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To The Savannah Irish: An Ethnohistory of the Culture from 1812-1880

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To The Savannah Irish: An Ethnohistory of the Culture from 1812-1880

An Honors Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Honors in
Sociology and Anthropology.

By

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Under the mentorship of *Heidi Altman*

Abstract

Between the years of 1812-1880, the Savannah Irish created and maintained an identity based on the Irish ideologies of separatism, independence, and egalitarianism. Through an analysis of Hibernian Society archival toasts and semi-structured interviews, the social, economic, and political institutions which influenced the Savannah-Irish culture emerged. While many aspects of Irish life in Savannah are left to be explored, this research serves to illuminate the creation of identity in the public space between Savannah and the Irish through social, economic, and political means.

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Introduction

Savannah, Georgia holds the third largest St. Patrick's Day parade in the world (Six 2015), yet many of Savannah's own Irish do not want to be part of the day's festivities that take place on River Street (Mahoney 2004; Lang 2004). At first glance, this seems odd. They *are* Irish, one would propose. *Of course*, the Irish would identify with the holiday and the celebrations around it. Unfortunately, one would only be slightly accurate with that assumption.

The Irish who lived in Savannah for generations--the first Irish immigrated in the late 1700's--have historically separated themselves from the celebrations on River Street. They do not want to associate their identities with the drunkenness and disorderly conduct that occurs there; they most certainly want St. Patrick's Day to be a family oriented day. In fact, the Savannah Irish have more than a simple parade: they have an entire season of events, ranging from the Celtic Cross Ceremony to the Jasper Green Ceremony. The Savannah Irish are proud of their heritage and culture. The perspectives that are celebrated by the Irish which surround St. Patrick's Day in Savannah stem from the creation of identity in the early 1800's. This research paper serves to understand how the Savannah-Irish ethnic identity was formed and maintained from 1812 to 1880 (Mahoney 2004; Walsh 2004).

When Irish immigrants landed in Savannah, they did not abandon their heritage and ideals, but rather they upheld their Irishness in several ways: they joined social organizations, supported each other in political races, attended church routinely, and

worked together to create unions so all Irish could have better lives (Shoemaker 1990). They kept in close contact with their motherland while facilitating a global consciousness in their new home. In many records, the Irish vigorously followed international news and sent remittances when Irish tenant farmers were in need (O'Day 2005; Ruark 2014). They were active in local politics and often discussed international politics openly in organizations and pubs (O'Keefe 2004).

The years 1812-1880 delineate the years that the Irish first immigrated to Savannah in large numbers. The year 1812 marks the charter of the oldest Savannah Irish social organization, The Hibernian Society. This was the first time in Savannah history that the Irish came together publicly and celebrated their heritage. This period also encompasses the peak influx of migrants during the 1850's; after these years, Irish migration fell drastically in the Southeast. This period includes dates up to 1880 to incorporate the generation following the population boom.

In the following pages, I will explore the question: "How did the Savannah Irish construct an ethnic identity in the public space between 1812 and 1880?" The research is divided into sections: a background of Ireland's history and ideologies incorporated into the Savannah-Irish culture, a review of the literature, the methods used in this research, the data and analysis of the findings, and finally, a conclusion. This thesis augments research on other ethnic groups, migrant groups, and how transnational ethnic identities develop and adjust to different cultures.

This study is diachronic as it served to provide an ethnohistory of the Savannah Irish over time. Newspapers from Savannah, Georgia, and Ireland were important tools for analyzing culture through text. The data used in this research included interviews,

transcripts, letters, opinion articles, news articles, political propaganda, election results, and other public media through which the Savannah Irish constructed or demonstrated their ethnic identity.

I examined the data through the lenses of functionalism, structural functionalism, and postcolonialism to document an ethnohistory of the Savannah Irish. These theories have different implications; together they will show the impact of different cultural factors between the years of 1812 to 1880. Prior research conducted on the Savannah Irish focuses on regional ties (Clark 1986; Smith and Hendry 2006; Smith 2009; Shoemaker 1990).

Most research exists in northern areas with high Irish populations. Savannah's total population is diminutive compared to Boston and New York City, but the population of Irish in Savannah as a proportion is noteworthy. Further, as a distinct cultural group, the Irish contributions to Savannah are striking. An ethnohistory of the Savannah Irish has never been done; this research serves to understand the Savannah Irish's emic perspective about their ethnic identity and the institutions which created a home for the Irish in Savannah.

Historical Background

Three themes of the Savannah-Irish ethnic identity are found in Ireland's history: separatism, independence, and egalitarianism. These ideologies formed alongside Ireland's own development as an independent nation as early as the twelfth century, when the Normans invaded County Wexford, Ireland (Sullivan, A.M. 1900). This invasion began a long-distance and complicated relationship with England. Ireland was ruled by deputies to the British in Dublin, only loosely following British rule (Moody 1991). This distant rule gave Ireland the chance to develop a modern, but separate culture relative to England. Over time, the Irish established a national identity of free citizens, equal in all aspects of life.

These ideologies continued to evolve when Henry VIII took control of the Irish lordship and became King of Ireland in 1541. Henry VIII's involvement in religion would affect all of Europe. Because the majority of Ireland would remain Roman Catholic, King Henry VIII would severely punish Ireland; Henry VIII's unbearable control would embolden the Irish to seek more freedom, equality, and separation (Moody 1991).

Between the years 1649-1660, Oliver Cromwell conquered Ireland (Barnard 1990) and oppressed the Catholic Irish; under the penal laws, power and land rights were taken away. Perhaps these years of oppression manufactured hate in Ireland and cemented the ideology of Britain as the "other."

During the sixteenth century, the potato became a crucial element of Irish culture; over the next two centuries, it would become a primary factor in the development of Ireland's sovereignty and even served to "other" Ireland from Great Britain: "the potato consolidated [Ireland's] dubious identity in the English mind" (Pollan 2002:199). The potato was made for Ireland's climate, it could grow on small plots of land, and it required minimum labor and tools. To the Irish, the greatest aspect of the potato was that it meant the Irish could now feed themselves without help from the British: a diet of the potato and cow's milk was "nutritionally complete" (Pollan 2002:200-201). The potato would provide a way to be independent of British control and with the potato, the Irish gained some footing in the march to equality.

Unfortunately, the prosperity the potato gave Ireland did not last long. The dependence on the potato soon became overdependence; throughout the years, frosts and blights would cause Ireland to go through many periods of hardship (Dickson 1997).

In 1845, the Great Famine struck Ireland, a result of British exploitation, diminishing property rights, droughts, disease, and overdependence on the potato. Even though there was a surplus of food in Ireland, exporting large quantities of food to England meant there was little left for the Irish themselves (Ryan 2004). Disease spread quickly among the emaciated. The population of Ireland in 1841 was calculated as 8,175,124; by 1851, the total population of Ireland would drop to 6,552,385 (Woodham-Smith 1992:411). More than one million people would migrate to North America alone; many also migrated to Great Britain and Australia. (Woodham-Smith 1992:206). This catastrophic event juxtaposed the Irish against the British once again. In the eyes of the

starving Irish, the British were malicious and evil: this hate easily transitioned into the separatist ideology.

Over time, news of rebellions and independence spread to Ireland. The Irish supported rebellions in France and America because the countries held similar ideologies to the Irish such as liberty, equality, fraternity, and freedom. Hearing the success of these rebellions across the globe, the Irish rallied their own troops, the United Irishmen, in an attempt to fight the oppressive British; for over a century the Irish would fight to gain their independence. The Irish would earn their independence in 1922. Just as they had done in the past, they established their new national identity as separate, free, and equal.

Honor Fagan writes, “...because England existed, Ireland was forced to invent itself” (2002: 137). According to anthropologists, while Britain was in the process of developing its modern national identity, so was Ireland. The British were Protestant and modernized, the Irish were Roman Catholic and rural (Tovey and Share 200:291-301). These ideologies would affect political, economic, and social roles in Irish immigrant culture around the globe, especially the Savannah-Irish community.

The idea of the Irish culture itself “is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign...It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1991: 5-6). While Anderson’s definition is in reference to the political nation, it also applies to cultural identities.

Anderson states that nationalism is often related to fatality (Anderson 1991). The Irish culture banded together because of tragedy and loss throughout its history. The

massive fatality numbers--originating from battles with British troops and widespread famine impacted the emic viewpoint of the Savannah Irish: they would develop similar ideologies to the Irish.

