

Spring 2014

The Ladies' Land League and Irish-American Identity in the American South

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THE LADIES' LAND LEAGUE AND IRISH-AMERICAN IDENTITY IN THE
AMERICAN SOUTH

by

AUDREY RUARK

(Under the Direction of Steve Engel)

ABSTRACT

The Ladies' Land League played an important role in the Land War in the 1880s and was a historically important instance of Irish women's political action. Anna Parnell and others galvanized women in both Ireland and the United States over land reform issues. This paper examines the evidence of the Ladies' Land League actions in the historic Georgia newspapers in an effort to better understand the roles of print capitalism and the development of Southern Irish-American identity.

INDEX WORDS: Ladies' Land League, Nationalism, Imagined Communities, Irish-American Identity, American South, Print-Capitalism

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AMERICAN SOUTH

by

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B.A. International Affairs, Kennesaw State University, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES

STATESBORO, GEORGIA

2014

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Electronic Version Approved:
May 2014

DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad, thank you for always expecting better than my best and enabling me to chase my dreams. I wouldn't have made it this far without your support.

To Kyle, thank you for every late night spent sifting through countless historical newspapers, and never failing to love and encourage me when I needed it the most.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Steve Engel for his invaluable support and guidance through this writing process. The time and effort devoted to this thesis is truly appreciated. Thanks to Dr. Howard Keeley for his time and suggestions in the development of the analysis. Finally, thanks to Dr. Krista Wiegand for her encouragement and involvement in this project throughout the year.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

April 8, 1882 *Irish World*, page 7:

Enclosed find \$102.55 which makes the third installment from the Ladies' Land League of Savannah, which please forward to Miss Anna Parnell, Dublin, for the relief of the evicted sufferers of Ireland, with the good wishes and prayers of the contributors to the Ladies' Land League of Ireland to continue their noble efforts until the No Rent Manifesto achieves a lasting triumph over the accursed system of landlordism.

Newspapers were critical for Irish-Americans as a means of maintaining a connection to Ireland. These newspapers illustrated Benedict Anderson's point of the imagined community and the ways in which print capitalism fosters nationalism. In this thesis I will demonstrate how this took place in the context of the 1880s in the American South. I will provide evidence of Georgia historical newspapers that demonstrated the frequency of articles that covered Irish news. This is important to investigate because it tells us about identity formation among immigrant communities; this case illustrates gender as a layer in the discussion.

For Irish women in the American South, life in the late nineteenth century was a time filled with some change and potential for political activity. Groups like the Irish Ladies' Land League helped to galvanize this path, and played a role in shaping the identity that was formed for these women. This examination of women's political organizing in the American South will help clarify how the Irish built transatlantic networks to advocate and fundraise for the tenant farmers facing excessive rent by absentee landlords in Ireland. Not all landlords lived outside of Ireland, but a complex chain of landlords, tenants, and sub-tenants existed. It is important to examine this

political organization of the Ladies' Land League as the traditional gender roles of the time made this a controversial but revolutionary organization as it plucked women out of the private sphere in which they had been confined and allowed them to partake in the public affairs that impacted their community. In this work I will investigate how the newspapers in the American South were influenced by the work of the Ladies' Land League, and how print capitalism connected transatlantic networks of immigrants. This work is compelling because the southern United States is greatly under researched in the area of Irish migration as compared to the northern states; one of the few scholars on the topic of the Irish in the South include David Gleeson.¹ I will also consider the role that gender plays in the development of nationalism by examining the Ladies' Land League and the way that they rallied support from Irish-Americans.

The Ladies Land League is examined as well as the Irish immigrants in the southern United States that developed a regional and ethnic identity through print capitalism in the late nineteenth century. The Irish Ladies' Land League (LLL) was one of the pioneer groups that advocated women's political organization.² This group worked diligently to bring fair rent and financial support to Irish tenant farmers who faced eviction during the Land War in the late nineteenth century. The majority of the funding for the Ladies' Land League came from those who had immigrated to the United States and felt a strong sense of connection to the homeland. The LLL challenged the gender roles of political activism by demonstrating that women could draw a connection between their traditional place in the home, or private sphere, to public activism by including the

¹ David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 2.

² Other women's political organizations at the time were focused on anti-slavery.

homeland in the private domain. This overlap of the public/private was controversial because women were seen as overstepping the boundaries that had been established.

Anna Parnell, the president of the Ladies' Land League used newspapers as a platform to share her political activism by captivating readers with her wit and knowledge of the issues surrounding the land agitation. Benedict Anderson's idea of the imagined community and print capitalism reflects the Ladies' Land League's use of the press to share its cause and promote the political and national identity of the Irish transnational community in America to those in Ireland. This imagined community of Irish-Americans was an essential factor in the success of the Ladies' Land League's fundraising efforts. Those Irish immigrants who lived in the American South would likely have a much different experience than the majority that immigrated to the American North due to the cultural differences and norms.³ I will demonstrate that Irish issues were getting coverage in towns large and small in the South and that land issues were prominent topics in newspapers in the 1880s.⁴

This difference in social climate will be examined through newspapers, and will contribute to this gap in research by giving examples of the southern experience for Irish immigrants versus the highly studied northern experience.

I will start with a discussion of the broader context for this question: the Irish Famine, the migration and diaspora that followed, the differences in migrant experiences

³ I will explain this further in the Northern vs. Southern Migrant Experience Section.

⁴ It is important to note that Anna Parnell's upbringing in New Jersey would have potentially helped to shape her role as a feminist activist through her consumption of newspapers such as the *Boston Pilot* that may have covered American feminism. As time progressed, the *Boston Pilot* offered a weekly digest of Anna Parnell's work for the Land League. See Rosemary Raughter, "The Ladies' Land League And The Tale Of A Great Sham" Greystones Archaeological & Historical Society, *Our Wicklow Heritage*, accessed January 12, 2014, http://www.countywicklowheritage.org/page_id_93_path_0p3p.aspx.

in the northern United States versus the southern United States, Land reform in Ireland, and finally the role of women in society. Each of these topics will serve as an essential component in understanding why the Ladies' Land League organized as it did. If there were no famine, there would have been fewer immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century. If there were fewer immigrants in the United States, the Ladies' Land League likely would have redirected its efforts to other areas to relieve those in the Land Agitation, ultimately changing the role of women in politics at the time. These interconnected series of events comes together to provide an exemplary setting and time for the Ladies' Land League to organize.

In order to engage the research question, I will examine Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and the logic, operation, and limits of imagined communities. Anderson's theory on nationalism suggests that it is a political and social construct. Anderson presents the imagined community as a tool of nationalism because of the way that print capitalism influences the homogenous empty time shared by those who read newspapers or had newspapers read to them. Anderson claims, "In the modern world, everyone can, should, will have a nationality as he or she has a gender," yet he goes no further into the role of gender in nationalism.⁵ Anderson's silence in addressing the gender question leaves room for feminist critics to make assertions such as: "Nationality, like gender, is a relative term; its identity stems from a system of differences and the affirmation of these differences."⁶ I will address this gap in Anderson's approach by

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso Books, 2006), 5.

⁶ Micheline Dumont, "Can National History Include a Feminist Reflection on History?" *Journal Of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2000): <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/3942985/can-national-history-include-feminist-reflection-history> (Accessed September 15, 2013).

examining the public/private dichotomy and the role that women began to increasingly play in the public sphere in the late nineteenth century.”⁷

Clarification

For the purpose of this thesis I have selected the theoretical framework of Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Community*. Although other scholars on nationalism focus on economic structures, ethnic or cultural norms, Anderson offers an explanation of nationalism through the way that we consume news. It is important to clarify some terminology before proceeding with this work; however, I do not intend to offer a new or revolutionary definition of nationalism or the nation. To better understand the context in which I use specific language, it is crucial to offer background on why the terms being used have been selected. Walker Connor best described the jumble of terminology that surrounds nationalism in his metaphor:

In this Alice-in-Wonderland world in which nation usually means state, in which nation-state usually means multinational state, in which nationalism usually means loyalty to the state, and in which ethnicity, primordialism, pluralism, tribalism, regionalism, communalism, parochialism, and subnationalism usually mean loyalty to the nation, it should come as no surprise that the nature of nationalism remains essentially unproved.⁸

Nationalism, or the loyal devotion to the nation or a culture, is examined throughout this work but in order to understand this concept it is crucial also to define the nation. Several leading scholars offer different angles from which the nation can be examined. Connor describes the nation as a psychological phenomenon that joins a

⁷ Dumont, “Can National History Include a Feminist Reflection on History?”

⁸ Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 111-112.

people and differentiates it from all other people, or a social group that shares a common ideology, institutions and customs associated with a particular territory.⁹ Connor's definition focuses on the idea of the nation as being socially constructed.¹⁰ Anderson discusses the idea of the nation as being limited (having boundaries that define its borders), sovereign (no state has control over them), and a community (deep, horizontal comradeship).¹¹ Anderson also goes on to offer a definition of nationalism; "Official Nationalism" combines naturalization with retention of dynastic power often concealing a discrepancy between nation and dynastic realm and is a self-protective policy that serves the interests of the state.¹² The character of official nationalism is "an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an emerging nationally-imagined community."¹³

Ernest Gellner discusses the importance of literacy as a minimal requirement to be an effective member of a modern community because with literacy comes the ability to fully exercise his rights.¹⁴ Geller's version of nationalism holds that the political and national unit should be congruent, "The basic deception and self-deception practiced by nationalism is this: nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some

⁹ Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, 92.

¹⁰ The focus here is on the outcome of the nation question, the point is more on the sentiment and less on the political outcome of the sentiment.

¹¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7, 110, 159.

¹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

¹³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 101.

¹⁴ Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Modernity," in *Nationalism*. ed. John Hutchison and Anthony D. Smith. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994) 55.

cases of the totality, of the population.”¹⁵ It is important to note that in nineteenth century Ireland, literacy was advanced beyond that of most Western countries due to the National School system introduced by the British authorities in 1831.

Anthony D. Smith argues that nationalism draws on the history of the group at hand, and that “The process of ethnic fusion, particularly apparent in England and France, which their lateral *ethnies* encouraged through the channels of bureaucratic incorporation, was only possible because of a relatively homogenous ethnic core. We are not here talking about actual descent, much less about race, but about the sense of ancestry and identity that people possess.”¹⁶ Smith’s nationalism does not require that its members be all the same, but that they have solidarity through a common kinship or other pre-existing system.

