Irish Origins and the Shaping of Immigrant Life in Savannah on the Eve of the Civil War
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Irish Origins and the Shaping of Immigrant Life in Savannah on the Eve of the Civil War

TYLER ANBINDER

WE DO NOT KNOW WHY CHARLES J. WHITE DID IT. Perhaps he was a particularly meticulous gentleman. Perhaps he was curious. Perhaps he anticipated the interests of future generations of historians. Perhaps he simply misunderstood his instructions. These directions, distributed to the thousands of census takers who began compiling the eighth decennial census in June 1860, directed White to record the state of birth for anyone born in the United States or the nation of birth for anyone born abroad. But White, a twenty-eight-year-old whose active support of the Democratic Party had likely led to his appointment as the deputy United States marshal for the southern district of Georgia, did not follow his instructions. If respondents told White that they were native-born Americans, he insisted on knowing their exact birthplace within their native state and duly recorded the information. If “Ireland” was the response he received, he asked in which of Ireland’s thirty-two counties the immigrant had been born. This was the procedure White followed for every one of the 13,875 white inhabitants of Savannah (including 3,145 Irish immigrants) and the 705 free people of color he tallied in the summer of 1860. For Savannah’s 7,712 slaves, however, White did follow instructions, recording only their age, gender, skin color, and the name of the owner, not that of the slave.¹

The Savannah census of 1860 is unique. In no other major American city did an antebellum census taker record such detailed birthplace data for all of its residents.² Historians can therefore ask, and answer, a number of questions about the Irish in Savannah on the eve of the Civil War that they can for no other city. We can examine, for example, a question that for decades has puzzled historians on both sides of the Atlantic—from exactly where in Ireland did the immigrants who emigrated in the wake of the Great Potato Famine of the late 1840s and early 1850s originate? We can also consider the extent to which an immigrant’s Irish birthplace affected his or her employment opportunities. Finally, we can reconstruct
how the immigrants’ birthplace in Ireland influenced where they chose to reside within Savannah, both in the city as a whole and within Savannah’s ramshackle Irish enclaves. The data from Savannah indicates that while native-born Americans tended to view the Famine immigrants as an undifferentiated mass, place of birth within Ireland—the very Irish county they were born in—had a significant impact upon their new lives in the United States. Where in Ireland the Famine immigrants were born played a role in determining the employment they pursued, influenced the community leaders they chose, and often played a role in the selection of a neighborhood (and sometimes the very block) they chose to call home. By no means did every Irish immigrant select where to live based on his or her birthplace within Ireland. Housing patterns varied among the city’s three Irish neighborhoods and even within them. But mapping the birthplace of Savannah’s Irish residents, block-by-block, shows unmistakably that the immigrants’ place of birth within Ireland played a large and heretofore underappreciated role in determining where they decided to settle. These findings have implications beyond the Irish in Savannah in 1860 because Irish immigrants (as well as newcomers from other parts of the world) must have been doing the same thing in other cities as well. Examining the role that an Irish immigrant’s county of birth played in his or her life provides greater insight into what it meant to be an “Irish American,” how immigrants chose (and still choose) a place to live after settling in America, and the overall American immigrant experience and its significant (but mostly neglected) southern dimension.

Many scholars, both historians and social scientists, have examined how different ethnic groups live amongst each other, but very little of the existing historiography examines intra-ethnic residential patterns. Lacking hard evidence, scholars desperate to reconstruct such patterns have attempted to divine Irish and Italian immigrants’ specific place of origin from their names—heroic efforts, to be sure, but hardly reliable. Other historians have examined broad intra-ethnic settlement patterns based wholly on impressionistic recollections written generations after the fact. These studies are useful to a point, but fading memories do not always stand up to empirical scrutiny. In any event, studies of immigrant residential patterns for the antebellum period and the Irish, no matter what sources they are based on, are exceedingly rare. What we do know about Irish immigrant settlement patterns tends to focus on which Irish immigrants settled in which cities. It is understood, for example, that a disproportionate number of Irish immigrants in Cleveland in the antebellum era came from County Mayo, and that in the postbellum years, the Irish population of Butte, Montana, was dominated
The Irish immigrants who lived in Savannah in 1860 constituted twenty-two percent of the city’s free population and sixty-seven percent of its foreign-born inhabitants. These Irish men and women did not, however, comprise a cross-section of Ireland’s overall population. In fact, nearly half of Savannah’s Irish immigrants came from just five of Ireland’s thirty-two counties.6

Mapping these results further clarifies the origins of Savannah’s Irish population. As Map 1 illustrates, a disproportionate number of Savannah’s immigrants were from the west of Ireland, though a significant number also came from a band of counties stretching west/northwest from Dublin through Cavan and Roscommon to Mayo. Most of the highly represented counties are well known as especially large sources of emigration in the

### Table 1: Birthplace of Savannah’s Irish Immigrants, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irish County of Birth</th>
<th>Number in Savannah</th>
<th>Percent of Savannah’s County-Identified Irish-Born Population</th>
<th>Proportion of Ireland’s Population, 1851</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining 22 Counties</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2995</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1860 U.S. Census for the City of Savannah, compiled in author’s Savannah Irish Immigrant Database.
Famine years. Counties Cavan, Roscommon, and Tipperary sent larger proportions of their populations to America in this period than almost all other Irish counties, while populous counties Cork, Dublin, Galway, and Limerick also sent large numbers of Famine immigrants to the United States. Yet Kerry and Wexford ranked only eleventh and seventeenth, respectively, in pre-Famine population, making their appearance at the very top of Savannah’s Irish population chart somewhat surprising. That Wexford and Kerry were the top sources of Savannah’s Irish immigrants does probably explain, however, why one of Savannah’s two Irish-born priests came from County Wexford and the other from County Kerry. The large Irish populations in
Savannah from these two counties must have played some role in their selection, though in some cases, it is possible that the immigrants followed their priests rather than the other way around.7

Like the Irish immigrant communities in most American cities, the one in Savannah pre-dated the Great Famine. But that catastrophe accelerated immigration tremendously. While a significant number of Savannah’s Irish immigrants had arrived in the United States in the 1820s and 1830s, naturalization records indicate that about two-thirds of those living there in 1860 had landed in the United States during the height of the Famine, from 1848 to 1852. This proportion of Famine to pre-Famine immigrants approximately matches that found in other cities, such as New York, favored by the newcomers from Ireland.8 Savannah was unusual, however, for its concentration of Wexford natives, as Wexford was a relatively prosperous county that did not have a high rate of emigration in the Famine years. The commercial connection between Savannah and Wexford seems to have originated with some Wexford shipowners, whose vessels typically sailed from Wexford to Canada with emigrants and back to Ireland with timber twice annually during the warmer half of the year. As the winter of 1848–1849 approached, these shipowners decided to take these vessels that usually lay idle from November to March and send them to Savannah instead (immigrants did not want to land in Canada in winter, but could be induced to make the voyage to the American South at that time of year). The ships carried virtually nothing but immigrants to Savannah and returned to Ireland, according to the Wexford Independent, with cargoes of “Pitch-Pine, Indian Corn, and Cotton.” About 100 to 150 Wexford men and women immigrated directly to Savannah each year in this manner. Almost all of the remaining Irish immigrants in the city must have traveled to the United States via major ports like New York, and then moved to Savannah. Many of the city’s Irish-born residents would have arrived there as a result of “chain migration,” initially sending one family member to America who would be responsible for saving enough to bring over another relative. The process would have been repeated until everyone who wanted to emigrate had made it to America.9

