On the front cover: "Fine Emeralds" by Eugene Zimmerman (ZIM), *Judge's Library*, March 1897, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Reproduced from original printed piece loaned by Draper Hill, editorial cartoonist, the *Detroit News* and member, Advisory Board, The Swann Foundation for Caricature and Cartoon.

ZIM's broad, thick strokes and masterful handling of color imbue his characters—whether blacks, Jews, hoboos, or Irish—with a vitality and charm that transcends the stereotypical sentiments of his cartoon captions.
Pat-Riots to Patriots
AMERICAN IRISH IN CARICATURE AND COMIC ART

by John and Selma Appel

Michigan State University Museum
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
Acknowledgments

“Pat-Riots to Patriots: American Irish in Caricature and Comic Art” is truly a didactic exhibition. The images, assembled by John and Selma Appel, provide a glimpse into the American cultural scene and its often critical, negative stereotyping that was common, and indeed acceptable in public arenas at the time. In addition, the artistic images convey the ways in which traditional culture is often maligned and misunderstood. While assimilation was perceived to be the unwritten social law of the land for new immigrants, Irish-Americans maintained many aspects of their traditional culture in the face of the negative stereotyping to which they, and many other immigrant groups, have been subjected.

Stereotyping remains a serious problem in America today, even as we enter the last decade of the 20th century. Through this exhibition, it is hoped that viewers will better understand the challenges faced by early Irish-American immigrants and how stereotyping functions as a destructive act with lasting effects.

Not only do these images portray a public view of Irish-American immigration and assimilation, but also they are noteworthy for their artistic quality. Included in the exhibition are works by some of the foremost artists and illustrators of the time. Their combined artistic skill and critical eye for social conflict has yielded lasting images of an America often in conflict with itself and its ideals.

This exhibition has been generously supported by the Swann Foundation for Caricature and Comic Art and the Lucius Littauer Foundation, both of New York City. The Swann Foundation funded the cost of the catalog and the Littauer Foundation provided additional support to the Michigan State University Museum for the development of the exhibition.

Many individuals have contributed by furnishing advice, supplying cartoons or illustrations, reading or commenting on the catalog essay, or providing other relevant data. In particular, Draper Hill and Andrew Greeley offered counsel and have contributed essays to the catalog.

Others who have contributed to this effort include: Pauline Adams, Laura Baumann, Peter Berg, Val Berryman, Joe Boskin, Laurel Boughton, Roger Bresnahan, Gary Bunker, Dan Capozzi, Dennis Clark, Maurice Crane, Jay Dolan, Judy DeJaeger, Ruth Fitzgerald, Phylis Floyd, Francie Freese, William Lee Frost, Barry Gross, Darlene Clark Hine, Pat Julius, John Kemler, Donald Lammers, Phil Lienhart, Yvonne Lockwood, Roy Mathews, Jerry Mattson, Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Timothy J. Meagher, Notre Dame University, Terry Shaffer, Laurie Sommers, John Sprague, Lynne Swanson, and Charlie Wehr. In addition, Sue Caltrider of University Publications, Michigan State University and Bob Culp of Riverhouse Graphics assisted in the production of this catalog.

The guiding hand and curatorial vision for this exhibition were provided by John and Selma Appel. The Appels are the consummate collectors and scholars of pictorial material on ethnic stereotyping in America. Their understanding of this material provides us a rich appreciation of the artistic talent as well as the social climate reflected in these examples of American culture.

C. Kurt Dewhurst
Director
Michigan State University Museum
The Irish have never been a fashionable victim group. No one ever proposed affirmative action to benefit them. When they were poor they were never part of the deserving poor. Now that they’re no longer poor, they are written off by the national elites as “conservative,” “chauvinist,” “anti-intellectual,” and “racist.” Moreover, it is said that the success of the Irish is limited by their drinking, their religious world view, and their propensity to corrupt politics.

Patriots they have become, perhaps, but now super-patriots and so unfashionable still.

The current stereotypes are as dishonest as the older ones so richly depicted in this collection.

In point of fact, the empirical data show that the “green” Irish—the Catholics, that is—are the most affluent, the best educated, the most liberal, and the most feminist gentile group in America. They are also not the heaviest drinkers in this country by any means.

I have neither the space nor the inclination to argue these points in the present context. I’ll content myself with the observation that if you instinctively react to the richly documented assertions in the last paragraph with the exclamation that they can’t possibly be true, then you are part of the problem.

God forgive you for it, says I.

She may even persuade me to forgive you, too. Eventually.

The bigotry of stereotypes was not and is not harmless. Professor Richard Stivers has documented that many of the drinking problems of the American Irish are the result of the myth of Mick as the Happy Drunk, which is the flip side of the stereotype of Paddy the Brutal Drunk that abounds in this collection.

Moreover, the bigotry of these crude images haunted Irish-Americans for generations. Irish clergy, eager to push the acculturation of their people, refused to baptize girl children Brigid (the correct spelling by the way) because of the negative connotations the name had acquired. The great goddess/
STEREOTYPES OF THE IRISH

Thomas Nast, arguably our greatest political caricaturist, was “warming up” a lecture audience at the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland, California on the evening of March 2, 1888. He offered several examples of mordant wit he had gleaned from the daily press, including the following:

Only a servant girl, But oh, how Green,
Only a can of Kerosene,
Only some matches and a small bit of wood,
Only a grease spot where the servant girl stood.