Literature Review

Although Irish Immigrants came to Savannah, Georgia, with very little, they carried a great deal of baggage: many immigrants held on to the ideologies of their motherland. This foreign belief system paired with southern ideologies created a cultural marginality for the Irish with values such as separatism, independence, and egalitarianism in Savannah. Factors of the migration to the American South would influence the way these values were adopted and employed.

For most scholars, the migration of such a large number of Irish out of the country is considered a “diaspora.” Scholars argue that the use of the term diaspora means the migration was involuntary, or at least compelled (Gleeson 2001). Factors such as the Irish Rebellion or desperation during the Great Famine forced migrants into the diaspora. In contrast, studies suggest that there were many factors which influenced the migration. Economic and religious opportunity were two main reasons for emigration (Rapple 2015). Whether the Irish emigrated for forced or unforced reasons, Irish immigrants were aware of their homeland’s volatile political situation and carried their perceptive ideologies to a new country with a different political climate (Gleeson 2001).

During the Irish diaspora, the Irish migrated to Great Britain, America, and Australia. In America alone, over thirty-five million people claim Irish descent, seven times larger than the population of Ireland (Kliff 2013). In the United States, the largest group of Irish immigrants settled in northern cities such as Boston and New York City. Because such a high population of migrants traveled north, the studies on the Irish have primarily comprised the northern communities (Miller 1988; Shoemaker 1990).

However, this is changing. A few Irish studies have been done on migrants to the Southeast in places such as Savannah, Charleston, and New Orleans.

Migration of the Irish to the Southern states was dramatically lower than in the rest of the country. For example, in 1850, only ten percent of the foreign-born Irish were located in the South. In ten years, this percentage only rose one percent (Shoemaker 1990:3). This low population percentage contributes to the lack of research completed on the Irish in Southern states. Dennis Clark writes, "...the Irish were never numerous enough or distinctive enough to shape the South's institutions in the way they affected labor, religion, politics, and urban growth in other regions" (1986:110). This is contradicted by several researchers, including Clark himself, who have demonstrated the Southern Irish's distinctive story, one different than the Irish in other regions (Clark 1986; Shoemaker 2000; Smith 2009; Kenny 2003; Kenny 2014).

Savannah's Irish population would take some time to increase because the South as a whole was still materializing. Clark writes, "The emergence of large concentrations of Irish in the South had to await the development of more major centers and the need for the kind of labor that characterized Irish employment in the period when Irish immigration swelled after 1820" (Clark 1986: 96). Over time, Savannah would become one of the most popular destinations for Irish migrants in the South, along with Charleston, North Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana.

Savannah, in particular, evolved to become a major hub for the Irish in the South: "In 1850, the 1573 people born in Ireland made up 10.3% of Savannah's total population and 18.7% of its white population. Ten years later, the number had doubled, to 3148 representing 14.1% of the city's total population and 22.7% of its whites" (Shoemaker

1990: 4). Shoemaker compares these numbers to those of Philadelphia, whose Irish-born population was 17% and Boston and New York, whose numbers were less than 25% Irish. Both were considered Irish settlements (Shoemaker 1990:4). Savannah's overall growth was comparable to these northern cities with a total population increase of 116% between 1810 and 1840; during these years, Boston increased 151%, Philadelphia increased 137%, and Charleston increased only 18% (Bancroft 1848).

Beginning with the first Savannah-Irish immigrants in the eighteenth century, the culture established a distinct ethnic identity expressed by the limiting characteristics of ethnic origin, religion, participation in social organizations, and political ideologies. However, various researchers argue that the Irish ethnic group and southern regional ethnic groups eventually blended together to create a "cultural hybridity" (McCarthy 2012:6).

In 2009, William Smith's research found that 18% of participants in Savannah Irish organizations identified themselves as southerners and Irish (2009:235). However, ethnic origin importance ranked higher than Southern identity importance (Smith 2009:229-231). Smith asserts that the Savannah Irish did not identify as strongly with regional consciousness because the needs of the group were met by religion and ethnic organizations (2009:235). While a portion of the Savannah-Irish community may have adapted southern identity as an element of their ethnicity, they remain Savannah-Irish; the characteristics of the Savannah-Irish ethnicity are still present. Historically, the southeast was under industrial development during the early waves of Irish immigration (Clark 1986). Perhaps the Savannah Irish developed their ethnicity apart from their

regional consciousness because the south lacked a strong regional consciousness as a whole.

For the Irish in Savannah, identity was interwoven with community because “ethnicity is initially experienced at home, but it is reaffirmed in the public space” (Georgiou 2013:3). The immigrant Irish faction emerged as the Savannah Irish ethnic group through a system of essential processes such as religion, social interactions, and politics. These processes were important for the construction of “group identities and the sense of belonging in a community, shaped while distinguishing the Self and Us from the Others - those who don't share the same sense of belonging, those who don't belong to the same group and community” (Georgiou 2013:3).

The ethnic identity was maintained by the presence of these social processes from 1812 to 1880. The distinction between the Savannah Irish and rest of the Savannah society would occur continuously during this period through “economic and political relations of inequality...situating the production of cultural differences within the historical processes of a socially and spatially interconnected world” (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:327).

The location of Savannah was critical for the development of the Savannah-Irish ethnicity because “...the identity of a place emerges by the intersection of its specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as a community or locality” (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:319).

Gupta and Ferguson assert that the actual location of Savannah does not matter as much as the emphasis on “ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places” (1992:321).

For example, the Irish would have created an ethnic enclave similar to that of the Savannah-Irish anywhere, regardless of the location.

In contrast, other researchers argue Savannah's location on the riverfront was a significant reason immigrants came to the southeast and stayed on the coast; many riverfront and railway jobs provided economic opportunities Ireland lacked (Sullivan, JC). Social connections may have given the Irish a foothold in Savannah. Together, the work opportunity and the strong Irish community created the groundwork for Irish immigration to Savannah and provided a purpose for the Irish to further develop their ethnicity.

After Irish immigrants arrived in Savannah, a majority joined social organizations that supported their ethnic group, such as the Friends of Ireland, the Irish Union Society, and the Hibernian Society. These institutions provided a safe place to "socialize and look after each other's welfare" (Shoemaker 1986:19). The Hibernian Society is the oldest Irish organization in Savannah; it began in 1812 as a Protestant and Jewish Charitable society (McDonough 1952). It is one of two remaining Savannah Irish Organizations created in the 1800's (the second is the Ancient Order of Hibernians) (*Savannah Morning News*; Smith 2009:228).

Irish religious presence in Savannah exhibited a contrasting pattern to that of national religious affiliation. In 1650, there were six Roman Catholic Churches in America (five in Maryland and one in Maine); by 1750, there were 30 Roman Catholic Churches (Gaustad 1962:38-40). Historically, the southeast has been primarily Baptist; in the 1960s, 144 out of 159 of Georgia's counties were Baptist (Gaustad 1962:43). Present

day statistics show a growth in Catholicism around the nation: in 2012, 48% of American Christians were Protestant while 22% were Catholic (Pew Research Center 2012).

The majority of Irish immigrants were Scotch-Irish Protestants before the 1800's, but this shifted dramatically during Ireland's era of famine when the majority of Irish emigrants were Catholic (Smith 2009). Success in Savannah was directly related to religious denomination. Gleeson writes, "Protestant immigrants were more likely to be prosperous and to have established connections in the region than were Irish Catholics" (2001:4). Other researchers make similar assertions. Smith states, "The Irish did not lose their ethnic identity as they assimilated into southern society, although it was substantially easier for Scotch-Irish Protestants than Irish Catholics to blend into the regional culture and become southerners" (2009:226).

As greater numbers of Irish migrated to Savannah, Catholicism became an integral aspect of Savannah-Irish culture, rather than Protestantism. The Irish were a dominant factor in the development of Catholicism in the South (Clark 1986:104). Savannah-Irish Catholics were members of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist or Blessed Sacrament (McDonogh 1952). Most Irish children went to corresponding church-sponsored schools, with the addition of the secondary schools, Benedictine Military Academy for boys and St. Vincent for girls (McDonogh 1952).

Religious identity was tied closely to ethnic identity and the distinction between Catholics and Protestants would define Irishness in America:

Catholic nationalists in both Ireland and America exclude Protestants from their definition of Irishness, Protestant Irish Americans from the 1830s onwards eagerly embraced the term 'Scotch-Irish' as a way of distinguishing themselves from the incoming waves of Catholic Irish immigrants. A further case of separation of 'Scotch-Irish' and Catholic

Irish immigrants, of course, was the relative concentration of the former in the American South and the latter in the Northeast, Midwest, and West. (Kenny 2014:3)

Today the tie between Catholicism and Savannah-Irish ethnicity remains: over ninety percent of members in Savannah-Irish social organizations claim Catholicism as their religious preference (Smith 2009). Eleven Irish organizations existed in 2009: the Hibernian society, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Clan-na-Erin Society, Daughters of Ireland, Fenian Society, Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, Irish Heritage Society, Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Police Emerald Society, Shenanigans Society, and Sinn Fein (Smith 2009).

