There is evidence of growing sectarianism in belfast

History

In the 18th century, Belfast's extremism between catholic and protestant was seemed amicable. According to source A, St. Marys Catholic Church was built in 1784 and was built by generous donations from Belfast's Protestants and volunteers. Although we can still see in source K that in 1782 was only 1, 092 catholic's to the protestant 13, 100 living in Belfast. By 1841 the catholic population had dramatically risen to 24, 000 to the 75, 300 Protestants. This number and date also corresponds with the first major outbreak of sectarianism rioting in 1857 which lead to development of segregated housing.

Protestant preachers were influencing Protestant's on their ideas and feeling on Catholic people. Preachers such as Dr. Henry Cooke were completely against the Catholic people living in Belfast and they would preach to people about this. 'Which led to increasing polarisation between the communities' was reflected by the drift into religious areas, this process was nearly complete in the 1850s. Despite the continuous rioting, Belfast's catholic businessmen continued to prosper.

Businessmen such as Andrew Joseph McKenna, a news paper editor who launched his own newspaper in 1868 is an example a of catholic business men that had had prospered in the 19th century. Businessmen like Andrew McKenna who were successful in Belfast were the reason why Protestants in Belfast felt threatened by their successfulness. Protestant businesses were only interested in hiring protestant workers, Hiring workers would have given them a reason to stay in Belfast, and if there were no jobs they would have had to leave.

When examined source P on gravestone inscriptions, published by the Ulster Historical Foundation in 1984, you can see that 'At least three distinguished newspaper editors were laid to rest in friar's bush including Andrew McKenna, Headstones were indications that Roman Catholics were more affluent. Friar's bush had become 'dangerously overcrowded' this shows an increase in catholic people coming to Belfast. Protestants believed that Catholics spread disease and they were the reason for disease spreading in Belfast. Source A describes how after the famine there was a 'massive influx of beggars into Belfast.. led to an 'outbreak of typhus and cholera. '

Friar's Bush had to re-open their cholera pit during the same time which can give us the indication that many were Roman Catholics. 'Large scale migration of rural Catholics in Belfast in search of work,' may also had led to the increase in the number of cases of fever which are referred to in source F. There was also an apparent increase not just in Belfast, with the ending of the penal laws and passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829 'following a successful campaign by Daniel O'Connell,' this meant that catholic's could now vote and become MP's.

According to source L 'much religious bitterness in the growing industrial town where the population was being swollen by rural Catholic immigration. ' Catholic funerals were by way of Sandy Row to Friar's Bush. Source L states that proceedings were frequently 'boohed at, insulted and attacked' during it route to Friar's Bush. During the 1860s friar's bush was the aim of many minor sectarian attacks in Belfast, A wooden Mission cross had been erected

at the gate-lodge during the 1940s, This cross was the focus to the sectarian attacks in the 1960s.

According to Andrew Boyd, 'they would stagger up to Friars Bush and throw stones at the cross', Source Q, according to Mr F McCallin the grandson to the grounds man talks of how his grandfather buried the mission cross at the top of the path in friar's bush he also recalls that the cross had been in terrible condition 'Local Catholic people were removing parts of it as souvenirs, Protestant folk from Sandy Row were attacking it'.

The cross was removed quietly and this lead to the catholic people believing the protestant people took their cross, One of Sandy Row's most popular sectarian songs was sung during drunken attacks on friars bush, 'Who Cut the Cross'. In 1864 source O states that a fake priest led a large funeral proceeding through Sandy Row to Friars bush graveyard were they were intending to burry an effigy of Mr Dan O'Connell's ashes, though this plan did not proceed when they were met at the gate by Patrick McCabe, the care taker of Friars Bush. Therefore there is a clear indication that there was growing sectarianism in Belfast during the 19th century.