

**England's War on Gaelic Culture: A Thesis on How the English Subjugated Irish Culture
and Oliver Cromwell's Invasion Secured Their Suppression**

A Thesis

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Think about what defines you. Think about the land you call home, the ideas you believe in, the habits you practice, and the people you love. Think about everything that you would find in a place called home. There should be a calm sense of nostalgia and a hint of pride as you think of these things. After all, these are the things that create *you*. Of course you would be proud of them. Now think about them being attacked by outsiders. The land you call home is taken away, your beliefs are changed, the habits you practice are demonized, and the people you love are either killed or sent thousands of miles away from you. It goes without saying that you would be furious. You would try to defend your way of life. But what if it was not just one person that did this? What if it was more people than you could count? What if suddenly you were the minority in your own home? That is what happened when the English began reforming Ireland in the fifteenth century. England's changes in Irish politics and social structures were implemented for centuries, but once Oliver Cromwell invaded Ireland in 1649, the English successfully subjugated the Irish.

The Cromwellian Invasion took place from 1649-1652. Cromwell's goal was to subdue the Irish resistance against Britain's rule in Ireland. He conquered major cities such as Drogheda and Wexford. The Irish fiercely resisted the English troops, but Cromwell overtook them. After his conflict, the death toll for the Irish was 600,000.¹

Henry II's reign in Ireland in 1167 is when the Anglicization of Gaelic culture began. In order to understand what that means, it is crucial to identify these terms. The process of giving something English characteristics is referred to as Anglicization. The term is used in academic

¹ Noel M. Griffin, "How many died during Cromwell's campaign?," *History Ireland* 16, no. 6 (2008):, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.historyireland.com/cromwell/how-many-died-during-cromwells-campaign/>.

secondary sources when referring to how Ireland's society began using English mannerisms.² Culture will be defined as the "the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group".³ The culture of the original Irish inhabitants is what will be used for the definition of Gaelic culture.

Gaelic refers to the language of the same name which derived from an earlier language known as Goidelic, spoken by a Celtic tribe known as the Goidels. The language was spoken mostly in Scotland and Ireland. Over time, the language in the two regions evolved differently to form what is now known as Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic, or most commonly known as Irish.⁴ Because one ethnic group settled in Ireland and had minimal contact with foreign cultures, it can be concluded that they had one unique culture. Over time, the group split into various tribes, but they retained the same cultural elements that defined Irish Celts. The term Gaelic will be used to include all Irish tribes because a common language bound them together.

The English subjugated Gaelic culture through governmental policies, religious intolerance, propaganda, violence, and expulsion. These methods significantly reduced Gaelic culture throughout Ireland. The culture did not disappear entirely; that can easily be proven with the fact that the Irish are still around. They even have an independent nation. However, the influence of Gaelic culture diminished after the English settled in Ireland.

It was after the Cromwellian Invasion that Gaelic culture greatly diminished. The reasons range from Anglicization, death, and expulsion of Irishmen. Anglicization took place in Ireland for centuries through governmental changes, but the Irish heavily resisted. The majority of

² Anglicization is most often used for language, but it is also used to describe the action of Englishmen making Ireland more like England. See *Cromwellian Ireland* by T.C. Barnard for examples of how Anglicization describes the process of making Ireland like England.

³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "culture," accessed April 23 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>

⁴ Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1997) 24.

Irishmen did not consent to becoming part of the British Empire and rebelled. The English used a military conquest to suppress the rebels and solidify their rule. It was the Cromwellian Invasion that secured the greatest loss of Gaelic culture because the invasion assured England's rule over Ireland.

The significance of this topic can be linked to one of the biggest fears scholars have: the loss of a culture. The destruction of a culture is a tragic loss to humanity. Often times, subjugation requires the death of many people or an entire group. The death of so many people simply because another country wants power is appalling. Lives are destroyed. Information is lost. The disaster of war has innumerable effects on people. It is important to stop that from occurring in the future. Lives can be saved if the symptoms of subjugation are recognized early. Otherwise, the destruction of an entire social group and their way of life is assured.

By analyzing how the Anglicization process reduced Gaelic culture, it is possible to understand how a culture becomes lost through subjugation. The suppression of local culture is a tell-tale sign of subjugation. The policies implemented on a country by a foreign power are key to conquering it and its culture. These policies can repress religion, language, and customs of the local social group. These aspects of culture begin to dwindle while the foreign country's culture rises in influence. Recognizing these signs can help make connections when observing old societies. It can also be used to identify when a culture is on the verge of being suppressed in modern times.

In addition, this analysis can be used to understand the symptoms of a disappearing culture. It can also be used to learn how one culture might subjugate another. Comprehending Britain's methods for subduing a culture can be used to study other conquests. Comparing it to

other major empires or contrasting it to smaller countries can open up new studies on the social aspect of warfare.

The connection between England and Ireland intensified when the Tudors began to reform Ireland. The association between England and Ireland may have differed if the Tudors had better understood the people and affairs of Ireland. The Tudors did not set foot in Ireland to gain knowledge for themselves. Henry VII, for example, used books for information and sent someone to scout the island. It is uncertain how much literature on Ireland and its people was available to him; it is quite possible that he had very few sources. This lack of knowledge led to the horrible mismanagement of Ireland through governmental policies that were incompatible with the local people⁵. *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland* by Christopher Maginn and Steven Ellis reviews how the Tudors gained information about Ireland, but it does not explain which policies were enacted. This thesis furthers Maginn and Ellis' work by including those policies to illustrate the changes England made to Irish culture in order to create a better understanding of the political changes Ireland experienced.

Ireland and England in the Past and at Present by Edward Turner and *The Story of the Irish Race* by Seumus MacManus both record the summary of Irish history. Turner's book presents basic information with few details of historic events, but a basic historical narrative is provided. The problem is that, without specifics, it is hard to understand his meaning. MacManus' book has a broad overview of Ireland's history. He also leaves out specific details of Irish history at times, but his book is a great example of history told from an Irish perspective. Many times throughout his book, he defends the Irish fervently while chastising Britain's actions. These authors provide information on the importance of events, but lack full detail. This

⁵ Christopher Maginn and Steven G. Ellis, *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2015) 13 and 40.

thesis aims to provide the details of the Ireland's history without chastising the British or the Irish.

