

"Cast Your Eye Across the Atlantic, My Countrymen..."

The Transatlantic Orientation of the Fenian Brotherhood

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

Master of Arts in History

By

Nathanael Pass

Dr. James Connolly, Advisor

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

MUNCIE, INDIANA

December 2015

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank everyone who helped in this project. A special debt of gratitude needs to be extended to the Ball State History Department for providing me with a position as a graduate assistant in both of my years at this university. I would also like to thank my professors both at Indiana Wesleyan University and Ball State for providing me with the skills and insight of a historian. However, I feel the need to provide special thanks to four of my professors. Firstly, I need to thank Dr. David Burden, my academic advisor at IWU. In many ways, I look to Dr. Burden as my father in history, as he was the man who deeply shaped the way I look at history. Additionally, he was the person who unknowingly set me on the path to investigate Irish-American Nationalism. The remaining three professors are my thesis committee; Dr. James Connelly, Dr. Nicole Etcheson, and Dr. Frederick Suppe. All three of these remarkably gifted historians have willingly taken a fledgling with big ideas and helped me to grow in my understanding of the historical arts. Additionally, through reading this work, they have been a great asset by pointing out those moments when I had got too lost in my own thoughts and missed crucial points in my argumentation. All of you will be remembered with great fondness in the coming years.

In addition to academic related acknowledgments, I feel the need to extend gratitude to those who have helped on more personal level. First on this list are my parents, Jay and Cheryl Pass, who allowed every family vacation to turn into a chance to explore historical sites. Also, they need to be thanked for being brave enough to home educate a dyslexic student. A second group who needs to be acknowledged are my fellow grad students, especially those individuals who have become the fixtures of the GA office community. You have been greatly encouraging be it through laughter or through group commiseration. One member of this group, who shall remain nameless, needs to be especially remembered for always reminding me that my topic was basically, "a bunch of drunk Irishmen invading Canada." I also need to acknowledge the role of my daughter, Evelyn Jane. At almost every step in the creation of this thesis, she has been either sleeping on, playing on, or playing next to me. The final and probably the most important person who needs to be thanked is my darling wife Rebecca. She has been a constant source of encouragement and support in my academic life. When she married me I doubt she expected to have a band of Fenians as a constant house guest. Thank you darling for being willing to learn more about the Fenian Brotherhood than any sane person would want to and for being willing to dedicate far too many evenings to editing this project.

Table of Contents

Introduction	page 4
Chapter 1: Dreaming of Liberation	page 29
Chapter 2: Pursuing an Avenging Mission	page 52
Chapter 3: Seeking an Ally	page 72
Chapter 4: Planning for Action	page 88
Conclusion	page 110
Bibliography	page 114

Introduction

At a large gathering of Irish nationalists in the city of Chicago in 1863, James Gibbons rose to his feet and announced, "Cast your eye across the Atlantic, my countrymen, and behold your ancient and venerable mother sitting with her head bowed in grief, her hands in manacles, amidst the ruins of her now departed glory."¹ This meeting of Irish-American nationalists was the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood and Gibbons' words served as its driving mission. The Fenian Brotherhood was the leading American expression of the transatlantic movement known as Fenianism. Fenians thought that the nation of Ireland could only be restored to liberty, and removed from English domination, through the use of physical force in an armed insurrection. The Fenian Brotherhood had been founded as part of a "co-operative revolutionary organization" with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), the branch of Fenianism in Ireland.² The Fenian Brotherhood dominated Irish-American nationalist activity between its founding in 1858 and its decline in 1870.

As with most radical movements, historians have offered many explanations for Fenianism's character. For American Fenianism, a key historical debate considers the impetus for the Fenian Brotherhood. One school of thought argues that the Brotherhood was a means for Irish-Americans to express ideals that they believed would improve their incorporation into American society. A second school of thought views the Brotherhood as

¹ Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood. 1870. MS, Catholic University of America, New York. Accessed June 19, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&c=CL5.7&d=HASH9ff23f222cb9156d05a636>.

² Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher, Comprising the Leading Events of His Career Chronologically Arranged, with Selections from His Speeches, Lectures and Miscellaneous Writings, including Personal Reminiscences*. (Worcester, MA: Messenger Press, 1892), 361.

being deeply dedicated to the cause of Irish liberation for no other reason than for the love of their native land. The most recent school of historians analyze the nationalists and argue that they were supporting Irish freedom in order to gain acceptance into America. This approach to Fenianism, however, has taken too narrow of a view of the Brotherhood, rooting all of their motivations within a single nation. Doing so, these historians have clouded the intensity with which the members of the organization felt the need to liberate Ireland. This thesis will argue that, regardless of where the social impetus for Fenianism came from, between 1858 and 1870, the organization was still adamantly dedicated to rectifying the situation in Ireland. It will thus break with the narrow national story that has been told of the Brotherhood and instead will look at the transnational realities of the Fenians.

In order to support its argument, this thesis will examine the way that the men who created the rhetoric of the Brotherhood depicted their world. The manner in which these men described Ireland, England, the United States, and the Brotherhood will be the main topics under evaluation. An examination of these portrayals reveals the way the Fenians described their world. By looking at these representations, it is clear that they were firmly resolved to liberate Ireland and that this mission was more than an attempt to gain a better standing in America.

At this point, it is worthwhile to explain a set of terms that will be used repeatedly in this thesis. These terms are transatlantic and transnational, which for the purpose of this thesis will be used interchangeably. Traditionally, historical narratives have been constructed with a focus on a single nation. Transatlantic or transnational histories break this pattern and tell stories that span either the Atlantic or national borders. In the

case of Irish-American nationalists, these terms are interchangeable because the border between Ireland and America is the Atlantic Ocean. A related concept that this thesis uses is a transatlantic orientation. This phrase describes people in America who display a focus on issues in European countries. Within the context of this topic, a transatlantic orientation would be Irish-American nationalists expressing concerns for affairs in Ireland rather than America. This transatlantic orientation will be juxtaposed with a focus upon American issues such as assimilation and social standing. Those historians who have argued that the Fenians were interested in Ireland as a means of improving their standing in America have presented the Fenians as possessing an orientation toward American concerns. This thesis will argue that the Fenians' transatlantic orientation was a very important motivation for these Irishmen. It must be acknowledged that American-based motivations likely did impact the Fenians, however these concerns have been overplayed in recent histories leaving no room for concerns rooted in Ireland. This thesis will seek to show that there were deep connections to the issues impacting Ireland in the rhetoric of the Brotherhood.

It is tempting to evaluate the reasons behind why the rank-and-file members chose to participate in the organization. However, developing a valid argument along these lines may be impossible. The members each had their own distinct and unique objectives. It is possible, and even likely, that some joined the Brotherhood in order to gain acceptance into American society. Nevertheless, developing a universal explanation for why individual Irishmen chose to participate in Fenianism is not feasible, due to the diversity of justifications adopted by the Brotherhood. Additionally, historians have cast substantial illumination upon the factors that may have impacted individual decisions to join the Brotherhood. For this reason, this project will skirt the question of why individuals joined the Brotherhood and instead examine the stance of

the authors of the Brotherhood's rhetoric. While the ideas of these leaders may have been supported by the average member of the organization, the lack of written accounts by rank-and-file Fenians means that historians have no information regarding the way that the rhetoric was received by these men. What is of concern is not reality but how the world was described by the Fenian writers. In this thesis, the question is: was the presented interest in the situation in Ireland by the Fenians genuine or was it a means of gaining acceptance into America? The answer to this question need not bear any resemblance to the actual reasons that individual Irishmen chose to participate in the Brotherhood's mission.

When seeking to evaluate the official position of the Brotherhood, the best place to look for information is in the rhetoric of American Fenianism. This rhetoric has been preserved in published documents and the private correspondence of men such as John O'Mahony and William Roberts, two of the most prominent leaders of the Brotherhood. It also can be found in the speeches and writings of men such as Thomas Francis Meagher and Michael Doolday, who, while not officially part of the organization for most of their lives, were closely aligned with it. Meagher, the famed leader of the Irish Brigade in the American Civil War, was widely known to have had many friends within the Fenian ranks.³ Moreover, this famous Irish general often supported the Brotherhood and several times expressed a desire to become an active member, despite not doing so until 1863.⁴ Likewise,

³ Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher, Comprising the Leading Events of His Career Chronologically Arranged, with Selections from His Speeches, Lectures and Miscellaneous Writings, including Personal Reminiscences*. (Worcester, MA: Messenger Press, 1892), 363.

⁴ *Ibid*, 489.

Doolday was never part of the Brotherhood but still held "a deep and abiding interest" in the program of the Fenian Brotherhood.⁵

The rhetoric of American Fenianism is preserved in a wide variety of documents. Circulars sent out to the local Circles of the Brotherhood, the published minutes of the annual national congresses of the Brotherhood, and a few books, including songbooks, are among the most prominent sources. The audience for these works were members of the Brotherhood or those very close to it. Most of the documents were sent to local Circles of the Brotherhood to be read during the Circles' weekly meetings, implying a basic level of education among these local members. All of the songbooks were created for the purpose of providing the Circles with material to sing at these meetings. While some of the other books were not as narrowly focused toward local Circles, the style of the books makes it apparent that they were intended for people who, at minimum, held to Fenian ideals. None of the works try to persuade those outside of the organization to join or support its cause.

As the members of the Brotherhood appear to be the primary audience, it is worth noting who these individuals were. Specific knowledge regarding the membership and most of the authors is impossible to ascertain due to the fact that membership roles either were not created or have not been preserved. It is generally assumed that at this point the majority of the members were first generation Irish-Americans who had left Ireland in or around the time of the Great Potato Famine. John O'Mahony, William Roberts, and John O'Neill, the only individuals

⁵ Michael Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision Containing the Inspirations of General Richard Montgomery, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Together with a Thrilling Account of the "avenging Angels," in New and Old Ireland. To Which Is Added a Mode of Managing Funds so as to Insure to the Individual Subscriber an Absolute Certainty That His Money Shall Be Invested for His Own Interest, or Be Properly Devoted to the Great Cause for Which It Was Given, When There Are Indubitable Moral and Physical Prospects of Success, Etc., Etc. Also, the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: Bradburn, 1865), 5-6, accessed January 17, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/feniansprogressv00newy#page/n14/mode/1up>

about whom specific data can be found, all arrived following the beginning of the famine. Many of the letters written by leaders of the local Circles to John O'Mahony proclaim that the Circles' members were poor. This information leads historians to assume that most of the local members were in the lower working class. One surprising fact that can be known about the Brotherhood is that there was a very large diversity of locations. The Brotherhood's records list some of the locations of the Circles. While the major Atlantic cities had the largest number of Circles, all of the Northern states and most of the Union Armies had a few Circles. In 1863, the First National Convention cited Indiana as the "patron state of Fenianism."⁶ These factors mean that the Brotherhood had a very broad geographic presence in the United States.

Much like the membership, little is known regarding the men who wrote the documents. As mentioned above, historians only have information on the background of three of the authors. In these cases, all were born in Ireland and came to America either as adults or adolescents. However, beyond these three, most of the men who contributed to the Brotherhood appear nowhere else in the historical records besides in the documents that they created. Their style of writing shows them to be educated men with deep connections to Ireland. For those who would look to see if there are variations in the Brotherhood's literature based on social class, age, or length of residency in America, there is, in fact, very little need for this sort of analysis in this thesis. Across the board the Fenian literature is remarkably similar in the images and themes that the authors display. A uniform view of Ireland, England, America, and the mission of the Brotherhood is found in the writings of Fenians.

⁶ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, accessed 5/18/2015 Chicago, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/Convention.htm>.

The Fenian authors were writing to their own people with the intention of inspiring them to a deeper dedication to the cause of Ireland. The Brotherhood was not intended to be a long-lasting political organization. When the I.R.B. was founded in Ireland, it was assumed that the uprising would happen in just a few years.⁷ Many of the letters exchanged between the two groups, promised a rebellion within the next year. Additionally, reading the Fenian documents makes it apparent that the authors were expecting a rebellion to occur at any time. The Brotherhood was operating as if it was perpetually on the edge of an uprising. Maintaining this fevered excitement among the common members would have been very difficult. It is likely that Fenian leaders created many of the documents to prevent the membership from drifting away as the promised uprising was not materializing. Each document can be seen as a rallying call to the Fenian troops, encouraging them to keep the faith.

When considering the literature of the Fenian Brotherhood, it is important to keep in mind that even in their own time they were considered to be "hopeless fanatics who held irrational romantic notions of achieving the impossible..."⁸ This status as die-hard zealots means that these nationalists often were disconnected from the reality of the situation. For example, they were never as representative of the Irish-American community as they believed. The Fenians rarely discussed concerns that have been established as significant to the Irish-American community by historians, such as nativism or labor problems. Likewise, the England that really existed probably held little similarity to the tyrannical, genocidal, murderous monster which the Fenians depicted. Regardless of this reality, it is crucial that historians treat these fanciful claims soberly. This thesis is concerned less with the world that existed than with the world that the

⁷ William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858 - 1886* (New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 11.

⁸ Patrick Steward and Bryan P. McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013). XIII

Fenians depicted in their writings. To the organization's authors, the images they included in their rhetoric of Ireland, England, and the United States accurately described their world.

Examining these portrayals allows us to see the world through a Fenian leader's eyes. Instead of evaluating the legitimacy of these claims, this paper is an attempt to understand how the Fenian Brotherhood justified its own existence.

Before proceeding further into the rhetoric of the Brotherhood, it is important to understand their history. The Fenian Brotherhood's sister organization, the I.R.B., was founded first. In 1858, James Stephens organized the I.R.B. in Dublin with the goal of initiating a rebellion against English rule.⁹ The I.R.B. was a radical organization expressing the most recent objective of an Irish separatist, republican or egalitarian government in Ireland.¹⁰ Fenians in America shared this ideology. However, it is difficult to ascertain the goals and operations of the I.R.B. as the only substantial sources on the organization during this period are police reports.¹¹ The fact that the I.R.B. was a secret organization means that few public documents were created. An American branch of the I.R.B. was formed that same year under the leadership of John O'Mahony. Originally, this new branch was known simply as part of the I.R.B. However, O'Mahony, a Gaelic scholar, renamed the organization the Fenian Brotherhood in honor of the Fenians, a collection of the finest of Ireland's mythical warriors tasked with defending the Island.¹² In this first period of the Brotherhood's history, the American organization was subservient to the one in Ireland.

⁹ William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858 - 1886* (New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 12.

¹⁰ Owen McGee, *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood, from the Land League to Sinn Féin* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2005), 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹² Wilfred Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 7.

O'Mahony altered this relationship in 1863 claiming that, if he and Stephens were to interact, it must be as equals.¹³ The separation took place at the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood held in Chicago. O'Mahony was elected as the president of the reestablished Brotherhood. Annual national conventions, containing representatives from the various Circles of the Brotherhood, were established to enact policies and elect leaders.¹⁴ Between its founding and 1863, the Brotherhood had experienced tremendous growth. When the Brotherhood was created, there were only forty members in New York, but by the time of the convention, the Brotherhood had expanded and reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific.¹⁵ Conflicts in the Brotherhood began to develop in that same year because one wing of the Brotherhood lobbied for an invasion of British North America.¹⁶

At the 1865 Congress, a new ten-man Senate was established to help O'Mahony run the organization.¹⁷ Throughout this year, Stephens and the I.R.B. began to plan for a rebellion which they promised would come soon.¹⁸ The conflict over invading Canada led to full rupture of the Brotherhood in 1865 when the Senate, dominated by the faction lobbying for an invasion of Canada, accused O'Mahony of financial dishonesty.¹⁹ This conflict resulted in the Fenian Brotherhood being divided into two distinct parties, both claiming to be legitimate. William Roberts, the former head of the Senate led the party that focused on conquering Canada, known as the Canada party, while the portion of the Brotherhood that still emphasized operations in

¹³ John O'Mahony to Charles Kickham, October 19, 1863 (New York), Catholic University of America, The Fenian Brotherhood Collection, 2.

¹⁴ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, online.

¹⁵ John Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs* (Boston: P. Donahoe, 1868), 55, accessed 5/18/2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951001701374a;view=1up;seq=5>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁸ McGee, *The IRB*, 34.

¹⁹ James Gibbson et al., Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B., 1865, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, 1, accessed October 14, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248734>.

Ireland, the Ireland party, continued to follow O'Mahony.²⁰ Despite the anger and violent words caused by the split, both parties remained very similar in their ideology and rhetoric. D.G.

Bodkin, author of *The Fenian Catechism*, claimed, "The leaders of the Fenian Organization are not divided as to the ultimate object - the liberation of Ireland; they only differ as to the place where they can strike the enemy with most advantage."²¹ This assertion suggests that, despite the existence of two parties, when considering rhetoric and ideology, they can still be treated as one entity. While many groups that went through a split over tactics also had strong ideological differences, this was not the case with the Fenians. Both branches shared similar views of Ireland, England, America, and even their own end goal. These shared views make it conducive to view both parties as part of the broad Fenian movement instead of treating them as two tangentially related groups.

Ironically, despite the division in the Brotherhood being over the prospect of invading British North America, both wings of the Brotherhood enacted plans to invade Canadian territory in 1866. Both of these attempts were complete failures.²² These humiliations meant that both leaders lost the respect of many followers. O'Mahony's situation was worsened by a disastrous I.R.B. rebellion in Ireland during the year 1867, which was suppressed before American Fenians could aid their co-revolutionaries.²³ As a result, O'Mahony was forced to resign. John Savage replaced him in 1867.²⁴ In January of 1868, William Roberts resigned to allow John O'Neill to

²⁰ Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America*, 29.

²¹ D. G. Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism; from the Vulgate of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Designed for the Use of the Fenian Soldier at Home and Abroad..* (New York: F. McElroy's Steam Printing Rooms, 1867), 12, Accessed May 20, 2014 <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2004/20040330001fe/20040330001fe.pdf>.

²² Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America*, 43 and 68.

²³ Kevin B. Nolan, "The Fenian Rising of 1867," in *The Fenian Movement*, ed. T. W. Moody (Cork: Mercer Press, 1968), 26.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

take over the Canada party.²⁵ Another invasion of Canada was led by O'Neill in 1870. This last official raid ended with the same lack of success as its predecessors.²⁶ John Savage was able to exploit this failure to reunite both parties of the Brotherhood.²⁷ However, after the Fenian Raids, the Brotherhood lost most of its supporters, limiting its access to supplies of men and finances.²⁸ Additionally, in 1869, the I.R.B. terminated its relations with the Fenian Brotherhood out of frustration that the divisions were sapping aid that was intended to assist in their operations in the home country.²⁹ Cut off from the home organization and support in the United States, the Brotherhood limped on for several years but was never again the preeminent Irish nationalist organization in America.

The story of Fenianism in America between 1858 and 1870 is a chaotic tale with many different individuals seeking to take control of the organization. Several historians have pointed out that this internal conflict ultimately crippled and prevented the Brotherhood from accomplishing its goals. Regardless, the Fenian Brotherhood was the first major Irish nationalist organization to take root in the United States. This fact makes it worthwhile to understand its official stance as later organizations sought to take over the mission laid out by the Brotherhood. Between the years of 1858 and 1870, the images that the Brotherhood used to justify its

²⁵John O'Neill, "Official Report of Gen. John O'Neill, President of the Fenian Brotherhood on the Attempt to Invade Canada, May 25th, 1870: The Preparations Therefor, and the Cause of Its Failure with a Sketch of His Connection with the Organization, and the Motives Which Led Him to Join It, Also, a Report of the Battle of Ridgeway, Canada West, Fought June 2nd, 1866, by Colonel Booker, Commanding the Queen's Own and Other Canadian Troops, and Colonel John O'Neill, Commanding the Fenians.," 1870, TS, Library of Congress, New York, 4, Accessed 3/31/2015 <https://archive.org/stream/officialreportof00onei#page/n2/mode/1up>.

²⁶Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America*, 119.

²⁷John Savage, "Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood," 1870, TS, Fenian BrotherhoodCollection, Catholic University of America, New York, 1, Accessed October 12, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4---0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH2dd7c743bb85cb51fbef90>

²⁸Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America*, 128.

²⁹Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1870, MS, Catholic University of America, New York, 6, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH9ff23f222cb9156d05a636>.

existence shows that its leaders were not merely seeking to improve Irish standing in America but were deeply dedicated to the cause of Ireland.

Historical writing on the Fenian Brotherhood consists of two distinct schools. The earliest school of historical thought was primarily concerned with explaining the Brotherhood's failure. These historians offered the theory that the internal fissures within the Fenian community resulted in its ultimate downfall. The second and more recent school has largely ignored the issue of why the Brotherhood failed and instead has looked at what led people to join the Brotherhood. This research concerning the Brotherhood examines the justifications for American Fenianism. These scholars have created a wider set of theories in this school, as well as a much wider source base. However, this second school has been dominated by those who argue that domestic concerns help explain why Irish-Americans took part in the Fenian Brotherhood.

The earlier historiographical school addressing the Brotherhood focused primarily upon what led to the organization's collapse. The ideology of the Brotherhood does not play very heavily in their analysis. Instead, these works spend substantial time providing a detailed recitation of the events of Fenianism. This structure means that they are still key to the study of the Brotherhood as they provide the skeleton upon which other research can be built. The main interest of these historians is the question of why an apparently powerful organization crumbled. These historians cite the infighting within the Brotherhood as the catalyst for its disintegration.

The first historian in this school, and possibly one of the most important historians in this analysis, is William D'Arcy, the author of *The Fenian Movement in the United States*. D'Arcy's writings served as the basis for the Fenian narrative that is still used today. The assertion that the Fenian Brotherhood was crippled by internal fractures appeared early in D'Arcy's work. He

stated that when conflicts in the Brotherhood appeared, it was the rival parties who often accused each other of having accepted British gold.³⁰ The sources which D'Arcy utilized in his work are an extensive collection of letters written by the leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood and by the I.R.B. Substantial sections of these letters are included in the book in the form of block quotes. Oftentimes, these block quotes take up entire pages with only short expository statements from D'Arcy breaking the flow of one quotation into another. D'Arcy notes that severe suspicion and distrust began to grow between Stephens and O'Mahony following debates about Fenians joining the Union cause in the American Civil War.³¹ Another larger conflict developed between the Midwestern Fenians and O'Mahony. These Midwesterners demanded immediate action and attacked O'Mahony, calling him a "drag chain."³² D'Arcy asserted that the Brotherhood had failed not due to English or American opposition but because the Brotherhood could not bury its own internal petty jealousies and differences of opinion.³³

The second significant work to come out of this style of research is Wilfred Neidhardt's *Fenianism In North America*. Unlike D'Arcy's work, Neidhardt endeavored to include the entirety of North America when he is discussing the Fenians. However, aside from its scope, the narrative that he offered is very similar to the one created by D'Arcy. Neidhardt painted the relationship between Stephens and O'Mahony as much more tense than does D'Arcy, going so far as to call them rivals.³⁴ Like his forbearer, Neidhardt argued that the traditional propensity of the Irish to become factional led to the collapse of the Fenian Brotherhood.³⁵ Neidhardt traced these

³⁰ William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858 - 1886* (New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 9.

³¹Ibid., 21.

³² Ibid., 29.

³³ Ibid., 35.

³⁴ Wilfred Neidhardt, *Fenianism in North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), 7-8.

³⁵Ibid., 3.

tensions forward through time looking at the various conflicts in the Brotherhood, spending substantial time on the major break in the Brotherhood that created the Ireland and Canada parties. Neidhardt continued to follow the disagreements that led to O'Neill's abandonment of the Brotherhood in a desperate attempt to lead another attack upon Canada. Neidhardt's sources bear a remarkable similarity to the ones considered by D'Arcy except Neidhardt includes more Canadian sources. In the end, much like D'Arcy, this work is a study of how internal controversy led to the Brotherhood's failure to attain their objectives.

The first collection of historians paid little attention to what fueled the dedication to Irish liberation. Both historians sought to understand why the Brotherhood failed to accomplish their mission, not what that specific mission was, as they assumed the objective was obvious. However, it is clear that both of these historians took it for granted that the mission of the Brotherhood was the liberation of Ireland. What was seen as an obvious assumption in this first school would be challenged in the second batch of research on the Brotherhood.