Not precisely rollicking good fun it might seem, but perhaps one had to be there. This exhibition, a lively, troubling exercise in “Pat-riotism,” is apt to make a deep impression on any fair-minded viewer. For philosophical. All too often he will find that what serves him as meaningful simplification or significant characterization can strike a target group as blatant stereotyping. Firing off V-2 rockets from the comparative tranquility of his studio, the cartoonist needs to be reminded from time to time that one man’s elixir of truth is another’s poison.

For such V-2s as The Day We Celebrate and The American River Ganges, Thomas Nast was roundly condemned from the pulpit of a Roman Catholic church five blocks from his home in March 1872. Pastor Eugene Maguire stigmatized the cartoonist as a slanderer and a “detractor” and intimated that men of his stripe would be barred from the kingdom of Heaven. These strictures had no visible effect on Nast’s viewpoint, but the prospect of a cascade of bricks through the front window of his Harlem cottage may well have helped with the decision, immediately thereafter, to purchase a house in Morristown, New Jersey.

Caricature is a language of exaggeration, useful for translating internal “truths” (perceived or actual) into external features. Cartooning, on the other hand, is an omnibus craft (or art—depending on whether it is employed by journeyman hacks or by masters) that can run the gamut from poetry to propaganda, from wildly comic burlesque to “straight” illustration. In practice, the two strains tend to tangle together inconveniently; neither is intrinsically dispassionate, objective, or fair.

Pat-riotism raises any number of compelling questions about human nature, mass communication, and the letting off of live steam from a melting pot that has reached a full, rolling boil. What are the forces that feed the aggression of stereotyping, and how do they vary from age to age? When does distance, not proximity, breed contempt? What roles are played by fear and ignorance? (Gillray’s Paddy on Horseback, produced in the comparatively homogeneous British society of the later 18th century, shows no trace of the
venomous ape-man image that gentlemanly John Tenniel would develop four generations later.)

Although Gillray was one of the most corrosive, anarchic artists in the long history of his calling, he was an equal-opportunity destroyer. Irish politicians came off no worse, or better, than their English counterparts. He reserved his gifts as a stereotyper primarily for the French and the Dutch. In Gillray’s day, and again in ours, a taste for caricatures of specific individuals seems to have filled the vacuum that the 19th century allocated to the evangelical bashing of minority groups. Perhaps the development and popularization of photography began to check the power of the rampant stereotype. I suspect, and hope, that the proliferation of television has all but finished the job, educating audience and artist alike to the plain face of reality. Where the old-timers had to stalk their prey on the hoof, we have C-Span.

Cartoonists, and their editors, still have much to learn about poking “serious” fun in a multi-ethnic, multiracial world. Only a quarter-century has passed since I was admonished not to put a shaded tone on the caricature of a black politician for fear that he would be offended by it. Too many of us still when we integrate crowd scenes at all, are inclined to draw a sea of WASPish figures with every third or fourth face darkened to indicate race. Fresh out of college, I repeatedly caricatured one portly candidate for public office, giving him a head like a football sitting broadside on his collar. It never occurred to me that I might be accused of exploiting a certain Irishness of feature in a stereotypical manner. I simply had responded to the invitations and temptations of a specific, unique human being; picked up the ball—as it were—and run with it. With the benefit of the hindsight provided by the present collection, I would surely have hesitated... A fortnight before the election in question, this same candidate telephoned, claimed to be greatly pleased with my published effort at “portraiture,” and asked if he could commission me to incorporate it into a campaign poster of himself on horseback as a “knight in shining armor” to be plastered liberally about town. I have always regretted that I couldn’t bring myself to accept.

The Swann Foundation for Caricature and Cartoon is more than pleased to offer support to this catalog and to the important investigation into the social history of the United States that it represents. Established in New York City in 1967 by Erwin Swann (1906–73), advertising executive and collector, the foundation’s original purpose was to assemble a collection of original drawings by significant humorous and satiric artists, and to encourage the study of these drawings as works of art. This collection is now in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, where it can be consulted, and where examples are regularly displayed in a special gallery. A general catalog of the collection is in preparation.

After Mr. Swann’s death, the foundation enlarged its board of advisors to include active caricaturists and cartoonists, art historians, critics, and museum professionals. Non-profit and tax-exempt, the foundation’s present activities include an annual fellowship and an unspecified number of grants-in-aid to worthwhile projects that advance the general purpose. These involve exhibitions, assistance towards publication or towards the cost of reproductions, special research, and oral history interviews with significant artists in the field.

Draper Hill

Draper Hill is an editorial cartoonist for the Detroit News, and a member of the Advisory Board, The Swann Foundation for Caricature and Cartoon.
In our image-conscious age, many readers and film and television viewers probably know Alfred Stieglitz's memorable 1907 photograph, "The Steerage," Lewis Hine's poignant photographs of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, or Charlie Chaplin's silent film, "The Immigrant." Yet not many people, not even history buffs, are familiar with the numerous, often striking, sometimes shocking (for today's viewer) caricatures and comic pictures created during pre- and post-Civil War years when the tide of immigrants to American shores reached new heights.