D.M.R Esson's book *The Curse of Cromwell A History of the Ironside Conquest of Ireland, 1649-53* provides as wonderful oversight to the events of the Cromwellian Invasion. The battles that Cromwell's army partook in and their actions are fully stated within the book. Some battles are given more context than others. For example, the Storm of Drogheda had an entire section dedicated to its events. The other battles were put into only one section. Cromwell's thoughts on the invasion are absent from this book. This thesis will include quotes from Cromwell's personal letters and use them to understand what he felt about the invasion. This thesis will also explain the events of all major battles without focusing on one more than the other.

Primary source documents such as seven of Cromwell's letters, Sir William Petty's land survey, and Sir John Temple's book *The Irish Rebellion...* show that Gaelic culture was significantly suppressed after the English invaded Ireland, especially after the Cromwellian Invasion. The English perspective of history will be gathered from those primary documents by analyzing them. It is possible to understand how the English would treat Irishmen by understanding their thought process which is given in Temple's book. Government documents such as Sir William Petty's land survey recorded how much wealth the English in Ireland had versus the Irish. This showed how the power transferred from the Irish to the English and how much land the Irish lost by the end of 1672. The loss of their land is connected with how the English conquered the Irish.

No one has fully unpacked the political relations of England and Ireland.⁶ A rivalry between Irish Catholics and English Protestants started almost five hundred years ago and continues to this day which causes the history of each country to be negatively skewed.⁷ The Irish perspective depicts Britain in a negative way due to this feud. A large part of the Irish population views the Cromwellian invasion as a bloody military conquest, but that is not necessarily the case.⁸ He did not attack innocent citizens; he only attacked the people who took up arms against England.⁹ He was merely doing his job as the leader of his country. If he was merciless, then no one would have been spared.

Anglicization started well before Cromwell's time, but it was after his campaign that Ireland's fate was sealed. Edward Turner perfectly captures the impact that English affairs of the seventeenth century had in Ireland and how it ended for the natives:

[...] at the end of the seventeenth century the thing was done, the Irish people were ruined and submerged, their religion trampled down, and their Irish culture very largely destroyed. Under Mary and Elizabeth and James I, English power in Ireland was established and consolidated by ruthless war and expulsion and even extermination of the Celtic people, and the planted of Englishmen and Scotchmen in their place.¹⁰

In Turner's quote, "the thing" refers to Britain's complete subjugation of Ireland. This quote explains how the Irish were suppressed: by having their culture destroyed, their religion disregarded, and the native Irish replaced with British settlers. The English managed to expel Gaelic culture by destroying the people who practiced it. The plantation system was used by the

⁶ Robin Frame, "The Crisis of 1314-1342" in *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven*, ed. by James Lyndon (Dublin: Irish Academic, 1981) 86.

⁷ Edward Raymond Turner, *Ireland and England in the Past and at Present* (New York, The Century Co., 1919) 65.

⁸ TC Banard, *Cromwellian Ireland: English Government and Reform in Ireland 1649-1660* (London, Oxford University Press, 1975), vii.

⁹ See Cromwell's letters in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* edited by Thomas Carlye.

¹⁰ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 63 and 64.

Tudors to take control of Irish land. They expelled or killed the Irishmen who lived on the land and replaced them with British settlers. The settlers brought their own culture which replaced Gaelic culture. Cromwell's invasion also affected the Irish population greatly. Forty-one percent of the population died as a result of the war.¹¹ The plantation system established by the Tudors laid the ground work for the suppression of Gaelic culture while Cromwell's invasion finalized its subjugation.

Background History on England's Connection with Ireland

England began its association with Ireland in 1167 during the Anglo-Norman Invasion when the king of Leinster, Dermot MacMurrough, sought to reclaim his lands. He asked the English king, Henry II, for aid. MacMurrough had lost his lands and had been banished from Ireland through conflict with his local political rivals. Henry II authorized lords from Wales to aid him. These lords were Anglo-Norman, settlers from Normandy who lived in England. MacMurrough and his Anglo-Norman troops reclaimed his land in 1167 but his main ally forces arrived in 1169 with the intent on claiming the entire region of Leinster. The cities of Dublin and Waterford were conquered by the main forces.¹²

The English Crown did not become directly involved until 1171. Henry II went to Ireland with a concession given to him by Pope Alexander III. This concession gave Ireland to Henry II.¹³ A blessing from the Church was required if a monarch wanted to make a major decision such as intervening with a foreign country. The pope's authority was established in all Roman Catholic lands. If he made a declaration, all Catholic countries were expected to obey. He did not

¹¹ Noel M. Griffin, *How many died during Cromwell's campaign?*

¹² Caitlin Ellis, "The Other Invasion: The Anglo-Norman Invasion of Ireland in 1167 Sowed the Seeds for Centuries of Tension between England and the Irish," *History Today* 67 no. 9 (2017): 12 and 13.

¹³ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 33 and 34.

have a secular authority in these countries, but he did have religious authority. At this time in history, religion and government were not separated; they needed to work together. Therefore, Henry II needed the pope's approval to carry out major governmental decisions in Ireland.

When Henry II went to Ireland, he visited the chieftains of the provinces.¹⁴ They paid homage to Henry II, acknowledging him as someone greater than themselves, but not surrendering their independence. Henry II and the Irish chieftains signed the Treaty of Windsor in 1175. The Irish chieftains gave the lordship of Meath, Leinster, Dublin, Wexford, and Waterford to Henry II. The Irish and Anglo-Normans continued to fight amongst themselves, not bothering to adhere to the treaty.¹⁵ From this time until the beginning of the Tudor reign, Ireland would be spared from any major forms of Anglicization.

The Tudors took more interest in Ireland than the monarchs before them. The English lands that were ruled by lords, such as Ireland, had loose bonds with the Crown. England's financial support for marches that were used for defense had declined and Ireland had stopped paying revenue after Henry IV's reign.¹⁶ Ireland also became a new topic of interest due to the threat of Spain and France. The island could be used as a strategic location for anyone trying to invade England.¹⁷ If the island was not secured, then enemies could easily slip in and sneak into England. In order to fix this, Henry VII began reforming Ireland.