The second school of research took the outline of events created in the first school and then evaluated the assumption that the Brotherhood was automatically oriented towards Ireland. Shifting from looking at the words and actions of the Brotherhood's leaders, these new historians followed new developments in history by seeking to access the minds of the lower ranking members of the Brotherhood. While not directly referring to Fenianism and the years of the Brotherhood's dominance, the historian who started the theoretical framework for this school is Thomas Brown. His first foray into this field was his article, "The Origins and Character of Irish-American Nationalism" which was published in the *Review of Politics* in July of 1956. Brown's argument was further developed and expounded upon in his 1966 book, *Irish-American Nationalism: 1870-1890*. Through these works, Brown founded the theory that Irish-Americans

participated in nationalist activities because they allowed them to improve their lives within the U.S. His work focused on the years after which the Fenian Brotherhood had lost its power but his ideas were used by later historians when addressing the Fenian Brotherhood. Brown's main argument in both the article and the book is that if Irish nationalism "was more apparent here than in the land of the Shannon, it was because of the peculiar experience of the Irish in America."³⁶ This conclusion is rooted in two questions that puzzled Brown, "But why should the immigrant who abandoned the old country and his son who never saw it become in many ways more Irish than the Irish themselves? What was there in the immigrant experience that transformed the indifferent peasant into a fierce and aggressive Irish nationalist?"³⁷ The answer, as far as Brown was concerned, is that these nationalist sentiments were the result of the unique world which the Irish entered into when they came to America.

Brown asserts that the reason behind Irish-American nationalism was that the Irish were desperate to improve their lives. In the concluding lines of his book, he notes, "Nothing strikes the historian of the American Irish so forcibly as their desire to wield power. As churchmen, nationalists, and politicians, they were possessed by the need to bend others to their will."³⁸ Earlier in the book, Brown notes that the Irish were highly motivated by a desire to be middle-class as well as to gain respectability in American society.³⁹ He ties these statements to the Irish-American nationalists by claiming that "nine-times out of ten" Irish-American nationalists were motivated by the desire to gain respectability.⁴⁰ Brown cites Patrick Ford, a famed Irish-American newspaper man, who claimed that the problem's solution lay in removing Ireland from

³⁶ Thomas N. Brown, "The Origins and Character of Irish-American Nationalism," *The Review of Politics* 18, no. 03 (July 1956): 328.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 327.

³⁸ Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism*, 133.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

the oppressive hand of England, which restored honor to her beleaguered children the world over.⁴¹ Irish nationalists also felt that nationalism gained them respect in American society on its own, as Irish-American nationalism was built upon ideas believed to be shared by all Americans such as the proper role and form of government.⁴² Brown ties all aspects of Irish-American nationalism to the way in which it could be mobilized to bring greater respectability to Ireland's exiled children. Brown does not apply his argument to the Fenian Brotherhood. However, this focus on the domestic interest of American Irish nationalists was very important to the development of the historiography on the Brotherhood.

Another key work in this school is Kirby Miller's massive *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. Miller also contributed a lesser-known but more pertinent work, "'Revenge for Skibbereen;' Irish Emigration and the Meaning of the Great Famine." Miller seeks to understand the social and cultural environment surrounding the Irishmen who crossed the Atlantic from when the exodus began through 1921. Miller breaks the larger history into several chapters, each dedicated to its own distinct period. These works are very important to the study of Irish-American nationalism as Miller's work is the only history to give the environment in Ireland a dominant position in his analysis. Some historians have used Miller's arguments to challenge Brown's approach.

The primary focus of Miller's work is the Irish understanding that emigration was a form of involuntary exile.⁴³ Miller claims that this belief was part of a uniquely Irish worldview.⁴⁴ The author asserts this ideology was maintained through the Irish-Catholic culture and the

⁴¹ Brown, *Irish-American Nationalism*, 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴³ Kirby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

longstanding conflict with landlordism.⁴⁵ From this focus emerges Miller's argument that, even while the Irish had physically left Ireland, they were still spiritually present in the Emerald Isle.⁴⁶ This perspective opens new fields of inquiry for historians, because, while other historians use the motif of exile in their work, only Miller seeks to understand the implications of what this motif could mean for the Irish-Americans. Miller builds his work upon a large base of sources, including 5,000 letters and memoirs. Miller also examines the poems, songs, and folklore of the Irish exiles.⁴⁷ Miller observes that even when the Irish did become middle class they still experienced the isolation of exile that led them to nationalism.⁴⁸ Miller notes that there was homesickness amongst the Irish-Americans, "However, Irish emigrants lamented more than distance from parents. As Sir Horace Plunkett observed, an Irish countryman had a much broader concept of 'home' than a middle-class Englishman, one which transcended the nuclear family to embrace an entire 'social order'- the human and physical landscape with which rural dwellers, especially Irish-speakers, had such intimate, organic relationships..."⁴⁹ This continued deep connection to Ireland suggests that these men and women joined nationalist organizations not for their own good, but for the good of the community in Ireland to which they still saw themselves belonging. Miller also notes that the experience of the famine motivated the Irish in America to seek to unseat English rule over Ireland.⁵⁰ Miller claims that the famine was seen as proof that the tyrannical English were trying to throw the Irish out of their native land.⁵¹ This work is important to the discussion of the justifications for the Fenian Brotherhood because Miller is the

⁴⁵Ibid., 345.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁸Ibid., 493.

⁴⁹Ibid., 515.

⁵⁰ Kirby Miller, "'Revenge for Skibbereen;'" Irish Emigration and the Meaning of the Great Famine., in *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, by Arthur Gribben (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 180.

⁵¹ Ibid., 184.

first to note that memories of Ireland and England contributed to the growth of nationalism. However, Miller's source base focuses on the Irish-American community in general, and does not provide specific evidence regarding the Fenians.

Another work that is important to the interpretation of Irish-American nationalism is Jeffery Irvine's 1994 *Aspects of Identity: Evidence From the Irish-American Press 1871-1925*. Much like Brown, this work addresses a different period of time, but the ideas it presents are useful for this analysis. This book adaptation of the author's doctoral dissertation is not without its problems. Irvine's work is one of the few histories to argue that the situation in Ireland was important to Irish-American nationalism without basing his argument upon Irish culture. Irvine's purpose was to analyze aspects of Irish-American identity through the use of Irish-American newspapers between 1871 and 1925 with a specific desire to understand what topics were interesting to the people who identified themselves as Irish.⁵² The author demonstrates that the Irish-Americans possessed three separate identities connected to the labor movement, the Catholic Church, and Irish nationalism.⁵³ In the sections on Irish-American nationalism, Irvine presents the argument that Irish nationalism was more of an expression of hatred for England than a response to the plight of the Irish.⁵⁴ This reality can be seen in Irvine's assessment that "Every ill that Ireland suffered was laid to England's blame."⁵⁵ The vast majority of books and magazines advertised in the *Irish World* and the *Boston Pilot* depicted a struggle against the oppressive hand of England.⁵⁶ When trying to justify Irish nationalism, according to Irvine, the

⁵² Jeffery A. Irvine, *Aspects of Identity: Evidence Form the Irish-American Press 1871-1925* (University of Pittsburg, 1994), iv.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, iv.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

English were often castigated.⁵⁷ Irvine also proclaims that the Irish-Americans had an abstract view of Ireland, whose most prominent feature was her oppression by England.⁵⁸ Irvine observes that articles that were specifically anti-English appeared more consistently than did articles that directly supported Irish-American nationalism.⁵⁹ Irvine's argumentation served as the inspiration for the inclusion of the Fenians' view of England in this thesis.

The next work to present the argument that Irish-American nationalists pushed Irish liberation in order to gain acceptance into American society looks at the Brotherhood directly. In 2004, Timothy Lynch wrote an article for the *New Hibernian Review* that reestablished the older view claiming that the origins of Irish-American nationalism were rooted in the environment in America. His article entitled "'A Kindred and Congenial Element': Irish-American Nationalism's Embrace of Republican Rhetoric," focuses on the reasons that Irish-American nationalists embraced the ideas of republicanism. Lynch specifically asserts that Irish nationalism's adoption of republicanism aided Irish-Americans in the process of assimilation, a fact that he claims had been overlooked by other historians.⁶⁰ The author claimed the reason that the impact of republicanism on assimilation had been overlooked by previous historians is that republican ideology was fractured in the Irish community, with separate groups adhering to different versions.⁶¹ Lynch affirms that "Irish-American nationalism was inextricably linked to important concepts of republicanism. Concepts that were dangerous on one side of the Atlantic were embraced on the other, and the Fenians' espousal of such rhetoric made important claims about Irish-American ethnicity and identity."⁶² Lynch presents the idea that the republican nature of

⁵⁷Ibid., 124.

⁵⁸Ibid., 129.

⁵⁹Ibid., 131

⁶⁰ Timothy G. Lynch, "'A Kindred and Congenial Element': Irish-American Nationalism's Embrace of Republican Rhetoric," *New Hibernia Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 77.

⁶¹ Ibid., 77.

⁶²Ibid., 77.

Irish-American nationalism may have been the most appealing feature to the Irishmen who joined the nationalist groups.⁶³ This deep connection between Irish nationalism and republicanism is important because Lynch presents, "republicanism as the transcendent theme of nineteenth-century America."⁶⁴ The Irish-Americans hoped to use this connection as a means of gaining acceptance within the United States.⁶⁵ The reason republicanism was important was that it could help alter the way the Irish race was viewed in America. Lynch argues that "By supporting efforts in the homeland to end centuries of British subjugation, individuals assumed that Know-Nothings and other nativists would realize that Irish-Americans were not brutish 'sub-humans' who threatened Protestant social and economic livelihood."⁶⁶ To Lynch, Irish-American nationalism was a means by which Irish-Americans could be better accepted into mainstream American culture.

The source base for this article is a wide selection of newspapers from various Irish-American publishers. More important than these primary sources are a wide array of secondary works, including those of Brown and Miller. Despite this substantive source base, Lynch provides only a minimal amount of information directly concerning the Brotherhood. Lynch does look at rhetoric but not the rhetoric of the Brotherhood. Additionally, Lynch's argument does not seek to explain the official position of the Brotherhood but instead analyzes the reasons why individuals participated in the organization.

The final work which emphasized the domestic interests of Fenianism is Patrick Steward and Bryan McGovern's 2013 *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-*

⁶³Ibid., 79.

⁶⁴Ibid., 77.

⁶⁵Ibid., 77.

⁶⁶Ibid., 78.

1876. Like Lynch, these historians apply ideas similar to the ones used by Brown to the period of the Fenian Brotherhood. In this book, the authors seek to articulate why Irishmen were interested in participating in the transatlantic Fenian movement. They argue that Irish-Americans were willing to do so as a means of gaining acceptance in the U.S. Steward and McGovern assert that Fenianism was a means to display their republican credentials, as well as demonstrating a willingness to disobey Catholic authority, and disproving many existing stereotypes.⁶⁷ They support this argument in part by pointing out that when nativist attacks on the character of the Irish-Americans diminished, the interest in Fenianism waned.⁶⁸ In explaining the reasons Fenians supported the American Civil War, the authors explain that, in the Victorian outlook, it was a man's duty to defend the nation in which he lived.⁶⁹ In an assertion like that of Brown's, Steward and McGovern note that those members who were from the upper portion of the lower class claimed that British rule in Ireland had capped their ability to gain upward mobility and that they had joined the movement to terminate British domination of Ireland.⁷⁰ The sources that Steward and McGovern use mostly consist of newspapers printed by the Fenians in America and Ireland. The group's various bylaws and official publications also feature prominently in Steward and McGovern's analysis. Additionally, primary sources from the more general Irish community are included to provide the context in which the Fenian movement developed. Steward and McGovern do an outstanding job presenting those aspects of American society which might have contributed to Irish-Americans participating in the Fenian Brotherhood. However, what they failed to consider was that the Brotherhood's authors were deeply dedicated to freeing Ireland.

⁶⁷ Steward and McGovern, *The Fenians*, XVI.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

This results in Steward and McGovern presenting a distorted image of the Brotherhood which fails to account for the Brotherhood's transatlantic nature.

Another historian who addresses the Fenians' motivation is Mitchell Snay, author of *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction*. In this history, Snay looks at American Fenians as well as African-Americans and whites in the south. The thesis which Snay seeks to defend in his work is that, for each of these three groups, Reconstruction was an opportunity to assert their desire for self-rule in politics and develop ethnic unity. Snay refers to all of these groups as proto-ethnic nationalists. One of the most important developments that Snay charts among the ethnicities under consideration is their understanding that they constituted a unique and separate group.⁷¹ Each of these groups used their racial and ethnic character to building up their collective identity and to justify their claim of political self-determination.⁷² Snay asserts that, for all three groups, the use of their racial or ethnic identity distracted members from the deep divisions within the group.⁷³ When examining the Fenians, Snay insists that the political self-determination which they sought was in Ireland as opposed to America. Snay takes a unique approach, arguing that half of the motivation of the Brotherhood was in America while the other half was in Ireland. However, a few problems arise when trying to apply Snay's argument to the broader history of the Brotherhood. Most important is Snay's limited source base regarding the Brotherhood. The primary sources employed by Snay when discussing the Fenians are a pair of New York-based newspapers. These sources limit his ability to address the full rhetoric of the Brotherhood. A second issue that arises with Snay's work regarding the Brotherhood is the period he examines. Snay only discusses a few years in

⁷¹ Mitchell Snay, *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 6.

⁷²Ibid., 114.

⁷³Ibid., 116.

which the Brotherhood was a substantial force in Irish-American nationalism. While the Brotherhood was created in 1858, Snay begins his examination in 1865 and the Brotherhood ceased to be a viable organization in 1870. The period that Snay takes into consideration is very good for analyzing broad social changes which took place in the U.S. but is insufficient to comprehend the orientation of the Fenian Brotherhood.

The reasons for the failure of the Fenian Brotherhood have been documented. The concern for why the Brotherhood failed has been more recently replaced by historians of the second school seeking to analyze the motivations for Irish-Americans who joined the Fenian ranks. Brown and the other historians of this school present the Irish nationalists as being absorbed in American domestic concerns. This approach has obscured the fact that the Fenians were deeply dedicated to the need to address the concerns in Ireland. Many of the theories presented by the second school of historians have their place. Lynch, Steward, and McGovern all speak to issues that apply to the lower ranking members of the Brotherhood. However, all previous historians have not included the full collection of Fenian literature. When the ideas of the leadership are included in the study of the Fenians, a new image is created. To these men, Ireland's situation was of great importance. Additionally, these men were taking action to ensure that their dreams of Irish freedom were brought to fruition, as will be seen in the final chapter of this thesis. The men who created this remarkable collection of literature clearly had a transatlantic orientation.

What is to be done with the previous histories? Two options exist. The first of these is mostly intended to apply to Thomas Brown. His work is focused on the period following the age of the Fenian Brotherhood. It is possible that seismic changes may have taken place which altered the situation for Irish-Americans, giving rise to nationalists who were more concerned

with the American context. Likewise, for Brown specifically, the theories may be more applicable to Irishmen who have been in America for a longer period of time. The second option addresses the likes of Lynch, Steward, and McGovern. The ideas that these historians present may be applicable to some members of the Brotherhood, but not the authors of the organization's literature. Support for this hypothesis can be found in the reality that the Fenian Brotherhood, despite its perpetual planning, could never organize enough resources to make the change they hoped for. For example, the fact that few men joined in the Fenian Raids may indicate that only a small portion of the Brotherhood were invested enough in Ireland to abandon their livelihood and risk life and limb for its liberation. If this situation was the case, then the Brotherhood would have suffered from an extreme disconnect. One element may have been more invested in America and only sought to use the Brotherhood to aid their new lives, while others may have still pined for the green shores of the Emerald Isle. Regardless, what is clearly seen in the rhetoric of the Brotherhood, and shall be defended in this thesis, is that the men who created the literature of the Brotherhood possessed a transatlantic orientation.

This thesis is broken up into four chapters. Chapter one, "Dreaming of Liberation," examines the images that were used to describe Ireland. This chapter will consider Ireland's status as an oppressed nation and the ways that the Brotherhood responded to this reality. "Pursuing an Avenging Mission," the second chapter, crosses the Irish Sea and develops the Fenian view of England. The Fenians called England the oppressor and destroyer of the Irish people. Additionally, the Fenians saw England as a target in their plans for war. The third chapter, "Seeking an Ally" considers the Fenian Brotherhood's rhetoric regarding their adopted home. This examination will show that even when the Fenians were discussing America they still had Ireland in the forefront of their mind. The final chapter, "Planning for Action," looks at

the way that the Brotherhood's authors described themselves and their plans for aiding in the war for Irish liberation.

Chapter 1: Dreaming of Liberation:

The Fenian Brotherhood's dreams for Ireland

"...For the time seems fast approaching when we will have to strike a blow for the independence of Ireland --- a time for which we have been preparing ourselves for years."⁷⁴ These words were spoken by John O'Mahony in 1863 at the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood. They were meant to inspire the delegates from all of the various states and city-based Circles that were represented in that first Fenian congress. While these words proved to be a false prophesy, in that Ireland would not gain independence until 1921, they do hint at the view of Ireland held by the Fenian Brotherhood. The other historians who have addressed the motivations behind the Brotherhood only offer passing acknowledgement that fighting for Irish independence was a major factor that drew people to the Brotherhood. However, these scholars prefer to focus on the domestic concerns that were also significant. In order to develop a fuller understanding of the Brotherhood, it is crucial to include the way the Fenians described their homeland. Examining the writings of the Brotherhood that address Ireland show that the Emerald Isle was a land that the Brotherhood believed they needed to rescue. This belief was rooted in the idea that Ireland was a land under oppression and that it needed liberation. The Fenians also presented several ways that they intended to respond to their mission. By examining these images and responses, it is possible to see that Ireland was key to the Fenians' imagined world, and that the creators of their rhetoric were dedicated to the conflict on the other side of the Atlantic.

⁷⁴ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

The first image of Ireland presented in the Fenian literature was that Ireland as a land under oppression. J.L. Kiernan, who delivered a speech for the Brotherhood, asserted that Ireland had been oppressed longer and more diabolically than any other nation that existed in the annals of human history.⁷⁵ An 1866 biography of James Stephens, which set him up as the ideal Fenian, claimed that the hero's early education and his extensive reading had built in him a "favor of his suffering country."⁷⁶ This work clearly shows that any worthwhile Fenian needed to see the land of his birth as suffering under a terrible scourge. The unknown compilers of the *Stephens' Fenian Songster* included songs that expressed the idea that Ireland was suffering under oppression. One song proclaimed, "Too long you've viewed your suffering land, By stranger's laws oppressed; The time has come when by your hands, these wrongs may be redressed."⁷⁷ A second song mocked the oppressive laws binding Ireland by asserting that it had been made illegal for the shamrock to grow in Irish soil as well as the wearing of green on St. Patrick's Day.⁷⁸ John O'Neill labeled the Irish as "victims of relentless and long continued persecution."⁷⁹

The Fenian authors were eager to point to England as the cause of Ireland's oppression. According to *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, part of this oppression was due to the fact that "Our blood has reddened foreign fields, For England's power and glory; Upon the seas we've been her

⁷⁵ James Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 1864, TS, Library of Congress, Detroit, 10-11 accessed March 31, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009578130/Home>.

⁷⁶ *James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic. Embracing an Account of the Origin and Progress of the Fenian Brotherhood. Being a Semi-biographical Sketch of James Stephens, with the Story of His Arrest and Imprisonment; Also His Escape from the British Authorities* (New York: Carleton, 1866), 28, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=bc.ark:/13960/t89g6278q;view=1up;seq=8>.

⁷⁷ *Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866), 17, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁷⁹ John O'Neill, 1868, TS, Address to the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood, 19, accessed March 31, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/addressofgenjohn00onei>.

shield, In Battles hot and gory."⁸⁰ This song proclaims that the Irish had been ill-used and slaughtered as a means of extending the glory of England, their oppressor. Additionally, the Fenians denounced the subjection of the Irish at English hands as unnecessary. D. G. Bodkin, the author of the *Fenian Catechism*, quoted the famed nationalist hero Robert Emmet in stating, "I declare it to God, I think that, if Ireland were separated from England, she would be the happiest spot on the face of the globe."⁸¹ O'Neill added that the Brotherhood's quarrel was with a government "which robbed and murdered our people."⁸²

Beyond simply stating generally that Ireland was oppressed, the Fenians cited several specific examples of how it was being done. One of the first forms of tyranny that the Fenians noted was the fact that Ireland was under foreign rule. The song the "Irish Patriot's Resolve" complained that Ireland was "By stranger's laws oppressed."⁸³ It was recounted in another song that a specific goal of the Brotherhood was to remove the foreign yoke from Ireland's neck.⁸⁴ John Savage, the second president of the Ireland party, in an address to the leading council of his faction, declared that, "After all these grievances have been grappled with there still remains the monster grievance of Ireland demanding to be remedied. This is the root from which all the other spring - the source and origin of all the woes of Ireland. It is Alien Domination."⁸⁵ Savage very directly points to rule by a foreign power, namely England, as being the chief reason behind Ireland's woes. English rule was also blamed for the massive amount of deaths witnessed in

⁸⁰ Ibid.,50

⁸¹ D. G. Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism; from the Vulgate of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Designed for the Use of the Fenian Soldier at Home and Abroad..* (New York: F. McElroy's Steam Printing Rooms, 1867), 58, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2004/20040330001fe/20040330001fe.pdf>.

⁸² John O'Neill, 1868, TS, Address to the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood, 21.

⁸³ *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 17, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

⁸⁴ *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 46. online,

⁸⁵ John Savage, Address of the Chief Executive and Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1869, TS, Catholic University of America, 1-2.

Ireland in which "Father and son lie side by side, Mothers and daughters are dead!"⁸⁶ The Fenians proclaimed that English governance was a poison corrupting the Irish race.

The tyranny of England was the most noted culprit causing Irish oppression. However, England was not the only suspect the Fenians accused of harming Ireland. When the Canada party of the Fenian Brotherhood sent out invitations to their 1868 convention, the notice included the statement, "Disarmed as Ireland is by the law of England; impoverished as she is by Landlord rule; the oppressor unscrupulous and regardless of everything by successful subjugation; our people at home look to us abroad for that action which their condition denies them."⁸⁷ This invitation gives clear notice that Fenians saw the landlord system in Ireland as another aspect of Irish oppression. To the Brotherhood, these landlords were often connected to England's domination, as it was the English system that had created the powerful landlord class that aided in the oppression of Ireland.

Protecting the Irish farmers from landlords was an important theme in the Fenian literature. John O'Neill called on the Brotherhood to work for the protection of the peasant tenant farmers in Ireland.⁸⁸ These assertions may appear surprising to those familiar with Irish nationalism as land agitation is generally associated more with the late 1870s and the 1880s than the period dominated by the Brotherhood. However, to John Savage, the fact that the landlords mistreated their tenants was counted among the vital problems facing Ireland:

⁸⁶ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 71.

⁸⁷ Fenian Brotherhood, "Invitation To Congress of Representatives of Irish Nationalist," 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

⁸⁸ John O'Neill, "Of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood." Address, Semi-Annual Session of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1869, TS, Library of Congress, New York, 2-3, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)..](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))..)

The Land grievance is a vital one - the manner in which it is dealt with means life or death for millions of people. It is a grievance great enough to justify a rebellion, and therefore it is a 'first-class' grievance, a rank which the Established Church grievance did not hold. The land of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland. The voice of the Irish people distinctly declares, as the rights of the people demand, that the actual cultivators alone should enjoy the privilege of holding land; and that the farmers should hold direct from the only legitimate landlord of Ireland - the aggregate Irish people. Feudal landlordism is doomed.⁸⁹

It is clear that, to John Savage, the problems that the Irish peasants were experiencing at the hands of their landlords were a major point of concern. The songbooks of the Brotherhood presented the land question as an issue of utmost worry to the organization's members. One song that was included was "Drimin Donn Dilis" by John Walsh, which stated "Oh! Dear Brown Cow! the landlord has come, Like a foul blast of death has he swept o're our home. He has withered our roof-tree - beneath the cold sky, Poor houseless, and homeless, tonight we [must] lie."⁹⁰ Through such rhetoric, the Fenians clearly expressed their understanding that the actions of the landlords in Ireland were a key reason why Ireland as an oppressed nation.

The Fenians cited the Great Potato Famine that devastated the Irish population in the 1840s as part of the evidence that Ireland was a nation under oppression. D.G. Bodkin asserted that the Famine had killed roughly two million people.⁹¹ This horrifying tragedy was seared into the minds of the Irish of this period regardless of which side of the Atlantic they lived on. The song "Ah ! Who will Seize" attested to the horrible suffering that the Irish experienced during the famine. It claims, "The famine years that we have seen, The same we never shall forget; At Ballinrobe and Skibbereen, Our people are unburied yet."⁹² The English were also tied to this

⁸⁹ John Savage, Address of the Chief Executive and Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1869, TS, Catholic University of America, 1, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00--off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&c=CL5.6&d=HASH91b4ca5d155657dff9e4e>.

⁹⁰ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 40.

⁹¹ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 62.

