

The Irish Famine (1845-1852) was a significant crisis during the Victorian era. Discourse in the press about the Famine was prevalent throughout England; yet, as the most Catholic and Irish county of England, Lancashire experienced the Famine in a unique way as the public opinion was influenced by the Irish who had already settled there and also took into account the influx of immigrants during the Famine who either received sympathy by their predecessors or were rejected as a source of instability. I will analyze the unique perspective from which the people of Lancashire viewed the Famine by studying five Lancashire-based newspapers of varying political, social, and religious affiliations. The articles featured in the *Blackburn Standard*, the *Lancaster Gazette*, the *Liverpool Mercury*, the *Manchester Times*, and the *Preston Chronicle* will reveal whether the opinions of the Lancashire press differed from the national press due to different social conditions and relationships. Through the project, I look forward to pursuing my interest in history and international relations and potentially using this research to develop a senior thesis.

Beginning in 1845, Ireland suffered through the last major famine of the modern, Western world and faced the deaths of over one million people. Although the British took steps to aid Ireland, England has often been accused of failing Ireland because of policies such as laissez-faire and ideologies such as providentialism that saw the Famine as an opportunity to rebuild Irish society.ⁱ The majority of the British public saw the Irish as separated by religion, class and race, and the British press reflected such opinions.ⁱⁱ Yet, particularly in the early years, the press also called for relief and decried the horrors of the Famine.ⁱⁱⁱ In addition to the vast mortality, almost 1.5 million Irish emigrated out of Ireland: many settling in Lancashire. The British reacted negatively to this immigration and believed that the Irish caused slums in towns such as Manchester.^{iv} This growing Irish population made Lancashire have the largest Catholic population in England. Hence, many Lancashire newspapers, including those I have chosen to study, were preoccupied with the Irish question and viewed the Famine through a unique lens.

Research regarding the British press and the Famine has only been completed by Michael De Nie and Leslie Williams in their respective books (see "Bibliography"). Their studies view British newspapers through a broad lens. De Nie's book focuses on the British press as a whole, although he concedes "that newspapers rarely, if ever, spoke with a unified voice."^v The majority of newspapers used in these studies were published in London, had liberal leanings, and had a middle-class readership; hence, sharing similar features when constructing an image of the Famine.^{vi} Williams saw the overwhelming negativity as the most striking characteristic of the British press during the Famine.^{vii} Generally, newspapers blamed the Irish and reflected British prejudice; thus, portraying the Irish shortcomings as a sign of British superiority.^{viii}

Less research has focused on the exceptions to the majority of the British press. Although studies, such as John Belchem's book on the Liverpool Irish (see "Bibliography"), have examined the Irish question in cities of Lancashire during the Famine, no studies have focused specifically on newspapers published in Lancashire during this time. This case study would show the discourse of various newspapers outside of the context of the broad British press; thus, providing an opportunity to search for disparities between the national press and the Lancashire press by looking at the influences of such factors as politics and religion. It is necessary to look past the views of the majority and delve into minority opinions. Such opinions "might have formed the basis for a radically different response to Irish distress."^{ix} A new perspective on the Anglo-Irish relationship and England's response to the Famine may emerge through the study of a set of chosen Lancashire newspapers.

My research will focus on fundamental questions based on this premise. Because of Lancashire's Irish and Catholic population, how did newspapers reflect the Anglo-Irish relationship in this context when compared to newspapers published in other areas? Are these newspapers exceptions in comparison to the general trends, or did the same ideologies prevail in these newspapers? Did this depend on their identity as liberal versus conservative or Anglican versus pro-Catholic? How did the discourse in Lancashire surrounding the Famine

take into account the Irish and Catholic populations, and how does this reflect the particular social character and perspective on the Irish question in Lancashire cities of this period?

To answer such questions, I have chosen Lancashire-based newspapers that have different affiliations. The *Blackburn Standard* and the *Lancaster Gazette* feature conservative viewpoints, and the latter advocates the Church of England, which I suspect will cause these publications to portray the Catholic Irish negatively. In contrast, the *Liverpool Mercury* holds liberal viewpoints and circulates among the middle class beyond Lancashire. *The Manchester Times* advocates liberal ideas and religious liberty, and the *Preston Chronicle* believes in a separation of church and state while appealing to a manufacturing and agricultural readership (See "Appendix" for more newspaper information). I expect the liberal newspapers that advocate religious freedom to show more sympathy. The distinctions between these newspapers will assist me in answering the questions of my research project because they show the opinions of different interest groups in the specific context of Lancashire in this period.