The Parliament of Ireland was implemented in 1367. It was modeled after the English Parliament. Members were summoned by the king instead of elected. The Parliamentary members were "openly hostile to the claims of the native population". Irish or Anglo-Irish

¹⁴ Ibid 14.

¹⁵ Seumas MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race* (Konecky and Konecky, Connecticut, 1921) 326-329.

¹⁶ Steven Ellis, "Henry VII and Ireland 1491-1496," in *England and Ireland in the Later Middle Ages : Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Otway-Ruthven*, ed. by James Lyndon (Dublin: Irish Academic, 1981) 237

¹⁷ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 66

landowners were not invited to send people to represent their interests.¹⁸ This means that the Irish Parliament was not carried out with the interests of the native Irish. England fully controlled the government in Ireland. He gathered information from books and a scout he sent to Ireland without ever setting foot there himself. This bred false information which caused him and the rest of the Tudors to mismanage Ireland.¹⁹ The Poynings Law was put into effect during a Parliament held at Drogheda convened by Sir Edward Poynings who was sent to Ireland as lord deputy. This law stated that the Irish Parliament could not begin until the Irish executive and privy told the king about their legislation. This was a step towards controlling Ireland's government. Common Irishmen were not greatly affected by this because they did not attend Parliament²⁰.

In 1536, an Irish Parliament comprised of English colonists declared that Henry VIII was now the head of the Church and State²¹. This decision was not what most Irishmen wanted. Having a Protestant rule over them was an appalling idea. To devout Irish Catholics "it was blasphemy to call Henry VIII... the Head of the Church."²² It was now abundantly clear that the English had no desire to adhere to the will of the Irish; they only acted on their own desires.

The Crown suppressed religious houses and took their land. Bribery was used by Henry VIII to pit the Irish chieftains against each other. When the Irish chieftains grew weary of fighting, they made peace with Henry VIII. The first Irish Parliament with Gaelic lords declared Henry VIII as king of Ireland in 1541.²³ This was a major change because England previously

¹⁸ Justin McCarthy, *Ireland and Her Story* (Horace Marshal & Son, 1903) 33.

¹⁹ Maginn and Ellis, *The Tudor Discovery of Ireland*. 13

²⁰ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 59 and 60

²¹ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*. 362.

²² Ibid 374

²³ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 61 and 62.

ruled Ireland under the title of lordship. This was the first time England declared kingship over the land. Unlike a lordship, a kingship assumed total control of the country.

It is important to understand that this was not an agreement of loyalty from the Irish. Most Irishmen knew very little of the Parliament and did not consent to the decision of submission to England. The few Irishmen that attended Parliament were heavily bribed with gifts of land or titles for favor in voting processes. Thus, the Irish were slowly losing the power they originally had due to political changes and influence from England.²⁴ However, the Irish author Seamus MacManus claims that the Parliament body that gave Henry VIII kingship was the same one from the previous Parliamentary meeting in 1536.²⁵ This would mean that no Irishmen were present.

During Henry VIII's reign, he outlawed Gaelic language and literature. He also outlawed Irish marriage, fosterage, and gossipred. Gossipred was a "religious relationship between families, and created mutual obligations of regard and friendship". When someone became a godfather of a child, he became a gossip for the parents.²⁶ He also took Irish noblemen's sons to England where they were "reared and educated in England, hostile to every tradition and instinct of their nationality". These steps towards suppressing Gaelic culture only encouraged the Irish to cling tightly to their own culture and resist English culture.²⁷

Edward VI began the first major step towards Anglicization in Ireland in 1547 by introducing the plantation system. These plantations were lots of land taken from Irishmen and given to British settlers with the intent of colonizing the land. Like in the other lands that England had, such as North America, the Crown gave away large shares of land to certain

²⁴ Ibid 62.

²⁵ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*. 362.

²⁶ Patrick Weston Joyce, *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland* (Dublin, M. H. Gill & Sons, LTD., 1906) 300.

²⁷ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*. 362-364.

Englishmen. The difference between doing this in the American colonies and Ireland was that Ireland was smaller as well as heavily populated. While America also had many indigenous people, they were spread out far across the continent leaving many areas available for settlement when the English expelled them. Ireland did not have such a luxury. The Irish were either expelled or killed to make room for the English and their tenants. Of course they fought back as fiercely as they could, but they did not win.²⁸ England had begun to whittle down the native Irish population. There were fewer people who practiced Gaelic culture now that the Irish population was dwindling.

This continued throughout the next two monarchs, Mary I and Elizabeth I. The fight against the English reached their peak during Elizabeth I's reign due to economic, social, religious, and land issues. When Mary I was queen, she transitioned England's religion back to Catholicism, but that was undone once a Protestant Elizabeth I took over. This conflict troubled the Irish more than the English because authorities in the region forced this decision on them. For example, Elizabeth's new religious policies made it impossible for someone to become a clergyman unless they spoke English. This made the Church and its language strictly English, thus excluding the Gaelic-speaking Irish. Irish, who were devout Catholics, practiced their faith elsewhere, but began to view Protestantism and those who enacted it as the oppressors of culture.²⁹

Elizabeth I took it a step further by declaring all Catholic priests to be executed. Acting in such a way showed the Irishmen how serious the English were to be taken. There was no room for leniency under English power. Anyone who was caught sheltering a priest was executed and their land was taken as punishment for disobeying the English laws. This law only applied where

²⁸ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 69.

²⁹ Ibid 64 and 65.

English authority reached. For example, the lands of Tyrconnel and Tyrone were safe havens for Catholic priests.³⁰ The religious feud between the two religions carries on to this day.³¹

Elizabeth I did her best to bring her Irish subjects to order. She sent religious governors to reform the Irish of their “barbarous customs”, a term that can be applied to anything considered Irish. As explained by Sir John Temple in his book “...these acts, and other courses tending to the advancement of true religion, and civility, were highly displeasing, and most incompatible of the loose humours of the natives, who apprehended even the most gentle means of reformation... [The Irish] began desperately to struggle for their liberty”.³² It can be surmised that the English justified their harsh methods by claiming they were bringing a proper lifestyle to the uncivilized Irish. This statement by Temple indicates that the Irish were considered to be lesser than the English because they did not want to learn English “civility”. They wanted to keep their “barbarous customs” and were willing to fight it. The English felt that it was best to replace the “barbarous customs” with their “civil” customs. It was clear that the English wanted to replace the Irish way of life with the English one.

