

TOPIC: Results of the Great Irish Famine

AIM: What problems faced Irish immigrants in the United States?

Standards: United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

Do Now Activity: Imagine you are a historian studying about problems facing Irish immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century. Make a list of sources you would examine to find the information you need to piece together their story.

Motivational Activity: How can historians learn about the lives of ordinary people.

List student ideas from the do now activity. How can we use these sources to find the information historians need to piece together the stories of immigrants?

Activity: Examine the lyrics to the songs, "Paddy Works on the Railway" and "No Irish Need Apply." Students can work individually or in groups, or the entire class can read the songs together. Students groups can also read different songs.

Key Questions:

- "Paddy Works on the Railway"

Why does Paddy put on "corduroy breeches"?

Why does Paddy tell us he is "more dead than alive"?

Why would someone attack Paddy with "stones and sticks"?

What happened to Paddy, Bidy, and their children?

- "No Irish Need Apply"

What is another word for a "situation"?

Why is the young man angry when he reads the advertisement?

How is the problem resolved in the song?

In your opinion, is this a realistic solution to the problem? Explain.

Does this song include stereotypes? Explain.

In your opinion, can we rely on these songs as historical documents? Explain.

Summary: What kind of problems did Irish immigrants to the United States face in the nineteenth century? Why do immigrants often face problems in a new country?

Application: Are there songs like these in our contemporary culture? Which songs?

How are they similar to "Paddy Works on the Railway" and "No Irish Need Apply"?

How are they different?

Homework: Write a poem or a song that tells a story about immigrants to the United States.

ACTIVITY SHEET - Songs of the Irish Experience

A) Paddy Works on the Railway

This traditional Irish American folk song has many versions and verses.

Source: E. Fowke and J. Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (Dover, 1973).

In eighteen hundred and forty one, I put my corduroy breeches on, I put my corduroy breeches on, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty two, I left the old world for the new, bad cess (luck) to the luck that brought me through, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty three, 'twas then I met sweet Bidy McGee, an elegant wife she's been to me, while working upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty four, I landed on America's shore, I landed on America's shore, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty five, I found myself more dead than alive, I found myself more dead than alive, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty six, they pelted me with stones and sticks, and I was in one hell of a fix, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty seven, Sweet Bidy she died and went to heaven, if she left one child, she left eleven, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty eight, I found myself at heaven's gate, I found myself at heaven's gate, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

It's "Pat, do this!" and "Pat, do that!", without a stocking or cravat (scarf), and nothing but an old straw hat, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

Questions:

- 1- Why does Paddy put on "corduroy breeches"?
- 2- Why does Paddy tell us he is "more dead than alive"?
- 3- Why would someone attack Paddy with "stones and sticks"?
- 4- What happened to Paddy, Bidy, and their children?
- 5- In your opinion, can we rely on this song as a historical document? Explain.

B) No Irish Need Apply

The earliest written version of this popular song is from 1865. It was part of the oral tradition in both the United States and Canada. Ballyfadd is a small town in southeastern Ireland. The Tribune was a New York City newspaper. "Milia murther" is a Gaelic phrase that means "a thousand murders."

Source: E. Fowke and J. Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (Dover, 1973).

I'm a decent boy just landed from the town of Ballyfadd; I want a situation and I want it very bad.

I have seen employment advertised, "It's just the thing," says I,
But the dirty spalpeen (rascal) ended with "No Irish Need Apply."

"Whoo," says I, that is an insult, but to get the place I'll try,

So I went to see the blackguard with his "No Irish Need Apply."

Some do think it a misfortune to be christened Pat or Dan, but to me it is an honor to be born an Irishman.

I started out to find the house; I got there mighty soon.

I found the old chap seated; he was reading the Tribune.

I told him what I came for, when he in a rage did fly.

"No!" he says, "You are a Paddy, and no Irish need apply."

Then I gets my dander rising, and I'd like to black his eye

For to tell an Irish gentleman "No Irish Need Apply."

I couldn't stand it longer so a-hold of him I took,

And I gave him such a beating as he'd get at Donnybrook,

He hollered "Milia Murther," and to get away did try,

And swore he'd never write again "No Irish Need Apply."

Well, he made a big apology; I told him then goodbye,

Saying, "When next you want a beating, write 'No Irish Need Apply.'"

Questions

1- What is another word for a "situation"?

2- Why is the young man angry when he reads the advertisement?

3- How is the problem resolved in the song?

4- In your opinion, is this a realistic solution to the problem? Explain.

5- Does this song include stereotypes? Explain.

6- In your opinion, can we rely on this song as a historical document? Explain.