⁹² *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 35.

tragedy in the minds of the Irish, as they claimed that the English system had ruined the Irish economy, making the people vulnerable to the famine. The Fenians held England responsible for the starvation. Kiernan pronounced that those who died during the lean years of the famine had been, "starved to death by English legislation."⁹³ George Train, who spoke to the Fenian Congress in 1865, claimed, "For the poor laws under English rule brought on the famine, and starved or drove them from their homes."⁹⁴ The poor laws were the governmental aid system that the English had set up and which failed tragically following the potato blight. The Fenians also described England's response to the famine as tyrannical. Bodkin forcibly presented the Fenian view of the famine in the response to one of the questions from his catechism. "Q. Did the government not effort to avert that misfortune, which has always followed English rule in Ireland? A. They did not; on the contrary, they secretly rejoiced over the sufferings of the Irish people which helped the long-wished-for extermination..."⁹⁵ In the minds of these radical nationalists, England had tried to exploit the famine to eliminate the Irish population. These ideas and events only reinforced the image that Ireland was a nation in suffering.

The Fenians believed that many of the Irish had been forced into exile, and to them this was another example of the oppression of Ireland. In 1863, during the First National Convention, James Gibbons declared, "The voice of this assembly, or Congress, as our friends in California happily term it, is the voice of the Irish race, that, wandering in the wilderness of exile, have centered here in council to tell the world that the nationality of Ireland is

⁹³ Kiernan, "Ireland and America", 6.

⁹⁴ George F. Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality. Delivered before the Fenian Congress and Fenian Chiefs at the Philadelphia Academy of Music," 1865, TS, Library of Congress, Philadelphia, 32, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://lcn.loc.gov/48042045..>

⁹⁵ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 64.

yet intact."⁹⁶ Through such expressions, the Brotherhood revealed that they believed that many members of their race had been forcibly exiled from their home. The Brotherhood's songs encode this understanding that the Irish had been exiled from their homes. One song lamented, "Farwell, for I must leave thee, my own, my native shore, And doom'd in foreign lands to dwell, may never see thee more..."⁹⁷ A second song bemoaned that, "I'm a lad that's forced an exile, from my own native land."⁹⁸ Bodkin shared this sentiment by claiming that those who had survived the famine were forced to leave the land of their birth.⁹⁹ Among the Fenians, the motif of exile appears to have been alive and well. Kirby Miller argued that this imagery was not new but was deeply built into the Irish Catholic worldview and predated the first English invasion of Ireland.¹⁰⁰ Miller claims that the Irish had no understanding of leaving Ireland for any reason other than being forced. This meant that when they saw people leaving Ireland the Irish were predisposed to the idea that someone had forced them out. This idea was as old as Irish culture. The Fenians simply built upon this idea by claiming that all of the Irish emigrants had been exiled from their home by the actions of England. Embedded within the idea that the Irish were exiles was the hope that they would return to Ireland someday. The motif of exile helps to demonstrate that the Fenians did not hold to one side of the Atlantic as home but were invested in worlds on both sides of the ocean.

The Fenians used a wide array of images to depict life in their native land, but none took on as bitter a tone as the idea that the Irish people had been enslaved. George Train in 1865

⁹⁶ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/Convention.htm>.

⁹⁷ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 35.

⁹⁸ *The Fenian War Songs! Dedicated to "The Men in the Gap."* (New-York: Hilton &, 1866), 25.

⁹⁹ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, IV.

¹⁰⁰ Kirby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 7.

proclaimed, "What I propose now is that as England has emancipated four millions of [America's] black slaves we should send out a few [abolitionists] to lecture all over England, with a view of the emancipation of her white slaves."¹⁰¹ Train used a common belief in the Irish community that claimed England had sent the abolitionists to America in the hopes of driving the U.S. into a civil conflict. Making such a statement proclaimed that the treatment of the Irish at the hand of the English was comparable to and possibly equal to the treatment of the African slaves in the southern states. Drawing such close comparison between themselves and African slaves was a risky move for the Fenians if they sought to improve their social standing. Historians of whiteness have observed that the Irish had only recently escaped being racially categorized with Africans.¹⁰² Several of the leading Fenians gathered and promised the Irish nationalists operating in America, "The destiny of a nation is in the hands of its own people - if true to themselves, no matter how rich or powerful the spoiler, they cannot be held in slavery..."¹⁰³ This pronouncement indicates that the objective of the Brotherhood was to free Ireland from her bonds of slavery. The Stephens' biography asserts that, following a failed insurrection in Ireland, Stephens and O'Mahony rededicated themselves to liberating the enslaved members of their race.¹⁰⁴

Similar sentiments can be found in the Brotherhood's songs. The song "To the Fenians" asserts that Ireland had been brutally held in chains for over seven hundred years.¹⁰⁵ A song in *The Fenian War Songs!* praises those who failed in a recent attempt to overthrow England by

¹⁰¹ Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality," 34.

¹⁰² Both Noel Ignatiev's "How the Irish Became White" and David Roediger's "Wages of Whiteness" discuss how the Irish had struggled to distance themselves from the African-American population and sought to achieve the status of white men.

¹⁰³ James Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1866, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia to the Irishmen and Friends of Ireland in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1, accessed October 14, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248738>.

¹⁰⁴ *James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 35.

¹⁰⁵ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 21.

heralding, "They'd rather do or die then rest While Irishmen were slaves."¹⁰⁶ The *Fenian Catechism* called on all Irishmen who would not be slaves to gather around the banner of their native land.¹⁰⁷ The First National Convention describes the Fenians as freemen resolved to win the freedom of their home country.¹⁰⁸ The song "To the Fenians" stresses, "The Irish slave of yesterday a man to-day appears, His eagle eye, with manly fire, wild flashing through its tears; The Saxon chain that bound him fast with maddening force he breaks."¹⁰⁹ The same song proclaimed that unless the Fenians were able to win freedom for Ireland then the Irish would be forced to live in slavery for centuries.¹¹⁰

The Fenian authors described Ireland as a land that was experiencing great suffering and oppression due to foreign rule, landlords, the famine, and the exile of her sons and daughters. However, the Fenians did not simply describe Ireland in these terms. This image of an oppressed Ireland was used as a means of calling Fenians to action. In the 1868 invitation to the National Congress, the Canada party reminded its members that the Fenian Brotherhood was "endeavoring to effect for our unhappy country." In fact, the authors argued that the "unhappy Ireland, and the circumstances of her oppression" was the reason that the recipients needed to attend. Whoever penned the invitation reminded the recipients that their attention was needed to remedy the situation.¹¹¹ The song "To the Rescue" contained lines promising the Fenians would return to Ireland to aid in terminating the nation's anguish. "We are coming, darling mother, we have heard your cry of pain- We are 'coming with a vengeance' from beyond the stormy main..."

¹⁰⁶ *The Fenian War Songs*, 19.

¹⁰⁷ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, viii.

¹⁰⁸ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

¹⁰⁹ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 22.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹¹ Fenian Brotherhood, "Invitation To Congress of Representatives of Irish Nationalist," 1. *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 37, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

The song later proclaimed, "We are coming, widowed mother, we have heard your anguished cry, To win back once more our birthright, or in Irish graves to lie..."¹¹² A group of the leading figures in the Canada party stated that the Fenian Brotherhood intended to arraign England "before the tribunal of mankind for her crimes committed against Ireland."¹¹³

The need for liberation was the second aspect of the Fenian's portrayal of Ireland. Reverend Edmund O'Flaherty, in a report to John O'Mahony following a fact-finding tour of Ireland, claimed that Fenians in the U.S. were filled with the desire to bring about the liberation of Ireland.¹¹⁴ George Train, a speaker who addressed the 1865 Fenian Congress, proclaimed, "My platform is easily comprehended. France for the French, Italy for the Italians, Germany for the Germans, Asia, for the Asiatics, Africa for the Africans, America, for the Americans, and Ireland for the Irish, is God's law"[sic].¹¹⁵ Such a claim attempts to call upon both the natural and divine authority to justify the idea that Ireland should be liberated from the rule of an alien power. William Roberts, in a circular to the Canada party, announced "We see, after ages of foul oppression, that unquenchable desire for Irish independence blaze forth anew..."¹¹⁶ John Savage informed the Ireland party that "The Fenians do not organize against legitimate authority, but to preach and spread the blessings of a just political system, and to ameliorate the condition of people who suffer not from legitimate authority but from illegitimate coercion."¹¹⁷ Regardless of whether the Fenians were planning to strike a blow to England through Ireland or Canada, they

¹¹² *Fenians Songster*, 62-63.

¹¹³ James Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1.

¹¹⁴ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861 (Catholic University of America), 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

¹¹⁵ Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality," 23.

¹¹⁶ William Roberts, Circular: Head Quarters Fenian Brotherhood, 1866, MS, Villanova University, New York, 1 accessed June 30, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249720>.

¹¹⁷ James Savage, Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood ... John Savage Chief Executive Fenian Brotherhood., 1866, TS, An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, New York, 2, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+1270100\)\)..](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+1270100))..)

shared the understanding that the land of their birth was in need of liberation. The First National Convention of the Brotherhood asserted that striking for Irish independence should immediately follow the Civil War, before the armed bands of Irishmen dispersed. The biographer of James Stephens claimed that "The Irish people are again united in the cause of Irish Independence and universal freedom."¹¹⁸

The Fenians' expression that Ireland needed liberation was connected to their belief that Ireland had a right to self-rule. The idea of Irish self-government, according to the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, had revitalized the organization.¹¹⁹ In the book, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*, the author pronounces, "Now, we are told that Ireland cannot govern herself. That statement is not true; Ireland can govern herself."¹²⁰ The Seventh National Congress reiterated this argument. The gathering of Fenians declared that the Brotherhood "may be fittingly termed the first step of the Irish people toward free self-government."¹²¹ In this same meeting, the representatives declared that they were seeking to relax the foreigner's grasp upon the land that was the rightful inheritance of the Irish.¹²² Likewise, the delegates promised the people that they would labor until such a time as no power but the free consent of the Irish controlled the nation.¹²³ The idea that Ireland should be run by the Irish was also expressed in the *Fenian Songster*. One song prophesied, "No more shall our land of high fame [and] renown, Be

¹¹⁸ James Stephens, *Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 1.

¹¹⁹ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, TS, Philadelphia, 6, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=true..>

¹²⁰ John Savage, *American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain*, 1870, MS, Harvard University, New York, 94, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011607820..>

¹²¹ "Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings of the Senate and House of the Fenian Brotherhood, in Joint Convention at Philadelphia.," 1868, TS, Hathie Trust Digital Library, New York, 5, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000006716072;view=1up;seq=5>.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 5.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 5.

yoked to foreign laws and proud foreign crown. The land heaven gave us shall belong, and to win it or die we're marching along."¹²⁴

In addition to the claims that Ireland was in need of liberation in order to attain her rightful self-rule, the Brotherhood boldly proclaimed that achieving these ends was a universal desire among the members of the Irish race. The authors of the Brotherhood filled their rhetoric with assertions that the liberation of Ireland was the objective for which all Irish hearts yearned. The First National Convention of the Brotherhood in 1863 proclaimed that a "profound love of Ireland, and a never-ceasing longing for her liberation from foreign domination are all but universal throughout the whole Irish Race, at home and abroad..."¹²⁵ Additionally, these Fenians argued that this love and desire to bring about Irish liberation was so deeply ingrained in the Irish people that it was "self-evident and incontrovertible."¹²⁶ In 1866, John Savage echoed the idea of the universal desire for liberation in his address to the council of the Fenian Brotherhood. He asserted, "The supreme desire of every Irish nationalist is to restore peace, prosperity, and happiness to his long-suffering country."¹²⁷ While Savage's statement is not as bombastic as that made by the First National Convention, it did argue that any who had an interest in the Irish nation were dedicated to seeing his country removed from the hand of foreign rule. James Gibbons preached the same message to the Canada party. He argued, "It is the wild yearning of the Irish heart to deliver Ireland from her Bondage, and lead her forth to liberty, and the generous willingness to make sacrifices for her - that, alone, will give her happiness and freedom. Whenever the people are willing to make the struggle - and the sacrifice will be light -

¹²⁴ *Fenians Songster*, 46.

¹²⁵ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ James Savage, Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1866, 4.

WE CAN FREE IRELAND."¹²⁸ The songs of the Brotherhood also expressed the belief that the Irish possessed such a universal desire. The song, "Fenians Hope for Independence," announced to the world, "Come, all you true bred Irishmen, and listen unto me, All you that are true-hearted, and love your country; Go now, and be a Fenian your country for to free. And tear down English tyranny and plant sweet Liberty!"¹²⁹ This song taught that the ideal or 'true' Irishman, a figure held up to be emulated, was dedicated to bringing liberty to the oppressed nation. While it is unlikely that even the Brotherhood believed that all of the Irish were as dedicated to the liberation of Ireland as they proclaimed, these statements reveal the Fenian belief about the world. To them, any good Irishmen was dedicated to the ideal of Irish liberation. This portrayal of the liberty-crazed Irishmen was very likely an image used to inspire their members. Depicting the Irish people in such a way served as strong evidence that the creators of Fenian rhetoric were deeply dedicated to the conflict for the poor oppressed nation.

The Fenians presented Ireland as being in need of liberation, and all Irishmen being dedicated to that liberation, but they also asserted that the Brotherhood was founded for this purpose. The Fenian's oath of membership points to this reality. It states, "I solemnly pledge my sacred word of honor as a truthful and honest man, that I will labor with earnest zeal for the liberation of Ireland from the yoke of England, and for the establishment of a free and independent government on Irish soil..."¹³⁰ The text of this pledge shows that the Fenians were expected to be working toward the liberation of Ireland. While this pledge cannot be used to make assessments of the reasons the Irish-Americans participated in the movement, it is useful in ascertaining the mentality of the leadership and the

¹²⁸ James Gibbons, Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B., 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, Buffalo, N.Y, 2, online.

¹²⁹ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 49.

¹³⁰ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

organization. According to the rhetoric of the Brotherhood, each and every man was intended to fight for Ireland, regardless of whether it bore any benefit to the Irish in America. In the Second National Congress, O'Mahony declared that the Fenian Brotherhood was founded upon the conviction that their work of military preparations in Ireland were absolutely necessary to the liberation of Ireland.¹³¹ Much later in the Congress of 1865, the delegates were reminded, "If ever an attempt is to be made to save our perishing country, an organization such as ours is absolutely essential."¹³² John Savage presented a similar image in his writings. He proclaimed that the Fenians had organized to oppose the illegitimate authority and coercion of England.¹³³ Bodkin's writings address the reasons the Fenian Brotherhood was founded three separate times. The most profound of these three sections reads, "*Question*. For what purpose has the Fenian Brotherhood been organized? *Answer*. To overthrow English tyranny in Ireland, and to restore to the Irish people, under an Irish Republic, all the rights, privileges, and property, which English legislation, fraud, and violence has deprived them of since the days of the royal freebooter Henry the Second."¹³⁴ James Gibbons pronounced that the Fenian Brotherhood had been created to labor for the regeneration of their fatherland.¹³⁵ The Seventh National Congress also declared that the Brotherhood was intended to liberate Ireland. In this venue, the representatives proclaimed that "our highest duty is to extend and strengthen the national body in which we are laboring and which is to-day the only hope of our suffering brethren at home, and the only object that inspires the enemy of our race with fear

¹³¹"Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, 13.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 47.

¹³³ Savage, Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 2.

¹³⁴ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 1.

¹³⁵ James Gibbons, Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B., June 24, 1869., 1869, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

of the retribution due to her crimes against the Irish people."¹³⁶ While the individual members may have joined to improve their domestic standing in the U.S., the rhetoric of the Brotherhood demonstrates powerfully that the organization was founded for a transatlantic purpose.

John Savage paints a picture of the Fenian Brotherhood's namesake, the mythical Fenian war band, which reinforces the idea that the Brotherhood was intended to liberate Ireland. Savage, in his book, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*, is the only Fenian author to provide any detailed analysis of these mythical heroes. It is impossible at this time to critique the accuracy of Savage's depiction of the ancient Fenians. However, it is important to understand that this depiction resembled Savage's dreams for the Brotherhood. Savage begins his analysis by proclaiming the era of the ancient Fenians to be "The most romantic and glorious in the records of ancient Ireland."¹³⁷ He states that the ancient Fenians were a "formation of a regular standing army, trained to war, in which all the Irish accounts agree, seems to have rude imitation of the Roman Legion in Britain."¹³⁸ The mission of the ancient Fenians connects the name and the idea of securing Ireland's liberty; "They (the ancient Fenians) were to support the crown, defend the country, and secure the liberty and property of the people."¹³⁹ Equally important was who this ancient army was intended to oppose. Savage observed that "for such a force alone could have coped with the Romans had they invaded Ireland."¹⁴⁰ In Savage's work, the ancient Fenians aimed to defend the rights of Ireland against a large and powerful empire that just happened to be situated in what became England. Savage's discussion of the predecessor of the Fenian

¹³⁶ Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings, 4.

¹³⁷ John Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs* (Boston: P. Donahoe, 1868), 109, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008373458>.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

Brotherhood adds a romantic and idealized aspect to the claims that the Fenian Brotherhood was founded to bring liberation to Ireland.

Beyond being founded for the stated purpose of liberating Ireland, the Fenians presented the organization as actively seeking to bring about that goal. The Brotherhood believed that if Ireland was ever to be liberated, they were the key figures in that process. An anonymous letter to the group from a supporter in Ireland announced that, without the Brotherhood, Ireland's hopes for freedom were doomed to failure.¹⁴¹ During the Second National Congress, John O'Mahony proclaimed to the delegates, "I will now remind you of the great responsibility that devolves upon you on the present occasion. The successes of the Fenian cause - the Freedom of Ireland and the preservation of her race - depend upon the wisdom, devotion and pure patriotism that shall guide your acts and deliberations."¹⁴²

The Fenian literature on this issue can be broken up into two categories. The first, justified the Brotherhood's policies, and the second involved preparations for action. In the first category, the Brotherhood's authors are trying to prove that what has been done or what should be done will assist in the liberation of Ireland. In the 1865 circular where the Senate of the Fenian Brotherhood notified the organization's membership that they were removing John O'Mahony from office (leading to the split between the Canada and the Ireland parties), they justified their actions by asserting it was in the best interest of Irish liberation. "However painful the accompanying resolutions may be, we, your representatives, had but one alternative before us - to submit in silence to the ruin of our cause and robbery of a too-confiding people, or to lay before you the truth, and trust to your virtue and patriotism to save Ireland and her name from

¹⁴¹ "K" to Unnamed General, March 15, 1863, Fenians Brotherhood Collection: Catholic University of America, 1, accessed, 3/31/2015 <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

¹⁴² Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, 9.

the contempt of the World."¹⁴³ Not only was the separation of the Brotherhood justified as being good for the cause of Ireland, but its reunification was viewed in the same manner. Anthony Griffin announced in an 1867 circular, "That a union of both sections of the Fenian Brotherhood in America is demanded by the necessities of our suffering country...."¹⁴⁴ For these radical nationalists, the idea that their policies were needed to secure the liberty of their homeland was very important.

Equally important was the idea that the Brotherhood was preparing to bring about the liberation of their homeland directly. Reverend Edmund O'Flaherty told John O'Mahony that he was glad to see the formation of a grand national army that would be able to bring about the liberation of Ireland.¹⁴⁵ In 1865 during the Second National Congress, O'Mahony proclaimed "That it is our most certain means of liberating our fatherland. We are firmly convinced that no enslaved people ever won liberty without pre-organization; and we are determined that Ireland shall be pre-organized."¹⁴⁶ W. J. Byron, as the head of the Canada party's war department, defended his party's plans by asserting, "We are earnestly and resolutely pursuing the only practicable and true path which leads to Irish Liberty..."¹⁴⁷ The Senate of the Fenian Brotherhood promised to put the Brotherhood on a solid war stance so as to be prepared to fight for the

¹⁴³ Senate of the Fenian Brotherhood, Circular To the Officers and Members of the F.B, 1865, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

¹⁴⁴ Anthony Griffin, Fenian Brotherhood Circular Signed by Anthony A. Griffin, 1867, TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York, 7, accessed October 3, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsdl/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4---0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&c1=CL5.5&d=HASH67479bc3ae5921f17891ee..>

¹⁴⁵ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861 (New York, 1861), 1, online.

¹⁴⁶ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, 8-9.

¹⁴⁷ J. W. Byron, Circular: War Department Fenian Brotherhood, 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

independence of Ireland.¹⁴⁸ James Gibbons promised that the leaders of the Canada party had personally resolved to work in preparing the Brotherhood for the war for Irish liberation.¹⁴⁹

The massive amount of the rhetoric authored by the Brotherhood between the years of 1858 and 1870 is impressive. To these men, such expressions were much more than a dream. They honestly believed that they were going to bring about their hope of seeing the light of liberty shine upon their beloved island. The Second National Congress called upon the Irishmen in America, "Fellow-countrymen, we desire that every man of Irish birth and lineage who loves Ireland and is willing to aid in her restoration, shall become a member of the Fenian Brotherhood. Within ourselves we shall then have the power to free our country, and united, our triumph will be absolute certainty."¹⁵⁰ The published minutes of the meeting also loudly proclaimed that Irishmen were fully able to bring about liberation under their own power.¹⁵¹

While the promise of liberty was powerful, it was given extra intensity by the belief that the chance to bring about these hopes was on the horizon. Reverend Edmund O'Flaherty was encouraged to know that the forces of Irish liberation were preparing in Ireland for the war that could occur at any moment.¹⁵² The First National Convention warned that "the time seems fast approaching when we will have to strike a blow for the Independence of Ireland..."¹⁵³ The songs of the Brotherhood also proclaimed this message. "The Fenians' Song" announced, "Awake, ye sons of Erin, see the day and hour draws nigh, when you must strike for liberty, And

¹⁴⁸ James Gibbons, Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F. B., 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 4, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, 48.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹⁵² Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861 (New York, 1861), 1, online.

¹⁵³ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

Swear to win or die."¹⁵⁴ The same song promised all who heard the words, "the hour of Ireland's redemption is now at hand."¹⁵⁵ Another song prophesied that it would not be long before the Irish would win their freedom from English rule.¹⁵⁶ D.G. Bodkin urged "Men of Ireland, the day of conflict approaches, the enemy of our race is preparing for his death struggle."¹⁵⁷ J.W. Byron, the head of the Canada party's War Department, joyfully proclaimed that "the day is not far distant when the Green Flag, the cherished emblem of our native land, shall be flung aloft to the breeze, and never furled till Independence, and the Divine Right of Self-Government are Forever secured to our now suffering and oppressed country."¹⁵⁸ A group of the leading members of the Canada party issued a circular to their followers encouraging them to be up and working in order to be prepared for the struggle that would end England's dominance of Ireland.¹⁵⁹ Anticipating that the liberation was close on the horizon greatly increased the importance of the Fenian Brotherhood's portrayal of Ireland. Additionally, the fact that the war in which the Brotherhood was to participate was supposed to be happening soon, means that the authors of the Brotherhood did not expect the members to be in America for an extended period. Considering that the Brotherhood did not expect to stay in America for long, they were unlikely to be worried about their status in America.

There is an additional but much less common image of Ireland that is worth including in this discussion of the Fenian's rhetoric. This image saw Ireland as part of a larger international struggle for freedom. The First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood proclaimed that

¹⁵⁴ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 17.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁵⁷ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, V.

¹⁵⁸ J. W. Byron, Circular: War Department Fenian Brotherhood, 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, online.

¹⁵⁹ James Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1866, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia to the Irishmen and Friends of Ireland in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1.

the cause of Irish liberation was of concern not only to Irishmen "but to all sincere lovers of human freedom."¹⁶⁰ Kiernan, in his speech before the Fenian Brotherhood, asserted that the Irish were not going to be content with liberating Ireland alone. He boldly announced, "Nor shall this position, great as it will content us; all history has shown us that Republics are progressive, absorbent."¹⁶¹ Kiernan explained this position further, "When the struggle comes, Fenians must be ready;- theirs will be the glorious mission of fighting for the cause of freedom here, freedom in Ireland, and freedom in other lands" [sic].¹⁶² In the ideology of Kiernan, the liberation of Ireland was just the first step in the Fenians' wider mission to bring about the liberation of the world from oppressive hands. William Roberts confirmed these ideals when he pronounced, "The Irish people are again united in the cause of Irish Independence and universal freedom."¹⁶³ The lyrics to the song "Erin and Liberty Forever" promised that after Ireland gained her independence, the shamrock would prove to be an emblem of the free all over the world.¹⁶⁴ The Seventh National Congress of the Brotherhood also weighed in on this issue. "Fenianism is no longer a mere expression of patriotism - a protest against English tyranny and brutality - it is an adoption and consecration of the principles of human liberty."¹⁶⁵ These expressions clearly place the Brotherhood's attempt to liberate Ireland within the larger context of a universal struggle to unseat tyrants and secure human freedom.

¹⁶⁰ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

¹⁶¹ John L. Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View. A Lecture, Delivered in the Principal Cities and Towns of the West.," 1864, TS, Library of Congress, Detroit, 12, accessed November 25, 2014, <http://lccn.loc.gov/11011807>.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁶³ William Roberts, Circular: Head Quarters Fenian Brotherhood, 1866, MS, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed June 30, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249720>.