Large parts of Ulster, Leinster, and Musnter were settled with colonization plantations under James I’s rule in 1620.³³ Land was taken from the Irish and given to British settlers who hired non-Irish tenants to live on their land. Sir John Temple states that James I was “...by dues course of law, justly entitled to all their whole estates there, yet he was graciously pleased to take but one fourth of their lands...”³⁴ This means that the king could legally take all Irish land, but

³⁰ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*. 374.

³¹ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 65.

³² Sir John Temple, *The Irish Rebellion Rebellion or, and History of the Beginnings and First Progress of the General Rebellion Raised within the Kingdom of Ireland, Upon the Three and Twentieth Day of October, 1641. Together with the Barbarous Cruelties and Bloody Massacres Which Ensued Thereupon.*_ed. (Dublin: Elizabeth Golding 1751) 9 and 10.

³³ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 74.

³⁴ Temple, *The Irish Rebellion*. 12.

because he did not, he was courteous to the Irish. This was a drastic change since all of Ireland used to be free of these plantations.

During Charles I's rule in the early seventeenth century, there was trouble brewing in England. Some people wanted to replace the monarch with a parliamentary system while others were willing to support the continuation of a monarchy. This debate sparked what would become known as the English Civil War which lasted from 1642 to 1651. The war took place in England with a total of three major battles.

The Irish used this period of unrest in England to retaliate against the English. The Uprising of 1641 occurred in Ulster after half a year of planning with military support from Spain and France.³⁵ The Spanish and French both detested Britain and were willing to help Ireland rebel against their common enemy. If Ireland was free from British control, the country could be used as a strategic point in battles against Britain. Spain and France were also Catholic countries. It was only natural that they would aid the Irish Catholics.

Ulster was taken under Irish control along with Leinster, except the city of Dublin, and Connaught. In 1642, the Irish leaders met to form the Confederation of Kilkenny which would rule Ireland as an independent nation until 1649.³⁶ The successful rebellion by the Irish concerned the English. They believed that the rebels needed to be dealt with but the Parliamentarians nor the Crown could trust their enemy with troops sent into Ireland.³⁷ Each party feared that their enemy would gain more supporters if the enemy went to Ireland. The Irish would be free from a major attack until Cromwell's invasion in 1649.

³⁵ James Scott Wheeler, *The Irish and British Wars, 1637–1654 : Triumph, Tragedy, and Failure* (London, Routledge, 2002) 45.

³⁶ MacManus, *The Story of the Irish Race*. 413 and 414.

³⁷ Turner, *Ireland and England*. 75.

The Irish Uprising of 1641 played a crucial role in shaping the perspective Englishmen had of the Irish. The accounts gathered by a Commission for Distressed Subject exaggerate the rebellion.³⁸ Most accounts were gathered from people that had not witnessed the acts they described. Most of the details that were listed in the 1641 Depositions were merely records of rumors rather than eyewitness testimony.³⁹ Some of the gruesome accounts relayed involved murder, infanticide, beatings, and burying people alive.^{40 41 42} The current king, Charles I, doubted the accuracy of these stories and believed that it would harm to public.⁴³

The most grueling of these rumors involved boiling a child alive and cutting open the wombs of pregnant women. The account of boiling a child alive was given by Margaret Parkin. The deposition stated that, "... this deponent further sayth that by the informacion of divers Credible persons the Rebels boyled a younge Childe to death in a Caldron or great Kettle in the Church at Newtowne."⁴⁴ There are multiple accounts of pregnant women being cut open, but the strangest comes from Phillip Taylor. He stated, "...that the rebels aforesaid killd a dyers wife of *Ross trevor* at Newry & ript up her belly she being with chyld of 2 children & threw her & the children into a ditch: and this deponent drive a sowe away that was eating one of the children."⁴⁵

The testimony of the rebellion was used by politicians to gain what they wanted: Irish land and/or supporting troops for the English Civil War. Banks provided money towards

³⁸ "FAQ," Trinity College Dublin, accessed April 28, 2018. <http://www.1641.tcd.ie/using-faq.php>

³⁹ Morgan Read, "Atrocity Propaganda and the Irish Rebellion," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1938): 11.

⁴⁰ Henry Jones, *Deposition of Jane Browne*, letter, Trinity College Library Dublin, *1641 Depositions Project*, <http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 831068v072a?>>, accessed April 27, 2018

⁴¹ James Wallis and Philip Bisse, *Deposition of William Dethick*, letter, Trinity College Library Dublin, *1641 Depositions Project*, <http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 828236r321?>>, accessed April 27, 2018.

⁴² John Watson and William Aldrich, *Deposition of Phillip Taylor*, letter, Trinity College Library Dublin, *1641 Depositions Project*, <http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 836007r006?>>, accessed April 27, 2018.

⁴³ Morgan Read, "Atrocity Propaganda and the Irish Rebellion," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (1938): 12.

⁴⁴ Roger Puttocke and William Aldrich, *Deposition of Margaret Parkins*, letter, Trinity College Library Dublin, *1641 Depositions Project*, <http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 835154r201?>>, accessed April 27, 2018.

⁴⁵ John Watson and William Aldrich, *Deposition of Phillip Taylor*, letter, Trinity College Library Dublin, *1641 Depositions Project*, <http://1641.tcd.ie/deposition.php?depID<?php echo 836007r006?>>, accessed April 27, 2018.

suppressing the atrocities. Members of the English Parliament wanted to have a strong militia. The rebellion stories that were exaggerated helped politicians gain troops for the English Civil War. Parliamentarians fanned the flames of hatred towards the Irish when they spread these terror stories. They then claimed that Charles I conspired with the Irish to commit such atrocities. People were more likely to support Parliament if the Crown was affiliated with the horrible image of the Irish. Another reason is that the English Parliament wanted more land from Ireland. Claiming they were taking land from the rebels who committed horrible crimes was an acceptable reason for possessing the lands.⁴⁶

The stories would play a crucial role in shaping the English's view of the Irish. Sir John Temple's *History of the Irish Rebellion...* offered accounts of the rebellion along with his own history of Ireland. Quotes from his book have already been used in this thesis providing the reader with an example of his logic. His book was used as the standard example of what happened in Ireland during the rebellion.⁴⁷ He claims "...that the mortality there [in Ireland] was such, and so great, as many thousands died there in two days..."⁴⁸ This made it seem like Ireland was a slaughterhouse. Englishmen were provided with false stories leading to a false idea of what the Irish were like. This would breed hatred towards Irishmen along with an idea that the English were superior to the Irish.