When the Irish immigrated to Savannah during the 1800's, many would find work as ditch diggers, laborers, and railway workers (Clark 1986:13). Over the years, some of the Savannah Irish would rise in class and become doctors, police chiefs, political officials, or become industry leaders in foundry and ironworks.

The majority who became politically active would hold positions in the Democratic or Whig parties. It was common for police and fire department members to have careers in politics. Family and friends would rally together to support their Irish candidate, sometimes even going so far as to bribe others from Savannah (Mahoney 2004; Ware 2004; O'Keefe 2004).

The common narrative often heard about the Irish replicates stereotypes and clichés that the Irish are drunkards or criminals (Demetrakopoulous 1991; Kooy and Chiu 1998; Wilson 2005). For example, statements like the following by Clark do nothing but perpetuate false claims:

Good examples of the Irish as urban workers existed in Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina. Conditions in Savannah were so chaotic and destructive of decency for the Irish that they gained a reputation as ‘the grand movers in all disturbances.’ Larceny, malicious mischief, buying and receiving stolen goods, fraud, illegal voting, assault and battery, and murder were common offenses for which they were brought to court. Drunkenness and gambling were vices that, when spread among slaves by Irish grogshop owners, caused deep local concern. Also, on the Savannah waterfront shipping agents named Kelly, Dunn, and Hussey became notorious for their victimization of sailors in the 1850s. (Clark 1986: 98-99)

While some Irish may have committed crimes, Clark’s claims stem from an article in the Georgia Historical Quarterly where Richard Hauton critiques the black versus white crime ratio. Hauton references a wide variety of white crime and only specifically mentions the Irish as criminals because of disorderly conduct and drunkenness—and adds that the words ‘and lying down in the street’ often accompany the charge (Hauton 1972:10). Hauton adds that the “foreign born” were often linked with the election results, insinuating that the elections were rigged by several ethnic groups besides the Irish (Hauton 1972:11).

Perhaps the Savannah-Irish interest in politics originated from interwoven themes of independence and egalitarianism in Ireland: under British rule, Irish perceptions were silenced for many years; in Savannah, the Irish used local politics to ensure their voices were heard.

Methods and Theory

This research focuses on the Savannah Irish during 1812-1880: this time period reflects the largest influx of Irish migrants to Savannah. The Savannah-Irish community established a defined cultural group during these years. In many cases, the Savannah Irish lived apart from other members of the Savannah community; this distance helped forge a distinct cultural group, specific to Savannah. Many immigrants found themselves in a semi-lower class in the early 1800's, but this class system was not rigid. Subsequently, several members of the Savannah Irish worked their way up the class system; some would find themselves in a new class known as the "Lace-Curtain Irish" (Ware 2004; Williams 2002:9).

In this study, I used qualitative research methods to analyze semi-formal interviews and archival research including newspapers, Hibernian Society toasts, historical archives, and rare pamphlets. Descriptions and observations were a better use of historic data than quantitative methods; these methods analyzed the emic view of the historic Savannah-Irish ethnic identity in the public space.

Archival research was used in this study; this was the best way to contextualize Savannah in the past. In the archives, newspapers from Savannah, the *Savannah Morning News*, the *Savannah Georgian*, and the *Savannah Republican* were important tools for analyzing culture through text. After the collection of the interviews, the data was coded to find similar topics. This gave context to the information and provided an image for how the Savannah Irish influenced the city.

The main archival data source used in this study were the Hibernian Society toasts published each March during the St. Patrick's Day festival. Each St. Patrick's Day, the organization gathered, had breakfast, listened to a guest orator, and then made toasts. There were two types of toasts, those made by the leaders, and subsequently those made by volunteers after the leaders were finished. These toasts often began with three toasts for St. Patrick's Day, Ireland, and America.

Smith and Hendry conducted fieldwork on the Savannah Irish regarding the Savannah Irish ethnic identity in Savannah. Hendry tape-recorded 38 semi-structured interviews with the Savannah Irish and then transcribed them. In this thesis, I used Hendry's interviews as qualitative data to supplement the Hibernian Society toasts (Smith and Hendry 2006).

These interviews document oral histories as well as provide emic insights about ethnic identity. Because the time frame of this particular project is 1812-1880, much of the data used from the contemporary interviews consist of memories from childhood or information passed down by generations of the Savannah-Irish immigrants. The interviews are subjective; they deal with personal memories and therefore it is important to remember that there may be some historical inaccuracies in the data.

By comparing these toasts to other archival data, primary sources in the form of pamphlets and newspaper reports, I examined the relationship between public space and lived experience in the Irish community. Archival research was supported by the anthropological frameworks of postcolonialism, functionalism, and structural functionalism. Postcolonialism strives to detail and record relationships between colonial rulers and their colonies; examining archival research through postcolonialism

illuminated what the Savannah Irish experienced after they migrated from a British colony. Functionalism and structural functionalism are theories which identify how culture functions to serve the individual and the society. The ability to develop social organizations, a formal church-based society, and neighborhood communities were vital aspects of the Savannah-Irish culture. Together, these theories will explain how the Savannah Irish cultivated their ethnic identity.

While both archival research and semi-structured research cannot give a full picture of the Savannah Irish, together, they can supplement each other. For example, where interpretation of interviews can be biased, archival research may support the histories provided. However, all are interpretations of the culture; the views on the interpretations of the cultures cannot be judged for historical accuracy. When archival research reveals new perspectives of the culture, interviews enhance the context of the historical research. This technique of using several anthropological methods can help the researcher be more objective. While one can never completely remove themselves from research, it is important to try to be as unbiased as possible. However, because this is nearly impossible, a researcher must examine their biases and include them in the research. No two anthropologists will ever get the same exact analysis, but it is important to stay as objective as possible to extrapolate reliable and trustworthy data.

To analyze the toasts, the software Nvivo was used. The data was coded into several nodes: St. Patrick's Day, America, Georgia, Savannah, community, religion, women, social organizations, and ideals. These nodes provided a quantitative depiction of the Savannah Irish: to what did the Irish toast most often? How did they discuss important themes in their society? The nodes also provided a database for examining the

diverse perspectives and characteristics of the Savannah Irish culture. In order to analyze the interviews, the same methods were used.

Data and Analysis

Ideals

The Savannah Irish cultivated their ethnic identity in the public space by forming neighborhoods and communities, church groups, political parties, economic unions, and social groups. The ideologies of separatism, egalitarianism, and independence that the Irish carried to America, and the newly acquired American ideologies would shape the social needs of the culture in Savannah from 1812 to 1880. The Savannah Irish valued American ideals over British ideals; the United States appeared prosperous and free, as opposed to the British principles of imperialism and control.

The most common Hibernian Society toasts published in the *Savannah Georgian* and the *Savannah Republican* between 1812 and 1880 were liberty and freedom. Toasts about liberty often included both civil and religious liberties. In 1823, the *Savannah Georgian* published a toast by Mr. Gilmartin, "Liberty, civil and religious to all men." Occasionally, the society toasted southern ideals rather than Irish, such as this sentiment by Osborne A. Lochrane in the 1850 edition of the *Savannah Republican*: "G. B. Cumming--The purest embodiment of Southern Principles--As long as liberty has a home--truth an advocate, or humanity a friend, his name shall not be forgotten." These toasts reflected egalitarian ideologies of the Irish overseas, but also of a newfound southern identity.

From 1812 to 1880, religion was an important institution to the Savannah Irish. It is seen most often in the charitable works by the church and the Hibernian Society toasts. In this sentiment, published in the 1828 edition of the *Savannah Republican*, dichotomized freedom: “Religion--Its untrammelled exercise, the dearest privilege of a free people.” Religion was extremely important to the Irish in public settings; a majority of the Savannah Irish were active in their local churches. Several social organizations had religious requirements, such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians which mandated members to be Catholic (Ancient Order of Hibernians).

