

# The Great Famine (1845-1850)

Headings	Notes
<b>IRISH LIFE IN THE 1840s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 1841, more than 70% of the Irish population still lived in the <b>countryside</b>. In under a century, the Irish population had doubled to <b>over 8.2 million</b>. This was mainly down to two reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irish people tended to marry young and have large families at the time.</li> <li>Agricultural improvements meant more food was available.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Most land was owned by landlords and was worked by <b>tenant farmers</b>. Large farmers were able to rent more than 30 acres while small farmers rented between 5 and 30 acres.</li> <li>Poorer people worked as labourers with some able to rent one acre from a farmer. These were known as <b>cottiers</b>. By 1845, there was about <b>1 million Irish cottiers</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>THE CAUSES OF THE GREAT FAMINE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Potato blight</b> is a fungus that spreads in damp and humid weather and destroys potato crops.</li> <li>In 1845, blight arrived in Ireland, causing the potato crop to fail. There were several factors which helped to make the arrival of the blight into a national catastrophe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of Irish people lived rurally and were <b>dependant on farming</b>.</li> <li>Widespread <b>poverty</b> meant people were already very vulnerable.</li> <li>The <b>rise in population</b> and the <b>subdivision of land</b> meant that, over time, people had to live off smaller and smaller plots of land with very large families.</li> <li><b>The poor were reliant on the potato</b> for food. A small plot of land was more than enough to grow enough potatoes to feed a family as well as potatoes being easy to harvest and store.</li> <li>Cottiers worked in exchange for rent so they had <b>no cash</b> to buy other food.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>THE FAMINE YEARS: 1845-1850</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1845</b> – Farmers noticed the <b>potato stalks turning black</b>. The potatoes had rotted but some of the previous harvest that had been in storage was able to be used.</li> </ul>
<b>THE COURSE OF THE FAMINE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1846</b> – <b>Two-thirds of the year's crop was lost to blight</b>. The potatoes in storage had been used up. The poorest began to starve and diseases spread easily.</li> <li><b>1847</b> – <b>Black '47</b> – <b>The worst year of the famine</b>. People had <b>very few seeds</b> to plant so the crop was very small. An estimated 300,000-500,00 died and over 250,000 emigrated.</li> <li><b>1848-1850</b> – Starvation and diseases (such as typhus and cholera) worsened. Roughly 40,000 more people died in 1850 than in 1846.</li> </ul>

Keywords	Summary
The Great Famine	Between 1845 and 1850, Ireland suffered the events of the <b>Great Famine</b> . Many Irish farmers were <b>tenant farmers</b> , renting land to farm in exchange for rent. <b>Cottiers</b> rented 1 acre – by 1845, there were over 1 million cottiers in Ireland. <b>Poverty</b> , reliance on farming & the potato, and the <b>subdivision of land</b> made Ireland a breeding ground for the potato blight that thrived in the Irish climate. <b>Potato blight</b> arrived in Ireland in 1845 which turned potato stalks black. There was enough potatoes in storage to support the first year but 1846 saw <b>two-thirds of the potato crop lost to blight</b> . <b>Black '47</b> was considered <b>the worst year of the famine</b> as people had very few seeds resulting in a small crop. Starvation and disease became widespread between 1846-50.
Tenant farmers	
Cottiers	
Potato Blight	
Poverty	
Subdivision of land	
Starvation	
Black 47'	

