The Famine.

EVICTION SCENE. 1787. W.L.

By James Lawlor.

The great Famine,also known as the great hunger,the great starvation,the Famine,or the irish potato Famine,was a period of mass starvation and disease in Ireland from 1845-1849.

Total deaths: 1 million

Start date: 1845

Impact on demographics: Population fell by 20-25% due to mortality and emigration.

Consequences: Permanent change in the country's demographic, political and cultural landscape.

End date: 1849

Location: Ireland.

The famine occurred in Ireland in 1845-49 when the potato crop failed in successive years. The crop failures were caused by late blight,a disease that destroys both the leaves and the edible roots of the potato plant.

The Irish famine was the worst to occur in Europe in the 19th century.
In the early 19th century,Ireland's tenant farmers as a class,especially in the west of

Ireland,struggled both to provide for themselves and to supply the British market with cereal crops. Given the small size of their allotments and the various hardships that the land presented for farming on in some regions. The potato, which had become a staple crop in Ireland by the 18th century, was appealing in that it was a hardy, nutritious, and calorie-dense crop and relatively easy to grow in the Irish soil. By the early 1840s almost half the Irish population had come to depend almost exclusively on the potato for their diet primarily the rural poor. The rest of the population consumed it in large quantities. A heavy reliance on just one or two high-yielding types of potato greatly reduced the genetic variety that ordinarily prevents the decimation of an entire prop by disease,and thus the Irish became vulnerable to famine. In 1845 a strain of *Phytophthora* arrived accidentally from North America.

Emigration During The Famine.

The number of Irish who emigrated during the Famine may have reached 2 million.
Between 1841-1850, 49 percent of the total immigrants to the United States were Irish.

Ireland's population continued to decline in the following decades because of overseas emigration and lower birth rates.

The figures for deaths in workhouses spiraled uncontrollably in the famine years, rising from 6,000 in 1845 to over 66,000 in 1847 and remaining in the tens of thousands until early 1850's. This period was also when most mass evictions took place, in which many landlords took

the opportunity to clear their estates of unpopular tenants. Replacing them in many cases with livestock because they could not pay their rent. Being evicted often meant that Bailiffs and the Sheriff, usually with a police or military escort, not only ejected tenants from their homes but also commonly burnt the cabins to prevent their reoccupation. Losing a house and shelter in the midst of the famine greatly increased the chances of dying. Though some landlords went to great lengths to set up charities and soup kitchens, the popular memory of the famine years was of the tyranny of cruel landlords backed by the British state.

The famine comes to an End.

By 1852 the famine had largely come to an end other than in a few isolated areas.
This was not due to any massive relief effort - it was partly because the potato crop recovered but mainly it was because a huge proportion of the population had either emigrated or died.

The End.