Identifying exactly where in Savannah each Irish immigrant lived proved to be much more difficult than anticipated. Before 1880, census takers did not designate the street address of each residence they visited, giving each inhabited building a “dwelling number” instead, beginning with the number 1 for the first habitation they enumerated. When trying to determine the street address of New York’s Irish immigrants listed in the census, one can search for each immigrant in a city directory from the same year in
order to determine the street address of each census dwelling number. But in Savannah, the city’s directory more often than not merely listed a resident’s street name and the nearest cross street rather than a precise address, simply stating that a person lives on “Farm bet. Indian and W. Broad” or “Broughton near Reynolds.” Nonetheless, while we often cannot tell with certainty exactly where one block ends and another begins in the Savannah census, the city directory address designations give enough information to enable historians to approximate the end of one block and the beginning of another, and therefore discern the patterns in the residential distribution of the Savannah Irish.10

When one thinks of Savannah’s streets, what usually comes to mind are the beautiful squares—lined with historic homes and century-old trees heavy with Spanish moss—that anchor each of the city’s thirty or so wards. But Savannah’s Irish immigrants lived predominantly in three neighborhoods on the outskirts of the city that lay, for the most part, beyond James Oglethorpe’s famous city plan. These districts had no airy squares, no beautiful homes and trees, and no Spanish moss.

The oldest and largest of Savannah’s three Irish enclaves lay in the northwest portion of the city, west of West Broad Street and north of the Central Railroad Depot. The northern part of this neighborhood, close to the Savannah River, was known as Yamacraw, after the Indian tribe that lived in that location before Oglethorpe purchased it from them in the early eighteenth century. Savannah’s first white residents lived in Yamacraw, while, to the east, they laid out the streets and squares envisioned in Oglethorpe’s plan. Further south of the river, the remainder of this district was officially known as the Upper, Middle, and Lower Oglethorpe Wards. The Oglethorpe Wards are now covered primarily by the Savannah College of Art and Design, but before the Irish Famine immigration, these wards were best known for housing most of the city’s African American population (comprising both free people of color and the many Savannah slaves whose masters allowed them to live away from their owners). The Yamacraw/Oglethorpe area was also renowned for raucous behavior and seedy brothels. This was the neighborhood in which most of most of Savannah’s pre-Famine Irish laborers and petty tradesmen settled, and a significant portion of the Famine immigrants chose to join their compatriots there upon arrival. Irish American men living in Yamacraw would have been likely to have sought employment either at the docks just to the north or at the Central Railroad Depot to the south.11

Savannah’s second Irish enclave, both in age and in size, was known as the “Old Fort” neighborhood, so-called because it was built around the
ruined ramparts of old Fort Wayne, which sat on a bluff overlooking the Savannah River just east of East Broad Street on the eastern outskirts of the city. Like the Yamacraw/Oglethorpe district, the Old Fort had a majority black population at the start of the Famine immigration, but by 1860, Irish newcomers far outnumbered African Americans. The Old Fort became so crowded with Irish immigrants, in fact, that its residents spilled westward and soon dominated several blocks just west of East Broad Street in Washington Ward. Native-born whites may have abandoned those blocks in part because the huge Savannah Gas Works was built in 1850 just east of East Broad, only yards from their Washington Ward homes. From that point onward, the plant’s huge gas storage tank dominated the Old Fort’s skyline.
According to Savannah’s police chief, the Old Fort district in 1855 was the most lawless part of town, in large part, he said, because it contained “over one hundred liquor vending shops, twenty-six sailor boarding houses, [and] five large houses of ill fame, besides numerous smaller ones.” The Old Fort’s immigrants would have likely looked for work either at the wharves and gas works to the north or to the south at the city’s second most important railroad depot, that of the Savannah, Albany, and Gulf Railroad, whose yards lay just three blocks south of South Broad Street, the neighborhood’s southern border.13

The final Irish neighborhood in antebellum Savannah had very few residents at all before the Irish moved in. Located south of the Central Railroad Yards and labeled “the Walton Ward” on a contemporary map, this area had only about two dozen houses in 1853, and none on Jones, Purse, or Wilson Streets across the street from the railroad’s maintenance buildings. Yet by 1860, each of these streets housed many Irish immigrants. In the late 1860s, the blocks adjacent to the rail yards would be christened the O’Neil Ward, further indication that its Irish character had become well known.14 Many Irish immigrants from the O’Neil Ward would have sought employment at the Central Railroad’s vast complex of yards, shops, and tracks. That so many Irish immigrants moved into the neighborhoods both north and south of the Central Railroad Depot and maintenance yards may help explain why the Central so drastically reduced its enslaved workforce in the 1850s. At the beginning of that decade, the Central owned 123 slaves living in Savannah; by 1860, the railroad’s managers had cut its enslaved workforce in the city down to just 53.15

The manner in which Savannah’s Irish immigrants settled within these three neighborhoods varied from enclave to enclave and often even from block to block. Some streets, for example, seemed to contain a fairly random mixture of immigrants from all parts of Ireland. Such blocks include Roberts from Wilson to West Broad as well as Stewart from Wilson to Roberts in the southwest part of town, and Broughton Street west of East Broad as well as Bay Lane, Bryan, and St. Julian Streets between Habersham and Price on the far eastern side of town (for a house-by-house, resident-by-resident graphic representation of the birthplace of each free adult resident of four such blocks, see figures 1–4 in “Replication Data for: Irish Origins and the Shaping of Immigrant Life in Savannah” at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/anbinder and http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jaeh/media/anbinder). These were almost all blocks where there were about as many white native-born Americans living as there were Irish immigrants. Such
blocks in the northwest portion of town were also home to many free black families as well as many slaves who lived away from their owners.16

Several other Savannah blocks, all in the Yamacraw/Oglethorpe area, housed Irish immigrants from every part of Ireland, except virtually none from the southwest portion of the Emerald Isle. Immigrants from Kerry and Cork were almost entirely absent from these streets, while those from every other section of Ireland abounded. These blocks included St. Gaul Street from Harrison to Zubly, Pine from Ann to West Broad, Bryan from Ann to West Broad, and Indian Street, Indian Lane, and Joachim Street from West Broad to Farm. In some cases, these blocks had especially heavy concentrations of immigrants from one or two counties, such as Wexford, Cavan, or Mayo. In other cases, the most outstanding feature of the block was merely the lack of Kerry and Cork natives. Like the blocks that seemed to have random mixtures of Irish immigrants, the Irish did not dominate

Map 2: The Irish Neighborhoods of Savannah, 1860. Map by Chris Robinson
most of these streets (see figs. 5–9 in “Replication Data”). Bryan and St. Gaul Streets housed large numbers of German immigrants. And two streets, Pine and Bryan, contained more black households than Irish.17

