



The famine

By Oisín Beatty

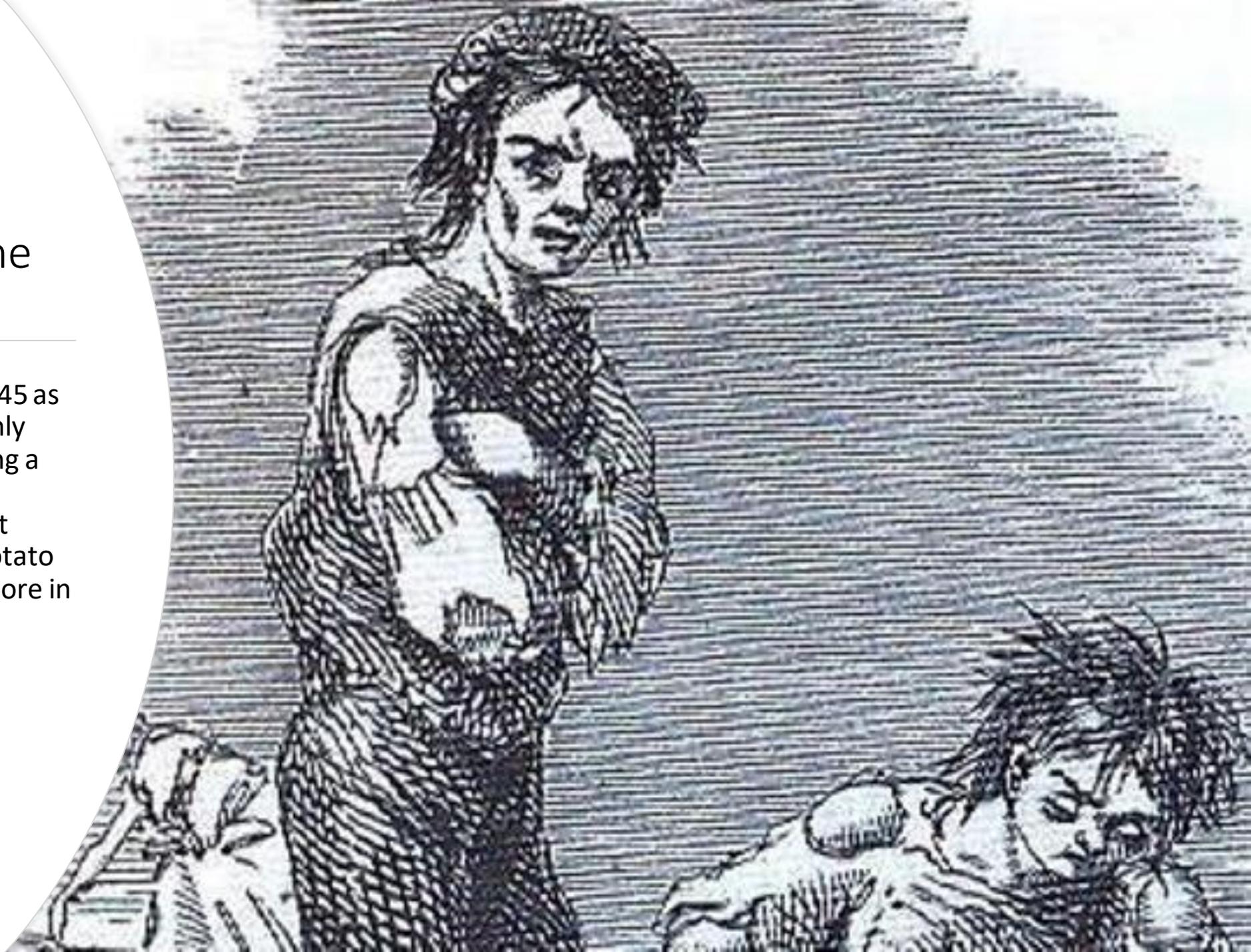
What was the famine

The great famine of Ireland was a huge disaster caused by a disease called blight. Blight was an airborne disease that infected the leaves of the potato plant and would proceed to go down through the plant and rot the potato causing the families who harvested these potatoes to starve as every potato in that farm would also be infected with blight.