The Cromwellian Invasion

Charles I was convicted of treason and beheaded in 1649. England now belonged to the Parliamentarians, supporters of Parliament. The country became a republic under the reign of Oliver Cromwell. He launched the first military conquest of Ireland. Unlike the other times the

⁴⁶ Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*. 14-16.

⁴⁷ Ibid 12

⁴⁸ Temple, 81

English fought in Ireland, this was a campaign based on military force. The army was sent into Ireland with the intent to travel the country and attack anyone who resisted them. The conquest lasted until 1652. Almost one third of the Irish population perished due to war, famine, and pestilence. Parliament took control of almost of Ireland except the “most worthless portions”: the province of Connaught and the county of Clare.⁴⁹ Royalists, supporters of the Crown, also participated in the war. They fought alongside the Irish trying to defeat Cromwell’s new rule. The English worked with the Irish aiming to disestablish Cromwell’s government and reinstate the English king to his throne.

Cromwell’s first goal was to take Drogheda because it would be a major loss to the Irish and it would secure his hold on Ulster.⁵⁰ On September 3, 1649, his army arrived at their destination. On September 10, he asked the town governor, Sir Arthur Ashton, to surrender. When he refused, Cromwell’s army began to batter the walls with canon fire. The next day, his forces stormed the walls but were forced to retreat due to the many Irish soldiers defending the breach. Their second attempt that day was more successful. Cromwell “...forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the Town... they put to the sword about 2,000 men...”⁵¹ Treating Drogheda’s soldiers so harshly sent a message to other rebels. Cromwell was setting an example for those who would not peacefully surrender. It is important to note that Cromwell said “any that were in arms”. This means that he only ordered the soldiers to be killed. Drogheda’s citizens were not armed which spared them from a gruesome end. Regardless, a large number of Irish

⁴⁹ Turner, *Ireland and England* . 77 and 78.

⁵⁰ D. M. R. Esson. *The Curse of Cromwell A History of the Ironside Conquest of Ireland, 1649-53* (Towa: Rowman and Littlefield 1971) 105.

⁵¹ Oliver Cromwell, “For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These. Dublin, 17th September 1649” in *Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches 2*, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons 1915) 49 and 50.

soldiers were killed in the Storm of Drogheda. Cromwell was not merciless to every Irishmen he found, but he did fight against his enemies ruthlessly.

The survivors fled to the other side of town taking refuge. On the same day, Cromwell once again asked them to surrender. They refused. On that day, Cromwell gave the order to burn a church which was one of the survivor's strongholds. This was an attack against Catholicism, a major part of culture for the Irish. To destroy a Catholic church and the people inside it was blasphemous. He reports having heard someone cry out "God damn me, God confound me; I burn, I burn."

On September 11, Cromwell asked that the survivors surrender. Unsurprisingly, they refused. Cromwell waited for starvation to change their minds. The survivors that were housed in one of the towers on the city wall fought back. When they surrendered, he commanded that every Irish officer be "knocked on the head". One in ten soldiers was killed and the rest were shipped to Barbados. The last of the soldiers in the second tower were also shipped to Barbados.

Cromwell truly believed that what he was doing was God's work. He stated in a letter to William Lenthal, a member of the English Parliament, "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood...."⁵² It is likely that the "innocent blood" he speaks of is the Englishmen from the Irish Rebellion. He felt the need to cleanse Ireland of the "barbarous wretches" as a duty to his religion and country. The concept of Irishmen being barbaric was already wide spread in England due to the rebellion stories being embellished. Cromwell's belief is a perfect example of how the propaganda about The Irish Rebellion of 1641 affected the English's interactions with the Irish. The Storm of Drogheda became an infamous tale of English cruelty.

⁵² Ibid 50 and 51.

Cromwell states in his letters to the English Parliament that his next stop was at Wexford, 122 miles from Drogheda. He asked the garrison leader, Colonel David Synott, to surrender on October 3, 1649. Terms were discussed through letters that were exchanged by messengers. Synott was willing to compromise by creating a treaty. Cromwell would not accept anything less than the city.⁵³

While these letters were exchanged, Cromwell sent troops to weaken an Irish fort near Wexford. The Irish there retreated to their boats, but English ships arrived soon after. The Irish surrendered. The residents in the town of Wexford were not aware of what had happened and sent a ship to help, which was also taken by the English. Terms of surrender were discussed between Cromwell and David Synott on October 11, 1649, but Cromwell ignored most of the propositions Synott offered. Cromwell only allowed the soldiers to leave with their clothing so long as they never took up arms against Parliament. Officers were taken as prisoners. Inhabitants had their goods unharmed and were protected from raiders.

However, an Irish captain acting separately from Synott yielded the Wexford castle to him on the same day. When Cromwell's men arrived, the Irish ran out the city walls and the English stormed the walls afterwards. The Irish rushed out to meet Cromwell's troops and fought hard, but retreated into boats which sunk with the weight of the people.⁵⁴ The image of a boat sinking because dozens of people were trying to flee conjures a chaotic scene. The Irish were so desperate that they were willing to drown rather than experience the wrath of the Englishmen. Hundreds of thousands of Irishmen were killed by the end of the Cromwellian Invasion. This would leave a terrible impact on Gaelic culture.

⁵³ Oliver Cromwell, "For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These. Wexford, 14th October 1649" in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* 2, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons 1915) 58 and 59.

⁵⁴ *Ibid* 57-66.