Benedict Anderson suggests that modern print media shape our collective imagination as a political community. Anderson refers to the nation as being “an imagined political community – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹⁷ Anderson elaborates on the imagined aspect of the community as being that members of any nation small or large, will never know or interact with all of their fellow members, but mentally they comprise a community. This image of national identity that an individual works up in his or her mind is a strong contributor to the success of imagined communities. Development of Irish cultural nationalism outside of its borders in the late

¹⁵ Ernest Gellner, “Nationalism and High Cultures,” in *Nationalism*. ed. John Hutchison and Anthony D. Smith. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994) 65.

¹⁶ Anthony D. Smith, “The Origins of Nations” in *Nationalism*. ed. John Hutchison and Anthony D. Smith. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994) 151. Although Irish Protestants like the Parnells didn’t belong to this homogenous ethnic core, the Society of the United Irishmen helped broaden the base of Irish Nationalism in the 1790s.

¹⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. 6.

nineteenth century owed much to the newspapers that circulated to the immigrants in the United States, and for the purposes of this thesis those specific to the American South.¹⁸ This shared print helped them to imagine a community with those abroad, though they might never meet those with whom they feel connected.

¹⁸ It is important to define here what comprises the American South, for the purposes of this paper “The South” refers to the original 11 states that formed the Confederacy: South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina. For the purposes of my study, Georgia, specifically the low country area of Savannah is the area that will be explored from the lens of Irish-Americans. The time period that is being examined is the late nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 2

THEORY

Imagined Community

In analyzing the role that nationalism plays in shaping the identity of Irish-Americans it is important to adopt an approach that nods to the importance of print capitalism as a tool that enables nationalism.¹⁹ For this reason I draw on Anderson's approach over other scholars, as it is apparent that the role of newspapers in the nineteenth century was one that enabled transatlantic political movements to occur successfully. The imagined community that exists between those who read newspapers and have shared experiences provides a platform for nationalism to spread. I will explain the logic of imagined communities and the way that they operate, the operation of imagined communities and the role of print capitalism, and finally the limits of imagined communities and the public/private dichotomy of gender roles in the late nineteenth century.

Benedict Anderson argues that three major cultural developments set the stage for nationalism's emergence: "The first of these was the idea that a particular script-language offered privileged access to ontological truth," writings conveyed religious belief.²⁰ "Second was the belief that society was naturally organized around and under high

¹⁹ Thomas Davis's *Nation* is one example of a newspaper helping to establish nationalism; its Prospectus includes the following, "...a nationality which may embrace Protestant [Anglican], Catholic, and Dissenter [Presbyterian], Milesian [Gael], and Cromwellian, the Irishman of a hundred generations, and the stranger who is within our gates; not a nationality which would preclude civil war, but which would establish internal union and external independence" from Mary Buckley *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*. 65, No. 257 (Spring 1976), 30-44.

²⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 36.

centres.”²¹ Society was no longer ruled by God-chosen leaders, but by monarchs that rule by heredity. “Third was a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indistinguishable.”²² Time was becoming calendrical, moved forward years, months, days, whereas before the sense of time was circular and mythological. These developments that led to the formation of nationalism, in turn helped to bring forth the idea of the imagined community because those who consumed news together shared a bond of common experience of events.

Logic of Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson, author of *Imagined Communities*, provides an excellent framework in which to analyze the Ladies’ Land League political organization as he discusses the role that print capitalism plays in forming identity. Anderson refers to the nation as being “an imagined political community – imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”²³ Anderson elaborates on the imagined aspect of the community since members of any nation small or large will never know or interact with all of their fellow members, but mentally they comprise a community. Imagined communities of people do not share all of the same values or beliefs, but they do share Anderson’s concept of homogenous empty time that bonds them through shared communal experiences.

The Ladies’ Land League’s donors may not have personally known the evictees that they were financially supporting and rallying around, but the idea of the imagined community encouraged these faithful donations to the homeland. This image of national

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

identity that an individual works up in his or her mind is a strong contributor to the success of imagined communities. These networks of donors in the United States supported the Ladies' Land League in their mission to sustain those who were affected by the high rents and inability to pay their landlords, especially those tenants who improved their land or homestead and were forced to pay an increased rent. The support from the Irish in America for the Ladies' Land League enabled them to give what they had to those at home and fight back without physically going back to Ireland. Even the Ladies' Land League members themselves subscribed to this idea of the imagined community as they worked tirelessly for people they knew little or nothing of beforehand, other than the idea that they shared some sort of communal link. This imagined community that exists without face-to-face communication and support is powerful enough to cross seas and remain legitimate. Nationalism is at the root of this imagined community of Irish-American immigrants that provided aid to those who remained in the motherland.

Operation of Imagined Communities

Benedict Anderson suggests that modern print media shape our collective imagination as a political community. Development of Irish cultural nationalism outside of its borders in the late nineteenth century was due much to the newspapers that circulated to the immigrants in the United States. This shared print helped them to imagine a community with those abroad, though they might never meet those with whom they feel connected. Print also held another role in the Land League's efforts; it served as a platform to spread the word about the Land Reform and an opportunity to fundraise for those who felt its effects. This method of identity and support through the shared

consumption of print media reinforces Anderson's idea that although readers in this imagined community will never know every person with whom they share a national identity they somehow are connected.

Anderson believed that the bourgeoisie were the most active and influential in building national movements, "They did come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves through print language."²⁴ Anderson goes on to discuss how the rise of the middle class brought a rise to vernacular print capitalism.²⁵ The newspaper shapes the reader's time and allows the reader to share an experience all at once with others who read it too, providing the familiarity of the same thing at the same time. This homogenous empty time is the feeling of moving up through history, and lets readers feel like they are in the same community.²⁶ Newspapers in the late nineteenth century were not only composed of journalistic news; many essays, poetry, political illustrations, and prose were popular aspects of print that entertained readers and kept alive the memory of the motherland to those who were not physically able to be there, but were able to stay psychologically connected. In this manner, print capitalism created mass readership and allowed for the development of national consciousness.

Although the idea of imagined communities is fashioned in the mind it is boosted further through communication. Anderson reveals some of the factors that enable this process: "What in a positive sense, made the new communities imaginable was a half-fortuitous, but explosive, interaction between a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and the fatality of human

²⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 77.

²⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 76.

²⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 26.

linguistic diversity.”²⁷ This passion for the imagined community is nurtured through this form of print interaction whether it is an article, poem, or image that connects its members. Anna Parnell, president of the Ladies’ Land League, used this imagined community of Irish-Americans to support those who remained in the homeland through sharing her writing with those who would sympathize through the newspapers.²⁸ The Ladies’ Land League thrived from print capitalism and the role it played in spreading the message across the entire community. Imagined communities are confirmed through print, especially newspapers that provide an image in the mind of the reader, and it is the calendrical coincidence through the date on the paper that provides the connection through homogenous empty time.²⁹ As readers are “imagining” the same news from the press on a daily basis, a mass ceremony of simultaneous consumption occurs.³⁰ In this manner, print capitalism made it possible for hoards of people to relate to each other regardless of their location in the homeland or abroad. The nation places much emphasis on the imagined reality that is visually and aurally constructed whether it is where an individual is physically or mentally associated with.³¹

Anderson asserts that nations inspire love and passion; through these emotions an artistic or aesthetic idea is born. “The cultural products of nationalism – poetry, prose fiction, music, plastic arts – show this love very clearly in thousands of different forms and styles.”³² This sort of love is not a romantic type, but more of a familial affection.³³

²⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 42-43.

²⁸ Anna, Fanny, and Charles Parnell’s maternal grandfather was an American admiral, thus enhancing their transatlantic nature.

²⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 33.

³⁰ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.

³¹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 23.

³² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 141.

“Political love” and how the author describes the object of affection as the motherland or home is naturally tied to the individual can be chosen to be represented.”³⁴ Natural ties to the homeland inspire love for the individual to express through aesthetics and the link that the nation has to their mental state, “...for it shows that from the start the nation was conceived in language, not in blood, and that one could be invited into the imagined community.”³⁵

Limits of Imagined Communities

It is necessary to point out a gap in Anderson’s work that plays a crucial role in nationalism, which is the lack of addressing the gender question. The logic of imagined communities does not address the role of gender and the gap it leaves in understanding how gender is involved in the formation of nationalism. In order to fill this gap, it is essential to seek feminist critiques of nationalism as the public/private dichotomy is central to what the feminist movement is about. Catherine Hall claims in her notes from the Bellagio Symposium, “Gender, Nationalisms and National Identities,” that a contradictory relationship between nationalism and feminism exists, “For nationalism has both made possible forms of activism for women which were previously impossible, and simultaneously limited their horizons.”³⁶ In her analysis, the development of nationalism

³³ Decades before the Land League’s presence, there were other Irish attempts at nationalism that were fostered through print capitalism such as Young Ireland, Daniel O’Connell, and the Society of the United Irishmen.

³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 143.

³⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 145.

³⁶ Catherine Hall, “Gender, Nationalisms and National Identities: Bellagio Symposium, July 1992.” *Feminist Review* 44 (Summer 1993): 100.

is a one step forward, two steps back scenario. This stems from the gendering of nations and how it constructs national identities.

Anderson's emphasis on the fraternity experienced by members of a nation elicits the assumption that the focus is on the male. Tamar Mayer argues in, "Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage," that "Anderson envisions a hetero-male project . . . imagined as a brotherhood, eliding gender, class and racial structures within and between national communities."³⁷ In this respect, the brotherhood of imagined communities is established, but the impact of imagined communities on women is unexplained, as well as other dynamics of race and class. Angela Martin offers another feminist critique in her work, "The Practice of Identity and an Irish Sense of Place," in assessing nineteenth-century Irish nationalism in which a corporeal approach was taken in understanding the construction of gender roles in the imagination as well as in daily life.³⁸ Martin's approach of the physical body extends beyond the scope of many other arguments simply based on gender, and encompasses the corporeal sense in which women may have been restricted in nationalism. This is an interesting contrast to Anderson's imagined approach with a more physical instead of mental take on what fosters nationalistic thought.