¹⁶⁴ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 23.

¹⁶⁵ Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings, 41.

In response to the images of Ireland as oppressed, in need of liberty, and as part of a larger war for global freedom, the Fenian writers created two images of the Brotherhood's relationship with Ireland. The first of these described the Fenian Brotherhood as a proto Irish government. John O'Mahony, in the Second National Congress, declared that the current Fenian gathering "acts the part of a national assembly of an Irish Republic."¹⁶⁶ Through this assessment of the Brotherhood's role, it becomes clear that O'Mahony understood his organization to be a government in exile for the nation of Ireland. An 1867 circular written by William Roberts depicts the Brotherhood as being an institution serving as the government of the Irish race the world over.¹⁶⁷ Robert's replacement, John O'Neill, took a similar stance in his writing. O'Neill pronounced that the Brotherhood represented the Irish race's interest. In 1868, O'Neill declared, "The Irish people of to-day are still the custodians of that great trust; in their name, the Fenian Brotherhood has been organized to demand, and with the blessing of Heaven, to achieve, what so many of our race have attempted before - the liberation of our country from the domination of England."¹⁶⁸ The Seventh National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood passed a resolution which made responding to "any demand made in the name of the Irish people for the rights of which our nation has been robbed, the restoration to freedom of men who are now suffering in English penal dungeons for their devotion to the cause of their native land" the primary mission of the Brotherhood.¹⁶⁹ For this organization, to present itself as the government or representative of the Irish people had stark implications. The fact that the leaders of the Brotherhood presented

¹⁶⁶ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, 5.

¹⁶⁷ William R. Roberts, Circular: Treaty of Alliance or 'Basis of Union' From the Head-Quarters Fenian Brotherhood, 1867, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 2, accessed October 25, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

¹⁶⁸ John O'Neill, 1868, TS, Address to the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood, 21, accessed March 31, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/addressofgenjohn00onei.>

¹⁶⁹ Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings, 23..

themselves as the government of Ireland shows that they saw themselves connected to the transatlantic situation in Ireland.

The second image of that the Fenians authors used when discussing the Brotherhood looks at the organizations relations with its sister organization in Ireland, the I.R.B. Both the Canada and Ireland parties used claims of an alliance with the I.R.B. to bolster their legitimacy. By trying to ally themselves with the I.R.B. the squabbling leaders were trying to show that they possessed the closest ties to Ireland and the cause of her liberation. In 1867, William Roberts claimed to have made a close and mutually supporting alliance with the leadership of the I.R.B.¹⁷⁰ Anthony Griffin, of the Ireland party, harshly denounced the Canada party's claim of coalition. "But when [Roberts] undertakes to tell the Irish People of America, that he has formed a union between the Irish Organization and his misguided followers, it is our duty, in justice to the men at home, and in justice to the cause, to expose the efforts of a vain-glorious leader to delude the honest men that support him, that he may thereby retain the reins of power."¹⁷¹ Griffin was not only accusing Roberts of lying but also asserted that he was only trying to deceive people about the alliance in order to gain power. This statement shows that, in the minds of the American Fenian leaders, having an official alliance with the Irish-based Fenians provided power to whichever side was able to make such an agreement. In the Seventh National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, the Canada party reinforced its connection to the I.R.B. by announcing that the branch of the Brotherhood had sent them \$7,681.50 in the last year.¹⁷² John

¹⁷⁰ William R. Roberts, "Basis of Union," 1867, TS, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed July 8, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249781>.

¹⁷¹ Anthony Griffin, Fenian Brotherhood Circular Signed by Anthony A. Griffin, 1867, TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York, 4, accessed October 3, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4---0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.5&d=HASH67479bc3ae5921f17891ee..>

¹⁷² Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings, 20.

Savage, in a report on the 1869 Ireland party's national convention, announced that the party had passed resolutions pledging undying support for the I.R.B.¹⁷³ This spat over which branch of the Brotherhood was actually in alliance with the home organization, is very revealing about the orientation of the Brotherhood's leadership. Arguing over this alliance shows that being connected to Ireland, and presumably being the one best suited to remedy the concerns in that nation, bestowed power onto the disputing Fenians. In this instance, being the branch with the strongest transatlantic orientation was key to the debate.

The rhetoric of the Fenian Brotherhood provides unique and powerful images of Ireland which were often used as a means of encouraging the Irish within the United States to participate in the Brotherhood. Both Ireland's oppression and Ireland's need for liberation were extensively used to motivate the Fenians to take up the cause of the poor old island. The role of these images, and the images of the Brotherhood that were created in response, have not been examined by previous historians. Understanding that Ireland played a huge role in the rhetoric of the Brotherhood's self-justification adds nuance to the historical understanding of the Fenian Brotherhood. Additionally, showing the importance of Ireland in these rhetorical justifications for the organization helps demonstrate that the discourses of the Fenian Brotherhood was directed toward the conflict in Ireland.

¹⁷³ John Savage, "Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood" (address, Semi-Annual Session of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, New York, 1869), 1, accessed May 22, 2014, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)..](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))..)

Chapter 2: Pursuing an Avenging Mission

The American Fenian View of England

"Remember that a cruel and relentless war is going on in Ireland, all on the side of the oppressor. It is true you do not hear the thunder of artillery, nor the clash of arms; nevertheless, the agents of extermination, degradation, and debasement, those terrible instruments of oppression, are doing their fearful work."¹⁷⁴ Leading members of the Fenian Brotherhood issued this warning to their countrymen in 1866. One of the most important and revealing portions of the imagined world of the Fenians was their view of England: the oppressor that was already warring against the people of Ireland. This depiction of England was key to the rationalizations presented between 1858 and 1870. This chapter will examine three of the images the creators of the Brotherhood's rhetoric used to describe their foe: England the oppressor, England the destroyer of the Irish, and England the Fenian target. When taking these images into account, the deep passion that the Fenian authors possessed for the fate of their beloved Ireland, suffering on the other side of the Atlantic, is easily detected.

The first Fenian depiction of England was that of the ruthless oppressor of Ireland. To any scholar familiar with Irish history, it will come as no surprise that the English were seen as the cruel evil heel which ground Ireland into the dirt. Michael Doolday offered this image in his book, *The Fenian's Progress*. In addressing the Irish, he claimed the English are the "foul and infamous oppressors of your country." He also asserted that the Irish were the victims of England's nefarious crimes.¹⁷⁵ In an 1867 letter to F.B. Gallagher, James Gibbons, a leading

¹⁷⁴ James Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1866, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia to the Irishmen and Friends of Ireland in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1, accessed October 14, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248738>..

¹⁷⁵ Michael Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision Containing the Inspirations of General Richard Montgomery, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Together with a Thrilling Account of the "avenging Angels," in New and Old Ireland. To Which Is Added a Mode of Managing Funds so as to Insure to the Individual Subscriber an Absolute Certainty That His Money Shall Be Invested for His Own Interest, or Be Properly Devoted to the Great*

figure in the Canada party of the Brotherhood claimed that the English "sucked their hatred of us from their Mothers Milk."¹⁷⁶ In that same letter, he commented that anyone who hoped England would provide any benefit to the Irish race was unfamiliar with Irish history, thereby claiming that England's hatred had led her to subjugate the Irish people throughout history. An anonymous 1866 songbook, intended to be used in the meetings of local Circles, expresses similar sentiments. One song, entitled "The Irish Brotherhood," stated "I hate the pirate Saxon Red, It speaks of chains and graves, It floats upon our proud old towers, and tells us that we're slaves..."¹⁷⁷ In the proceedings of the Seventh National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, John Savage, the Ireland party's second president, declared, "The misfortunes of Ireland spring primarily from the fact that Englishmen, in England, make the laws to govern her, for the benefit of England exclusively."¹⁷⁸ These expressions give clear voice to the Fenian belief that England was oppressing Ireland.

The Fenians offered two distinct depictions of how England was oppressing the land of their birth. The first was that England had created a system which disadvantaged the native Irish population. John Savage, in an address to the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, proclaimed that the Irish tenant farmer had been made the victim of his landlord by English laws.¹⁷⁹ An 1866 anonymous biography of James Stephens asserted that England had excluded the Irish from all

Cause for Which It Was Given, When There Are Indubitable Moral and Physical Prospects of Success, Etc., Etc. Also, the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood (New York: Bradburn, 1865), 17, accessed January 17, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/feniansprogressv00newy#page/n14/mode/1up>.

¹⁷⁶ James Gibbons to F.B. Gallagher, January 18, 1867, Villanova University, 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

¹⁷⁷ *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 67, accessed May 16, 2014, <https://archive.org/stream/feniansongster00phil#page/n8/mode/1up..>

¹⁷⁸ "Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings of the Senate and House of the Fenian Brotherhood, in Joint Convention at Philadelphia.," 1868, TS, Hathie Trust Digital Library, New York, 46, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000006716072;view=1up;seq=5>.

¹⁷⁹ James Savage, Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood ... John Savage Chief Executive Fenian Brotherhood., 1866, TS, An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadides and Other Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, New York, 2, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)..](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))..)

professions and official stations, leaving only the medical profession open to the native Irish. Additionally, Irish Catholics had been banned from owning a horse worth more than five pounds. In the event that a Protestant desired to purchase the horse, all he had to do was pay the Catholic five pounds, regardless of the horse's real value, and the Catholic was not allowed to refuse the offer.¹⁸⁰ It is important to point out that these laws, or ones very similar, did exist in Irish history; these were the infamous Penal Laws used to oppress the Catholic population of Ireland. All of the Penal Laws had been repealed by the time of the Fenians; but these tyrannical laws were still remembered with great anger by the Irish. *The Fenian Songster*, a patriotic songbook published in 1866 contains the song "A Persecuted Man am I." It boldly proclaims, "To me it seems, both Kings and Queens Are in the league of plunder, But Irishmen will answer them with cannon loud as thunder."¹⁸¹ The inclusion of this song in a collection to be sung at Fenian meetings suggests that, to American Fenians, theft from Ireland was ample justification for rebellion. Another song contained in the same songbook asserts that, "Our brothers till her fertile soil, But insult is our bourdon; Proud England gets the fruits and spoil, While we must bear the burden, Of tax to swell their pomp and pride..."[sic].¹⁸² This song argues that the English were stealing from Ireland twice, once through taking her produce and a second time through taxes. In a work entitled, *The Fenian Catechism*, D.G. Bodkin declared that the English had confiscated the Irishmen's land, desecrated the graves of their ancestors, and abused the Irish martial spirit to expand its own domain.¹⁸³ All of these accusations depicting the English as having taken what had rightfully

¹⁸⁰ James Stephens, *Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic. Embracing an Account of the Origin and Progress of the Fenian Brotherhood. Being a Semi-biographical Sketch of James Stephens, with the Story of His Arrest and Imprisonment; Also His Escape from the British Authorities* (New York: Carleton, 1866), 8, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=bc.ark:/13960/t89g6278q;view=1up;seq=8>.

¹⁸¹ *The Fenian Songster*, 36, online.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 49

¹⁸³ D. G. Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism; from the Vulgate of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Designed for the Use of the Fenian Soldier at Home and Abroad..* (New York: F. McElroy's Steam Printing Rooms, 1867), V, accessed May 20, 2014, <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2004/20040330001fe/20040330001fe.pdf>.

belonged to the Irish served as a clear indication that, when Fenians contemplated England, the image of the oppressor and thief was in the forefront of their minds.

The second expression of the motif of England the oppressor emphasized that England had suppressed Ireland's liberty and political rights. The song, "A War Hymn" sounded the note that "the tyrant's grasp is on thy throat, Erie land!"[sic].¹⁸⁴ In the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood held in 1863, Captain T. B. Bourke, the Center pro tempore of the Circle of the Rappahannock of the Fenian Brotherhood, informed the delegation through a letter, "We wish our delegate to state in emphatic terms, that the Circle of the Rappahannock is in favor of taking advantage of the earliest chance that offers itself to rise in open rebellion against the despoilers of the liberties and rights of our people."¹⁸⁵ In the mind of Captain Bourke, the English had removed the rights and liberties that belonged to Irishmen. In a speech sponsored by the Fenian Brotherhood, George Train, an American who was friends with Fenian leaders and who greatly supported the Fenian cause, claimed that since England had pushed the United States to emancipate its black slaves, America should send men to push England "with a view of the emancipation of her white slaves."¹⁸⁶ Bodkin, in his *Fenian Catechism*, asserted that England had robbed the Irish of her political rights and "For seven hundred years [England] has kept us in chains, and by making us the instruments of our own enslavement..."¹⁸⁷ John O'Neill also joined in this declaration that England had usurped Ireland's political rights in his 1868 address to the officers and members of the Fenian Brotherhood. He

¹⁸⁴ *Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866), 3, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

¹⁸⁵ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

¹⁸⁶ George F. Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality. Delivered before the Fenian Congress and Fenian Chiefs at the Philadelphia Academy of Music," 1865, TS, Library of Congress, Philadelphia, 34, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://lccn.loc.gov/48042045>.

¹⁸⁷ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, V

stated, "Our cause is a just and holy one; it is the struggle of the rights against the wrong, of freedom against oppression."¹⁸⁸ For the Irish-Americans participating in Fenianism, England had done more than steal their land and the produce thereof, England had usurped Ireland's political rights and turned the Irish race into slaves.

In addition to the idea that England had oppressed the Irish race in Ireland, the rhetoric of the Brotherhood also claimed that the English had injured the Irish in the United States. J.L. Kiernan, in a lecture before the Congress of the Brotherhood, laid out an argument that the problems that the Irish were experiencing in the U.S. were, in fact, the result of English oppression. Kiernan chided the Americans for their negative image of the Irish who had taken up residence in the U.S. He noted that when native born Americans "see a 'Mick' or a 'Pat' ignorant and other wise degraded they rail and sneer at him and not at the tyranny which with diabolical ingenuity made him thus..."¹⁸⁹ Based on the way that Kiernan understood the situation in Ireland, England's oppression was responsible for the difficulties that the Irish faced in the America. Kiernan added that Americans should not be surprised at the poor condition of the Irish, but instead marvel at their success given the oppression under which they had previously lived.¹⁹⁰ According to Kiernan, English mistreatment was not something the Irish had left behind but something that was part of an ongoing experience that the Irish lived under, even those who had made a new home in America. Such ideas kept the oppression in the forefront of Irish-Americans' self-understanding.

¹⁸⁸John O'Neill, 1868, TS, Address to the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood, 23, accessed March 31, 2015, <https://archive.org/details/addressofgenjohn00onei>.

¹⁸⁹ John L. Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View. A Lecture, Delivered in the Principal Cities and Towns of the West.," 1864, TS, Library of Congress, Detroit, 6, accessed November 25, 2014, <http://lccn.loc.gov/11011807>.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 6-7.

The second major Fenian view of England took a more extreme approach. In this motif, the English were the murderous destroyers of the Irish race. The Fenians saw the English as maniacal monsters always on the hunt for an opportunity to exterminate the people of Ireland. Doolday, in his *The Fenian Progress*, called upon God to cast His eyes upon, "the heaps which [England] has slain, By famine, sword, and penal laws."¹⁹¹ William Roberts, in an address to the Fenian Brotherhood, published in 1866, reminded the American Irish that England was "a Government whose history is written in the blood of your robbed and slaughtered kindred, and whose influence and power has been gained by every infamy and crime which the most selfish and debased instincts could prompt or restore to."¹⁹²

The belief that England had set her gaze upon destroying the Irish race was common in the Fenian Brotherhood. Several leading Fenians reminded their countrymen that the right had "never been delegated by Divine authority to the English government to exterminate a whole people."¹⁹³ Bodkin in his catechism expressed similar ideas. He stated that it did not matter if the rulers were Anglo-Norman, English, or Dutch, they all sought to bring about the extermination of the Irish.¹⁹⁴ Bodkin also smeared the whole of British civilization claiming it "meant invasion, plunder and massacre."¹⁹⁵

When the American Fenians looked back upon history, they saw England destroying the Irish race. One of the first ways that the Fenians saw England trying to destroy the Irish was by

¹⁹¹ Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress*, 7.

¹⁹² William R. Roberts, Address of William R. Roberts, President, F.B.: To the Fenian Brotherhood and Irishmen of America, 1866, MS, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed June 30, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376?type=AllFields&sort=year+asc&page=3>.

¹⁹³ Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1866, 1.

¹⁹⁴ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 49.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 64.

degrading the legacy and culture of Ireland. The Fenian authors, such as John Kiernan, remembered ancient Ireland as a glorious place:

Stretching our mental vision back through the trial and sorrows which for many centuries have been the lot of oppressed Ireland, we behold her independent, happy and prosperous, the home of learning and of piety at a period when the rest of Northern Europe, particularly Britain, was buried in a state of gross barbarity, groaning under feudal tyranny and torn by the dissensions of contending factions.¹⁹⁶

In this expression, created by Kiernan it is evident that the oppression had brought this glorious age to an end. Kiernan asserted that the English had intentionally sought to destroy the record of this golden Irish past. He called the destruction of the evidence of Ireland's former glory as "One of the malignantly ingenious plans of our enemy."¹⁹⁷ Additionally, Kiernan argued that "the British Government has managed by means of lying literature to misrepresent her and the Irish."¹⁹⁸ D.G. Bodkin agreed with this assessment, claiming that England had sought to destroy the Irish nationality through several acts of legislation which intended to make the Irish into Englishmen.¹⁹⁹ To these authors, the English were responsible for endeavoring to destroy their heritage and their culture.

However, their culture was not the only thing the Fenians accused the English of destroying. These radical nationalists also believed that numerous times throughout history the English had tried to exterminate the Irish race. The Fenians were able to find evidence of England's genocidal nature from the first encounter between the two peoples. Bodkin asserted that when King Henry II first landed in Ireland, his intention was to exterminate the native Irish population.²⁰⁰ The Fenians interpreted the actions of Henry II as the first attempt to eradicate the

¹⁹⁶ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 5.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 7.

¹⁹⁹ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 38.

²⁰⁰ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 19.

Irish, followed by numerous other efforts. J.L. Kiernan, in an 1864 lecture endorsing the Brotherhood, declared that the English used the 'Pale,' a region they dominated around Dublin, to launch incursions into the rest of Ireland, featuring rape and bloodshed.²⁰¹ Bodkin, who had a great deal to say about the annihilation of the Irish race, claimed that "In 1309 it was enacted (O Fenian soldiers remember this!) that the murder of an Irishman was not a crime punishable by law, and that an Irish women should have no legal remedy for injury."²⁰² Bodkin intended this assessment to show that the English had, for years, held no regard for the life of an Irishman. The inclusion of such assessments of England's treatment by these authors reminded the Irish-Americans of the work that they needed to do in Ireland.

Moving forward in time, John Savage argued that all English, regardless of their religious persuasion, hated and were united against the native Irish.²⁰³ This understanding is important to the image of England as the destroyer of the Irish. Instead of being based upon the line of distinction between Protestants and Catholics, which had been key to many of the blood-lettings, the Fenians interpreted the violence against the Irish as a part of the English character. In a final statement regarding the horrors of English rule, Bodkin recounted that, under Queen Elizabeth I, nearly a million Irishmen were exterminated and, when Oliver Cromwell invaded Ireland, he spared neither women nor children and that under his order, civilians and soldiers were slaughtered alike.²⁰⁴ For the American Fenians, the reality that England had desired the extermination of the Irish and had actively sought to bring about such a genocide was ample reason for Irish-Americans to take up arms and wage a bloody war to remove Ireland from the hand of so malicious a fiend.

²⁰¹ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 6, online

²⁰² Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 26.

²⁰³ John Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs* (Boston: P. Donahoe, 1868), 13, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008373458>.

²⁰⁴ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 41-46.

The attempts by England to eradicate the Irish race did not end with the ancient past. American Fenians pointed to much more recent events and interpreted them as genocidal. Leading members of the Brotherhood claimed that, because of the English policy, thousands of Irishmen had been swept into their graves.²⁰⁵ Kiernan claimed that Ireland was filled with those who had been stricken with starvation by English legislation.²⁰⁶ The Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1865 stepped back and evaluated the last twenty years of Irish history. The convention concluded that,

within [the last twenty years] four millions of our people have been swept from the Irish soil, some have perished of starvation; some were flung into the depths of the Atlantic; some died in Canada; while the bones are bleaching on all the battlefields of Europe and America, and the remainder are dragging out a miserable existence as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water,' in every clime beneath the sun.²⁰⁷

This assessment demonstrated numerous ways in which Fenians perceived the English as seeking to destroy the Irish people. A large portion were killed directly, be it through military service, or starvation, while others were forced to flee Ireland. The Seventh National Congress, in 1868, supported this assessment as well stating that, due to English legislation, "out of fifteen millions in whose veins the blood of the Irish race runs red, there are to-day but five millions remaining in the old home of our people..."²⁰⁸

All of this historical criticism pales in comparison to the rage that the Fenians expressed in regard to the Great Irish Potato Famine. When considering the Famine, it is important to understand that, in the mind of the members of the Fenian Brotherhood and to others who shared

²⁰⁵ Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, Villanova University, 1866, 1.

²⁰⁶ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 6.

²⁰⁷ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, TS, Philadelphia, 46, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=true..>

²⁰⁸ "Seventh National Congress," 1868, 8.

the Fenian's ideology, England was responsible for the tragedy. The Second National Congress proclaimed that Ireland was blessed by God with abundant harvest and it was the tyranny of the English which caused the poverty in Ireland.²⁰⁹ In his speech before the Fenian Congress, George Train argued that "For the poor laws under English rule brought on the famine."²¹⁰ The Fenian Brotherhood was eager to point out that not only had England's policies caused the famine, but also that, during the famine, Ireland was still producing vast quantities of food. However, instead of feeding the Irish, this food was diverted to England.²¹¹ This complaint by the Fenians is connected to the reality that Ireland's wheat harvest, used as a cash crop, was sent to English markets instead of being used to feed the poor. D.G. Bodkin claimed that the food which had been produced in Ireland during the famine would have been enough to sustain the population of Ireland.²¹² For individuals such as Archbishop Hughes of New York, the existence of enough food in Ireland to prevent starvation was proof that the famine had not been caused by God but by a human agent.²¹³ The Fenians saw that the English policy had pushed Ireland into the famine and the additional English policies had ensured that once the shortage of potatoes had begun, the Irish would be forced into starvation. These factors led American Fenians to blame the famine upon England. Kirby Miller has suggested that this phenomena of blaming England was the result of the guilt that many of the Irish survivors of the famine felt about what they had done to survive.²¹⁴ Additionally, Miller asserted that the experience of the famine had made the Irish much more receptive to the ideas of radical nationalism.²¹⁵ Doolday supported this idea in his book citing the memory of starving infants seeking nourishment from the breast of their mothers

²⁰⁹ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood ,47.

²¹⁰ Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality," 32.

²¹¹ *James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 16.

²¹² Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 63.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 63.

²¹⁴ Miller, "'Revenge for Skibbereen,'" 185.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 189.

who had just died of starvation as a means of rallying his fictitious army to fight for the cause of Irish liberty.²¹⁶

While the idea that the famine was caused by England was a powerful motivation, Fenians hoped to use a more radical accusation to build support among Irish-Americans. This depiction argues that England not only caused the Potato Famine but that they then used it as a means to commit genocide. In his book, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*, John Savage claimed that England saw the famine years as "powerful allies for the reduction of the Irish."²¹⁷ In *The Fenian Catechism*, Bodkin argued that those who died in the famine "were forced to perish with hunger." To the Fenians in America, the cause for the intentional extermination of the Irish was simple: England wished to settle the land with Englishmen. The biography of Stephens claimed that, "Whole villages have disappeared; homesteads which had stood for a hundred years or more have fallen in the south and west in every parish, and stone fences have been piled up from their ruins to keep in herds of sheep for the English market as of old, but tended this time by English or Scotch shepherds, and owned by English farmers."²¹⁸ The Fenians pronounced that the Irish had been cleared out and their homes had been destroyed in order to make room for new English farmers. Acknowledging that the Fenians understood the famine in these terms, it is little wonder that they were desperately advocating the overthrow of English power in Ireland. The English government, while possibly responsible for the famine, probably did not intend to use it as a means of depopulating Ireland to make room for a new wave of English-born farmers. However, this fact was unimportant to the American Fenians. In their minds, the English were guilty of what would now be considered genocide.

²¹⁶ Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress*, 17.

²¹⁷ Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*, 42.

²¹⁸ James Stephens, *Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 24.