Other blocks on the west side of Savannah stand out for the dearth of immigrants from the entire south of Ireland (not just southwestern Ireland), something especially notable given that the largest populations of Irish immigrants in the city were from Wexford in the southeast and Kerry in the southwest. The Irish populations of the far western extremities of Indian Street and Indian Lane (an alley between Indian and Mill Streets) were dominated by Irish immigrants from central and northern Ireland: Cavan in particular, but with inhabitants from Tyrone, Meath, Westmeath, Mayo, and Sligo as well. Another of the neighborhood’s main thoroughfares, Farm Street, housed more African Americans and native-born whites than Irish immigrants, but of the two dozen Irish-born adults who did live there, only three came from the south of Ireland. More than half were natives of Counties Cavan and Meath. Harrison and Zubly Streets (both just north of the Central Railroad Depot), and Jones Street just south of the depot, also lacked immigrants from Wexford, Kerry, and Cork (see figs. 10 and 11 in “Replication Data”). All of these blocks except Jones and the eastern portion of Indian Street had significant African American and white non-Irish populations. The front and rear dwellings on Jones Street near Purse, in contrast, were inhabited almost exclusively by Irish Americans. It is a shame that the population schedules of the census do not record which dwellings housed the many slaves who lived apart from their masters in Savannah, and how many of them lived in each house, making it impossible to determine if slaves and Irish immigrants shared housing on these blocks or were merely neighbors.18

It is also a shame that we do not know the religious affiliation of the Irish immigrants in the various neighborhoods of Savannah because it is possible that the blocks without many immigrants from southern Ireland were ones in which Irish Protestants concentrated. Immigrants from Tyrone and Cavan, for example, were more likely to have been Protestants than were those from Wexford, Cork, or Kerry. Yet having faced decades of religious bigotry, discrimination, and persecution, hundreds of thousands of Catholics emigrated from northern counties, too, so there is simply no way to know whether newcomers to Savannah from counties like Tyrone and Cavan were Catholics or Protestants.

The fourth and final settlement pattern found in the Irish enclaves of Savannah consists of blocks dominated by immigrants from the south of Ireland. Some of these streets had an especially large Wexford presence.
On Broughton between East Broad and Reynolds, as well as on Reynolds between President and the Gas Works, about half the adult residents hailed from County Wexford, though these blocks included immigrants from all over southern Ireland. Bay Lane between Price and East Broad, in contrast, was a Kerry enclave—immigrants from that one Irish county comprised about half the adult population (see figs. 12–15 of “Replication Data”). Most of these blocks, however, housed immigrants from all over south (and often just southwest) Ireland. These included East Broad between Bay and
Congress, Bryan between Houston and Price, Congress near Bryan, and St. Julian near East Broad. Another notable characteristic of these blocks, in contrast to the Irish neighborhood in northwest Savannah, is that they rarely contained many African Americans. Some African Americans (slave and free) did live in this part of town, but they tended not to reside on the blocks that the Irish dominated.\textsuperscript{19}

One way to look at the residential patterns of Savannah’s Irish immigrants is on the block-by-block basis considered thus far. Another option is to map the dispersal of immigrants from a certain county in Ireland throughout Savannah. If we do that, additional patterns emerge. Irish immigrants from some counties (Dublin, Galway, Tipperary, and Wexford) settled fairly evenly across Savannah, albeit not on every block in every

Map 4: Irish Immigrant Residential Patterns in the “Old Fort” District and Vicinity, Northeast Savannah, 1860. Map by Chris Robinson
Irish neighborhood. Immigrants from other Irish counties can be found in abundance in two of the three Irish neighborhoods but are noticeably scarce in the third (this was the case for those from Cavan, Cork, Limerick, Meath, and Roscommon). Others, such as the emigrants from Cork and Mayo, can be found in more than one neighborhood but are numerous in only one. Finally, Irish immigrants from two southwestern counties, Clare and Kerry, seem to have been especially partial to residential isolation, with almost all of them congregating in a single Savannah neighborhood, the Old Fort district. This fact should not be terribly surprising—these immigrants came from the most isolated part of Ireland, rarely spoke English, and were described by one of their priests in west Kerry as especially clannish. The propensity of these Kerry immigrants to cluster so tightly together does not appear to be the result of conditions specific to Savannah. A study of the Famine Irish in New York found that there, too, the immigrants from Kerry concentrated more closely than those from any other Irish county. We know that the Kerry immigrants clustered together in New York in part because most of them had been neighbors in Ireland, residents of the same estate, whose owner paid for several thousand of them to emigrate in 1851. But there is no evidence that Savannah’s Kerry Irish were part of a similar assisted-emigration program.  

No matter which of the Irish neighborhoods an immigrant might have lived in, the housing stock was remarkably similar. Most of the Irish immigrants lived in single-story frame houses that measured about 20 feet wide and 15 feet deep. These homes probably consisted of two or, at most, three rooms. These “wooden tenements,” wrote a northern visitor, “of one or two stories in height... present in many instances a very dingy and sombre appearance.” In 1884, the first year that the insurance industry mapped Savannah’s residential housing, the assessors described most of the dwellings in Yamacraw and many in the Oglethorpe Wards as “shanties.” Contemporaries did not often use that term when referring to the residences of the Old Fort district or the O’Neil Ward, but maps from the period show that the dwellings in these neighborhoods were no bigger than those in northwest Savannah. More than a dozen of these very modest antebellum dwellings are still standing in the Old Fort district on blocks once dominated by Irish immigrants.  

As small and dingy as the houses in the Irish immigrant enclaves might have been, when compared to what the residents had inhabited in Ireland, these homes may not have initially disappointed the newcomers. Although conditions in County Wexford were considered better than average for Ireland, even there, many inhabitants lived in mud-walled one- or two-room
cabins without ceilings, covered by leaky roofs crudely thatched with straw. These huts had dirt floors that became muddy whenever it rained (a very frequent occurrence in Ireland) and tiny windows that more often than not had no glass in them at all. Savannah’s immigrants from western and southwestern Ireland—Clare, Cork, Kerry, Mayo, and Tipperary—would have had significantly worse pre-emigration housing than those in Wexford. In these western counties, tenants often could thatch their roofs only with the stalks of dead potato plants. Along the seacoast of Mayo, an investigation found that “the cabins are of a very miserable description. . . . The use

Figure 2: Residential Housing on Farm Street, Savannah. These houses, also photographed by Johnston in about 1939, appear to date from the antebellum period as well, and many would have been inhabited by Irish immigrants in 1860. The only significant change made to the exteriors since 1860 is the covering of the original wood-shingled roofs with a newer material. Negative 00729, Carnegie Survey of the Architecture of the South Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.
of privies is quite unknown. . . . [T]he filth of the house is received and treasured in an excavation before the door, which serves the purpose of a dung-pit.” The stench would have been even worse than one might imagine because if these folk were lucky enough to own a pig, “the pig live[d] in the house.” While most homes had at least a few stools, and perhaps half had a crude bedstead, in some cases, these peasants had “no furniture except a potato-pot.” Consequently, to most of the Savannah’s Irish immigrants, even the city’s somber shanties would have seemed light, dry, clean, and comfortable when they first moved in.24

One might wonder if class differences might explain some of the residential patterns of Savannah’s Irish immigrants. Yet the occupations of the Irish-born residents of each of the three major Irish neighborhoods were remarkably similar. To the extent that occupations indicate class identification, the immigrants living in the O’Neil and Walton Wards, who were slightly less likely to have been day laborers and slightly more likely to have worked as clerks, may have been a bit better-off than those in the older neighborhoods, but not by very much. In contrast, those Irishmen who could afford to live in the center of Savannah rather than in the three Irish enclaves were much less likely to have worked as day laborers and twice as likely to have earned a living as a clerk, artisan, or business owner.25 The Irish women who lived in central Savannah, however, were much less likely to have shared the higher status enjoyed by the Irish men who lived there. Irish women in central Savannah were primarily domestic servants who lived in the homes of native-born whites.26