In the first 1-2 weeks of the summer I will broaden my knowledge of the Famine and the Anglo-Irish relationship in Lancashire through secondary sources. I have found various sources, available through Northwestern's library, which will assist me in my assessment of the reactions of newspapers to these social situations (see "Bibliography"). I will then study the articles in the newspapers that discuss the Famine and the Irish people. These articles are digitalized and available online through Gale's "19th Century British Library Newspapers," which is endorsed by the Northwestern University Library. There are approximately 350 articles relating to Ireland and the Famine between the years 1845 and 1852. Because of accessibility and because I will be remaining in Evanston this summer, I will be able to explore all of the relevant articles of the five newspapers. If time allows, I will also look at *The Guardian*, which has been widely studied and has many relevant articles, in order to further support my findings.

I will focus on finding articles and points that differ from the majority discourse in England, while also noting the similarities between the general trends and the Lancashire papers. Likewise, I will search for the religious and political motivations that underlie different articles and explain their place in the context of Lancashire and in the context of the national discourse. After examining these articles, I will categorize them and determine the factors that caused certain trends in Lancashire papers. I will construct an argument that helps to explain, through newspapers, the unique environment of Lancashire during the Famine. I will continue to study this topic during an independent study my junior year before completing a senior thesis.

This project combines my love for history and international relations as it exposes a time in which the relationship between two countries defined a crisis. The History classes I have taken have prepared me for this project as I have learned how to analyze historical primary documents from time periods ranging from the 10th century to the 21st century. My success in History classes and related classes at Northwestern, such as Tudor and Stuart Britain, Introduction to International Relations, and Imagining Ireland: Nation-Making in Modern Irish Literature, gives me confidence that I will complete a thorough and effective research project. I have begun a great amount of preliminary research and have been in contact with various Northwestern professors as well as research librarian Harriet Lightman while shaping this project. Additionally, I have been in contact with Professor James S. Donnelly of the University of Wisconsin who specializes in Modern Britain and Ireland and has provided helpful input.

For many years, I have studied the research of others in the hopes of completing my own research. While I did assist Professor Matthew Johnson in archaeological research in England in the summer of 2012, this will be my first time conducting independent research. I would like to complete a research project in order to hone my skills and learn more about the process. I plan to do a great amount of research in the future by completing a senior thesis and conducting research in graduate school. I have always found it difficult to narrow down my historical interests, and I hope that delving deeper into this period of history will give me a sense of my own goals in studying history and further define my greatest passions in the subject.

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- ⁱ Michael de Nie, *Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 87-88.
- ⁱⁱ De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 5. ; Leslie A. Williams, *Daniel O'Connell, the British Press, and the Irish Famine* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 17-19.
- ⁱⁱⁱ De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 95-96.
- ^{iv} De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 20.
- ^v De Nie. *Eternal Paddy*, 28.
- ^{vi} De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 27-28.
- ^{vii} Williams, *Daniel O'Connell*, 344.
- ^{viii} De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 270-272. ; Williams, *Daniel O'Connell*, 23.
- ^{ix} De Nie, *Eternal Paddy*, 94.

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Appendix

Additional Information on Newspaper Sources

Blackburn Standard

"The first issue of the *Blackburn Standard* was published on 21 January 1835, with eight pages of four columns per page costing 7d. It was published by James Walkden, Bookseller and Printer, of no. 5 Duke-Street, Blackburn. In keeping with other weekly newspapers, page one consists of small advertisements. The bottom right hand corner of page five features the duty stamp of 4d. By 18 July 1849, four pages of seven columns each were printed. Listed as a conservative paper by Mitchell in 1860, the circulation is given by Hubbard in 1882 as 10,000 copies."

Charles Mitchell, *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1846), quoted in "Publications: Blackburn Standard." *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,
<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C20%29%22Blackburn+Standard%22%24&searchTerm=blackburn+standard&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>

H.B. Hubbard, *Hubbard's Newspaper and Bank Directory of the World* (New Haven, 1882), quoted in "Publications: Blackburn Standard." *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,
<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C20%29%22Blackburn+Standard%22%24&searchTerm=blackburn&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>.

