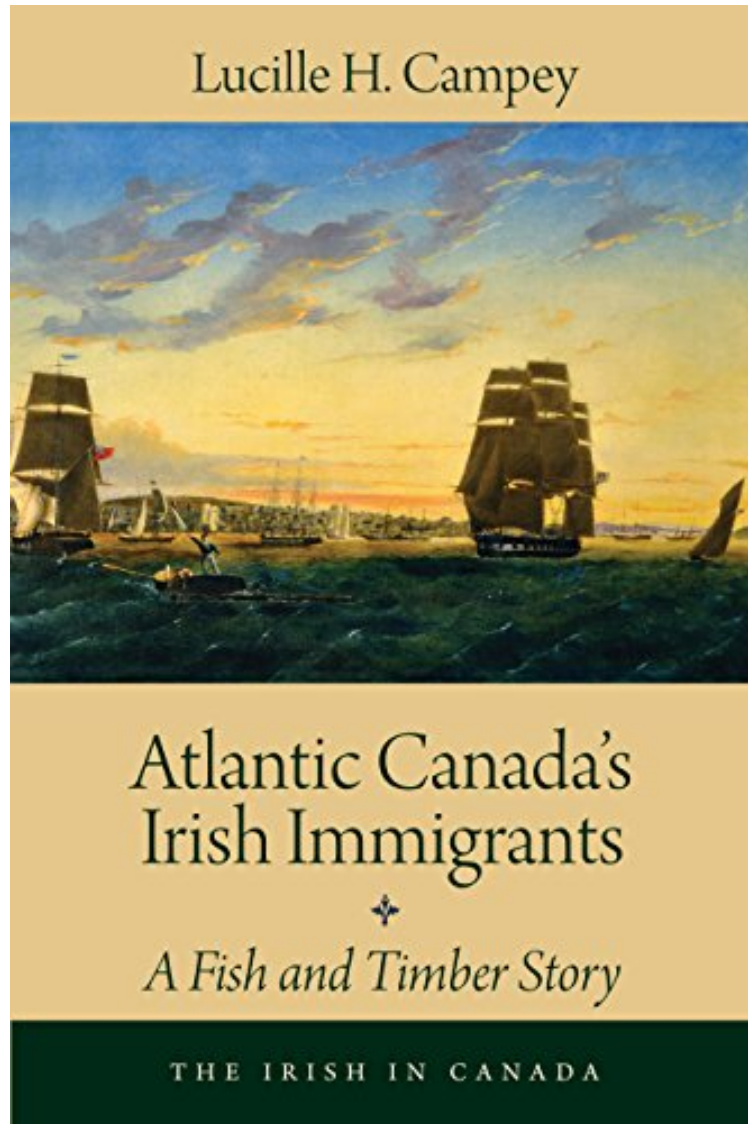


[DOWNLOAD] Atlantic Canada's Irish Immigrants: A Fish and Timber Story (The Irish in Canada)

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Lucille H. Campey

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Lucille H. Campey : Atlantic Canada's Irish Immigrants: A Fish and Timber Story (The Irish in Canada) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Atlantic Canada's Irish Immigrants: A Fish and Timber Story (The Irish in Canada):

A transformative work that explodes assumptions about the importance of the Great Irish Potato Famine to Irish immigration. In this major study, Lucille Campey traces the relocation of around ninety thousand Irish people to their new homes in Atlantic Canada. She shatters the widespread misconception that the exodus was primarily driven by dire events in Ireland. The Irish immigration saga is not solely about what happened during the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s; it began a century earlier. Although they faced great privations and had to overcome many obstacles, the Irish actively sought the better life that Atlantic Canada offered. Far from being helpless exiles lacking in ambition who went lemming-like to wherever they were told to go, the Irish grabbed their opportunities and prospered in their new home. Campey gives these settlers a voice. Using wide-ranging documentary sources, she provides new insights about why the Irish left and considers why they chose their various locations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland. She highlights how, through their skills and energy, they benefitted themselves and contributed much to the development of Atlantic Canada. This is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the history of the Irish exodus to North America and provides a mine of information useful to family historians.