Table 2: Occupations of Savannah’s Male Irish Immigrants, by Neighborhood, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yamacraw and the Oglethorpe Wards (Northwest)</th>
<th>O’Neil and Walton Wards (Southwest)</th>
<th>Old Fort (Northeast)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Owners</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Status White-Collar</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Laborers and Other</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to Classify</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Irish-Born Adult Males</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1860 U.S. Census for the City of Savannah, compiled in author’s Savannah Irish Immigrant Database.
While the immigrant residents of each Irish neighborhood in Savannah held roughly the same mix of jobs, if we control for birthplace instead of neighborhood, we find that some occupational patterns do seem to correlate to county of birth. For example, immigrants from northernmost Ireland (Counties Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Donegal, Down, and Tyrone) were much more likely than others to have owned businesses and much less likely to have toiled as unskilled laborers. These facts may relate to their having arrived in America earlier than other Irish immigrants, as those who had relocated to Savannah before the Famine had more time in America to accumulate the capital necessary to start their own businesses. Immigrants from the northernmost counties of Ireland were also more likely to have been literate and formally educated, and to have come to America with significant savings, all factors that would have helped them start their own business enterprises.27

While these occupational differences between immigrants from the far north of Ireland and their central and southern Irish counterparts might be expected, other occupational variations within the Savannah Irish community are more surprising. Immigrants from Mayo and Tipperary, for example, were less likely than other Irish immigrants from central and southern Ireland to have worked as laborers, and more likely to have held white-collar jobs or owned businesses. County of origin also seems to have played a role in which occupations the Irish immigrants followed. Those from Wexford,

Table 3: Occupations of Savannah’s Male Irish Immigrants, 1860, By Irish County of Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cavan</th>
<th>Cork</th>
<th>Kerry</th>
<th>Mayo</th>
<th>Tipperary</th>
<th>Wexford</th>
<th>North and Northeast Ulster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Owners</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Status White-Collar</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to Classify</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Irish-Born Adult Males</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1860 U.S. Census for the City of Savannah, compiled in author’s Savannah Irish Immigrant Database. “North and Northeast Ulster” defined as Counties Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Donegal, Down, and Tyrone. “Adult” defined as equal to or greater than sixteen, by which age a majority of male Irish immigrants were employed.
for example, made up a disproportionate share (thirty percent) of the city’s Irish blacksmiths. Natives of County Mayo were especially numerous in the grocery business, operating twenty-two percent of all Irish-run groceries. Men born in Kerry held an outsized number of positions in the Savannah police department, constituting twenty-three percent of the Irish immigrants on the force. In contrast, no policemen in 1860 had been born in Wexford or Cavan, and only one came from County Cork. The roots of these occupational niches are not readily apparent, but we know that immigrants to this very day tend to carve out such niches in urban labor markets.28

For Irish-born women, county of birth seems not to have affected what work one did, but whether one worked at all. Overall, fifty-seven percent of Irishwomen who worked for pay in Savannah did so as domestic servants. Others toiled as seamstresses, washerwomen, and boardinghouse keepers, and the proportion that held these jobs did not vary tremendously depending on Irish county of birth. But the proportion of women who worked for pay at all did vary significantly by one’s place of origin in Ireland.

Table 4: Percentage of Savannah’s Irish-Born Women Who Reported Having an Occupation, 1860

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irish County of Birth</th>
<th>Percent of Women Born in That County Who Reported an Occupation in Savannah</th>
<th>Total Number of Female Irish Immigrants Age Sixteen or Older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wexford</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Northeast Irish Counties (Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Down, and Tyrone)</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Counties</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1,243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1860 U.S. Census for the City of Savannah, compiled in author’s Savannah Irish Immigrant Database. “Women” defined as females equal to or greater than age sixteen, the age at which a majority of female Irish immigrants were employed. The five northeast counties are combined because there were not enough women in Savannah from any one of them to provide a statistically significant sample.
immigrants from southwest Ireland were less likely to have worked for pay than those from the north and east. The ability to speak English does not fully explain these figures, for while southwest Irish immigrants probably would not have spoken English upon arrival in the United States, Galway immigrants, more likely than average to have worked outside the home, were just as likely as those from Kerry and Cork to have spoken only Irish.\textsuperscript{29} It may be that women from Roscommon, Cavan, and Wexford more often came to Savannah unmarried or alone, and were therefore more willing to work in the homes of others. Because the census does not indicate marital status, we cannot determine whether there were more single women in Savannah from those counties than from Limerick, Kerry, and Tipperary. A higher ratio of women to men among the Irish immigrants from certain counties might indicate that there were more single women from that county in Savannah, but the ratio of women to men from low-female-employment counties such as Kerry was virtually identical to that of women from high-female-employment counties such as Roscommon.\textsuperscript{30}

Economic opportunity for Savannah’s Irish immigrants, both male and female, seems to have been somewhat more circumscribed than in places like New York. A male Irish immigrant in Savannah was fifty percent more likely to have worked as a day laborer or in some similar low-paying, unskilled occupation than an Irish immigrant in New York City.\textsuperscript{31} And while many Irish immigrant women in New York City had, by the eve of the Civil War, secured relatively high-paying and respectable jobs as teachers, in Catholic as well as public schools, in Savannah, only a single Irish woman was employed as a teacher in 1860.\textsuperscript{32} Yet the relative dearth of white day laborers in Savannah meant that unskilled workers there could earn significantly more per day than their New York counterparts. Laborers in Savannah typically earned $1.25 per day in the 1850s, while their New York counterparts could command only a dollar and sometimes even less. This fact probably helped draw many of the Irish to Savannah in the first place.\textsuperscript{33}

Overall, county of birth was not the decisive factor in determining the work experiences of the Savannah Irish. Most men worked as laborers, and most women employed outside of the home toiled as domestic servants. One’s Irish county origins did, nonetheless, still have an impact on the occupational experiences of many of Savannah’s immigrants, influencing which immigrants owned businesses, which followed certain trades, and which women did or did not work as domestic servants. Yet while Irish county of origin did affect immigrants’ occupations, the impact was not nearly as strong as it was on place of residence.
While this study has enabled us to get a better sense of how place of birth within Ireland affected the work and living arrangements of Savannah’s immigrants, there is no evidence that Savannah’s native-born residents knew much, if anything, about the geographic origins of their Irish neighbors. If the press is any indication, native-born Savannahians did not pay much attention to the Irish at all. The words “Wexford” and “Kerry” rarely appeared in the pages of the Savannah press in the 1850s, and when they did, it was typically in reference to a shipwreck or some other event taking place in Ireland. Except for stories about St. Patrick’s Day, the papers rarely mentioned the city’s Irish immigrants, though they came in for more scrutiny in the \textit{Savannah Republican} during its affiliation with the anti-immigrant American or “Know-Nothing” Party in the mid-1850s, when the journal commented on the purported Irish propensity for drunkenness and voting irregularities.