The ideologies separatism, independence, and egalitarianism were often represented as symbols in Savannah-Irish culture. The use of symbols in the Irish material culture represented these large scale ideologies as smaller themes. From 1812-1880, the Hibernian Society often toasted America’s symbol, the eagle, and Ireland’s symbol, the harp. In 1828, the *Savannah Republican* published a Hibernian Society toast as following: “The Harp of Erin--May some master hand snatch it from the Willows and strike a strain that will be heard and felt from one extreme of Britain to the other [:] ‘No chains shall sully thee [/] Thou soul of love and liberty, [/] Thy songs were made for the pure and free, [/] They shall, never sound in slavery.’”

The connection of symbols in the Savannah-Irish culture may have stemmed from Ireland’s earlier use. Symbols, as tools of rhetoric, were easily identifiable and could be made to any size--from a small jacket button to a flag. The Irish first used the harp as a symbol as far back as the thirteenth century, but diffusion of the symbol did not occur until the use in political movements during the eighteenth and nineteenth century (O’Donnel 2012-13:23). Early uses of the harp represented high status among the Irish;

over time, laws were put in place on the musicians that restricted movement throughout the country. The harp became a symbol for oppression and separatism. The United Irishmen used the harp as a seal during the 1798 rebellion, along with the mottos: “It is now strung and shall be heard” and “Equality” (LGMA Libraries Development). This symbol quickly spread stateside to Savannah. Savannah-Irish organizations used the harp to represent Ireland, for example, the Irish Jasper Greens, a voluntary military corps created in 1842, whose military uniforms had buttons printed with the image of an eagle sitting atop a harp to represent the union of Ireland and the United States (Rodgers 2008:46). The Hibernian Society also used this symbol frequently: more than two hundred years since the Hibernian Society charter, the harp is still present as the society’s seal and banner (The Celtic Cross Ceremony 2012).

The Hibernian Society frequently quoted other ideals such as freedom of discussion. For example, in the 1831 edition of the *Savannah Republican* by Bishop John England: “Freedom of Discussion.--Whether by the press or in the assemblies of the people. Truth and Justice need not fear the judgment of those most interested in their triumph.” These ideologies developed from political circumstances in America, Ireland, and other countries; the featured ideals depended on the year and the status of the international community. In general, Irish ideologies of separatism, independence, egalitarianism overlaid other ideologies.

Over the years, the members of the Hibernian Society would toast heroes, such as Ireland’s Robert Emmet, Irish nationalist and rebellion leader, or America’s George Washington, a pillar for American ideals. In 1823, the *Savannah Georgian* published the

Hibernian Society toast: “The memories of Emmet, FitzGerald, Sheares, and others, who suffered Martyrdom in endeavoring to obtain for their country, that which Washington acquired for his.” In 1836, the *Savannah Republican* published the Hibernian Society’s toast for George Washington, “The memory of Washington--His cenotaph, the hearts of his countrymen. To praise is in vain; ‘tis eloquence to be silent.” These leaders reflected ideologies that appealed to the Savannah Irish. George Washington’s campaigns for freedom often paralleled other Irish revolutionists.

In the nineteenth century, the Hibernian Society toasted men famous for their help in the crusade for independence off the battlefield, such as Dean Jonathan Swift. Swift wrote several letters under the column titled, “Drapier Letters” for an English-sponsored circulation in Ireland. In the fourth letter, Swift declared that the: “Royal Family had no more right to ignore the feelings of Irish subjects than they had to impose what they did not want on the citizens of the mother-country,” and this declaration sparked Irish sentiment across the globe to Savannah (Birkhead 1911 96-102). In 1817, the *Savannah Republican* published the Hibernian Society toast: “The Memory of Dean Swift and all departed Irishmen--Who, by their talents, virtue and patriotism, have added to the lustre and renown of the ‘Emerald Isle.’” These ideologies developed the social, economic, and political views of the individual and the society in Savannah.

In addition to Hibernian Society toasts, speeches were also given during Hibernian Society meetings. The speakers lectured on similar topics to the upcoming toasts, such as the status of Ireland’s freedom. On March 17, 1848, in the *Savannah Republican*, Robert H. Griffin’s speech to the Hibernian Society encompasses several of the usual topics: messages of oppressed people and a struggle for liberty are main themes.

He spoke to those who celebrate St. Patrick's Day broadly in his message: "It is a feeling of common humanity which, at this accustomed season, brings together so many who are strangers to the blood of Ireland, and leads them to unite in this often repeated stirring of the troubled waters of her history." In the quote, Griffin created a sense of unification, often heard in Savannah during the St. Patrick's Day season. Even those who did not have Irish heritage could understand the adverse conditions in Ireland.

Griffin further discussed the Irish famine and need for autonomy from an American perspective through the use of compelling rhetoric: "It is this which fills the veins of all Americans with boiling anger." He labeled the Irish migrants as "orphans of Ireland" and described America as a place with "unshackled freedom." This juxtaposition gives the audience a sense of obligation to the Irish circumstances. Historically, the Savannah-Irish were open to charity and sponsored many programs for the Irish abroad.

Finally, equality was often heralded in the Savannah-Irish society as an upstanding ideal. However, the views of women in Savannah reflected a male-dominated society. The Hibernian Society toasts referred to women in several different manners. In the 1819 edition of the *Savannah Republican*, the Hibernian Society toasted, "the fair sex." Other times, the Hibernian Society would regard women in positive means, such as in the 1829 edition of the *Savannah Republican*, "The Ladies--their approbation an incitement to laudable acts--their smiles an ample recompense for their achievement." Occasionally, poems would accompany the toast as in the 1827 edition of the *Savannah Georgian*: "The Fair--'Without the home that plighted love endears, without the smile, from partial beauty won, Oh! What were man? A world without a sun.'" While the

Savannah Irish valued equality, it would be much later before men and women were equal in the Savannah-Irish culture.

Semi-structured interviews provide an emic view of the Savannah Irish as equal, yet an etic perspective indicates a noticeable gender inequality. Savannah Irish women were not allowed into Irish social organizations until they created their own in 1986, called the Daughters of Ireland (Daughters of Ireland).

In a semi-structured interview, Carita Conner stated, “the Hibernian society hasn’t changed for many, many years... I’m not one of these that just feels like a woman has to break into everything. I have been very happy in all the things that I have done in my life and I have never been--felt excluded.”

When asked if there should be a female Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade, Gloria Jones responded:

Personally, my own personal feeling is that I hope it never happens. Because I think we’re having enough male problem today, with...and we don’t support our men enough as men with women working and making more money and things. I think we definitely need to put our men as head of our households and head of our families and let our children grow up. I guess I’m as liberated as any woman ever was, and I’m liberated in my own way. I can be who I want to be in my organizations. I can stand up and I can hold my head high, but I still think that men need to be up head of the household to the degree that the children respect...both need to be in their place, mothers and fathers. But I think that men need to be men somewhere and have their own. I just feel that way. I feel very strong about this. (Jones 2004)

Women in the Savannah-Irish culture represented one of the different ways the Irish held the ideology of equality. While not all Irish were equal in social organizations, cultural equality in the public space was an ideology the Irish strived for.

Ireland and America

Two leading Hibernian Society toasts were Ireland and America. These toasts also appear to be the most important; they were most often toasted first. The most prominent way Ireland was toasted debated Irish ideals as well. In 1817, the *Savannah Republican* published a Hibernian Society toast by the British Consul, Mr. Wallace, to Ireland: “equally distinguished for bravery, friendship and hospitality.” Over the years, the way Ireland was mentioned would not change. In 1831, the *Savannah Republican* published a toast by William Condon, “Ireland as she has been!--Ireland as she deserves to be!--and Ireland as she shall be!” In 1850, the year the Compromise of 1850 was passed by the United States Congress in an attempt to silence the unavoidable Civil War, the *Savannah Republican* published a toast to Ireland by Reverend J. F. O’Neill, “May the general union of Irish hearts, of Irish hands and Irish sentiment, which so happily greeted us this day, be as perpetual as a divine Providence will, I trust, render the confederated union of our States.”

The Hibernian Society toasted America with positive terms; sometimes comparing the political situation of Ireland and America. This toast by Mr. A. Hall in the 1823 edition of the *Savannah Georgian* compares the two countries, “America as she is, Ireland as she ought to be, Free, Sovereign and Independent.”

Tributes to American presidents were also common, as well as the United States Army and Navy in these sequential toasts in the 1814 edition of the *Savannah Republican*

by Lieutenant Henry B Jones, “The American Navy, may it ever prosper over its enemies” and the following, by J. Jackson, “The American army--its colors on the walls of Quebec, the ensuing campaign.” Throughout the years, a considerable amount of patrons from the Army and the Navy attended meetings of the Hibernian Society, sometimes as guests and sometimes as members.

