

The Irish in British North America/Canada

March 11, 2021

Norma M. Milne

Irish Genealogy Special Interest Group

Welcome to our March 2021 Irish SIG

Materials and some notes are taken
**from “Irish Emigration and Canadian
Settlement”**

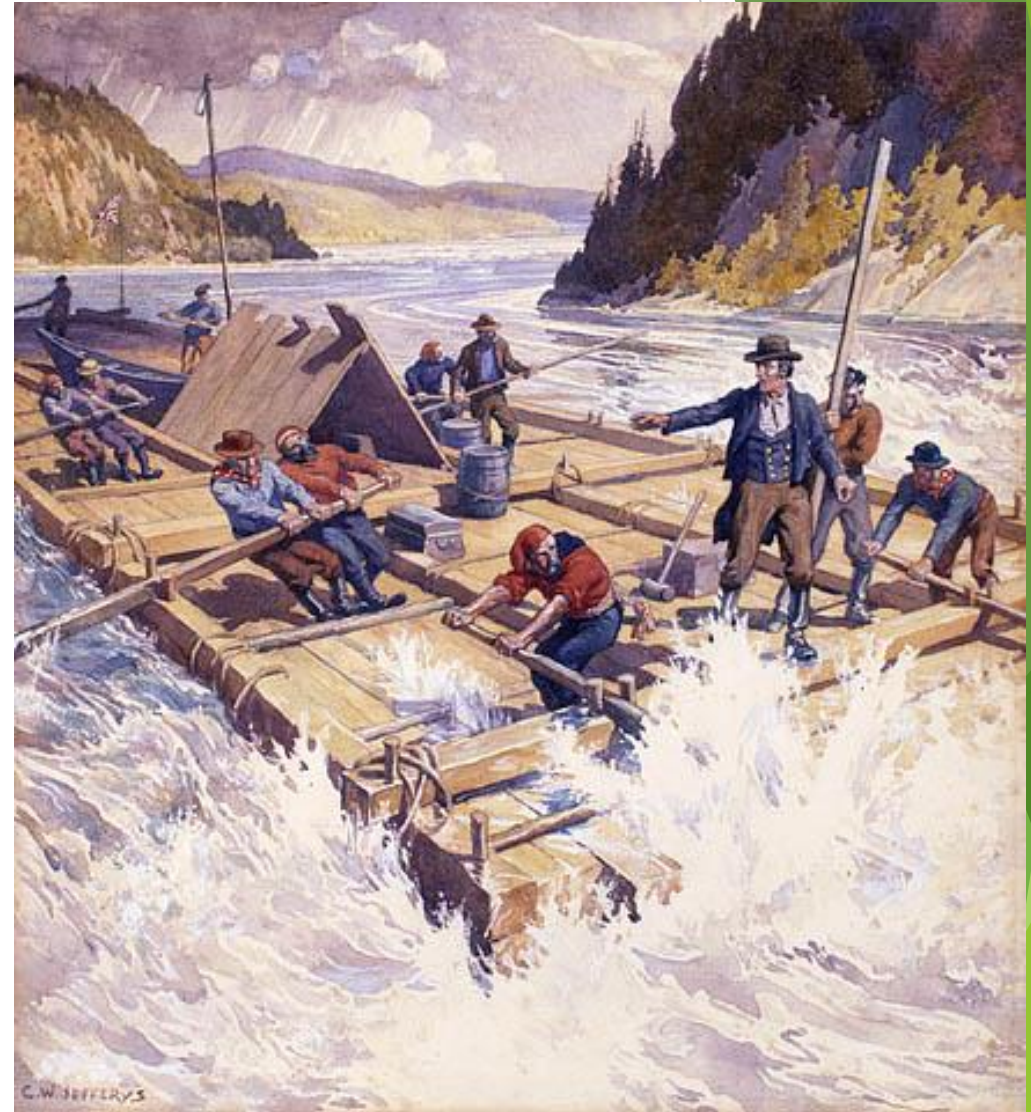
by Cecil J. Houston and William J.
Smyth