Lancaster Gazette

"Founded and owned by William Minshull, a printer, on 20 June 1801, the *Lancaster Gazette* established itself as a chronicle of the events of the town and local area. William Minshull died in May 1833, and his daughter Graciana Jane sold the newspaper to Charles Edward Quarme in August 1834. Quarme was a prominent local Conservative, who ran the newspaper until 1848, when he sold it, probably to George Christopher Clark. Quarme continued as editor of the newspaper until 1874, when he retired at the age of eighty. George Christopher Clark is recorded in Mitchell's *Press Directory* as being the proprietor between 1851 and 1873. The price of the Saturday edition reduced over the years: 4 1/2 d in 1846, 3 1/2 d in 1860, 2 1/2 d in 1870, 1d by 1880. By 1872 the newspaper was being issued on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Mitchell commented in 1870: '...strongly attached to the principles of the Church of England'; and in 1880: '...is a popular family newspaper.'"

Charles Mitchell, *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1846), quoted in "Publications: Lancaster Gazette." *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,
<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C21%29%22Lancaster+Gazetteer%22%24&searchTerm=lancaster+gazette&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>.

Liverpool Mercury

“The *Liverpool Mercury* was first published in 1811 as a weekly newspaper for the thriving port and commercial city. On 1 January 1850 the proprietors described their long-term aim as 'continual and peaceful progress', and it was these serious, reformist and Liberal principles that guided the *Mercury* throughout the century. The newspaper gradually expanded in size, frequency and circulation. The newspaper was circulated not just in Liverpool and surrounding rural areas of Lancashire and Cheshire, but also in Wales, the Isle of Man and London. The *Mercury*'s advertising role was central to its commercial success, with as many as five out of ten or twelve pages being devoted to advertisements and notices by 1900. Although reports from elsewhere in Britain and overseas were published on a comprehensive range of political, business and sporting subjects, the *Mercury* was exceptional for its coverage of local social issues. Regular columns, such as those by Hugh Shimmin in 1855-56, exposed the poverty and degradation of urban life. Successive editors used such articles to lead political campaigns for housing, public health and moral reform in Liverpool.”

“Publications: *Liverpool Mercury*.” *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,

<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C19%29%22Liverpool+Mercury%22%24&searchTerm=liverpool+mercury&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>

Manchester Times

“Circulates through Manchester, Salford, Rochdale, Bolton, Bury, Stockport, Congleton, Macclesfield, Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, Wigan, Warrington, Preston, Chorley, Blackburn, Burnley, Halifax, &c. Advocates reform, retrenchment, peace, free-trade; considers the corn laws injurious to commerce, without being of any benefit: contends for the equalization of sugar and coffee duty. Is not the organ of any sect, but is the advocate of religious liberty, and is opposed to all endowments for religious purposes. Has advocated the abolition of slavery, Roman Catholic emancipation, poor laws for Ireland, more liberal poor laws for Scotland, the establishment, on voluntary principles, of explanatory schools and schools for infants, reform of old educational institutions, sanitary improvements, &c. The Anti-Corn Law League has always had in this journal a firm and consistent supporter, and its value to that body cannot be overrated. The political editor, Mr. A. Prentice, is one of the select band from whom the great movement emanated.”

Charles Mitchell, *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1846), quoted in “Publications: *Manchester Times*.” *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,

<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C18%29%22Manchester+Times%22%24&searchTerm=manchester+times&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>

Preston Chronicle

"Circulates through Preston, Chorley, Blackburn, Wigan, Accrington, Burnley, Colne, Clitheroe, Padiham, Garstang, Fleetwood, Poulton, Reikham, &c. Advocates no religious party whatever; opposes connexion of church with State, and all State endowments of religion. It is also a free trade and complete suffrage journal, and circulates among a dense manufacturing population, as well as over a wide expanse of agricultural districts. All restrictions in trade are looked upon as disastrous alike to commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, and upon free trade as equally advantageous."

Charles Mitchell, *Mitchell's Newspaper Press Directory* (London, 1846), quoted in "Publications: Preston Chronicle." *Gale Cengage Learning: 19th Century British Library Newspapers*, 2007,

<http://find.galegroup.com/bncn/publicationSearch.do?serQuery=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28jx%2CNone%2C19%29%22Preston+Chronicle%22%24&searchTerm=preston+chronicle&inPS=true&prodId=BNCN&userGroupName=northwestern¤tPosition=0&type=getIssues>