Similarly, the way Ireland was described in newspapers in positive terms. Even during times of famine, the Savannah Georgian published this note in 1822: “In the Waterford Mirror we find the following remark: ‘Great as the present emergency is deemed, the patriot, the philosopher, the statesman will be well occupied in considering how Ireland, a country so eminently productive, has been reduced to such scarcity, after a harvest which was so plentiful, that food was said to pay little more than the cost of growth, preparation and carriage.’”

In the public sphere, Savannah newspapers influenced the manner in which the Savannah Irish perceived America and Ireland. In a comical letter to his wife published in the *Savannah Georgian* published on June 8, 1819, Patrick O’Driscoll describes America as “This land of liberty as they call it—where children are free before they are born.” His wife, still in Ireland, responds, “To see the melancholy state of poor Ireland; nor can it be mended, unless the people become united as they are in America...” Images described by the newspapers would permeate into Savannah-Irish daily life and often into Hibernian Society toasts.

From a global perspective, the *Savannah Georgian* regularly published news about Ireland among international news from countries such as Greece, Great Britain, Spain, Turkey, or Brazil. The international perspective of current issues covered in the newspaper updated the Irish with news from their homeland and encouraged them to donate money for social issues.

In the same way, the Hibernian Society toasts also mentioned the states of global actors from across the globe. Great Britain was the most frequently mentioned; often in juxtaposition to Ireland (Savannah Republican 1817).

Other than Great Britain, the toasts to foreign states in Hibernian Society toasts included separatist and independence ideologies which affected those areas as well. For example, in 1817 in the *Savannah Republican*, the Hibernian Society toasted, “The Patriots of South America--May they also...a separate independent and distinct station among the powers of the earth.” Six years later, the Hibernian Society toasted in the *Savannah Georgian*, “The South American Republica--We were foremost to acknowledge their independence, and we rejoice in the prospects of its speedy recognition by the governments of Europe.”

Neighborhoods, Community, and Religion

The Savannah Irish developed their cultural identity through processes directly related to the Savannah neighborhoods. Because the Savannah-Irish identity is fundamentally tied to the location of the neighborhoods, an accurate portrayal of the Savannah-Irish neighborhoods is essential.

Savannah was historically divided into wards and squares. The Savannah Irish primarily lived in three areas: Washington Square (also known as Washington Ward or Old Fort), Yamacraw, and Oglethorpe Ward (separated into North, Middle, and South) (O'Keefe 2004; Shoemaker 1990). These neighborhoods were vital aspects of the Savannah Irish culture. Shoemaker described the Irish neighborhoods in his dissertation:

The neighborhoods on the east side, east of Habersham street, included Glimerville and the area surrounding the Old Fort...Between Jefferson and West Broad, south of Liberty street, lay the rough district locally known as Curry Town. Beyond West Broad was Oglethorpe ward (actually divided into North, Middle, and South Oglethorpe) between New and Bryan streets. From Bryan Street to the river lay Yamacraw, the most disreputable of all parts of Savannah...These districts encompassed concentrations of poverty and the kinds of activities widely associated with poverty...These were the neighborhoods in which the bulk of the Irish immigrants to Savannah settled. The 1860 census moved from east to west across the city in compiling their manuscripts. The first District on the returns represents that part of Savannah east of East Broad Street. Of the 1,098 households occupied by Irish-born women and men during the 1860 census, 438 (39.9%) lived in this district. Another 35.6% or 391 households lived west of West Broad in the Fourth District, which included Oglethorpe Ward and Yamacraw. (Shoemaker 1986:116-118)

According to Shoemaker, Oglethorpe Ward, divided into North, Middle, and South Oglethorpe Ward, can be found between New and Bryan Street (Shoemaker 1990:117). However, figure 1 and 2 depict Oglethorpe Ward with a north boundary of Joachim Street (presently known as West Bay Street), a south boundary from New Street (presently known as Turner Boulevard), a west boundary from Farm Street (presently Fahm Street) and an east boundary of West Broad Street (Figure 1). This distinction has important implications for the division of Yamacraw and Oglethorpe Ward because it alters the percentage of Irish living in both neighborhoods. Yamacraw and Oglethorpe Ward have distinct differences in social class as well as disbursement of city services. Shoemaker states that in 1854, the city council was still debating whether or not Yamacraw would have gas mains when the rest of the city received services (Shoemaker 1990:117). This distinction is crucial because the Irish neighborhoods were fundamental to the creation of other cultural institutions, such as organizations, economics, and religion, directly tied to the location of the Irish neighborhoods. Through neighborhoods, the Savannah Irish met others with similar ideologies and established a close-knit community. During the height of Irish migration to Savannah, 519 white males and 480 white females lived in Oglethorpe Ward (Bancroft 1848). Figure 5 shows the location of some of these institutions in correlation with the Savannah-Irish neighborhoods.

The Yamacraw neighborhood, as Shoemaker states, ran from Bryan Street to the Savannah River and was known as the least respectable neighborhood in Savannah (Shoemaker 1990:117). However, figures 1 and 2 depict Yamacraw with a north boundary of the Savannah River, a south boundary of Joachim Street (presently known as West Bay Street), a west boundary from Savannah Canal Basin and an east boundary of

West Broad Street. This distinction alters North Oglethorpe's boundary--it is not in the least respectable neighborhood as Shoemaker asserts above.

Lastly, according to figures 1 and 2, the Old Fort neighborhood corresponds with Washington Square Ward, with a north boundary of Bay Street, a south boundary running possibly as far as East Oglethorpe Avenue, a west boundary of Habersham Street and an east boundary of East Broad Street (Figure 1; Figure 2).

In a semi-structured interview, James F. Stafford Sr. asserts that Old Fort consisted of the houses between Bay Street and Oglethorpe Avenue, but possibly only as far south as Broughton Street. His parents and older siblings lived in Old Fort, but later moved out to a different house on East Jones Street. He recalls joking with his siblings that he was born in the "lace-curtain part of Savannah" (Stafford 2004).

In 1840, the census recorded that there were 196 white men and 129 white females in Washington Square; only 8 years later, the census recorded 242 white men and 180 white females (Bancroft 1848). Bancroft notes "the proportion of those of foreign birth over the other two classes is greatest in Washington" (1848:10). This influx of population corresponds with the famine and other political events in Ireland at this time.

Shoemaker claims, as stated above: "The first District on the [1860 census] returns represents that part of Savannah east of East Broad Street. Of the 1,098 households occupied by Irish-born women and men during the 1860 census, 438 (39.9%) lived in this district" (1990:118). According to figures 1 and 2 and the location of Washington Square, a known Irish ethnic neighborhood, Shoemaker's percentage of Irish

in the first district can only be true if he intended east of Habersham Street, not east of East Broad Street. This adjustment would then include the considerable population of Irish living in the Old Fort neighborhood. Figure 4 refers to Shoemaker's interpretation of Savannah. These neighborhoods clearly impacted the development of the Irish culture and identity throughout the 1800's. The neighborhoods are the main aspect of identity which connected the Irish to other institutions such as religion or organizations. Therefore, a clear map of the Savannah-Irish neighborhoods is directly relevant to the creation of Savannah Irish ethnicity.

In Savannah, ideologies such as freedom and equality often intertwined with one another. An emic viewpoint often expressed through interviews was that the Irish considered everyone who lived in the Irish neighborhoods Catholic, and everyone who was Catholic to be Irish, yet statistically, these neighborhoods were not homogeneous. According to a semi-structured interview with the Ryan family, the Irish were often associated with Catholics because they lived in close proximity and participated in many church-centered activities (Ryan 2004).

Perceptions of growing up in Savannah often melded religious and ethnic identities together, as they did in Otto Aliffi's life: "For the life of me, I can't separate whether I felt like I was part of an Irish community or part of a Catholic community" (Aliffi et al. 2004). Sentiments similar to this were often heard among members of the Savannah-Irish community.

O'Keefe's grandfather lived in Washington Square during the late 1800s. He recounted a story of his grandfather's upbringing in Savannah:

Until [my grandfather] died in 1890, I think it was a very tight, very strong, Irish community and almost everybody only interacted with the Irish. My grandfather said it was probably eighty percent Irish in that geographic area and everybody interacted primarily with Irish. Then when my father came along, they had moved out and while it was probably fifty-fifty, the assimilation has started... (O'Keefe 2004).