One of the major factors that defined women's roles in nationalism in the nineteenth-century were the ideals of womanhood, and the public/private doctrine that limited women's sphere of influence. Traditional gender roles of the time held separate spheres for men and women. Middle class men dominated the public sphere, engaging in work and politics that yielded power and influence but also ruled and inhabited the

³⁷ T. Mayer, "Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage" in *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing The Nation*. (London: Routledge 2000): 6.

³⁸ A. K. Martin, "The Practice of Identity and an Irish Sense of Place," *Gender, Place and Culture* 4 (1997): 89–113.

private sphere. Men were able to go and do as they pleased with limited repercussions. Carole Pateman's feminist critique of the public/private dichotomy claims that the personal is political in terms of social life and that women have never been fully excluded from public life, but that their duties are grounded in the domestic sphere.³⁹ Pateman argues that the separation of the domestic life of women from men's public is constitutive of patriarchal liberalism in which the economically dependent wife has been presented as the norm for the respectable classes of society.⁴⁰ At a time when respectability and image were such central issues, women were inherently restricted in either being an ideal image of womanhood, or a rebel fighting for her cause. Women were typically restricted to the private sphere, that being the home and had very rare exposure to the public realm without a male escort such as a husband or a family friend. Women were seen as helpmates, not as equal to men and had to deal with those opinions that confined them to the home. Women were held responsible for the keeping of the home and children, "The family, as the locus of traditional Irish culture and morality, was deemed by the state, church and pressure groups to be in need of protection from foreign corrupting influences. By placing the family at the center of Irish culture, the nation came to be symbolized more and more by Irish motherhood and the sanctity of the Irish Catholic family."⁴¹

Imagined communities are developed through the presence of newspapers and other print, and their members work up a nationalist image in their minds from the content present in the newspapers. In the context of today's society this becomes a bit

³⁹ Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 132.

⁴⁰ Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*, 132.

⁴¹ Dumont, Micheline. "Can National History Include a Feminist Reflection on History?"

more complicated with all of the other sources of media, but when focused on the late nineteenth century this concept is applicable. Anderson's theory of the imagined community points us to the need to grapple with the historical context that surrounds the activities of the Ladies' Land League in order to better understand the application of the concept. This is directly applicable to the Irish situation. The Irish who remained in Ireland were able to send news articles and announcements via telegraph to newspapers in America. These newspapers in turn would publish updates on the situation with the land agitation in Ireland for those who had migrated. This news reached a wide audience as it was widely published, so it was not only the Irish in America that paid attention to the headlines but all those who chose to read the newspaper. Although they were no longer sharing a continent, the Irish in America and those in Ireland were able to pass through time and stay aware of events through the press in a simultaneous manner thus fostering an environment for nationalism to build. The Irish famine, migration and diaspora, migrant experiences, and gender roles all shape the way in which the Ladies' Land League and imagined communities operated.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Now that the theoretical framework has been explained, historical factors that retrace the root of Irish immigration to the United States will clarify the connection of these differing topics. Ireland's Great Famine (1845-1849/1852) was a crucial factor that led to the migration and diaspora to the United States in the nineteenth century. The famine also led to the Land Reform movement, stirring the pot for those Irish who wanted ownership of their homeland. The historical context will reveal the way that each of these areas build on one another in order to make sense of the identity question of Irish-Americans in the Southern United States. In order to understand the broader political and historical context in which the Ladies' Land League arises, it is important to lay out certain events and topics that frame the topic.

Famine

“An Gorta Mór” as the Irish call the famine that occurred in the 1840s and 1850s, marked a momentous event in revealing contempt by the British for the Irish situation which inspired many of the Irish to call for independence.⁴² Before the Irish famine struck, land ownership by the English was one of the factors that contributed the poverty in Ireland. Many of the landlords that owned the majority of the Irish land lived in England and rarely or never set foot in Ireland. These landowner's interests were in collecting money from the Irish tenants and they had stewards, called agents, to watch

⁴² Douglas Daly, “The Leaf that Launched a Thousand Ships,” *Natural History* 105, no.1 (January 1996): 1.

over the land for them. Landowners were hated by many Irish tenants who resided on their properties because they split land into very small holdings for very high prices, resulting in debt as they would raise the rent on a whim. There were different tiers to the land ownership system, often, the smallest tenant paid rent to a higher up tenant and so on until, eventually, one arrived at the landlord. This is interesting as those who were demanding rents could have been tenants themselves and not the landlord. Leases were luxuries that were rarely granted and easily terminated if rent was not paid on time. Their crops were responsible for paying the rent, and if crops failed they could be evicted and homeless. One of the factors that fueled this cycle was the reliance on the potato for general sustenance in Ireland. The potato is a cheap and nutritious staple in the diet and when it is mixed with buttermilk it provides all nutrients needed.⁴³ Potato illness was common, and there was no way to protect the crops from the spread of disease. Irish peasants were dependent on this unstable crop even before the great famine struck. The potato was the most popular crop for Irish peasant masses because it did not need much land to grow in and simply required a spade to harvest it. The potato could only be harvested 30 weeks of the year, making unemployment rates very high because the farmhands had few other skills to sustain them for the remaining weeks of the year. Potatoes don't keep well and the entire crop would rot after 6 months, so seasonal starvation was very common.

Gender division of labor during this period was common. The man's task was to produce and provide food, while the woman managed the food (including preparation,

⁴³ Jonathan Senigaglia, "*The Great Famine Part 2*," Youtube Video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p85P-baYxv4> (accessed September 25, 2013).

preservation, and division of the supply). These roles reflect the traditional gender assignments of men to the public sphere of work and women to the private sphere of the home but it placed a great deal of power in the woman's hands in deciding who ate what and when, "raising the question of women's influence on the incidence of survival or mortality in families during the famine."⁴⁴ Giving to the poor was a socially necessary task. This act fell into the hands of women as they were in charge of the supply. Women, while typically in charge of maintaining the household, also had to take to the workforce at times in order to maintain the ability to provide for their family. In addition to working, women also had to travel long distances in order to buy food. This turned into a dangerous task as it was easily stolen on the journey home making the trip unsuccessful. Although rare, there were certain instances in the folk tales where women or men who traveled to buy food were robbed or beaten for their lot.

From county Limerick tradition we hear of a widow who is said to have first walked over ten miles to town to buy bread or flour or oatmeal only to have her parcel of goods snatched off the shop counter by another woman. She then had to set out for another town in search of provisions, and eventually arrived home with two loaves of bread and a little milk for her son, having journeyed more than forty miles for this amount of food.⁴⁵

These desperate times seemed to expose the urgency of obtaining food regardless of the cost; food theft became common as a result. Alternative foods even became in demand as certain weeds, such as charlock, that were typically consumed by the poor were a frequent source of nutrition by those who once looked down upon it.⁴⁶ At the end of the famine, one out of every three people was gone from Ireland due to either

⁴⁴ Patricia Lysaght, "Perspectives on Women during the Great Irish Famine From the Oral Tradition." *Béaloides*. 64/65, (1996/1997):77.

⁴⁵ Lysaght, "Perspectives on Women during the Great Irish Famine From the Oral Tradition," 79.

⁴⁶ Lysaght, "Perspectives on Women during the Great Irish Famine From the Oral Tradition," 82.

migration or death from the scarcity of food or disease associated with it.⁴⁷ For the two-thirds of the nation that was solely or almost-solely reliant on the potato this was a devastating blow to health and well-being.⁴⁸ Death from starvation, or diseases that accompanied it was all around Ireland.⁴⁹ The smell was described as terrible as it came not only from the decaying plants, but also from the unburied bodies that had passed from hunger and disease. These decaying leaves are the ones said to have launched a thousand ships.⁵⁰

Migration/Diaspora

One and a half million people left Ireland between 1845-1851 and two million more in the 20 years that followed.⁵¹ The increase in physical mobility in the middle of the nineteenth century made this journey possible by the advancement in production of steamships and other forms of transportation such as railways. These immigrants were typically poor, but had the means to provide a way out through private financing, which would include indentured-servitude contracts. The poorest of the emigrants only made it as far as England. Emigration from the famine did not end until the early twentieth century, and 80% of the immigrants went to the United States despite it being more expensive than other destinations.⁵² Remittances were pre-paid tickets sent back to friends and family in Ireland so that they could migrate, often coming in the form of the

⁴⁷ John Kelly, *The Graves are Walking*, (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co. 2012), 2.

⁴⁸ Kelly, *The Graves are Walking*, 3.

⁴⁹ These numbers mentioned remain controversial.

⁵⁰ Daly, "The Leaf that Launched a Thousand Ships."

⁵¹ Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-1852* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995), 297.

⁵² Kinealy, *This Great Calamity*, 297.

American Letter. This was a welcomed sight to those in Ireland as it provided a way out, but those who were financing the remittances were often in communication with those back home and delivered money and news of the new life they were creating. This emigration was seen as more of exile and banishment and not so much as a quest for opportunity.⁵³

Benedict Anderson discusses William Acton's belief that "Nationality arose from exile, when men could no longer easily dream of returning to the homeland."⁵⁴ Irish emigration began to be seen as exile and banishment rather than a quest for opportunity and self-improvement.⁵⁵ This migration from Ireland to other parts of Europe and America due to the famine certainly fits the bill for Acton's sentiments. "By 1890, 40 per cent of those born in Ireland were living outside of it – in Britain, North America, and the rest of the English-speaking world."⁵⁶ This mass number of immigrants led to imagining Ireland existing as a nation as much outside as inside the national territory thanks to the nationalist newspapers that circulated from Ireland to America to sustain political movements.⁵⁷ As Anthony McNicholas argues, "The process of imagining themselves as a nation was thus facilitated for the Irish, (indeed made necessary), by exile."⁵⁸ This transatlantic nature of print capitalism plays directly into Anderson's concept of the imagined community.

⁵³ Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora And Comparison: The Global Irish As A Case Study." *Journal Of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 137.

⁵⁴ Anderson, Benedict. *The Spectre of Comparison*. New York, NY: Verso Publishers, 1998. 60.

⁵⁵ Kenny, "Diaspora And Comparison," 137.

