Abstract

As Irish immigrants from Árainn Mhór off the coast of County Donegal created new lives for themselves on Beaver Island in northern Michigan, their identities and social worlds were profoundly shaped by their interactions with a Mormon community that first settled on the island, Native Americans who lived elsewhere in the archipelago, and other ethnic groups with whom they interacted. This technical report documents the 2010 pilot project of an archaeological and historical investigation of the Irish diaspora, ethnogenesis, and identity on Beaver Island.

Early occupation of the island was an eclectic mix of Irish, German, Native American, and other families scattered on subsistence farms around its perimeter (pre-1847). The population was then dominated by a Mormon sect during the mid-century until their leader was assassinated in 1856 and they were forcibly removed by Irish immigrants reclaiming Beaver Island for themselves. During the second half of the 19th century, nearly 95% of the families on the island were of Irish descent. The Beaver Island Lumber Company altered the cultural landscape by bringing an influx of foreign laborers in 1903.

Rather than simply representing demographic shifts in the island's population, the cultural exchanges that accompanied each of these transitions profoundly shaped Irish identity and *ethnogenesis* (the process of forming new cultural identities). Ethnic identities were defined and solidified through contact with other peoples. Instead of a straight line of one group becoming like another, however, interactions between these entities represented a series of negotiations in which some ethnic traditions continued, individual choices and adaptations made, and cultural norms rejected or subverted.

As Irish identities and lived experiences on Beaver Island were transformed through cultural interaction with non-Irish groups so too were their material and social worlds. By examining syncretic processes in material culture, dietary changes, and uses of the built environment, this interdisciplinary and collaborative project investigates the ways in which Irish families continued traditions from their homeland, incorporated new cultural norms and practices, and otherwise navigated the multifaceted and ever-changing social landscapes in which they lived.

This technical report documents the research activity from the 2010 field season. It includes a summary of a cultural study in Ireland, archaeological excavation at the Gallagher Homesite (20CX201) on Beaver Island, documentary research, and oral history collection. This report is intended to document the data and preliminary results of analyses. An additional season of field excavation is planned at the Gallagher Homesite for 2011. A final report summarizing the analyses will be completed in 2012.

Acknowledgements

Chapter 1: Project Introduction
by Deborah L. Rotman

As Irish immigrants from Árainn Mhór off the coast of County Donegal (Figure 1.1) began new lives for themselves on Beaver Island in northern Michigan (Figure 1.2), their identities and social worlds were significantly shaped by their interactions with a variety of cultural groups, including Mormons, Native Americans, and others with whom they had contact. This interdisciplinary project began in 2010 and will undertake archaeological and historical investigations of a series of 19th-century homesteads associated with Irish immigrants on Beaver Island, Michigan over the next several years.

Transnational research, including the use of archival resources and collection of oral histories in both the United States and Ireland, will be central to the project as will the incorporation of undergraduate students as active collaborators on all phases of this research endeavor. By examining changes in material culture, dietary preferences, and uses of the built environment, the team will investigate the ways in which Irish families continued traditions from their homeland, incorporated new cultural norms and practices, and otherwise negotiated their ever-changing social worlds. The results of this work will contribute significantly to the scholarly discourse on diaspora, ethnogenesis, and identity.

The research began will consist of the following components each year: (1) a week-long cultural study in Ireland, (2) three weeks of intensive field excavation on Beaver Island, (3) laboratory processing and preliminary analyses of artifacts recovered during the excavation, (4) archival research, (5) oral history collection, (6) continued specialty and other analyses as warranted by the research questions (specifically botanical, faunal, ceramic, glass, other artifacts, and uses of domestic space), and (7) public outreach, report writing, and dissemination of research results through web sites, public lectures, conference presentations, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

This document records our research activities from the 2010 pilot project at the Peter Doney Gallagher homestead (20CX201) on Beaver Island, Michigan. It includes a brief historical background, a review of the relevant literature, and a summary of the oral history, archival, and archaeological data collected. Preliminary interpretations of the data are also presented.

