by the British warship,

the *Leopard.* The result was the death of three seamen and seventeen injured.[490] By

1811, with British forces refusing to acknowledge the rights of American vessels,

President Madison had arrived at the conclusion that the only alternative was war. In

part, he believed that it necessary to demonstrate that the American Government

would force the British into recognition of American sovereignty on the seas. For

Irish migrants crossing the Atlantic, their *Chesapeake* moment came in 1811.

The *Belisarius*, bound for New York from Ireland, was boarded in 1811 by

the British sloop, the *Atalanta*, sailing from Halifax. The passengers aboard were

deemed illegal travelers due to their alleged failure to clear the Irish Customs House.

As such, the majority of the passengers aboard were taken to St. John's Island and

employed as tenants and workers on the state of the Lord Townshend. Seventeen

more were impressed into the British naval forces without due process. They were

told when being boarded – "You shan't go into that damn'd Republican country…we

are going to have a slap at them one of these days."[491] The outrage that followed,

especially in Ireland and the United States, galvanized the growing sense of American

patriotism building within Irish-American communities. Reports of the boarding of

[490] Cogliano, *Revolutionary America*, 151.
[491] Quoted in M. L. Hansen, *The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 70.

the *Belisarius* were published in the *Shamrock* on July 6, 1811. Such images were depicted of "the shrieks of the unfortunate parties on being dragged into the boats, — the lamentations of the aged parents who were left behind, —the wife clinging to her husband, —the child grasping the knee of its more than distracted father, on giving up his last hope to provide for his little ones and doomed to serve his tyrants—all contributed to render the scene truly one of the most distressing which ever occurred."[492] These scenes take on a gendered component: the Irish husband could no longer protect his family if he were impressed.

The editor of the *Shamrock,* Edward Gillespy, provided "an additional proof, if additional proof were wanted, of the perfidy of the British nation."[493] He went on to argue that the policy of impressment employed by the British Empire was the "prosecution of a war waged against Ireland for nearly seven centuries, and which will never be terminated by concession, submission or treaty." [494] One editor from the *Washington Reporter*, a newspaper in Washington County, Pennsylvania, went so far as to claim that the actions of the British, in language that was echoed generations later in the wake of the Irish Famine, were genocidal. These were the actions only of the British, "the bloody and ruthless nation that on one occasion reduced the whole population of Ireland to eight hundred souls."[495] He continued, "Irishmen in America! . . . swear eternal vengeance (sic) . . . vow holy hatred to British tyranny, on the altar

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492 *Shamrock*, July 6, 1811.
493 *Shamrock*, July 12, 1811.
494 *Shamrock*, July 12, 1811.
495 *Washington Reporter*, July 22, 1811.

of patriotism; and heaven will smile on the deed and accept the sacrifice."[496] On July 11, 1811, Edward Gillespy wrote "Sons of Hibernia! Do I awaken sad recollections? Do I recall the memory of guilt that can never be expiated; of wrongs that can never be atoned?" [497] Curiously, this rhetoric paired liberty and patriotism that emerged during the revolutionary period with a parochial religious overtone.[498] The impressment of Irishmen in the years leading up the War of 1812 meant a loss of masculinity as they were forced back into British subjecthood. When war eventually broke out in 1812, the United Irishmen used language that was exclusively masculine to define their commitment to American citizenship in defense of the United States.

Masculine Citizenship, the United Irishmen, and the War of 1812

On September 3, 1814, the *Shamrock* newspaper posted a section entitled "The Daughters of Erin emulating her sons." In it, the editor described how 1,500 Irish "Sons of Erin" were seen preparing Fort Greene in New York City for defense against possible British invasion. The column went on to note that "some women were observed laying sods and driving pickets." One of these women was asked, "what brought you here?" to which she replied: "I am the wife of Bernard Kennedy, I glory and boast of my employment." The editor concluded by noting that "we are happy to be thus able to designate one of these patriotic females, believing, as we do, that the flame that warms her breast, burns also in that of a great majority of her

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[496] *Washington Reporter*, July 22, 1811.
[497] *Shamrock*, July 20, 1811.
[498] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States,* 80.

country-women."[499] On first glance this demonstrates the combined efforts of Irish women, often exiles from Ireland, with Irish men in their efforts to demonstrate a combined determination toward the defense of the United States. However, while these efforts were made by women aligned with the United Irishmen, the war effort of the United Irishmen during the War of 1812 was spoken about, and acted on, in purely masculine terms. This runs parallel with how Americans broadly painted the war effort.