Cromwell wrote to the English Parliament about his next destination, New Ross, which was twenty-three miles from Wexford. He arrived on October 17, 1649. As in previous Irish towns, he sent a messenger into the town to ask for surrender. The message was received by New Ross' governor, Lucas Taaf, but a response was not given immediately. After two days, Cromwell's men followed their usual pattern and began to batter the walls with artillery. Taaf soon responded.⁵⁵ He offered to sign a treaty. Cromwell proposed that the Irish soldiers leave while the citizens remained unharmed. Taaf asked if his soldiers could also take their guns and ammunition. He also asked if the citizens could leave town. Cromwell denied the soldiers their guns and ammunition but allowed the citizens three months to leave. Taaf agreed to these terms.⁵⁶

Secret communications were going on between the people of Cork and Youghal. Cork was 115 miles from Wexford while Youghal was eighty-two miles from Wexford. The merchants of the towns were at an economic standstill since the Irish began rebelling. They claimed that they would do whatever they could to convince their countrymen to return their loyalty to England. On October 16, 1649, the people of Cork took action and expelled their current governor, Major Muschamp, and the Irish troops.⁵⁷ ⁵⁸ The English part of the garrison was aided by Cork's merchants. Soldiers from the Royalist army defected and joined Cromwell's army within the week⁵⁹. Cromwell quoted Lord Broghil who was there when the English forces

⁵⁵ Oliver Cromwell, "For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These. Ross, 25th October 1649" in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 2*, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1915) 72.

⁵⁶ Cromwelliana in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 2*, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1915) 67-71. The book that was used as a source did not provide the entirety of the Cromwelliana newspaper. Only excerpts of Cromwell's letters were recorded.

⁵⁷ Charles Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork, Containing a Natural, Civil, Ecclesiastical, Historical and Topographical Description Thereof*, Vol. 2, (Cork: John Connor, 1815) 420.

⁵⁸ Esson, *The Curse of Cromwell*. 123.

⁵⁹ *Ibid* 124

entered Cork: they were greeted "...with all the real demonstrations of gladness an overjoyed people were capable of."⁶⁰

To start his campaign against Waterford, Cromwell sent Lieutenant General Michael Jones to Duncannon with half of the army. Duncannon, which is twenty-three miles away from Waterford, was defended by Colonel Roche. However, men began to desert him due to his incompetence as a leader. The Royalist leader, Lord Ormonde, replaced Roche with Colonel Wogan who did a fine job of rallying Irishmen and English Royalists together. His leadership proved that it was possible for English and Irish to work together. Cromwell's Lt. General Jones blockaded the city. Cromwell's army waited for two weeks in miserable conditions. The weather took a turn for the worst. The tents were leaking water and the soldiers were hungry and wet. Jones grew tired of the poor conditions they were living in. He gathered his troops and departed for New Ross.⁶¹

Waterford was Cromwell's next stop. It is eleven miles from Duncannon. He stated in a letter that he arrived in Waterford on November 24, 1643.⁶² Following his other conquering pattern, he asked the town to surrender but they refused.⁶³ Cromwell then attempted to besiege the town by cutting off their access to the rest of Ireland. He was unable to stop Ormonde from sending reinforcements into Waterford. The arrival of heavy rain with sleet and hail brought sickness to the English and lowered their strength. Cromwell withdrew his men on December 2,

⁶⁰ Oliver Cromwell, "For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These. Ross, 14th November 1649" in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* 2, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1915) 77.

⁶¹ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 123.

⁶² Oliver Cromwell, "For the Honourable William Lenthall, Esquire, Speaker of the Parliament of England: These. Before Waterford, Nov. 1649" in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* 2, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons 1915) 83.

⁶³ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 126

1649 and resupplied at Dungarvan, Youghal, and Cork, towns he had already conquered. As he left, his men swept the countryside bare leaving no food or resources for the Irish.⁶⁴

On March 22, 1650, Cromwell arrived in Kilkenny, which is forty-seven miles from Wexford. Unlike the previous cities, this one had two governors: one for the castle and one for the city. Cromwell asked the city governor, Walter Blake, to surrender. He stated in a letter to the English Parliament, "If you chose for the worst, blame yourselves." This shows that Cromwell believed that the Irish had only themselves to blame for the results of a war should they deny surrender. Still, Butler stubbornly refused. The English began to batter the walls eventually breaching it on March 26. They tried to storm the breached walls but were met with heavy defenses. This only delayed them momentarily. They eventually succeeded in breaching the walls. Meanwhile, a second force, separate of the one breaching the city, attacked a town quarter successfully.⁶⁵

While the fighting was going on, Butler listed his terms of submission. Cromwell found most of them outrageous and denied them. However, the mayor, James Archdakin, agreed to surrender to Cromwell's terms. Cromwell's attitude towards the Irishmen quickly changed. He now stated that "Those whom God hath brought to a sense of His hand upon them, and to submitting themselves there-to and to the Power to which He hath subjected them, I cannot but pity..." He had originally told the Irishmen it was their fault violence came upon them and now he pitied them. A treaty was agreed to on March 26 and cessation of violence came to afterwards.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid 126 and 127.

⁶⁵ "King's Pamphlets" in *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches 2*, ed. Thomas Carlye (London: J.M. Dent & Sons 1915) 118-125.

⁶⁶ Ibid

Cromwell's last military act in Ireland was at Clonmel, thirty miles away from Waterford. At the beginning of May 1650, he focused his forces on the city which housed two thousand of Lord Ormonde's best troops. Cromwell asked them to surrender; they refused. On May 9, the wall was breached and Cromwell attempted to storm the city. The first attempt to enter the city failed, but they succeeded on the second attempt, though the Irish fought hard. Night fell and Cromwell's troops had to retreat. The Irish leader, Hugh O'Neil, took his troops and fled to Waterford. He asked his people to make the best terms they could with Cromwell. They did so the following day.⁶⁷

The last major military battles were carried out by Cromwell's Lord Deputy, Henry Ireton. In July of 1650, he tried to lay siege on Waterford once again. As usual, the city refused to surrender. After many weeks of blockade, the town's distress became unbearable. They surrendered on August 10, 1650. Waterford was given the same terms of surrender that were offered to the city of Duncannon. This time the Irish agreed.⁶⁸

Henry Ireton traveled eighty miles from Waterford in order to reach Limerick on October 6, 1650. The Irish in Limerick refused to surrender. Ireton wanted to besiege the city but he decided not to since winter was coming. On June 19, 1651 he returned. Ireton asked Hugh O'Neill to surrender but was denied again. The English troops proceeded to open fire. This attack destroyed the castle. Ireton built bridges across the river that Limerick was next to allowing reinforcements and supplies to easily reach his forces. The English soldiers tried to take

⁶⁷ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 138 and 139.