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Headings	Notes
<b>THE FAMINE YEARS: 1845-1850</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many tenant farmers and cottiers could not pay their rent and, as a result, were <b>evicted</b> (forcibly removed from their homes).</li> </ul>
<b>THE COURSE OF THE FAMINE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those who could afford to leave <b>emigrated</b> and were considered lucky although they faced a hard and uncertain journey. The ships were unsuitable, unstable and in poor condition. They became known as <b>coffin ships</b> as so many died on board of disease and starvation.</li> <li>The middle and upper classes were almost untouched by hunger, homelessness and disease.</li> </ul>
<b>FAMINE RELIEF EFFORTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially, the British government took a <b>laissez-faire</b> ('let it be') attitude, believing that they should not interfere in the economy as it would correct itself in time. Britain did not rely on the potato for food as Ireland did, believing the blight would only affect one year of crops. As a result, Britain <b>continued to export food</b> from Ireland.</li> <li>As it became apparent that the blight would not end as quickly as believed, some help was put in place by the British government:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prime Minister <b>Sir Robert Peel</b> sent aid in the form of <b>maize</b> in November 1845, at cost price. Most people could not afford it nor did they know how to cook it.</li> <li><b>Public works schemes</b> were set up for people to earn money building roads, walls or bridges for one shilling per day. This wasn't enough as prices continued to rise.</li> <li><b>Workhouses</b> (large buildings where people worked in return for basic accommodation and food) had been established for those who had nowhere else to go in the early 1840s. By 1847, 200,000 people were in these workhouses where disease spread quickly and easily.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Most aid came from charities and volunteers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Quakers</b> (Religious Society of Friends) set up <b>soup kitchens</b> in a number of towns in <b>1846</b>. These soup kitchens gave hot soup to starving people who were not in workhouses.</li> <li>Money was raised by the Quakers and others to give practical and financial help to the Irish. <b>Donations</b> came from at least 19 different countries. <b>Queen Victoria</b> donated money, the <b>Ottoman Sultan</b> sent both money and food while <b>Pope Pius IX</b> gave Roman coins from his private income. The <b>Choctaw Nation</b> also raised money for those starving in Ireland.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Keywords	Summary
Eviction	<p>The events of the famine saw many tenant farmers <b>evicted</b> from their homes as they could not afford rent. <b>Emigration</b> rose as those who could afford to leave boarded <b>coffin ships</b> to escape the suffering in Ireland. The British government had a <b>laissez-faire</b> approach to the famine. <b>Sir Robert Peel</b> sent <b>maize</b> in Nov. 1845 but people could not afford or cook it. <b>Public work schemes</b> were set up but pay wasn't enough for rising costs. <b>Workhouses</b> were established for people who had nowhere else to go where they worked for food and accommodation. Charities such as the <b>Quakers</b> set up <b>soup kitchens</b> to feed the poor. Donations came from <b>Queen Victoria</b>, the <b>Ottoman Sultan</b>, <b>Pope Pius IX</b> and the <b>Choctaw Nation</b> to help the poor.</p>
Soup kitchens	
Emigration	
Workhouses	
Coffin Ships	
Queen Victoria	
Laissez-faire	
Ottoman Sultan	
Sir Robert Peel	
Maize	
Pope Pius IX	
Public Work Schemes	
Quakers	
Choctaw Nation	

# The Great Famine (1845-1850)

Headings	Notes
THE IMPACT OF THE GREAT FAMINE IN IRELAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Decrease in population</b> – From 1845 to 1850, the population dripped from 8 million to about 6 million as roughly 1 million died from disease or starvation while a further 1 million emigrated.</li> <li>• <b>Changes in farming practices</b> – subdivision of land was ended; the eldest son would now inherit the entire farm when his father died which resulted in larger farms but forced younger children to emigrate. Many landlords changed from <b>tillage</b> (crops) to <b>pasture</b> (cattle) farming.</li> <li>• <b>Rise in anti-British feeling</b> – Many blamed the British government for the great suffering experienced during the famine. This would lead to a boost in support for nationalist groups and a desire for Home Rule, paving the way for the upcoming uprisings and rebellions.</li> <li>• <b>Decline of the Irish language</b> – Irish-speaking areas were the worst affected by death and emigration. People began to speak English instead of Irish as it would help them find work.</li> <li>• <b>New emigration trends</b> –emigration from Ireland existed from as early as the Irish Plantations but the events of the Great Famine exacerbated the issue. In the 1881 census, the population of the island had fallen by over 3 million (37%) since 1841.</li> </ul>
THE IRISH DIASPORA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emigration from Ireland soared from the 1840s onwards. Destinations included Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the US. The <b>Irish diaspora</b> refers to Irish migrants and their descendants scattered across the world.</li> </ul>
THE IRISH DIASPORA IN BRITAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Irish emigration to British cities such as <b>Liverpool</b>, <b>Manchester</b> and <b>Glasgow</b> was not new as it was <b>cheap to travel</b> to Britain. People sailed aboard crowded <b>steamships</b> that were built for transporting animals and grain. The Irish migrants were among the poorest people, living in the <b>slums</b> of British cities and towns. Unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions led to the spread of diseases such as cholera, typhus and tuberculosis.</li> <li>• At the same time as the Great Famine, Britain was experiencing its <b>Industrial Revolution</b>. The Irish were willing to work for <b>low wages</b>, making them unpopular with many British people. Later the Irish would become part of the industrial working class as publicans or shopkeepers.</li> <li>• The Irish were heavily involved in the <b>building trade</b> and <b>transport</b>, building the <b>British canal, road and rail networks</b> in the nineteenth century.</li> <li>• Today, up to <b>6 million people (10%)</b> in the UK have an Irish-born grandparent.</li> </ul>
<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Decreased population	<p>The Great Famine had a massive impact on the island of Ireland. It led to a <b>decreased population</b> (due to 1 million emigrating and another 1 million dying), <b>changes in farming practices</b> (<b>tillage</b> to <b>pasture</b> as well as larger farms), a rise in <b>anti-British feeling</b> (and the rise of <b>nationalism</b>), the <b>decline of the Irish language</b> and <b>new emigration trends</b>. It also led to the Irish diaspora as emigration to Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand increased.</p> <p>The Irish in Britain worked for <b>low wages</b> in the <b>Industrial Revolution</b> for jobs in the <b>building trade</b> after arriving there on <b>steamships</b>. Up to 6 million people in Britain have Irish ancestry.</p>
Changes in farming practices	
Anti-British feeling	
Decline of the Irish language	
Emigration	
Low wages	
Steamships	Irish diaspora
Building trade	