MAP 1

Northwest County Donegal
Ireland

Gweedore

Arranmore Island

Burtonport

Rosses

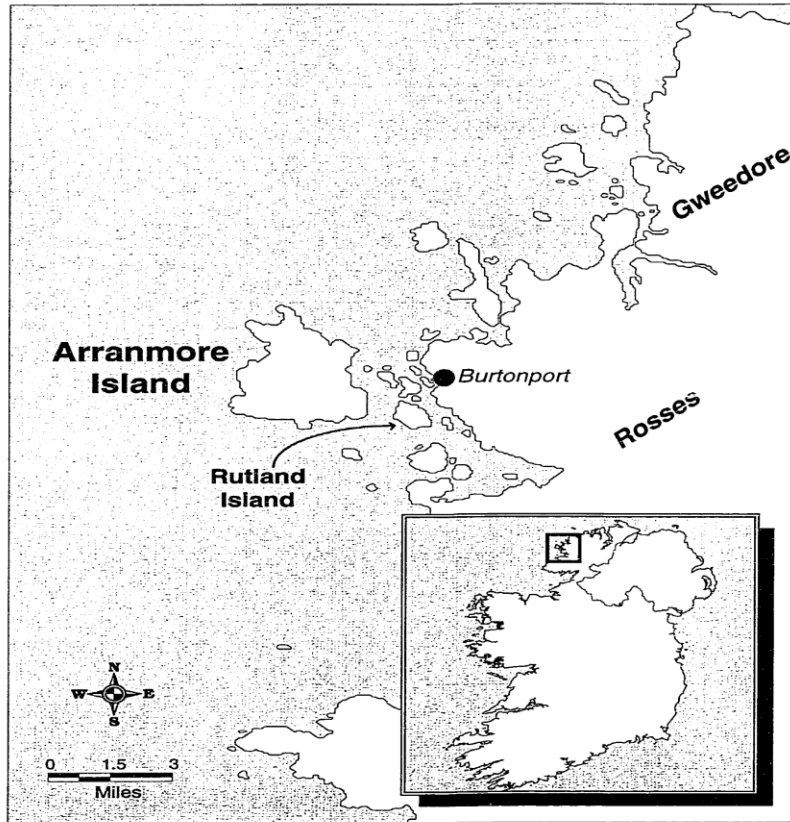Rutland Island

N
W E
S

0   1.5   3
Miles

Figure 1.1. Location of Árainn Mhór off the coast of Co. Donegal, Ireland. Image created by Paul Connors (1999:6). Permission to use this image is pending.

MAP 3

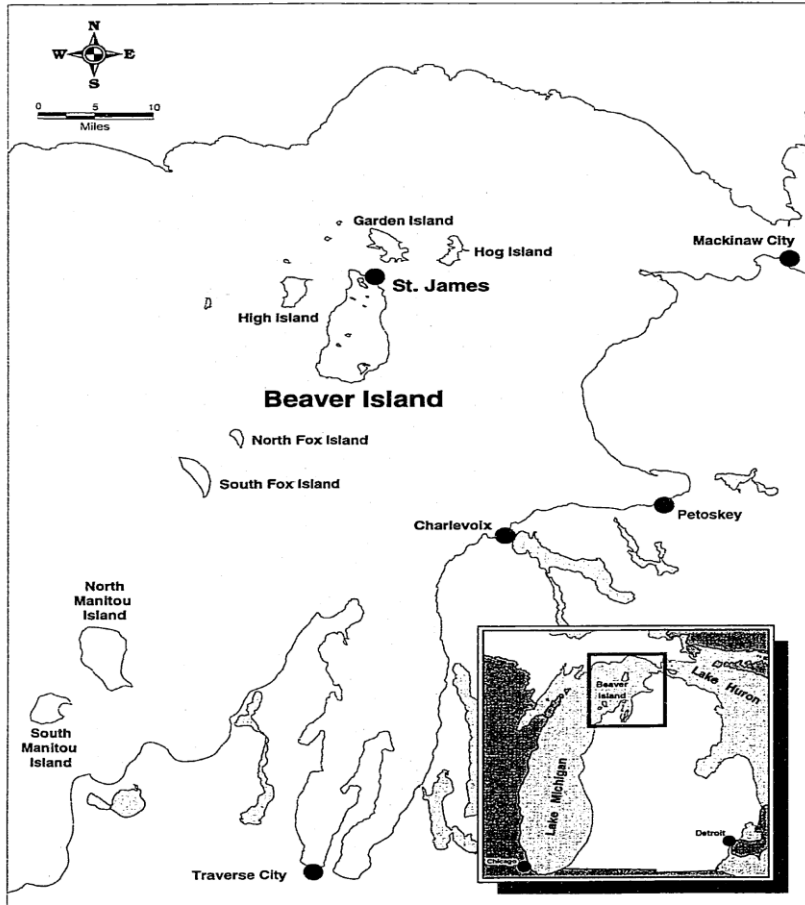57

Beaver Island Archipelago

Figure 1.2. Location of Beaver Island off the mainland of Michigan. Image created by Paul Connors (1999:57). Permission to use this image is pending.

