

## The Irish of New Brunswick at Mid Century: The 1851 Census

P.M. Toner

In the years following 1845, Ireland was afflicted with a catastrophe caused by the repeated failure of the potato crop. The Irish people had a certain resilience to withstand hardship, but so great was this famine that soon hundreds of thousands of Irish fled the starvation and disease which wracked their homeland. In 1847, Saint John was one of the most important ports of entry in North America, a fact which has been commemorated by a monumental Celtic Cross on Partridge Island at the entrance to the harbour. By 1851, the greater part of the immigration from Ireland had passed by New Brunswick, and the refugees landed in Quebec, Boston, or New York. New Brunswickers of Irish origin look back on "Black '47" as something of a genesis, an attitude shared by those not of Irish descent. To most, it was the year in which the Irish came.

Yet there were already thousands of Irish in the Province of New Brunswick, some of them long standing. The Irish already constituted a distinct community, but folk memory has forgotten the impact of the Irish who were already here, so powerful was the spectre of the Great Famine and its resultant waves of immigration from Ireland.

There are many questions which could be raised concerning the Irish population of the province. Some are obvious. When and in what numbers the Irish came can be answered, in part, through studies of immigration records, but these do not reveal how many stayed and how many moved on, or the exact impact of the Famine Irish on the existing community. What kind of people were these Irish immigrants, whether Famine or otherwise? Were they young or old when they arrived? Did they come as individuals or families? Were they poor or comfortable? Did they live in clusters or extended families? Did they have small or large families? There are questions related to the cultural contribution they made, but before these can be answered, we must determine the character of the Irish community in New Brunswick. Only when we answer these questions can we understand the more controversial history of the Irish in this province, and the best place to begin looking for these answers is in the 1851 census.

### **The Census Record**

In 1851, the Province of New Brunswick conducted a full census, and this census became an important record for posterity. There had been enumerations conducted previously, but the manuscript returns for these earlier censuses have not survived the passage of time. Even the tabulated returns are not of much use, because they recorded only limited types of information. The returns for 1851 have survived, at least for the greater part, making this census the most important record for studying the character of any portion of the province's population. It is essential to an understanding of the Irish of New Brunswick.

As later enumerations go, the census of 1851 was not extremely complex, but it does contain enough information to present a fairly comprehensive grasp of the character of the population. The population was enumerated by county and by municipal parish. Each household was recorded as a unit, even though this is not entirely clear in some cases, and each individual was recorded along with certain details: name, sex, age, place of birth, date of entry into the province, occupation, and relationship to the head of the household. The care with which this information was recorded depended upon the

individual enumerator. Some cared little about their task, and some used the margins to make acid comments about their charges. Others were quite meticulous, and recorded far more than was required of them. Some took care to record their information in a clean, legible hand, while others scratched away in a sometimes meaningless jumble which requires decoding more than reading. Some took care with the spelling of names, while others seem to have splashed down phonetic versions of whatever they thought they had heard. Thus it is a very mixed record — difficult to use, but never dull.

Major portions of the 1851 Census have been lost. The complete record for Gloucester, Kent, and Queen's, minor parts of York, and major portions of St. John County have become casualties of time and indifference. The loss makes a complete survey impossible, but nevertheless, the records of over 141,000 have survived, including 47,359 Irish immigrants and their native offspring whose data was fed into a computer for analysis. Of these, 21,128 were Irish-born, over 26,000 were native, with the remainder born elsewhere, usually Nova Scotia. For those born in Ireland, identification was easy. Similarly, the dependent children of Irish-born parents were readily identified. But the identification of independent children of Irish parents was a question of the enumerator's whims. Sometimes an enumerator would indicate "Irish Native," but more often than not, he would simply indicate "native," which meant that possibly thousands cannot be included. The children of Irish fathers were included, regardless of the ethnicity of the mother, but, following the practice established in ages past by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and its successor, ethnicity follows the male line. An Irish woman married to a non-Irish man is included, but her children are not.

To enhance the meaning of this study, the files were compared to the census of 1861 wherever possible, because this later census contains one piece of information which is not found in that of 1851, namely religion, and this is essential to any study of the Irish. This file matching was done manually in a careful and conservative fashion. In most cases, the designated religion was simply affixed to the record, but in others, it was more difficult. Doubtful cases were not assigned religions. The result is that only 60% of the immigrants and their native-born offspring could be identified with any degree of certainty, very few of whom were in the critical region of the City of Saint John. Still, this sample should be sufficient to indicate something of the religious character of the New Brunswick Irish.

New Brunswick in 1851 represents a rare opportunity to study an Irish immigrant group. Date of entry was not reported in later censuses or elsewhere, and if nothing else was studied, this alone would warrant the attention of historians. The Irish of New Brunswick, although numerous proportionately, represent a population small enough to squeeze into a computer and get results easily. A random sample might have been used, but this would have inhibited linkage with non-census sources and with later censuses, the database would remain firmly fixed to the single census. For example, birthplace in Ireland can be read off tombstones, or found in family tradition, but the chance of matching this to a random sample is slim. Because it was possible to deal with the whole Irish population identified in the manuscripts of the 1851 census, and thus open the doors to future research, this course of action was adopted.

### The Immigrants

Those identified as Irish immigrants in 1851 numbered 21,130, representing somewhat more than half of the actual total, 78.7%. These ranged in age from infants of less than one year to one rugged man of 99 who had arrived at the scarcely less formidable age of 93. For the most part, these

immigrants had arrived earlier than common wisdom would have it. The surviving immigrant with the earliest date of arrival was John Flannigan, who claimed to have arrived in 1780. Twenty-two others had arrived by 1799 and by 1815, the time of Waterloo, 163 of the Irish enumerated in 1851 had arrived. This is in addition to 576 native-born Irish. The importance of these numbers cannot be exaggerated, because they represent survivors. John Flannigan was 90 years old in 1851, and a person born in New Brunswick before Waterloo would have been at least 36. Mortality and out-migration would have accounted for many others. It would be fair to say, on the basis of the survivors, that the Irish were in New Brunswick in significant numbers before Waterloo.

---

**Table 1: Date of Arrival**

---

Period	No Religion				Total
	Beginning	Assigned	Protestant	Catholic	
1780	75	49	39	163	
1815	378	377	254	1009	
1820	686	577	532	1795	
1825	727	569	802	2098	
1830	1374	958	1188	3520	
1835	1401	651	1074	3226	
1840	1700	557	1207	3464	
1845	3026	574	1648	5248	
Total	9367	4312	6844	20523	

---

(Not all immigrants were assigned a date of arrival in the census)

The first good census was taken during 1824, an unfortunately the manuscripts did not survive. The total population of the province was 74,176 but there was no attempt to tabulate the returns on the basis of birthplace, origin, or religion, although race was a consideration as white and black were separated. About 3,900 of the Irish immigrants and native Irish recorded in 1851 had dates of entry earlier than 1824 or were born in New Brunswick before that date. Therefore they would have been included in that census. Many would have died or moved along, so that the total Irish population in 1824 would have been much higher. As it was 5.2% of that census were Irish who survived long enough to be listed in 1851. The census of 1834 was similar in character, and 11.2% of those enumerated were Irish who survived for the 1851 census. The next census in 1840 revealed that 15.5% were Irish who would

last for another eleven years. Even without allowing for mortality, it is obvious that the Irish presence in New Brunswick was significant long before the Famine.