Ethnic and immigrant stereotypes gave body and contour to unfamiliar people encountered by Americans during this period of mass immigration, industrialization, and urbanization from 1830 to 1920. They included beer-guzzling Germans, drunk, tomahawk-waving Indians, gesticulating Jews, la-de-da English dudes, pig-tailed and wily John Chinaman, and others. Clearly in the lead among printed and theatrical farcical characters were no-account black Sambo and brogue-spouting, irresponsible, inebriated, recalcitrant, happy-go-lucky Irish Pat and Bridget.

As delineated by American and English cartoonists and caricaturists for more than a hundred years, these Irish stereotypes are the focus of the "Pat-Riots to Patriots" exhibition organized by the Michigan State University Museum in 1990 and supplemented by this publication. Of course, the exhibition is a minute but representative fraction of the thousands of cartoons and drawings depicting Paddy, Bridget, and other comic, irascible, or threatening Irish stereotypes in realistic or fanciful encounters with native-born or naturalized citizens.

In the years preceding, and for a long time after the Civil War, unprecedented markets for printed images were created in growing cities swelled by newcomers from abroad and from rural districts. Illustrated magazines, newspapers, promotional pamphlets, handbills, and labels strove to attract readers and influence voters and customers. Vividly colored circus and theater posters, merchandise labels, and other lithographed ephemera delighted viewers, as did the full-page cartoons of Puck, Judge, and The Wasp (three influential illustrated satire and humor weeklies), at a time when color in cheap magazines was still a startling novelty. (So many garishly colored products of the lithographer's trade rolled off new steam-powered presses that a fastidious, displeased observer dubbed the 1870s and 1880s a "chromo-civilization.")

From this era also date Currier and Ives' hand-colored lithographs, including many once-popular ethnic cartoons about Indians, immigrants, and "coons." Yankee Notions, one of the earliest humor magazines, featured full-page black-and-white cartoons. So did American Vanity Fair. Thomas Nast's influential, boldly aggressive anti-Catholic and anti-Irish woodcuts were prominent features of Harper's Weekly. Life, lampooning high and low society, included cartoons and editorials about Catholic Irish and other ethnic groups.

In the 1890s, newspaper comic strips evolved, marking the stylistic transition of cartoons from crowded compositions with lengthy captions, speech balloons, and much letterpress to today's stripped down, simpli-
fied editorial versions. Cartoonists were recruited from the same talent pool that supplied illustrations for 19th-century almanacs and joke books, advertisements and merchandise labels, minstrel and vaudeville show posters, dime novel and sheet music covers, and postcards. Not eliminated from these condensed comics, however, were the ethnic stereotypes that had amused readers of a less newshungry, slower moving age. Later, even posed photographs reproduced on thousands of stereopticon slides and silent motion pictures perpetuated Pat, Mike, Bridget, and other stock racial and ethnic characters in clichéd situations that their viewers had encountered in graphic and theatrical entertainments.

Stock Irish stereotypes did not appear until well into the 19th century. Irish men and women first immigrated during the 18th century. These were predominantly Ulster, Northern Ireland Protestants, sometimes called Scotch-Irish, though Catholics were also among them. Widely dispersed, often settled on embattled frontiers, these first Irish immigrants arrived when America still lacked a vigorous native tradition of political cartoons. Images of them therefore appear only on a few rare surviving specimens of colonial cartoon art.

Irish arrived in large numbers after 1815, when the exodus from Ireland resumed after being interrupted by the Napoleonic wars. Although members of all Irish religious traditions—Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and even some of Ireland’s tiny Jewish population—settled in the United States and participated in its development, the majority was Roman Catholic. American cartoons predominantly depict “green” or Catholic Irish.

As immigration accelerated in the 1800s, a strong anti-Catholic sentiment and incidents involving “green” Irish increased prejudice against “Paddies” and heightened their social rejection. Irish were the first non-Protestant, non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants to enter the United States whose traditions and lifestyle clashed noticeably with that of the native, urban peoples among whom they settled. They were the first of whom it was said that “they ruined the neighborhood.” They quarrelled, drank, and rioted to such an extent that their leaders and priests repeatedly admonished them. From the grim reality that these impoverished, uneducated, ill-adjusted peasantry and proletariat faced in urban America were derived the graphic, highly stylized Irish comic and serio-comic jokes, stories, theatrical and cartoon stereotypes that for over a hundred years inhabited the American popular imagination: the cop, the hod-carrying mason, the cook, maid, and washerwoman; the Irish shanty dweller; the

“Our New Public Drinking Fountains as They Will Be” published by T. W. Strong, Yankee Notions, August 1859 8 × 11 inches

“Irish jokes” and “Biddy jokes” appeared in English caricature in the 1790s and remained sources of mirth for English and American audiences throughout the 19th century. They were based on Irish countryfolk’s ignorance of city ways and conveniences. (Exhibit piece 23.)
The Irish themselves knew “shanty” Irish as hard-drinking, contentious men and women who smoked clay pipes and lived in squalor with livestock underfoot. “Lace curtain” Irish had reached middle-class respectability and no longer wished to be associated with bibulous, vulgar shanty dwellers. Because working class families quickly adopted lace curtains as marks of refinement, the wealthier, who could afford imported Waterford crystal chandeliers and glassware to display in their parlors, were dubbed “cut glass” Irish. The cartoon reflects the stilted, stifling conformity said to typify “cut glass” Irish propriety. (Exhibit piece 85.)

dynamite-happy radical and Fenian fanatic; the Irish-American saloon keeper; the ward heeler and boss; the Irish drunk; and finally the newly rich “lace curtain” upstarts.