Chapter 2: Brief History of Irish Immigration and the Project Area
by Deborah L. Rotman

Between 1815 and the Civil War, five million people immigrated to the United States; 40% of these – nearly two million – were from Ireland (Bodnar 1996:2). Prior to 1845, experiences of Irish immigrants varied widely according to place of origin, family circumstances, and other factors. After 1845, however, the lives of Irish immigrants were united by the commonalities of: (1) the Great Famine and general agricultural decline in their homeland; (2) the changed power of Catholicism in America with the significant influx of Irish Catholics; (3) an emerging Irish nationalist ideology and communal identity; and (4) the concentration of immigrants into American urban and industrial landscapes (Doyle 2006:213).

At present, the lives of Irish immigrants in America are understood almost exclusively from investigations of large urban centers like Boston and New York (e.g., Adams 1967; Brighton 2009; Diner 1983; Donnelly 2001; Gallagher 1982; Kinealy 1995; McCaffrey 1976, 1997; Meagher 2001; Miller 1985; O'Connor 1995; O'Grady 1973; O'Toole 2000). Historical accounts of immigration tend to homogenize individual experiences; thus, the incredible variation of immigrant stories both in Ireland and the US is often veiled in anonymous tellings of emigration and resettlement. Stereotypes of Irish immigrants are frequently based upon expatriates in the densely occupied tenements of unskilled laborers in large cities on the East Coast, but life in these ethnic enclaves is not wholly representative of Irish experiences in America (Doyle 2006:219). Many Irish immigrants settled beyond the eastern seaboard of North America; however, their lives are much less well understood (exceptions include Emmons 1989 and Smith 2004). Smaller communities in the Midwest, for example, had economic, social, and political structures that were more fluid than those of the long-established urban enclaves (Esslinger 1975). As such, those who settled in less urban and less industrial places – such as Beaver Island, Michigan – were afforded, for better or worse, different opportunities than their counterparts in large cities (Doyle 2006:230). Consequently, archaeological and historical investigations of these smaller and more isolated communities will contribute significantly to our understanding of the Irish Diaspora in America by elucidating lived experiences in small towns and rural fishing villages not previously explored.

Emigrating Irish families encountered profound discrimination in America, particularly those arriving during the second half of the 19th century (Orser 2001:10). The sheer volume of immigrants fleeing *an Gorta Mór* (the Great Hunger) along with their frequent state of destitution and anxiety resulted in poor public perception (Doyle 2006:216). Nativists feared that newly arrived immigrants would "outbreed, outvote, and overwhelm the 'old' native stock" (Bailey and Kennedy 1983:300). There were tensions that the Irish would replace Yankee workers in mills (Kulik 1988:400), a justifiable concern as increasingly cheap foreign labor displaced native-born help (Gross 1988:529). The fear of losing jobs was particularly acute in the Midwest. The Know-Nothing Party was a nativist political movement with a strong presence in the region (Tucker 2004:32). When Irish and German workers came to the Midwest during the building of canals in the 19th century, many citizens joined the Know-Nothing organization and denounced these immigrant laborers (Bodnar 1996:9).

There were divisions between Protestants and Catholics in the Midwest and elsewhere in the United States that were intimately linked to the nativist/non-nativist dialogue (Giffen 1996:248). The presence of the Roman Catholic Church in America was significantly changed by the tide of immigration in the 19th century. There were 1.1 million Catholics in United States in 1845 and 3.1 million in 1860 – about one half of which can be attributed to Irish immigrants during that time (Doyle 2006: 240). The numbers of congregants continued to grow to 6.3 million in 1880 (Doyle 2006:241).

Irish Catholics were further discriminated against as they were often associated with racially-marginalized African Americans (Mullins 2001:163). The Irish developed a monopoly on unskilled labor in construction work and factory employment, which put them in rather fierce competition with American Blacks (Wolf 1982:364). Being "white" for the Irish meant engaging in dominant institutions of society, from which they had largely been excluded in colonized Ireland (Paynter 2001:136).

Brief Summary of Beaver Island History

The history of the island is well documented in the *Journal of Beaver Island History*, which is published by the Beaver Island Historical Society. Interested individuals are encouraged to seek out this exceptional publication series for more detailed information. The summary presented here is intended only to serve as a brief sketch of the local history.

Árainn Mhór is the largest of the islands in the west coast of Rosses, Co. Donegal (Hargreaves 1962). The population of the island has consistently been about 500 people, who made their living at fishing and small-scale farming. Communities were organized in *clachans*, small-clusters of households that were often related. The island was hard-hit by the Great Hunger. Many island inhabitants were forcibly removed by landlords during the Famine or left under Quaker-assisted emigration schemes (Tuke 1885). Some of these individuals and families first settled along the eastern seaboard, while others – particularly during the late nineteenth century – came directly to Beaver Island.