Contrastingly, another emic viewpoint was that the Irish simply included people of all ethnic identities into their culture. This viewpoint is supported by the egalitarian ideologies the Irish brought with them to Savannah. In a semi-structured interview, Margaret Aliffi commented on the ethnic blend: "In the north, where Italians marry Italians and Irish marry the Irish, and Polish marry the Polish and they had their separate cemeteries and their separate churches. But that was never Savannah. Savannah was really a place where all nationalities get along very well" (Aliffi et al. 2004). Savannah's location relative to the ports and its temperate climate made it a hub for immigrants since the city's charter. Irish ideologies may have helped assimilate others into the American culture.

The Irish ideologies of freedom often materialized in different forms. For instance, the freedom to practice any religion manifested in Irish Catholicism in the South. While semi-structured interviews and historic records demonstrate a strong correlation between the Savannah Irish and Catholicism, the Hibernian Society toasts do not reflect this; when toasts are made about religion, they refer to freedom of religion.

For example, this toast in the *Savannah Republican* by Captain Cooper in 1821, “Religious liberty to all people.” This may be because the Hibernian Society was not originally Catholic, or because religious oppression was found in Ireland and therefore, freedom of religion meant freedom to be Catholic to some Irish.

Many Savannah Irish were parishioners at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, or Blessed Sacrament, or St. Patrick’s Church (McDonogh 1952). In June 1845, the Sisters of Mercy opened the Convent and Academy of St. Vincent dePaul, which later became St. Vincent’s Academy for girls (St. Vincent’s Academy). Religion in the regions around Savannah during 1812 to 1880 was very strict: in a semi-structured interview, Gloria Jones recounts how her grandmother was disowned by her father, “we weren’t even allowed too much to mention our Catholic background because my grandmother was disowned by her family in Statesboro when she married an Irish Catholic” (Jones 2004). Once again, the Irish ideologies manifest in different forms but are still present in the Savannah Irish culture.

Politics and Economics

The Irish have a history with politics in Savannah, which started long before the first Irish mayor of Savannah was elected in 1891 (McDonough 1891). In fact, Savannah's Irish have developed quite a reputation in Savannah politics over the years. The *Savannah Morning News* noted, "'No one has run this town like the Irish have over the years,' said Tom Coffey, a former Morning News editor. 'When they got in control, they really ran the show. It will never be like that again'" (Savannah Morning News).

One way that early Irish immigrants were involved in politics was their creation of charities for Ireland. Through letters from across the sea and newspaper updates, the Savannah Irish kept up with their motherland. In a semi-structured interview, Paul Jurgensen described historic Irish figures such as Theobald Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward FitzGerald, Robert Emmet, Napper Tandy, Henry Joy McCracken as "warriors" (Jurgensen 2004). Jurgensen describes Emmet's speech as "one of the great orations of mankind," which "rivals those of Cicero and Demosthenes" (Jurgensen 2004). The characterization of Irish political identities is clearly reverent; ethnosemantically, Irish patriots were held in high regard by the Savannah Irish. Perhaps veneration was one reason many of the Savannah Irish participated in social organizations to raise money for Ireland.

During Hibernian Society meetings, the name Robert Emmet, an Irish revolutionist and nationalist, was a common toast. Toasts generally followed patterns

such as this quote from the *Savannah Republican* in 1825: “The memory of Robert Emmet--The Patriot who would have freed his country--The Martyr whose death established the truth that Tyranny reigned over the land.” The Savannah Irish were so enamored by Robert Emmet that they changed the name of the park closest to Washington Square from Irish Greens to Emmet Park in 1902 (Waymarking).

In 1847, during the beginning of the Irish great famine, the Hibernian Society did not celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. In lieu of a celebration, the *Savannah Republican* wrote,

In consequence of the melancholy intelligence in regard to the calamitous famine in Ireland, the usual festivities were dispensed with, and the amount usually appropriated for that purpose was very properly ordered to be added to the fund for the relief of the Irish poor. The disposition of the means was a most praiseworthy one, and we doubt not that the Association will find that, like ‘bread cast upon the waters, it will return again.

Consequently, The Irish Union Society was created on March 17, 1847 with the goal of, “the amelioration of the condition of the fellow countrymen of its members” (Davidson). The first mention of the Irish Union Society was in the March 22, 1847 edition of the *Savannah Republican*, which published nearly identical toasts to the Hibernian Society’s regular toasts. Also in this issue was a notice for the Irish Relief Committee, which composed of men who met with the Savannah mayor, Henry Burroughs, that morning.

In 1855, the worst year of the famine, the Hibernian Society declined to meet. The *Savannah Republican* wrote, “This Society did not celebrate the day as formerly, in consequence of the numerous demands for charity recently.”

In Savannah-Irish politics, the culture generally voted Democrat, but the political tickets were diverse:

O’Keefe said, “Two democratic parties in Savannah would always put a slate up and the slate would always include a couple of Irish, a Jew, someone of Jewish descent, several other ethnic groups, and then always the ‘cracker’ or ‘blueblood’ as you call them these days, or the control, the other part of it” (O’Keefe 2004).

Members of the Savannah-Irish community felt that there was a hierarchy for political careers. In a semi-structured interview, Thomas Mahoney said, “some of your political appointments through the city of Savannah, like City Marshal of the City of Savannah that was an Irish job. The jobs through the county that were...there were certain positions that the Irish knew they just weren’t going to be considered for those because it was just sort of a caste system so to speak.” He mentions that this cronyism was long over by the 1950’s (Mahoney 2004).

In Savannah, politics were often tied to other careers, such as police and fire jobs. The geographic location of the fire departments may have played a part in the importance to the Savannah Irish. Three of the four white fire companies (which were separated by race during the mid-1800s) were located in or near Irish neighborhoods (Fireman’s Relief Fund Association 1906:27). Oglethorpe Fire Company No. 1 was located in Liberty Square, Washington Fire Company No. 9 was located in Washington Square, and

Germania Fire Company No. 10 was on Julian Street in the east lot of Franklin Ward (Fireman's Relief Fund Association 1906:26). Semi-structured interviews imply the connection between the Irish and the police and fire departments; Joseph Ware stated, "Well the Irish usually ran the police department and the fire department. That was the two big jobs. In those days, back in the old days, practically every policeman you would meet would be Irish" (Ware 2004).

O'Keefe recalled how his grandfather had to be politically active in order to be a successful Fire Chief for the Fire Department on Washington Square:

Another thing about the Irish, this is typical from Savannah, it's typical for Irish everywhere--one of the ways to assimilate is through the political process. My great-grandfather is the one who came up here in the 1860's and he--I guess about the 1850's [he] was first seen showing up--he was a policeman. My grandfather was a captain on the fire department. He's got from the old Walton Street Fire Department, which was right down around Washington Square. Well, in order to be a captain on the fire department in those days, you had to deliver certain precincts. You had to be politically active or you kind of fall back into the department. (O'Keefe 2004).

Early members of the Savannah-Irish community worked seasonally on the docks and then would return to Northern cities, but over time, more Irish chose to stay permanently (Jones 2008). The harsh working conditions would eventually lead the men to form Savannah's first union, called the Workingmen's Benevolent Society (Gleeson 2001; *Savannah Morning News* 2002). In a semi-structured interview, Catherine Walsh discussed her deceased husband. Many men, like Walsh's husband, made their living working in companies based on or near the docks (Walsh 2004). James Stafford Sr.'s family also had members that worked on the docks; his grandfather was a tugboat

engineer and his father worked for Strachan Shipping Company. Yet like many of the Savannah Irish, Stafford also had family in the police and fire departments (Stafford 2004).

While the majority of Irish immigrants in Savannah worked on the docks, the rail, police, or fire departments some immigrants chose careers in other fields. The careers of the Irish are consistent with the Savannah public. According to the census of 1840, 604 males were engaged in commerce, 707 were engaged in manufacture and trade, 241 were engaged in navigation, and 131 were learned professionals or engineers (Bancroft 1848).

In the early 1800s, many of the jobs Irish immigrants held were considered lower class jobs, but over time, some Savannah Irish were able to gain status and wealth. Sometimes, this rise in status would cause discrimination among the Irish. In a semi-structured interview, Elizabeth Ware recalls her memories of being different: “...an old crone came out of one of the apartments. She said, ‘Who are you?’ and I said, ‘I’m Elizabeth Powers.’ She said, ‘I knew it, you look just like it! You lace-curtain Irish you!’ And went and slammed the door in my face” (Ware 2004). Ware describes the phrase “lace-curtain Irish” as the term for people in Savannah who had enough money to buy lace curtains and consequently thought they were better than those who did not. She contrasts this phrase with the term “Billy Goat Irish,” a phrase coined for the Irish who owned goats and were poorer (Ware 2004).