Now faded are the images of the dangerous Irish ape-man and his wife or daughter, the indispensable but troublesome servant girl, or both, as feckless, amusing, bibulous but harmless clowns. Gone too are the tensions, even physical altercations between “green” Irish, African-Americans, Chinese, Jews, and other ethnic groups, including fellow Catholic Franco- and Italian-Americans. Yet if indeed a deep-seated anti-Catholicism pervades American intellectual and academic life, and Irish-Americans have prospered in proportion to their suppression of Irish ethnic and Catholic religious traditions, as the sociologist-novelist-historian-priest Andrew Greeley asserts, then these cartoons point to some of the root causes of this condition.

Around the turn of the century, Micks, Bog Trotters, Queens of the Kitchen, and Knights of the Hod—a few of the nicknames applied to Irish immigrants—gradually metamorphosed in caricature from troublesome Pat-riots to blarneying but respectable working and middle class Irish-Americans, including winsome colleens and law-and-order enforcing cops who invited everyone to become Irish for a few hours on St. Patrick’s Day. Blacks and Jews continued as butts of ridicule, but the Irish image changed for the better in leading humor weeklies, in the burgeoning newspaper comic strips, in Finley Peter Dunne’s influential “Mr. Dooley” columns, on millions of comic postcards, in advertisements, and other printed ephemera.
In today's society with its mass culture entertainments, including cartoons and caricature, the American Irish are no longer the highly visible ethnic presence they once were. After experiencing sometimes intense religious bigotry and economic hardship in the previous century, Irish have successfully assimilated into American society. Only in a few cities do the old Irish neighborhoods remain. Irish-Americans no longer invariably vote the straight Democratic ticket and spend their lives in the same Catholic parish community. Their marriages often involve a non-Irish partner, with the children less likely to think of themselves as Irish.

Since the organization of an American Catholic episcopate in 1789, Irish-born priests and nuns have organized and been involved in the activities of countless churches, schools, and hospitals, giving American Catholicism a distinctly Irish cast well into the present century. But in the church, too, other newer Catholic immigrant and nationality groups are becoming more prominent.

The Irish established themselves politically long before 1960, when John F. Kennedy became the first Roman Catholic U.S. president. American business, labor unions, sports, the arts, literature, the armed services, and municipal fire and police forces have had a strong and marked Irish presence.

Few American Irish nowadays read Irish-American newspapers or belong to organizations actively involved in the renewed struggle with England, the old enemy, over the fate of Northern Ireland. However, some observers report a minor renaissance of Irish consciousness and a renewed interest in Irish culture, arts, dance, and music. An American Committee for Irish Studies has, for some years, published a newsletter and held annual meetings attended by a growing membership. Irish bars, county societies, and even a few Irish bookstores have sprung up in a number of large cities.

Today’s affluent, well educated, middle class Irish-Americans do not often recall the era when “No Irish Need Apply” notices were common. Few American Catholic Irish (8 million of whose forebears emigrated to North America between 1700 and the 1970s) whose status as full-fledged members of American society is no longer problematic, remember how English and American cartoonists and draftsmen lampooned and stereotyped “Paddies” for over a century. Nearly every accusation made against later newcomers to our cities—that they were shiftless, emotional, irresponsible, often drunk and disorderly, easily provoked to violence, spelled the ruin of the neighborhoods to which they moved in large unassimilable numbers—was first made against the Irish, and not always without cause!

In retrospect we see that cartoons lampooning the Irish in America previewed trials and tribulations endured by other minorities who also felt the sting of ridicule, prejudice, and contempt. Of course, cartoons do not tell an impartial, full, or nuanced story. But whether humorous, fanciful, satiric, sentimental, unkind, or hostile, they are memorable markers along the complex, emotion-laden historic route to success taken by Catholic Irish immigrants—the first group, except Native Americans and blacks, about whom there grew unflattering, mordant, and hostile stereotypes.

Cartoonists, like comedians in all the arts, shun the shock of novelty or innovation, highly personal convictions, or private visions. The effectiveness of their drawings depends chiefly on recognition, often evoked by minutely varied repetitions of familiar themes, characters, and proven comic formulas. They cannot easily project subtle insights, or explore profound or unconventional thoughts and propositions. That is why cartoons are frequently the results of editorial conferences. Staff collaborations on large 19th-century cartoons were so common that well-known cartoonists like Joseph Keppler
and Frederick Opper did not hesitate to sign them jointly.

Few cartoonists of the time could afford to express convictions that ran counter to popular beliefs or to arouse fresh thought about Irish and other immigrants. Real, living models were routinely rejected. In fact, ZIM (Eugene Zimmerman, active from 1882 to 1930), in his correspondence-school course, counselled would-be cartoonists to “rely on evocative, symbolic, already widely-recognized models.” He instructed, “Go beyond the possibilities of nature and produce already known, accepted, distinctive racial or national expression when drawing foreign characters.”