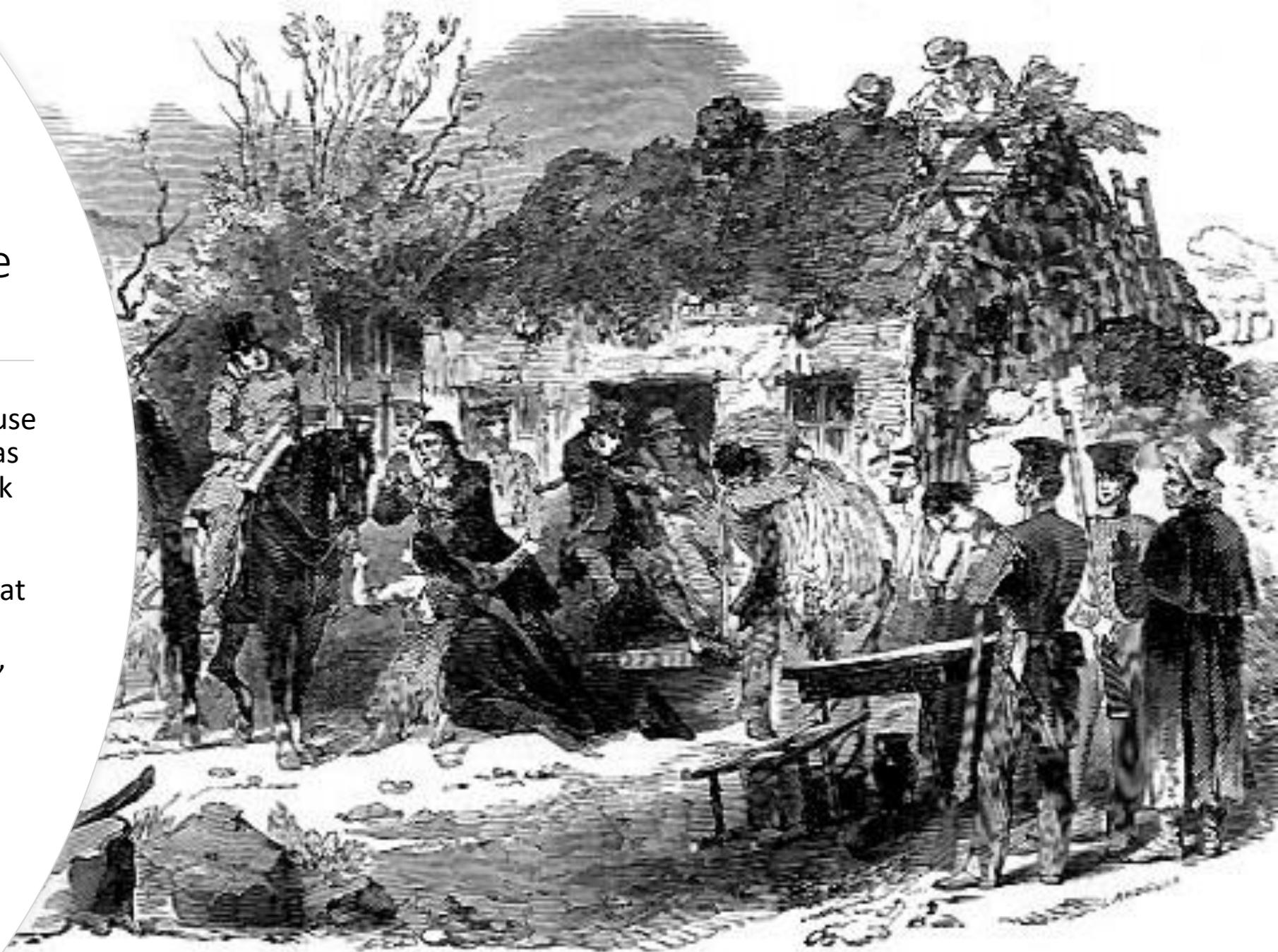
How Did The Famine Start

The Famine began quite unexpectedly in September 1845 as leaves on potato plants suddenly turned black and rotted, causing a fog that had wafted across the country of Ireland. Under moist conditions, a single infected potato plant could infect thousands more in just a few days.