Although only 5,200 of the Famine Irish who had arrived here have been found in the surviving manuscripts of the 1851 census, Saint John accounted for 2,653 or 50.5% of the total. In other words, more than half of the Famine Irish were still in the main port of entry. Even accounting for the lost St. John County records, Famine immigrants would still be outnumbered almost four to one by the earlier arrivals. Half of the 1851 Irish had arrived by 1837, and additions to cover the lost records could not seriously affect the conclusion that the larger portion of New Brunswick Irish were not driven here by the Famine. When those parishes which have manuscript returns for both 1851 and 1861 are taken into account, it becomes obvious that the Famine immigrants were the most prone to move. Of 950 Famine household heads in 1851, 68.0% cannot be readily identified in the 1861 census. Granted, they may have migrated to other parts of the province, but when one considers that over 63% of those who had arrived between 1815 and 1829 can be found in 1861, and that over 61% of those who arrived between 1830 and 1844 can be found in 1861, then it follows that the earlier arrivals were much more stable and had a greater impact on later generations of New Brunswick Irish.

The immigrants in all periods represented a wide range of ages, from infants to elderly, and the average age for all was between 20 and 21. This average was reasonably uniform for all periods. A lower average for the group which arrived before 1815 can be explained by mortality, but the slightly higher average of 21 years 4 months for the Famine period reflects the nature of the Famine emigrations themselves, which did not represent prime emigrant stock; the conditions in Ireland precluded such selectivity. The difference should not be exaggerated; the immigrants were young.

Insofar as can be determined from the evidence, many of the immigrants arrived as families. In fact, two of every three Irish-born married couples listed in the census had arrived in New Brunswick already married, many with children. In addition to these, it is also apparent that in many cases, the husband arrived earlier to seek employment and later sent for his wife and children, and even parents. There are numerous cases where the husband and father had a date of arrival as much as eight years in advance of the rest of the family, which usually arrived later as a group. Sometimes the rest of the family arrived a few at a time. This phenomenon was especially common in the Miramichi, where labour for timber production was imported from Scotland and Ireland for a period of years.

The question of religion is somewhat clearer if the reported denominations of the 1861 census are any indication of the religions when they arrived. It is probably that many immigrants adopted a new religion in New Brunswick in the past, but it is also possible that conversions may have cancelled one another. Given the tenor of denominational relationships in New Brunswick in the past, one could surmise that there was little conversion from any Protestant denomination to Catholicism, and indeed the 1861 Census gives little indication of any. There is one denomination which is an exception, and that is the Baptist faith. There were and are few Baptists in Ireland, while they were a principal Protestant denomination for the Irish in New Brunswick. It is likely that most of the Irish who reported their denomination as Baptist in 1861 represent conversions, but from which previous faith is an open question. Admittedly, surname is a poor guide on this matter, even poorer than for county of origin, but if the combination of surname and Christian names in any given family can be used as a rough guide, then all of the Baptists did not begin life as Protestants.

Common wisdom has suggested that Protestants came before the Famine and Catholics during, but the record does not establish this as a fact. Even the earliest immigrants, those who had arrived before Waterloo, were 44.3% Catholic. In the five year period immediately after Waterloo, the Catholic proportion fell to 40.2%, but it rose again in the early '20s to 48.5% and steadily climbed to 74.1% during the Famine years. Because most of the Famine people have not been identified in the 1861 Census, the actual proportion of Catholics must have been much higher. There is no reason to assume a greater mortality on the part of Protestants so, even accounting for conversions, Catholic immigration generally was greater than that of Protestants. There was no period during which Catholic immigrants to New Brunswick were insignificant, let alone absent.

---

**Table 2**  
Religion of Immigrants

---

Denomination	Number	Percentage
Anglican	1732	15.1%
Presbyterian	1793	14.8%
Methodist	649	5.6%
Baptist	336	2.9%
Other Protestant	53	0.4%
(Total Protestant)	(4473)	(38.8%)
Catholic	6995	61.0%
(because of rounding off, percentages do not add up to 100.0)		

Of the Protestants, Presbyterians and Anglicans were almost equal in numbers. The Church of Ireland was the strongest Protestant denomination in the homeland, so the number of immigrants of that faith is not surprising. It is noteworthy that the Church of Ireland was not confined to one area of Ireland as much as was the Presbyterian, and in fact, over 25% of the Anglicans come from outside of Ulster. The impact of the Church of Ireland on the Church of England in New Brunswick becomes an intriguing question, in terms of ethnic background, and in terms of religious custom.

The Presbyterians, who were and are associated with the Irish Province of Ulster, are thought to be the most numerous of Irish Protestants, but in the Ireland of mid century, they were somewhat less numerous than the Anglicans. It is possible that the Presbyterians arrived in larger numbers but were more prone to conversion than the Anglicans, but this would have to be established by other research. In some demographic aspects Presbyterians would prove to be closer to the Catholics than to other Protestants, most notably in the area of occupation. The Methodists, a small group in Ireland, were also

a small group in New Brunswick. The Methodist Irish in New Brunswick probably included conversions, because Methodist evangelism was strong in the new communities served by horseback missionaries, as well as in the region around Sackville with its Methodist college. Because the Church of Ireland tended to be Low Church, one assumes that many Irish Anglicans found that the Anglicans in New Brunswick were too High Church for their taste. Investigations would probably prove that many Irish Methodists in New Brunswick had left Ireland as Anglicans.

The Baptists probably represented earlier waves of immigration, because they were strong amongst the older immigrants and weaker amongst the later arrivals. This is even more prominent in the case of the New Brunswick-born Irish; the older the native-born, the higher the proportion of Baptists. Of the native-born over the age of 40, Baptists constituted 45.9%, a higher proportion than for any other denomination. Early immigrants probably chose the handiest and most convenient form of worship, and, of course, the earlier immigrants probably tended to intermarry with the local population more than would later immigrants, who had many more Irish from whom to choose.

In terms of religion, the Irish immigrants to New Brunswick did not reflect the current belief that they were more Catholic than Protestant. And this evidence also differs from that in recent studies which suggest that the Irish in British North America were mainly Protestant. This may have been true of Ontario, but the Irish of New Brunswick were quite different in their denominational patterns, and since they were so numerous here, this would have a profound impact on New Brunswick society. It would be interesting to have fuller data for New Brunswick, and even more interesting to have data for the remainder of the Maritimes.