The Fenians were eager to point out that Ireland was not the only nation to suffer under England's lash. J.L. Kiernan presented England as being the enemy of liberty the world over. Additionally, he accused England of hypocrisy as it only supported liberty in those countries that it had no control over, while it suppressed liberty in its own domain.²¹⁹ England's "barbarous blood-thirsty spirit is not confined to Ireland. In India it is exterminating a race and tainting the air with the starved bodies of its civilized victims; in Jamaica her Eyres have imitated the barbarities of her Elizabeths, her Cromwells, and her Hastings..."²²⁰ William Roberts made this claim to demonstrate that England had more targets than Ireland. Roberts believed that England was by nature an oppressive nation that abused any people that came under its power. George Train concurred with this description, arguing that England had left a track of blood all around the world.²²¹ Train also accused England of imitating the Roman Emperors, but instead of ruining virgins, England was destroying nations.²²²

In addition to abusing the rest of the world, American Fenians specifically blamed England of oppressing her own citizenry. Bodkin's argument to support the superiority of the Irish over the English was predicated on England having sold her own people into slavery while the Irish had never performed such a horror. John Savage also pointed to England's abuse of her own people when he stated that the cause of those advocating democracy in England was the same as the Fenian cause. Additionally, he labeled both forces as sharing a common enemy: the English aristocracy. Painting England with such a color was likely a strategic move on the part of the American Fenians as they were constantly on the lookout for allies to help them in their

²¹⁹Kiernan, "Ireland and America Versus from a Fenians Point of View," 9-10.

²²⁰ William Roberts, Address, To: The Fenian Brotherhood and Irishmen of America, 1866, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

²²¹ Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality," 35.

²²²Ibid., 43.

struggle. Claiming that England was odious to, and had abused, the entire world made England appear to be an enemy that foreign powers had a reason to oppose.

While most of the rhetoric of American Fenianism is dedicated to recounting the past evils of England, several of the sources point out that England had not changed and was still acting according to this nature. The Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood in an address to the Irish-American population, recounted, "the fearful work goes on; still famine stalks abroad; still the emigrant ships unfurls her sails, and bears away to an ocean grave, or to stranger lands the bone and sinew of our race."²²³ A song, "Up for the Green," in *The Fenian Songster*, laments the fact that even at this point the Irish peasantry were unable to find enough food to keep them alive.²²⁴ In his introduction, Bodkin explains that the Fenians must redress Ireland's wrong because England continued to make Ireland a melancholy country.²²⁵ Later into the catechism, Bodkin asked if England's treatment of Ireland had improved. The answer was very succinct, "It is as unwavering under Victoria as it was under Elizabeth."²²⁶ It is crucial to remember, as stated previously, that in Bodkin's reckoning, a million Irish were exterminated under Elizabeth's reign. Through this short observation, Bodkin suggested that nothing had changed in Irish history. The English sought the extermination of the Irish in the past and were still seeking to eradicate them. The Seventh National Congress collapsed time in a similar manner:

To us the mail-clad Norman robber, seizing upon our heritage with armed hands, and massacring those whom he thus despoiled, is fittingly represented to-day by the ermined judge, upon an English bench, by packed juries and a perverted law consigning Allen, Larkin and O'Brien to the death of the scaffold, and again blasphemously setting aside

²²³ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood," 47.

²²⁴ *Fenian Songster*, 28.

²²⁵ Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, vii.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

Heaven's own order, which makes patriotic devotion to native land the highest duty of man, next to that he owes to his Creator.²²⁷

Demonstrating that the evils of England continued to this day was essential to the Fenians.

These assertions show that their complaints, and thereby their reason for existence, were still valid.

Not only did the American Fenians claim that England's old practices continued, but they pointed to a situation that, to them, proved that England's brutal nature had not been lessened. This situation was the treatment of Fenian prisoners in English custody. The Ninth National Convention asserted that these American citizens of Irish descent had been arrested for participating in Fenian activities and were now facing torture.²²⁸ A series of letters, sent from John Savage to President Grant, serve as the main documentation of these accusations. Savage sensed an opportunity to display what he saw as England's heinous activity to the world. He chose to publish these letters in two separate documents. In Savage's first letter to Grant he states, "Sir: I respectfully beg to call the attention of the Government to the deplorable case of American citizens who are being literally done to death in English prisons. Their names are John McClure and Charles Underwood O'Connell."²²⁹ Savage informed Grant that the treatment of these prisoners was the most deplorable ever recorded from a civilized and Christian nation.²³⁰ In the process of encouraging Grant to advocate for the release or reduction of these men's sentences, Savage warned the President, "O'Connell may linger for weeks or months, but his

²²⁷ "Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings of the Senate and House of the Fenian Brotherhood, in Joint Convention at Philadelphia.," 1868, TS, Hathie Trust Digital Library, New York, 8, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000006716072;view=1up;seq=5>.

²²⁸ Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1870, MS, Catholic University of America, New York, 7, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd1/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00--off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&c1=CL5.7&d=HASH9ff23f222cb9156d05a636>.

²²⁹ John Savage, American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain, 1870, MS, Harvard University, New York, 2, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011607820>.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

condition also warrants the belief that he might die at any moment."²³¹ Savage also directed Grant's attention to the fact that these prisoners, who had yet to be convicted, were being treated worse than the lowest class of criminals.²³² In recounting the conditions these men lived under, Savage reported that even the strongest of these "political prisoners" had been driven to insanity or death by the treatment they were enduring.²³³ Savage observes that the men had been placed on a diet that was little better than slow starvation.²³⁴ The Fenians claimed that both men were denied medical care regardless of their illnesses.²³⁵ While these letters were first written for the purpose of seeking Grant's aid in gaining the release of these prisoners, the fact that they were published shows that the Fenian Brotherhood hoped to use them to motivate their own people and build support among the American population. The accuracy of these letters cannot be evaluated in this thesis, but what is important, is that John Savage was trying to show England's continued brutality.

To the American Fenians, England was not simply an evil overlord but it was also a specific target against which they acted. James Gibbons attested to this reality in the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood. He stated that "They know that Liberty is not a gift -- that it must be wooed and won by virgin steel in the hands of freemen, and they have resolved to win it -- planting the standard of Ireland, a free land, upon the mounds where lie those foes who have been feeding upon the heart's blood of her people for

²³¹Committee on American Citizens in British Prisons. American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain : Extract from Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, Held August 30th to September 5th, 1870, Inclusive, in the City of New York., 1870, TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York, 9, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsdll/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH6a937c3fed8e97009d431b>.

²³²Ibid., 15.

²³³ Savage, American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain, 1870, 3.

²³⁴Ibid., 9.

²³⁵Ibid., 11.

ages."²³⁶ In this evaluation, Gibbons specifically identified England as the target of Fenian activity. The Second National Congress attested that there existed in the heart of all Irishmen an undying hatred for the monarch of Great Britain.²³⁷ In 1869, John Savage returned to the idea of England as a target when he argued, "The rule of England is the grievance of grievances. To remove it is to remove all others... None of the grievances of Ireland can be radically cured until English domination shall cease..."²³⁸

The Fenians saw two distinct reasons why England should be targeted. The first emphasized that striking England was necessary to gain Irish liberation. In an 1868 circular, James Gibbons announces, "The armed legions of England stand between us and the liberty of our native land... They must be met by organized force, and beaten in the field."²³⁹ The American Fenians knew that if they wanted Ireland to gain liberty, they needed to focus their forces against England. James O'Reilly, in a letter to O'Mahony, asserted that any person who did not support the presence of an English garrison in Ireland should join with the Brotherhood.²⁴⁰ "A War Hymn," found in *Stephens' Fenian Songster* urged the Fenians to ensure that the "Saxon's thrall" should not be permitted to remain in Ireland.²⁴¹ Fenians encouraged their countrymen to set their sights on England's enslaving chains which bound Ireland. Bodkin taught that the sole purpose for which the Brotherhood had been founded was to overthrow England's domination of

²³⁶ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, online.

²³⁷ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood," 54

²³⁸ John Savage, Address of the Chief Executive and Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, 1869, TS, Catholic University of America, 2, accessed June 19, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-Ofenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.6&d=HASH91b4ca5d155657dff9e4e>.

²³⁹ James Gibbons, Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B, 1868, TS, Villanova University, Buffalo, N.Y, 3, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248709..>

²⁴⁰ To John O'Mahony from James O'Reilly, Centre-October 24, 1864 Catholic University of America, 46, accessed 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

²⁴¹ *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 4.

Ireland.²⁴² According to these arguments, Fenians targeted England because she had oppressed Ireland, and so removing England's rule would grant Ireland its liberties.

However, there were expressions of a desire to do battle with England as merely a means of hurting her. Many Fenians sought an opportunity to wound their ancient foe. In 1865, the minutes of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood announced to the Irish-Americans that the work before the organization was the "disruption of one of the most mighty empires of the world..."²⁴³ This same convention asserted that the Irish people were possessed by a burning desire to see the destruction of British tyranny.²⁴⁴ According to Doolday's dream, the Irish hero, Lord Edward, stated prior to a major battle, "Let the nations rejoice; The accursed British Monster is doomed."²⁴⁵ J.W. Byron, in charge of the Canada party's War Department, informed his constituents that the War Department was preparing breech loading rifles so that Fenians could be ready to strike the "red-coated mercenaries of Ireland's hereditary foe."²⁴⁶ The various songbooks associated with Fenianism are full of lyrics praising those individuals who had sought to injure England or humiliate her. Large public venues and published works were not the only place that Fenians expressed their desire to personally beat England. In a private letter, William Roberts told a close friend that he hoped that, before he died, he would be able to do significant damage to England.²⁴⁷ The rhetoric produced by the American Fenians was filled with a thirst for English blood.

²⁴² Bodkin, *The Fenian Catechism*, 1.

²⁴³ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood," 13.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

²⁴⁵ Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress*, 13.

²⁴⁶ J. W. Byron, Circular: War Department Fenian Brotherhood, 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

²⁴⁷ William Roberts to "My Dear Gallagher" October 26, 1866 Villanova University, 1, accessed 3/31/2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

The craving to batter England was also motivated by a desire for vengeance. In the First National Convention, James Gibbons, as the Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions and Addresses, spoke to the floor and encouraged them to be ever ready for battle for they did not know the hour when the "battle-cry of the old race will sweep across the Atlantic, announcing in tones of thunder that the long looked for hour of vengeance [would] come."²⁴⁸ In this statement, Gibbons encouraged readiness not for the sake of Irish liberty but for the sake of retribution. Doolday's vision falls in line with this imagery referring to the Fenian army as both "avenging angels" and possessing "vengeful souls."²⁴⁹ He likewise called upon the Irish of America to take action as, "The blood of millions cries to offended Heaven and to you for vengeance upon the brutal perpetrators of these sickening, horrid crimes."²⁵⁰ The images of England the oppressor and destroyer of Ireland fed directly into this call for retribution. The "horrid crimes" which Doolday wished to avenge were likely those actions which caused England to be seen as the oppressor and destroyer of the Irish race. In 1866, a group of the leading figures in Fenianism called upon their followers to remember the "awful memories of the past" when they issued a call for Irishmen to avenge themselves upon England.²⁵¹ "Too long you've viewed your suffering land, By stranger's laws oppressed; The time has come when by your hands, these wrongs may be redressed." With these words, *Stephens' Fenian Songster* joined in the ranks of those encouraging Irish-Americans to target England because of the suffering that it had brought upon Ireland.²⁵² To the Brotherhood, the evil imagery that they produced for England served to aid in their call for military action. Proving, or

²⁴⁸ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, online.

²⁴⁹ Doolday, *The Fenians Progress*, 9 and 17.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁵¹ Moan et al., Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia, 1.

²⁵² *Stephen's Fenians Songster*, 17.

reminding the Irish-Americans, of England's evil was a means of encouraging them to take vengeance upon their enemy.

The fact that hurting and punishing England was as much a concern for the Fenians helps to explain why the Canada party was so eager to attack Canada. O'Neill defended his desire to attack Canada with the following assertion: "As to the propriety of invading Canada, I have always had but one opinion: Canada is a province of Great Britain; the English flag floats over it and English soldiers protect it, and, I think, wherever the English flag and English soldiers are found, Irishmen have a right to attack."²⁵³ Doolday cites the Fenian invasion of Canada as a prime opportunity to take the first chunk out of the British Empire.²⁵⁴ These men hoped to give England the proverbial bloody nose by striking and seizing her territory in North America. Such ideas are inconsistent with a narrow focus on liberating Ireland, but makes sense in a Fenian Brotherhood where damaging England in order to enact revenge was an objective. Roberts reminded his followers that England's power was not confined to England or Ireland. "Her laws, her interests, are elsewhere; her supporting props are on both sides of the Atlantic..."²⁵⁵ It appears that Roberts was hopeful that he would be able to weaken England by removing Canada from its hands. The fact that the Fenian Raids were conducted at least partially because they offered a valid chance to strike at England means that the American Fenians were able to act upon the dark and evil view they held of England.

²⁵³ John O'Neill, "Official Report of Gen. John O'Neill, President of the Fenian Brotherhood on the Attempt to Invade Canada, May 25th, 1870: The Preparations Therefor, and the Cause of Its Failure with a Sketch of His Connection with the Organization, and the Motives Which Led Him to Join It, Also, a Report of the Battle of Ridgeway, Canada West, Fought June 2nd, 1866, by Colonel Booker, Commanding the Queen's Own and Other Canadian Troops, and Colonel John O'Neill, Commanding the Fenians.," 1870, TS, Library of Congress, New York, 4, accessed March 31, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/officialreportof00onei#page/n2/mode/1up>.

²⁵⁴ Doolday, *The Fenian Progress*, 30.

²⁵⁵ William Roberts, Address, To: The Fenian Brotherhood and Irishmen of America, 1866, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

No previous historian has systematically taken the Fenian view of England into account when they analyzed the organization. Fenian writings reveal that they held a very dark image of England, and saw it as the oppressive destroyer of Irishmen. These images of England fed into the call for the Fenians to target England and to seek out vengeance, thereby serving as key factors in the justification of American Fenianism. The Fenians did not use the poor treatment that they received from England as means of drawing connections between Ireland and America, which had previously also experienced oppression by England. The fact that America was not taken into account shows that these views were not meant to be a means of aiding the Irish situation in America. England played very heavily into the rhetoric that was used to justify the existence of the Brotherhood. Possessing such a strong interest in the way that England treated the Irish race shows how truly transatlantic the Fenians orientation was to these nationalists.

Chapter 3: Seeking an Ally

The Fenian Brotherhood's View of America

In Chicago during the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1863, concerned over the bloody Civil War still raging in the United States, the delegates of the Brotherhood unanimously passed the resolution proclaiming:

*Resolved, THAT WE, THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FENIAN BROTHERHOOD IN THE UNITED STATES, DO HEREBY SOLEMNLY DECLARE WITHOUT LIMIT OR RESERVATION, OUR ENTIRE ALLEGIANCE, TO THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.*²⁵⁶

This proclamation declared to the world that the members of the Brotherhood, these exiled Irish nationalists, were loyal to the Union government in the midst of the Civil War. At first glance, this appears to be clear and irrefutable proof that those historians who have chosen to examine domestic issues as the motivation for Fenianism are correct in their arguments. However, making this assumption fails to consider the way that the men who created the Brotherhood's rhetoric looked at America. This chapter will endeavor to illuminate this issue. The Fenians took a Machiavellian or utilitarian view of the United States, seeing America as a tool that could be deployed against England in a war for Irish liberation. When the Fenian leaders depicted the U.S., they were still oriented toward the conflict in Ireland.²⁵⁷

During the period in which the Brotherhood was dominant within Irish-American nationalism, much of the rhetoric created by the Brotherhood's authors concerning the United States touches on the Civil War. As a result, much of the discussion of the U.S. includes the

²⁵⁶ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/Convention.htm>.

²⁵⁷ While the Fenians claim that there were Fenian Circles operating in the South prior to the Civil War, no documentation has survived from these organizations. As a result of this situation, the views expressed in this chapter need to be understood to only represent the Northern Fenians perspective on the nation.

Brotherhood's view of the Civil War. This chapter will use these discussions, as well as statements about the U.S., in order to evaluate the general view that the Fenian leaders held of the United States. Some of these Fenians viewed the U.S. as a distraction from their mission, while others desperately clung to the dream that the land of their adoption was key to liberating the land of their birth.

Before proceeding, another issue must be addressed. The Fenian discussion of the U.S. and the Civil War is deeply disconnected from the reality that most Irish-Americans experienced. The Fenian view of America does not include the anti-Irish prejudice that marked the reality of the average Irish-American. Likewise, the issues in the Civil War that effected the Irish community in the North receive no coverage. The Fenians did not address the slaughter of Meagher's Irish Brigade at Fredericksburg, the Emancipation Proclamation, or the draft, all issues that broke the Irish-American community's willingness to support the Union war effort. This disconnect from the reality of America shows how little interest in this country there was among the leading Fenians. To these men, America was both an idealized paradise free from nativism and was a brutally efficient tool that they could use to liberate Ireland.

The first issue that needs to be addressed, when considering the Fenian view of America, regards the pronouncements that can be found in the Brotherhood's declaration of loyalty to America. These are exactly the sort of proclamations that would be expected from an organization which was intended to be a means of facilitating Irishmen's entrance into the U.S. At the First National Convention, O'Mahony declared that alterations needed to be made in the Brotherhood's governing structure in order to "better accord with the democratic institutions of

America..."²⁵⁸ According to this assertion, O'Mahony wanted to make stark changes in the organization, not to improve the chances of Irish liberation, but to make the Brotherhood work in a way more akin to the American governmental ideals. J.L. Kiernan, in a speech for which the Brotherhood published the transcript, declared that Irishmen needed to remember the hope that their first sight of America gave them, "It was the Mecca of their dreams - the land of promise - the bright isle of fancy, painted on the fervid Celtic imagination amidst their stormy sea of trouble, whose shores, if they could reach they would be happy."²⁵⁹ By reprinting Kiernan's statement, it appears that the Brotherhood was affirming that America was their hope. If America was the Fenians' hope, then it is logical that they would be worried about Irishmen assimilating into American society. These statements seem to prove that the Fenians were using the struggle for Irish liberation to help assimilate into the U.S. However, there also exists a substantial portion of the Fenian literature that viewed America only in the way that it related to the Fenian dreams of Irish freedom.

One of the less important images of America used by the Fenians was that America was a hindrance to the Fenian cause. There were two distinct expressions of this point. The first way that the Fenians saw the U.S. as a distraction is that the Civil War drew the best of the Fenians into the army. James Stephens wrote O'Mahony an angry letter stating that the men of the I.R.B. were wondering "why those friends of ours who have joined the army don't continue to subscribe; and, from the fact of their not doing so, question their willingness to come over to fight here."²⁶⁰ In this letter, Stephens was complaining that those members of the Brotherhood

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ John L. Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View. A Lecture, Delivered in the Principal Cities and Towns of the West.," 1864, TS, Library of Congress, Detroit, 12, accessed November 25, 2014, <http://lccn.loc.gov/11011807>.

²⁶⁰ J. S. (Stephens) to John O'Mahony, April 7, 1862, in *Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America.*, 1, access, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

who had joined the Union Army were no longer contributing to the funds needed to bring a successful conclusion to any Fenian rebellion. A renowned Fenian from Crawfordsville, Indiana proclaimed that he felt more weight was placed upon his shoulders now that a large number of his best men had gone into the "infernal war."²⁶¹ The First National Convention asserted that the war had cut the Brotherhood off from Southern Circles that had extended all the way to New Orleans. Additionally, they claimed the war had retarded the growth of the Brotherhood due to the large numbers of Fenians who had abandoned the organization for spots in the Union Army.²⁶² The Second National Congress echoed this sentiment. "Since the commencement of the present civil war in America, and more especially since our last Congress, the Fenian Brotherhood has lost a large number of its most valuable members who, as officers and men, perished on the battle-field while defending the integrity of their adopted country..."²⁶³ In the minds of some of the creators of the Brotherhood's rhetoric, the Civil War had hindered the organization's progress and had served as a distraction. If domestic concerns were the primary focus of the leadership then losing men to serve in the Civil War would have been celebrated. Many of the historians of the Irish in the Civil War observe that improving their standing in American society, by showing their loyalty to the nation, was a major goal for the Irishmen in the Union Army. For some of the Fenian leaders to oppose something that would so greatly improve the Irish standing in America, indicates that they held transatlantic concerns.

²⁶¹ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861, in *Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America*. (New York), 1, accessed 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsdll/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

²⁶² Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

²⁶³ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, TS, Philadelphia, 32, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=true..>

The Civil War was not the only distraction that the creators of the Brotherhood's rhetoric found. Several of the Brotherhood's authors called America itself a distraction. The First National Convention pronounced, "That every subject relating to the internal politics of America and the quarrels of American partizans, together with all subjects relating to differences in religion, be absolutely and forever excluded from the councils and deliberations of the Fenian Brotherhood, and be declared totally foreign to its objects and designs..."²⁶⁴ These Fenians adhered to the idea that only corrupt Fenians were interested in the U.S. Following the split in the Brotherhood, it became very common for rivals to accuse the other party of being more interested in America than they were in Irish liberation. F.F. Millen, a close friend of O'Mahony, blamed the split in the Brotherhood and the Canada party's determination to attack British North America on "Irish Americans who thought they saw their personal welfare more in the annexation of Canada to the United States than in freeing Ireland."²⁶⁵ James Gibbons, a leading member of the Canada party, when discussing the Ireland party, proclaimed that "While professing to be patriotic Irishmen, they have shown that they were in reality only speculators in American politics, trading on what capital they could make out of the wrongs of our unhappy country and the credulity of our suspecting countrymen." Gibbons followed up this denouncement by accusing those in the Ireland party of being as bad as English agents trying to thwart the Brotherhood's progress.²⁶⁶ John O'Neill agreed with Gibbons' pronouncement regarding the Ireland party. In 1870, he ridiculed the rival party: "They know too well, that instead of trying to build up an organization for the regeneration of Ireland, their great

²⁶⁴ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

²⁶⁵ F. F. Millen to Col. John O'Mahony, August 1, 1868, in *Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America*. (Guadalajara, Mexico), 3, access 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

²⁶⁶ James Gibbons, Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B., 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, Buffalo, N.Y., 1-2, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

ambition is to build up a political organization for their own benefit."²⁶⁷ What can be seen in these accusations is that being too interested in the U.S. was something that was supposed to delegitimize the rival party's claim to be the true Fenian Brotherhood. In essence, the authors of these accusations are claiming that only corrupt or bad Fenians were interested in domestic issues within the United States.

While some of the contributors to the Fenian's rhetoric saw the United States as being a distraction or hindrance to Fenianism, some of the other authors declared that the U.S. was an asset to the Fenian Brotherhood. Some Fenians believed they could use the United States to gain military experience which could be deployed against England. In the biography of Thomas Francis Meagher by Michael Cavanagh, O'Mahony's personal secretary, the author recounted that Meagher was invited to review the Phoenix Brigade, a New York based Fenian military unit. He told these men, the armed forces of the Brotherhood, that their comrades still in Ireland were encouraged to know that "day and night their honorable deliverance is the first thought of their armed countrymen in these free States."²⁶⁸ Charles O'Connell wrote to O'Mahony in 1862 advocating that Michael O'Brien be admitted to the Fenian Brotherhood. O'Connell recounted that O'Brien had lost his job in Ireland and was now coming to the U.S. However, O'Connell proclaimed "Above all things he desires to acquire military knowledge in the Phoenix Brigade."²⁶⁹ Lesser known Fenians were also engaged in this discussion. Edgeworth Dougherty told a friend,

²⁶⁷ John O'Neill, Address of General O'Neill, in Prison at Windsor, Vermont, 1870, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

²⁶⁸ Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher, Comprising the Leading Events of His Career Chronologically Arranged, with Selections from His Speeches, Lectures and Miscellaneous Writings, including Personal Reminiscences* (Worcester, MA: Messenger Press, 1892), 396.

²⁶⁹ Charles O'Connell to John O'Mahony, May 1, 1862, in *Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America.*, 1, access 3/31/2105, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

Presuming that military affairs will be the subject mostly discussed I take occasion to suggest to you the great importance of taking the matter of drill and instruction under consideration. When the war opens you see we will depend chiefly upon the men who will come to our ranks spontaneously and indiscriminately, (am under the impression now that our army accounts to anything in comparison) those men or at any rate the most of them will be soldiers who were drilled and instructed on the principles in vogue during the rebellion, those men will not be able to drill in accordance with the Upton Method and then we will have neither (unreadable) nor opportunity to instruct them. The only way I see to avoid confusion will be to form all the troops we will have instructed in Uptons Tactics together, but that will be disadvantageous as those men must be necessarily the bases on which all entanglements will be made. Perfect unanimity should pervade the military framework.²⁷⁰

The comparison of the value of various drill manuals demonstrates that members of the Brotherhood intended that its men receive military training during their time in America. The members of the 1868 Seventh National Congress declared that the education that they desired for the Brotherhood was one "which teaches our men to pull a trigger and push a bayonet at the right time, and in the right way, and to keep doing it."²⁷¹ These plans make clear that some Fenians understood America to be a place where Fenian soldiers could gain martial skills to be used in the liberation of Ireland.