Please note: Items displayed are not the property of Norma Milne, nor LRGIG

A bit of history:

- ▶ Many of our Irish Ancestors came into Canada for a variety of reasons and from different areas in Ireland. British North America was close, and the cost of passage in certain times was much less than to the United States. In the 19th century the Irish comprised the largest of the immigrant population in Canada, but emigration had occurred well before the Famine Period. The Irish in Canada also formed some distinctive regional cultures. There are many myths about the Irish coming to Canada. The authors have provided great information to dispel many of these myths, and their text is well worth reading.
- ▶ Along the way, we will touch upon some information that will be helpful to those of us who are puzzled by when, why or where to or from our Irish first-generation ancestors arrived.
- ▶ A few additional references are important to share:
- ▶ Terence Punch's study of Halifax – background of the Catholic community in detail
- ▶ Cyril Byrne and Brendan O'Grady on Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island
- ▶ Marianna O'Gallagher on the Quebec Irish
- ▶ Murray Nicholson on Toronto Irish
- ▶ Peter Toner on New Brunswick Irish
- ▶ Robert O'Driscoll and Lorna Reynolds on the Irish Experience
- ▶ Lucille Campey – Atlantic Canada Irish Immigrants
- ▶ Other authors: William Spray, Deirdre Mageen, John Mannion – on new sources of information

Industries that brought the Irish to Canada include fisheries, timber, flax-seed, and agriculture



Number of ships from Ireland to mainland North America, 1750-1775; based on data from Dickson & Lockhart - taken from Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement as noted

Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement, Patterns, Links, and Letters – Cecil J. Houston, William J. Smyth



FIGURE 2.1

Number of ships from Ireland to mainland North America, 1750-75; based on data from Dickson and Lockhart: see [chapter 2](#), [note 3](#).

The map shows that the major ports of embarkation were Dublin and the Ulster ports of Derry, Belfast, and Newry, the latter three ports linked to the middle colonies of America by, among other things, Ulster's demand for flax-seed. The emigrants went out to America on the returning voyages of the flax-seed ships. Cork and other ports, such as Galway, Limerick, and Waterford, were less important. In the eighteenth-century movements from Ulster, family emigration from rural areas was the norm, and most emigrants became pioneering settlers on the agricultural frontiers. A majority of the settlers were Presbyterian, from counties Antrim and Londonderry, the harbinger of what became known as the Scotch-Irish.⁴ Anglicans and Catholics were also represented and were especially numerous⁵ among those exiting through Newry and Belfast. The emigration from places outside Ulster had a different character. Participants were less likely to be organized in family groups, and more of them were rural labourers and single male artisans, quite often from towns and cities. A large proportion of these would have been Catholic.⁶ They were often indentured to work on farms and in industry in the New World. However, regardless of region of origin, occupation, and religious affiliation, the Irish were headed for the same American destinations.

Some facts the authors have developed:

- ▶ Approx. 55% of the Irish Settlers in Canada were Protestants, predominately Anglican rather than Presbyterian – mainly from the Northern third of Ireland – Ulster, Leinster, Munster
- ▶ Of the 45% who were Catholic, as many as 1/3rd were from Ulster, with also a significant group from Cork
- ▶ Set aside the idea that Ulster arrivals were mainly Protestants, and southern Ireland origin were Catholics – truly a mix!
- ▶ The Irish in Canada were spread across a vast territory – sometimes based on the skills they possessed and the specific needs in a territory
- ▶ From **1725** on there was a steady flow of Irish across the Atlantic

