The Irish Famine, 1845-50

by

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Paul McMenamin
King David High School, Liverpool
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## Lesson plans

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| Pupils should learn that:  
  • Ireland experienced famine conditions from 1845-50.  
  • Many Irish emigrated to Liverpool and other places.  
  • Famines still occur and that famine situations have certain characteristics. | 1 | Introductory activity on the number of people in class with Irish surnames.  
  Discussion on why so many children in class and people in Liverpool have Irish surnames.  
  Make links between Liverpool as the nearest port to Ireland and the famine.  
  Brainstorming on famines: what makes a famine? | Pupils:  
  • Share ideas and knowledge of their family history.  
  • Identify and analyse characteristics of a situation and issues.  
  • Understand that famines still exist today. Pupils understand the causes of famines.  
  • Understand the characteristics of a famine. | Key skills. -  
  • Literacy.  
  • Links with Geography.  
  • Links with food technology. | |
| Pupils should learn:  
  • About the causes of the Irish Famine.  
  • The land situation in Ireland.  
  • About population growth and the subdivision of land in Ireland.  
  • About the potato blight and its effects on the potato crop. | 2-3 | Causes of the Irish Famine. Teacher gives explanation on population growth in Ireland; the land situation and subdivision of land.  
  Explanation of the importance of potatoes to the Irish peasant.  
  Explanation and discussion on the potato blight 1845.  
  Classwork and homework: written exercises on the key issues. | Pupils:  
  • Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the causes of the Irish Famine.  
  • Understand the central role which the potato crop played in Ireland.  
  • Understand the nature of the Irish economy.  
  • Learn that it is dangerous to depend on one food crop.  
  • Learn about the potato blight and how it affected the staple crop. | Links with population studies and Geography.  
  • Literacy and key words.  
  • Links with Economics.  
  • Links with Biology | |
| Pupils should learn:  
  • About the cause of the Famine and how it resulted in death and disease.  
  • To make deductions based on evidence. | 4-5 | The course of the Famine: the return of the blight 1846.  
  The years 1847-50 in Ireland. Starvation: Famine fever: typhus, yellow fever, dysentery.  
  Pupils study sources of evidence and complete written tasks.  
  Pupils produce sketches/images of famine scenes. | Pupils:  
  • Produce sketches of Famine scenes.  
  • Demonstrate an understanding of the course of the Famine.  
  • Make deductions based on evidence. | Links with Nutrition and public health.  
  • Links with Art. | |
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| Pupils should learn: | 6-9      | Famine Relief Measures:  
• Question and discuss with class famine relief measures for modern famine situations.  
• Explanation of laissez-faire.  
• Trevelyan’s attitude towards the Irish.  
Explain where relief could be obtained:  
• Workhouses for relief.  
• Soup kitchens.  
• Public works.  
• Private charity.  
Pupils divide into groups. Each group studies one relief measure and reports back to the whole class. Written task on the ‘best’ relief measure. | Pupils:  
• Demonstrate knowledge on the Famine relief measures.  
• Identify differences in attitudes between the 19th and 21st centuries. | - Links with Economics.  
- Citizenship. Use the Trevelyan example to discuss equality and respect for other people.  
- Citizenship.  
- Literacy and key words. | |
| Pupils should learn: | 10-11    | Discussion of the role of the British Government: could the Government have done more? Pupils prepare a debate on this question for next lesson. | Pupils:  
• Demonstrate knowledge and plan and deliver a debate. | - Citizenship and the role of the British Government.  
- Links with politics.  
- Idea of Empire. | |
| Pupils should learn how: | 12-14    | Debate on the role of the British Government (lesson 12). Results of The Famine. Discuss with class the possible/obvious results of the Famine.  
• Evaluation of number of deaths and population decline.  
• Consolidation of land.  
• Change in marriage patterns.  
• Political effects.  
• Emigration.  
Pupils produce pie and bar graphs on number of deaths and numbers who emigrated.  
Pupils produce a structured piece of writing on the effects of the Famine. | Pupils:  
• Demonstrate knowledge of the results of the Famine.  
• Produce and explain graphs. | - Keywords.  
- Links with politics.  
- Links with Maths. | |
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<tr>
<td>Pupils should learn about:</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>The Famine as a turning point.</td>
<td>Pupils:</td>
<td>Key words and literacy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How the Famine was a turning point.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Explanation of a turning point in History.</td>
<td>• Demonstrate knowledge of the Famine and its short and long term effects.</td>
<td>• Long term repercussions of the Famine in modern times.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The long term as well as short term effects of the Famine.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion on how the Famine was a turning point:</td>
<td>• Select and organise relevant information into a well-structured account.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Producing a structured piece of writing on why the Famine was a turning point.</td>
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<td>Political implications:</td>
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<td>- move towards Home Rule.</td>
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<td>Cultural implications:</td>
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<td>- adopting the English language;</td>
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<td>- the Irish abroad, i.e. the USA, Britain, Australia.</td>
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<td>Pupils produce a structured piece of extended writing on the Famine as a turning</td>
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<td>point in Irish history.</td>
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<td>16-17</td>
<td>The impact of the Famine on Liverpool.:</td>
<td>Pupils:</td>
<td>Citizenship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils should learn:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short term:</td>
<td>• Recognise and understand the effects of the Irish Famine on Liverpool.</td>
<td>• Links with I.C.T. and links with the Media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• That the Irish Famine had a big impact on Liverpool.</td>
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<td>- numbers entering Liverpool;</td>
<td>• Plan and produce a structured account using the Front Page Headlines and details</td>
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<td>• How Liverpool was affected by the Famine.</td>
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<td>- housing;</td>
<td>for a Liverpool newspaper for 1848.</td>
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<td>• To produce the front page of a Liverpool newspaper which explains the impact of</td>
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<td>- public health;</td>
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<td>the Famine on Liverpool.</td>
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<td>- disease.</td>
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<td>Long term impact:</td>
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<td>- religion;</td>
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<td>- accent;</td>
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<td>- education;</td>
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<td>- culture.</td>
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<td>Pupils prepare an extended piece of writing on the effects of the Famine on</td>
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<td>Liverpool. They make use of local sources of evidence.</td>
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<td>[See separate sheet].</td>
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Resources