⁶⁸ Ibid 139 and 142.

the city, but failed. At the end of September, Ireton received a reinforcement of guns. On October 27, 1651 the town surrendered.⁶⁹

The Effects of the Cromwellian Invasion on Gaelic Culture

The fate of Gaelic culture was sealed after Cromwell successfully brought Ireland under English rule. The Irish population had been greatly reduced, which lowered the amount of people who participated in Gaelic practices. England's power had been fully established, allowing them to enforce policies that would restrict what was left of Gaelic culture. It became incredibly easy for English culture to thrive now that many Irishmen were gone and English policies ruled Ireland.

The native Irish population plummeted after Cromwell's invasion. After the invasion, 600,000 people had died from famine, pestilence, and fighting.⁷⁰ England's policies after the invasion reduced the population even more. Irish soldiers, Catholic priests, and landlords that enabled the Irish rebels were expelled from their current land. Irish soldiers were allowed to live if they left Ireland and swore to never take up arms against Parliament again. About forty thousand Irishmen were sent abroad because of the new policies.⁷¹

Strict laws were enforced against Catholic priests in Ireland. Laws were harsh because the English believed that without any Catholic priests, Ireland would become Protestant, like England. If there was no one teaching Catholicism, then there would be no way for people to learn it. Only Protestant priests and their faith would remain. A twenty pound reward was offered

⁶⁹ Ibid 149 and 152.

⁷⁰ Noel M. Griffin, *How many died during Cromwell's campaign?*

⁷¹ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 158 and 159.

for information leading to the arrest of a Catholic priest. People would be killed if they assisted a Catholic priest. Many were killed or transported abroad, but others escaped to areas that had Irishmen still at arms. To further the depopulation of Catholic priests, England's Parliament offered to let them live if they accompanied the Irish soldiers who were being sent abroad on January 6, 1653. Many Catholic priests took the offer, but several stayed in Ireland.⁷²

Some English troops would go out and hunt for remaining Catholic priests. The priests were "herded into hails and internment camps throughout Ireland, and were then moved progressively to ports for shipment overseas like cattle."⁷³ The number of Catholic priests who were relocated was so numerous that the English government stopped enforcing the laws at times. One such instance would be the case of the Catholic priest William Shiel. He was allowed to remain in Ireland, but he had to stay within a mile of his house and stop being a priest.⁷⁴

On August 12, 1652, The Act of Settlement declared that land belonging to the Irish rebels would be settled by the British. Parliament promised to keep all Irishmen safe, except rebels from the Irish Uprising of 1641, various lords, and Irish citizens who attacked Englishmen. Those who still upheld arms were given twenty-eight days to surrender or be excluded from this pardon. All Irish senior officers had two thirds of their land taken and were banished from Ireland. The remaining third would support their families. Other Irish soldiers were granted life but also had two thirds of their land taken with the last bit being reallocated. Catholics who did not support England had one third of their land taken with the rest reallocated. Non-Catholics who didn't support England lost one fifth. Anyone who owned no land exceeding ten pounds would have their life and estate spared. The Act of Settlement was considered to be

⁷² Ibid 159.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid 1160.

moderate towards England's enemies. Rather than killing everyone and taking their land, the English only punished those who participated in the war or enabled the Irish rebels.⁷⁵

On September 26, 1653, England's Parliament passed the Basic Ordinance. This declared that the lands England took control of would be passed onto British settlers. All Irish settlers had to leave by May 1, 1654. English soldiers were given land throughout Ireland except in Connaught. This was where the remaining Irish rebels were driven. However, the amount of soldiers that earned lots of land exceeded the land outside of Connaught. Some soldiers were given lots in the province.⁷⁶ According to a land survey completed by Sir William Petty, the soldiers were given a total of 1.4 million acres of land.⁷⁷

Irish nationalists were trapped in Connaught because English troops surrounded the lands around them. A strip of land along the Shannon River was reserved for extremely zealous Puritan fighters. Another strip of land around Galway held the English garrison. There were no defenses, ports, or supplies for war in Connaught. This Irish could not rebel because of this. If they did attempt a rebellion, the Puritans would attack them. The Irish were trapped in Connaught.⁷⁸

Before being transplanted, the Irish had to report how much land they had and their possessions. They were given temporary land of the same size in Connaught. These orders were given on October 15, 1653 and families had to report before January 30, 1654. The Irish had to move before May 1, 1654. Anyone left behind after the given date became tenants for the new

⁷⁵ Ibid 160 and 161.

⁷⁶ Ibid 163.

⁷⁷ Sir William Petty, *Tracts: Chiefly Relating to Ireland. Containing: I. A Treatise of Taxes And Contributions. II. Essays In Political Arithmetic. III. The Political Anatomy of Ireland.* Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1769. 301

⁷⁸ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell.* 163.

landlords and owed them every fifth sheaf of their harvest. Some Englishmen did not allow the Irishmen to remain on their land after May 1; they forced the Irishmen to leave.⁷⁹

Connaught was not a fruitful land for the transplanted Irish. The English armies had taken all the good food, shelter, and resources. Whatever decent resources remained were held by Irish landlords who lived in Connaught before the Cromwellian Invasion. They did not care for the transplanted settlers and did not help them. Some stubborn Irish stayed on their land outside of Connaught. On December 21, 1654 the English Parliament declared that the remaining Irishmen needed to leave by March 1, 1655. The Englishmen thought they had been very patient and decided they would enforce the deadline this time with violence. Irish leaders were hanged and the remaining Irish would be sent to the West Indies. The crops of the remaining Irish would be taken and given to those who did listen to Parliament's orders. Still, some Irish did not move and the English began to arrest them. An example of this enforcement took place on April 3, 1655. An Irishmen named Edward Hetherington was hanged for not moving and his body was displayed with a sign that read "for not transplanting".⁸⁰

The land survey conducted by Sir William Petty provides information on how the land in Ireland was divided. It can be concluded that the Irish lost a significant amount of their land after the Cromwellian Invasion. In 1641, Catholics and "sequestered Protestants" owned 5.2 million acres of land in Ireland. New Protestants that settled in Ireland during Elizabeth I and James I's reign owned two million acres of land. By the end of 1672, the English and Protestants owned 5.1 million acres of land. The Irish only owned 2.2 million acres of land.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid 165.