With its sparse population and relatively remote location, Beaver Island created unique opportunities for individuals and families seeking to build new lives for themselves in America (Connors 1999). The island was not "a blank slate," however, as Irish immigrants interacted with a variety of other cultural groups throughout their history. Prior to 1847, occupation on the island was a varied mix of Irish, Native American, Germans, Swedes, and other families who were scattered on subsistence farms around the island's periphery (Metress and Metress 2006). Encounters with French fur traders, commercial fisherman, and crews of cargo ships transporting goods between Buffalo, New York and Chicago were also not uncommon (Collar 1980). The principal business on the island was "a trading establishment on the north side of the harbor. Its owners were some [Buffalo] New York men, who, under the name of the North West Trading Company, were engaged in trading with the Indians and fishermen of the adjoining regions" (Quaife 1930:81). This "relatively peaceful multicultural society" was comprised of not more than a couple of hundred residents (Connors 1999:60). Like Árainn Mhór, farming and fishing were the principal means by which families subsisted and earned their living (Case 1938:2).

The social dynamics of the island were radically altered beginning in 1847. After a dispute with Brigham Young over leadership of the Mormon Church, James Strang " wanted more territory, more privileges… so he began to look about for a place where he could establish a kingdom over which he could rule with undisputed sway" (Williams 1905:61). He discovered Beaver Island while traveling to Wisconsin when the steamer on which he was aboard sought shelter in the harbor during a storm. Shortly thereafter, he brought his followers to the island and established the Kingdom of St. James (Weeks 1976:10). He coronated himself king and, under his leadership, St. James became one of the most important ports in northern Lake Michigan (Case 1938:20). Beaver Island "possessed a seemingly inexhaustible supply of timber, it was on the main steamboat route from Buffalo to Chicago, it was in the very center of the richest fishing grounds of Lake Michigan, and it possessed a splendid, landlocked harbor" (Quaife 1930:81). These attributes positioned the island socially and economically within the region, the nation, and the world.

The development of infrastructure on the island under Strang's leadership was considerable. Roads were cleared to farm the interior and a variety of construction projects were undertaken, including a steam sawmill, a tabernacle, docks, and "kindred improvements [that] contributed to the comfort of the settlers" (Backus 1955:29-30). A school for white and Indian children was also opened (Quaife 1930:84). By 1852, "a portion of Paradise Bay was designated as a quarantine station; a hospital for the care of persons afflicted with contagious diseases was established; elaborate provisions governing the keeping and control of dogs, domestic animals, and gunpowder were enacted; [and] a board of health was charged with a periodical inspection of the fishing stations" (Quaife 1930:142).

All property on the island was considered "the lands of the Church" and was "apportioned among its members" (Backus 1955:30). Each "inheritance" consisted of a village lot and from 40 to 160 acres of farm land (Quaife 1930:139; Van Noord 1988:109). Inheritances were not free; rather "those who joined the kingdom could not receive an inheritance until they gave the king a tenth of all they possessed" (Van Noord 1988:110). The inheritance of Wingfield Watson, as one example, was described as "about midway of the island [sic], in the midst of the untamed wilderness, several miles from St. James. Here a cabin was built, a well dug, and fruit trees set out; in short, with no accumulated capital, by the hardest of manual labor during the ensuing four years, the foundations of a modest homestead were reared" (Quaife 1930:175). Mormon

houses were typically "two stories high and built of squared logs, whitewashed outside and in" (Van Noord 1988:73). Presumably, the king's cottage represented an ideal Mormon residence. It was described as

> a sturdy two-story frame home with a porch across the length of the front. Massive doors at the front and rear were connected by a hallway through the center of the home. There was a large room on either side of the first floor, with two bedrooms and closets upstairs. The house was built in a grove of hardwoods and scattered evergreens on a level area just below the bluff where the log house stood. [The original crude log dwelling in which the king and his family had resided when they first arrived on the island.] There was a view of the harbor and Lake Michigan beyond. A white picket fence surrounded the yard (Van Noord 1988:167).

Interestingly, with the establishment of the Mormon kingdom on Beaver Island, the communalism that had characterized their lives in Illinois and Wisconsin was abandoned. Although "groups of Mormons were encouraged to associate themselves under the patronage of a chosen leader, sharing his table and house" (Quaife 1933:139), fewer than 10% of dwellings in 1850 were comprised of more than one nuclear family (United States Bureau of the Census 1850). Even the delimiting of the houselot with a fence signaled a significant shift away from communalism toward a new emphasis on individual households.