### **The Occupations of The Immigrants**

It is difficult to know just how much capital or skill these immigrants brought with them. The census records occupation, but it is not known if these were the occupations followed before emigration. Nonetheless, the occupational breakdown for the immigrants is quite informative. The vast majority of the people of Ireland at this time were tenant farmers or landlords' farm labourers. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the immigrants were farmers here as well. The prospect of owning farmland either through grant or purchase must have been a great incentive for emigration, and the land which had been half cleared by timber operations was part of the lure of New Brunswick. A few Irish immigrants were willing to be tenant farmers here, but most were proprietors. Access to land seemed to decline with the passage of time, and probably the price went up as well. Thus it should come as no surprise that the number of immigrants who became farmers declined according to the period of arrival. The majority of those who arrived before 1825 were farmers. It is probably true that many of these were forced to combine agriculture with other activities, but this was not often recorded in the census. For those who arrived after 1825, the rate of Irish listing "farmer" as occupation declined rapidly, while "tenant farmer" held more or less steady. The Famine immigrants had arrived but recently, probably had less capital, and could not take advantage of free or cheap land which had been available earlier, and therefore had not gone to the land by 1851, if they ever were to do so. Hence, only 8.4% of those who had arrived between 1815 and 1819 were labourers, but this proportion rose with regularity until 69.9% of the amine immigrants were so recorded. Similarly, the earlier arrivals recorded high levels of the professions and business as occupations, highest for those who arrive during the period between 1815 and 1819 at 8.6%, and lowest for the Famine people at 2.7%. By contrast, skilled

and semiskilled occupations varied little: 16.9% for the 1815 period and 17.6% for the Famine with a high of 20.8% for those who had arrived between 1835 and 1839.

As one would expect, there was a difference for those who resided in Saint John and the larger towns. Fredericton, Woodstock, Chatham, and St. Andrews were combined with Saint John to gain some comparison with those who lived in the rural areas. This represents 43.2% of the total sample, and if other towns were added, the city and small town Irish would probably represent half of the sample. The towns also included adjacent rural areas, and it is impossible to delineate these areas with precision, but the overall pattern should indicate something. Even having said this, there are few farmers, 6.2%, and a similar proportion of professionals and businessmen, but the trades and labour are naturally quite high. Unskilled labour accounts for 58.8% of this urban population, and the skilled and semiskilled numbered 25.5%. Although Saint John was a large urban centre with no rural areas, it did not have proportionate share of the “urban” occupations. If the farmers are deducted from this sample, then Saint John’s proportion of the remainder is 68.1%, yet it had 70.9% of the tradesmen and only 66.9% of the unskilled labour. This suggests that the towns were as “urban” for the Irish as was Saint John, and also confirms the Irish immigrants as urban workers to a much higher degree than the general population.

**Table 3**  
Religion and Occupation of Immigrants

	Catholic	Protestant	None	Assigned
<b>Professional &amp; Business</b>	4.9%	6.5%	4.8%	
<b>Farmer</b>	41.6%	55.4%	21.0%	
<b>Skilled &amp; Semiskilled</b>	14.9%	17.5%	18.9%	
<b>Unskilled</b>	36.2%	18.4%	53.1%	
<b>Other</b>	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	
(number)	(2988)	(2034)	(4717)	

There was also a noticeable discrepancy related to religion. In most categories, Catholic and Protestant are approximately equal, but for farmer and unskilled labour, it is clear that a higher proportion of Protestants had managed to establish themselves on farms and that more Catholics were forced to accept unskilled jobs. In part, this could be explained by the earlier arrival of the average Protestant, but even this cannot close the gap completely. If the arrivals between 1830 and 1840 are compared, a smaller proportion of Catholics were listed as farmers, and of course the gap widens considerably for those who arrived during the period of the Famine. It is possible that the Protestant Irish arrived with more skills and capital, had better access to opportunity, or simply worked harder to establish themselves after arrival, but the common suspicion that Protestant immigrants were better off than the Catholics is supported by the census evidence.

## **Family Life**

As mentioned above, about two-thirds of the Irish couples who were married in 1851 seem to have arrived in that state, so it makes sense that most married Irish. A straight analysis of spouse selection demonstrates this, but also brings out some variations. There were 6,613 married Irish male immigrants, some 80.7% of whom had Irish-born wives. New Brunswick was next in numerical importance at 16.4%. For those in the towns, this rises to 87.7% with Irish-born wives. When religion is added to the equation, it appears that only 69.8% of the Protestant immigrants chose Irish-born wives while their Catholic counterparts with Irish-born wives rose to 86.5%. The major difference was in the fact that the Protestant rate for selecting native wives was almost double that of the Catholic rate. It is probable that many of these native-born wives were themselves of Irish descent, but the contrast between Catholic and Protestant remains. Protestants chose wives from England and Scotland at triple and quadruple the Catholic rate. Irish-born women were not so numerous and a little more inclined to stick with boys from back home. They chose Irish-born husbands in 89.4% of the cases, with New Brunswickers a very distant second. There was a similar difference on the basis of religion. Almost 95% of the Catholic women had Irish-born husbands, while 83.1% of Protestant women made this selection.

The same general patterns hold true with selection on the basis of ethnicity. 10.4% of Irishmen's wives cannot be identified on ethnic lines because they were at least North American by birth, but 86.1% were Irish by birth or by origin, and in the towns this rate rises to 89.5%. For Catholics, 92.6% of the wives were Irish in ethnic terms, while for Protestants this rate dropped to 75.6%. Similarly, wives of English and Scots origins were almost four times as common for Protestants as for Catholics. No Protestant Irishman is on record as having a French woman for a wife, while a few Catholics had French wives. A few Catholics and Protestants married Blacks, and a few of both had wives of Dutch or German origins.

Irish women were again more conservative in spouse selection on the basis of ethnicity. 90.4% had Irish-born husbands, with the same type of difference between Catholic and Protestant. The Catholics had Irish husbands in 96.7% of the recorded cases, and this fell to 84.9% for the Protestant women. Protestant women chose English and Scots husbands at a rate of four times that of their Catholic sisters. Irish women married Blacks at a rate of almost double that of the Irish men.

The male-female discrepancies in spouse selection, and probably Catholic-Protestant differences, may be explained if one can accept various stereotypes. If we assume that males were more prone to emigration, and that Catholic Irishmen were more rooted to the soil of Ireland, then there would have been more Irish Protestant males available in New Brunswick, and therefore they would have had fewer Irish women from whom they could select wives. The higher preference for native women can thus be explained.