Atlantic Canada's Irish Immigrants is a missing chapter in the story of many Canadian families. (Open Book Ontario) Drawing on the immigrants own words, the book looks at their experiences, origins in Ireland, the voyage, where they settled, and how they lived afterwards. A mine of information for the family historian. (Canada's Anglo-Celtic Connections) The book is of immense help in understanding the settlement patterns of the Irish in the Atlantic Provinces. An excellent work, and well-recommended. (Families, Ontario Genealogical Society journal) About the Author Lucille H. Campey was born in Ottawa. A professional researcher and historian, she has a masters degree in medieval history from Leeds University and a Ph.D. from Aberdeen University in emigration history. She is the author of eight books on early Scottish emigration to Canada and three on English emigration to Canada. She was the recipient of the 2016 Prix du Quebec for her work researching Irish emigration to Canada. She lives near Salisbury in Wiltshire, England. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 Fish, Timber, and Hope It is to the credit of the great majority of [Irish] immigrants that once given a fair start in this country, they rapidly rose from want to comfort and often to affluence. Professor William Ganongs observation, made in his *Origins of Settlement in the Province of New Brunswick*, published in 1904, seems blindingly obvious, but it needed to be said. Many of the Irish who came to live in Atlantic Canada were not given a fair start. Not only that, their important contribution to Atlantic Canadas development has been belittled and misconstrued. Their story is not a tragic epic in which victims of famine were forced to flee their homeland. The truth is otherwise. It is a tale of how hope and hard work gave Atlantic Canada its stalwart Irish population. Irish Catholics suffered discrimination from the moment they arrived. Rather than being welcomed as useful additions to the local population, they were treated with contempt by the Protestant elite who governed the region. Because Catholics owed their religious allegiance to Rome, their loyalty to the British Crown was questioned. Another mark against the Irish was their poverty. When large numbers of penniless Irish began arriving in Nova Scotia in 1816 officials complained about the drain they would be on the public purse. There was certainly no question of them being welcomed as useful settlers. They were just riff-raff. Unfortunately this imagery of the sad, bedraggled, and unwanted Irish immigrant has moved centre stage. It has enveloped the entire emigration saga. A mythology attributing all Irish emigration to poverty, disease, and forced exile has come into existence and it is rarely challenged. Far from being a great tragedy full of pitiful victims, this saga is about thrusting, brave, and well-organized people who grabbed their opportunities in Canada to the benefit of it and themselves. The high death toll associated with the immigration that took place during the period of the Great Irish Famine in the 1840s became the story. By then, Irelands population had reached around 8.5 million double that of today. Being reliant on a good potato crop, it was just a matter of time before hunger and disease struck, which happened in the early 1840s when the crop failed, creating the most traumatic event in the history of modern Ireland. However, the immigration that took place during the period of the Great Irish Famine was, in fact, the later stage of the influx of Irish settlers to Atlantic Canada. The sudden surge in numbers during the famine period represented the tail end of an immigrant stream, not its beginning. After 1855 the stream reduced to a trickle. Between the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 and the 1840s, half a million Irish arrived in Canada (initially British North America), representing 60 percent of the total, with the Scots and English making up the rest. In other words, the Irish were Canadas principal British colonizers. By the late 1850s they were the largest immigrant group in both Newfoundland and New Brunswick and equalled the Scots in Prince Edward Island. Only in Nova Scotia, where they were eclipsed by the earlier Scottish takeover of much of the province, were the Irish in the minority. For nearly a century the Irish left their native country in search of the better life that Atlantic Canada offered. Few were compelled by force or famine to leave Ireland. They deliberately chose to emigrate. Their chief limitation on being able to leave their homeland was their ability to pay for their relocation costs. With a rapidly growing population and an increasing subdivision of its land holdings, Irelands agricultural system had become unsustainable. People were stuck with the age-old problems of unproductive land and overpopulation. Conditions were also desperate for Ulster textile workers. Because theirs was a cottage-based, labour-intensive industry, they were particularly vulnerable to the structural changes taking place in the early nineteenth century as a

