

in the larger context of Irish and the immigrant America of the period. Finally, a deeper secondary reading would have helped. For example, Redmond fails to use Tim Meagher's *Inventing Irish America* (2001), an excellent study of the significant changes between 1880 and 1920 in Worcester, Massachusetts and one source that might have provided more of the larger picture. Ultimately then, this book is very useful for those seeking a nice synopsis of what the Irish did in organised American sport before 1920 but it fails to analyse properly what all this activity and achievement meant in the larger story of the Irish immigrant experience in America.

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LAND QUESTIONS IN MODERN IRELAND. Edited by Fergus Campbell and Tony Varley. Pp 272. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press. 2013. £70.

This tripartite volume of essays – surveys, reflections, new research – was prompted by a conference at N.U.I. Maynooth and the editors' subsequent invitation to selected historians and sociologists to revisit the work on the Irish land question that they had largely researched and published between the 1960s and 1980s. They were requested to contextualise the times and circumstances in which their projects were undertaken, to reflect on the issues that coloured and shaped their initial engagement, and to consider possible lacunae and alternative approaches. Following these exegeses, representatives of the next generation of scholars address some of the land-related issues and themes that emerged from the 1990s onwards. In the Introduction, Fergus Campbell explains at some length the volume's gestation and rationale, and pays due homage to its 1983 progenitor, James Donnelly and Samuel Clark's edited collection *Irish peasants: violence and political unrest, 1780–1914*.

The volume's first section consists of two survey chapters, by Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh and Tony Varley on the period of the Act of Union and the twentieth century respectively. In an engaging and challenging essay, Ó Tuathaigh addresses what he terms the dense matrix of interlocking issues and questions relating to the ownership, occupancy and use of land historically in Ireland. The complexity of these questions is prefaced in the author's reflection on Seamus Deane's ideological distinction between the terms 'land' and 'soil' in Irish memory, imagination and history. Varley's analysis of agrarian agitations and the politics of land reform in the twentieth century neatly complements Ó Tuathaigh's contribution and, together, they provide a solid contextual and historical foundation for exploring land questions in modern Ireland.

In the book's reflective section, Barbara L. Solow, Philip Bull, Samuel Clark, David Jones and Fergus Campbell re-engage with their earlier work on the Irish land question, some of which was innovatory and set the agenda for subsequent scholars. The contributions vary in approach, length and pitch, from the confessional to the explanatory and exculpatory. Thankfully, there is little evidence of either point-scoring or score-settling but the counterfactual nature of the exercise, its subjectivity and the representativeness of those involved raise questions about its value. Research and writing take place in a specific time and context and are influenced by factors such as individuality, current knowledge, the availability of source material, and prevailing orthodoxies. Historians and sociologists, like other scholars, are neither omniscient nor infallible and only the most self-deluded and arrogant would not have done things differently if privileged with subsequent research findings and analyses. Historiography

is a constantly evolving process and publications derive integrity from their time, place and context.

Gender, religion and local leadership were some of the more significant themes that were overlooked or only partially explored in the earlier analyses, deficiencies that some of the contributors readily acknowledge, and the third segment of the book addresses some of these issues. Heather Laird traces the contribution of the Ladies Land League and argues for the centrality of women generally in the Land War of 1879–82. Anne Kane addresses the role of the Catholic Church but, unfortunately, her jargon-laden approach mars the analysis. Gerard Moran raises the important question of local leadership in agrarian movements and offers as a case study the part played by Matthew Harris in land agitation in Connacht. The final essay is by Tony Varley, whose focus, as in his survey chapter in the book's first section, is the twentieth century, specifically the role of various farmers' parties and the politics of land redistribution.

The contributions to this compound of survey, reflection, new research and indicators to the future vary in quality, accessibility and significance, and, inevitably, there is some replication of themes and ideas. The introduction and the various chapters are properly referenced and, with the exception of those in section two, have select bibliographies appended. Production values are high, reflecting possibly the book's high purchase price, with an attractive, suggestive cover image, Gerard Dillon's *The little green fields, c.1945*.

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HOMICIDE IN PRE-FAMINE AND FAMINE IRELAND. By Richard Mc Mahon. Pp xii, 221. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press. 2013. £70.

In February 1847, at the height of the Great Famine, James Malone was apprehended by the County Meath constabulary for the murder of Patrick Brennan, some thirty-six years previously. The stabbing and murder of Brennan in the village of Mayo in Queen's County (Laois) in 1811 occurred when two factions contested the space on the fair green as a place to sell their wares. The apprehension of Malone, thirty-six years after the crime had been committed, said much about public attitudes to crime and homicide in general in the Ireland of the 1840s. Ireland was not, as has been casually suggested, a lawless society where homicide and crime were ignored, but one which conformed to a strict moral code. Since the mid-1990s the study of the Great Irish Famine has been greatly enhanced by a number of important multidisciplinary works. Richard Mc Mahon's *Homicide in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland* is another in this field. Using a multitude of sources the author carefully reconstructs and examines homicide in pre-Famine and Famine Ireland. This is achieved by adopting a case-study approach principally in four counties – Armagh, Fermanagh, Kilkenny and Queen's County. By doing so he has filled a gap in the historiography of Famine Ireland. This examination of homicide in Ireland is divided into four key areas: personal relations, family, land and finally, sectarianism. All the while the author asks the question: was Ireland a violent society? Indeed, throughout the book Mc Mahon challenges the assumption that Ireland became a much more ordered society after the Famine, arguing that there was continuity in the approach of family and community in controlling social order, which in turn prevented the escalation of violence and homicide. Controlling individual behaviour varied over time and place but it appears that it was effective enough in Famine Ireland. Skilfully, Mc Mahon addresses the variety of causes of homicide, which in this predominantly rural society ranged from