Mormon dietary prescriptions forbade the use of wine, strong drinks, tobacco, and hot drinks (tea and coffee), while herbs, fruits, "flesh of beasts and fowls of the air" were to be used "with prudence and thanksgiving" (Word of Wisdom 89). Beaver Island has "small potentialities of the land for agricultural use" (Case 1938:55). Consequently, large-scale crop production was somewhat limited, although clover and other forage crops (such as alfalfa and timothy hay) were grown along with some corn, oats, and rye. During the Mormon occupation, "Strang encouraged sheep husbandry as a means of supplying homespun" (Case 1938:89). A typical farmstead also consisted of a small orchard and vegetable garden. Mormon occupation of the island was focused on the northernmost quarter of the island, around the harbor and the farmland immediately outside the village of St. James, such as around Font Lake and along Darkey Town and Sloptown roads (Case 1938:55).

Almost immediately upon his arrival on Beaver, Strang seized near complete control of political and economic interests on the island, which created considerable animosity between Mormons and non-Mormons (Case 1938:3). In 1847, Beaver Island had been incorporated into the township of Peaine; "although part of Emmet County, the township was attached to Mackinac for judicial purposes, to Newaygo for the election of state representative, and to Lapeer for the election of state senator" (Quaife 1930:141). The remote location of the island coupled with these unique political circumstances gave the Mormons near complete control of the island and the archipelago. Strang even managed to get himself elected to the State Assembly in 1852 (Quaife 1930).

The 1850 census enumeration reveals the varied nature of Mormon society (United States Bureau of the Census 1850) (Table 2.1). About half of the men (49.7%) were engaged in farming and fishing as occupations, while the other half provided skilled trades and other services to their community. The composition of occupations parallels that of urban places and appears to represent the recreation of the urban-oriented life the Mormons led in elsewhere in the Midwest before settling on Beaver Island. Furthermore, it illustrates the economic and social interdependence of community members with one another. The median household size in 1850 was five, with 90% of households having eight or fewer members (United States Bureau of the Census 1850). The overwhelming majority of these households (75%+) were composed of married couples, nuclear families (married couples with children), and nuclear families with other boarders (many of whom appear to have been related to the head of household).

Strang's autocratic rule created considerable tensions with non-Mormons on the island. Collar (2011a:1) reported that non-Mormon merchants, such as Alva Cable at Whiskey Point, "would sell no provisions to the Mormons," which forced Strang and his people to purchase goods from Chicago. In response to the increasing hostility, many Irish families migrated away from the harbor and main habitation center at the northeast corner of the island to the southernmost point at Cable's Bay, particularly during the winter of 1851-1852 (Connors 1999:98). Eventually, however, nearly all Irish and other non-Mormon

Table 2.1. Census Summary ~ 1850; entire island, largely Mormon occupation

General Category	Specific Occupation	Number of men	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	44	28.0
Maritime	Seaman	14	21.7
	Ship carpenter	4	
	Fisherman/fish	16	
Lumbering	Lumberman/lumber	21	14.1
	Sawyer	1	
Skilled Trades	Carpenter	10	21.1
	Carpenter & joiner	4	
	Cooper	9	
	Shingles	1	
	Cabinet (maker)	1	
	Tailor	1	
	Shoemaker	3	
	Mason	1	
	Couch maker	1	
	Brick maker	1	
	Blacksmith	1	
Services	Merchant	9	12.1
	Clerk	2	
	Warehouse	1	
	Minister	3	
	Lawyer (Strang)	1	
	Cook	1	
	Meat market	1	
	Teamster	1	
General Labor	Laborer	5	3.0

families moved from the island altogether. The departure of 20 non-Mormon families from Beaver Island in 1852 was reported in the *Green Bay Spectator* as the "Flight of the Gentiles."

Afterward, only eight non-Mormon families remained (Van Noord 1988:176), but Strang was determined to remove these families as well. Williams (1905:143) reported that "one morning on the first of November [1852?] a messenger came to every Gentile family with a letter from the king, saying every Gentile family must come to the harbor and be baptized into the Church of Zion or leave the island within ten days after receiving the notice." Thus by 1856, the island was inhabited almost exclusively by Mormons

Disaffection for Strang's ecclesiastical theocracy, however, also permeated his followers. At issue were disputes over the practice of polygamy, harsh punishment (including horsewhipping) meted out for violating local laws, and even proscriptions for women to wear short skirts with pantalet trousers (Quaife 1930). In June 16 of that year, two disgruntled Mormons attacked Strang as he was disembarking from a ship in the harbor (Collar 1972:118; Quaife 1930:174). Mortally wounded, Strang was transported back to Voree, Wisconsin where he died at his parents' home July 9 (Backus 1955:38).