Specific times for settlement

- ▶ 18th century - significant emigration to Newfoundland - between 1770 and 1830 some 30,000 Irish settled there (fisheries) - the Atlantic fisheries provided a substantial settlement in what would become Canada. Many then migrated to the maritime mainland of British North America and New England
- ▶ In 1830s this provisions trade collapsed
- ▶ Nova Scotia had some first efforts to promote land & agricultural settlements:
- ▶ 1760 Alexander McNutt advertised for recruits in the Belfast Newsletter and approx. 300 people from Donegal and Derry to Nova Scotia arrived. 1762 more arrived; Further, some Ulster Presbyterians went up from Londonderry, NH
- ▶ Nineteenth Century Mass Migration & Settlement Phases:
- ▶ Mass emigration from Ireland also developed in 1815. Up to 100,000 in exceptional years emigrated before the Famine period, **to Britain**. (in 1841 - 50,000 arrived) as travel was fast and the low fares. (seasonal work, factory work, miners)
- ▶ 19th century: Irishmen went to Quebec City and Saint John, New Brunswick and a few other Canadian harbors.
- ▶ Between 1825-1845 abt 450,000 Irishmen went to British No America, and abt 400,000 to the United States. For comparison....

Irish Migration to British No America and US

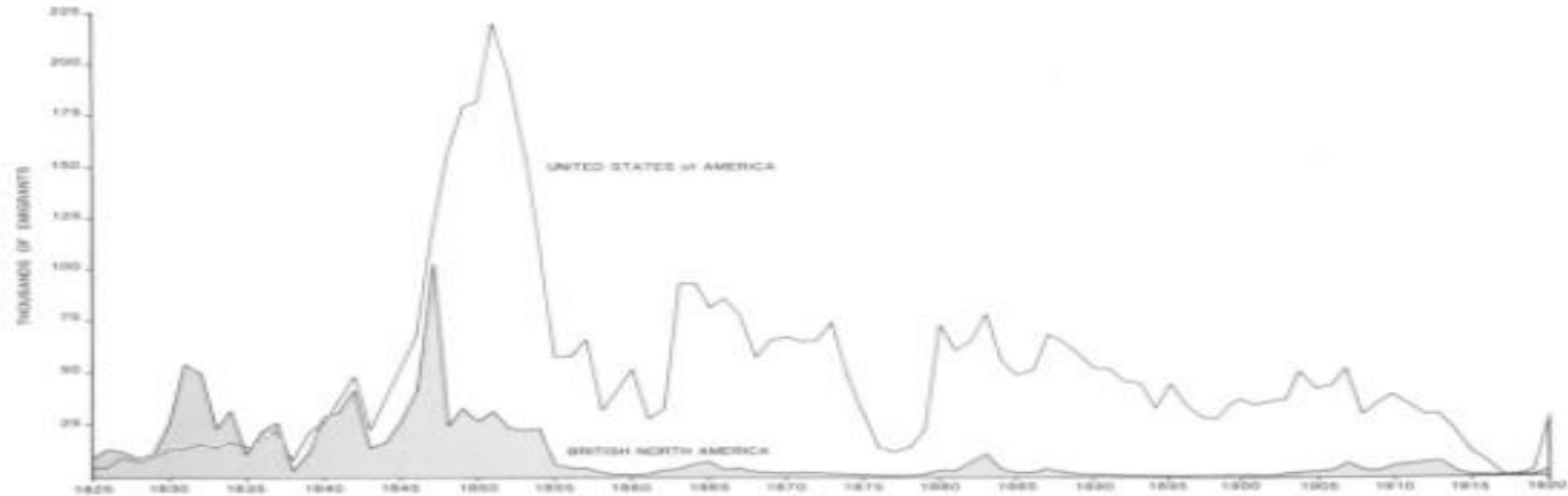


FIGURE 2.3

Irish immigration to British North America and the United States, 1825–1920

Canadian Irish settlements were created within a larger North American movement that saw many Irish arrivals in British North America continue on to US destinations. The cheap passage to Quebec City and Saint John led many to see British North America as a stop on the thoroughfare to the United States, rather than an ultimate destination. The advertisement in

More Settlement Information:

