

Famine Project

By Colum McLaughlin

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Summary

The famine was a period of time spanning from 1845 to 1849 where approximately one million people died and several million forced to emigrate. It was caused by a disease called blight which started in central Europe. Blight killed out the whole potato crop. Potatoes were the primary food in Ireland at the time so when the complete crop failed due to blight it left the majority of the population with nothing to eat. Some people think that the British saw this as a chance to kill the whole Irish population



Blight

Blight is a disease that destroys both the leaves and the roots of the potato plant. It refers to a specific symptom affecting plants in response to infection by a pathogenic organism. It caused a complete failure of the potato crop in Ireland during the Famine. The Irish famine was the worst thing to occur in Europe in the 19th century.



Blight Infected Potato

Who Helped ?

Abdul Mejid Khan who was Sultan of the Ottoman Empire became involved in Famine relief for the Irish and donated one thousand pounds and it is also said that he sent three ships with food supplies to Drogheda. The Jewish community in New York raised hundreds of dollars for famine relief in Ireland.



Abdul Mejid Khan

The Board of Works in 1831 were assigned responsibility to look after the conditions of bridges, roads, and harbors, this was paid for by local taxation. This continued into the years of the Famine to help out the poor by giving them jobs so they could earn money. A popular principle summarized the public works system by stating that: *“Irish property should support Irish poverty”*



Workhouses

During the Famine the poor who couldn't look after themselves went to workhouses which were houses of free labour. These houses were built by the British government who were ruling over Ireland at the time



Workhouse

There were 163 workhouses built all over Ireland all of which were designed by George Wilkinson so every workhouse looked the same. Since so many people died in the workhouses because of all the diseases every workhouse had a graveyard on the grounds.



Public Works

The Public works was a scheme set up in 1846. It was a scheme set up by the English government for the poor to go out and build piers, bridges and roads so that they could earn money to be able to buy cheap corn that was imported from America by the Prime Minister of England at the time Robert Peel



Robert Peel



Cheap corn was provided to feed the starving Irish

A prime example of something locally built by public works during the famine is Conolly's Folly. It was built just outside the Castletown Estate by the Public works for the Conolly sisters one of whom lived in Castletown House, the other lived in Carton House. It was built for them because they couldn't see each other at the time, so at the same time every day they would look out the window to the Folly and feel like that were looking at each other.

For this project I have made some videos of Conolly's Folly they are included on the next slide.

Colum McLaughlin's home videos of Conolly's Folly

(Also see Video Files Uploaded Separately)