“The Wearing of the Grin”  
Frank de Sales Casey  
Life, March 17, 1927  
8½ x 11 inches

Today, organizers of the parade invite everyone to be Irish on March 17, with many takers among politicians and other well-wishers. So much so, as Andrew Greeley suggests, that “are monuments to lost possibilities.” The cartoon caption alludes to a song, “The Wearing of the Green,” sung by an American Irish entertainer in 1865, that praised American freedom and contrasted it with British repression of Irish nationalist symbols and sentiments.  
(Exhibit piece 68.)

paranoid hatred and fear. Embodying the conventional Victorian-American ethnocentric wisdom about the Irish, these drawings reveal unsuspected parallels between cartoonists’ witty, aggressive images and social prejudices supported by the 19th-century social-scientific theories of physiognomists, physiologists, and phrenologists. This is particularly evident in cartoons that portrayed Irish as childish or subhuman creatures.

In short, graphic representations of the Irish, like all national symbolic figures, have more to do with icons and stereotypes than with renditions of actual individual persons or their portraits. Thus they satisfy the entertainment demands of large, undifferentiated audiences: repetition of a familiar format with slight variations catering to the viewers’ desire for relaxation and escape, not taxing their minds with unfamiliar or unsettling ideas.

The foregoing factors help explain why national stereotypes are difficult to refute. Based on observable qualities of behavior and appearance, they are true to varying degrees. Because an ethnic caricature exaggerates carefully selected, recognizable, predictable features, it may seem to be “more true” than a balanced account. The cartoonist usually assembles the least flattering physical marks or behavioral qualities found in a given ethnic group—qualities or characteristics that have their causes and roles in the group’s past, though their ultimate origins often can be found only by studying the interaction of religious, biological, climatic, and other environmental or time-bound factors. “Typical,” often-caricaturized Irish features included a heavy brogue, prominent chin, projecting jaw, pronounced eyebrow ridge, and red hair. These characteristics, though many Irish objected to them, at certain stages and among some Irish, existed and may still be found.

Today, many Americans are sensitive to the implications of aggressive, insulting, demeaning racial and ethnic humor. Some ask whether reproductions of racial slurs and
ethnic stereotypes tend to perpetuate and reinforce these attitudes. The answer is that for the inexperienced, the gullible, the unenlightened, or the vicious, there are few safe historical topics. Like all art, cartoons can serve base and corrupt, as well as humane, enlightened, and harmless purposes.

However, these cartoons, "social myths cut down to size" in the words of historian John Higham, remind us that today's discredited theories and attitudes about race, color, and nationality were not long ago widely accepted in social custom and law, and reinforced and perpetuated by uncritically acclaimed popular entertainments. Those who imposed the strictest, most absurdly delicate social taboos were largely oblivious to the hurts and insults that devious ethnic caricature inflicted on its subjects—subjects differing in race, religion, and ancestry from the Anglo-American Protestant elites who set the cultural tone. These cartoons are therefore reasonably accurate barometers of what many native-born Americans and quite a few immigrants liked, disliked, feared, and found amusing about the real or alleged behavior of the Irish during a century of unprecedented migration from Ireland to America and from country to the city. They distilled the values of the marketplace and the crowd, of the average readers of the time, probably members of the middle classes whose opinions are less accessible to historians than those of professional writers or social reformers.

It is generally agreed that humor frees us from conventional restraints. Does it also extend to approval or disapproval of behavior not found acceptable by one class of Irish of another class of Irish? Are some ethnic cartoons and jokes actually left-handed compliments, insults that are compliments in disguise, in the way that an apparent gaffe—"Irish bull that is always pregnant"—may be a faux pas incorporating a flash of perspicacity?

We know that some cartoons and jokes involving the Irish were generated, disseminated, and appreciated by many of the Irish themselves, not only the dominant majority. Did this ridicule of old country rural or ethnic mores encourage Irish in America to assimilate and adapt to urban ways, and therefore to accelerate their upward mobility and adjustment under changed conditions? Such questions and conjectures have been raised concerning cartoons and jokes about Irish and other immigrants. All the answers are not yet in, and lack of space prevents further investigation of these matters here. One thing is certain: humor serves diverse purposes and meanings. Depending on the social context, it can express hostility, superiority, and repressed feelings and energies—sometimes playful or joyous, occasionally aggressive and demeaning.

"The Irish Declaration of Independence That We Are All Familiar With"
Frederick Oppen
Puck, May 9, 1883
10 × 13¼ inches

Editorially, Puck commented, "The Irish declaration of independence has been read in our kitchens...many times, to frighten housewives. The fruits of that declaration are to be seen in...ill-cooked meals on ill-served tables, in unswept rooms and unmade beds, in dirt, confusion, insubordination, and general disorder, taking the sweetness out of domestic life." (Exhibit piece 28.)
Most cartoons and jokes dealing with immigrants and ethnic groups concerned social boundaries, lines of division between "them" and "us," between what was done and not done, what was proper and improper; between what was thought to be Irish conduct—or misconduct—and what was acceptable urban American majority behavior. The 19th-century American Irish found these boundaries sometimes clearly defined, sometimes indistinct, sometimes pitting native versus immigrant, Catholic versus Protestant or Jew, white versus black, Democrat versus Republican, rural custom versus urban behavior and values in unpredictable, often highly contrived or fanciful joke and cartoon situations.

We are not always certain what emotional impact these images elicited in bygone eras. Did they worsen ethnic and racial relations? Or were they regarded as harmless, good-natured fun? Social scientists and psychologists trying to measure the strength or persistence of prejudice are obviously unable to experimentally recreate responses that accurately reflect past attitudes. Historians cannot be sure that surviving documents record all the complex reactions that a cartoon evoked from beholders in the past. Nevertheless, some pertinent facts and opinions on prejudice and stereotyping are available from literature and historical record.