# The Great Famine (1845-1850)

Headings	Notes
THE IRISH DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emigration to the US was <b>expensive</b> while the journey was long and difficult with strict immigration rules.</li> <li>• The main point of entry into the US was at <b>New York City</b>. Until 1890, its main immigration centre was at <b>Castle Garden</b>; a new immigration centre was open in 1892 at <b>Ellis Island</b>.</li> <li>• Famine immigrants were <b>Catholic</b> and most <b>spoke Irish</b>. The largely <b>Protestant American population</b> were not welcoming with signs such as '<b>No Irish Need Apply</b>' and '<b>No Blacks. No Dogs. No Irish</b>' especially when the economy was suffering.</li> <li>• The Irish mostly worked at <b>manual labour jobs</b>. Many were later recruited by the <b>US Army</b> to serve in the <b>American Civil War</b> and afterwards to build <b>cities</b> such as <b>Kansas City</b> and the <b>Union Pacific Railroad</b>.</li> <li>• Many <b>Irish-Americans</b> had a deep hatred towards the British government which would lead to their support of <b>Irish nationalist movements</b> (<b>The Fenians</b> and the <b>Irish Republican Brotherhood</b>) both politically and financially.</li> <li>• In 1841-1850, around <b>910,000 Irish</b> emigrated to the US. Today, over <b>41 million Americans</b> claim Irish ancestry including <b>22 US Presidents</b> such as <b>Barack Obama</b> and <b>Joe Biden</b>, as well as actors such as <b>Chris Evans</b> and <b>Robert Downey Jr.</b></li> </ul>

Keywords	Summary
Expensive	<p>Unlike travelling to the UK, emigrating to the US was <b>expensive</b>. Irish emigrants arriving in the US arrived in <b>New York City</b> at <b>Castle Garden</b> (1820-1890) and then to <b>Ellis Island</b> (1882-1954). Most Irish faced discrimination due to being <b>Catholic</b> in a <b>Protestant</b>-majority country as well as not speaking Irish. Signs such as '<b>No Irish Need Apply</b>' and '<b>No Blacks. No Dogs. No Irish</b>' were common. The Irish were employed in manual labour jobs before serving in the <b>US Army</b> during the <b>American Civil War</b> and building the <b>Union Pacific Road</b>. Many Irish-Americans held a <b>deep hatred towards Britain</b> for what had happened in the Great Famine, leading to the rise in <b>Nationalist</b> support for groups such as the <b>IRB</b> and the <b>Fenians</b>.</p>
Labour jobs	
New York City	
Castle Garden	
Ellis Island	
Catholic	
Protestant	
No Irish Need Apply	
No Blacks. No Dogs. No Irish	

# The Great Famine

Keywords	Definitions
Absentee landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Property owners who did not live on their estates. They lived in Dublin or England and left the running of their estates to stewards.</li></ul>
Coffin ships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name given to the ships that carried the famine-era Irish abroad because so many starving passengers died on board.</li></ul>
Conacre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The sub-letting of small plots of ground to grow crops, such as potatoes.</li></ul>
Cottier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Labourers who worked for a farmer in return for one acre of land.</li></ul>
Emigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Movement of people from their birth country to settle in another country.</li></ul>
Eviction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When someone is forced out of their home.</li></ul>
Irish diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the Irish people and descendants of Irish people who live outside Ireland.</li></ul>
Laissez-faire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The belief that a government should intervene as little as possible in economic affairs.</li></ul>
Landless labourers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who lived in one-roomed cabins on the outskirts of towns and villages and found work on other people's land. Wandering labourers were called spalpeens.</li></ul>
Large farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers who rented more than 30 acres.</li></ul>
Lazy beds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parallel rows of earthen ridges used to grow potatoes.</li></ul>
Lumper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The most common type of potato grown in Ireland in the 1840s.</li></ul>
Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The movement of people within or between countries.</li></ul>
Peel's brimstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name given to the maize (corn) imported by Peel's government to feed the starving Irish. It was yellow like brimstone (sulfur), hard and unpalatable.</li></ul>
Potato Blight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A fungus that rots potatoes in the ground and makes them inedible.</li></ul>
Public works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Government work schemes to build roads and piers</li></ul>
Small farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Farmers who rented between 5 and 30 acres.</li></ul>
Soup kitchens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Places that gave soup to starving people who were not in workhouses.</li></ul>
Subsistence farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growing enough food to pay the rent and provide meals with almost nothing left over.</li></ul>
Tenant farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People who rented the land they farmed. For most, crops were grown to pay rent, and potatoes were grown to feed themselves.</li></ul>
Workhouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place where poor people could get food and shelter in return for their labour. Families were kept apart and conditions were terrible.</li></ul>