result of increasing mechanization. Thousands of Ulster linen weavers were thrown out of work or had to survive on pitiable rates of pay, thus creating another massive stimulus for emigration. The Irish frequently came to Canada in small, well-organized groups and were supreme networkers. Contacts with family and friends already established in North America helped them to assess where their best opportunities lay. They collected information, weighed alternatives, and headed for a particular location. Once settled, they were valued for their skills and work ethic, and they attracted other followers, often sending money back home to cover the transport costs of relatives and friends. That said, their woes as struggling immigrants have been far better chronicled than their obvious success in adapting to the testing conditions of pioneer life. Extended Irish families spread themselves widely across North America, with many choosing the United States. For example, having relocated from county Armagh to the Saint John River Valley region of New Brunswick in 1816, Mr. Laurence Hughes continued to receive letters from brothers in Boston, Pennsylvania, and Iowa and a brother-in-law in Minnesota, all extolling the benefits to be had from farming in their part of the United States. While he resisted these siren calls, most of his brothers and sisters headed south. Arriving in the Miramichi region from Cork at about this time, John McCarthy could compare notes with two brothers already settled in Michigan and Wisconsin. Similarly, having worked for a while in the city of Saint John, probably as a labourer, Martin Dyer, from county Sligo, found employment in Rhode Island and shortly after that went to work on the York and Erie Railroad. Gerald Dougherty followed a similar pattern, working first in Prince Edward Island, moving to Boston a year later, and two years later working on a railroad in Maine. People steadily worked their way up the employment ladder, which sometimes meant abandoning the Atlantic region for the better-paid jobs that the United States offered. The Irish did not have the backing of wealthy proprietors in establishing their communities as had been the case with many Scots. They had to organize their sea crossings, find a job or acquire land, if they were going into farming, and learn how to adjust to a completely new physical environment on their own. Family and friends who had been through the experience could help, and there was also a plethora of emigrant guides that pointed the way, this extract being typical: An emigrant is generally so poor on his arrival that he can seldom afford to purchase a lot of land; but after the lapse of four years, with care and industry, he is generally able to effect that object. An emigrant, therefore, on his arrival here, will prudently engage with a farmer as a labourer for the first year, in order to acquire the means of improving land and the mode of cultivating it. Pioneering conditions were gruelling and required considerable toughness and determination. Early arrivals had to transform the huge tracts of wilderness that awaited them into settled communities: For the man who has been accustomed to work in good clear land the gloomy forest presents rather a strange appearance when he enters upon his grounds the entire surface of the earth being covered with innumerable trees a solitary settler builds his little shanty amidst the stumps, the walls of his dwelling are large logs piled on each other and dovetailed at the corners with a square hole cut through for a door and another for a window, the cracks are filled with moss; this fabric is covered with the bark of a tree secured by long poles and with the furniture inside all of his own making. The challenges facing the Reverend Samuel Bacon were quite different. Having been appointed in 1821 to serve as an Anglican missionary in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, he planned his departure from Ireland carefully. His cousin advised him to take 30 to 40 to furnish yourself with a moderate portion of those comforts, which that rigorous climate will render absolutely necessary, and to bring plenty of clothing. He should take: 2 hats, 3 suits of clothes, a good great coat, 6 pairs of new boots or shoes, 6 pairs of worsted or lambs wool stockings, 6 pairs of cotton hose, 12 good shirts, 6 good flannel waistcoats, 12 neck cloths, 12 pocket handkerchiefs, a flannel and cotton dressing gown. He was also advised to have a thick rough loose great coat and an old hat to wear on the sea crossing. This dealt with his material comforts, but to help him cope with the inevitable attacks of ennui, he was advised that he should also take books describing the many trees, shrubs and flowers and insects that will engage your attention. His moments of leisure were all very well, but for most new arrivals, pioneer life revolved around back-breaking and never-ending physical labour. Meanwhile, Irish Catholics continued to receive negative press, often being portrayed as ignorant and rowdy types who frequently got drunk and enjoyed having a good punch-up. Drunkenness was a widespread social problem in early Canada. Descriptions abound of early settlers who ended up in a drunkards grave. Although the problem was not exclusive to the Irish, they seemed to fall prey to alcohols addictive charms more than most. As if to demonstrate their determination to succeed as colonizers, families from counties Cork and Kerry actually founded what they termed a teetotal settlement in New Brunswick. The demon drink was not going to impede their progress! However, the cheapness of rum and whiskey and the isolation and hardships of pioneer life remained a lethal combination for many Irish, bringing misery and often an early death. By the mid nineteenth century, Irish Catholics had a pro-Catholic newspaper, the Saint John Weekly Freeman, which provided a forum for challenging anti-Catholic prejudices and enhancing their reputation in the city. In 1859 the paper asked its readers why it was that the arrival of eighty immigrants from Galway had gone unreported in the other newspapers. The answer it gave was that these mere Irish are not of that better class so longed for had they been Scottish, what poems would have been sung! However, this slight probably mattered very little. As the Cork-born journalist and politician John Maguire observed when he visited Halifax in the 1860s, prosperity had arrived: In no city of the American continent do the Irish occupy a better position or exercise a more deserved influence than in Halifax. The Irish element is everywhere discernible in every description of business and in all branches of industry, in