Resources include:


The Irish Famine by Tony Allan, Heinemann, 0-431-06908-5.


Useful websites:

www.people.virginia.edu
www.seark.nets-sabra/potato.html
Worksheets etc.
Examples of students’ work

- Famine timeline
- Results of the Famine
- Famine diary
- Poetry inspired by the Famine
- Imploring the government
- Famine studies
- Headlines
- A famine story
  - A review of Under the Hawthorn Tree by Marita Conlon-McKenna, O’Brien Press, 0-86278-206-6

Statistics
Front page
By this time people were starving and 114,000 people were doing public work.

’Potato Blight’ struck again.

The population of Ireland dropped by 2 million.

Disease called ‘Potato Blight’ struck Ireland.

Harvest was a good one, the situation was better. But Irish taxpayers had to carry cost of the workhouse soup kitchens. 111,000 people were in workhouses which were only built for 100,000, so disease spread.

The famine appeared to be over.

Gabrielle Walker
Results of the Famine

During the 1840s, Ireland suffered from a disastrous famine. It left millions of people dead and a lifetime of attempts to increase the population. The results were a population decline, consolidation of land, changes in marriage patterns, political effects and many people emigrated.

One of the most obvious effects of the famine was the downfall in population. Taken from the previous census in 1841, the population was 8 million. In 1851 the population was down by 2 million. From this number, it is thought that half emigrated whilst the other half had died. However, not only did this leave an immediate effect on the population, but the population continued to decline and in 1900 there was only about 4 ½ million people left. A drastic 3 ½ million people were missing. Much of this was an effect of the changing pattern of early marriage and land subdivision.