Not that all of the Irish were married. Even without counting children, 7,703 of the immigrants were not married according to the census, and 691 of these were known to be widowed. Of these, most lived with at least some of their children, but 58 lived alone, as did 170 immigrants who were never married. Although the widowed seemed proportioned according to religion, the unmarried solitaires were more often Catholic. The majority of immigrants lived in nuclear, or simple, families. This proportion was not high by contemporary standards, 84.1% of all Irish households were of this simple type, as opposed to 77.5% of Scots households. The extended-family household, although it is a popular

modern conception of how our ancestors lived, was in short supply, only 10.8%. In this, the Protestant households tended to be extended more than did the Catholic households, rising to 12.1%. Household patterns varied according to occupation, sometimes considerably, and also had a rural/urban dimension. Unskilled labourers had the highest rate of nuclear households, 89.3%, while businessmen and professionals were the lowest with only 76.2%. Possibly they could afford a few extra relatives, and the result was that they had the highest proportion of extended-family households. The urban households tended to be more extended than did the rural households, 14.8% against 7.8%, which should dismiss the idea of the multi-generational Irish farm family, at least in the New Brunswick of 1851.

The shortage of extended family households amongst Irish should not come as a surprise since we are discussing an immigrant community. Their close relatives were back in Ireland or somewhere else. Even so, in 1851, extended families were more common amongst the Irish than in most other groups. By 1871, there is some evidence that extended families would become more common amongst all groups, including the Irish. Because it would require time to build up extended families, this seems reasonable.

Aside from the Irish who lived in families, there were also 2,368 immigrants who lived in households as lodgers or as servants. No fewer than 1,602 of these lived in Saint John and the selected towns. Individuals in these classes are very difficult to track, because so many of the lodgers were labourers who tended to move on very quickly. Most of the servants were girls and women who, if they married by 1861, were almost impossible to locate in 1861. Only 222 of both types could be identified by religion. Of the lodgers, 63.9% were Catholics; 86.5% were tradesmen or labourers, and for the urban lodgers this increased to 92.0%. All servants were classified as unskilled labour, 66.6% of whom were also Catholics. Similarly, others were difficult to identify in the 1861 census, such as the inmates of poorhouses.

Whatever the differences between the Irish and other ethnic groups, at this time there was little difference between Catholic and Protestant Irish insofar as household life was concerned. The picture which emerges is one of a community which in some ways was quite different from the one which has been painted by later generations, and yet in others was similar to accepted wisdom.

### **The Native-born Irish**

The immigrants, of course, were the “real Irish.” They were the people who had been born in Ireland and had emigrated to New Brunswick. But their children and grandchildren are worthy of attention as well, because they were the generations which would make the Irish of the province an ethnic group as opposed to an immigrant generation. This is no small distinction. Any group of immigrants who show cohesion as a group pass on to succeeding generations attitudes and values which eventually may set them apart as an ethnic group. Those immigrants who show a preference for assimilation will pass on little, and soon their children and grandchildren will live and think differently from the original immigrants. There may be a genetic contribution, but little on the cultural level. Statistical population studies cannot by their very nature deal with cultural values, but they can indicate whether the preconditions for the transmission of these values have been present. For this reason, no historical study of any immigrant group is really complete unless its progeny are also studied.

In 1851, there were 26,000 New Brunswick-born Irish, as well as a few who had been born in other parts of British North America. The vast majority, 23,762, were dependent children, but at least

2,500 were the grandchildren of immigrants. But there were also 1,371 who had listed occupations, and 565 who were heads of households. From these, we can determine the same types of social patterns as we have for the immigrants, and if there were any distinctions which separate them from the immigrant cohort. Their degree of "ethnicity" determines the whole Irish claim to such status.

The relative youth of the natives compared to the age of the immigrants would preclude any direct comparison of the two groups for occupation. But there were enough mature natives to draw some conclusions. Businessmen and professionals were not so common amongst the natives, and their ages indicate that the immigrants were more mature in this category. The same cannot explain the equal proportion of skilled and semiskilled workers. When these figures are broken down further, it is found that the natives tended to be far more engaged in the semiskilled occupations than their fathers. In the categories of farmer and unskilled labour, the native proportion was higher than the immigrants by a few percentage points. As with the immigrants, the natives' occupations depended upon religious affiliation. The Protestant natives had almost the same proportion of professionals and businessmen as had the immigrants, and it was almost the same in the category of skilled and semiskilled trades. In the case of unskilled labour, the Protestant natives were more numerous in proportion to their Protestant fathers, and in the area of agriculture proportionally fewer. Whereas two-thirds of the Protestant immigrants were farmers, over half of their Sons followed suit.

---

**Table 4**  
Native-born Occupations

---

	Catholic	Protestant	None	
	Assigned			
Professional				
& Business	3.1%	4.1%	3.4%	
Farmer	23.2	51.9	26.3	
Skilled				
& Semiskilled	24.4	17.9	14.3	
Unskilled	48.4	25.2	55.3	
Other	0.8	0.6	0.5	
Number	254	412	732	

In almost direct contrast, the Catholics born in New Brunswick differed radically from the Protestants. Less than 4.0% were in the professions or business, but they had skilled trades or semiskilled occupations in a higher proportion than did the Catholic immigrants or the New Brunswick-

born Protestants. Where the Catholic natives differed most from the Protestants was in the occupations of farmer and unskilled labour. Native Catholic farmers were far scarcer than Protestant native farmers and a native Protestant was twice as likely to be a farmer as was a Catholic. Similarly, native Catholics were almost half labourers, as opposed to a quarter for the Protestants, or almost twice as common. For the New Brunswick-born Irish, the occupational difference on the basis of religion which was noted for the immigrants was greatly exacerbated.

In order to eliminate the possibility that this occupational comparison is not realistic, those natives aged over 20 years were compared with immigrants of the same age who had arrived before 1841. This produces a smaller native sample, but it otherwise is a fair comparison. The gap between native and immigrant narrows slightly in some areas, but not enough to refute the contentions made above. For the Catholic natives, 29.0% were farmers compared with 58.0% of the Catholic immigrants, and 39.7% were unskilled compared with 17.7% for immigrants. For Native Protestants, the farmers were 56.2% compared with 62.7% for immigrants, and the unskilled were 22.6% for the natives against 12.0% for immigrants. As the age of the natives is increased and the age and date of arrival of the immigrants is altered accordingly, the gap narrows further, but the total impact of all these comparisons remains: the immigrants were on a higher occupational plane than were their native-born children.

If we equate land-owning and the acquisition of professional or business skills with social advance in a population, then two things become clear. First, the immigrants as a whole were better off than were their children born in New Brunswick, although this is not so clear in the case of the Protestants. Second, the position of the Catholics deteriorated more obviously than did that of the Protestants, thus opening a class distinction between the two religious groups which was not as readily apparent in the immigrant cohort. If this trend could be demonstrated through several generations, then the differences between the two groups of Irish in New Brunswick involved class as well as religion.