Why Was The Famine So deadly

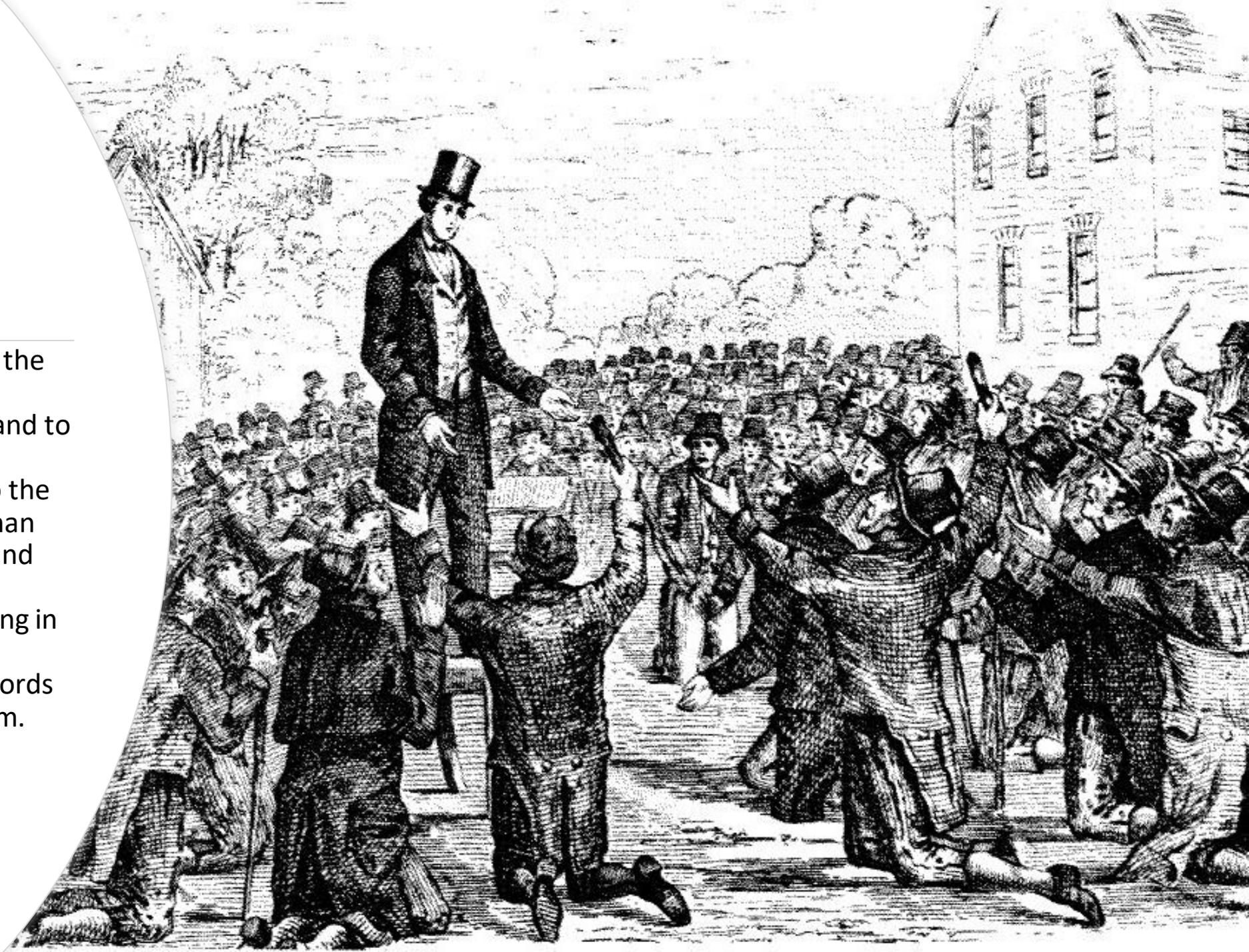
The reason that the potato blight was so deadly in Ireland was because the Irish depended on the potato as their only food source. You may ask why the Irish didn't just eat other foods? The reason they didn't eat other foods is because the food that was collected was exported to Britain instead of kept for the Irish, so the only food they had was the potatoes from their farms which were rented from the landlords.



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Who Were The Landlords

The landlords of Ireland during the famine were mostly English landowners who rented their land to farmers called tenants. These farmers were made pay rent to the landowners and would more than likely not make the payments and proceed to be evicted by the landowner who would then bring in a new tenant. There were also landlords called absentee landlords who got people to rent for them.