Many people’s problems built up and the only answer people saw to be the right one was to emigrate. Many Irish tried to find a new life in a better place following the famine years. However, many never reached the better land but died from awful conditions aboard the ships. They were commonly known as the coffin ships. These ships were overcrowded, food was poor and disease spread easily. Only the wealthier emigrants were allowed to use the deck. Poorer people often had to stay below for the whole voyage, which could be three months. Disease thrived in these conditions. A book, ‘The Potato Famine and the Irish Emigrants’ by P. F. Speed (1976) quotes, ‘This vessel left with 476 passengers, of whom 158 died before arrival, including the master, mate, one seaman and a boy, able to do duty all others were dead or ill in hospital.’

Many landlords were anxious to sell off their land, even more so if they were in debt. In 1849, The Encumbered Estates Act made it easier for them to do so. Many of the Irish tenants had realised the uncertain nature of subdivision of land and had stopped doing it. The cottier class almost died out and the number of larger holdings increased.

Danielle Tripp
Famine diary

This diary you are about to read is all about a girl who is suffering the effects of the potato famine. Her life changes and many things happen throughout these few scrap entries:

1st January 1845

Well here I am using one of the new pages in my diary that mother got me for Christmas. Although you couldn’t really call it Christmas here because, the hunger months have set in. So for breakfast we have the delightful meal of porridge. For lunch the same and for dinner and supper, guess what? Porridge! I suppose I have to be grateful for what we have. You see my 7 brothers and 6 sisters have to be fed as well as Grandpa and Grandma.

Well I may as well talk about myself then. My name is Aislinn O’Connor. I have one mother, ‘Jane’ and my father is called ‘James’. I then have six sisters; Jane, Shannon, Kelly, Stephanie, Ashley and Kirsten. Then I have my seven brothers; Jim, James jnr, John, William, Michael, Thomas and finally my youngest brother Peter. So my family is quite big! That is only because we have a farm that can house all of us. That’s enough about them and more about me!

My name is Aislinn and I’m nearly 11 years old. I work here with my brothers and Ashley and Jane on the farm. We mainly deal with all the potatoes. Father deals with all the cattle and the pigs because; all of his land was subdivided! Our farm is really lovely and I don’t know what my life would be like without it! We thrive on the farming, talk about it and centre our whole lives on the O’Connor farm. Anyway I have to run because father has called me down to hoe the fields.

15th June 1845

A lot has happened since I wrote to you last! The farm has gone down into the depths of despair. It all happened when the potato crop season had just started and father noticed something was wrong with the potatoes. The leaves had gone all brown and some of them were even black. Father told one of the other farmer’s and he told us to get rid of the crops! They were diagnosed as having something called phytophthora infestans more commonly known through Ireland as potato blight!

After 4 months there was nothing left and we were all starving. I suppose it hit Jane the hardest her being the smallest one with no food. All I can think about is food, and our usual Sunday Roast but there is no potatoes left for us. It is happening all over Ireland the people are starving with only horrible Indian Maize to eat. Father was right. Mr. Peel is useless to our country.

25th December 1845

Our family has fallen apart, Grandma and Grandpa have died because of the cold. All of my brothers were offered a boat trip to America and so they took it! I know that they are going to die because, they are called the coffin ships. Now father and mother have run off with all of my sisters apart from Jane and I. So I have decided to trek to Belfast with Jane because, there is no hope here and I hate it here.

25th December 1845 (second entry)

The two of us are cold and hungry and we have seen derelict farms along the way I’m so scared of what is going to happen to the two of us. I didn’t get anything for Christmas I feel so useless and no one cares at all about even Jane or me. All I want is some proper food to eat no one gives mercy because, they’re in the same position as we are.

14th May 1846

Jane is dead and it is my entire fault I killed her. I didn’t look after her properly, I sent her to the workhouse it was my only choice I had to get some money for my self. So I sold Jane for some food. Mr O’Neill the owner of the workhouse told Mrs Baker (the woman I’m staying with because of Jane). I have at least 1 day before I am back out and onto the streets.