The War of 1812 takes on a romantic, masculine veneer according to historian Nicole Eustace. She writes that "throughout the war years, Republicans, worked to portray the war as a romantic adventure, one in which dashing young men to win the hearts of patriotic maidens."[500] The war was played out to the American public with language of romantic patriotism that was evident in generic songs detailing the battles of the war, and poems lamenting those who died. The newspapers of the early republic, so successfully utilized by Democratic Republicans with Thomas Jefferson's successful push for the presidency, were once more utilized by Republicans to further the war effort, both Irish and America alike.

In one example, Hezekiah Niles, the American the editor of the *Niles Weekly Register*, had a visceral hatred for the British, which he expressed often in his newspaper. In 1812, on the use of spies on American ships, Niles expressed his disdain for such British tactics under the subtitle of "they shun the light because their

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[499] *Shamrock*, September 3, 1814.

[500] Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), xiii.

deeds are evil." [501] Niles wrote on the British with providential, romantic language, but also deeply gendered language. He believed that British soldiers had attacked his mother while carrying him, and only by an act of providence was he saved. Imbedded in his analysis of his own attempted prenatal killing was also the necessity for the nation to be conscious of the need for a patriotic, but also abundantly fertile society. Niles believed that among other things population size would play a crucial role in beating the British. Both women and men had specific gender roles to realize this.

Within this context, the United Irishmen who resided in the United States decided it prudent to close ranks on the what was considered the common and enduring enemy: the British Empire. While there had been disagreements between John Binns, William Duane, and Mathew Carey, to name a few, the specter of the British, who had perpetuated plunder and violence in Ireland, and caused their exile, made alignment over the war easily attainable. Binns and Duane, both radical opponents of one another, saw eye to eye, but only on the issue of the war. For these United Irishmen, they saw that the British Empire had extinguished the prospect for liberty in Ireland, and now had turned their attention to their adopted home: the United States. In truth, the United Irishmen had been invested in supporting American efforts against the British since the attack on the Chesapeake in 1807. In the outrage that followed, United Irishmen like John Binns and John Daly Burk offered the most vocal outrage. Burk bellowed that "four of our citizens are borne off...wretched

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[501] *The Weekly Register*, July 4, 1812.

victims to satiate the rage of the British Moloch.[502] Binns in much the same language

expressed that "never, perhaps, did a more unanimous desire for revenge . . . animate

the nation than at that period."[503] Under this blanket of victimhood, the United

Irishmen produced rhetoric and action that perpetuated a masculine focused form of

American citizenship.

The United Irishmen devised that their role during the war was to be active,

masculine citizen-soldiers, as they had been during the 1798 Rebellion. Denis Driscol

believed that Americans "must be prepared to meet the British, in arms, by sea and

land.[504] Irishmen were encouraged to form companies that used the memory of defeat

in 1798 as fuel against the British Empire. The cry, "Sons of Erin, Assemble!" ran

through northern cities where United Irishmen predominated. In Philadelphia, the

company created by William Duane, the Republican Greens, rejected domestic

traitors and lauded allies on St. Patrick's Day. From there, they were encouraged to

take revenge for "murders…. committed on the blood-stained fields of poor Erin."[505]

Here, the passive female victimhood of Erin is underlined, and just as Erin or the

Shan Van Vocht had to be protected in Ireland, and avenged, so too was the case in

the United States. The Union Greens, a battalion of Irishmen formed in Baltimore in

anticipation for the war, had the emblem of an eagle protecting a harp, set on a green

banner, such in the same tradition as the *Shamrock* newspaper. Its motto read

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[502] John Daly Burk, "Oration," *Richmond Enquirer*, March 11, 1808.
[503] John Binns, *Recollections of the Life of John Binns* (Philadelphia, 1854), 198.
[504] *Augusta Chronicle*, July 11, 1807.
[505] *Augusta Chronicle,* August 8, 1807.