⁵⁶ McNicholas, Anthony. "Faith and Fatherland: Cultural Nationalism and the Irish press in mid-Victorian England." *Cultural Studies* 24, no. 6 (November 2010): 821.

⁵⁷ McNicholas, "Faith and Fatherland," 821.

⁵⁸ McNicholas, "Faith and Fatherland," 824.

As many Irish women as men immigrated to America. These women became heavily concentrated in working domestic service jobs in the United States. Irish women were an integral part of immigration to America because of their willingness to work and provide remittances to those in the homeland, placing them as the matriarchs of an immigrant chain.⁵⁹ The vast majority of those who immigrated to America had their fare paid for by those fellow Irishmen and women who immigrated before them, indicating that a transatlantic network blanketed Ireland especially demonstrated through the correspondence of sending newspapers back and forth.⁶⁰

Northern vs. Southern Migrant Experience

When the Irish began to board ships to emigrate to America, the majority of immigrants ended up in Northern cities such as New York or Boston. The number of Irish immigrants that settled in the American South comprises a very small amount of the total number of migrants; 90% of Irish migrants did not settle in the South during this wave of immigration.⁶¹ For those who did settle in the South, Savannah was a popular destination. An Irish population existed in Savannah since the colonial period, but during the 1830s the first large wave of Irish immigrants in Savannah began to come in seeking jobs with contractors recruiting workers to build for them.⁶² From 1848 onward most Wexford immigrants who settled in the South came directly to Savannah in small shops arriving from New Ross and the Wexford town, with 221 direct arrivals from County

⁵⁹ Janet Nolan, "Women's Place in the History of the Irish Diaspora: A Snapshot." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 28, no. 4 (Summer 2009): 77.

⁶⁰ McNicholas, "Faith and Fatherland," 824.

⁶¹ Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 2.

⁶² Monsignor Lory Kehoe, *County Wexford and Savannah, GA 1848-1860*, (Gorey:2013), XI.

Wexford to relocate and work seasonal jobs for income.⁶³ By 1850, the Irish population in Savannah comprised 10% of the total population with 1,555 immigrants.⁶⁴

In the nineteenth century, there was surely a difference in cultural atmosphere in the cities of the American North versus those of the American South. The three main areas I will focus on are social, economic, and political variances of the regions that would have affected the lives of Irish immigrants of the time. These three areas are crucial to the understanding of how women would have organized politically at the time, and what limitations they would have faced due to the regional differences. It is important to also clarify that this difference in the North and South is directed towards the Irish-American experience.

Although there were similarities, the Irish saw themselves as exiles in this country with great ties to their homeland.⁶⁵ Irish-Americans in the South lived in close proximity with blacks as they were poor free whites who sought many of the same positions of employment. As immigrants, they had little knowledge of the existing social hierarchy of whites over blacks in the South and didn't seem overly concerned with the interaction between them aside from the competition for jobs. In the early 1800s, non-slaveholding white laborers, such as Irish immigrants, had regular contact with urban slaves and blacks.⁶⁶ Some stereotypes that were placed on the Irish were that they were quite similar to blacks in negative ways: subservient, liars, pilferers, and insolent individuals.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 6.

⁶⁶ Timothy James Lockley, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2001), 24.

This had quite a different connotation in the American South versus the American North due to the degrees of segregation in these regions.

Northern states focused on production of textiles, and workers were populous in the factories. In the South, agriculture was the main source of labor, and many of the jobs that Irish immigrants sought were met with competition from black workers. Irish-American women were more successful in urban areas as the opportunity for jobs was higher. Older Irish women dominated the cloth trades, such as seamstresses and dressmakers, while younger Irish women worked trades such as chambermaids or domestic servants.⁶⁷ These positions were often sought out by black women as well, so the Irish and black women often found themselves working together regularly. For single or working women that migrated to America, obtaining jobs in domestic service was a popular option and the women used the wages earned as remittances for family members back in Ireland. These Irish women in the industry are typically referred to as “Bridgets.” This cycle of remittances proved to play an integral role in immigration as those who lived back in the motherland often couldn’t come up with the finances to emigrate on their own.

Political differences and hostilities in the American North and American South stemmed from much of the hostilities carried over from the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. These deeply divided states held values that developed from their political affiliation at the time. Women were seeking suffrage in this era and the prohibition movement was also very active. Women in the United States were able to express their political views in a way that women in Ireland had yet to do.

⁶⁷ Lockley, *Lines in the Sand*, 35.

In Savannah, Georgia, evidence suggests that working class women labored from necessity to survive. Two-thirds of working white women were either the principal or sole breadwinner of the household.⁶⁸ Savannah's booming Irish population in the late nineteenth-century was composed of many young migrants seeking work; Irish women in particular dominated the least skilled areas of employment such as whitewashing, domestics, or chambermaids. These Irish immigrants in the South, or Irish Southerners as David Gleeson refers to them, were largely the migratory result of the famine and influenced many urban institutions and held a historical significance in southern economy.⁶⁹ For these Irish immigrants, the American South was certainly a culture shock due to the southern climate and large presence of African Americans. Unlike in the North, the Irish in the South never dominated the population of any city, so reception by natives was more agreeable as Irish immigration never threatened to overwhelm cities in the South.⁷⁰ Irish success in the labor market, as well as in politics leaves a lasting impression in the history of the American South.

Women in Politics

Starting in the early nineteenth century, women were able to begin devoting themselves to the cause of nationalism regardless of the opinions that others held. The public/private dichotomy of the nineteenth century was one that often held "respectable" women in a bind of the home. Traditional gender roles advocated that women were expected to reside in the private sector and were supposed to fulfill household and

⁶⁸ Susan Delfino, *Neither Lady nor Slave* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press 2001), 105.

⁶⁹ Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 187.

⁷⁰ Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 192.

mothering duties in this sphere but this was not the only duty for the working class women of Ireland:

Women in Ireland were still not fully domesticated within the home, as is clear from the numerous images of women out-workers found in popular illustrations of this period. As the site of production shifted dramatically in the industrializing world, the sexual division of labour became entrenched; as the social and economic value of men's work increased, that of women correspondingly decreased, constituting what Engels called "the now controlled household, reducing women to virtual slave status – object of his desire, mother of his children."⁷¹

Women of the middle class were confined to the private domestic sphere, unless escorted by a male counterpart to their destination. The middle-class viewpoint on working class women in public lies in the demeanor that they carry while out. It was not uncommon for a woman to hold a job in the working class, and this would often require her to go about unaccompanied as her husband would work as well. The attitudes towards these women were based on what they were suspected to be up to. If a woman is hurrying about town in order to complete her task in public it was viewed as respectable, but those who loiter and hang around for too long were seen as unnatural and came to be a sign of doubtful morality as this behavior was associated with prostitution.⁷² Much of this perception came about by the ideals of middle-class Victorian womanhood that believed the woman's place was to maintain the hearth and home, and being out in public alone showed that women didn't uphold those values in her life.

Working-class family life depended very much on what type of job the head of household held. Artisans were at the top of this class, often living somewhat comfortably depending on the success of their trade. Women who were without a male head of

⁷¹ O'Sullivan, Niamh. "The Iron Cage of Femininity: Visual Representation of Women in the 1880s Land Agitation." *Ideology and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (1998): 183.

⁷² Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 10.

household often tended to be on the opposite end of this spectrum. They lived without a real way to provide for their family as women were not paid near as much as men, and were not always eligible for jobs that could bring in a strong income. This evolution of the middle class woman transformed them into a superficial status object rather than a partner for their husbands. Around the middle of the century, many of these women became too expensive to keep happy and ended up driving some men away from the idea of marriage because of the cost involved. Middle class women seemed to relish in the idea of status and appearance as education was not a priority for women early in the century and this social appearance was the only way they were able to rise in society. We know that as the century turned, these attitudes began to change as women wanted more power and the ability to be true citizens in society. For working class women, the evolution over the nineteenth century certainly had an impact from the role of the family and the slowly shrinking numbers of children that allowed them to have more freedom.

Social class was a good indicator for the type of education that young women received. In the Victorian era, public schools for Irish girls were state funded and established by the British government. These national schools were primarily attended by children of the working-class; those in the middle and upper-classes were educated at home by governesses and had access to their family's library.⁷³ Privileged girls would often read and study what other family members had interest in, such as books from their fathers and mothers. Girls in the public schools were not exposed to this type of scholarship as the curriculum they undertook was catered towards domestic subjects

⁷³ Deirdre Raftery, Judith Harford, and Susan M. Parkes. "Mapping the Terrain of Female Education in Ireland, 1830-1910." *Gender and Education* 22, no. 5(September 2010): 566.

including botany, hygiene, music theory and domestic economy thus furthering the cycle of women remaining in the domestic sphere.⁷⁴

Women in England who held an interest in politics were able to attend the meetings of the House of Commons; however they were quarantined to the Ladies' Cage. This was important for Irish women as well, for decisions affecting their livelihoods were made in the House of Commons. This visitors' gallery for women was adorned with a large metal screen that shielded them from the happenings below.⁷⁵ In confining women to this area, the social norms of women being confined to the private sector were reinforced. The women were able to hear and see what was happening, but due to the configuration of the cage there was no way to participate, essentially turning them into spectators.

⁷⁴ Raftery, Harford, and Parkes, "Mapping the Terrain of Female Education in Ireland," 570.

⁷⁵ See figure 1.

Figure 1: The Ladies' Gallery, House of Commons

Illustrated London News, *Ladies' Gallery, House of Commons*, 1870, From: Parliament UK, catalogue number WOA 3938. Accessed 7 Oct. 2013. < <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/electionsvoting/womenvote/parliamentary-collections/collections-19thc-and-suffragists/ladies-gallery/> >



CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Land Reform

The Land War in Ireland was really a prolonged period of civil unrest that lasted from about 1879-1882/1886. It served as a stepping stone towards the development of Irish independence that began with the catalyst of poor crop yield and frustration expressed in mass meetings to politicians such as Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt. Citizens began to band together and rally support and change for the situation at hand. The first major public demonstration was a mass meeting held in Irishtown, Co. Mayo, in April 1879.⁷⁶ The model for these mass gatherings was Daniel O'Connell's Monster Meetings, which were associated with the unsuccessful campaign for Repeal of the Act of Union. Land ownership was a major issue in Ireland in the nineteenth century as absentee landlords, many of whom lived in England, demanded excessive rents for small pieces of land. The majority of Irish farmers were tenant farmers and most of them lacked a formal lease that would grant them any rights to their land.⁷⁷ Farmers were sharecroppers and tenant farmers in their own homeland and felt the pressure to make unrealistic rents on very little crop yield.