16th May 1846

The streets of Belfast have done nothing for me at all. My life consists of begging from the poor and going to the church for money everyday. The vicar thinks I am disgusting and only gives me half of the money. I think I might be dying of hunger I only had mouldy bread and water when I was at Mrs Baker’s. Even then she made me pay for it.

My ragged clothes are too big and that proves how much weight I have lost because, when mother gave them to me I could just about fit in them. There is mud on my face and my feet are blistered cut and sore. The wind curls around me like a chilling whisper from the past. I wish I was back on my farm, our families farm, my homeland. There is no one here for lunch the same and for dinner and supper, guess what? Porridge! I suppose I have to be grateful for what we have. You see my 7 brothers and 6 sisters have to be fed as well as Grandpa and Grandma.

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12th September 1846

I am alive and well living with the Brown’s of Liverpool. After my last entry people were lining up for a boat and so I queued and got on it. A girl behind me told me this was the way to freedom and emigration would help all of the people of Ireland. We sailed for 4 nights and 5 days on a boat called ‘The Prince’ and I ended up here in Liverpool! The first thing I saw when I got off was the fantastic Albert Dock, it was so big and I could smell all of the sugar from the warehouses. Then we were all taken to the church and there was a statue of Jesus on Donkey outside I was very impressed.

Mr Brown was a shipping officer and noticed I was a small girl alone and so out of the kindness of his good Christian soul he took me in. Mother and Father would be very pleased that I’m living with some lovely Catholic people. So I stay at Mr Brown’s home and I love every second of it. For work I have to work at the cotton warehouse and I help Mr Brown take in orders from big ships. I even get paid 1 Shilling a week!

Liverpool is so full of life and it helps to know that millions of Irish people have a lifeline in this city. I don’t know where I would be if I had never gotten onto that boat back in Belfast and come here. I suppose I would have died and have been buried. I hope that many generations to come realise how much this place means to me and how it saved me from the clutches of the Irish Famine.

Stephanie Lambert
Poetry inspired by the Famine

No Escape
The Irish Famine brought hunger and disease,  
Even selling their wealth gave no ease,  
Children would lie dying in mud,  
Foods from other countries were no good.

People would die starving to death,  
Some would survive if only they’s left,  
Many bought tickets to far far away,  
Only to find they’d sailed but a day.

Cheated and hungry the Irish fled,  
Even so some ended up dead,  
They had hopes and dreams of so much more.  
But most didn’t live to see America’s shore.  
Stephanie O’Connor

There is nothing worse
There is nothing worse than telling your children there is no food.  
There is nothing worse than eating rotten food.  
There is nothing worse than losing your home.  
There is nothing worse than leaving your country.  
There is nothing worse than not knowing anyone.

I can only be grateful that I am alive.  
John O’Connor

Perspectives
The Rich
They are like a foul stench in my beautiful country,  
Polluting the air that is rightfully mine,  
Constantly complaining that they’re hungry,  
Pointlessly asking the rich to spare some time.  
Why should I help them at all?  
I just can’t explain or understand  
What they should do’ is help themselves.  
By leaving to me what’s rightfully mine, England.

The Poor
As I look down the street sitting alone,  
I wonder what I did wrong,  
I used to have a family who where alive, now gone,  
Now so weak when once so strong.  
The rich don’t understand my trouble,  
They blame our starvation on our country you see,  
When the real victims in this page of history are us,  
The victims of a terrible tragedy.

Martin Mulrooney
Imploring the government

To the British Government,

I am a victim of the dreadful potato famine. My name is Emily Hennigan, and although I am only thirteen years old, I have seen so much over the last few weeks, which an adult in England has never seen through their entire life. I see people dying every day and have now grown used to losing loved ones. We go to sleep at night not knowing what the next day will hold, and which one of us will be given the privilege to sleep again. We dream of our old lives, when we did not have famine and potatoes could be enjoyed by all.

