

Irish immigrant in united states of america history essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Irish Potato Famine initiated the departure of many Irish people to the United States. The problem was that the potato constituted the diet for most Irish and when the blight struck, diverse epidemics accompanied the famine and a lot of Irish people died. "The Irish famine was proportionally more destructive of human life than..., the famines of modern times". Jim Donnelly. The survivors emigrated to the United States, which they considered to be the land of opportunity. "The first time I saw the Statue of Liberty, all the people were rushing to the side of the boat. 'Look at her, look at her' and in all kinds of tongues." "There she is, there she is", like it was somebody who was greeting them" cited Elizabeth Phillips in 1920 in the book 'Ellis Island: An Illustrated History of the Immigrant Experience', edited by Ivan Chermayeff et al. (New York: Macmillan 1991).

The majority of Irish immigrants inhabited urban centers such as New Orleans, Chicago and San Francisco; a minority went further afield. Most Irish immigrants were peasants, and therefore did not have the money to purchase land.

The Irish have been present in the United States for a long time and have had more opportunity than other ethnic groups. In the eighteenth century, the Protestant Irish became assimilated and socially accepted. This process was more difficult for Catholic Irish. They suffered from the negative stereotypes carried over from England; they were considered pugnacious, drunken, and almost savages. Many cartoons also depicted the Irish negatively, and Irish immigrants often found that they were not welcome in America; many ads for employment were accompanied by the order "NO IRISH NEED APPLY"; and such terms as "paddy-wagon", "shenanigans", and <https://assignbuster.com/irish-immigrant-in-united-states-of-america-history-essay/>

“shanty Irish” gained popularity. Despite these offensive images, the Irish Catholics immigrants possessed advantages. They arrived in great numbers, most of them could speak English, and their culture was similar to American culture. Catholicism came to be accepted in time, and is now an important part of American culture, thanks to its introduction by Irish immigrants.

American Catholicism possesses somewhat of an Irish character. We can find a lot of Irish names among past and present Catholic clergy. The Irish have been particularly supportive of their church and have established great numbers of Catholic churches, cathedrals, convents and seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, community centers and orphanages. The life of Catholic Irish-Americans revolved around their parish, until the mid-twentieth century. The parish priest was usually the dominant community leader. Although, they still retained their Catholic parish. Nowadays, the parish is less important because of the decline in religious practice. The American Catholic Church has supported innovations imposed by the Second Vatican Council and most Irish Americans have embraced this development. Many Irish Catholics wonder about the church’s position and subjects like divorce, abortion, contraception, priest celibacy, and female priests. The clergy is discontent and this has caused a decline in vocational religious life for the Irish. Most Irish American Catholics are faithful, and they continue to identify as Catholics despite of some disagreements with Vatican teachings.

It is not easy to define what is meant by an Irish American ethnic identity. The Irish suffered an adaptation process in order to become American citizens. It was not easy because American people felt negatively towards them, but the process has been facilitated by a great migration over the decades. Greater
<https://assignbuster.com/irish-immigrant-in-united-states-of-america-history-essay/>

participation in the multicultural public school; another major factor has been that there are 38, 760, 000 Americans who claim Irish ancestry. Among these immigrants, there is still great pride and prestige in being Irish.

Still, in some circles Irish are considered less assimilated, less advanced intellectually, and more politically reactionary than other ethnic groups. Catholic Irish Americans are some of the best educated and liberal in the United States. They are well represented in law, academia, and medicine; traditionally, they have been prominent in the Democratic ranks of politics. Irish Catholic immigrants to the United States arrived as Democrats, a political stance developed due to years in the hands of the British. They found their political ideas in the Democratic Party. After the Civil War, Irish political activity became increasingly evident. Irish control of New York's Tammany Hall in 1872, the center of the city's Democratic Party, is a symbol of their powerful and dubious involvement in American urban politics. Irish politicians were more successful than their Anglo-Protestant counterparts. The Irish political "machine" had a strong democratic and reformist agenda, frequently extended to Jews, Italians, Germans, Poles, etc.

Irish domination of political life continued. An Irish Catholic, the Democrat John Fitzgerald Kennedy, reached the White House in 1960. "I am not the Catholic candidate for president", he declared during the campaign. "I am the Democratic Party's candidate for President, who happens also to be a Catholic. I do not speak for my church on public matters, and the Church does not speak for me". On the other hand, was an Irish Protestant - Ronald Reagan. Nowadays, most Irish Americans are still supporters of the Democratic Party.

<https://assignbuster.com/irish-immigrant-in-united-states-of-america-history-essay/>

The Irish have contributed to the later movement in America. American capitalist injustice was not too different to that by English landlords at home. The Irish were active in workers' organizations and their involvement in labor activities became very prominent. The activities of the Molly Maguire anthracite coal miners of Pennsylvania, is one of the most important activities in the labor movement, in which they resisted the English, Scottish and Welsh mine bosses.

Peter James McGuire was another leader who founded the American Federation of Labor. He is known as the " Father of Labor Day". Irish women have also been prominent in American's labor movement - Cork-born Mary Harris (Mother Jones), who organizing workers in labor unions to improve worker's conditions, is just one such example. " The nature of work and workers was altered. Waves of immigrants and displaced farmers dug the nation's coal and forget its steel. All too often, they received in return only starvation wages and nightmarish conditions. Within these men smoldered the sparks of class conflict which Mother Jones would fan for for 50 years. To these workers, she would become an anchor to the past and an arrow toward a better future", by Mana Lou Hawse. [http:// www. kentlaw. edu/ilhs/majones. htm..](http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs/majones.htm)

Another famous Irish female was Elizabeth Gurley Flynn who co-founded the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO).

Culture Contributions:

Art: Numerous Irish Americans have achieved prominence in the arts. We can mention Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), was one of the greatest figures in

<https://assignbuster.com/irish-immigrant-in-united-states-of-america-history-essay/>

Literature; Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), one of the best eminent playwrights, and F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), was a popular novelist and story writer.

Business and Finance: William Russell (1812-1872), was the founder of the Pony Express; Anthony Nicholas Brady (1843-1913), his interests extended from railroads to electric companies; Andrew Mellon (1855-1937), he was interesting in art collector, but he was a banker, and philanthropist; and Howard Hughes (1905-1976), wealthy, industrialist and aerospace manufacturer.

Entertainment: they have attained distinction in the entertainment industry: John Ford (1895-1973), film director; Bing Crosby (1901-1977), singer and actor; Grace Kelly (1929-1982); actress and Princess of Monaco; and Jack Nicholson (1937-), actor.

Military: we should mention: Lydia Barrington Darragh (1729-1789), who born in Dublin; she was an heroine of the Revolutionary War and she was a spy for George Washington; John Barry (1745-1803), he was born in Wexford and he was the " Father of the American Navy"; and Audie Murphy (1921-1971), he was the most decorated soldier of the World War II in the United States.

Sports: eminent in sports as well: John L. Sullivan (1858-1918), Jack Dempsey (1895-1983), both heavyweight boxing champions; Babe Ruth (1895-1948), was a baseball player; Maureen Connolly " Little Mo" (1934-1969), tennis player, she won the United States women's singles championship three times.

Among the early immigrants to the United States, the Irish are now assimilated in all aspects of this nation, but they still retain their pride and identify with their Irish heritage.