Three F's were demanded by tenant farmers: Fair rent, Fixity of tenure, and Free sale from the absentee landlords that charged unfair rents to those in Ireland.⁷⁸ Fair rent was essentially that Irish farmers would not be subject to "rackrents" in which a landlord

⁷⁶ Terence McBride, "John Ferguson, Michael Davitt and Henry George - Land For the People." *Irish Studies Review* 14, no. 4 (2006): 421.

⁷⁷ Timothy W. Guinnane and Ronald I. Miller. "The Limits to Land Reform: The Land Acts in Ireland, 1870-1909." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (1997): 593.

⁷⁸ McBride, "John Ferguson, Michael Davitt and Henry George - Land For the People," 423.

would solicit bids for rent. Fixity of Tenure was an informal and perpetual lease, and free sale amounted to tenant's rights when the land holding would change hands.⁷⁹ Due to these circumstances, the Irish National Land League was established in October 1879 as a way to advocate and support the tenant farmers being charged excessive rents. The Land League encouraged farmers to resist paying these unfair rents until faced with eviction or physical force during the Land Agitation.⁸⁰ The term boycott originated in this situation as the people voluntarily chose not to deal with or obey the orders of Captain Charles Boycott, who worked as the land agent on the Mayo estate of Lord Erne, an Anglo-Irish peer.

The Irish National Land League, or Land League as it commonly became known, set out to help poor Irish tenant farmers in dealing with the landlords that dominated Ireland and demanded outrageous rents. Charles Stewart Parnell the president of the Land League and his secretaries Michael Davitt, Thomas Brennan, and Andrew Kettle founded the organization in 1879. The Land League's slogan "The land of Ireland for the people of Ireland" furthers the practice of the Ulster Custom, or the three F's (fair rent, fixity of tenure, and free sale).⁸¹ Originally seeking to reach the three F's in a peaceful manner, they held mass meetings, public demonstrations, and marches.

In tackling such controversial topics, the leaders of the Land League began to cause quite a stir and many were thrown into jail for their actions in furthering the cause. It became clear that something had to be done in order to follow through with the Land Leagues' mission. In 1880, Michael Davitt suggested that Anna Parnell, sister of Charles

⁷⁹ Guinnane and Miller, "The Limits to Land Reform," 594.

⁸⁰ The Land League modeled itself on prior organizations such as the Tenant Right League and the Catholic Defense Association.

⁸¹ Guinnane and Miller, "The Limits to Land Reform," 594.

Stewart Parnell, take charge of the newly founded Ladies' Land League. The Ladies' Land League held its inaugural meeting in New York in 1880, providing the assistance needed by the Land League to carry on the cause. The formation of the Ladies' Land League was the first time in history that women assembled as an official body to engage in Irish political reform.⁸² Many women were hesitant to join the Ladies' Land League until the executives of the Land League encouraged them to join.

Much of Davitt's motivation in forming the Ladies' Land League came from the circumstances surrounding the men in the Land League and the reality of its possible elimination with many executives being imprisoned. Women, though not exempt, were less likely to be thrown in jail, so it seemed like a natural fit for them to carry on the cause while the men were detained. Anna's brother, Charles Stewart Parnell, was not supportive of the idea of his sister taking charge of the Ladies' Land League as he held the traditional ideals of womanhood to be in the home, not in politics. Anna Parnell recaps these experiences with the Land League in her memoir, *Tale of a Great Sham*.⁸³

Anna Parnell, president of the Ladies' Land League, was among the women who observed the meetings from the Ladies' Cage and wrote about her experience in 'How They Do It In the House of Commons'. In the years following, Anna Parnell gave many speeches in support of the Land League, and didn't miss an opportunity to bring this issue of women's involvement to the forefront. For example, a newspaper report of an address by Anna Parnell in April 1881 at a rally in Charleville, County Cork insisted that

⁸² Marian Broderick, *Wild Irish Women: Extraordinary Lives From History* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2001), 170.

⁸³ Anna Parnell, *Tale of a Great Sham*. (Syracuse, NY: Arlen House, 1986).

Anna was received with great enthusiasm, but called out the men for completely surrounding the platform from which she gave her speech in a manner that prevented the ladies present from hearing what she had to say. Anna said, “The men of Ireland have had plenty of meetings. They have had plenty of people to speak to them for the last two years, and if they have not been able to profit by those meetings before now I am afraid there is not much use in their going to any more trouble now.”⁸⁴

In nineteenth-century Ireland, women in politics were few and far between, and it seems that those who took a stance on issues, such as Maud Gonne and the Parnell sisters, were widely known and came from educated backgrounds. They were not typical working class women, but they connected with women of all backgrounds on issues, especially centering on issues that could be extended to women. Gerry Kearns reveals the contradiction in the way that Irish women were perceived as symbols of the Irish nation, but their role in the development of Irish nationalism is often overlooked.⁸⁵ Irish women were involved in political agitation and physical combat, going past the traditional perception of these women as just figureheads for the cause.⁸⁶

Ladies’ Land League

Ladies Land League president, Anna Parnell, was the fifth of six daughters and five sons born to Irish-American mother Delia and father John Henry Parnell of County Wicklow. Her father was a landowner; her mother and other women in the family were

⁸⁴ Adrian N. Mulligan, “By a Thousand Ingenious Feminine Devices: The Ladies’ Land League and the Development of Irish Nationalism,” *Historical Geography* 37, (2009): 166.

⁸⁵ Mulligan, “By a Thousand Ingenious Feminine Devices,” 162.

⁸⁶ Geraldine Horan, “Discourses of Gender and Nationalism in Early Twentieth-Century Germany and Ireland: an Analysis of Four Nationalist Women’s Texts.” *Patterns of Prejudice* 45, no. 5 (2011): 473.

highly literate and provided her with a polished upbringing. Anna began writing on the politics that surrounded her brother, and it became apparent that she inherited her mother's animosity towards British rule of Ireland. She observed her brother Charles' political activism in the House of Commons and wrote a series of articles called "How They Do it in the House of Commons", recording her observations from the Ladies' Cage.⁸⁷ In 1851, Anna published "The Irish Land Question" under her brother's name in her uncle's newspaper the *North American Review*.⁸⁸ Anna's later writing was geared towards topics such as women and their exclusion from politics, the financial aid provided by the Ladies' Land League to those who were evicted, and also the way that workers were treated by the government.⁸⁹

Fanny Parnell was best known for her poetry and for including nationalist sentiments in her poems to bring together the people of Ireland for the Land League's cause. In 1864, Fanny published poems in the Fenian newspaper *Irish People* and became a national celebrity for her work.⁹⁰ Fanny toured the United States in order to raise funds for the Land League and had hopes that the Ladies' Land League would spark competition with the men for fundraising. After many male Land Leaguers began to get arrested it became a necessity that the ladies carried on the cause. It was no longer was a competition between men and women, but a continuance of the original mission. The Ladies' Land League not only kept the efforts of the Land League going through

⁸⁷ O'Sullivan, "The Iron Cage of Femininity," 181.

⁸⁸ Mary Cullen and Maria Luddy. *Women Power and Consciousness in 19th Century Ireland* (Dublin: Attic Press, 1995), 291.

⁸⁹ Beverly E. Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism* (Bethesda, MD: Maunsel & Co., 2005), 26.

⁹⁰ Fanny's nationalistic poetry was also featured in the *Boston Pilot* newspaper, edited by John Boyle O'Reilly.

fundraising for those facing evictions, but also compiled the “Book of Kells” that reported the numbers of evictions by local landlords and other detailed information on tenants in the area.⁹¹ The Ladies’ Land League even manned the printing presses of *United Ireland*, the Land League’s newspaper publication, while the men were imprisoned.⁹² In doing so, the Ladies’ Land League allowed women to assert a role in political activism locally and in the homeland like they had never been able to before. Two visions began to emerge from the Ladies’ Land League, the radical and conservative.⁹³ Radical Land Leaguers felt that reform in Ireland should also take place in the United States. These sentiments began to form a distinction in the ideals of the Land Leaguers. The Conservatives thought that the Ladies’ Land League should just focus on social and political reform in Ireland.

In a set of manuscripts from the National Library of Ireland, several correspondences to Anna Parnell were documented that shed light on the types of activities that the Ladies’ Land League administered. In a letter addressed to Anna Parnell on November 10, 1881, Charles McMonagle of the Fahag Branch of the Irish Land League wrote:

“Madam,

I hope you will excuse me for taking the liberty of addressing you on a subject in which you have taken such a deep interest, I presume you will overlook my presumption I mean the P.N. Land League of little while previous to the arbitrary and cowardly arrest of your illustrious brother we got the above named branch established here (being to that time joined to the Buncrana branch) and at

⁹¹M. O’Neill, “The Ladies’ Land League”, *Dublin Historical Record*, 35, no. 4 (September 1982): 124.

⁹² This action was particularly significant because the European printing industry was quite hostile to employing women.

⁹³ Ely M. Janis, “Petticoat Revolutionaries: Gender, Ethnic Nationalism, and the Irish Ladies’ Land League in the United States,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 27, no. 2 (Winter 2008): 5.

the time the central executive were obliged to remove their offices from Dublin, we were about to send a remittance, for the purpose of getting our branch affiliated, but since they removed from Dublin I have no knowledge of their whereabouts so our branch still remains to be affiliated. Believing that you can tell us where they intend holding the central office in the future I will feel very grateful to you for sending me the name and address of the secretary of the central executive.

Your humble servant,
Charles McMonagle⁹⁴

These types of letters to Anna Parnell and the Ladies' Land League were very common. Donations were sent in as well as membership lists and requests for lectures. The manuscripts that I examined had over one hundred letters to Anna Parnell. The vast majority of the letters came from Ireland, and pertained not only to the Ladies' Land League, but to the Children's Land League as well. Some of the letters dealt with the treatment of the men of the Land League while they were imprisoned, and gave updates on living situations and diet. This particular letter mentioned previously was a common type of correspondence to Anna from a chapter of the Land League.