My father was a farmer and we had only a small plot of land, as he had seven brothers, of whom now only one uncle is still alive. Our farm was surrounded by their children’s farms, slowly decreasing in size as another son received land for their family. Potatoes was our main crop, we lived on them and sold the leftover potatoes to make money so that we could live.

We were not rich, but we were not terribly poor. We had health and the ones we loved around us, even with no money this made us so happy. Now we have none of these things. All has been taken away and help has not even been given. We do not ask for far much, only to live. Now can you decide who will see another day and who will not? We are human beings, we depend on your help.

Please save us, you alone have the power and the money to do so.

Waiting in anticipation for you to be our saviours,

Emily Hennigan
(Danielle Gillis)

Dear Sirs,

I am writing this letter in despair. As you are aware there is a famine spreading over the whole of Ireland. The crops are diseased and moulded. Everywhere you go you know if there is a potato field near by because the smell is unbearable. The stalks themselves have melted away. With the sun beating down the smell grows stronger every day. People are crying out for your help but you are not listening. My sons are dead and their sister is terribly sick. They were so desperate for food they ate the diseased crop. My whole family is dying out. My cry for help to you must not be ignored.

Everywhere I go there are people lying on the floor just waiting to die. I am expecting a baby soon and for him to be born into a world full of death I would rather him not be born than his life be snuffed out like a candle.

I ask for your help and your support I send this letter from your servants the people.

Yours truly

Bridget O’Connell
(Simon Cullen)
Famine studies
This woman is called Bridget O’Donnell. Her husband had 7 acres and the rent was about £7 75 a year. The family was evicted when they could not pay and men came to knock down their home. Bridget was pregnant and had a fever. Her husband went away to find work. Neighbours took in Bridget and her children. The baby was born dead and then they all got fever. Her 13 year old son died of hunger while the rest was sick.
Headlines

‘GO SOMEWHERE ELSE’
Locals despair as the never-ending stream of refugees continues
Liverpool Mercury

SORROW SPREADS FROM STARVATION
‘No particle of food found in the stomach!’
Liverpool Chronicle

FAMINE NEWS: THE IRISH INVASION
Mother refuses to inter dead children
Liverpool Mercury

IRISH INVASION
Liverpool Mercury

ARE THE IRISH INVADING?
Liverpool Mercury

HUNDREDS OF ENGLISH AND IRISH DIE OF DISEASE
Liverpool Times

DEATH FROM DISEASED!
Liverpool Chronicle

DEATH FROM STARVATION
Liverpool Mercury

HUNDREDS DEAD AS DISEASE SPREADS
These poor wretches come from one famine to another
Liverpool Mercury

200,000 IRISH INTO THE LIVERPOOL DOCKS
Liverpool Mercury

DEATH TRAP DUBLIN!
More die as Potato Blight rages through the Irish capital
Liverpool Chronicle

DEATH SPREADS THROUGH THE CITY
Liverpool Chronicle

THE GREAT HUNGER
Danger of death from starvation
Liverpool Chronicle

DEATH, DISEASE & DISASTER AT OUR DOORS
Liverpool Mercury

THOUSANDS OF IRISH IMMIGRANTS DEAD!
Liverpool Mercury

DO YOU WANT TO DIE?
Mecho
**THE FIGHT WITH THE BLIGHT!!**

**IRISH INVASION**

**POTATO BLIGHT STRIKES AGAIN**

**MOTHER DEAD AFTER BEING REJECTED BY AN ASYLUM**

**LIVERPOOL DECLARED IRELAND’S CEMETERY**

**HELP!!!!!!!**

**BOY OF 8 FOUND DEAD!**

**LIVERPOOL CONSUMED BY HUNGRY IRISH**

**IRISH INVADE LIVERPOOL!!!!!!!**

**DEATH FROM STARVATION**

**HUNGER STRIKES**

**FEARFUL FAMINE STRIKES IRELAND**

**IRISH TAKE OVER CENSUS**

**THEY’RE EVERYWHERE**

**THE IRISH ENTRY**

**STARVATION HITS LIVERPOOL**

Thousands of Irish immigrants bring death and disease to Liverpool

**WE FEAR THAT THERE IS AT THIS MOMENT SUFFERING AS GREAT AND UNDESERVED.**

King David, Irish Famine, page 15
A famine story

A review of Under the Hawthorn Tree by Marita Conlon-McKenna, O’Brien Press, 0-86278-206-6