Former island residents, many of whom were Irish, returned to evict the Mormons and reclaim Beaver Island for themselves (Weeks 1976:9). Mormon "homesteads and improvements were seized and occupied" (Backus 1955:38). Case (1938:3, 16) reported that

> All of the property of the [estimated] 2,500-2,600 Mormon inhabitants of the Island was confiscated, and the Mormons themselves were removed from their farms and their town homes, and by boat were carried to Milwaukee and Chicago…. More than a hundred head of cattle, horses, and mules were taken as well as boats, nets, fishermen's supplies, and

furniture. Three stores and the printing office were rifled. The tabernacle was burned, and the "royal palace" was sacked.

It is believed that Strang inflated the numbers of Mormons in his flock as a way of securing financial resources and political power for the island (Case 1938: 4). Thus it is unclear exactly how many Mormons were evicted. The *Northern Islander*, the Mormon newspaper printed on Beaver, reported a population of 2,608 residents in 1854 (Quaife 1930:174). The federal census taker in 1860, however, documented only 115 dwellings, six of which were vacant (United States Bureau of the Census 1860). Even if it there had been twice as many houses on the island in 1850 as were enumerated ten years later, each Mormon dwelling would have had to house an average of 11 people – more than twice their median household size in 1850 – in order to accommodate such a large population. Furthermore, between 1850 and 1856, the Mormons would also have needed to transform their residential patterning, moving from an emphasis on nuclear families to one of combined households of two or more families. This seems unlikely, however, given that communism was not practiced on the island. Consequently, the numbers of Mormons actually evicted by the returning Irish to Beaver Island as well as the number of abandoned homesteads for Irish families to occupy is unknown, but is likely fewer than has been reported (Metress and Metress 2006:33).

One oral history of the Mormon eviction recounts that "the Dan Boyles moved into a house where the hearth was still warm and the cow still in the barn" (Collar 1976:41). "Black John" Bonner is reported to have dismantled the logs from several Mormon homes and used them to construct his own homestead in the spring of 1857 (Connors 1999:124). The returning Irish also benefited from the infrastructure that Strang and his followers had developed around the harbor and in the village of St. James, which included residences, retail stores, a hotel, sawmills, numerous fishing sheds and drying racks as well as piers and wharves lining the waterfront (Case 1938:20). Although it is easy to imagine the Irish taking over these buildings and businesses in much the same way as they occupied former Mormon homes, definitive evidence that they did so is elusive.

Island life for the returning Irish immigrants had a very different focus than that of their Mormon counterparts. The 1860 census enumeration shows that about 1/3 of men (35.7%) were engaged in farming and fishing occupations, but the overwhelming majority were listed as "laborers" (Table 2.2). These laborers almost always appeared in families where the head of the household was listed as a "farmer" or "fisherman." In all likelihood, these young men worked as farm laborers or on fishing boats, although some may have also performed odd jobs and other tasks. Interestingly, a reliance on lumber is completely absent as an economic

Table 2.2. Census Summary ~ 1860; entire island, largely Irish immigrant occupation

General Category	Specific Occupation	Number of men	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	16	10.4
Maritime	Fisherman	34	25.3
	Sailor	3	
	Lighthouse Keeper	2	
Other	Fisherman & farmer	2	1.3
Skilled Trades	Carpenter	4	14.3
	Cooper	14	
	Shoemaker	3	
	Tanner (?)	1	
Services	Merchant	3	3.9
	Clerk	1	
	Boarding House	1	
	Tavern Keeper	1	
General Labor	Laborer	69	44.8

focus during this time and doesn't appear as an occupation again until 1880. The relatively few full-time skilled tradesmen and service providers illustrates the large degree of self-sufficiency of these Irish fishermen and farmers. Island trout and whitefish were salted, packed in barrels, and shipped to Buffalo, Mackinac, and the Sault where they were either consumed, sold to traders or repacked and sent to even more distant markets (Collar 2011b:1, 3). Commercial fishing activity was facilitated by local merchants, such as Peter McKinley (1850s), Charles R. Wright (1850s through 1870s), and James and Allen Dormer (1870s to the turn of the century) (Collar 2011c).

Significantly, the census data suggests that the Irish were recreating the fishing, farming, and rural lifeways of Ireland – which was very different from the Mormons who had recreated a more-urban-like community during their occupation on Beaver. Importantly too, such a high degree of self-sufficiency would have required women to make substantial contributions to the domestic economy of each household and, as a result, their status vis-à-vis men would likely have been higher than their Mormon and/or urban counterparts.

Interestingly, however, Irish households on Beaver Island strongly resembled Mormon ones. The median household size in 1860 was four, with 89% of households having seven or fewer members (United States Bureau of the Census 1860). The overwhelming majority of these households (82%+) were composed of married couples, nuclear families (married couples with children), and nuclear families with other boarders (many of whom appear to have been related to the head of household).