These facts hint at one reason why an analysis of Savannah’s Irish immigrants is important. While natives saw in their immigrant neighbors an undifferentiated mass of alien-looking and alien-sounding people, the immigrants themselves readily perceived significant differences within their communities. Immigrants from Kerry would not rent housing on the west side of Savannah; those from Cavan avoided the east side. We know that these differences affected the immigrants’ decisions about work as well, and they undoubtedly affected other aspects of their daily lives. Marriage records of this period from Savannah’s Cathedral of St. John the Baptist are not open to the public, but those from other American cities indicate that Irish county of origin also played a key role in helping immigrants to choose a mate.

It is well known that German-speaking immigrants in this period, without a single country to call their homeland, thought of themselves more as Prussians, Saxons, and Bavarians, rather than Germans. The Italians who came to the United States in large numbers beginning in the late nineteenth century likewise thought of themselves more as Neapolitans, Calabrians, and Sicilians, rather than Italians, even though the unification of Italy had taken place years earlier. The self-segregation practiced by Savannah’s Irish immigrants perhaps suggests that the Irish, also denied a nation-state in the nineteenth century, may also have identified themselves, to a significant extent, with a county or region. Where natives saw an undifferentiated mass of Irish foreigners, the Irish themselves appear to have perceived distinct county or regional differences in language, culinary taste, religion, and culture. They might have come together to support the nationalist cause in Ireland, or to pack a Savannah theater to see a visiting Irish comedian.
or dancer, or to form Irish militia units, but when it came to choosing a home, they often preferred to live with others from the same part of Ireland. These patterns evident among the Savannah Irish surely must be present in other immigrant groups in other eras, and are as likely to be found among Mexicans or Chinese immigrants today as they were in Savannah 155 years ago.37

This study also makes visible the usually invisible (and often forgotten) processes of transatlantic networking and chain migration. There was clearly something—letters from loved ones, commercial ties, the promise of work or family reunion, the balmy climate—that especially pulled the people of Wexford and Kerry to Savannah. The existence of such phenomena is well known to scholars, but rarely can they be documented for the Irish or the American South in the antebellum years. The authoritative work on the Famine in Wexford, which includes a section on emigration, does not even mention Savannah. Yet we see that not only did large numbers of Wexford natives choose to live in Savannah, but once they got there, many of them chose to live on blocks or in neighborhoods where other Wexford immigrants concentrated.38

The Savannah story also demonstrates that the Famine Irish had more control over their lives than we sometimes imagine. These were not refugees who blindly boarded the first ship to America that came their way, but thoughtful migrants who made careful decisions about where they would settle and under what circumstances. Most of Savannah’s Irish immigrants did not land initially in the city, but traveled there after disembarking, and usually living, in some other American city. They were not washed up helplessly on American shores, but instead chose to go to Savannah and made that choice a reality, often by following a chain of family members who had preceded them. And once they arrived in Georgia’s largest city, they did not straggle haphazardly into the first house they could find, but used their networks of kinsmen or acquaintances from Ireland to choose a neighborhood that felt comfortable to them. In some cases, that meant a street dominated not merely by other Irishmen, but others who had the same surnames, spoke with the same accents, ate the same foods cooked in the same ways, and had many of the same visions in their heads when they thought of “home.”

One might argue that the Irish immigrant housing patterns in Savannah reflect desperation or haphazardness rather than agency. Perhaps the Irish from the north refused to rent space to those from the southwest, forcing the latter into the Old Fort district. Perhaps conscious effort led to the exclusion of Wexford natives from those blocks in Yamacraw and the Oglethorpe
Wards on which they were absent. But those scenarios do not seem likely. We can tell from the census that the Irish owned very few of the homes in Savannah’s Irish enclaves, so it is doubtful that Irish immigrants were choosing their neighbors. An Irish family that rented a house could decide whom to take in as boarders, but would have had little influence over whom the landlord allowed to move in next door.

In one respect, the Irish housing situation in Savannah may have reflected a degree of powerlessness on the part of the newcomers. The immigrants would have quickly learned of the stigma attached to living in neighborhoods populated by slaves and free people of color, and likely would have tried to avoid settling in those places had they had the power to do so. But within those constraints, Irish immigrants appear to have exercised decision-making powers and to have chosen where to live within the portions of the city open or affordable to them. In some respects, living in a city with a large African American population may have actually raised the status of the Irish immigrants. In the North, it was commonplace and acceptable in most genteel circles to express loathing for Irish immigrants and their impact on northern cities, but in Savannah, that kind of disgust seems to have been typically reserved for the city’s slaves and free blacks. The same kinds of complaints about drinking, brawling, and other criminal behavior that one finds leveled at the Irish in the northern press were, in Savannah newspapers, aimed primarily at slaves and free blacks instead. “Here the white man, whatever his condition or calling, is the acknowledged superior of the black,” crowed the Savannah News in 1851. This fact may have helped attract to Savannah some of the Irish immigrants whose names Charles White recorded in the pages of the 1860 census.39

Just months after White made his rounds collecting those names, Abraham Lincoln was elected president, and the nation lurched toward civil war. In public, Savannah’s Irish immigrants seemed no less enthusiastic about attaining southern independence than their white native-born neighbors. In the midst of the secession crisis in January 1861, for example, a Kerry-born Savannahian wrote a letter to the New York Irish-American in which he scoffed at the idea of sectional compromise and boasted that Savannah’s Irish American militia companies were already drilling in anticipation of war and were “prepared to resist . . . any force sent against them by the Federal Government.” Dublin-born war correspondent William Howard Russell visited Savannah four months later and found the same sentiment. “There is a considerable population of Irish and Germans in Savannah,” wrote Russell, “who to a man are in favour of the Confederacy and will fight
to support it.” Both of Savannah’s Irish-born priests, Jeremiah O’Neill, Sr., from Kerry, and Peter Whelan from Wexford, were ardent southern nationalists. When the war came, hundreds of Savannah’s Irish immigrants joined the Confederate military—most of them had been members of Savannah’s three pre-existing Irish militia companies. “The mass of them are poor men,” reported one of their officers, thirty-five-year-old Savannah merchant Laurence J. Guilmartin (the head of one of these militia units, the Montgomery Guards), but “we have batteries to build and such men as I have are used to such work and will do as much work in one day as many of our [non-Irish] companies can do in a week.”

Even when Savannah’s Irish immigrants went to war, their county affiliations apparently continued to matter. Guilmartin was born in Savannah shortly after his parents arrived there from County Tipperary, but most of the remaining officers of the Irish companies were immigrants. When Union forces captured Guilmartin and much of his company at Fort Pulaski 10 miles east of Savannah in April 1862, Captain Christopher Hussey, a native of County Kerry, succeeded him. The other most prominent antebellum Irish American militia company in Savannah besides Guilmartin’s was the Jasper Greens. The commander of that unit when it joined Guilmartin’s men in the 1st Georgia Infantry was Captain John Foley, another Kerry native. Yet another immigrant from County Kerry, Captain David O’Connor, assisted Foley in his command. The only other Irish-born Confederate captain from Savannah whose birthplace could be identified, Captain John Flannery of the Jasper Greens, hailed from the very same town in County Tipperary as did Guilmartin’s parents. Even in war, one’s birthplace within Ireland seemed to matter to Savannah’s immigrants.