The Great Famine of Ireland is arguably the most tragic and horrific famine ever to strike in the past. It was both one of the most lethal famines in modern history and a watershed in the development of modern Ireland. It has in itself created a long-lasting effect in the world of Ireland, even to this day, killing more than one million people of its population. The number of souls decreased considerably throughout the disastrous years of labour and hardship and has never risen since this dreadful incident.

The unbalanced diet of potatoes and milk had long been the main food in Ireland. It kept people strong and healthy, working in the fresh air and eating this nutritious food. Another reason for planting potatoes was that with the subdivision of land regime, potatoes could be grown in small amounts of land. An acre of potatoes would have fed a family of five for a year, whereas an acre of wheat would feed one or two people. However, it was intensely dangerous to depend on one type of food crop. The crop could fail if a particular year was damp and frigid. Food shortages were not unique to Ireland after 1845, although famine was.

In the summer of 1845, a greatly hazardous disease struck the country as a surprise - POTATO BLIGHT! The potato failure impacted a country that was familiar with periodic shortages. From then on, ordinary people’s lives were turned upside down in the struggle to survive without their desired food- potato. Famine had arrived, which would strike the subdivision of land regime, potatoes could be grown in small amounts of land. An acre of potatoes would have fed a family of five for a year, whereas an acre of wheat would feed one or two people. However, it was intensely dangerous to depend on one type of food crop. The crop could fail if a particular year was damp and frigid. Food shortages were not unique to Ireland after 1845, although famine was.

‘Under the Hawthorn Tree’ written by Morita Conlon-McKenna is a deeply moving story of the children of the famine, expressing the hope, courage and suffering of young children subjected to the jeopardy of the famine.

The three children in the novel, Eily, Michael and Peggy symbolise the exhilaration and optimism with regard to the famine and the courage children and even adults took to survive in the dire shortage of food in their country.

Eily, Michael and Peggy are left alone, surrounded by disaster. In danger of being sent to the workhouse, they escape, and set out on a long and challenging journey to find their great-aunts they have heard about in their mother’s stories, their mother having gone in a desperate search of their father.

The story demonstrates how the Famine profoundly affected many aspects of Irish life including the separation of family life and the deaths, which affected the psychological minds of the Irish.

The ‘Hawthorn Tree’ also represents the hope of a better life and is in contrast to the disastrous plight of the potatoes. Whenever this Hawthorn tree is described in the book, a miracle happens to the children’s disbelief.

Throughout the book many important aspects of the famine come up to play a vital part within the book and I feel it is important to mention them in the act of writing my essay.

On pages 44-47, a threatening feeling comes to the children when the landlord of their house threatens to evict them from it, as their mother has gone in search of their father, feeling it best to leave them behind.

‘There is no work for anyone now. I am ordered to check all the cottages and send those to the workhouse that have no means of keeping themselves... if she[their mother] has disappeared you can’t stay on your own, and will have to make ready for the journey.’

Many Irish families suffered eviction throughout the course of the famine. These evictions led to further suffering among the poor and the starving. The quote from the book above exemplifies this point as the reader immediately sympathises with the children having to leave their home for the workhouse. It also describes how cruel and callous landlords were to those in need. The indiscriminate evictions that intensified after 1847 were a recurrent grievance by tenants, although proprietors blamed evictions on the high level of poor rate. Briefly, poor rate was the money the Irish had to pay to stay in their house. It comes from the Poor Law that was introduced in 1838. Relief was only provided, in Ireland, within the confines of a workhouse. The differences between the Poor Law in England and the one in Ireland made it clear that the poverty in Ireland was to be treated more harshly than elsewhere. Inevitably this attitude shaped responses during the Famine.