⁸⁰ Ibid 166 and 167.

⁸¹ Petty, *Tracts: Chiefly Relating to Ireland*. 300 and 302.

With the Irish officers gone, forty thousand active Irish rebels were sent abroad and the priests were banished. This left almost one sixth of the original population.⁸² The Irish had lost three million acres of land.⁸³ With almost all of the Irishmen gone and their land taken, the English had taken complete control over Ireland. Once they had control of the country, they were able to strictly enforce their policies. This led to the substantial loss of the Irish population and land. The English settlers were now the majority ethnic group in Ireland. Because Englishmen were the majority, their culture also became the majority.

Conclusion

England had power in Ireland before the Cromwellian Invasion, but their power was limited. Policies were not enforced heavily before the Tudor reign. Once the Tudors held power, they began to colonize Ireland through plantations. The English forcibly removed the Irish through murder or expulsion which began to lower the Irish population in order to create the plantations. The English Civil War distracted England from focusing on the Irish rebels. The Cromwellian Invasion further reduced the Irish population by taking the lives of 600,000 Irishmen.

When Cromwell finished his military campaign, England's power was solidified. The rebels were expelled and Catholic priests were hunted down. The land of Irish rebels was taken and English settlers replaced the Irish who previously lived on the land. With eighty-three

⁸² Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 168.

⁸³ Petty, *Tracts: Chiefly Relating to Ireland*. 300 and 302.

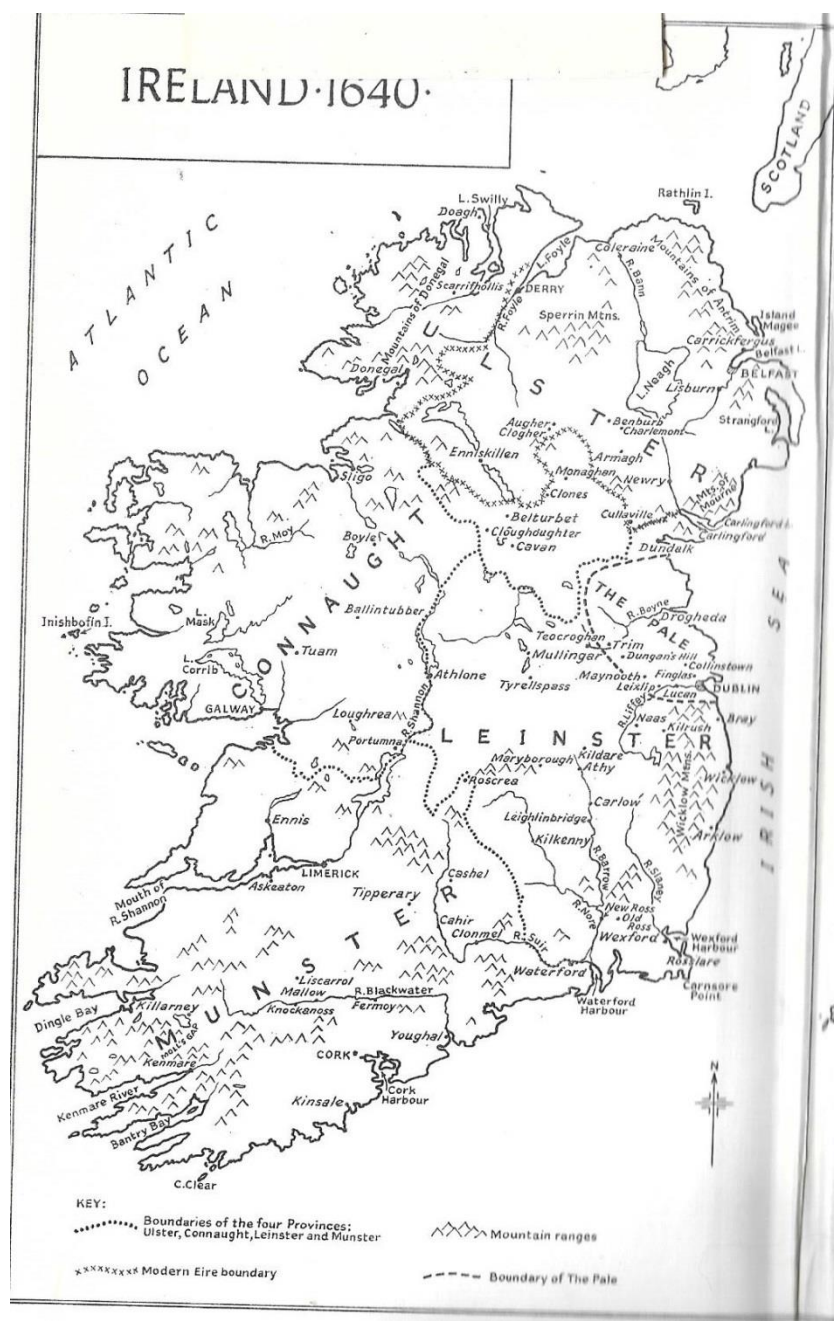
percent of the native Irish population gone, there was barely anyone left who partook in Gaelic culture.⁸⁴

The few Irish that did remain were held under strict laws. Catholic priests were gone which restricted their ability to practice Catholicism. The Brehon Laws, tradition Irish law, were outlawed. Gaelic language and literature were forbidden.⁸⁵ The original way of life for the Irish was destroyed. Ireland would continue to resist England's rule over them until 1937 when majority of Ireland was declared a free republic. A small portion in the north had decided to remain part of Britain. Even now there is conflict in Ireland. Many Irish nationalists demand that all of Ireland be free. Extremist groups, such as the Irish Republican Army, use violence to assert this belief. England's hold on Ireland has been firm for centuries. With such a tight grip, there was no room for Gaelic culture to thrive.

Illustrations

⁸⁴ Esson, *Curse of Cromwell*. 168.

⁸⁵ Joyce, *A Smaller Social History*. 300.



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