Anna Parnell knew that it was essential to create news for the Ladies' Land League and used existing Irish-American "association" newspapers to get her work published at a time when Americans were highly engaged in political events. These newspapers were very supportive and encouraged readers to contribute to the cause, published tallies of contributions, and thanked them when they were active.⁹⁵ To effectively reach readers, Anna had to portray the Land Leagues as more than just an interest group that gave women something to do in an era when women were barred from

⁹⁴ Letter to Anna Parnell, from the Anna Parnell Holdings at the National Library of Ireland, Manuscript no. 17,701.

⁹⁵ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 26.

direct participation in politics.⁹⁶ Anna not only knew that it was essential to create the news, but to shape herself into a newsworthy subject, one of high visibility to create interest in her work. Regardless of whether Anna Parnell was present at Ladies' Land League meetings, or away on business, she knew that it was essential to communicate her presence, Anna was adept at tailoring her message to the interests of American women readers in particular, similar to the strategies of newspaper editors of time.⁹⁷

Anna had the leadership skills, the fundraising abilities, and the passion to take the Land League as an organization as far as it could be expected to go, given that it served two constituencies divided by the Atlantic Ocean; had no start-up funds; had no offices; was constantly at odds with the law; relied entirely on donations; was spread all over Ireland; and was composed of volunteers whose characteristics and reasons for involvement were as varied as their educational and economic profiles. If these factors were not enough to suggest any success attained would be hard-won and fleeting, the Land League's titular heads spent most of the time of their central work in jail, while Anna and the Ladies' Land League were left to keep the pressure up in public opinion; her travels in rural Ireland: her extensive use of the newspaper presses for coverage her stump speeches, her fundraising; and, her work in building tenants' cottages.⁹⁸

Female politicians, like Anna, benefitted from the social compulsions of women to form groups and in doing so writing for newspapers and magazines to mirror their interests.⁹⁹ This spread of knowledge of organization through the press really launched the Ladies' Land League as an organization and enabled them to rally the support needed to make their goals a reality. Women were not acknowledged as true citizens of society, as they were deemed "under coverture" of their husbands or fathers.¹⁰⁰ Many women felt pressure from their church or husbands to maintain the ideals of Victorian womanhood and remain in the home, particularly Catholic women. However, it is evident that the

⁹⁶ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 5.

⁹⁷ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 12.

⁹⁸ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 9.

⁹⁹ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 285.

¹⁰⁰ Marian Ramelson, *Petticoat Rebellion*. (Old Woking, Surrey: Unwin Brothers Limited, 1967), 47.

Protestant Parnell sisters and other leading figures in the Ladies' Land League did not feel the need to be bound by these standards. The Ladies' Land League addressed this issue of tending to the home by extending it to the homeland, and deeming it as philanthropic work. One of Charles Stewart Parnell's most famous lines dealt with the importance of the preservation of the house of residence as a central factor to the land campaign and brought the domestic into the political; "Keep a firm grip on our *homesteads* and lands."¹⁰¹ This opportunity gave women the chance to demonstrate their intelligence and competence and gave them a sense of pride in political activism and leadership. In turning this type of work into a sort of philanthropy it allowed women to express themselves in a political manner, with a traditional sort of motivation behind their actions to justify it being in the public sphere.

When Charles Parnell was released from jail in 1882 and negotiated the Kilmainham Treaty he went on to disband the Land League and Ladies' Land League as he felt that they had served their purposes. He felt that the Land League was meant to serve as a mass-agitation movement and not as a radical political entity, and was very unhappy with the extreme turn that the organization had taken under the women.¹⁰² Knowledge that the women of the Ladies' Land League had attended evictions, and even gotten physically involved in altercations reinforced his decision to bring the organization to a halt. Charles publicly called out Anna and the Ladies' Land League, claiming that they were misusing funds for unnecessary expenses for those who were evicted in ways

¹⁰¹ From http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Charles_Stewart_Parnell

¹⁰² Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London: Dingle, 1983), 31.

that the Land League had not intended for the money to be spent.¹⁰³ The men of the Land League then reigned back the organizations duties and disbanded the ladies work. Anna Parnell believed that the male leaders “wanted us for a buffer between them and the country—a perpetual petticoat screen behind which they could shelter, not from the government, but from the people.”¹⁰⁴ In October 1882 the Land League reorganized itself as the Irish National League, becoming more conservative than the original Land League. Ely Janis tells us that the Irish National Land League, “left no doubt as to its views on the relationship between women and politics, describing itself as “an open organization in which the ladies will not take part.”¹⁰⁵ For the Irish women involved in the Land League, it was a very dramatic ending, but women of the American Ladies’ Land League had a less dramatic ending as the focus of the American leagues shifted their focus from land reform to Home Rule issues. The Ladies’ Land League was fully dissolved by August 1882.¹⁰⁶ The Ladies’ Land League in the United States served as an essential introduction to public participation for Irish American women, regardless of how briefly it made its impact, and demonstrated how Irish American women were able to shape and influence Irish American nationalism in the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Janis, “Petticoat Revolutionaries,” 22.

¹⁰⁵ Janis, “Petticoat Revolutionaries,” 23.

¹⁰⁶ Schneller, *Anna Parnell's Political Journalism*, 3.

¹⁰⁷ Janis, “Petticoat Revolutionaries,” 23.

Newspaper Evidence

Newspapers were certainly part of the day-to-day life experience for many citizens and immigrants in the nineteenth century. Newspapers represented a way for opinions and concerns to be expressed to the broader community. Often, newspapers would report from other news sources in an attempt to relay information across different platforms. For example, if a newspaper in Boston ran an article about the Land League, it would often be reproduced in other newspapers, especially in smaller towns. Larger cities in the north frequently received news from Ireland and published large columns on the latest news and events happening overseas. Breaking news of the Irish situation was less common in smaller newspapers, and reproduction of the articles from the larger newspapers was frequent. Anthony McNicholas gives some insight into the way that newspapers provided a method of advertising for support:

The importance of the United States as a source of finance and support for the movements in Ireland is well-attested to. Three quarters of the Land League funding which came from America was credited to the exertions of one newspaper editor, Patrick Forde of the New York *Irish World* and Gladstone is reported to have remarked that but for the work of the *Irish World* there would have been no agitation in Ireland.¹⁰⁸

For the purposes of this research, I deliberately chose to sample historical Georgia newspapers from cities such as Augusta, Milledgeville, Macon, Columbus, Athens, and Atlanta in order to understand what was being reported. These were some of the most populous cities in Georgia at the time. Papers from these five cities have been made accessible online by the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG), and the data collected for this thesis was derived from this database. Although Savannah, Georgia was a destination for

¹⁰⁸ McNicholas, "Faith and Fatherland." 824.

Irish immigrants, Savannah newspapers have not been digitized in the DLG database so the data is not included in the charts. For more information on how the data was collected, please refer to Appendix B.

It is crucial to gain a sense of what nineteenth-century Irish or Irish-American readers would have been exposed to and experienced through the press at the time surrounding the peak of the Land Agitation, in order to analyze how the Ladies' Land League used the news to create interest and drive support for the Land League. Many of the articles that were printed concerning the activities of the Land League came from other news sources, such as larger newspapers but others were original announcements of meetings and other news. Other articles presented news of the Land League in the international news column with updates of arrests or reports of events such as the speeches and activities of the Land League. One of the benefits of searching through these newspapers is that announcements for local events, letters, editorials, and other opinion columns were frequently published. The time period that I focused my search on was 1880-1882 as these were the years that the Land League would have been mentioned in the press both in America and Ireland. Although the majority of Irish immigrants did not settle in the South, those who did would likely have had a significantly different experience than those in the North due to the differences in the social and political climates that surrounded the regions and this would be reflected in the newspaper coverage of the areas.

The following graph demonstrates a conservative estimate of the volume of coverage of newspapers from the following cities: Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville. The first column identifies the year and city, the second column

identifies the number of articles that covered the topic of Ireland during the years of 1880-1882 from the Digital Library of Georgia's database. These numbers in the second column were determined by initiating a keyword search of "Ireland" or "Irish" in the Digital Library of Georgia's database with the corresponding city. The third column represents articles that are related to the Land League's news by searching the keywords "Land League" and "Irish Land." The fourth column represents the number of search results using the following keywords "Ladies' Land League", "Anna Parnell", and "Fanny Parnell."

Table 1: Newspaper Articles Demonstrating Irish News Coverage: Pulled from the following Georgia cities during the height of the Land League: Athens, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville, 1880-1882

	Irish, Ireland	Land League, Irish Land	Ladies' Land League, Anna & Fanny Parnell
1880			
Atlanta	183	13	0
Athens	48	3	0
Columbus	461	57	0
Macon	263	29	0
Milledgeville	102	6	0
1881			
Atlanta	220	52	1
Athens	61	16	1
Columbus	400	134	2
Macon	153	39	3
Milledgeville	119	31	1
1882			
Atlanta	191	32	9
Athens	46	1	0
Columbus	346	47	4
Macon	86	10	1
Milledgeville	82	17	2

From these findings, it can be determined that news of Ireland was a hot topic in the Georgia press. The first column demonstrates that depending upon the city, news from Ireland was almost a daily occurrence. Whether this news of Ireland was directed toward an Irish-American audience, or present to peak the interests of followers of the ever-popular land issue in the American South is unknown, however; the coverage was present. What is even more intriguing is the frequency that land issues were mentioned in these articles, and the very rare occurrence that female activism within the Land Leagues efforts is recognized. In order to understand this breakdown in greater detail, the following tables will dig deeper into what these numbers reveal.

Table 2: Frequency of Topics in Historic Georgia Newspapers: Newspaper articles pulled from the following Georgia Cities during the height of the Land League: Athens, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville, 1880-1882.

Year	Stories covering Irish, Ireland	Stories covering Land League, Irish Land	% of Irish stories that cover Land Issues
1880	1,057	108	10%
1881	953	272	29%
1882	751	107	14%

Table 2 represents the total number of newspaper stories in these five Georgia cities that pertained to the Land League, or Irish land issues. Nearly one-third of the stories that mentioned Ireland or Irish news dealt with land issues, clearly demonstrating that land was a newsworthy topic to the American press.