These differences can be enhanced through an examination of spouse selection. Native-born Irish selected their spouses from the native-born more than did their parents, but this is more a feature of the Protestants than of the Catholics. The native Catholics selected Irish-born spouses in 42.3% of all cases, but for the Protestants, this fell to merely 8.5% while 73.7% had New Brunswick-born spouses. In ethnicity, Catholics married Irish at almost the same high rate as had their parents, 82.6%. The Protestants, on the other hand, married Irish in only 67.7% of the marriages. When this is compared with the immigrants, the Catholics resemble their parents more than do the Protestants in their selections, and the difference between Catholic and Protestant immigrants again is more obvious amongst their New Brunswick-born offspring.

It is entirely possible that many sons of these New Brunswick-born Protestants chose wives of Irish parentage even though this was not recorded in the census, but the fact that there was a notable difference in spouse selection between Catholic and Protestant immigrants which became extreme amongst their offspring cannot be overlooked. In addition, the continued high preference amongst Catholics for Irish-born wives cannot be ignored, nor can the fact that New Brunswick-born Protestants chose wives who were known to be other than of Irish ethnicity at double the rate of Catholics. Catholics married Irish by birth or ethnicity more than did the Protestants, and this difference became more extreme amongst the Irish who were born in New Brunswick.

Even in the matter of religious breakdown, the natives differed from the immigrants. If 61.0% of the immigrants were Catholic, only 52.4% of the natives were, still a majority, but a smaller one.

Amongst the native Irish Protestants, Anglicans were slightly more numerous than Presbyterians, 2,765 as opposed to 2,289. The Baptists were far more common amongst the New Brunswick-born, over three times as common, 9.7% as opposed to 2.9%. As discussed above, many of the Baptists represented conversions on the part of the immigrants; and since the Baptist natives married non-Irish so frequently, many of them may represent conversions as well.

There can be no question that the Irish born in New Brunswick were splitting into two very different groups based upon religion. Differences noted between Catholic and Protestant immigrants become extreme amongst the Irish born in the province, occupation, spouse selection, and even denominational preferences. The Protestants were more obviously inclined towards assimilation than were the Catholics. This may have been a matter of preference amongst the Protestants, but it may also be a matter of discrimination against the Catholics. Perhaps Catholics could not buy land as easily. Perhaps Catholics lacked the capital to go into business. Perhaps the Protestants did not wish to remain “Irish,” and therefore married non-Irish, and switched to less “Irish” religious denominations. Perhaps further research will indicate that the children and grandchildren of Protestant Irish immigrants forgot that their forebears had been Irish in the first place. As in the case of occupations, the possibilities for further research in resolving such questions are endless.

### **The Migrants**

Lest the above should give too great a sense of stability, it would be well to examine very briefly the Irish who simply could not be located in 1861. The two censuses have not been preserved in identical conditions, since some counties missing in 1851 have been found for 1861 and vice versa. It would be pointless to derive much meaning from any attempt to match individuals in both, partly because it is seldom possible to trace females. This would mean that married daughters or remarried widows who could not be identified would skew the results. But some success can be achieved in tracing families through the individuals listed as the household head. In the areas common to both censuses, there were 4,261 households in 1851, and two-thirds of their heads can be identified in the manuscripts for 1861. The balance represent those who died and their families dispersed, or those who migrated to another part of the county or province or out of the province altogether. These migrants may indicate something about the stability of the Irish in New Brunswick.

In comparison with the household heads who remained in the parish where they resided in 1851, there is little to choose in some facets. About 90% of both groups were born in Ireland. There was a slightly greater proportion of the native heads who migrated, 42.0% as opposed to 39.1% who stayed, but this probably means little. Similarly, there was little difference based on the birthplace and ethnicity of the spouse between the “persisters” and the migrants.

If the immigrant household heads are arranged into cohorts based upon the dates of arrival in the province, then some sign of difference begins to emerge. Those who arrived before 1825 may be presumed to have been sufficiently affected by mortality to skew the data, but the cohorts who arrived after that point show increasing instability. Of those who arrived in the five-year period beginning in 1825, 32.4% migrated between 1851 and 1861. The next five-year period, that beginning in 1830, produced a migration rate of 36.3%, the period beginning in 1835 a rate of 38.2%, 1840 a rate of 42.0%; and the Famine topped the lot with 53.8%. Younger people tend to be more footloose than their elders, and those who were well-established were unlikely to migrate.

There were differences of occupation between the persisters and the migrants which could be predicted. Those with more of an investment in the place of residence tended to stay, which meant that only 32.3% of the 1851 proprietor farmers migrated by 1861. The rate for tenant farmers was higher at 45.8%. Only a third of the skilled tradesmen migrated, but 46.9% of the unskilled householders moved. The conjugal families, as opposed to non-conjugal households, tended to remain to a greater extent. Of those living alone, 60.8% could not be found in 1861, as was the case for 62.7% of the unmarried co-resident relatives. The encumbrance of children may have had something to do with this. The migrant nuclear families had an average of 4.0 children, while the persisters had an average of 4.6.

The destination of the migrants is a good question for future research, but the low proportion of migrants is an indication that most of the Irish had achieved a degree of stability by 1851. Those who chose to leave were those who could not afford to stay, and this was a minority.

### **The Irish in Provincial Context**

It should be understood that the Irish population was not spread evenly throughout the province in a homogeneous fashion. Not all areas of the province were accessible for early settlers, and therefore the entire settlement pattern was determined early. In some areas, the Irish were more common than in others. In some they were more Catholic or more Protestant, and in some areas they were more firmly established or more assimilated. For convenience, the province has been roughly divided into regions based on access through the rivers. An examination of the Irish of these regions of the province can lend some insight into the various waves of immigration which produced the Irish population of 1851.

### **Saint John**

The Irish of Saint John have been dealt with elsewhere in this volume, so that no further background is necessary. The census indicates what has long been known, that Saint John is the home of the largest Irish community in the province. Even with incomplete figures, the Saint John Irish outnumber all competition, and since they were concentrated into a relatively small area, one would expect that they would have felt a tremendous sense of cohesion.

The whole of the 1851 manuscript returns have not been preserved, but of the 20,191 listed in those that have survived, at least 10,892 are Irish by birth or origin. The enumerators in Saint John recorded little more than necessary, and the result is that only dependent native Irish are indicated, and this makes any comparison of the immigrant and the native virtually impossible. It is also difficult to really understand how long or how well the Irish community had been established through means of the age of the native Irish. It is unfortunate that the manuscripts for the 1861 census are lost because this makes a denominational break-down difficult and uncertain.