After the largest wave of Irish immigrants in the 1840’s, more Irish immigrants rose in class. R.J. Nunn is example of the Savannah Irish who did not arrive in the lowest

class: Nunn immigrated to Savannah in 1851 and became a medical doctor. According to the 1860 census, Nunn had five thousand dollars to his name (The Genealogical Committee of the Georgia Historical Society 1979). He became a professor at the Savannah Medical College and joined the Georgia Chapter No. 3 of the Royal Arch Masons (Davidson). Nunn worked as a doctor during the breakout of Yellow Fever in 1876--which plagued Savannah from August 1 to November 26, saving many lives, both Irish and American. According to a rare pamphlet from 1876, the disaster was given the name, "the epidemic of 1876," (Waring 1876; *Savannah Morning News* 1876). In 1878, Nunn was elected officer of the American Microscopical Society and helped other doctors find funding for microscopical studies on a national scale (United States, Office of Education 1896).

Because equality and freedom were two ideologies stressed by the Savannah Irish, the Hibernian Society has had several committees based on different aspects of Savannah life. According to James Stafford Sr., one committee was in place to help those who could not find a job. The organization also donates to several different organizations (Stafford 2004). This connection between social organizations and economics played a large part in the Savannah-Irish community. Together, the aspects of the Savannah Irish made a strong and vibrant culture still present in Savannah today.

Conclusion

From 1812 to 1880, the Irish immigrants in Savannah united over common ideologies of separatism, independence, and egalitarianism to establish a unique culture. Through social organizations, economics, politics, and religion, the Savannah Irish rose in class and social structure to become one of the wealthiest culture groups in Savannah. Their cultural and material additions to Savannah impacted Savannah's development as a port city and a global hub for international commerce and celebration of ethnic identity.

This research is only the beginning of a rich and vital culture in Savannah still present today. While much research has been conducted on the Irish in other areas, studies on the southern Irish can tell us more about the creation of the south as a whole, as a region, and as a culture. Today, many Irish still live in Savannah; they walk the same streets that their ancestors did; they participate in the same organizations that their ancestors did. By studying the past, we can find out more about the future of the Irish in Savannah.

In addition to the Irish in Savannah, this research is relevant to other transnational societies, both past and present. Diachronic studies of the Irish over time may help close gaps in the histories of other minority cultures. Synchronic studies between new migration hubs and the Savannah Irish may show routes to success or paths these new cultures should not take.

And finally, one cannot forget the St. Patrick's Day parade. What was once a representation of culture and heritage has lost its roots. The addition of history and heritage to the St. Patrick's Day festivals may improve the outcome as a whole.

There is much more research to be done; the Savannah Irish are a strong and vibrant culture in the twenty-first century. Research remains in the areas of women's studies and contemporary identities, as well as synchronic studies of other transnational culture groups and the Savannah Irish.