There is evidence in various Georgia historical newspapers of the Land League’s presence in Georgia, especially chapters in Savannah, Macon, Augusta, and Atlanta. Evidence of these chapters comes from newspaper articles that advertise for meetings that were held, or that money was sent to the cause. For example, on April 12, 1881 The *Weekly Constitution* newspaper from Atlanta stated, “The Irish National land league club of Atlanta has sent \$75.30 to Mr. Lawrence Walsh, treasurer of the league in America.” News like this was common as these clubs were proud to boast the efforts being made, but there was also evidence published when new leagues were formed. In the *Georgia Weekly Telegraph* in Macon, on January 14, 1881 we see, “Augusta Georgia, January 12th a large meeting was held last night to express sympathy with the Irish people. A land league was formed and enumerable money subscribed in aid of the Irish Land League.”

From these articles I am able to determine not only where Land Leagues existed in Georgia, but also what happened in their meeting through the publication of minutes.

From the *Augusta Chronicle* on January 28, 1881: Land League Meeting “The Savannah News, of yesterday, says: “A large and enthusiastic meeting of the Savannah Branch, No. 1 and those friendly to its objects was held last evening at the hall of the League, No. 149 Bryan street. After the transaction of the usual routine of business, and addresses having been made by several of the members, President Doyle introduced Mr. Fitzgibbon, of Chicago, to the League who in eloquent yet plain language described the condition of Ireland, and how Mr. Parnell has infused a spirit of independence into the hearts of the people who, before his time, were in the dust groveling beneath the heel of the oppressor. Having eulogized Messrs Davitt and Biggar, he alluded to the base course pursued by others who had been elected as Home Rulers, but who, when occasion required it, had not the moral courage to stand by the principles of the party. Mr. Lake Carson handed in a handsome contribution, which will swell considerable the funds of the League. The treasurer reported that he had remitted two hundred dollars, and owing to the large collection at this meeting, he would, in a few days, be enabled to make another remittance. The friends of Ireland have not an opportunity of allowing their love for the “Green Isle,” and it is to be hoped that our neighboring elites will not be ahead of them in demonstrating the importance they attach to the labors of Mr. Parnell and his league.”

It is apparent that this news played a major role in not only the spread of the Irish cause, but also of the way that the Irish were perceived in America. By using this as a platform to spread the agenda and happenings of the Land League, identities were formed based on the homogenous empty time that was traveled through weekly as Irish-Americans waited to receive the newest edition of the latest Irish news.¹⁰⁹ This process of obtaining transatlantic news and mixing it in with local happenings seems to bring the issues home and parade them around with the rest of the topics that are important to

¹⁰⁹ Charles Stewart Parnell’s brother, John Howard Parnell, was based in Alabama during this time of the Land Agitation as a peach farmer, and organized public rallies in places such as Atlanta and Tybee Island.

locals. Similar articles from other cities as well as excerpts from other newspapers can be found in Appendix A.

Aside from meetings, there is also evidence that galas and picnics were held and that women were involved in these events. In the *Augusta Chronicle*, August 15, 1882:

Heading “The Land League.” Body:

At a meeting of the Augusta Branch of the Irish Land League, held last evening, resolutions of thanks to M.P. Carroll, Esq., the orator of the day on the occasion of the annual pic-nic, to Mr. M. Toohey, the reader of the Declaration of Independence, and especially to the ladies who so greatly conjoined to the success of the pic-nic, were unanimously adopted. The meetings of the League are well attended, and much interest is manifested.

The *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Journal* recaps the Macon Land League’s St. Patrick’s Day Banquet celebration on March 25, 1881 in two and one-third columns on the front page of the paper. In this article, the Macon Land League’s St. Patrick’s Celebration Gala held in the Masonic Hall is described in detail, especially the speeches of those present. One interesting find was the note at the beginning of the article that many ladies were present. In the *Augusta Chronicle* on January 1, 1881 a full column was devoted to a meeting of the Augusta Land League and their sympathy expressed with the Irish. In the article, the minutes of the meeting are documented as well as the description of money sent to Ireland.

The volume of activity surrounding the Land League is not only evident in the announcement of meetings, events, and donations but also in the coverage of Charles Stewart Parnell. The *Weekly Constitution* of Atlanta on February 15, 1881 reports, “Mr. Parnell has determined to sail for this country in a few days, whether he wants more money, or more sympathy, or more men, or more guns, is not known. He is coming and

we will have to await his arrival to find out just what he expects from the large and healthy American branch of the Irish Land League. It is plain there is trouble of some kind brewing.” This addition of opinion about his visit is an excellent indicator of the attitudes towards the Irish cause at the time. Several papers reported so frequently on his actions that they began to refer to him by just his last name; an example is when he is referred to as simply “Parnell” in the *Union Recorder* on March 1, 1881. Again, we see an example of public, or at least the reporter’s opinion on what the actions of the Land League were in the *Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Journal & Messenger*, on October 21, 1881:

Title: Parnell’s Arrest: “Yesterday is what might be called real news. It will certainly create a sensation on both sides the Atlantic and in Ireland will stir popular feeling to its depths. But it ought not to excite surprise except on the supposition that the Gladstone government had made up its mind that Parnell was not at all a potential element for mischief and therefore not worth their notice or action. He had been ignored so long that this conclusion had come to be pretty generally accepted. But it seems the government was only waiting to see how far he would go and lost no time in acting just as soon as he had reached the limit it had fixed. If his followers are in earnest, his arrest will only precipitate the end that was inevitable if he had been left to push his purposes to their legitimate conclusion. It will be the match to the mind if they are not in earnest his arrest will strike them with paralyzing power and the end is easily foreseen. They will accept the land act and try and make the best of it, Independence for Ireland on Parnell’s plan was never anything more substantial than a dream and if he is the power in that country that he has seemed to be his arrest will add another incontestable proof of that fact to the legion that have gone before.”

The comment from this article that, “Parnell’s plan was never anything more substantial than a dream...” is particularly interesting with consideration to Anderson’s theory of the imagined community in that it continues with the imagined existence of these networks. These papers reinforce Benedict Anderson’s concept of the Imagined Community and the connection that print capitalism plays in shaping nationalism;

however, there is a gap in Anderson’s work in addressing the role that gender plays in print-capitalism. To reiterate, Anna Parnell and other women in the Ladies’ Land League worked diligently to keep the Land League efforts relevant while many of the men of the League were imprisoned. Without their work and commitment to the Land League, it would have fizzled due to lack of membership as so many were locked in prison. Despite what we know about the Ladies’ Land League activities, Table 3 reveals numbers from Georgia newspapers that expose how rarely these women were mentioned in the press.

Table 3: Women in the Press: Newspaper articles pulled from the following Georgia Cities during the height of the Land League: Athens, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville, 1880-1882.

Year	Stories covering Irish, Ireland	Stories covering Land League, Irish Land	Stories Covering Ladies Land League	Percent of Land League Stories that Mention Women
1880	1,057	108	0	0
1881	953	272	8	2%
1882	751	107	16	15%

Digging further into these numbers of land issues, Table 3 reveals a significant percent of news in 1882 that covered land issues in Ireland made mention of women who were involved in the Land League efforts. Interestingly enough, 1882 was the year that the Ladies’ Land League was disbanded. Anna Parnell and other women of the Ladies’ Land League were actively working to gain support for Ireland from Americans through fund-raising tours and other advocacy, however; their presence would not be considered big news when taking into account the numbers present in Table 3.

Women were perceived in the papers in a couple of different ways. One example is the sarcasm surrounding the events as displayed in the *Weekly Constitution* of Atlanta on March 7, 1882: “The Ladies of Ireland have done it at last, those ladies of the land league of Rusberry who have solemnly and unanimously resolved never to marry a land lord, agent, bailiff, land-grabber, or peeler who is not a land leaguer.” Other opinions published took a stand for what the Ladies’ Land League was accomplishing, for example in the *Daily Enquirer* of Columbus, Georgia, on October 22 1881 it was stated:

Whatever may be said of the Land League by its opponents not even Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Forster will deny that it has developed a marvelous perfection of organization. Not only has the Ladies’ League reinforced the branches originally founded by the sterner sex, but even the children are now enlisting for the campaign under a separate association of their own. As suggested in a letter, it will be hard work to suppress by violence a cause that commends so deep rooted and universal an enthusiasm.

Another example from June 9, 1882 in *Daily Enquirer* of Columbus, GA was a response to an article out of Ohio condemning the ladies of the Land League for their radicalism and refusal to disband the cause:

Bishop Gilmour, of Ohio, may possibly be right in condemning the Ladies’ Land League. But when young women join such organizations it does not follow by any means that they “forget their womanhood” and “turn themselves into brawling politicians.” The latter phrase, repeated several times in the bishop’s card, exhibits too much feeling. Quarrels between Catholic bishops and Irish people, formerly regarded as impossible, are now quite frequent. They constitute a portion of the increasing evidence of the general decline of faith. Where there is perfect faith there is obedience, and quarrels are impossible. In the breaking of the ties between priests and people the church is weakened.”

This is a particularly useful quotation in addressing the social perceptions of female political activism. These mixed opinions in the press of Ladies in the Land League’s efforts seem to represent the mixed emotions of the breaking of the

public/private dichotomy of the time. Another example from the *Augusta Chronicle*, on July 25, 1882, describes the Augusta Land League's efforts in honoring Fanny Parnell after her death.

Title, The Land League, Resolutions passed in regard to the death of Miss Parnell "A called meeting of the Augusta branch of the Irish National LL was held last evening, President O'Connor in the chair. Consisting of Mr. John F. Armstrong, father Quinlan and Mr. J. Rival was appointed to draft resolution in regard to the death of Miss Fanny Parnell sister of the great Irish leader and herself an active worker during her life for the Irish cause."... (Resolutions mentioned)... "Resolved, that we recommend to the Irish National Land League the erection of monument by voluntary subscriptions to the memory of Miss Fanny Parnell on account of her patriotic zeal and devotion from the inception of the present movement until her death."