---

**Table 5**  
Regional Variations

---

Saint John	Southwest NB	Petitcodiac	North Shore	Total
------------	--------------	-------------	-------------	-------

Population	20,191	78,072	24,127	19,225	141,615
Total Irish	10,892	25,543	3,674	7,250	47,359
Irish Born	6,666	10,789	1,139	2,534	<b>21,128</b>
% Catholic	(1)	42.1	56.4	82.3	55.8
% Anglican	(1)	20.9	9.1	6.3	15.7
% Presbyteria	(1)	18.6	6.1	7.5	<b>13.9</b>
% Baptist	(1)	8.8	19.3	1.2	<b>6.9</b>
% Farmer	(2)	47.9	51.8	42.0	34.3
% Skilled	20.4	9.4	11.9	11.2	17.3
% Unskilled	60.1	34.2	26.4	37.5	<b>41.2</b>
<b>Medium Date of Arrival</b>					
Catholic	1841	1837	1832	1831	<b>1836</b>
Protestant	1839	1831	1832	1827	<b>1831</b>

What is obvious is that Saint John continued to receive and retain immigrants on a large scale. It was a port of entry, but many simply stayed on. The best indicator of this is to point to the large Famine population, the largest proportion in any part of the province. The median date of arrival is also the latest, 1841, even though there were a few who had survived from the 1780s.

An examination of the occupations reveals that the Saint John Irish were definitely proletarian. Of the 3,008 with listed occupations, there were a few fishermen and a couple of farmers, but 60.1% were unskilled labour. This rate is highest for the Famine immigrants, 72.9% of whom were in this category. And the reverse is also true. The Famine arrivals had the lowest proportion of businessmen and professionals, while the Irish who had arrived before 1825 were almost 20% of this top level of occupation. There were 703 servants listed, and 487 lodgers, the majority of whom were either skilled or semiskilled, and only 37.1% were unskilled. In spite of the cursory information in the returns, it is possible to get some slight indication of the occupations of the New Brunswick-born Irish in Saint John. A very few dependent children had listed occupations. In contrast to the whole native Irish population, these show a higher level of employment. The proportion of unskilled labour dropped to 33.3%, or just over half of the immigrants, while the rate for skilled trades, 38.7%, is almost double that of their

immigrant fathers. Admittedly, this is a small group, but further studies should demonstrate if the trend is accurate. If it is, then Saint John does provide a startling difference from the general Irish population in which the New Brunswick-born did not fare as well in these terms.

In household structure, the Saint John Irish are even more nuclear than those of the remainder of the province, but the occupational relationship of household types holds fast. The households headed by professionals and businessmen are the least nuclear and most extended, while 91.6% of the households of unskilled labourers are nuclear. In a large, congested city like Saint John, many of these households were tenement apartments, hence the high proportion of simple families and the similarly high proportion of boarders. A thorough understanding of the conditions in which these people lived requires a massive research effort, and the data base indicates that this would be rewarding.

### Rural Southwestern New Brunswick

The southwestern portion of the province is dominated by the valley of the St. John River. This was the area settled by the United Empire Loyalists during the 1780s, and has been the most prosperous and populous region of a relatively poor and sparsely-settled province. This region contained the majority of the Irish, 25,543 in all, and their characteristics are essential to an understanding of the New Brunswick Irish.

The Loyalists had acquired title to the best lands on the riverfronts, and the later immigrants were forced onto the less favoured back lands. Some of them, of course, could purchase land from the earlier settlers, and some could rent land as tenant farmers. There were a few towns, such as Fredericton, Woodstock, and St. Andrews, but the bulk of the people, and of the Irish, were rural, and the major occupation was that of farmer.

Just over half of the Irish-born were farmers, including 197 who were tenants. Just over 34% were unskilled labourers, most of whom were located in small towns, and many of whom had disappeared by 1861 making it impossible to assign a religion. Of those who can be "baptised" through this means, 57.9% were Protestant, a reversal compared to the religious ratio for the whole Irish population of the Province. When this is applied against occupation, a significant difference is presented. 65.6% of the Protestants were farmers, as were 50.5% of the Catholics, but Catholics were more than twice as prone to be tenant farmers as were the Protestants. The Catholic rate for unskilled labour was much higher than was the Protestant rate. In the skilled and semiskilled categories, there was less of a difference.

There were 525 lodgers and 470 servants in this area, most of whom could not be traced in 1861, but of those who can be assigned a religion, these two groups were more Catholic than the Irish of this region. The lodgers were 47.4% Catholic as were 58.0% of the servants. In both cases the disparity between the overall proportions of these religions seems excessive unless we can accept the differences between the groups on the social and economic level deduced above.

Amongst the New Brunswick-born Irish, the proportion of Protestants stood at 61.8%, and the differences of occupation observed for the whole province re-emerge with even more clarity. Over half of the native Protestants were farmers, while only 25.3% of the native Catholics were the same. In the field of unskilled labour, we find 46.4% of the Catholics and 23.8% of the Protestants. As was the case with their Irish-born fathers, there was little difference in the categories of skilled and semi-skilled trades. The occupations of the New Brunswick-born Irish suggest a downward social mobility and a

decline in social status when compared with the immigrant generation. This decline appears to have been much more pronounced amongst Catholics compared with Protestants. This in turn suggests that a widening social gap based upon religion was emerging between the two groups. Southwestern New Brunswick outside of Saint John was clearly “Orange” and all that this would imply.

### **The Petitcodiac**

The counties of Westmorland and Albert were originally a part of Cumberland County in Nova Scotia. Cumberland received a scattering of Irish settlers during the 1760s, many of whom were offshoots from Alexander MacNutt’s settlement of Ulstermen at Truro. There are some indications that the Irish in this area may represent the oldest group in the province. The median date of arrival of the immigrants is not the earliest — that is in the Miramichi — but it is almost as early, 1832. But the native population was proportionately the oldest, and there are signs of early and heavy assimilation, especially amongst the Protestants.

The Irish in this area were just over half Catholic, 56.4%, but the most striking characteristic of the Petitcodiac Irish was the strong Baptist presence amongst them, 19.3%, the highest level in the province. This fact, together with the highest ratio of New Brunswick-born Irish, can provide some insight into the process of assimilation which seems to have been taking place amongst the New Brunswick-born Irish, especially the Protestants. Especially in Petitcodiac, the older the native population age group, the more Baptist it was. Those born in New Brunswick before Waterloo were 57.5% Baptist, and those born before 1800 were 63.1%. In average age, the native Baptists were about two years older than the whole. In spouse selection, the Baptist natives again represented an extreme. While 55.1% of the New Brunswick-born had selected spouses born in New Brunswick, the figure for the Baptists was 902%. 75.8% of the natives selected spouses who were Irish by ethnicity, but the Baptists did this in only 59.7% of the cases. And of the Irish who married into the oldest group in the area aside from the French and Indians, i.e. the Hillsborough Germans, three-quarters of those with known religions were Baptist. This Baptist phenomenon was concentrated in the Parish of Salisbury in Westmorland County and in the eastern parishes of Albert County, and was even more notable in these districts. The Anglican and Methodists were concentrated in the vicinity of Sackville, and the Catholics in the north of Westmorland and the very southerly portion of Albert.