Appendix

Fig

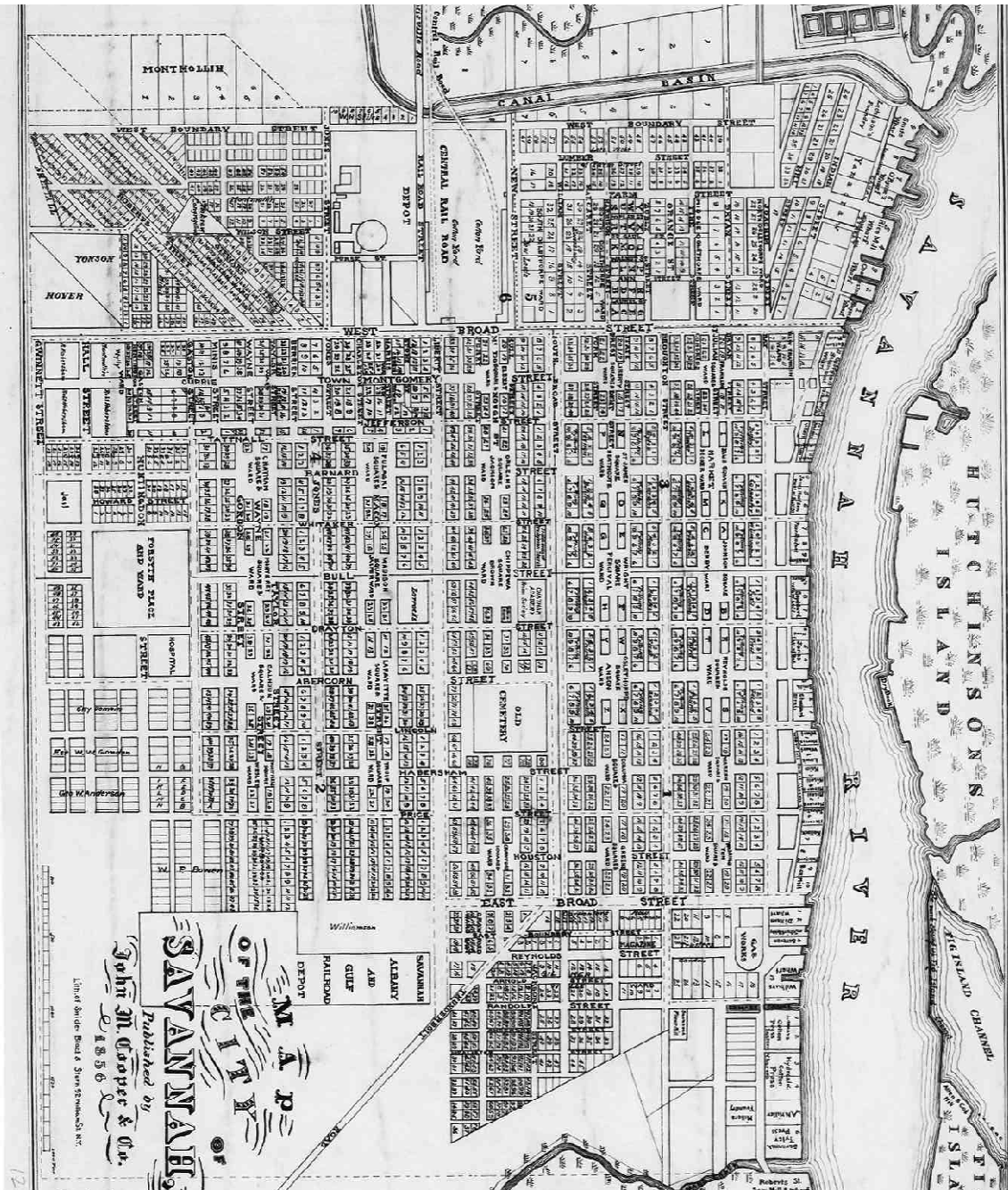


Figure 2

Map of Savannah by ward in 1855 by G.W. Colton

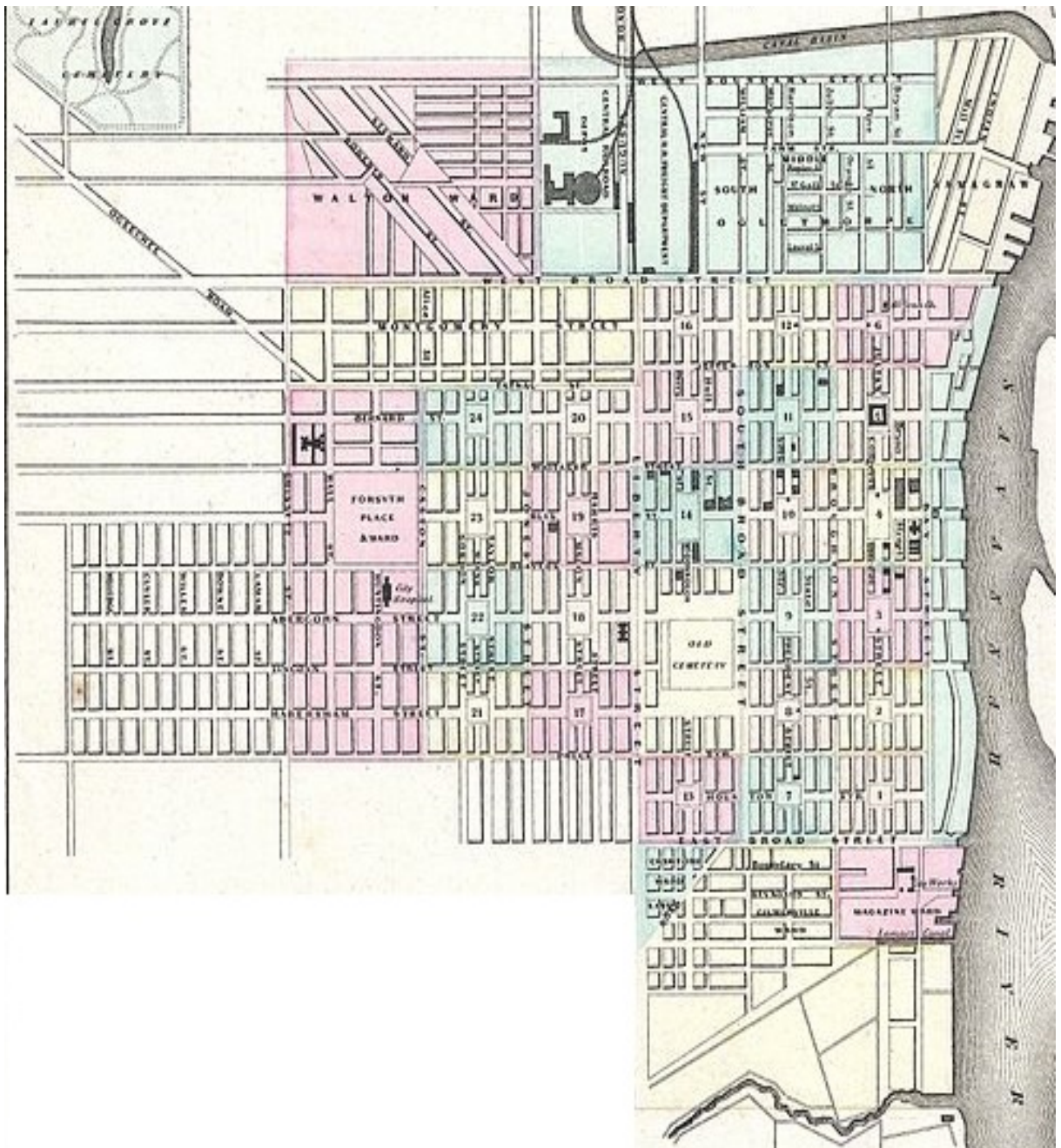
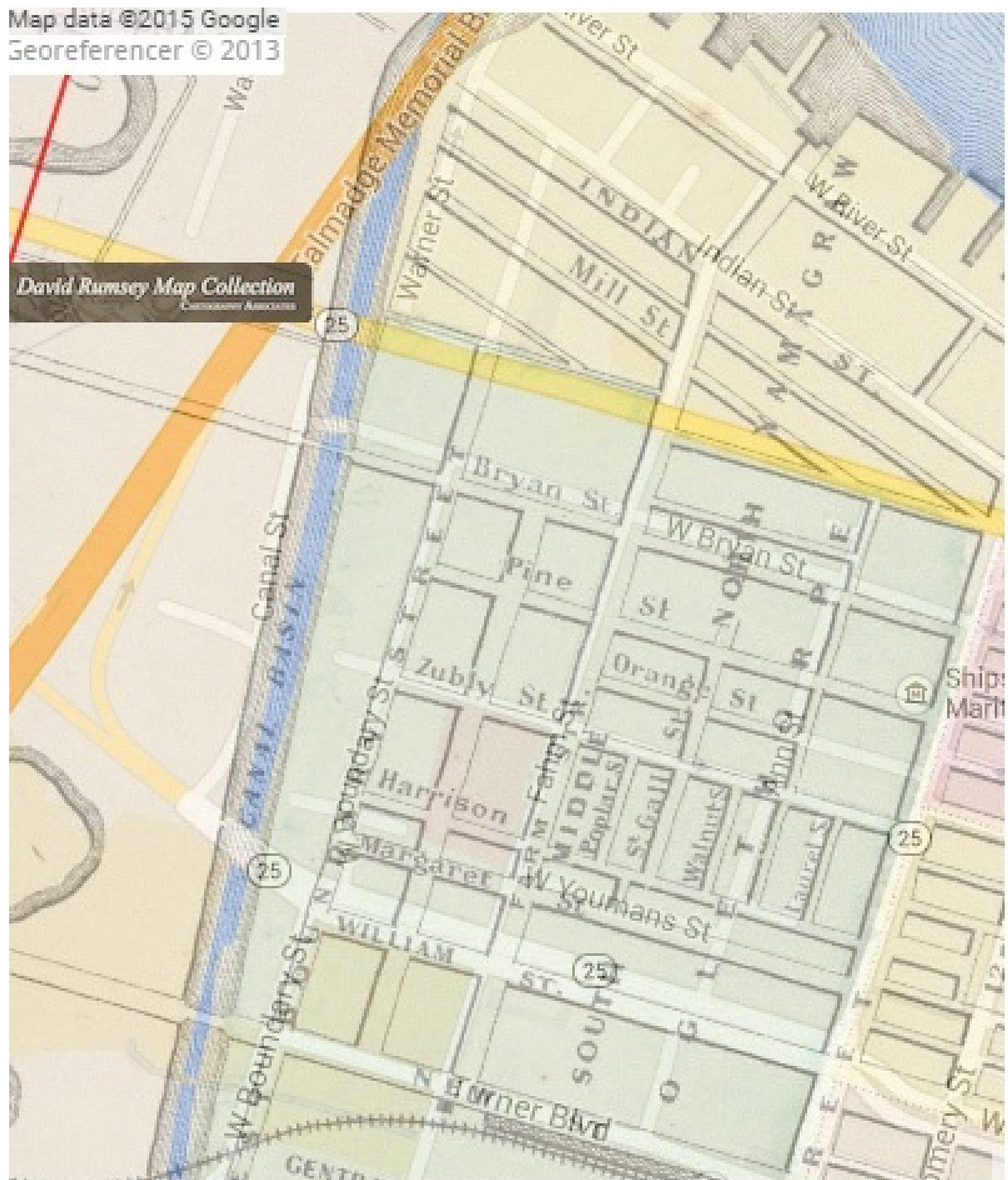
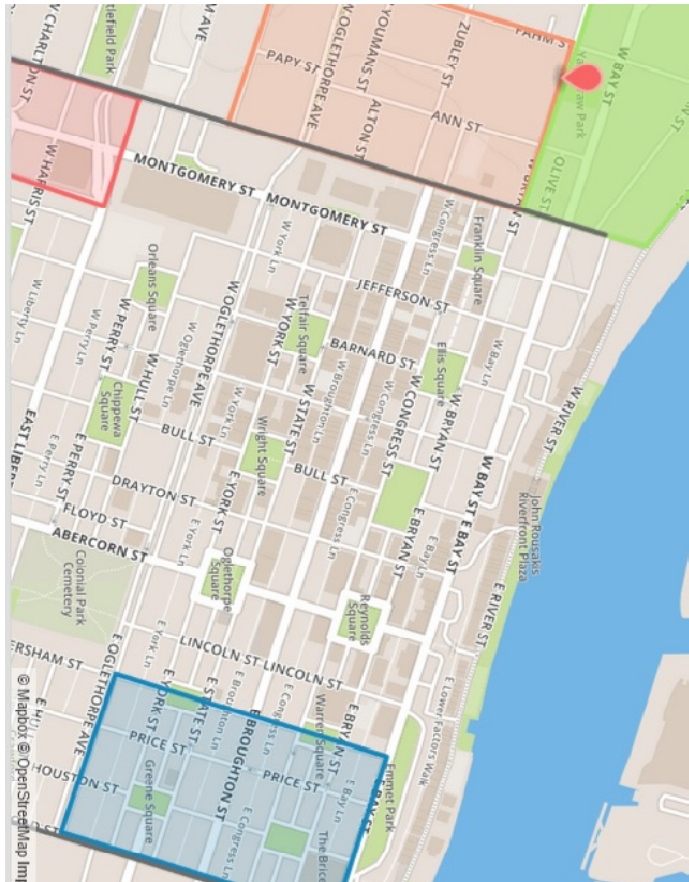


Figure 3

Colton map imposed on contemporary West Savannah





Green	Yamacraw
Figure 4	
Map of Shoemaker's interpretations of Savannah	
Red space	Curry (Currie) Town
Blue space	Old Fort, Washington Square Area
Red Marker	West of West Broad
Blue Marker	East of East Broad

Yellow marker	Location of Cathedral and school
Grey marker	St. Patrick's Church
Blue marker	Germania Fire Company No. 10
Orange marker	Oglethorpe Fire Company No. 1
Red marker	Washington Fire Company No. 9

Figure 6

Image of Hibernian Society Banner from Hibernian Society during the Celtic Cross Ceremony



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