- ▶ **Through migration:** From Quebec City, a popular route was up the St. Lawrence River to Lake Ontario, then some form of transport to upstate New York or Ohio Valley could be undertaken.
- ▶ Ex: Individuals wrote to their families from Massachusetts stating they had left Quebec in 1833 due to the cholera outbreak.
- ▶ Through migration to the US was likely not tracked, due to the length of the border between Canada and the US, and crossing was easy!
- ▶ Through migration was most likely more prevalent in Saint John. New Brunswick became unable to absorb Irish immigrants, due to land shortages.
- ▶ The United States had more capacity to absorb the Irish.
- ▶ Stats: In 1842, Canada had 122,000 Irish-born settlers, and all of British North America had 160,000 (retention of approx. 1/3rd of emigrants who arrived between 1816-1842)

Emigration to Saint John and Quebec from the principal Irish Ports (1833-1834 by Percentage)
Source: Quebec Emigrant Agent's Report, 20 December 1840 (National Archives of Canada) and
Passenger Lists, Saint John, 1833 and 1834 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick)

From	To Saint John	To Quebec
Belfast	11.4	18.1
Cork	19.0	10.2
Derry	39.5	11.0
Dublin	3.6	30.3
Galway	4.0	0.9
Kinsale	7.0	--
Limerick	0.8	5.4
Newry	4.3	5.3
Sligo	7.8	9.0
Waterford	--	3.8
Others	2.6	6.0
Total Percentage	100%	100%
Numbers	9,579	31,221

Volume of Irish emigration during the Famine Period - why the decline?
Partially due to the Emigrant Tax being doubled, various levies, such as need
to quarantine, post 1847. Fewer opportunities for families.

Year	To British No America	To USA
1846	40,667	68,730
1847	104,518	119,314
1848	24,809	157,473
1849	33,392	181,011
1850	26,444	183,672

Interesting:

- ❖ The stereotype of the Irish emigrant was one of a poor labourer - not always true
- ❖ There were many successful farmers and tradesmen
- ❖ Ordinance Surveys can give a glimpse into holdings or leases “values”
- ❖ There were shoemakers, weavers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, manufacturers, clerks, quarrymen, apothecaries, butchers, wheelwrights, printers who were enticed to travel to Upper Canada from New York or Ireland in 1817
- ❖ Substantial land grants were available at specific times (example: Robert Reid and William Stewart from Bushmills, County Antrim were granted 2,200 acres of land in 1822.)
- ❖ There were “British government” experiments - between 1823-1825, two and one half thousand Irish, mainly from Fermoy region of County Cork, to Upper Canada with free land grants provided. (Peter Robinson’s assisted settlement)
- ❖ The Talbot group migration of Protestants from north Tipperary is an example of a non-government scheme. Talbot selected 38 families with whom he proceeded to the New World. All were literate - and this was to promote social familiarity and security with reliable kin. They were granted 100 acres per adult male on the military frontier of Upper Canada

Where do we begin?

This depends upon what timeframe, what records and information you are seeking:

➤ Example: The Lawler/Lawlor Family (Erin's search)

- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Canada_Online_Genealogy_Records
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland_Emigration_and_Immigration
- [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland,_Parliamentary_Papers_on_Emigration to Canada - FamilySearch Historical Records](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland,_Parliamentary_Papers_on_Emigration_to_Canada_-_FamilySearch_Historical_Records)
- THEN:
- [NovaScotiagenealogy.com - NovaScotiaArchives - Facebook](#)
- -----
- <https://www.genealogybranches.com/irishpassengerlists/>
- <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/immigrants-grosse-ile-1832-1937/Pages/immigrants-grosse-ile.aspx>

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog/?category=40>

Card Catalog

Searchable listing of all record collections

Title

Keyword(s)

Search

or Clear All

Filters

✕ Immigration & Emigration

Filter By Category

Border Crossings & Passports 41

Citizenship Records 169

Crew Lists 104

Immigration & Emigration Books 262

Passenger Lists 225

Ship & Port Pictures 5

Results 1-25 of 551

Sort By Date Added



[Search entire "Immigration & Emigration" Category](#)