This depiction of America as the training ground for the Brotherhood profoundly impacted the way that many of the Fenians discussed the American Civil War. Many hoped that this conflict could provide the Fenian Brotherhood with the trained soldiers they needed to strike for liberty. The First National Convention proclaimed that the Brotherhood had "numerous Circles in the army, whose members count by thousands, as well as in the cities and towns of the Union. We no longer need generals of our own blood to lead us to battle for Ireland, nor veteran

²⁷⁰ Edgeworth Dougherty to Mr. Gallagher, November 26, 1868, in *Fenian Brotherhood*, Villanova University, 2, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, online, access 3/31/2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

²⁷¹ "Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings of the Senate and House of the Fenian Brotherhood, in Joint Convention at Philadelphia.," 1868, TS, Hathie Trust Digital Library, New York, 15, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000006716072;view=1up;seq=5>.

soldiers to follow them. We have more of them than we shall ever need."²⁷² In a letter to this convention, Captain T.B. Bourke, the Center pro tempore of the Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood operating in the Union Army of the Potomac, declared "We are ready and willing to take up arms at any time that our superiors should deem expedient (and in accordance with our duties and obligations to the U. S. Government) and in the 9th [Massachusetts] regiment alone we can raise at least 300 fighting men, unless the casualties of battle will diminish that number during the coming seven months." Both of these pronouncements declare that the Irishmen in the Civil War were ready to join the struggle for Irish freedom. Cavanagh recounted that when Meagher chose to enlist in the Union Army, he reasoned, that if only one in ten of the Irishmen who were taking up arms came out alive, the military skills that they had gained would be of greater use in the struggle for Irish freedom than the entire ten as they were prior to enlistment.²⁷³ Cavanagh also proclaimed that Meagher believed that the hope of every Irishman in the Union Army was "To-day it is for the American Republic we fight – to-morrow it will be for Ireland..."²⁷⁴ In *Stephens' Fenian Songster*, written with the intention of providing the Fenian Circles with songs to sing during their meetings, a song writer declares, "Oh! mother dear, the stranger's fight we've fought and dearly won, And left on ever crimson field full many a gallant son; But now we homeward turn our eyes- your children, staunch and true, Are coming 'with vengeance' back, to strike a blow for you!"²⁷⁵ The Fenians were very clear in their hope that the American Civil War provided them

²⁷² Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

²⁷³ Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher, Comprising the Leading Events of His Career Chronologically Arranged, with Selections from His Speeches, Lectures and Miscellaneous Writings, including Personal Reminiscences* (Worcester, MA: Messenger Press, 1892), 369.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 438

²⁷⁵ *Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866), 63, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

with a large and well-trained force with which they could strike a blow to England for Irish freedom.

Even after the Civil War had concluded, the Brotherhood continued to hope that they could use the Irish veterans to bring about the liberation of Ireland. *Stephens' Fenian Songster* announced "'Tis true I have but one arm, but double is its power, I lost the left upon the field when brave McClellan led; But this good right arm, with Heaven's help, but now awaits the hour, To trail the proud flag in the dust that's striped with bloody red."²⁷⁶ This song indicates that even those who had been injured during the Civil War were still eager to take up arms again, but this time for Ireland. John O'Neill took special interest in expressing this ideal. In 1870, he recounted "There was, too, an army of veteran Irish soldiers but just disbanded by the close of the civil conflict in the United States, That were ready and anxious to be led to battle for their country."²⁷⁷ He used this ready-made army as a means of justifying the Canada party's attack upon America's northern neighbor. He argued, "... and besides, the thousands of our countrymen who participated in the late war, were fast settling down in life, and if we deferred matters much longer, it would be almost impossible to secure a sufficient number of veteran soldiers for the proper inauguration of the movement."²⁷⁸ Whether it was prior to, during, or after the American Civil War, the Fenian Brotherhood saw the U.S. as the place where Irish-Americans could gain military experience that could be deployed in a war for the redemption of Ireland.

²⁷⁶Ibid., 8.

²⁷⁷ John O'Neill, "Official Report of Gen. John O'Neill, President of the Fenian Brotherhood on the Attempt to Invade Canada, May 25th, 1870: The Preparations Therefor, and the Cause of Its Failure with a Sketch of His Connection with the Organization, and the Motives Which Led Him to Join It, Also, a Report of the Battle of Ridgeway, Canada West, Fought June 2nd, 1866, by Colonel Booker, Commanding the Queen's Own and Other Canadian Troops, and Colonel John O'Neill, Commanding the Fenians.," 1870, TS, Library of Congress, New York, 4, accessed March 31, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/officialreportof00onei#page/n2/mode/1up>.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 5.

The authors of the Fenians' rhetoric not only saw America as a place for Fenians to train for the forthcoming war, but also as a kindred spirit. These men described the cause of Ireland and America as being connected. J.L Kiernan asserted this idea when he declared, "in field in the United States, and disclose to our eager gaze our loyal boys carrying the Starry Banner to the triumphant cry of our Union everywhere; every blow struck, every victory gained, brings us nearer to the consummation of our hopes" of ending England's domain.²⁷⁹ In Kiernan's analysis, anything that was done that aided the U.S. was also a victory for the cause of Ireland. In 1865, the Brotherhood's Second National Congress declared that they were glad that whatever they did for Ireland also served the interests of America.²⁸⁰ George Train, who spoke to the Second National Congress proclaimed, "I stood alone in England for two years fighting for Ireland, for America, and for the common rights of humanity."²⁸¹ To Train, and the other spokesmen of the Brotherhood, it is clear that the cause of the old land and the adopted land were connected. The Fenians believed that the cause of these two countries were connected because America would be instrumental in bringing about the liberation of Ireland. This reality could mean that part of the expressions of loyalty to America were consistent with the loyalty to Ireland which the authors expressed elsewhere.

A large portion of the idea that the interests of Ireland and America were connected was built upon the assumption that America had also suffered under the cruel hand of England. Kiernan pronounced England an enemy of America as she had tried to destroy the nation through sending abolitionists to the North and fire eaters to the South in order to stir up the Civil War.

²⁷⁹ John L. Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View. A Lecture, Delivered in the Principal Cities and Towns of the West.," 1864, TS, Library of Congress, Detroit, 15, accessed November 25, 2014, <http://lccn.loc.gov/11011807>.

²⁸⁰ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 7.

²⁸¹ George F. Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality. Delivered before the Fenian Congress and Fenian Chiefs at the Philadelphia Academy of Music," 1865, TS, Library of Congress, Philadelphia, 30, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://lccn.loc.gov/48042045>.

With the war started, Kiernan had proclaimed that England had tried to aid the weaker party in order to further damage America with the hope of preventing the nation from becoming prosperous.²⁸² The delegates of the Second National Congress concurred with Kiernan's view of America. They argued that by aiding the South during the Civil War, England had earned the "hatred of every true American patriot, as she had long since gained that of every true Irishman."²⁸³ Train argued that the tactics which England was using against America were something that they had used many times against other opponents, including Ireland.²⁸⁴ To the Brotherhood, America had been deeply wronged by England which had built a certain affinity between the interest of America and the other target of England's evil hand, Ireland.

A final way in which the causes of Fenianism and America were connected was that the men responsible for the Brotherhood's literature believed that America was key to the cause of liberty in the rest of the world. This depiction was built on the idea that America existed to prove that a republican form of government was a workable form of government and the hope for liberty of the rest of the human race hinged on the continuation of the American nation.²⁸⁵ Meagher agreed with this sentiment after having chosen to enlist in the Civil War, "The Republic, that gave us an asylum and an honorable career, -that is the mainstay of human freedom, the world over-is threatened with disruption."²⁸⁶ Delegates at the First National Convention justified their position on the Civil War in a similar manner. "We deem its preservation and success of supreme importance, not alone to ourselves and our fellow-citizens, but to the extension of democratic institutions, and to the well being and social

²⁸² Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 8.

²⁸³ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 7.

²⁸⁴ George F. Train, "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality. Delivered before the Fenian Congress and Fenian Chiefs at the Philadelphia Academy of Music," 35.

²⁸⁵ Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 2007), 40.

²⁸⁶ Cavanagh, *In Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher*, 369

elevation of the whole human race..."²⁸⁷ John Savage mimicked this claim in 1868 in his book *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*.²⁸⁸ J.L. Kiernan declared that the war he believed was to be fought between England and the allied forces of Ireland and America was more than for the liberty of Ireland but was part of a war of " Democracy versus Aristocracy, the rights of man versus the rights of Kings."²⁸⁹ Kiernan also held to the ideology that America had been formed as a bulwark for human freedom and equality intended to protect these ideals against the swarms of despotism.²⁹⁰ If the Fenians believed that human freedom depended on America, it is no wonder that the Brotherhood was so dedicated to the cause of America. In their mind, if Ireland was to gain freedom tomorrow, then America had to survive today so that freedom would ultimately be achievable for Ireland.

In addition to seeing America as sharing the same cause of Ireland, the Brotherhood's rhetoric also incorporated the idea that America would be Ireland's ally in the struggle against England. Meagher informed Cavanagh, who became his biographer, that America would be the central factor determining the success or failure of an Irish rebellion. "We could not hope to succeed in our effort to make Ireland a Republic without the moral and material aid of the liberty-loving citizens of these United States."²⁹¹ These men expected that the American government would assist in this conflict. Kiernan proclaimed that as soon as the war for the Union had ended, America would join Ireland in its cry of "*down with England*."²⁹² He also decreed that the Stars and Stripes would rise alongside the Sun-burst, the symbol of Ireland, in

²⁸⁷ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

²⁸⁸ John Savage, *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs* (Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1868), 58, accessed May 30, 2014, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951001701374a;view=1up;seq=5>.

²⁸⁹ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 15.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁹¹ Cavanagh, *In Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher*, 369

²⁹² Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 15.

the war for the liberation of the oppressed shores of the Emerald Isle, and that the Fenians would have many American citizens fighting alongside them.²⁹³ Meagher recounted that, while he was in route to exile for participating in a rebellion against England, he saw a ship flying the American flag and seeing the flag reminded him that there was "a power in this country and in this world to redress and right the wrongs dealt upon disgraced and depressed humanity."²⁹⁴ In 1865, with the end of the Civil War on the horizon, the Second National Congress' delegates evaluated the war and the legacy of the many Fenians who had died fighting for America. "All honor to the memory of the brave and loyal dead! May America remember them some day with gratitude, and aid us, their brother Fenians, in accomplishing the work which was ever uppermost in their hearts."²⁹⁵ These delegates hoped that the dedication with which the Fenians had protected the Union cause in the Civil War would result in the United States fighting with equal dedication in the liberation of Ireland. Michael Doolday, who published an account of a vision he claimed to have had, noted that, in his vision, the Fenian Army carried both the American and the Irish flag into battle, showing that the two nations were fighting as allies.²⁹⁶ The song "To the Fenians," by Colonel Roberts, reminded the Fenian soldiers that "The Stars and Stripes with your own Flag, are with you to the death..."²⁹⁷ For the men who created the discourse surrounding American Fenianism, America was not simply a place of refuge for the Irish, but also a nation that would help bring an end to the oppression of the Irish race.

²⁹³Ibid., 16.

²⁹⁴"UNION RALLY AT BRIDGEPORT.: MONSTER MASS MEETING. Ten Thousand People in a Tent. Speech for the Union by Hon. Daniel S. Dickinson. Stirring Speech by Thomas F. Meagher," *New York Times* (New York), September 16, 1861, accessed March 31, 2015, nytimes.com.

²⁹⁵Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 7.

²⁹⁶Michael Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision Containing the Inspirations of General Richard Montgomery, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Together with a Thrilling Account of the "avenging Angels," in New and Old Ireland. To Which Is Added a Mode of Managing Funds so as to Insure to the Individual Subscriber an Absolute Certainty That His Money Shall Be Invested for His Own Interest, or Be Properly Devoted to the Great Cause for Which It Was Given, When There Are Indubitable Moral and Physical Prospects of Success, Etc., Etc. Also, the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: Bradburn, 1865), 9-10, accessed January 17, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/feniansprogressv00newy#page/n14/mode/1up>.

²⁹⁷*Stephens' Fenian Songster*, 47.

Part of the reason the Fenians assumed that they would be receiving assistance from America was that they expected that the United States and England would soon be at war. The resolutions of the First National Convention declared,

" WHEREAS, From the hostile attitude assumed by the English oligarchy, merchants, and press, towards the United States, Since the commencement of the disastrous civil strife that has devastated this Republic during the past three years, it is all but certain that war is imminent, or at least fast approaching, between our adopted country and England, our hereditary enemy; be it *Resolved*, That the younger members of the several Circles of the Fenian Brotherhood be instructed to apply themselves sedulously to the study of military tactics and the use of arms, and to organize themselves into companies for the purpose of drilling, so as to be prepared to offer their services to the United States government, by land or sea, against England's myrmidons in that event."²⁹⁸

With this resolution, the Fenian Brotherhood declared that they were preparing to aid the U.S. in a forthcoming war with England. Retributive justice was cited by J.L. Kiernan as proof that, when the Civil War concluded, America would deploy its armed forces against England.²⁹⁹ The Second National Congress agreed with these declarations. "New York should have its Fenian Brigade, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Boston, and Chicago, their Fenian Regiments. All these should hold themselves in constant readiness either to sail at once for Europe or to march to the British Provinces at the command of the United States authorities."³⁰⁰ In all of these pronouncements, it is clear that Fenians expected the United States to become embroiled in a war with England after the Civil War. While the Fenian rhetoric does not contain any concrete evidence to support this assertion, several historians have argued that the Fenian raids into Canada may have been an attempt to bring about this war by degrading relations between the two nations even further. If the Fenians understood America and England to be on the brink of war, it

²⁹⁸ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, online.

²⁹⁹ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 12.

³⁰⁰ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 13.

is possible that the Fenians embraced America for no other reason than to aid a nation preparing for war with their ancient foe. As shown in the previous chapter, England was seen as a target of vengeance to the Brotherhood. Doing battle with England alongside the armed legions of America could have been seen as a very tempting opportunity to destroy their nemesis.

Many Fenians went so far as to declare that Ireland would gain her liberty through a conflict between America and England. Thomas Francis Meagher told the Irish soldiers under his command in the Irish Brigade, "War with England is imminent, *the Irish Brigade will be the first to meet the music*. Fourth and Fifth Regiments must hold themselves in readiness for marching orders. *Ireland's day has come.*"³⁰¹ Meagher clearly understood that the war between America and England that was supposed to be coming would provide the Irish exiles an opportunity to liberate their homeland. Edmund O'Flaherty, the leading Fenian in Indiana, wrote to O'Mahony and noted that many Fenians were saying, "when England gets embroiled in the present American contest then will be Ireland's opportunity."³⁰² Kiernan, in his speech, noted that assisting Ireland was America's best means to repay England for all the aid she had provided to the Confederacy during the Civil War.³⁰³ O'Mahony told the Second National Congress of the Brotherhood that, "In case of a war, [between America and England], the chances of successful invasion would be greatly increased by our being found ready to march in few hours after its proclamation became known."³⁰⁴ America was the ally of Irish liberation because she was supposed to provide aid to the Fenians. She was going to be at war with England, and war would give Ireland a chance to gain independence.

³⁰¹ Cavanagh, *In Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher*, 427.

³⁰² Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861, in *Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America*. (New York), 1.

³⁰³ Kiernan, "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View.," 12.

³⁰⁴ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 13.

While there do exist instances in the Fenian rhetoric which seem to indicate that the authors were concerned with issues inside the United States, when the Fenians considered America, they did so primarily through the lens of Ireland. Some of these men were concerned that the situation in the U.S. was actually a distraction for the Fenians and was hindering the progress of the organization. Others took a much warmer view of America, claiming that America offered Fenians a chance to gain military skills, that the cause of Ireland and America were connected, and the Americans would be an ally in a future war against England. None of the men who considered the U.S. took the concerns of the common Irish American into account when they shaped their image of the U.S. The reality was that when the creators of the Fenian Brotherhood's rhetoric depicted America, they generally did so in relation to how the nation helped Ireland, thereby demonstrating just how deep the transatlantic orientation ran in these men. To these Fenians, even when they looked at the American side of the Atlantic, the conflict on the other side was their primary concern.

Chapter 4: Planning for Action

The Fenian Brotherhood's Plans to Liberate Ireland

An old Catholic priest sat quietly in his office contemplating the words he would put into a letter to a close friend in 1861. The priest had returned from a tour of Ireland, the land of his birth, to his home in Crawfordsville, Indiana. He had journeyed across the sea as an emissary for John O'Mahony, the man to whom he was currently writing, to convey the truth about the nationalist movement in Ireland. Sadly, the priest, Edmund O'Flaherty, had not been encouraged by what he saw. With a heavy heart, Father O'Flaherty informed O'Mahony, "If matters go on thus much longer there will be no Irish Nation for us to free. If we are to redeem our country, we must do it soon, or not at all."³⁰⁵ O'Flaherty was offering advice to his close friend, the Head Center of the Fenian Brotherhood. The cause of the Fenian Brotherhood was of great importance to Father O'Flaherty, among the earliest and most ardent of all Fenians.³⁰⁶ The advice this Catholic sage offered to O'Mahony was that action must soon be taken or all hope for an Ireland bathed in the warm glow of liberty would be lost. O'Flaherty and other Irish-Americans in the Fenian Brotherhood held that it was their task to provide the various resources that their colleagues in Ireland needed to bring about the liberation of their homeland.

The discourse of the Fenian Brotherhood contains a massive amount of information regarding what the Brotherhood sought to do in order to prepare for the liberation of their native soil. As already established in the discussion of the Fenian's view of Ireland, the creators of the rhetoric believed that the Brotherhood had been founded to bring about liberation. The Brotherhood's literature presents several ways in which the organization intended to aid their

³⁰⁵ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (New York), 1, access 3/31/2015.

³⁰⁶ William D'Arcy, *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858 - 1886* (New York: Catholic University of America Press, 1947), 23.

compatriots in the motherland. In the images surrounding this issue, it becomes clear that the Brotherhood was actively seeking to provide that which would aid in the liberation of Ireland. Attempting to provide these resources took several forms. The fact that the 1867 rebellion, the only rising in Ireland during this period, ended before the Fenian Brotherhood could mobilize, means that historians have no idea exactly what the Brotherhood would have provided. Likewise, the lack of detailed records of financial expenditures shrouds the Brotherhood's actual activity. Despite this hindrance, the rhetoric of the Brotherhood contains substantial discussions showing what the authors imagined the Brotherhood could provide to a war for Irish independence. Conducting this investigation reveals that the Fenian leaders did not focus across the Atlantic for the sake of self-aggrandizement. Instead, these men believed their organization was playing an active role in the struggle for Ireland's redemption.

In an endeavor to understand the rhetoric of the Brotherhood regarding what the organization was to provide to Ireland, it is essential to demonstrate that the desires of James Stephens, the highly vocal leader of the I.R.B., for the American Fenians were not representative of the Fenian Brotherhood's ambitions. In the majority of Stephens' letters, he demands that the Brotherhood supply the I.R.B. with financial backing and financial backing alone. Most of the early historians see the Brotherhood as nearly passive suppliers of financial support to their colleagues in Ireland. The historian William D'Arcy, makes this case based upon the letters from Stephens. The personalities of both Stephens and O'Mahony serve as the best proof that Stephens' desires were not shared by the Fenian Brotherhood's members. John O'Leary, one of Stephens' lieutenants, who also lived with O'Mahony while serving as an emissary to America, noted that Stephens "was vain, arrogant, with a most inordinate belief in his own powers and

proportionate contempt for those of others."³⁰⁷ Elsewhere, O'Leary notes that Stephens could be both arrogant and dogmatic.³⁰⁸ O'Leary's assessment serves as a strong indication that Stephens may have ignored the desires of the Irish-American nationalists in favor of simply pushing his own opinions on those around him. The historian, Desmond Ryan, notes that it is often impossible to disentangle Stephens' personal wishes from reality in his correspondence with colleagues.³⁰⁹ Ryan, Stephens' biographer, further notes that Stephens had a strong bias against the Irish nationalist leaders in America.³¹⁰ These assessments mean that many of Stephens' demands may reflect his personal notions instead of what O'Mahony and other authors of the Brotherhood believed the organization was supposed to provide. O'Leary claimed that O'Mahony put very little importance on money. Instead of contributing financial aid, O'Leary claimed that when O'Mahony provided charity, he offered "his time, thought, or any other good thing he had at his disposal."³¹¹ The fact that O'Mahony did not count money as his most important contribution, makes it unlikely that the rhetoric of his organization would preach passively sitting back and throwing money at Ireland. It is also likely that, similar to its leader, the Brotherhood provided a wide array of any good things which they had at their disposal. These arguments necessitate an evaluation of ideas coming out of the Brotherhood's rhetoric instead of simply depending on Stephens' demand for financial aid in order to understand the imagination of the Brotherhood on this issue.

The pre-Fenian background is of great importance to the discussion of the role the members of the Brotherhood set for themselves between 1858 and 1870. The fact that

³⁰⁷ John O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, vol. 1 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1873), 65-66.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

³¹⁰ Desmond Ryan, *The Fenian Chief: a Biography of James Stephens*. (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1967), 105..

³¹¹ O'Leary, *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism*, 103.

previous Irish nationalist organizations saw themselves as active participants in the struggle for independence helps to explain why the Fenian rhetoric paints such an image. The direct ancestor of Fenianism was the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848.³¹² Many of the leaders of the Fenian movement, including O'Mahony and Stephens, took their first revolutionary actions as part of this rebellion. During the Young Ireland Rebellion, "Enthusiastic Irish-Americans established a national directory in New York, held monster rallies, raised money, purchased arms, and formed militia companies for anticipated service overseas."³¹³ John Belchem draws special attention to the promise to provide Ireland the benefits of "American 'military science': an officer corps drilled in the militia; the latest firearms technology (including Colt revolvers) to supplement the native pike; and battle-hardened veterans of the Mexican War."³¹⁴ American-based Irish nationalists' plan of action even went so far as to include an invasion of Ireland. The invasion was abandoned after France denied access to its coasts, which the Irish-Americans wanted to use as a rallying point.³¹⁵ The fact that it was at this moment that Irish-American nationalism took on its Fenian appearance is what makes this period so important to discuss.³¹⁶

After the failure of the Young Ireland Rebellion, the dream of Irish-Americans supplying vital resources to their comrades did not fade. In the 1850s, during England's war in the Crimea against Russia, Irish nationalists through the Emmet Monument Association actively organized

³¹² R. V. Comerford, *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-82* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985), 11.

³¹³ Miller, *Emigrants and Exile*, 334.

³¹⁴ John Belchem, "Nationalism, Republicanism and Exile: Irish Emigrants and the Revolutions of 1848," *Past & Present*, 146th ser. (February 1995): 110, accessed January 10, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/651153>.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

armed men in an attempt "to support an impending uprising in Ireland."³¹⁷ In the same period, Irish nationalists, still operating in Ireland during the Crimean War, actively expected an armed expedition to arrive from the Emmet Monument Association.³¹⁸ Since the Fenian Brotherhood absorbed the members of the Emmet Monument Association, it is likely that the ideas of the Association had a deep impact on the rhetoric and thinking of the Brotherhood.³¹⁹ O'Mahony depicted a close relationship between the two organizations, arguing that the Fenian Brotherhood was not a new creation but instead was simply a reconstitution of the Emmet Monument Association.³²⁰ The historical context of previous Irish-American nationalist organizations supports the conclusion that the Fenians viewed their organization as providing those factors most conducive to Irish liberty.

In the mind of the Fenians in America, supplying provisions to Ireland was not merely an issue of minor importance. Father O'Flaherty berated his co-revolutionaries in the Fenian Brotherhood for not being "the 'tower of strength' which they ought to be and might be, to our brethren in Ireland."³²¹ In that same letter, O'Flaherty warned his colleagues that the strength of the I.R.B. was contingent on the exertions undertaken by the Fenian Brotherhood.³²² The importance of the Brotherhood's assistance can be seen when it is acknowledged that Stephens only formed the I.R.B. when he was convinced that resources would be forthcoming from America.³²³ O'Mahony responded to these demands in a speech during the First National

³¹⁷ David Sim, "Filibusters, Fenians, and a Contested Neutrality: The Irish Question and U.S. Diplomacy, 1848-1871.," *American Nineteenth Century History* 12, no. 3 (September 2011): 26, accessed September 17, 2013, EBSCOhost.

³¹⁸ Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 15.

³¹⁹ "COL JOHN O'MAHONY Death of the Ex-Head Centre. His Remains to Be Sent to Ireland." *IRISH-AMERICAN* (New York), February 17, 1877, 1, accessed 3/31/2015.

³²⁰ Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 52.

³²¹ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861 (New York, 1861), 1.