Workhouses are another issue raised within the book as the children are sent to them by their landlord, forcing them out of their childhood village. Chapter five entitled ‘The Road to the Workhouse’ describes the poor who went to the workhouse. They are portrayed in a depressing and disease stricken way, expressing some people ‘so weak they could hardly walk.’ It was true that the ill and the dying were sent to the workhouse in order to work for food. However, in some cases it was too late. Until the famine, people avoided the workhouses as much as they could. However when the famine did arrive, they had no choice. By January 1847, there were 111,000 people in the workhouse built to accommodate 100,000. These numbers describe the overcrowding of the place and this just added to the problems of disease. Famine fever became widespread and more people died of the spreading of this disease than of hunger. I feel that from the information above, the suffering and hardship of the Irish was immense and more should have been done to save them. Landlords ought to have been more considerate with the poor Irish and let them stay within their own environment of their house.

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people. Soup kitchens run by such charities saved many lives during the famine. Chapter Seven of the book describes such kitchens from a child’s point of view.

‘Eily could not believe the crowds when they reached the village. Hundreds of ragged starving people thronged the small main street. They queued desperate for food.’ This describes the amount of starving people who came from all parts of the area to soothe their hunger. It must have been terrible to watch and experience this occurrence, as the poor depended on this kitchen to survive their life.

‘The faces— the faces— she would never forget them. They all had the same look. The cheeks were sunken, the eyes wide and staring with deep circles underneath, the lips narrow and tight, and in some the skin had a yellow tinge.’ This vividly explains the appearance of the poor, making them out to be near skeletons. ‘They all had the same look’ conveys a feeling of a diseased and afflictive atmosphere within the kitchen.

The landlords did not wish to encourage the use of these soup kitchens, because they had to pay for them, so they made them as unattractive as possible. This is evident in the chapter:

‘This must be hell’, thought Eily, for once terrified.

The ‘soup’ was a kind of porridge called ‘stirabout’ and each person was to get one pound per day. In general, these soup kitchens worked well.

The thirteenth chapter - ‘Peggy’s Fever’ - outlines the common disease which was around in Ireland ‘Famine Fever.’ This fever broke out among the people who were weakened by hunger. One of the children in the story, Peggy, catches this awful disease whilst on the journey trying to find her aunts. ‘She touched Peggy’s forehead. It was burning. The skin on her shoulders and legs and everywhere was hot to touch. She was burning up with a fever.’ This distinctly describes the common effects of the fever, burning up everywhere and ‘tossed and turned and sometimes cried out in pain’. The fever was prevalent among the weakened and dying Irish and was the consequence of the tremendous hunger.

Throughout the book, ‘yellow meal’ is described frequently. This meal was bought by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel for £100,000 and was the common name for the Indian maize. Its original planting was done in America and he had bought it to Ireland. Many people disliked the maize and called it ‘Peel’s Brimstone’. To prevent starvation they were forced to eat it.

Fortunately for the children, their dangerous and tiring journey had not been wasted as they found their Great Aunts, Nano and Lena. Their hope and optimism kept their will power going, until their greatest feelings came to life when they saw their aunts. However not all stories of the famine ended up as contented and fortunate as this, in fact, some cases proved quite the opposite. Weak government, parsimonious administrators, entrenched financial interests, anti-Catholic, anti-poor and anti-Irish sentiments produced a particularly lethal combination of misguided intervention and injudicious non-intervention. The immediate consequence was the unnecessary deaths of over one million people.

I thoroughly appreciated reading and analysing the book, as it has expanded and widened my mind to the suffering humanity caused by horrifying, intolerable famine. The long-term legacy of the Famine not only changed Ireland, but also continued to influence British politics after the passage of 150 years.