Title	Category	Records	Activity
North Dakota, U.S., Naturalizations, 1873-1952	Immigration & Emigration	309,472	NEW
Italians to America Passenger Data File	Immigration & Emigration	841,376	
Delaware, Federal Naturalization Records, 1802-1943	Immigration & Emigration	11,157	
West Virginia, Federal Naturalization Records, 1844-1943	Immigration & Emigration	32,689	
U.S., American Samoa, Passenger Lists and Travel Documents, 1918-1965	Immigration & Emigration	41,670	
Irish Emigrants in North America, 1775-1825	Immigration & Emigration	5,024	
Canada, Immigrants Approved in Orders in Council, 1929-1960	Immigration & Emigration	71,733	

Example: Ancestry.com

<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections>

All Canada, Seafarers of the Atlantic Provinces, 1789-1935

results for Mooney

Search Filters

Mooney Broad ☐ Exact ☒

[Edit Search](#) [New Search](#) [Update](#)

Filter by

[All Categories](#)

- > [Immigration & Emigration](#)
- > [Crew Lists](#)

Canada, Seafarers of the Atlantic Provinces, 1789-1935

Discover your maritime heritage in this collection of ships and sailors from Newfoundland's Maritime History Archive.

[Learn more about this database...](#)

New: Instantly filter by location and time period.

Results 1-20 of 902

View Record	Name	Birth Year	Birth Place	Vessel Name	Voyage Departure Date	Voyage Departure Place
View Record	Thomas Mooney	abt 1847	Liverpool, England	Henry	7 Nov 1871	Liverpool, England
View Record	Michael Mooney	abt 1841	Antrim, Ireland	Marathon	20 Sep 1880	Dublin, Ireland
View Record	Michael Mooney	abt 1844	Ireland	Canada	28 Jul 1896	London, England
View Record	James Mooney	abt 1853	Dublin, Ireland	Lyman Cann	8 Dec 1871	New York City, New York, USA
View Record	John Mooney	abt 1865	Belfast, Ireland	Lennie	3 Aug 1886	Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada
View Record	W Mooney	abt 1859	Belfast, Ireland	Ruby	21 Sep 1895	Liverpool, England
View Record	Mathew Mooney			Village Bell		
View Record	John Mooney	abt 1857	Dublin, Ireland	George	26 Apr 1873	Liverpool, England
View Record	W Mooney		Ireland	Harvest Queen		London, England
View Record	Edward Mooney	abt 1845	Belfast, Ireland	Hermon	30 Apr 1880	Gloucester, England
View Record	Charles Mooney	abt 1827	Jersey, Channel Islands	Matilda Hillyard	15 Jun 1870	Liverpool, England
View Record	Thomas Mooney	abt 1854	Liverpool, England	Hannah Morris	18 May 1881	Bremerhaven, Germany
View Record	Roderick Mooney	abt 1850	Dublin, Ireland	Tasmanian	20 Mar 1879	Liverpool, England
View Record	Thomas Mooney	abt 1841	Liverpool, England	Mary Ann	29 Aug 1868	Glasson Dock, England
View Record	D Mooney	abt 1863	Dublin, Ireland	Navarch	1 Dec 1886	New York City, New York, USA
View Record	Matthew			Mary		

As we know, Findmypast.com (available when you can visit a Family History Center) is helpful:

- <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/canada--the-irishman-in-canada> (allows you to search by name)



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying `forgottenbooks.com/en/books/TheIrishmaninCanada_10094100`. The page has a breadcrumb trail: **Forgotten Books** > **History - Modern** > **Canada** > **The Irishman in Canada**.

On the left is a book cover for "THE IRISHMAN IN CANADA" by Nicholas Flood Davin, part of the "CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES". The cover features a red wax seal and the "Forgotten Books" logo at the bottom.

To the right of the cover, the title "The Irishman in Canada" is displayed in a large, bold font, followed by the author "by Nicholas Flood Davin". Below this, there are four buttons: "Download" (with a PDF icon), "Read" (with a computer monitor icon), "amazon Paperback", and "amazon Premium Hardcover".