"Fostered under thy wing…. we die in thy defence." [506] Duane's Republican Greens looked forward to the hour when "the heart of 50,000 bold Irish boys, will beat in unison with Yankee Doodle."[507] The *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, a paper in Baltimore published on September 10, 1812, an advertisement, written by "an Irishman," that called for the formation of a "battalion to be comprised entirely of Irishmen or sons of Irishmen."[508] Moreover, the advertisement was written to attract "persons desirous of enforcing the joint claims of the Harp and the Eagle" so as to "Pluck a feather from the wing of the British dragon."[509] Finally, the advertisement read that "the service of single men, in general, would be most acceptable; as in the absence of husbands, the maintenance of too many families might devolve on the community."[510] That is to say that women could not maintain the community in the United States without their husbands. The following week, on September 18, 1812, the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* published a similar message calling on "my brave Hibernians" to come forth, "such of you as are unmarried, strong and hearty."[511] Later the same posting read, detailing the acclaim that soldiers would receive, "nor will Erin's daughters be unmindful of you—to their lovely and sentimental breasts the brave are always dear."[512] Once more the role of women was to celebrate the vigor of Irishmen. In the *Democratic Press* newspaper, printed in Philadelphia, its writers lauded how "in one city of the union more than 500 Irishmen,

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[506] In the *Shamrock* newspaper, these words were placed under outstretched wings.
[507] *Aurora*, July 9, 1807.
[508] *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* September 10, 1812.
[509] *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* September 10, 1812.
[510] *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* September 10, 1812.
[511] *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* September 18, 1812.
[512] *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,* September 18, 1812.

who have never been naturalized, have enrolled themselves for its defence."[513] In 1812, the Hibernian Provident Society, a benevolent society in New York City, gave a toast on St. Patrick's Day declaring "war, vigorous War!-till the Nation's Wrongs are avenged, the Country's rights secured."[514] The United Irishmen took it upon themselves to combine "hibernocentrism with hyper-American patriotism" which made them some of the most hawkish of commentators during the War of 1812. The reasons for this position ranged from the defense of their adopted nation to their criticism of the hunting down and impressment of Irishmen aboard American ships. Finally, those exiled to the United States had a long memory, especially of their exile from Ireland by the British Empire.[515] Much as Duane became embroiled in the war effort, William MacNeven became an active participant, due in part to his support of the cause, but also from the military experience he garnered during the 1790s in Ireland, as well as his time in Napoleon's Irish Legion. There he not only learned the importance of well drilled, professional troops, but also the necessity for spy networks.[516]

In these newspaper articles also ran the stories of heroism, stressing the masculine capacity of the new nation and its citizens. In them, lurid details of British and their Indian allies, complicit in "savagery," were contrasted with the bravery of American and often Irish combatants. In one example, titled "Irish bravery" in a letter dated January 1, 1812 from Robert Thompson, of the U.S. 4th Regiment, to his

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[513] *Democratic Press*, February 22, 1813.
[514] Crimmins, *St. Patrick's Day*, 139.
[515] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States*, 80.
[516] William MacNeven, *Of the Nature and Functions of an Army Staff* (New York City, NY: George Long, 1812).

brother in New York City, detailed the battle that took place between his regiment and the "savages." He wrote that upon being ambushed, "I shot one and bayoneted another...I was overpowered by numbers. They were bringing me off (as I supposed) to be roasted alive."[517] Thompson eventually fought off his captives and was rescued by a regiment of American dragoons. There was also further reason for Irish migrants in America to stress their commitment to American patriotism. Irish residents not yet naturalized in the United States by 1812 fell under the category of *alien enemy* as detailed by an 1812 *National Intelligencer* penned with the title *amicus*, or impartial observer. There it called for un-naturalized citizens to "to confirm their choice by embracing the terms of adoption held out to them by law, whereby they may avoid the inconveniences which a state of war may otherwise expose to them."[518] For the United Irishmen, almost all of whom arrived in the United States by 1803, the dye had already been set in where they positioned themselves during the War of 1812. They saw themselves as Irish exiles first, but also American citizens.