every class and in every condition of life, from the highest to the lowest. Each of the four Atlantic provinces has its own individual story. The fishing trade with Britain attracted the Irish to Newfoundland from the eighteenth century, while the timber trade brought the main immigrant stream to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island a century later. Newfoundlands Irish were Catholics from the southeast of Ireland who first took up employment in the cod fishery as seasonal workers. John Francis O'Leary's fishing contract, stating that he was to have as his wages half the fish he catches, rations and cuffs (fingerless mittens) in the winter, was hardly very generous. Despite the poor remuneration and tough working conditions, those Irish with an eye to the future could see the benefits of remaining and becoming permanent residents, with most settling in the Avalon Peninsula. Later, Irish Catholics would seek work in New Brunswick's lumber camps and Nova Scotia's coal mines, where jobs were also onerous and badly paid. But, for the poorest of the poor, these were stepping stones to the better life that the New World could offer. Because of the limitations of Newfoundland's agriculture and overall economy, many Irish fishery workers set their sights on moving to more advantageous locations. By simply crossing to the other side of the Gulf of St. Lawrence they could procure much better farmland and have access to the better-paid jobs that were to be had in eastern Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and the Miramichi River region of New Brunswick (see Map 2). This they did, and their letters home to family and friends ensured that other groups of immigrants from the southeast of Ireland continued to arrive. As a result, these regions became settlement strongholds for Irish Catholics who had originated from counties Waterford, Kilkenny, Wexford, Carlow, and Tipperary. The next group from Ireland could not have been more different. Ulster Presbyterians, who could trace their ancestry back to the Lowlands of Scotland, had been relocating to North America since the mid eighteenth century to escape religious discrimination in Ireland and to benefit from the New World's enticing farming opportunities. In keeping with this spirit of enterprise, the New Hampshire-born Alexander McNutt, a man of Ulster ancestry, took it upon himself to organize the relocation of between four and five hundred Ulster people to Nova Scotia in the 1760s. Having obtained a large tract of land in the Cobequid Bay region (later in Colchester County) from the Nova Scotia government, McNutt located his recruits in the Ulster counties of Donegal, Tyrone, and Londonderry. With his help they went on to establish successful farming communities in Truro, Londonderry, and Onslow townships. However, his venture did not attract as many followers as had been anticipated. The settlements were in the wrong locations for what was to follow. The region's timber trade, which was firmly established by 1815, became focussed on Saint John, New Brunswick. It was the principal port from which ships, loaded with timber cargoes, left for Britain, and was the primary destination to which immigrants from Britain sailed. Reaching Cobequid Bay in Nova Scotia required a substantial onward voyage by steamer, making this location far less desirable. Although their earliest major settlements were in Nova Scotia, it was New Brunswick that would eventually attract the majority of the Irish. With its semi-feudal land system, Prince Edward Island was less appealing. While settlers could acquire leaseholds from landlords, they could not easily purchase land, prompting many Irish to bypass it all together or to eventually leave. As a result, the island became a well-trodden staging post for people seeking onward settlement in other parts of the Maritimes. But that situation changed in the 1830s when a Catholic priest organized the departures of more than two thousand Irish people originating from county Monaghan who were then residing in Glasgow. The explosive growth in the Maritime region's timber trade had made sea travel affordable for the masses. The ports of Londonderry and Cork began trading regularly with New Brunswick, offering space in their vessels to immigrants as they set off to cross the Atlantic to collect timber cargoes. The timber trade became the driving force behind local economies, and for the poor it provided the means to earn money to purchase land, although in New Brunswick there were plenty of lumbermen who never became farmers. Despite being regularly plunged into boom and bust, according to fluctuations of business cycles in Britain, the timber trade offered diverse employment opportunities and was often a vital component of an immigrant's livelihood. The earliest Irish arrivals to Nova Scotia had come mainly from the ancient province of Ulster, consisting of counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, a