We know that some of the Irish resented these caricature stereotypes and eventually mounted organized protests against them. Even if not invariably designed to insult and degrade, graphic stereotypes were surely implicated in justifying, maintaining, and perhaps extending stereotyped perceptions that undergird prejudiced attitudes. Nevertheless, in an immigrant-receiving country like the United States, they also served as a crude means of differentiating the new arrivals, many of them recognizable by their speech, dress, physique, and gestures. When the perceptions on which stereotypes were grounded no longer satisfied or fit the facts, traits once regarded as objectionable or ludicrous—for example, the Irish propensity to fight and quarrel, and their love of strong drink and blarney—were, within a generation or two, transmuted into amusing foibles or quaint, endearing traits. Or, mutatis mutandis, they were transformed, often with considerable help from Irish journalists and publicists, into approved symbols of national identity and traditions.

The exhibition therefore concludes on a positive note that, in time, may apply also to ethnic and racial stereotypes other than American Irish. Old, long-lived, demeaning, insulting ethnic stereotypes do fade away, or are transmuted to benign, even sentimental symbols.

The relationship of ethnic caricature and comic artistic treatment of ethnic, racial, and religious subjects to complex historical reality remains indeed problematic. Yet should a pluralistic society be satisfied with condemning unflattering, slurring, hostile, or aggressive ethnic caricature without a grasp of events and conditions that gave rise to them? Can a society unafraid of multiple cultural loyalties tolerate and even enjoy humor and cartoons highlighting and contrasting different ethnic values, tastes, and lifestyles? Can satire, humor, and cartoon help to check excessively divisive, extremist tendencies towards ethnic exclusivity and diversity? Or are the insulting capabilities of ethnic satire and cartooning too persistent, too threatening for us all to revive and encourage their practice?

John and Selma Appel
"The Day We Celebrate"
Thomas Nast
Harper’s Weekly, April 6, 1867
15 1/2 × 10 1/4 inches

The drawing accompanied a front-page story, "The Riot on St. Patrick’s Day." It announced that the melee had begun when marchers attacked the driver of a horse-drawn truck who inadvertently got in their way. After police intervened, paraders in turn were attacked. (Exhibit piece 61.)
“His First Love Letter (from America)"
“The Welcome Answer (from old Ireland)"
artwork unsigned
circa 1880
trade cards, set of 2
5½ × 7½ inches each

Cartoon caricatures are, by nature, poorly suited to elaboration or understatement of character. While the more subtle arts amplify social relations of their times, caricature art records or reflects only the obvious and converts superficial traits, like clothing, features, accoutrements, to essential qualities. These qualities can appear in prejudicial as well as nonprejudicial settings, such as ads, greeting cards, and other appeals to taste and sentiment. (Exhibit piece 7.)
"King of Spades"
"Home Rule"
artwork unsigned
1906 (postmark)
leather postcards
$5\frac{1}{4} \times 3$ inches each

Novelty postcards were produced on wood, peat, aluminum, and leather. Irish women had a deserved reputation for striking back when provoked by their husbands. (Exhibit pieces 35k and 35d.)
"American Gold"
Frederick Opper
*Puck*, May 27, 1882
13¾ × 10 inches

*Puck* applauded Irish men’s and women’s hard work in America, but deplored “naturalized citizens who pretend to be Americans” supporting radical, rent-withholding, disturbance-creating relatives and friends in the “turbulent old home.”

(Exhibit piece 26.)
“The Morning After”
artwork unsigned
1905
Arthur Livingston, New York
number 1127 in a series of 8 postcards
5⅜ × 3⅛ inches

Numbered card sets were offered to collectors to increase revenues from single card sales. Cards lampooning the St. Patrick’s Day parade marchers aroused repeated protests from Irish nationalist and fraternal organizations. (Exhibit piece 72h.)
"An Irish Club House"
A. H.
1905
postcard
5½ × 3½ inches
(Exhibit piece 35j.)
"I've Had a Great Many Ups and Downs"
A. H.
circa 1908
postcard
$3\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$

The hod carrier on a ladder has represented the Irishman for 150 years. (Exhibit piece 35n.)
“St. Patrick’s Day in Atlanta, Ga.”
Charles H. Forbell
*Life*, March 13, 1924
9 × 11 inches

The resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, with its anti-black, anti-Irish Catholic attitudes, inspired this cartoon. (Exhibit piece 67)
"In the Land of the Free, rapid changes we see"
1910 (postmark)
postcard
3¾ × 5¾ inches

The single Irish immigrant girl, usually employed as a live-in domestic, had more money to spend on clothing than young women who worked in factories, lived at home, and contributed their wages to family income. (Exhibit piece 82a.)
"Id's raining, Padrick..."

artwork unsigned

1913 (postmark)

postcard

3½ × 5½ inches

(Exhibit piece 60e.)
"Uncle Sam's Lodging House"
Joseph Keppler
Puck, June 7, 1882
20 × 13½ inches

Puck editorialized: "The raw Irishman in America is a nuisance, his son a curse. They never assimilate; the second generation simply shows an intensification of all the bad qualities of the first... They are a burden and a misery to this country." Further, Irish had corrupted our politics, lowered the standards of domestic service, and waged an "imbecilic and indecent war" against the English government. The time had come to clear the Irishman from Uncle Sam's Lodging House, where all races and nationalities, except the Irish, got along with each other! (Exhibit piece 36.)
"So Long, Mary"
E. R. Morgan
1906
postcard
5½ × 3½
(Exhibit piece 35c.)
"The Fighting Irish"
athletics symbol
Notre Dame University

Although Irish-Americans have been eclipsed by Polish- and African-Americans as star players, the two-fisted leprechaun remains Notre Dame’s athletics icon.
(Reproduced courtesy of Notre Dame University.) (Exhibit piece 80.)
A. Probing Ethnic Caricature and Stereotypes

1. “Please, Ma'am, May I Come In?” by Grant Hamilton, Judge, February 18, 1893, 21 × 13⅛ inches.