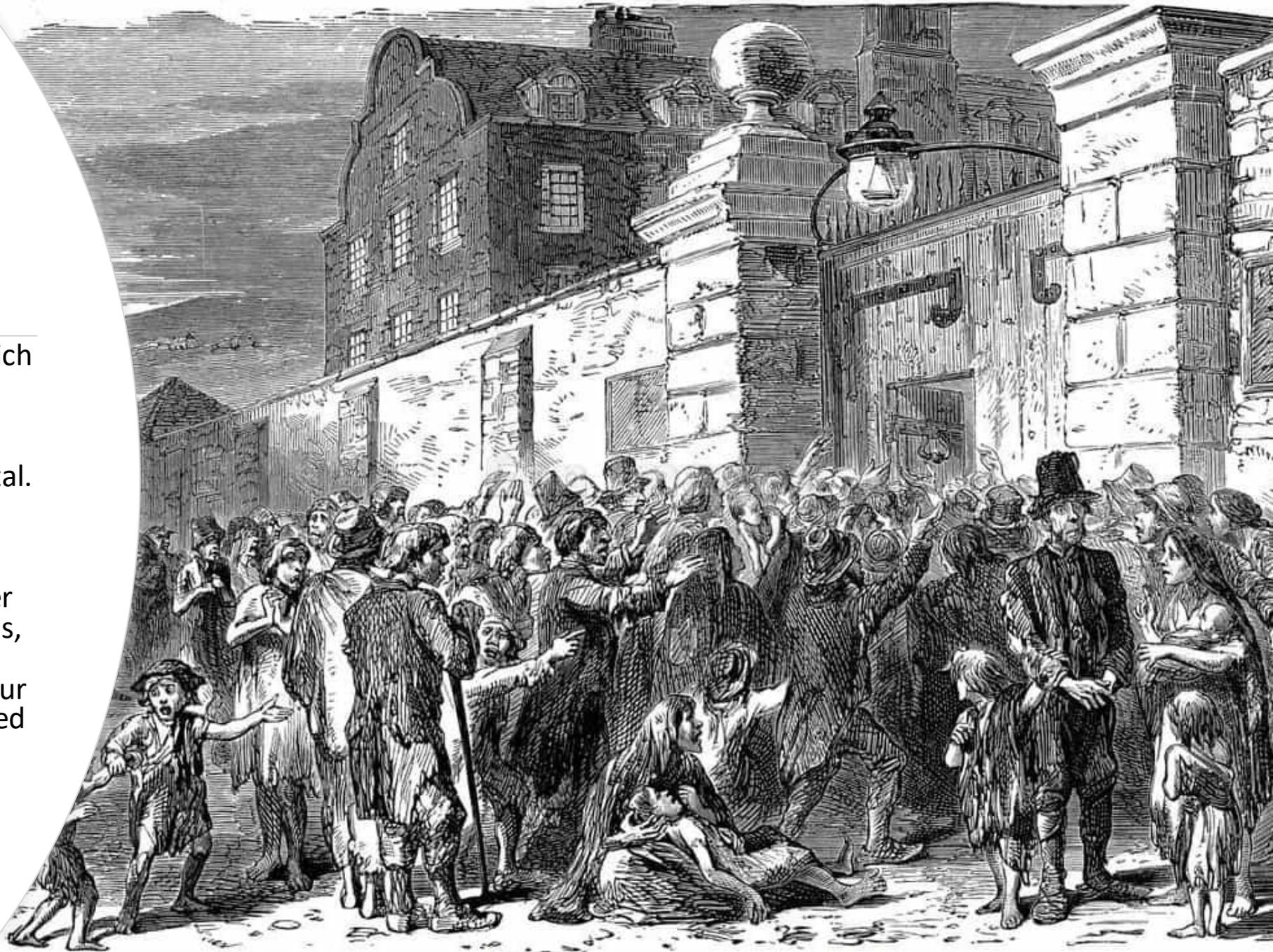
Absentee Landlords

Absentee landlords had no interest in their land other than it making them money. They got middle men to rent the land for them. These middle men were known in Ireland for being ruthless when it came to rent and evictions even after the famine. After people were evicted from their homes they had nowhere else to go but the workhouses.