There is a tantalizing postscript to the Guilmartin story, one that provides a bit of insight into the complexities of the difficult-to-document relationship between Savannah’s Irish and African American residents. On the eve of the War, Guilmartin and his wife owned a twenty-six-year-old black female slave (whose name may have been Mary Ann Roberson) and a two-year-old mulatto slave girl who was likely her daughter. They lived in Yamacraw at the western end of Indian Street on a block that housed both African Americans and Irish immigrants. Sometime after the war, the Guilmartins legally adopted the little mulatto girl, who became known as Mary Ann Guilmartin, and sent her to boarding school in Quebec (perhaps Captain Guilmartin was her biological father?). She twice had her photograph taken at a well-known studio in Quebec, and eventually married Onésiphere Ernest Talbot, who
in 1896, began fifteen years of service in the Canadian Parliament. Captain Guilmartin and his wife Frances had moved to Quebec City by 1889, perhaps in order to be closer to their daughter and grandchildren. He died there in 1902. His story shows, among other things, that the stereotypical characterization of widespread Irish American antipathy for African Americans, epitomized by the New York City Draft Riots, often prevents us from seeing what is really a much more complicated story.\(^{42}\)

The saga of Captain Guilmartin and his African American daughter highlights the need for further research on relations between the Irish immigrants and their African American neighbors—both slave and free, in the South as well as the North, during the Civil War Era. A recent call in the _New York Times_ for readers to submit accounts of such relationships based on their own genealogical research demonstrates that scholars are not the only ones interested in this subject.\(^{43}\) While that is an area about which we know relatively little, we do know that for the Guilmartins, who arrived in Savannah from Tipperary before the Famine, as well as the much larger number of Irish immigrants who moved there during the Famine years, place of birth within Ireland helped shape their new American lives. For some immigrants, Irish origins determined in what neighborhood—and in some cases, on what block—they would live, or which streets they would avoid. The immigrants’ Irish birthplace also influenced what occupations they followed in Savannah. Even when they marched off to war in Irish infantry companies, county of origin played a role in who was most likely to be barking orders at them. It is often said, of both the North and the South, that Civil War military service made the immigrant seem less foreign. What remains for future historians to discover is what, if anything, eventually made the Irish seem less foreign to each other.

**METHODOLOGICAL NOTE**

My analysis of the concentration of Irish immigrants in Savannah is based on manuscript population returns of the 1860 federal census. That census does not record street addresses, but I determined which dwellings sat on which streets by searching for the residents of each dwelling in the _Directory for the City of Savannah, . . . 1860_. These search results, and the names of each adult resident of each dwelling and his or her place of birth, can be found in my Savannah Irish Immigrants Database, which can be downloaded at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/anbinder. For the
neighborhoods in which most Irish immigrants lived, the directory did not usually provide precise house numbers, but merely said “Broughton bet. E. Broad and Houston” or “Broughton nr. Houston.” Based on the information provided in the directory, I determined approximately where in the census one block ended and another began. As a result, I could establish which residents of Savannah lived within close proximity to each other, but I cannot be certain that the residents of one dwelling lived next door to the residents of the dwelling listed next in the census. The census taker could have skipped a house and gone back to it later, or crossed the street in the middle of the block. It was typical for census takers to canvass all the dwellings on one side of a block, from one end to the other, and then cross to the other side and do the other half of the block, but we do not know whether this census taker followed that practice.

In order to determine whether the concentration of immigrants from a particular part of Ireland on a particular block was significant, I did not employ a chi-square test of residential dispersion nor any similar statistical method. When I found, for example, that more than half of the Irish immigrants on a particular set of blocks came from the three southwesternmost of Ireland’s thirty-two counties, I did not think any statistical test was necessary to validate the observation that the block had a significant concentration of immigrants from that part of Ireland. But I have provided the raw data upon which my conclusions are based in both a graphic version (showing the birthplace of each adult resident of each dwelling for fifteen representative blocks) and in Excel format (showing every Irish-born resident of Savannah and every resident—no matter where the resident was born—of the city’s Irish neighborhoods) so that anyone who wishes to run these tests can do so. The visual version is available at both my Dataverse page and http://www.press.uillinois.edu/journals/jaeh/media/anbinder. The Excel version is available only at http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/anbinder.

Finally, it should be noted that these data, in both the visual and Excel format, show only free African Americans and not slaves, who were not enumerated in the census schedules upon which my analysis is based. It is very likely that the dwellings inhabited by free African Americans also housed slaves, as it was common in Savannah for slaves to live apart from their owners, and most of these slaves lived with free people of color in Yamacraw and the Oglethorpe Wards. But because the slave schedules do not state where slaves lived, it is impossible to determine how many slaves, if any, lived in the dwellings depicted in these charts.
NOTES

The author wishes to thank research assistants Julie Gouss, Katherine Carper, Madeline Crispell, and Jeannine Cole, as well as genealogist Janet Schwartz. Their diligent work made this article possible. Thanks also to my colleagues Adam Arenson, Kevin Kenny, Gerry Lyne, Tim Meagher, Cormac Ó Gráda, and Frank Towers, as well as the eleven different anonymous readers who commented on this work at various stages of its development.

1. For the beginning and end dates of the Savannah census enumeration in 1860, see Population Schedules, 1860 United States Census, Georgia, Chatham County, City of Savannah, 1st District, 1, and 4th District, 370, National Archives (accessed via ancestry.com; hereafter “1860 Census”). For more on White, see 1860 Census, City of Savannah, dwelling 1081; “Democratic Meeting,” Savannah Daily Morning News, July 26, 1859: 2. For the population of Savannah, see Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census (Washington, DC, 1864), xiii, xxxii, 74. Because White numbered all of the dwellings in Savannah consecutively, rather than designating the first dwelling in each district as dwelling number 1, it is not necessary to know in which district a person lived in order to locate him or her in the 1860 Census for Savannah. I have therefore omitted district numbers for that census from subsequent endnotes.

2. The census takers in Ward Four of Milwaukee and Ward Two of St. Louis also recorded Irish county of birth in 1860, but because these predominantly German cities did not have large Irish populations in these wards, the number of Irish birthplaces recorded is small and of doubtful statistical significance. For St. Louis, see Walter Kamphoefner, “Paths of Urbanization: St. Louis in 1860,” in Emigration and Settlement Patterns of German Communities in North America, ed. Eberhard Reichmann, LaVern J. Ripplcy, and Jörg Nagler (Indianapolis, 1995), 258–72.

the South, 1815–1877 (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001); Bryan Giemza, ed., Rethinking the Irish in the American South: Beyond Rounders and Reelers (Jackson, MS, 2013).


6. The Irish birthplace of 150 additional Savannah residents was not recorded in the 1860 Census. This data is derived from the author’s database of Savannah Irish immigrants in the 1860 Census, posted on the Institute for Quantitative Social Science “Dataverse” website, https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/anbinder (hereafter “Savannah Irish Immigrant Database”). The database contains, in Excel format, a transcription of all information listed in the 1860 Census for every Irish immigrant in Savannah. The database also includes non-Irish-born residents of the three Irish neighborhoods identified in this study. Population of Ireland by county in 1851 based on Abstracts of the Census of Ireland Taken in the Years 1841 and 1851, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

8. Proportion of Savannah’s Irish immigrants who arrived from 1848 to 1852 is based on Edward Shoemaker’s exhaustive study of Savannah naturalization records (Shoemaker, “Strangers and Citizens,” 100). Unfortunately, he lists only the ten most frequent years of arrival in Savannah, and therefore does not state the percentage of the city’s Irish immigrants who arrived in the United States in 1845, 1846, or 1847. In New York’s Five Points, three-quarters of the neighborhood’s Irish-born inhabitants in 1855 had arrived in the United States since the commencement of the potato blight in 1845. Manuscript 1855 New York State Census, Sixth Ward, New York City, Old Records Division, New York County Clerk’s Office, New York (now available from familysearch.com at https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1937366). The 1855 New York Census recorded how long each person had lived in the state, which, for the Irish-born, usually equated to the number of years since emigration.