³²² *Ibid.*, 1.

³²³ Comerford, *The Fenians in Context*, 46.

Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood in Chicago. In that speech, O'Mahony stated that "Provisions will have to be made for the regular transmission of supplies to all quarters where they may be needed."³²⁴ John Savage joined in with this approach when he noted that the 1866 convention of the Brotherhood had passed a resolution which stated that the Ireland party was pledging undying support to the I.R.B.³²⁵ Savage also asserted that it was essential that the I.R.B. should be sustained by the Fenian Brotherhood.³²⁶ "The Fenians Song" promised, "Now thousands of our country's sons, United in other lands, To aide you by their swords and guns, And join your hearts and hands."³²⁷ In the world created by the Fenian rhetoric, the Brotherhood not only was to provide assistance, but their assistance was to be the defining factor in the success or failure of Irish liberty.

The national conventions provide remarkable insight into the ideology of the members of the Fenian Brotherhood. Every state, every Federal Army (during the Civil War), and any local Circle which had sent in the requisite number of reports were allowed to send representatives to these meetings, meaning that the rhetoric expressed at these events included the ideas of a wide range of the Brotherhood.³²⁸ The first resolution passed by the earliest convention stated, "We furthermore boldly and firmly assert our unquestionable right under the said constitution and laws to associate together for [Irish liberation], or for any similar one; and to assist

³²⁴ Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863, 1863, TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/Convention.htm>.

³²⁵ John Savage, Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood ... John Savage Chief Executive Fenian Brotherhood., 1866, TS, An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broadsides and Other Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, New York, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))).

³²⁶ Ibid., 4.

³²⁷ *Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866), 17, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

³²⁸ "Proceedings of the First National Convention of the FENIAN BROTHERHOOD Held in Chicago, Illinois." 1863.

with our money, our moral and political influence, or, if it so pleases ourselves, with our persons and our lives in liberating any enslaved land under the sun."³²⁹ The ideas coming out of the First National Convention in 1863, and subsequent meetings, attested that the leaders, both local and nationally, intended their organization to provide whatever was deemed needed for Irish liberation.

The Second National Congress also affirmed this assessment. During the opening address, the Congress was presented as a national assembly and the I.R.B. was compared to a national army.³³⁰ Imagining the relationship between the two organizations in such a manner is a key aspect of the Brotherhood's rhetoric on this matter. Describing the alliance between the two organizations in this way gave the Fenian Brotherhood the responsibility for providing what the I.R.B. needed to conduct its campaign and to gain Ireland's long awaited freedom. The Second National Congress also asserted that, "Our countrymen, and all who love Ireland, must be organized in these United States. Here a never-failing base of supplies must be created and secured, the Irishmen of the British colonies aiding in the work."³³¹ The plan to aid Ireland that came out of the Second National Congress was "to send means and men across the sea, and redress Ireland's wrongs where alone they can effectually be redressed, on the field of battle."³³² O'Mahony also offered an explanation of why providing resources to the I.R.B. was so important. He stated, "The Fenian Brotherhood is founded upon the conviction that military organization at home is absolutely essential to the liberation of Ireland. The Irish Revolutionary

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio," 1865, TS, Philadelphia, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=true>.

³³¹ Ibid., 13.

³³² Ibid., 46.

Brotherhood, with which we are in alliance and the sustainment of which is one of our chief objects, is the only association in our native country which is likely to effect its [liberation]."³³³

The image of the Fenian Brotherhood as the "tower of strength" that ensured the procurement of whatever Ireland required to gain liberation was not the dream of Edmund O'Flaherty alone, but was an objective held by the majority of Fenian writers. However, generic terms are not necessary when discussing what the Brotherhood thought the organization could contribute to the war in Ireland. Sufficient documentation can be provided to discuss each of the four major areas of resources that the Fenian Brotherhood planned to send: money, arms, men, and ports from which to launch a naval fleet.

In the list of resources that the Fenian Brotherhood's authors depicted the organization providing to their comrades in Ireland, money is granted the most page space in the previous historical works. O'Flaherty, the leading figure of the Fenian Brotherhood in Indiana, argued that funding the revolution was one of the most important actions that the Brotherhood could undertake due to the lack of worldly wealth in the I.R.B.³³⁴ Charles Kickham, one of Stephens' lieutenants in Ireland, in 1864, cautioned O'Mahony that if money was not forthcoming from the Brotherhood, the dream of a free Ireland would be lost.³³⁵ John Mitchel, who helped funnel Fenian money into Ireland through France, agreed with O'Flaherty's and Kickham's diagnoses.³³⁶ In 1866, Mitchel told O'Mahony that the insurrection, which was being planned, would fail if

³³³ Ibid., 13. While the organization in Ireland was officially the Irish Republican Brotherhood, both O'Mahony and Stephens used the wrong name calling it the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood on several occasions.

³³⁴ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861 (New York, 1861), 1.

³³⁵ Charles Kickham to John O'Mahony, January 18, 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Dublin, Ireland), 2, accessed 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³³⁶ John Mitchel to John O'Mahony, April 26, 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Paris, France), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

money was not remitted to Ireland.³³⁷ The high priority placed on dispatching these funds to Ireland is seen in the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood. In this conference, the leaders of the Brotherhood stated, "if [the I.R.B.] be allowed to go down for want of sufficient subsidies, the Fenian Brotherhood will have existed in vain and Ireland's hope of freedom will be destroyed for the present generation."³³⁸ In the mind of the members of the Fenian Brotherhood creating the rhetoric, providing funds to their colleagues was of extreme importance. To these nationalists, the dollars which they transmitted across the Atlantic had the ability to guarantee the continuation of Ireland's struggle for freedom.

The need to raise funds was widely recognized in the Fenian Brotherhood. The Circle located in Ottawa, Canada recognized the need for funds and contributed \$81 dollars to the Brotherhood's treasury.³³⁹ Despite the need to provide funds, not all Fenians were able to provide a reliable stream of currency. John O'Donnell, from Lawrence County, Indiana, noted to O'Mahony that many of the men in his Circle were "railroad men and their means is only from one month to another."³⁴⁰ While some of the local Circles, like the one in Lawrence County, Indiana, were short on funds, the rhetoric of these men still showed determination to provide the needed financial aid when the uprising in Ireland began. John Forristal, a member of the Davenport Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood promised O'Mahony, "when the time comes for the rising up of the people in Ireland you may depend on the Davenport Circle although composed of

³³⁷ John Mitchel to John O'Mahony, January 27, 1866, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Paris, France), Transcript by Seamus Pender, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³³⁸ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865.

³³⁹ John Feeny to John O'Mahony, June 23, 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Ottawa), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁴⁰ John O'Donnell to John O'Mahony, June 27, 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Lawrence County, Indiana), Transcript by Seamus Pender, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

poor working men.”³⁴¹ In 1863, O'Mahony seeking to assuage Stephens' anger, promised, “Again, I shall require that the FB shall covenant to supply to the I.R.B., through the aforesaid C.E. a certain and definite sum monthly....”³⁴² In that same letter, O'Mahony promised that the position of treasurer would be created with the specific assignment of assuring that resources were delivered to Stephens.³⁴³ The members of the Fenian Brotherhood in Chicago showed particular dedication to raising funds to be remitted to Ireland and considered it their duty to take every opportunity to do so.³⁴⁴ On a tour of the United States in 1864, Stephens noted that, in Peoria, Illinois, between fifty and sixty Fenians raised \$1,455 for the cause.³⁴⁵ In the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, the delegates urged the members to work even harder to secure the funds that were needed for the long awaited rebellion that was believed to be on the horizon. Clearly, remitting money to Ireland was a practice that had widespread support in the Fenian Brotherhood.

Overestimating the importance of providing funds to Ireland, in the final few years before the split in the Brotherhood, is quite easy. This possibility exists because of an astounding number of letters written in 1864 and 1865 which discuss sending money to the national organization. Most of the letters were written by the local officers responsible for a single Circle. An example of such a letter was one by P. Gorman, the center of the Circle in Logansport, Indiana, in which he included a check for "two-hundred and fifty-nine dollars collected by our

³⁴¹ John Forristal to John O'Mahony, June 28, 1864 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Davenport), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁴² John O'Mahony to James Kelly (Stephens), October 19, 1863 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (New York), 2, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁴³ Ibid., 2.

³⁴⁴ Chas Ring to John O'Mahony, April 16, 1865, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Chicago), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁴⁵ J. Daly (Stephens) to John O'Mahony, April 28, 1864 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Saint Louis), 4, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

circle for the more speedy accomplishment of our cause."³⁴⁶ The volume of letters written in this vein can cause it to appear that remitting money to Ireland was the task which was most important to the lower-ranking members of the Brotherhood. This assessment, while persuasive, misses an important reality. The First National Convention in November of 1863, placed new requirements on the local Circles. The constitution drafted in 1863 states that "A Treasurer shall be nominated and selected by each Circle and Sub-Circle. It shall be his duty to make up a financial report to be embodied in the monthly report of the Centre, on the 25th of each month."³⁴⁷ This new responsibility also commanded that "The balance on hand he shall forward to the Head Centre on the same stated day, every month, without fail."³⁴⁸ These new requirements necessitated an increase in the number of letters O'Mahony received from the local Circles that concerned forwarding money to the national organization. C. Murphy, the center of the Pittsburgh Circle of the Fenian Brotherhood, claimed that sending in the monthly funds was part of the reason behind his letter.³⁴⁹ Due to the fact that many of the Fenians wrote these letters to fulfill the requirement for monthly reports, it cannot be concluded that providing financial support for the I.R.B. was of any greater importance to the lower-ranking members of the Brotherhood than the other resources they sought to provide. Likewise, the money was being sent to the national organization, where the Fenian leaders had control over how it was spent, meaning that these contributions were funding the provision of all other resources to Ireland as well.

³⁴⁶ P. Gorman to John O'Mahony, July 8, 1864 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Logansport, IN), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁴⁷ "Proceedings of the First National Convention of the FENIAN BROTHERHOOD Held in Chicago, Illinois." 1863.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ C. Murphy to John O'Mahony, November 19, 1864 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Pittsburgh), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>

A substantial portion of the funds that the Brotherhood's authors claimed to be sending was earmarked for the procurement of arms and ammunition.³⁵⁰ However, these men were not content with simply promising remittances that could be used to procure weapons. Instead they proclaimed that the Brotherhood was shipping arms across the Atlantic. For example, the Ottawa Circle, in addition to sending in their monthly dues, in June of 1864, provided two rifles to O'Mahony for the purpose of having them forwarded to Ireland.³⁵¹ From very early in the Brotherhood's existence, the lack of weapons in the hands of Irish revolutionaries was a matter of concern for the men who authored the organization's literature. In 1861, Mitchel observed that the Phoenix Society, a revolutionary organization which was folded into the I.R.B., was not as well-armed as he would have liked.³⁵² The song "Come Let us All United Be" called upon Irishmen who could not take up arms themselves to provide the arms to those who could do so.³⁵³ O'Mahony's analogy of the Fenian Brotherhood being the national assembly and the I.R.B. being the assembly's army was used to explain the shipment of arms to Ireland. O'Mahony declared at the Second National Congress: "It is this Brotherhood that is to furnish the supplies and munitions of war while our friends at home furnish the soldiers to use them."³⁵⁴ In this speech, O'Mahony clearly established that the I.R.B. was the organization that would lead in the charge, but that it was the Fenian Brotherhood who was responsible for supplying weapons with which to make the charge. Stephens placed his stamp of approval on this alignment when, in

³⁵⁰ F. F. Millen to John O'Mahony, June 24, 1865, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Dublin, Ireland), 2, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵¹ John Feeny to John O'Mahony, June 23, 1864 (Ottawa), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵² John Mitchel to John O'Mahony, May 8, 1861 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (France), Transcript by Seamus Pender, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵³ *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 37, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵⁴ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865. TS, Philadelphia. Accessed February 8, 2014, 13.

1864, he reminded O'Mahony that it was his responsibility to furnish the means of conducting the war while it was Stephens' task to raise the army with which the war would be fought.³⁵⁵

John Savage, O'Mahony's replacement, reinforced this idea and claimed that great efforts were being made to supply arms to the revolutionaries in Ireland.³⁵⁶

This idea of sending weapons directly to Ireland, instead of simply sending cash, had its supporters among the lower ranks of the Brotherhood as well. William Moran, a member of the Fenian Brotherhood in Saint Louis, wrote to Stephens following an 1864 tour of America, requesting, "You will please instruct me when and where to forward what arms I have collected."³⁵⁷ While the shipment of arms was widely supported, it was not without its detractors. Richard Quinn, the center of the Davenport Circle, expressed concern in 1864 that shipping arms across the Atlantic could endanger the Brotherhood's existence. However, Quinn expressed that he had no objection to sending weapons as long as doing so did not endanger the Brotherhood.³⁵⁸ William Halpin attested to the perceived importance of procuring weapons for the I.R.B. in 1865. He told O'Mahony that, "All that is needed are the improved implements of agriculture you have over there ..." Given the context of the letter, it is likely that the 'agricultural implements' were weapons. Halpin's statement shows that he believed that increasing the amount of good weapons in the I.R.B.'s possession was all that Ireland needed to be free of the oppressive hands of England. In the Second National Congress, the delegation called upon their colleagues in the Fenian Brotherhood to provide arms to their countrymen. Specifically, the

³⁵⁵ J. Daly (Stephens) to John O'Mahony, April 28, 1864 (Saint Louis), 2, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵⁶ John Savage, Report of the Chief of the Executive, on the Negotiations for a Union of All Irish Nationalists, 1867, TS, University of Notre Dame Library, University of Notre Dame, New York.

³⁵⁷ William Moran to J. Daly (Stephens), June 28, 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Saint Louis), 2, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁵⁸ Richard Quinn to John O'Mahony, June 28, 1864, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Davenport), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

council requested their constituents to provide "Rifles of the best description" to ensure that the I.R.B. would be successful in its bid to liberate Ireland.³⁵⁹

Not only did the Fenian Brotherhood intend to provide weapons, but its rhetoric also called for the Fenian Brotherhood to provide men to use the weapons. Like all of the other resources that were needed by the I.R.B., O'Flaherty brought the need to supply men to light in his 1861 letter to O'Mahony. Father O'Flaherty instructed his fellow exiled revolutionaries, "to sustain them and to carry out successfully this movement we must be prepared to give our means and if necessary our heart's blood."³⁶⁰ The martial aspect of the Fenian Brotherhood is attested to in J.J. McDonnell's 1865 letter. While attempting to gain admittance to the Brotherhood, McDonnell states that he was part of an independent infantry regiment and was very good at comprehending military tactics despite never having seen combat.³⁶¹ McDonnell went on to state that his qualifications suited him more to fighting on the battlefield in Ireland than to aiding the organization in America.³⁶² O'Mahony's secretary, Michael Cavanagh, asserted that, prior to the start of the American Civil War, the Fenian Brotherhood had already established a New York militia regiment, known as the Phoenix Brigade, made up entirely of members of the Brotherhood.³⁶³ James Hanley told Cavanagh that, in 1865, a new Fenian regiment had been established in New York.³⁶⁴ The songs of the Brotherhood also expressed this idea. The song, "The Fenian's Good-bye," pronounces "Oh! Mary Malone, my heart's true joy, come say good

³⁵⁹ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865. TS, Philadelphia. Accessed February 8, 2014., 47.

³⁶⁰ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861. 1.

³⁶¹ J. J. McDonnell to P. O'Rourke, July 24, 1865 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Lyons, Iowa), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml> accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁶² Ibid., 1.

³⁶³ Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher*. 362.

³⁶⁴ James Hanley to Michael Cavanagh, August 11, 1865, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (New York), 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

bye to me, For the boys are bravely marching, to the Isle beyond the Sea, Where we spent our happy childhood..."³⁶⁵ The Brotherhood saw the American Civil War as very beneficial in the effort to organize men to reinforce the I.R.B. James Gibbons of Philadelphia, echoed these sentiments when stating, "From our army too, where Ireland's noble sons fought and bled for their adopted country, came men with true hearts and willing hands to do and die for the dear old land."³⁶⁶

Raising a military force consisting of Irish-Americans was of supreme importance to the Fenian Brotherhood. The rhetoric of the Brotherhood expressed fear that the Potato Famine, along with the outward rush of emigrants, had created gaps in the I.R.B.'s ranks, and argued that the Brotherhood was the only means of remedying the situation.³⁶⁷ In the final statement to come out of the First National Convention, the Fenian Brotherhood covenanted with their compatriots in Ireland: "we shall be prepared with you to meet the implacable persecutors of our race in battle array, to put an end forever to the accursed system under which our unhappy people have suffered such cruel tortures -- or die like men in the attempt."³⁶⁸

This preparedness for battle, however, was not as simple as it appears and took on two distinct variations. The first variation of the need to supply men to the I.R.B., found in the Fenian's literature, was an invasion of Ireland in order to aid in the overthrow of British power. In 1865, the Fenian Brotherhood took steps to ascertain the feasibility of such an endeavor.

While John Mitchel's primary assignment was to funnel money into Ireland, O'Mahony gave him

³⁶⁵ *Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood* (New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866), 7, accessed January 17, 2015, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

³⁶⁶ James Gibbons, Circular: "To the Centres and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood," 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, accessed October 25, 2014, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376..>

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

specific instruction to assess the "practicability of an invasion of Ireland from America."³⁶⁹ This hope of being able to launch an invasion was widely held by the members of the Fenian Brotherhood. However, there was very little discussion of the logistical issues that would be needed for the invasion. Edmund O'Flaherty informed O'Mahony that "others tell [us] to 'wait till the war is over here and we shall then see what an Irish force will be available for our cause.'"³⁷⁰ The war that these hopeful Fenians were referring to was the American Civil War. Kirby Miller notes that, during the Civil War, many Irish ethnic units were converted into Fenian Circles.³⁷¹ At the end of the war, the conversion of ethnic units into Circles provided the Brotherhood with nearly 50,000 members who had military experience.³⁷² John Fredrick avowed that these Irish-American veterans were eager for an armed conflict with England. He told O'Mahony, "Some ardent fellows talk of throwing up their places and starting before the Revolution takes place at all. The returned soldiers of both sides are particularly ardent and would go home to Ireland at their own expense if they were only sure of a fight when they'd get there." Fredrick encouraged O'Mahony to send between ten and twenty thousand men to Ireland to improve the I.R.B.'s chances of success.³⁷³ The Irish-American veterans also expressed the hope of coming to blows with England. Captain Bourke, an officer in the Ninth Massachusetts Volunteers and the center of the Fenian Circle in the Army of the Potomac, wrote to the First Nation Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood to tell them that the Ninth Massachusetts alone

³⁶⁹ John O'Mahony to John Mitchel, November 10, 1865 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (New York), accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁷⁰ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861, 1.

³⁷¹ Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*.336.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 336.

³⁷³ John F. Finerty (Fredrick) to John O'Mahony, May 23, 1865, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Cincinnati, Ohio), 1-2, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

could provide 300 men to an invasion of Ireland.³⁷⁴ Clearly in the mind of Captain Bourke, the Irish veterans of the Civil War could provide an effective force to throw against Ireland's oppressor as soon as a favorable situation was attained. Anthony Griffin asserted that the leaders of the I.R.B. were confident that if the Fenian Brotherhood provided a sizable military force that they would be able to insure Irish liberation.³⁷⁵ While the idea was widely popular, not all members of the Fenian Brotherhood endorsed it. Father O'Flaherty warned his fellow revolutionaries, "The liberation of Ireland will not come through invasion alone. Invasion was tried most unsuccessfully before now."³⁷⁶

The understanding that an invasion alone could not liberate Ireland from the grasp of England leads to world of the Fenian Brotherhood's provision of resources directly to the I.R.B. The leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood understood that they should prioritize other concerns above preparing for an invasion. The Second National Congress explained, "What need is there of enrolling men here in the F.B. for the invasion of Ireland? If all other things needed for such an expedition were provided, we would have but to beat the drum through the streets of New York, and that city alone would furnish a sufficient number of volunteers for it in twenty-four hours."³⁷⁷ O'Mahony claimed "It is for the purpose of the organizing our kinsfolk at home that the Fenian [Brotherhood] is in existence. That is our most certain means of liberating our fatherland."³⁷⁸ As part of the endeavor to organize the men in Ireland, O'Mahony stated that the

³⁷⁴ "Proceedings of the First National Convention of the FENIAN BROTHERHOOD Held in Chicago, Illinois." 1863, online.

³⁷⁵ Anthony Griffin, Fenian Brotherhood Circular Signed by Anthony A. Griffin, 1867, TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York, 3, accessed October 3, 2014, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsdll/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-Ofenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4---0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.5&d=HASH67479bc3ae5921f17891ee..>

³⁷⁶ Edmund O'Flaherty to John O'Mahony, October 5, 1861, 1.

³⁷⁷ Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865. TS, Philadelphia, 9.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 9.

Irish-American nationalists needed to focus on "disciplining and arming" their co-revolutionaries still in the home country.³⁷⁹ An anonymous 1866 biography of Stephens notes that even prior to the war, many Fenians had enlisted in the militia with the intention of using the knowledge to train their colleagues in Ireland.³⁸⁰ Disciplining the I.R.B. was an objective with which the Fenian Brotherhood could help with by sending its members with martial experience. In 1861, William O'Carroll notes that the Fenian Brotherhood had already sent an emissary to Ireland with the hope that the man would be able to help drill the I.R.B.'s forces.³⁸¹ In 1865, James Stephens asserts that he was disappointed that another emissary to Ireland was simply an observer instead of being the first in a series of experienced men who were to aid in preparing the members of the I.R.B. for the uprising.³⁸² In the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood, O'Mahony argued that, "A fund should be set apart, and lodged in safe custody, in New York, subject to the orders of the Central Council, for the purpose of sending skilful military men to Ireland in sufficient numbers previous to any uprising of her people..."³⁸³ The convention also encouraged the members of the Fenian Brotherhood, "let those of us that are in exile give arms and trained soldiers to our Countrymen at home - rifles of the best description, and competent teachers to instruct them in the manner they should be used. Of these we have a sufficient number in America who served in the armies of Republic, and who are ready to give

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁸⁰ James Stephens, *Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic. Embracing an Account of the Origin and Progress of the Fenian Brotherhood. Being a Semi-biographical Sketch of James Stephens, with the Story of His Arrest and Imprisonment; Also His Escape from the British Authorities* (New York: Carleton, 1866), 52, accessed January 12, 2015, <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=bc.ark:/13960/t89g6278q;view=1up;seq=8>.

³⁸¹ William M. O'Carroll to John O'Mahony, July 1861 Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Cork, Ireland), transcript by Seamus Pender, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁸² James Stephens to Fenian Brotherhood Central Council, June 24, 1865, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America (Dublin, Ireland), transcript by Seamus Pender, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁸³ "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865. 13.

their experience and lives if need be in the service of their country."³⁸⁴ For the Fenian leadership, it was their task not to simply fund and arm the men in the I.R.B., but it was also their job to provide instructors who could train their comrades still in Ireland.

What is shocking about the sending of experts to Ireland to aid in the uprising is that when the I.R.B. was able to launch an insurrection in 1867, these skilled men were the largest contribution that the Ireland party of the splintered Brotherhood made. In 1865, many of the I.R.B.'s leadership had been arrested and, as a result, American officers were key in the preparations for the 1867 rebellion.³⁸⁵ The historian Kevin Nowlan notes that by 1865, "Irish-American officers such as Colonel Thomas J. Kelly, General William G. Halpin, and General F.F. Millen had been sent to investigate the position in Ireland, and to provide expert military assistance to the I.R.B. circles."³⁸⁶ By some estimations, a hundred and fifty officers from the Fenian Brotherhood were operating in Ireland prior to 1867.³⁸⁷ When the rebellion was initiated, the Fenian Brotherhood dispatched a ship with five thousand stands of arms, giving further credence to the task of supplying arms, and thirty-nine military men to help instruct the rebels. Sadly, the ship arrived too late to be of any use to the I.R.B.³⁸⁸ Following the failed uprising, Anthony Griffin called upon the Brotherhood to aid the numerous American officers who had been sent to Ireland but following the failed insurrection were now stranded.³⁸⁹ The fact that expert advisors were one of the Fenian Brotherhood's largest contributions to the uprising of 1867 provides a strong indication that this task was a high priority for the Fenian Brotherhood.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 47.

³⁸⁵ Kevin B. Nolan, "The Fenian Rising of 1867," in *The Fenian Movement*, ed. T. W. Moody (Cork: Mercer Press, 1968), 26.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., 27.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 27.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., 34.

³⁸⁹ Anthony Griffin, Fenian Brotherhood Circular Signed, 3.