It is dear from the evidence presented that the Baptist Irish in the Petitcodiac represent not merely the earliest layer of Irish settlement in the Province, but also one of the oldest groups of Irish in the whole province. Although it is common to associate the Irish of the area with Moncton’s St. Bernard’s Church, it is probably more accurate to think in terms of Protestant Irish moving in from Truro as the founders, and this in the days before the Orange Order was even founded.

### **The North Shore**

The Miramichi Irish are one of the “backbone” Irish communities of the population of the province. Although not as numerous as the Irish in Saint John, the Miramichi Irish have preserved a distinctive culture which has been an influence upon the other groups in the valley. The census records for Kent and Gloucester Counties are sorely missed, because they would have provided a fuller picture of the whole North Shore region, and as interesting as Northumberland and the Restigouche might be, this analysis is truncated by the loss.

Although we have already seen that the Petitcodiac Irish were an old layer of the population, the Miramichi community is at least as old and far different in character. The Irish in the whole of New Brunswick were just over half Catholic, but on the North Shore most of the Irish, 82.3%, were Catholic. The largest Protestant denomination was Presbyterian, with the Anglicans a near second. Amongst the natives this ratio shifted slightly in favour of the Protestants, although the Protestant denominational distribution held much the same. The median date of immigrant arrival was 1831 for Catholics and 1827 for Protestants, and this is not the only indication that the Protestants were an earlier population. The average age of native Protestants was over two years greater than the average for Catholic natives, and those natives born before Waterloo were 44.4% Protestant, the majority of them Presbyterian.

This early Protestant Irish community was concentrated in the upper reaches of both branches of the Miramichi, while the Catholics were almost the only Irish on the lower stretches of the main river, with their “capital” at Chatham. The Parish of Nelson was the most Catholic, even though it still included the Protestant Irish north of the river in what is now the Parish of Derby. The earlier Irish of both religions were found further in the interior. Blackville Parish had the earliest median date of arrival, 1827. Chatham, as the chief port of entry, had the only significant group of Famine arrivals.

The occupational structure for these North Shore Irish was also different, because it is the only region in which Catholics and Protestants were farmers in almost the same proportions, 55.2% and 55.8% respectively. There were four Catholic labourers to every three Protestant, the difference being taken up by the higher Protestant rate of tradesmen. Yet the same religious disparity shows in the distribution of native occupations. The natives were mainly labourers but this was a Catholic phenomenon almost exclusively. Twice as many Protestant natives were farmers than was the proportion for Catholics, and the reverse was true for the unskilled labourers, twice the proportion for Catholics as for Protestants. The Catholic natives did advance in their proportion of skilled trades over their fathers, while the Protestants showed a slight decline.

As in other areas, the North Shore Irish were highly nuclear in their household patterns, but not quite as much so as elsewhere. The religious factor was present here as well. The Catholic households were 85.2% nuclear but this was true of only 78.3% of the Protestant households. The Protestants lived in extended-family households to a greater extent than did the Catholics, 17.4% to 10.4%. The occupational differences noted above also affected the North Shore Irish, as did the differences in spouse selection. Selection of spouses by the Irish on the North Shore was based upon religion as it was elsewhere. The Catholics chose Irish spouses at the far lower rate of 73.2%. In almost all cases, Scots were the preferred non-Irish partners, the sole exception being for the Anglicans, who preferred English as a second choice. Yet it was the Anglicans of all the Protestant denominations who married Irish at the highest rate, 79.3% opposed to 74.4% for the Presbyterians. Spouse selection must be viewed with a careful eye, since there were so few Irish Protestants, but they are reported for sake of comparison with the other regions.

The statistical data on the North Shore Irish must be supplemented by some impressionistic information. That which comes from the manuscripts is impossible to quantify, but should be stated as a possibility. Nowhere else in the province were the Catholics so strong amongst the Irish population, or so early. The pattern of family names and given names amongst the North Shore Irish indicates that they may have spoken Irish to a greater extent than did the Irish elsewhere at the time. Irish versions of surnames were often rendered phonetically by census takers, and yet they remain identifiable. “Caitin”

was often given by ancestors of families who now call themselves "Keating." An even more striking example is of a family who seem to have shifted back and forth between "Shinnock" and "Fox" in the censuses of 1851 and 1861. There is some evidence of a nature which is non-statistical to suggest that the Irish language lingered in the Miramichi, and this can be sustained by the impression left by the census evidence. The counties of origin and the dates of arrival for the Miramichi Irish in combination suggest that these people came from areas of Ireland which were either Irish-speaking or on the language frontier. The earlier immigrants came from Waterford-Kilkenny-Queens-Tipperary, areas which were Irish-speaking early in the last century, but which had, with the exception of Waterford, begun to switch to English by the Famine. Cork, which was generally Irish in language until the Famine, was as well represented in the Miramichi as it was in any other part of New Brunswick. In their patterns of origin, the Miramichi Irish resemble the Irish of Halifax and Newfoundland more than they do those of the remainder of the Province. In no other area of the province were the English language districts of Northern and Eastern Ulster so poorly represented. Not very scientific perhaps, but it does suggest a line for further research.

In fact, the whole of the evidence for the North Shore begs further investigation. The Miramichi Irish lived in tight, exclusive communities, which makes a systematic study of family relationships a real possibility. The loss of the two counties mentioned makes a regional study more difficult, but the distinctiveness of the North Shore Irish, compared with those in other parts of the province, does seem clear.

### **Conclusions**

This brief survey of the 1851 census reveals much about the Irish in New Brunswick which both sustains and refutes the folklore. The most important conclusion is that the Irish can no longer be regarded as a "Johnny-come-lately" ethnic group. There were a few Irish who had arrived before the Loyalists, and given that there were few of any ethnicity here at that time to welcome the refugees of 1783, this cannot be overlooked.

The New Brunswick Irish of 1851 represent several waves that are not entirely discrete, but identifiable. Probably the earliest, and most difficult to trace using census data, would be the Protestants of the Petitcodiac region. Undoubtedly, these in part were an extension of early Protestant Irish settlers in the area around Minas Basin in Nova Scotia. Possibly as early were the Protestant Irish in the Miramichi, who were accompanied by smaller numbers of Catholic Irish. In the Southwest, there were probably a small number of Irish in Saint John and the lower St. John River Valley from the days of the Loyalists. In the period immediately after Waterloo, immigration increased, both Catholic and Protestant in almost equal numbers in the period from 1815 to 1824. When the natives already born were added to these immigrants, it is safe to assume that the two religious groups were about equal in numbers until sometime between 1825 and 1830, when Catholic immigration outstripped that of the Protestants. From this point on, it was obvious that the Irish were numerous enough to split into two communities along religious lines. The rise of the Orange Order was an illustration of this split.