10. Marshal White divided Savannah into four districts for the purpose of enumerating the city’s population in the 1860 Census. Districts One and Four are comprised almost exclusively of the peripheral areas where the Irish concentrated, while Districts Two and Three correspond to the central portion of town where relatively few Irish immigrants lived. The directory I utilized for this study was Directory for the City of Savannah, To Which Is Added a Business Directory, for 1860, Vol. II (Savannah, GA, 1860). Knowing Savannah’s nineteenth-century street numbering system, which is no longer used, helps with identifying the current location of those residents of Savannah whose precise address is listed in the directory. That system is summarized in Barry Sheehy and Cindy Wallace, Savannah, Immortal City, Vol. I—Civil War Savannah (Austin, TX, 2011), 423.


12. Many histories of Savannah mention the Old Fort neighborhood, but none examine its history in any detail. See, for example, Sheehy and Wallace, Savannah, Immortal City, Vol. I, 109; Jacqueline Jones, Saving Savannah: The City and the Civil War (New York, 2008), 39; Roulhac Toledano, The National Trust Guide to Savannah (New York, 1997), 85–87. For the race of the neighborhood’s inhabitants in 1848 as the Irish began to arrive in large numbers, see Bancroft, Census of the City of Savannah, 8, 20 (with the Old Fort district labeled as Carpenters’ Row, Trustees’ Gardens, and Gilmerville, the official designations of the neighborhood at that time).


14. For its designation as the Walton Ward and its lack of dwellings, see Edward A. Vincent, Vincent’s Subdivision Map of the City of Savannah, Chatham County, State of Georgia, Shewing All the Public and Private Buildings, Lots, Wards, Etc., Together with the Latest Improvements, From Surveys and Authentic Records (n.p., 1853).

15. 1850 Census, Slave Schedules, Georgia, Chatham County, District Thirteen, [62–64]; 1860 Census, Slave Schedules, Chatham County, City of Savannah, District One, 2–3.
16. Dwellings 793 to 820 (Roberts Street), 839 to 856 (Stewart Street), 908 to 929 (Purse and Berrien Streets), 2159 to 2171 (Bay, Bryan, and St. Julian from Habersham to Price), and 2251 to 2264 (Broughton from East Broad to Price), City of Savannah, 1860 Census. We do not know how many slaves lived in these enclaves because the population schedules of the 1860 Census list free persons of color but not slaves. Nonetheless, we know from a survey done in 1848 that seventy-nine percent of the African Americans living in the Oglethorpe Wards were slaves who in most cases were not living with their owners but on their own. See Bancroft, *Census of the City of Savannah*, 8. Finally, an explanation is necessary concerning dwellings “2159” to “2171.” When Marshal White finished recording dwelling 2179 and then turned the page, he mistakenly labeled the next dwelling as “2080” rather than “2180” and continued upward from 2080. So there are two different Savannah houses, blocks apart, designated as dwelling 2080, two different houses labeled 2081, and so on, all the way to 2179. The span of dwellings from 2159 to 2171 referred to in this note is the second White listed with those dwelling numbers, yet the first houses White designated with those numbers (the even side of Broughton from Habersham to East Broad) and also had a mixture of Irish immigrants.

17. Dwellings 253 to 270 (St. Gaul Street), 338 to 358 (Pine), 379 to 409 (Bryan), 410 to 454 (Joachim), and 482 to 561 (Indian Lane and Street from West Broad to Farm), City of Savannah, 1860 Census.

18. Dwellings 12 to 46 (Indian Street and Lane west of Farm), 47 to 122 (Farm), 210 to 238 (Harrison and Zubly), and 937 to 951 (Jones near Purse to West Broad near Jones), City of Savannah, 1860 Census. The relationship between African Americans and immigrants in another southeast city is explored in Jeffrey Strickland, “How Germans Became White Southerners: German Immigrants and African Americans in Charleston, South Carolina, 1860–1880,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 1 (Fall 2008): 52–69.

19. Dwellings 2283 to 2298 (Broughton and Reynolds), 2318 to 2335 and 2410 to 2422 (Bay Lane), 2080–2097 (Congress), 2169–2186 and 2191–2206 (Bryan, Congress, and St. Julian between East Broad and Price), 2397 to 2422 (East and South Broad), and 2446 to 2477 (East Broad), City of Savannah, 1860 Census.

20. Savannah Irish Immigrant Database; Anbinder, “From Famine to Five Points: Lord Lansdowne’s Irish Tenants Encounter North America’s Most Notorious Slum,” *American Historical Review* 107, no. 2 (April 2002): 368–71; William Bennett, *Narrative of a Recent Journey of Six Weeks in Ireland* (London, 1847), 129–30. It is possible that the clustering of immigrants from certain Irish counties might be the result of extended families gathering together, though the variety of surnames in these Savannah mini-enclaves indicates that this was not the case. In New York’s Five Points, two surnames (Shea and Sullivan) predominated among the Kerry immigrants, who mostly originated in a single west Kerry estate. There are no similar surname concentrations among Savannah’s Kerry or Wexford immigrants, suggesting that they were not especially drawn from one or two estates there. See Tyler Anbinder, “From Famine to Five Points,” 385. The surnames found among the two populations can be compared at https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/anbinder.

21. “Correspondence of Newark Daily Advertiser,” *Savannah Daily Morning News*, February 4, 1851: 2. My description of the housing stock in the Irish neighborhoods of Savannah in 1860 is based on Vincent, *Vincent’s Subdivision Map of the City of Savannah*; the oldest Sanborn insurance maps of the city, those published in 1884; and the photographs of old Savannah houses taken circa 1939 by Frances Benjamin Johnston for the Carnegie

22. Size and age of the housing stock in the Old Fort district and the O’Neil and Walton Wards based on Vincent, Vincent’s Subdivision Map of the City of Savannah; Savannah, Georgia, March 1884, plates 2 and 13; Insurance Maps of Savannah, Georgia, 1888 (New York, 1888), plates 5, 7, 8, and 18. Houses still standing in the Old Fort district and vicinity that would have likely housed Irish immigrants in the Civil War Era include 26, 28–30, and 48 East Broad Street, 548 and 600 East Broughton Street, 541, 545, and 547 East Congress Street, and 17 Price Street. See Historic Preservation Department of the Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, “Historic Building Map: Savannah Historic District,” 13–16, 115–16.


24. Ibid., 40 (Mayo, first quotation), 58–59 (Kerry, second quotation, 59), 61 (Tipperary), supplement 19–29 (Mayo), 163–209 (Cork, third quotation, 166), 209–18 (Kerry), 232–51 (Tipperary).

25. The northwest neighborhood is defined as dwellings 1 to 561, City of Savannah, 1860 Census; the southwest neighborhood is defined as dwellings 793 to 981; the northeast neighborhood is defined as dwellings 2011 to 2540. The occupations that comprise each category are as follows:

Anbinder


26. Savannah Irish Immigrant Database. “Central Savannah” is defined as dwellings 1018 to 2010, City of Savannah, 1860 Census.