3. “Welcome to All,” by Joseph Keppler, Puck, April 28, 1880, 19⅞ × 13 inches.


5. “Peace, and the Good Will of All Men,” by Bernhard Gillam, Puck, August 5, 1885, 13¼ × 20 inches.

6. Trade Cards (set of 6): Chinese, Irish, Indian, German Jew, Black, German, artwork unsigned, 1882, 2½ × 4¼ inches each.

7. Trade Cards (set of 2), artwork unsigned, circa 1880, 5½ × 7½ inches each:
   a. “His First Love Letter (from America).”
   b. “The Welcome Answer (from old Ireland).”


B. Irish in Early English Caricature 1775–1835


19. Cartoons reflecting prevailing English attitudes toward destitute, starving Irish peasants, by John Leech, Punch, 1846, 8 × 10½ inches each:
   a. “Young Ireland in Business for Himself.”
   b. “Union is Strength.”
   c. “Justice to Ireland.”
   d. “The British Lion and the Irish Monkey.”

C. Leaving Home: Departure from Ireland, Arrival and Reception in the United States


22. “Castle Garden Emigrant Catchers,” by Frederick Oppen, Puck, June 4, 1882, 13½ × 10 inches.


D. Pat and Biddy


28. “The Irish Declaration of Independence That We Are All Familiar With,” by Frederick Oppen, Puck, May 9, 1883, 10 × 13¼ inches.

29. “How to Keep a Girl,” by Joseph Keppler and Frederick Oppen, Puck, December 5, 1883, 20 × 13½ inches.


32. "Vinegar" valentines, by "H" (Charles Howard), 1880–1900, 7 × 9½ inches each:
   a. "Pot Washer."
   b. "French Nurse from Ireland."
   c. "A Dishonest Policeman."
   d. "Stupid Driver."
   g. "Police Court," 1910 (postmark), Anglo Life Series.
   h. "Very Irishtocratic," 1913 (postmark).
   k. "King of Spades," 1906 (postmark), leather postcard.
   r. "God Help the Poor Sailors on a Night Like This," 1914 (postmark).
   u. Postcards, "On the Ould Sod," artwork unsigned:
      1. Paddy's Geography.
      2. The Boyne Water.
      3. Injustice to Ireland.
      5. Engaging the New Coachman.
      7. At the Grocers.
      8. Donnybrook.
     10. Paddy and His Pig.

33. Trade Cards:
   a. "The Friends of Ireland—dynamite, whiskey, powder."
   c. "Give it to him, Mickey..."
   d. Itinerant Newspaper Paragrapher.
   e. "A New Vehicle..." (hog and poultry remedy).
   f. "Justice" (Wood Cook Stove).
   g. "Ye Boss of the Shop."
   h. "Mr. Murphy" (Rice's Seeds).
   i. Victor Shade Roller.
   j. Irish Soap.
   k. High grade fertilizer.
   l. "Hampered Courtesy" (from Puck).

34. Stereopticon cards (set of 2), undated, Keystone View Co., St. Louis, Mo., 3½ × 7 inches each:
   a. "Patrick Brannigan's Wake."
   b. "There's Brannigan's Ghost."

35. Comic postcards depicting stock Irish characters.
   Bridget:
   f. "What Are You Doing, Bridget?" 1907, Bamforth & Co.


37. "Our 'Dear Irish," by Frederick Opper, Puck, November 12, 1890, 20 × 13½ inches.


43. "Democracy's Debut," by Grant Hamilton, Judge, December 27, 1884, 10 × 13¼ inches.


45. "Is This His Mission?" by W. A. Rogers, Life, March 26, 1892, 17¾ × 10¾ inches.


50. "Setting Down in Malice," attributed to John F. O’Hea, Pat (a Dublin, Ireland weekly), January 22, 1881, 10 × 7¾ inches.
F. Ethnic Encounters


53. “Abie’s Irish Nose,” artwork unsigned, words by Gene Austin, Dixon Lane Music Co., Chicago, 1925, sheet music cover, 9 × 12 inches.


60. Postcards:
c. “How can Ireland get as many children as Germany?” artwork unsigned, circa 1910.
e. “Id’s raining, Padrick…,” artwork unsigned, 1913 (postmark).
g. “For Old Times Sake,” artwork unsigned, circa 1910, leather card.


69. “The Dare Devil,” by Frank de Sales Casey, Life, March 12, 1925, 8¾ × 11 inches.

70. “Commissioner Murphy’s efforts seem to be meeting with some success,” by Edwin Fisher, The New Yorker, March 18, 1972, 8¼ × 11½ inches.