The 1830s represent the high point for the immigrants who stayed long enough for the 1851 census. There were thousands who arrived during that decade, but these stayed and had not yet died off, as was increasingly the case for the earlier arrivals. The case for the Famine people being the core of the New Brunswick Irish is clearly unsupportable. Of the tens of thousands who arrived, mainly through the port

of Saint John, remarkably few stayed even for the census under study, and most of those who were enumerated had moved along by the time of the 1861 census. This is not to deny the trauma of the Famine period upon the immigrants or upon the earlier Irish and the host population, but the fact of the matter seems clear: the majority of the present Irish population of New Brunswick is descended from Irish immigrants who arrived before the Famine.

The Famine was a traumatic experience. It caused changes to the very basic nature of Irish society. It is probably fair to say that the Irish who had emigrated before 1845 came from a society which was different from that of Ireland during, and more especially after, the Famine. It is probable that many of these changes had been in gestation for some time before, but the period 1845-1851 was probably a point of no return — a revolutionary era in the development of a society. The Irish of New Brunswick probably represent the pre-Famine Irish mentality better than those Irish who trace a higher proportion of their forbears to the Famine years. This could likely be examined within New Brunswick itself. The Miramichi Irish and the Saint John Irish present contrasts on the basis of rural versus urban, but they also represent two clearly distinct waves of immigration in chronological terms. This type of study is beyond the bounds of this work and must be pursued in another context.

Individuals do not make an immigrant group, and therefore it is difficult to decide at what stage the Irish became a real community. Quite possibly there was a recognisable community amongst the Irish of the Petitcodiac or amongst the Irish of the Miramichi before 1800, but it seems that the other parts of the province had to wait until after Waterloo for the individual immigrants to blend into a cohesive mass. And of course, the immigrant community remains just that until their children determine whether that group can qualify as an ethnic group. Just what is it which decides if a group can be labeled as an “ethnic group?” There are many factors which can go into this equation. A separate and distinctive language is the clearest and easiest. The Acadians qualify on that basis as do the Indians. For some time, the Germans in Lunenburg maintained their language, as did the Scots in northern Nova Scotia for even a longer time. The role of the Irish language in helping to maintain a sense of identity is a subject which remains uninvestigated, but the patterns of county origins suggest that at least a third and perhaps half of the Catholic immigrants were Irish speakers. To preserve a distinctive “culture” of a non-linguistic nature is another matter, be it through songs, dances, folklore. These components cannot be examined using the data of the census either, so some other means must be sought to establish “ethnicity” for the Irish.

#### Households Types by Ethnicity

Type	Irish	Irish			
	Catholic	Protestant	Scots	English	
Solitary	2.3%	1.8%	4.9%	1.8%	
Co-Resident Relatives	1.4	1.6	2.6	1.0	

Nuclear	86.1	84.2	77.5	80.1
Extended	8.1	10.0	13.0	13.9
Multiple-Family	1.8	2.2	1.7	3.0

Household patterns can provide one key. Samples from the 1851 census for other groups indicate that the Irish differ somewhat from the Scots and the English in the proportion of nuclear and extended families. In any case, Catholic and Protestant Irish were closer in their household types to one another than to anyone else. Smaller samples drawn from the 1871 census indicate that there was some divergence between Catholic and Protestant Irish, but that they still resembled one another more than they did the Scots or the English.

---

## Occupation and Ethnicity

---

	Irish Catholic	Irish Protestant	Scots	English
Professional & Business	4.8%	6.2%	8.4%	6.9%
Farmer	40.2	54.8	51.7	58.8
Skilled	15.7	17.5	10.3	10.8
Unskilled	37.2	19.5	23.4	19.0
Other	2.0	1.8	6.6	4.0

In terms of occupation, we find the same sort of thing. The Irish as a whole are not so different from the English and the Scots, but when religion is added, the differences become more obvious. The addition of religion to the Scots and English does not produce the same impact. This occupational distinctiveness, which follows folklore, is even more extreme when the New Brunswick-born are considered. Not only are there the noted differences between Catholic and Protestant Irish, but comparisons with the English and Scots indicate that the Catholic Irish became even more “Irish” on the basis of occupation, and the Protestants became less distinct. With both groups considered together,

the native Irish were perhaps not as well-off as had been their immigrant parents, which threatens the time worn myth that the immigrants toiled in the new land so that their children could have a better life.

Perhaps nothing can indicate ethnicity more than spouse selection, and in this the Irish were more ethnocentric than the English and Scots, and rated side by side with the French. But when religion is injected into the matter, the Catholic Irish become the most ethnocentric group in the province. Catholic Irish married Irish to an extreme degree, but their Protestant cousins did not follow suit. Everywhere, the Protestant Irish married outside of their own group to a greater extent than anyone else except the English. When the native-born are treated separately, it would almost seem that the Protestant Irish and the English were trying to assimilate into something else, but the Catholic Irish stubbornly remained more committed to their own kind than any comparative group. The higher level of Protestant Irish intermarriage with the English and Scots, when compared with that of the Catholics, raises questions about those two groups as well as about the Ulstermen, such as their degree of "Englishness" or "Scottishness." When the rate of intermarriage with non-Irish is considered, the Protestant Irish seem to have assimilated at a rate of about three times faster than the Catholics, on the basis of the 1851 data alone.

Thus, the whole question of the Irish as an ethnic group seems to depend upon more than simply a large number of immigrants settled in a specific area. It involves numbers, distinctiveness, and persistence of characteristics. There is some evidence of linguistic distinction. Beyond that, there are other factors which suggest that the Irish remained distinct into the first generation, and perhaps beyond, not merely because they called themselves "Irish," but because their basic patterns of social life remained distinct. Occupation, household patterns, and spouse selection demonstrate that the New Brunswick born Irish kept to themselves to almost the same degree as had their parents. But even this can be emphasised by adding religion. In all of these matters, the Catholic Irish were more "Irish" in every way. Catholics, not Protestants, would have been the Irish speakers, and it was the Catholics who demonstrated distinctiveness in other ways. This may have been a question of religion, but religion was not the only variable. Memories of grandparents praying or swearing in Irish, along with surviving words or phrases, would remind the Catholic Irish of the differences. Two or three generations of occupational difference of the same pattern as indicated in the 1851 census would have meant the imposition of class differences in addition to the religious differences between the two groups. Two or three generations of spouse selection at the same rate as in 1851 would make little difference to the core of the Catholic Irish, but it would dilute the "Irishness" of the Protestants to a meaningless level. Political differences between the two groups would add meaning to the unconscious factors dividing Catholic from Protestant, and might hasten the assimilation of the Protestants into the larger community of Scots, English, and the descendants of the American Loyalists. In their assimilation, the Protestant Irish would modify these groups, just as the Catholic Irish, in their persistence as a group, would modify the character of the society of the province.