Farmsteads continued to have orchards and vegetable gardens, providing much of families' dietary needs. Canned goods from purchased at the village store supplemented what households could produce (Case 1938:68). Although there were a few sheep farms, about half of Irish farms focused on cattle, while the other half were more general in their agricultural practices (Case 1938:60). The crops grown included clover, timothy hay, alfalfa, oats, corn, and potatoes (Case 1938:68).

The habitation of the island had gone from being almost exclusively Mormon to almost exclusively Irish in less than a generation. Indeed during the second half of the 19th century, nearly 95% of the families on the island were of Irish descent (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1870, 1880, 1900) and most of these families had ancestral ties to Árainn Mhór (Connors 1999:116). Árainn Mhór Irish who had initially settled elsewhere in North America also migrated to Beaver Island in large numbers in the immediate post-Mormon period. "Black John" Bonner facilitated the relocation of a group from New York City, while Charlie O'Donnell assisted another large group from Toronto, Canada at about the same time. Some Árainn Mhór Irish even came via the coalfields of Pennsylvania, where they "wished to escape the oppressive work conditions of the dangerous mines and the vicious coercive tactics of the mine owners and their private armies" (Metress and Metress 2006:35). These individuals and families were told that an island had been found that "was remarkably like Arranmore, and full of empty houses which had been abandoned by the Mormons and could be had by any who simply walked into them" (Collar 1976:40).

With such marketing of Beaver Island (albeit somewhat exaggerated), it is perhaps not surprising that the second half of the nineteenth century was the period during which chain migration direct from County Donegal was most active. Large groups of families came in 1866 and 1884, the latter of which received financial and logistical assistance from British and Irish Quakers (Collar 1976:35; Tuke 1885). At the peak of Irish immigration, Beaver Island was a *Gaeltacht*, one of only a few Irish-speaking enclaves in the United States (Sullivan 2010:65). Island colonization was predicated on the many interrelated families from Árainn Mhór, "who spoke the same dialect, lived the same lifestyle, and shared memories of the past" (Connors 1999:122).

Given the cultural homogeneity of the island, non-Irish families were pressured to integrate into Irish culture. Edward and Rosalie DeBriae were French Canadians. They were invited by their New York City Irish neighbors to join them in relocating to Beaver Island in 1857. According to island tradition, the surname DeBriae was difficult for the Irish to pronounce. Someone reportedly proclaimed, "Oh hell, DeBriae is just French for O'Brien!" and the name stuck (Collar 1976:37-38). The family appears with their Irish surname in land records and census enumerations and, although Rosalie's headstone in Holy Cross Cemetery shows her as DeBriae, two of her children were buried as O'Briens (Connors 1999:142).

The physical isolation of the Island served to preserve important elements of traditional Irish culture (Collar 1976:49). Many aspects of their lives on Árainn Mhór persisted in northern Michigan, including subsistence fishing and farming (Tables 2.3 and 2.4), endogamous marriage practices and traditional

Table 2.3. Census Summary ~ 1870; entire island, largely Irish immigrant occupation

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men Chandler (north)	# of men Peaine (middle)	# of men Gallilee (south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	9	32	8	33.8
Maritime	Fisherman	5	7	18	24.1
	Sailor	3	1		
	Lighthouse Keeper			1	
Skilled Trades	Carpenter	3			11.0
	Cooper	7	1		
	Shoemaker	2			
	Blacksmith	1			
	Wagon maker		2		
Services	Merchant (dry goods)	2			6.2
	Clerk	1	1		
	Hotel Keeper	3			
	Teaching school		1		
	Catholic priest		1		
General Labor	Laborer	11	15	10	24.9

Table 2.4. Census Summary ~ 1880; entire island, largely Irish immigrant occupation

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men Chandler (north)	# of men Peaine (middle)	# of men Gallilee (south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	2	59	16	33.3
	Farm laborer	1	7		
Maritime	Fisherman	7	14	5	14.9
	Sailor	4	4		
	Wholesale fish	1			
	Fish inspector	1	1		
	Lighthouse Keeper			1	
Lumbering	Lumberman/lumber	1			0.4
Skilled Trades	Carpenter	3	3		7.8
	Cooper	10			
	Shoemaker	1	2		
	Blacksmith	1			
	Wagon maker				
Services	Retail grocer	5	1		6.3
	Retail dry goods	1			
	Clerk	2	1		
	Bookkeeper in store	1			
	Bookkeeper	1		1	
	Schoolteacher		1	1	
	Clergyman		1		
General Labor	Laborer	3	59	33	37.3

gender roles, commitments to clan and community, their Catholic faith and Irish language, and patriarchal authority. All these factors contributed to group stability and cohesiveness, which stands in marked contrast to the extreme transience and instability observed in many other, more urban Irish immigrant populations. The island's remote location also meant that the issues of great importance to urban ethnic ghettos, such as Irish nationalism, Catholic-Protestant tensions, and Democratic machine politics, "had virtually no bearing on the Beaver Irish" (Connors 1999:146). Islanders were also at least somewhat removed from "nativist xenophobia, assimilative pressures, and inter-ethnic conflict arising from socioeconomic inequality in the industrial occupational structure" that characterized urban enclaves (Connors 1999:149).