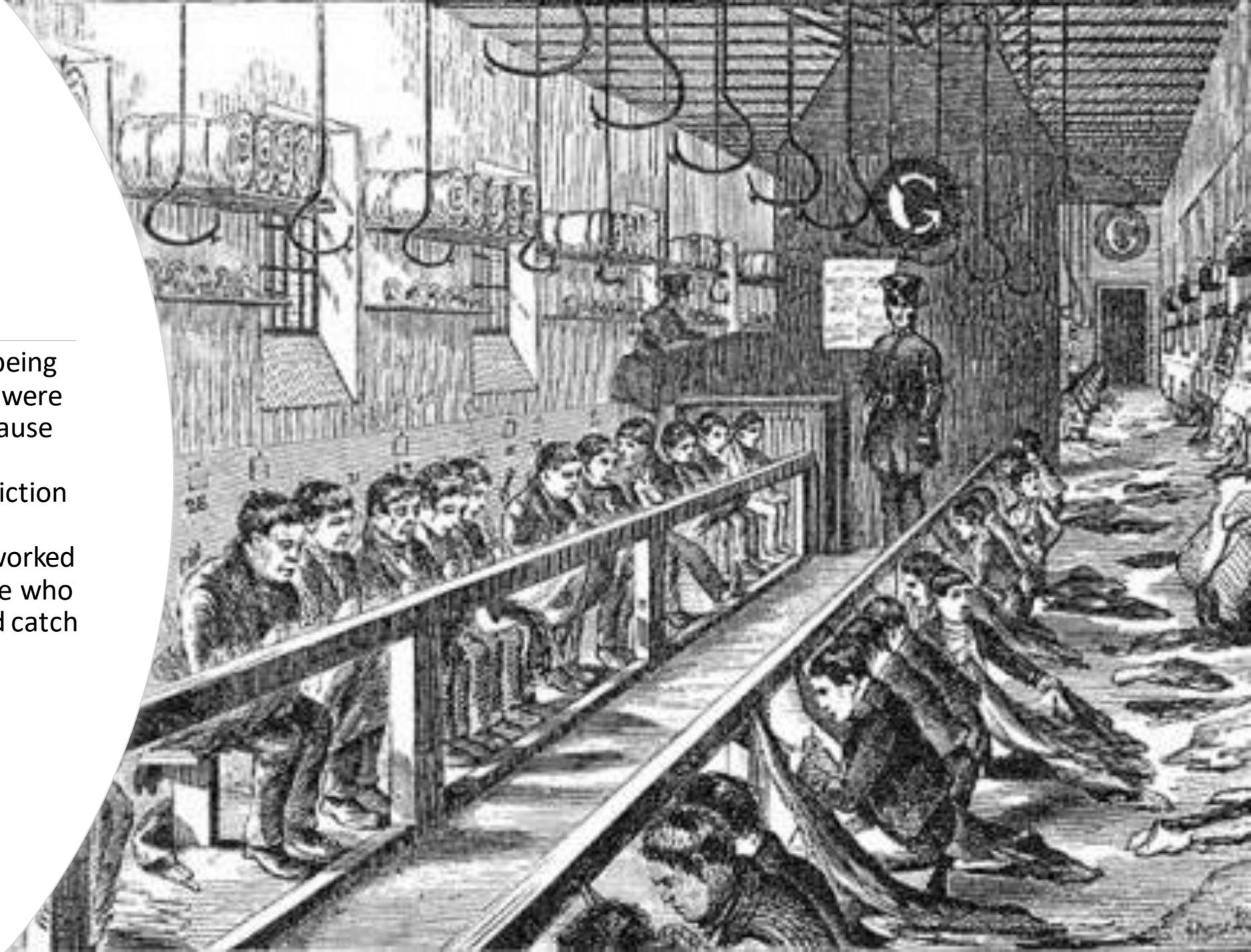
The Workhouses

The workhouse was a building which were built around Ireland for about 80 years, from the early 1840s to the early 1920s. There were 163 workhouses in total. People had to stay and live in the workhouse and so the system was known as indoor relief. The whole family had to enter together and would be split. Boys, men, girls, and woman were all split tearing families apart. Aswell as having your family split up you were then forced into working for food and money.



Health In The Workhouses

- The Workhouses as well as being a place of sadness and despair were also extremely unsanitary. Because everyone who was in the workhouses were victims of eviction they were most likely carrying diseases from the farms they worked on. This meant that most people who entered the workhouses would catch a disease and never leave the horrible building that they had once entered.



Burriel In The Workhouses

Most workhouses would have a graveyard in the back of the building where they would just throw the dead bodies into holes that they would have dug for them. Then they would proceed to cover up the bodies leaving nothing not even a gravestone. The closest that you would get to a gravestone would be a rock above where you were buried.



The Soup Kitchens

There were relief schemes during the famine like the workhouses but the most notable were the soup kitchens. The soup kitchens were as you would expect; kitchens that opened up around Ireland for the poor so they could have some food while the blight purged the farmland of Ireland. The soup kitchens closed in 1847 and the British declared the famine over. This this was known as black 47.



Work Relief

Robert Peel was the prime minister in Britain but he also set up work relief where people were paid to work. The government paid poor people wages to do work such as building roads or piers. The wages did not allow the workers to buy much food for themselves and their families. However, it did help to feed many people and during 1845 no one died of famine. The money that the people got was used to buy cheap corn which was shipped from America. But after this Robert Peel overthrown by a new government who declared the famine over, closing the soup kitchens and the work relief.



Black 47

Black 47 was the worst time in the Irish famine history because the new government declared the famine over and the soup kitchens were shut down leaving millions to starve or die of disease. At this point blight was so bad that people started leaving for other countries, emigrating to get away from the famine. Usually the eldest child would leave first as they would have the best chance of surviving. These ships were horrible because of the famine nearly everyone who boarded that ship had diseases. Most died on their journey this is how they got the name coffin ships





- That Was My Project On The Famine
Thank You For Reading