Below the book information, there is a section titled "Excerpt" containing the following text:

AN Old friend Of mine, Mr. Joseph Hatton, writing in Tinsley's Magazine says Still at the bottom of all thought and speculation as to the future, there is a strong layer Of Old English sentiment outside the Province Of Quebec. The great pioneers of Canada, the English and the Scotch look across the broad waters of the Atlantic, and think Of home. They feel proud Of the flag which is not only to them a national symbol, but a link between the far-off settlement and the churchyard where their forefathers sleep beyond the sea. Scarcely anybody in England knows anything Of Canadian history, and Mr. Hatton cannot be blamed for not being aware that the majority Of people in Ontario, as compared with other nationalities, are Irish. The population Of Ontario is Of these are Irish, Scotch, English and in the four Provinces Of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the Irish number as compared with English, and Scotch. The Irishman was here as early others he fought against the wilderness as well as others; his arm was raised against the invading foe as well as that of others; and when a man who was not Irish lifted the standard Of revolt, and another who was not Irish betrayed his country and his flag, who more faithful.

Library and Archives Canada - Immigration Records

- <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/Pages/introduction.aspx>

Immigration Records

- [After 1935](#)
- [Ancestors Search \(databases\)](#)
- [Border Entries](#)
- [Deportation Records](#)
- [Home Children](#)
- [Immigration History: Ethnic and Cultural Groups](#)
- [Immigration Records Column Headings](#)
- [Passenger Lists](#)
- [Passports](#)
- [Terminology and Abbreviations](#)
- [When Did Your Ancestor Arrive in Canada](#)

Library and Archives Canada holds immigration records, up to and including 1935 for arrivals at ocean and border ports. There are no comprehensive nominal lists of immigrants arriving in Canada before 1865.

From 1865 onwards, passenger lists and border entry lists were the official record of immigration; no immigrant applications or files exist. For a period of five years, from 1919 to 1924, an individual form was used instead of passenger lists and border entry lists. The [Form 30A](#) was used for ocean arrivals while [Form 30](#) replaced the border entry lists. The use of passenger lists and border entry lists resumed in 1925.

These immigration records were microfilmed in the 1940s and 1950s and were not produced to archival standards. As a result, the quality of some microfilm reels is poor. Also, on some pages, the ink had faded before the records were filmed. Unfortunately, the original records were not retained after they were filmed.

The passenger lists and border entry lists and the individual forms contain information such as name, age, country of origin, occupation and intended destination of the immigrant. The Government of Canada did not keep records of people leaving the country; there are no passenger lists for departures from Canadian ports.

Most of the records have been digitized and are indexed by name. Over the coming years, more digital images and nominal indexes will be available on the Library and Archives Canada website. The Search Help pages for databases and for the collections of digitized microforms explain how the records are arranged, how to search the records and how to obtain copies.

British Isles - Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

<https://bifhsgo.ca/>

- ▶ **A double-header coming in March! (You must be a member \$50 individual per year)**
- ▶ **Saturday, 13 March 2021**
- ▶ Online - registration required
- ▶
- ▶ **Register for the Education Talk / Register for the Feature Talk** (If you register for the Education Talk, you need not register again for this Feature Talk.)
- ▶
- ▶ A popular BIFHSGO speaker, Lucille Helen Campey, returns with two topics:
 - **Numbers not Names: Using British Government Publications to Locate Ancestors** (9 a.m.) - exploring how census returns, customs records and the British Parliamentary Papers may help find clues for immigrants to Canada
 - **Canada's Irish Pioneers: Their Story** (10.30 a.m.) – Even though Irish immigrants successfully settled in Canada, some politically-motivated people depicted them as sad and helpless exiles. Our speaker will demonstrate how the Irish are more deserving of our admiration and gratitude, than pity.

Let's show and share your examples in our next meeting! Send me where you have searched and what was of benefit or not. We learn best when we demonstrate specific examples.

- ▶ There will be more websites to explore next time!