# The Irish in America: A History of Immigration and Exclusion

The Irish in America: A History of Immigration and Exclusion tells the story of the Irish people who came to America in search of a better life, and the challenges they faced along the way. From the first Irish immigrants who arrived in the early 17th century to the mass migration of the 19th century, the Irish have played a vital role in shaping American history and culture.

But the Irish experience in America has not always been easy. In the early years, Irish immigrants faced discrimination and prejudice from the Protestant majority. They were often seen as dirty, lazy, and violent. And as the number of Irish immigrants increased, so too did the anti-Irish sentiment.



Unintended Consequences: The Story of Irish Immigration to the U.S. and How America's Door was Closed to the Irish by Ray O'Hanlon

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In the 1830s and 1840s, the anti-Irish movement reached its peak. Irish immigrants were attacked in the streets, and Irish homes and businesses were burned down. In 1844, anti-Irish riots in Philadelphia left 13 people dead.

The anti-Irish sentiment eventually subsided, but the Irish continued to face discrimination in many areas of life. They were often denied jobs, housing, and education. And they were often the victims of violence and hate crimes.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Irish began to organize and fight for their rights. They formed labor unions, political organizations, and social clubs. And they gradually made progress in overcoming the discrimination they had faced.

Today, the Irish are one of the most successful immigrant groups in American history. They have made significant contributions to American society in all areas of life, from politics to business to the arts. And they have helped to make America a more diverse and vibrant nation.

#### The First Irish Immigrants

The first Irish immigrants to America arrived in the early 17th century. They were mostly Catholic refugees fleeing religious persecution in Ireland.

These early immigrants settled in the colonies of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York.

The Irish immigrants who arrived in the 18th century were mostly economic migrants. They were looking for a better life in America, and they were willing to work hard to achieve it. These immigrants settled in all parts of

the country, but they were particularly concentrated in the cities of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia.

The Irish immigrants who arrived in the 19th century were fleeing the Great Famine of 1845-1849. This famine was caused by a potato blight that devastated Ireland's potato crop. Over a million people died in the famine, and another million emigrated to America.

The Irish immigrants who arrived in the 19th century faced many challenges. They were often poor and uneducated. And they were often discriminated against because of their religion and their ethnicity. But they persevered, and they eventually made a significant contribution to American society.

#### The Anti-Irish Movement

The anti-Irish movement in America reached its peak in the 1830s and 1840s. This was a time of great social and economic change in America. The country was rapidly industrializing, and there was a growing influx of immigrants from Europe.

The anti-Irish movement was fueled by a number of factors, including:

- Economic competition: Irish immigrants were often willing to work for lower wages than native-born Americans. This led to resentment among some American workers.
- Religious prejudice: Many American Protestants were prejudiced against Catholics. They believed that Catholics were not loyal to the United States, and that they were trying to take over the country.

 Political power: Irish immigrants were beginning to gain political power in some cities. This led to fears among some Americans that the Irish would eventually control the country.

The anti-Irish movement manifested itself in a number of ways, including:

- Violence: Irish immigrants were often attacked in the streets. Irish homes and businesses were burned down. And in 1844, anti-Irish riots in Philadelphia left 13 people dead.
- Discrimination: Irish immigrants were often denied jobs, housing, and education. They were also often the victims of hate crimes.
- Political exclusion: Irish immigrants were often excluded from political participation. They were denied the right to vote, and they were rarely elected to public office.

The anti-Irish movement eventually subsided, but it left a lasting legacy of discrimination against Irish Americans.

### The Irish Fight Back

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Irish began to organize and fight for their rights. They formed labor unions, political organizations, and social clubs. And they gradually made progress in overcoming the discrimination they had faced.

One of the most important Irish organizations was the Ancient Free Download of Hibernians (AOH). The AOH was founded in 1836 as a fraternal organization for Irish immigrants. But it quickly became a powerful

political force. The AOH fought for Irish rights in a number of areas, including voting rights, education, and job opportunities.

Another important Irish organization was the Irish Land League. The Irish Land League was founded in 1879 to fight for land reform in Ireland. The Land League was successful in getting the British government to pass a number of laws that improved the lives of Irish farmers.

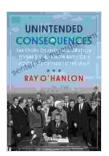
The Irish also made progress in politics. In 1882, the first Irish-born American was elected to the U.S. Senate. And in 1884, the first Irish-born American was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Irish continued to make progress in the 20th century. They became increasingly integrated into American society, and they made significant contributions to all areas of American life.

#### The Irish Today

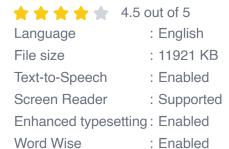
Today, the Irish are one of the most successful immigrant groups in American history. They have made significant contributions to American society in all areas of life, from politics to business to the arts. And they have helped to make America a more diverse and vibrant nation.

The Irish experience in America is a story of perseverance and success. Despite facing many challenges, the Irish have overcome discrimination and prejudice to become one of the most successful immigrant groups in American history. Their story is a reminder that anything is possible if you have the courage to dream and the determination to succeed.



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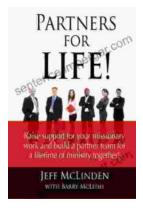
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