27. Immigrants born in the northern half of Ireland were much more likely than those from the south to have achieved wealth in Savannah by the eve of the Civil War. About half of Savannah’s Irish immigrants in 1860 originated in the southern counties of Clare, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, and Wexford, but immigrants from these counties constituted only about a quarter of the city’s hundred wealthiest Irish immigrants. See Savannah Irish Immigrant Database.


30. Language barriers may explain the fact that of the dozen or so Irish-born nurses in Savannah, not a single one was born in the southern half of Ireland, even though the vast majority of Savannah’s Irish immigrants came from that region.

31. In New York City in 1855, forty-four percent of male Irish immigrants worked as laborers or in other jobs requiring no training. In Savannah, sixty-six percent of male Irish immigrants held such positions. Robert J. Ernst, *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825–1863* (1949; Syracuse, NY, 1994), 214–18; Savannah Irish Immigrant Database.


33. For the wages of Savannah day laborers, see Haunton, “Savannah in the 1850s,” 58. The pay for New York laborers in the 1850s typically ranged from 87.5 cents to $1 per day. See “Document No. 14,” *Proceedings and Documents of the Board of Assistant Aldermen of the City of New York* 44 (1852), 309–24; Richard B. Stott, *Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York* (Ithaca, NY, 1990), 60–61.

34. For examples, see “A Superb Skeleton,” *Savannah Republican*, August 10, 1849: 2; “Foreign Items,” *Savannah Republican*, November 11, 1849: 2; “Great Storm,” *Savannah Republican*, November 11, 1849: 2.
Republican, April 22, 1850: 2; “Foreign Accounts by the Asia,” Savannah Republican, March 20, 1851: 2.


36. Savannah’s Catholic marriage registers from this period are at the Archive of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, but a request made by the author to examine these records was rejected by church officials. At the Church of the Transfiguration in New York’s predominantly Irish Five Points neighborhood, forty-seven percent of the marriages held there in 1854, 1855, and 1856 involving at least one resident of the neighborhood were of a bride and groom born in the same Irish county. Of those same-county marriages, fifty-four percent involved partners from the same city or town in Ireland, while forty-six percent involved husbands and wives born in different places in the same Irish county. See Marriage Register, Church of the Transfiguration, 29 Mott Street, New York.


38. Anna Kinsella, County Wexford in the Famine Years, 1845–1849 (Enniscorthy, Ireland, 1995). The only published work on emigration from Wexford covers an earlier period and different destination. See Bruce Elliott, “Emigration from South Leinster to Eastern Upper Canada,” in Wexford: History and Society, ed. Kevin Whelan (Dublin, 1987), 422–46.

39. Savannah News, July 29, 1851, quoted in Haunton, “Savannah in the 1850s,” 56. For press complaints about lawlessness among the slaves and free blacks living in the Oglethorpe Wards and the Old Fort district, see Haunton, “Savannah in the 1850s,” 246–56.

40. “KENMARE” to the Editor of the Irish-American, January 3, 1861, “Affairs in Savannah,” New York Irish-American, January 19, 1861: 1; William H. Russell, My Diary North and South, 2 vols. (London, 1863), I:229; Capt. L[aurence] J. Guilmartin to Gov. Joseph E. Brown, August 3, 1861, Governor’s Incoming Correspondence, Georgia State Archives, accessed via ancestry.com; service record of Capt. Laurence J. Guilmartin, 1st (“Olmstead’s”) Georgia Infantry Regiment, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers, National Archives, accessed via Fold3.com. There were several different “First” Georgia infantry regiments created during the course of the war, so to prevent confusion, they were known by the surname of their founding commanding officer, in this case Colonel Charles H. Olmstead. Three pre-war Irish militia companies, the Montgomery Guards, the Jasper Greens, and the Irish Volunteers, became companies in Olmstead’s regiment at the start of the war. Later, when Georgia’s regiments were reorganized, Savannah’s Irish troops were placed in Companies E and F of the 22nd Georgia Heavy Artillery Battalion. See Sean O’Brien, Irish Americans in the Confederate Army (Jefferson, NC, 2007), 171, 173; David T. Gleeson, The
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41. For Hussey, see dwelling 2134, City of Savannah, 1860 Census (where his occupation is listed as “shipping master”); for Foley, see dwelling 214, District 13, Chatham County, 1850 Census (where he is listed as a grocer with $1,500 in real estate), and dwelling 1633, City of Savannah, 1860 Census (where he describes himself as a “gentleman of leisure” with $30,000 in real estate); for O’Connor, see dwelling 1567, City of Savannah, 1860 Census. For Flannery, see dwelling 1490, City of Savannah, 1860 Census; Gregory Murphy, Irish-American Units in the Civil War (New York, 2008), 22–23; Gleeson, Green and the Gray, 45. Captain Martin J. Ford was not listed in the 1860 census, but he was likely a native of Mayo, as was almost every other Ford in Savannah. For Guilmartin, see dwelling 55, Chatham County, District 13, 1850 Census; dwelling 1572, City of Savannah, 1860 Census (where he is mistakenly listed as Laurence J. Owens); dwelling 1007, Sub-District 21, Chatham County, 1870 Census; Enumeration District 24, City of Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia, 1880 Census, 34; “Nursed Yellow Fever Sufferers,” Baltimore Sun, December 26, 1896: 3 (obituary of Guilmartin’s sister, Mary A. Prendergast, which lists her birthplace as Nenagh, County Tipperary). For a list of soldiers serving in units with Irish affiliations, see Lillian Henderson, ed., Roster of the Confederate Soldiers of Georgia, 6 vols. (Hapeville, GA, 1955–1964), I:115–25 (Montgomery Guards), 125–31 (Jasper Greens), 157–62 (the “Irish Volunteers”); Janet B. Hewett, ed., Georgia Confederate Soldiers, 1861–1865, 4 vols. (Wilmington, NC, 1998), III:171–72 (Montgomery Guards when reorganized as Company E in the 22nd Georgia Heavy Artillery Battalion), 172–73 (the Emmett Guard, Company F of the same battalion).

42. 1860 Census, Slave Schedules, Chatham County, City of Savannah, District Three, 43; Images II-45957.1 and II-77923, Archives Photographiques Notman, Musée McCord, Montreal; C. P. Choquette, Histoire de la Ville de Saint-Hyacinthe (Saint-Hyacinthe, QC, 1930), 279; A. B. Cherrier, Cherrier’s Quebec City Directory, 1889–1890 (Quebec City, 1889), 302; “Laurence J. Guilmartin,” 1891 and 1901 Census of Quebec, Canada, and 1902 death records of Saint-Patrice parish, Quebec City, accessed via ancestry.com. It is possible that a twelve-year-old free “mulatto” boy, John Francis Guilmartin, listed in the 1860 Census as living in Yamacraw, is also an illegitimate son of Capt. Guilmartin. This boy is listed as living with a free mulatto woman, twenty-six-year-old Mary Ann Roberson. White may have mistakenly recorded Roberson twice, once as a slave and once as a free person of color. See 1860 Census, City of Savannah, dwelling 6. The two photographs of Mary Ann Guilmartin, from 1877 and 1885, can be found as “Miss Guilmartin” at http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/keys/collections/.