S. Churney
The Irish Invade England

By Catriona Lewis and Nicole Monchar

The Irish people are emigrating to Liverpool and other parts of England. They are coming because of famine all over Ireland. Potato blight struck their food supply four weeks ago and they are now beginning to starve. In Ireland they don't have anything else to eat apart from potatoes so, once they have gone they don't have anything else. They are coming over by the 100's on boats, starving and frozen because of the cold. They are bringing all kinds of diseases with them so beware!!!

Last week, a man was found in the middle of the road. He had collapsed while the transport was still moving towards him. Help was on the way and we were told that he had suffered from starvation. He also had torn and dirty clothes which let drafts reach his body. He was taken to hospital and was given treatment for his injuries. He was diagnosed with pneumonia also.

Ten cases have been confirmed the same that week and something had to be done about it. Other diseases such as cholera and typhoid were being spread too by the Irish when they come over and the English are getting sick because of it.

This is a quote from a Manchester newspaper: "an unknown man was found lying dead on the footpath in Marybone, frothing at the mouth. A police constable was called and the man was taken to hospital but died on arrival. The post-mortem examination proved death from starvation. Mr Currie, the Coroner, remarked to the jury that there was no evidence that would suggest any blame attaching to the parish officers. It was the seventh case within the last few weeks. He was afraid that there were many people in Liverpool on the point of starvation. The inquest was held on 26th January."
Liverpool Chronicle

SORROW SPREADS FROM STARVATION!!!

“No particle of food found in the stomach!”
Children deceased as a cause of starvation

Through endless corridors of the
Albert Dock Famine hospital
screams and haunting sounds of death
can be heard throughout,
echoing screams of pain and
tragedy. Many innocent souls are
lost everyday here, symbolizing the
endless pain that is and
always will be the prey to the
abhorrent, atrocious Irish Famine-
children being the centre.

No one had expected the surprise of the Potato Blight in 1845, to
conclude into a web of such despair and depression, where
children would give their lives for a piece of bread. The last-growing
disease striking the country of Ireland, deteriorated potatoes into nothing, leaving
a vast majority of land infertile and unusable.

Then hunger struck. Famine Fever was subjected to an entire race of people
and ended up with a huge majority of Irish emigrating - Liverpool being the
attraction.

However, this emigrating did not end suffering - evidently it was far from
over. Many children have died from starvation, including the recent had named

Luke and his family emigrated from Ireland, and since then were steeped
to the lips of poverty. The deceased has recently been subjected to a post
mortem examination made by Mr. H. Christmas. It was stated, by the doctor,
that “the cause of death was the lack of food.” He also added that “no particle
of food was found in the stomach.” The family emigrated to Liverpool
thinking that there would be a change of life for them. However, their escape
became their end. They lived within a parish, and obtained 3s a week, but
other sources state that “on one particular week, they only obtained 1s
instead of 3s.” When the children were well enough to crawl out, they went
begging, door to door.

This in itself can describe how such a terrible famine can lead to a
depressing end in children, who should be the light of life.

Reported by Samuel Churney
Liverpool Chronicle

LIVERPOOL DECLARED IRELAND’S CEMETERY

Liverpool Saturn intends to prove that the quote at the
start of this article is the truth.

Tuesday 27 Jan.
An unknown man was found on a
footpath. He later
died from starvation.

Friday 2 Apr.
Ireland is pouring
into the cities of this
island, in a mass of
nakedness, dirt, and
cold. Liverpool,
whose proximity to
Ireland has given it
the unhappy title of
the most unhealthy
town.

Over 80,000 Irish are being buried in English cemeteries every week.

There have been several hundreds of thou sands of deaths 
regarding the Irish and the potato famine. We here at the

Saturday 27 Feb.
There are several 
streets occupied
Almost only by
the lowest class
of Irish. In these,
huge amounts of 
sickness and mortality occur.