72. Postcards, artwork unsigned, 1905, Arthur Livingston, New York:
b. #1121 “The Color Bearer.”
c. #1122 “The Band.”
d. #1123 “The Committee.”
e. #1124 “The Irish Brigade.”
f. #1125 “Watching the Parade.”
g. #1126 “His Honor, the Mayor.”
h. #1127 “The Morning After.”
Artwork unsigned, circa 1900, Raphael Tuck and Sons, New York:
i. “Shure, it’s Meself that Wishes Yez Ivery Blessin’.”
j. “The Top o’ the Mornin’s to Ye!”
Artwork by Eugene Carr, 1907:
k. “A King for a Day.”
l. “Following the Crowd on St. Patrick’s Day.”
Artwork unsigned, circa 1900:
m. “This is the Day we are all Willing to Be Green.”

G. St. Patrick’s Day


63. “Paddy’s Day,” by Joseph Kappler, Puck (German edition), March 13, 1877, 19¼ × 13¼ inches.

64. “A Suggestion for the Next St. Patrick’s Day Parade,” by James Albert Wales, Puck, March 19, 1879, 13½ × 10 inches.

65. “McGrath’s First St. Patrick’s Day in America,” by Frederick Oppen, Puck, March 16, 1892, 10¼ × 13½ inches.


73. St. Patrick’s Day “French fold” Greeting Cards:
H. Fading Irish Stereotypes


82. Postcards, 1905–1912, 3¾ × 5¾ inches each:
   a. “In the Land of the Free, rapid changes we see.”
   b. “Everybody works but father.”
   c. “I’m just a little American girl . . .”
   d. “Nothing too Good for the Irish.”

83. Trade cards, artwork unsigned, circa 1880:
   a. “Our New Coachman on the Mash.”
   b. “A Quiet Nook in the Park.”
   c. “May You Be Happy, Sir!”
   d. “Blissfully Unconscious of Family Objections.”
   e. “Reconciliation.”
   f. “Happy Result.”

84. “We are the 400—Salon de Tammany,” by Samuel D. Ehrhart, *Puck* (German edition), June 7, 1893, 20¼ × 14 inches.


86. “The Mulligan Guard Chowder,” artwork unsigned, sheet music cover, 10 × 13 inches; and trade cards, artwork unsigned, circa 1880, 5 × 3½ inches each:
   a. “Muldoon’s Picnic.”
   b. “McSorely’s Inflation.”
   c. “Squatter Sovereignty.”
   d. “Skipped by the Light of the Moon.”
   e. “Let Her Go, Gallagher!”

87. “Biddy—A Fox Trot Song,” artwork unsigned, words by Harry D. Kerr, Sam Fox Publishing Co., Cleveland, Ohio, 1920, sheet music cover, 9¼ × 12½ inches.

88. “If They’d Only Move Old Ireland Over Here,” artwork unsigned, words by J. Kellie and Lou Klein, 1913, sheet music cover, 10½ × 13½ inches.


90. “We Americans,” by Barbelle, 1927, sheet music cover, 9¼ × 12 inches.


Inventory of Cartoonists

Author’s note: Artists who produced illustrated postcards, trade cards, and sheet music covers often did not sign their work, or their names are not generally listed in standard reference works of artists.

Beard, Frank (F. B.), 1842–1905
Capozzi, Dan, active 1970s–1980
Carr, Eugene, 1881–1959
Casey, Frank de Sales, active in 1920s
Charlebois, Joseph, 1872–1935
Cruikshank, Isaac, 1762–1811
Ehrhart, Samuel D., circa 1862–1920
Fisher, Edwin, active circa 1950s to date
Forbell, Charles H., 1886–1946
Gibson, Charles Dana, 1867–1944
Gillam, T. Bernhard, 1856–1896
Gillray, James, 1756–1815
Graetz, Friedrich, circa 1840–1913
Hamilton, Grant, 1862–1920
Hansen and Kuther, active in 1880s
Heath, William (pseudonym Paul Pry), active 1795–1840
Holton, L. J., active in 1920s
Hoover, Ellison, 1888–1955
Howard, Charles (“H”), active after 1890
Howarth, F. M., circa 1870–1908
Jones, Thomas J., active circa 1800–1808
Keller, G. Frederick, d. 1883
Keppler, Joseph, 1838–1894
Leech, John, 1817–1864
Martin, Charles Edward, b. 1910
McManus, George, 1884–1954
Nankivel, Frank A., 1869–1959
Nast, Thomas, 1840–1902
O’Hea, John F., active in 1880s
Opper, Frederick Burr, 1857–1937
Pry, Paul (aka William Heath)
Rockwell, Norman, 1894–1978
Rogers, William Allen, 1854–1931
Roth, Arnold, b. 1929
Strong, T. W., circa 1840–1865; publisher, Yankee Notions
Taylor, Charles J., 1855–1929
Wales, James Albert, 1852–1886
W. S. (Williams, aka Ansell), active 1797–1830
Zimmerman, Eugene (ZIM), 1862–1935
On the back cover: Trade cards (set of 4), “Our New Citizens,” artwork unsigned, 1882, 3 × 4 inches each. A “Mick” carrying mortar or bricks up a ladder became associated with the “rising Irish.” Police jobs provided secure employment. From the earliest arrivals, Irish had the language skills and developed the abilities that enabled them to excel in politics.