Another article pertaining to gender included in the *Augusta Chronicle* on April 3, 1881 was a review from a woman watching British parliamentary debate concerning whether women in Ireland should be liable for arrest under the new coercion bill, specifically the women of the Ladies' Land League. In this article, Lady Wilde, Oscar Wilde's mother, states, "everyone knew that the clause was aimed against Miss Parnell and the Ladies who have joined her in forming a Land League, and 18 months in prison simply meant death."

Aside from the coverage in Georgia newspapers that reported on local happenings surrounding the Land League, national reproductions were also common. Many large cities in the North reported frequently on the Irish situation, and newspapers in the South would run those articles in their papers as well to relay the news. This also reinforces Anderson's theory as local papers felt that this news was important enough to its

readership to reproduce articles on the Land League. Anna and Fanny used these association newspapers to create the news that kept the Land Leagues' efforts in tow.

The data and newspaper material in this chapter reveal that land was a very popular issue for readers in Georgia, and that interest in Irish events was present. The numbers mentioned in the tables provide evidence of this account. Newspapers also reported on the activities of local land league branches, furthering the involvement of Georgians in the Irish land agitation. It can be drawn from the Georgia press' reporting on the Land League and Ladies' Land League that the Irish situation was that of a transatlantic nature, and that an imagined community derived from print-capitalism was present.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

To further develop the importance of what Anderson has taught us, it is necessary to examine how the Irish would have been perceived by the community that was reporting their news. Two factors play into this discussion, that of gender and of the construction of social identity. When we do not attend to the issue of gender, we miss out on the ways in which the gender dichotomy of the nineteenth century limited what was and was not acceptable for women to do and say. Women of the Ladies' Land League found a way to extend the private sphere of the home to the public sphere of politics by fighting for the homeland. This homeland held burning issues of the continued integrity of the domestic sphere due to widespread eviction as a central mechanism of the landlord-driven pursuit of farm consolidation.

The scholarship is divided on how the Irish felt about themselves in terms of race in the United States.¹¹⁰ However, in the nineteenth century the Irish identified themselves as belonging to a distinct race because they believed there were distinctions within the category of "white".¹¹¹ The Irish in America may have felt that they were racially inferior but "[u]nlike African American and Asians, they could become citizens, could vote, could serve on juries, were not segregated, had no restrictions on their travel, and did not endure sustained or systematic violence."¹¹² Although the Irish were often stereotyped and faced harsh caricatures in publications they were not perceived as more

¹¹⁰ Kenny, "Diaspora And Comparison: The Global Irish As A Case Study," 155.

¹¹¹ Suzanna Chan, "'Kiss My Royal Irish Ass.' Contesting Identity: Visual Culture, Gender, Whiteness and Diaspora." *Journal of Gender Studies* 15, no. 1 (March 2006): 6.

¹¹² Kenny, "Diaspora And Comparison: The Global Irish As A Case Study," 155.

racially inferior than other groups. The Irish arrived in the United States as racially inferior, until they began to embrace American whiteness.¹¹³

This concept of ethnic identity varies from country to country, but it was central to national self-identification in the nineteenth century America. Ethnicization was something that was partly required for the Irish to be able to assimilate into society and become American.¹¹⁴ This entry into society was not an easy thing to do, “Sometimes the entry into the dominant nation is very difficult, or almost impossible... There is a type of superficial reason why it is sometimes difficult is difficult to change basic cultural traits... and it is impossible to change one’s pigmentation, in cases where the nation to be ‘entered’ is defined partly in terms of color.”¹¹⁵ The Irish had an edge in this migration in that as far as superficial qualities of skin tone, they could be perceived as white like any other American. Anderson mentions a solidarity among whites that links those who belong to the in-group without regard to internal rivalries and conflicts.¹¹⁶

For future research, it would be beneficial to explore which dynamics of the American South may have influenced the experience for Irish-Americans in ways that those immigrants in the North may not have encountered. For example, life was arguably different in the American South versus the North in the sense of culture and industry, which would likely play a role in the working-class struggles of many Irish immigrants. This could reveal the gap in knowledge that gender played, especially in the examination of women’s presence in newspapers, and the differences in regions.

¹¹³ Kenny, “Diaspora And Comparison: The Global Irish As A Case Study,” 136.

¹¹⁴ Kenny, “Diaspora And Comparison: The Global Irish As A Case Study,” 146.

¹¹⁵ Gellner, “Nationalism and High Cultures” in *Nationalism*, 60.

¹¹⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 153.

Margaret Lynch-Brennan suggests that the Bridgets, or Irish female domestics working in the United States, "helped pave the way for the Irish, as a group, to become acceptable to Americans"; their employment in white, bourgeois homes (primarily in the North) gave Irish women "the kind of constant contact and interaction that is so rare in hired employment of men"; in fine, Irish women in this labor sphere benefitted from "an opportunity to learn and internalize American middle-class values and social conduct."¹¹⁷

The Ladies' Land League was an historically important instance of Irish women's political action of a transatlantic nature. These efforts would likely not have been possible without the presence of newspapers to spread the latest update from Ireland to America. Benedict Anderson's concept of the imagined community sheds light on the ways in which the Ladies' Land League was able to influence Irish-American women's political identity in the American south through the utilization of newspapers. Anderson's analysis of the role that print-capitalism plays in fostering transatlantic national thought is evident through the Land League's use of newspapers to share the latest update and rally support. Although Anderson's idea of print-capitalism is one that fosters nationalism, it lacks in examining the role that gender plays in the process. One of the major factors that defines women's role in nationalism was the ideals of womanhood in the nineteenth century and how the public/private doctrine limited women's sphere of influence. Traditional gender roles of the time held broadly separate spheres for men and women, separate but seen as equally important and valuable. This spread of knowledge of organization through the press really launched the Ladies' Land League as an

¹¹⁷ Joseph Lee and Marion R. Casey. *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*. (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2006), 332.

organization and enabled the LLL to rally the support needed to raise funds for the evicted people of Ireland. Support for the Irish cause was fostered outside of the state through the coverage received in American newspapers. The transatlantic nature of the Land League's activities allowed for a sense of Ireland to be carried to America by organizations that developed a united political identity. The role of print capitalism serving as a catalyst for the Ladies' Land League furthers Anderson's idea of the imagined community, but also points out the gap that he leaves in addressing gender.

Through the examination of Georgia historical newspapers, it is evident that the editors were catering to an Irish audience, as well as the American audience that supported the Irish cause. This identity that is shaped through the consumption of transatlantic print capitalism is due in part to the support for the Irish in America, and also for the work that the Ladies' Land League accomplished in creating this news. After analyzing historic Georgia newspapers, it is evident that Irish news was very popular among the cities of Augusta, Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville. In fact, in these cities in 1880 over 1,000 stories ran that covered Irish news. Within this coverage, land related topics comprised 10% of the stories. Land news was a common headline for these Georgia newspapers and it demonstrates an interesting point in what type of audience the papers may have been catering to; especially with the complex experience of land-holding in Georgia including the plantation system and the Civil War. The Peach State was quite receptive to its own land issues at the time of the Irish land agitation, and the parallels between the two issues may have been a reason for this coverage.

Similar to the gap in Anderson's research, these newspapers display a gender gap on the topic of land issues. After reading scholarship on the activities of the Ladies'

Land League and reviewing the volume of their actions in the Land agitation, it is safe to say that the Land League would have dissolved if the women had not stepped in to carry on the efforts while the men were imprisoned. Yet when reading through the newspapers, the pressing nature of the Ladies' Land League is rarely mentioned. Whether this was due to the gender dichotomy of the nineteenth century or bias of the editors is unknown; however, it is significant to note that a gap is present in what is recorded by scholars and what was published by the newspapers.

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APPENDIX A

HISTORIC GEORGIA NEWS ARTICLES

From the *Augusta Chronicle* on February 1, 1882: “A special meeting of the Irish Land league will be held at the office of M.P. Carroll on this (Wednesday) evening February first at 7 1/2 o’clock for the purpose of making arrangements for a public address in this city, by the Rev. Eugene Sheehy. Lately under the coercion act in Ireland by order of the President.” Signed P.H. Rice, Secretary

From the *Augusta Chronicle* on March 29, 1882: “There will be a meeting of the Irish Land League at St. Patrick’s Hall on Thursday evening March 30th, at 8 o’clock for the purpose of reorganizing on a permanent basis. A full attendance is requested. All who favor are cordially invited to be present by orator of the president J. L. Maxwell P.h. Rice Secretary.”

From The *Georgia Weekly Telegraph* in Macon on February 11, 1881: reprint from the *Augusta Chronicle* “A meeting of the Irish Land League will be held on tomorrow evening, at 8 o’clock, at the hall of the Hibernian Society, over the Opera House Arcade. Every member is urged to be present, as business of importance will be transacted. Gentlemen who do not belong to the League but whose sympathies are with the movement will be cordially welcomed at the meeting. The treasurer of the League forwarded last week, by direction of the executive committee, €30 (\$250) to the Land League in Ireland in aid of the cause.”

From The Union Recorder in Milledgeville, February 8, 1881: Under General News, “A large land league meeting will soon be held in Atlanta.”

APPENDIX B

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The reason I chose to examine these papers is due to the availability of the digitized versions of each city. Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, and Milledgeville all had their newspapers digitized on the Digital Library of Georgia's site. These were some of the most populous cities in Georgia at the time. Although Savannah was a major hub for Irish immigrants in the south-east, newspapers have not been digitized making it too difficult to keyword search for collecting data. Savannah news would reach the Irish that immigrated into that area, but other cities in the state seemed to shed light on the prevalence of the Land League's work in the region.

The way that I conducted the research was by searching for topics surrounding the Land League, Ladies' Land League, Anna Parnell, Charles Parnell, Fanny Parnell, and Irish land in Georgia historical newspapers through the Digital Library of Georgia's database. After narrowing the search by city, keyword, and year I was able to total the number of articles that were composed on each of the three categories (Irish news, Irish Land News, and Ladies' Land League news). Once I completed the search, I extracted data from the website and placed it into an excel file to eliminate duplicate posts. After the duplicate posts were deleted, I totaled the news on each topic per year and constructed a table with a conservative estimate of these numbers.