Conclusion

Both the War of 1812 and the 1798 Rebellion explained much about the revolutionary ideology of the United Irishmen. First, the manifesto of revolutionary politics was exclusively masculine and designed for the benefits of men primarily. Moreover, this was juxtaposed against the use of women's perceived innocence and morality as keepers of the nation's virtue. This is evident also in histories of the 1798

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[517] *Raleigh Register, and North-Carolina Gazette*, Raleigh, North Carolina, 21 Feb. 1812.
[518] *National Intelligencer* [Washington, District Of Columbia] [June 18, 1812]

Rebellion in how they were remembered. Women were often written out of the narrative so as to maintain their pristine place in Irish history. In fact, Irish women in 1798 were active members of the rebellion in a variety of key functions from pamphleteering to engagement on the battle field. The War of 1812 was similar in that it was in many ways about Irish subjecthood under the British Empire. Therefore, the exiled United Irishmen endeavored to mark themselves as masculine citizens of the new republic, but at the expense of women broadly. The manifesto of the United Irishmen was exactly that—a doctrine pursued for the betterment and liberation of Irish men.

Conclusion: The Radicalism of the United Irishmen?

What does it mean to be revolutionary? This is the question that has reverberated throughout this dissertation. For the United Irishmen, this question produces more subsequent questions than this dissertation could ever hope to answer, but their exile does give us an excellent opportunity to query how revolutionary their ideology was. Cast headlong into the Atlantic world, the United Irishmen were forced to adapt to life outside of Ireland. There, their ideology twisted and turned, augmented to suit their new homes, or hardened to maintain their existence. The process of exile was both emotionally harrowing and physically treacherous. When they arrived at their destinations there was an acceptance for many of them that they would never return to Ireland. In Philadelphia, the United Irishmen wanted to lose their reputation as Irish Jacobins so as to become accepted members of the American political system. In response to the Alien and Sedition Acts that threatened their ability to dissent against the government and extended the length required for naturalization, they petitioned the government to repeal the legislation. Reverting back to political agitation that was non-violent, the United Irishmen used the petition and court room as the means to stake their legitimacy as American citizens. In Newfoundland, United Irishmen fomented conspiracy to mutiny against the British establishment there. While the reason for this mutiny may have been the conditions of impressment in Eastern Canada, the political ideology that they fostered in Ireland gave them the tools needed to rebel.

For the United Irishmen, slavery was a distant evil that could be harnessed rhetorically to highlight their own enslavement under the British Empire. In exile, slavery became a reality that exposed the inconsistencies of the United Irish ideology relating to race. In New York City, United Irishmen like Thomas Addis Emmet and William Sampson became integral actors in manumission cases for runaways and battered slaves. In Philadelphia, though, Mathew Carey accepted the institution of slavery as the accepted law of the land and instead of focusing on the divisions within the United States, stressing the necessity for the nation to come together and slavery to be accepted. In South Carolina and Georgia, United Irishmen like Denis Driscol became slaveholders and slave merchants. Their racial ideology, in line with many revolutionaries during the period, had many diverging points along a continuum. On gender, the United Irishmen remained a consistent and exclusionary ideology. In 1798, while women played active roles as messengers and combatants, the liberatory rhetoric of the United Irishmen was meant only for men. Instead, women were expected to occupy the role as republican mothers who allowed their brothers, sons, fathers, and husbands to support the cause. During the War of 1812, while Irish women in the United States played an important role at times, the rhetoric used stresses the patriotic capacities of Irish men, with little space allotted for the patriotism of women. Broadly speaking, the ideology of the United Irishmen, while politically radical, was limited in what it offered to persons beyond that of Irish men. There would be no social or racial leveling.

To conclude, while Wolfe Tone's death may have been symbolic to the failures of the 1798 Rebellion, the legacy of the United Irishmen did not end there, or indeed with Robert Emmet's death in 1803. The United Irishmen prevailed throughout the Atlantic world and while the possibility of a liberated Ireland was no longer attainable, the United Irishmen brought with them a flawed ideology to their new adopted homes. Carrying their green bough, the United Irishmen retained a legacy as the original Irish revolutionaries, but they were more than just that. They were also sons of exile.

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