All of the previously discussed rhetoric addresses ideas held mostly prior to the Brotherhood's internal split and then strongly maintained by the Ireland party. Admittedly, some of these ideas were shared by the Canada party. However, following the fracture of the Brotherhood, new imagery was introduced into the rhetoric of the organization. This new imagined contribution was used to explain and justify the Fenian invasion of Canada. J. W. Byron, the head of the Canada party's War Department, asserted that the invasion of Canada was the only practicable means of liberating Ireland.³⁹⁰ John O'Neill asserted that the Canada party had been using a policy of "freeing Ireland through an invasion of Canada."³⁹¹ Instead of varying from the imagery of the other portion of the Brotherhood, the Canada party painted itself as providing a resource that was key to the liberation of Ireland. Michael Doolday in his book, *The Fenian Progress*, provided substantial information regarding the way that Fenians interpreted the invasion of Canada as contributing to the liberation of Ireland. In the vision he recounted in his book, Doolday witnessed a speech by the martyred General Richard Montgomery. The general tells the army assembled to fight for Irish liberty, "Oh! it is a glorious thing to fight, and, if needs be, to die for Ireland. But, my friends, if you would be finally triumphant, the fight must not be begun, but must be ended, here." This statement preceded the observation that placing the Atlantic between the Fenian Army and England was key to victory.³⁹² This understanding that the war for Ireland needed to start on the American side of

³⁹⁰J. W. Byron, Circular: War Department Fenian Brotherhood, 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York, 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁹¹ John O'Neill, Address of General O'Neill, in Prison at Windsor, Vermont, 1870, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, 1, accessed, 3/31/2015, <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>.

³⁹² Michael Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision Containing the Inspirations of General Richard Montgomery, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Together with a Thrilling Account of the "avenging Angels," in New and Old Ireland. To Which Is Added a Mode of Managing Funds so as to Insure to the Individual Subscriber an Absolute Certainty That His Money Shall Be Invested for His Own Interest, or Be Properly Devoted to the Great Cause for Which It Was Given, When There Are Indubitable Moral and Physical Prospects of Success, Etc., Etc.*

the Atlantic was crucial to the way that the Canada party explained the need to launch their attack. The reason that Canada was seen as so important was that it would give the Fenians the chance to build up a naval force that could be then used to secure Irish liberty. The biography of Stephens notes that the invasion of Canada was an attempt to gain control of several cities from which large ships could be built and dispatched to challenge the English at sea.³⁹³ When discussing the plans of the Brotherhood, Doolday also adds "Nor do they confine their operations to the mere supplying of arms. A fleet of privateers is one of the possibilities of their philosophy. They acknowledge the superiority of England on the seas, and deem it necessary to meet her on her favorite element. They even aspire to the dignity of iron-clads."³⁹⁴ Stephens' biography notes that the capture of Canada would have given the Fenians access to many resources they needed for the war in Ireland besides the fleet, indicating that the Canada party had not abandoned providing the other resources to the I.R.B.³⁹⁵ The invitation to the Canada party's national convention announced,

England's oppression of Ireland is part of her commercial policy, and it is therefore, in her commercial interests that she can alone be vitally touched on the Irish question. This is the key to the solution of the whole problem. Let us secure but a point of territory whereon we can establish a government, in the name of the Irish nation, that can enjoy the belligerent rights to issue Letters of Marque, and run down British Commerce upon every sea, and we shall have freed Ireland.³⁹⁶

This idea was echoed in other places as well. The song "The Boy in the Field" by Richard Oulahan called divine blessings down upon the privateers the Brotherhood hoped to launch from

Also, the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood (New York: Bradburn, 1865), 11, accessed January 17, 2015, <https://archive.org/stream/feniansprogressv00newy#page/n14/mode/1up>.

³⁹³ *James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 85.

³⁹⁴ Doolday, *The Fenians' Progress.*, 49.

³⁹⁵ *James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic*, 88.

³⁹⁶ Invitation, To: Congress of Representative Irish Nationalists, 1868, TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, 1, accessed March 31, 2015, <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Canada to devastate the British merchant fleet.³⁹⁷ In the mind of the Canada party, invading Canada was not a break with older Fenian ideas but instead was still an attempt to provide the resources needed to liberate Ireland. For this party, however, the leaders felt that the resource which was needed was a base from which they could launch privateers to face England at sea.

In 1861, Father Edmund O'Flaherty, the Catholic priest and leader of the Fenian Brotherhood in Indiana, had returned from Ireland with a call to action for his fellow Irish revolutionaries in America. O'Flaherty was not the only Fenian spokesman to argue that the Brotherhood needed to take actions to aid in the liberation of Ireland. Others promoted several ways that the Brotherhood was contributing to a forthcoming war for Irish liberation. However, all of these images were tied together by the idea that the Brotherhood was providing that which was needed to bring liberty to Ireland. The amount of time spent addressing what the Brotherhood was to provide shows that Fenian writers did not simply produce imagery and rhetoric but that they also expected the Brotherhood to take a leading role in acting on their vision.

³⁹⁷ *The Fenian Songster* (Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866), 71, online

Conclusion

John Gibbons had called upon his countrymen to direct their attention across the Atlantic at the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood in 1863. This statement was an example of the authors of the Brotherhood's orientation toward the conflict that was going on in their home country. The most recent historians of the Brotherhood have sought to uncover what factors in the U.S. led to the Irish-Americans joining the Brotherhood. This approach has not given enough credence to the idea that the Fenians had significant transatlantic concerns. Regardless of any domestic issues, the men of the Brotherhood were deeply invested in the objective of liberating their homeland.

The historians who focused on the reason why the ordinary members sought to join the Brotherhood failed to include the rhetoric that leaders of the Brotherhood created. These men produced a deep and varied rhetoric, much of which has been preserved. Examining this evidence does not allow us to formulate a universal argument as to why individuals were joining the Brotherhood. Regardless, these documents do offer hints about the images that leading figures of the Brotherhood used to explain the world and justify the organization's existence and activity. These writers and speakers would build a literature which was focused primarily on the situation in Ireland.

Previous histories of the Brotherhood have obscured the importance of the Irish context to the Fenians. This thesis has endeavored to show that regardless of the social impetus in the U.S. to become a Fenian, these radical nationalists were deeply connected to the situation in Ireland. This approach is very useful to our understanding of Irish nationalism as it breaks from the traditional nation-based historical narrative where Irish men and women were in a constant

struggle to gain admittance to the U.S. This inclusion allows historians to see that the members of the Brotherhood did not exist within the context of America alone but were still deeply invested within the context of Ireland. The historian, Kevin Kenny, notes that studies of diasporas in recent history reveal a “transnational nation.”³⁹⁸ The fact that the Fenians appeared to live in a world impacted by the context in Ireland despite their presence in America means that their history fits in with this larger understanding of immigration studies. The reality that the leaders of the Fenian movement in America were so keenly tied into the transnational Irish nation raises some serious questions for the way we understand these individuals. For example, these men have been routinely referred to as Irish-American or as Irish-American nationalists. However, as they appear deeply interested in Ireland and show little concern for America, beside the way they could use the country, it must be asked if they have been accurately titled. Are these men truly Irish-American or are they Irish who just happened to be in America? Much further study would be needed to ascertain if there were major ideological breaks between the American and Irish Fenians. What is clear at this point is that the Fenian Brotherhood's orientation made it substantially concerned with transatlantic issues in Ireland, meaning that these men can be seen as transplanted Irishmen instead of truly being hyphenated individuals, like their countrymen so desperate to gain accommodation within the American nation.

Incorporating the Fenian rhetoric and its transatlantic orientation to the analysis of the Fenians adds new and previously unexplored layers to the historical knowledge of this group. Instead of seeing Fenianism as a monolithic entity, this research reveals a complexity to Fenianism. It is possible that the transatlantic ideas may not have been universally held by the Fenians. One portion of the Brotherhood clearly oriented itself toward Ireland. However, other

³⁹⁸ Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study," *Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 29.

portions of the Brotherhood may have been less interested in Ireland, and simply used the Brotherhood to improve their standing within American society. If such a disconnect existed, it, along with the poverty of many members, could help explain why an organization, which appeared to be so powerful on paper, was so ineffectual at mobilizing money to go to Ireland and an army to invade Canada. The fact that the images of Ireland being oppressed and England being an evil overlord were used so routinely may suggest that these ideas were not as important to the other layers of Fenianism as it was to the authors. If all members of the Brotherhood had adhered to these ideas, it is unlikely that the leaders would have been compelled to remind them to think in a transatlantic manner. Instead of being a sign that all held the transatlantic orientation, the creators of the rhetoric could have been constantly battling to get the other members to switch to a transatlantic perspective. What is certain is that this understanding of the Fenian rhetoric needs to be included in our understanding of the Brotherhood.

While this thesis was intended to only address a single group of Irish-American nationalists, it has implications for historians' understanding of immigration more broadly. Most activities by past immigrant groups are described as being forms of assimilation. Americans like to view these past groups as willing participants in the American melting pot. This belief that older immigrants were eagerly seeking to assimilate into American society is used to justify American citizen's indignation that many current immigrants are apparently refusing to assimilate. This thesis challenged the idea that all the activities of past immigrants were myopically focused on them fitting themselves into American society. The Fenians were deeply connected to and influenced by transnational concerns. It is possible that actions taken by other Irish nationalists, other Irish-Americans, and other past immigrant groups could be equally driven by concerns for their homeland or home culture. If this is true, then the recent phenomena

of immigrants clinging to home culture may not be new but simply part of a much longer trend for those entering this country from various homelands.

The images of Ireland, England, America, and the Fenian Brotherhood itself have been examined in this thesis. Fenian descriptions of Ireland presented it as an oppressed land in need of liberation. To the Fenians, England, on the other hand, was the oppressor and destroyer of the Irish and was a target of Fenian vengeance. When they included America in their rhetoric, they looked at their adopted land mainly in relation to Ireland, as a distraction from, or an ally to, the Fenian cause. Finally, the Fenian Brotherhood's authors depicted the organization as providing that which was crucial to securing Irish liberation, be it men, money, arms, or a port in Canada from which to launch a privateer fleet. What is consistent in all of these images is that they all focus upon the situation in Ireland. This suggests that the mental world of the Fenian Brotherhood's leaders, as expressed in the organization's rhetoric, was characterized by a transatlantic orientation toward Ireland.

Bibliography

Primary sources Collections

The Fenian Brotherhood Collection, The Catholic University of America,
<http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/collect/fenian/fenian.shtml>

Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Villanova University,
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>

Library of Congress, Online Archives, <http://www.loc.gov/search/?q=fenians&sb=date>

Hathi Trust Digital Library, <http://www.hathitrust.org/>

Specific Primary Sources Documents

Bodkin, D. G. *The Fenian Catechism; from the Vulgate of St. Lawrence O'Toole, Designed for the Use of the Fenian Soldier at Home and Abroad ..* New York: F. McElroy's Steam Printing Rooms, 1867. Accessed May 20, 2014.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/gdc/scd0001/2004/20040330001fe/20040330001fe.pdf>.

Byron, J. W. Circular: War Department Fenian Brotherhood. 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Cavanagh, Michael. *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher, Comprising the Leading Events of His Career Chronologically Arranged, with Selections from His Speeches, Lectures and Miscellaneous Writings, including Personal Reminiscences.* Worcester, MA: Messenger Press, 1892.

"COL JOHN O'MAHONY Death of the Ex-Head Centre. His Remains to Be Sent to Ireland."

IRISH-AMERICAN (New York), February 17, 1877. Accessed February 28, 2014.

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/omahony.htm>.

Committee on Address and Resolutions. "Address of the Fenian of the Philadelphia To Irishmen and Friends of Ireland in Pennsylvania." TS, Villanova University. Accessed July 2, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248738>.

Committee on American Citizens in British Prisons. American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain : Extract from Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood, Held August 30th to September 5th, 1870, Inclusive, in the City of New York. 1870. TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsdll/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11-11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH6a937c3fed8e97009d431b>.

Doolday, Micheal. *The Fenians' Progress: A Vision Containing the Inspirations of General Richard Montgomery, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Together with a Thrilling Account of the "avenging Angels", in New and Old Ireland. To Which Is Added a Mode of Managing Funds so as to Insure to the Individual Subscriber an Absolute Certainty That His Money Shall Be Invested for His Own Interest, or Be Properly Devoted to the Great Cause for Which It Was Given, When There Are Indubitable Moral and Physical Prospects of Success, Etc., Etc. Also, the Constitution of the Fenian Brotherhood.* New York: Bradburn, 1865. Accessed January 17, 2015. <https://archive.org/stream/feniansprogressv00newy#page/n14/mode/1up>.

Fenian Brotherhood. "Invitation To Congress of Representatives of Irish Nationalist." 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

The Fenian Songster. Philadelphia: Barclay &, 1866. Accessed May 16, 2014.

<https://archive.org/stream/feniasongster00phil#page/n8/mode/1up>.

Filkins, S. E. Sixth National Congress, F.B.: Report of the Committee upon Finance and Ways and Means. 1867. TS, Villanova University, New York. Accessed July 8, 2014.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249736>.

Gibbons, James. Circular: "To the Centres and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood," 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed October 25, 2014.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibbons, James. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F. B. 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibbons, James. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B., June 24, 1869. 1869. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibbons, James. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood, July 10, 1869. 1869. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibbons, James. "Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio January, 1865." 1865. TS, Harvard University, Philadelphia.
<http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

Gibbons, James. To the Officers and Members of the F.B. 1870. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibson, James. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B. 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, Buffalo, N.Y. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Gibson, James. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B. 1868. TS, Villanova University, Buffalo, N.Y. Accessed July 14, 2014.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248709>.

Gibson, James, P. Bannon, J. W. Fitzgerald, W. Sullivan, P. O'Rourke, William Fleming, Edward L. Carey, Patrick J. Meehan, Michael Scanlan, and W. R. Roberts. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the F.B. 1865. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University. Accessed October 14, 2014.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248734>.

Griffin, Anthony. Fenian Brotherhood Circular Signed by Anthony A. Griffin. 1867. TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York. Accessed

October 3, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.5&d=HASH67479bc3ae5921f17891ee>.

Hachey, Thomas E., Joseph M. Herson, and Lawrence John McCaffrey. *The Irish Experience: A Concise History*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1996.

Invitation, To: Congress of Representative Irish Nationalists. 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

James Stephens, Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic. Embracing an Account of the Origin and Progress of the Fenian Brotherhood. Being a Semi-biographical Sketch of James Stephens, with the Story of His Arrest and Imprisonment; Also His Escape from the British Authorities. New York: Carleton, 1866. Accessed January 12, 2015.
<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=bc.ark:/13960/t89g6278q;view=1up;seq=8>.

Keenan, Patrick, and Treasury Department. Circular: "Head-Quarters Fenian Brotherhood, Treasury Department." 1868. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed October 25, 2014.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Keenan, Patrick, and William R. Roberts. Circular: To the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood. 1867. TS, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Kiernan, John L. "Ireland and America, versus England, from a Fenian Point of View. A Lecture, Delivered in the Principal Cities and Towns of the West." 1864. TS, Library of Congress, Detroit. Accessed November 25, 2014. <http://lcn.loc.gov/11011807>.

A Life of James Stephens, (Chief Organizer of the Irish Republic,) Embracing an Account of the Origin and Progress of the Fenian Brotherhood. New York: Carleton, 1866. Accessed May 30, 2014. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044019338284;view=1up;seq=15>.

Mitchel, John. *The Life and times of Aodh O'Neill, Prince of Ulster; Called by the English, Hugh, Earl of Tyrone, with Some Account of His Predecessors, Con, Shane and Tirlough.* Dublin: James Duffy & Sons, 1868. Accessed August 24, 2014. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=wu.89090352832;view=1up;seq=1>.

Moan, James, Alex Newet, John McAttre, Hugh Davis, Thoe Mkeban, and James Gibbson. Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia. 1866. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Address of the Fenian Brotherhood of Philadelphia to the Irishmen and Friends of Ireland in Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Accessed October 14, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:248738>.

Nvitation, To: Congress of Representative Irish Nationalists. 1868. MS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University. Accessed October 27, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

O'Leary, John. *Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism.* Vol. 1. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1873.

O'Neill, John. 1868. TS, Address to the Officers and Members of the Fenian Brotherhood.

Accessed March 31, 2015. <https://archive.org/details/addressofgenjohn00onei>.

O'Neill, John. Address of General O'Neill,. 1870. TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic

University of America, Windsor, Vermont. Accessed October 14, 2014.

<http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASHf0cfed13a79a9595cd2c10>.

O'Neill, John. Address of General O'Neill, in Prison at Windsor, Vermont. 1870. TS, Fenian

Brotherhood, Villanova University. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

O'Neill, John. Address of General O'Neill, in Prison at Windsor, Vermont. 1870. TS, Fenian

Brotherhood, Villanova University. Accessed March 31, 2015.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

O'Neill, John. Circular to Claimants. 1867. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University,

Washington, D.C. Accessed October 25, 2014.

<http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

O'Neill, John. Of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood." Address, Semi-Annual Session of the

Council of the Fenian Brotherhood,. 1869. TS, Library of Congress, New York.

Accessed March 31, 2015. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000)))

[bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))).

O'Neill, John. "Official Report of Gen. John O'Neill, President of the Fenian Brotherhood on the Attempt to Invade Canada, May 25th, 1870: The Preparations Therefor, and the Cause of Its Failure with a Sketch of His Connection with the Organization, and the Motives Which Led Him to Join It, Also, a Report of the Battle of Ridgeway, Canada West, Fought June 2nd, 1866, by Colonel Booker, Commanding the Queen's Own and Other Canadian Troops, and Colonel John O'Neill, Commanding the Fenians." 1870. TS, Library of Congress, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<https://archive.org/stream/officialreportof00onei#page/n2/mode/1up>.

Proceedings of the First National Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Chicago, Illinois, November 1863. 1863. TS, The Fenian Brotherhood & The Clan-na-Gael Hosted by Rootsweb, Chicago. Accessed January 17, 2015.
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mruddy/Convention.htm>.

Proceedings of the Ninth General Convention of the Fenian Brotherhood. 1870. MS, Catholic University of America, New York. Accessed June 19, 2014.
<http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH9ff23f222cb9156d05a636>.

"Proceedings of the Second National Congress of the Fenian Brotherhood Held in Cincinnati, Ohio." 1865. TS, Philadelphia. Accessed January 16, 2015.
<http://books.google.ca/books?id=RFINAAAAYAAJ&ots=NzcX4DS7ZW&dq=Proceedings%20of%20the%20Second%20National%20Congress%20of%20the%20Fenian%>

20Brotherhood%2C%20held%20in%20Cincinnati%2C%20Ohio%2C%20January%201865.&pg=PP5#v=onepage&q&f=true.

Roberts, William. Address, To: The Fenian Brotherhood and Irishmen of America. 1866. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Roberts, William. Circular: Head Quarters Fenian Brotherhood. 1866. MS, Villanova University, New York. Accessed June 30, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249720>.

Roberts, William R. Address of William R. Roberts, President, F.B.: To the Fenian Brotherhood and Irishmen of America. 1866. MS, Villanova University, New York. Accessed June 30, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376?type=AllFields&sort=year+asc&page=3>.

Roberts, William R. "Basis of Union." 1867. TS, Villanova University, New York. Accessed July 8, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:249781>.

Roberts, William R. Circular: Treaty of Alliance or 'Basis of Union' From the Head-Quarters Fenian Brotherhood. 1867. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed October 25, 2014. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

Savage, John. Address of the Chief Executive and Council of the Fenian Brotherhood. 1869. TS, Catholic University of America. Accessed June 19, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1-->

0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-
 OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.6&d=HASH91b4ca5d155657dff9e4e.

Savage, John. Address of the Chief Executive and Council of the Fenian Brotherhood. 1869. TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America. Accessed October 4, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.6&d=HASH91b4ca5d155657dff9e4e>.

Savage, John. Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood ... John Savage Chief Executive Fenian Brotherhood. 1866. TS, An American Time Capsule: Three Centuries of Broad­sides and Other Printed Ephemera, Library of Congress, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))).

Savage, John. "Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood." 1870. TS, Fenian Brotherhood Collection, Catholic University of America, New York. Accessed October 12, 2014. <http://www.aladin0.wrlc.org/gsd/cgi-bin/library?e=d-01000-00---off-0fenian--00-1--0-10-0---0---0prompt-10---4-----0-11--11-en-50---20-home---01-3-1-00-0-0-11-0-OutfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL5.7&d=HASH2dd7c743bb85cb51fbef90>.

Savage, John. "Address of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood." Address, Semi-Annual Session of the Council of the Fenian Brotherhood, New York, 1869. Accessed May 22, 2014. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(rbpe+12701000\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/AMALL:@field(NUMBER+@band(rbpe+12701000))).

Savage, John. *American Citizens Prisoners in Great Britain*. 1870. MS, Harvard University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011607820>.

Savage, John. *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*. Boston: P. Donahoe, 1868. Accessed January 17, 2015. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008373458>.

Savage, John. *Fenian Heroes and Martyrs*. Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1868. Accessed May 30, 2014. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951001701374a;view=1up;seq=5>.

Savage, John. *Report of the Chief of the Executive, on the Negations for a Union of All Irish Nationalists*. 1867. TS, University of Notre Dame Library, University of Notre Dame, New York.

Senate of the Fenian Brotehrhood. *Circular To the Officers and Members of the F.B.* 1865. TS, Fenian Brotherhood, Villanova University, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://digital.library.villanova.edu/Item/vudl:247376>.

"Seventh National Congress, F.B. Proceedings of the Senate and House of the Fenian Brotherhood, in Joint Convention at Philadelphia." 1868. TS, Hathie Trust Digital Library, New York. Accessed March 31, 2015. <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000006716072;view=1up;seq=5>.

Stephens' Fenian Songster, Containing All the Heart-stirring and Patriotic Ballads and Songs, as Sung at the Meetings of the Fenian Brotherhood. New York: W.H. Murphy, 1866. Accessed January 17, 2015. <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/012154614>.

Train, George F. "Speech on Irish Independence and English Neutrality. Delivered before the Fenian Congress and Fenian Chiefs at the Philadelphia Academy of Music." 1865. TS, Library of Congress, Philadelphia. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<http://lccn.loc.gov/48042045>.

Trial and Conviction of American Citizens in Great Britain. 1868. MS, Harvard University, Washington, D.C. Accessed March 31, 2015.
<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/011545965>.

"UNION RALLY AT BRIDGEPORT.: MONSTER MASS MEETING. Ten Thousand People in a Tent. Speech for the Union by Hon. Daniel S. Dickinson. Stirring Speech by Thomas F. Meagher." *New York Times* (New York), September 16, 1861. Accessed March 31, 2015. nytimes.com.

Wood, Henry, writer. *When Fenians Fight for Freedom*. Orchestrated by Henry Tucker. J.H. Budworth, 1865, CD. Accessed May 14, 2014.
<http://www.loc.gov/resource/ihas.100009463#seq-1>.

Secondary Sources

Belchem, John. "Nationalism, Republicanism and Exile: Irish Emigrants and the Revolutions of 1848." *Past & Present*, 146th ser. (February 1995): 103-35. JSTOR.

Brown, Thomas N. *Irish-American Nationalism*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1966.

Brown, Thomas N. "The Origins and Character of Irish-American Nationalism." *The Review of Politics* 18, no. 03 (July 1956): 327. Online.

Encyclopedia Britannica Online, accessed February 11, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/>.

Comerford, R. V. *The Fenians in Context: Irish Politics and Society, 1848-82*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1985.

D'Arcy, William. *The Fenian Movement in the United States: 1858 - 1886*. New York: Catholic University of America, 1947.

Irvine, Jeffery A. *Aspects of Identity: Evidence Form the Irish-American Press 1871-1925*. University of Pittsburg, 1994.

Kenny, Kevin. "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study." *Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 134-162. Accessed February 11, 2015.

Lynch, Timothy G. "'A Kindred and Congenial Element': Irish-American Nationalism's Embrace of Republican Rhetoric." *New Hibernia Review* 13, no. 2 (2009): 77-91. Online.

McGee, Owen. *The IRB: The Irish Republican Brotherhood, from the Land League to Sinn Féin*. Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 2005.

Miller, Kerby A. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Miller, Kerby. "'Revenge for Skibbereen;'" Irish Emigration and the Meaning of the Great Famine." In *The Great Famine and the Irish Diaspora in America*, edited by Arthur Gribben, 180-95. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.

Neidhardt, Wilfried. *Fenianism in North America*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975.

Nowlan, Kevin B. "The Fenian Rising of 1867." In *The Fenian Movement*, edited by T. W. Moody, 23-34. Cork: Mercer Press, 1968.

Ryan, Desmond. *The Fenian Chief; a Biography of James Stephens*. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1967.

Snay, Mitchell. *Fenians, Freedmen, and Southern Whites: Race and Nationality in the Era of Reconstruction*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007.

Steward, Patrick, and Bryan P. McGovern. *The Fenians Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858-1876*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013.