This is not to say that Beaver Island was entirely beyond the social, political, economic, and cultural influences of the mainland. St. James continued to be an important port along the Great Lakes shipping lanes well into the twentieth century. Consequently, the Beaver Island Irish were well connected to the outside world through this dynamic commercial activity.

During the first four decades of the post-Mormon occupation of the island (1856-1896), the Irish consisted predominately of foreign-born immigrants who had transplanted religious, economic, and cultural practices from Árainn Mhór to Beaver Island. Traditional lifeways were further reinforced by the appointment of Fr. Peter Gallagher, C.S.C., who served on the island from 1866 until his death in 1898 (Pike and Vreeland 1988:173). As a native Irish speaker, Fr. Gallagher was a welcome addition to the Beaver Island community. Indeed at least one parishioner believed the priest was heaven-sent, as she had prayed that she would not die until "an Irish priest would hear her confession in Irish" (Gallagher 1929-1930:201-202). Fr. Gallagher said Mass in Irish and conducted the religious business of the island in ways that helped to perpetuate the social and cultural structures from Árainn Mhór (Connors 1999:290).

By the 1890s, American-born descendants of the founding Irish families were coming of age and challenging the parochial worldview that had dominated island life. Connors (1999:275) asserts that second-generation Irish "aimed to topple the entrenched oligarchy and dismantle the Old World, hierarchical social system" and inspired by "true participatory democracy, market driven capitalism, and materialism,…planned to take advantage of the benefits that further integration with the mainland would provide."

This generational shift was facilitated in part by the overwhelming success of the fishing industry during the late nineteenth century, but which represented a paradox for Beaver Irish (Table 2.5). The ample household incomes which fishing generated resulted in a stable island economy and "nurtured the continuance of familiar, pre-migration subsistence agricultural practices," which in turn "provided for the cultural transference of a conservative, patriarchal village clan structure" (Connors 1999:290). Yet simultaneously, commercial fishing meant engaging with a market economy, emerging class consciousness, a spirit of individualized entrepreneurialism, and increasing social stratification – all of which directly challenged traditional communal values and social organization. Before these differences of tradition and modernity could be fully reconciled between the generations of island Irish, however, the fishing industry began to decline due to both overfishing and state regulations that undermined fishing as a viable livelihood. Children no longer followed their fathers into the profession (Cashman 1976:86) and a pattern of out-migration and exogamy began to characterize the lives of American-born Irish on the island (Duke and Rotman 2012).

The Beaver Island Lumber Company further altered the cultural and economic landscape of the island by bringing an influx of foreign laborers in 1903 (Gladish 1976) (Tables 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8). Although the Irish continued to have a strong presence, the logging camps were occupied by lumberjacks and millers from Germany, Denmark, Norway, France, Austria, England, and even India (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1910). Lumbering also assumed prominence in the economy, accounting for more than one-quarter of all men's jobs on the island. The cultural influence of the Beaver Irish began to wane and the *Gaeltacht* faded into history as English became the language through which daily business was transacted.

Although the Beaver Island lumber company ceased operations ca. 1915, lumber-related industries continued on the island into the 1970s (Gladish 1976:101). The multicultural society that developed as the result of timber in the early 20th century has persisted to present day. Only about a third of current island residents claim Irish ancestry.

The pattern of self-sufficiency that was established in the immediate post-Mormon period by returning Irish fishermen and farmers persisted well into the 20th century. Although the proportions of

Table 2.5. Census Summary ~ 1900; entire island, largely Irish immigrant occupation, but beginning to change

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer		60	40.1
	Farm laborer		47	
Maritime	Fisherman	56	18	42.2
	Captain (steam boat)	1		
	Captain (lake)	5		
	Captain (marine)	4		
	Engineer (boat, marine, lake)	3		
	Foreman (marine)	2		
	Sailor	5	6	
	Cook (boat)	3		
	Agent (dock)	1		
	Life saving station		1	
	Lighthouse Keeper	5	3	
Lumbering	Foreman (camp)		1	8.1
	Foreman (saw mill)	1		
	Watchman (saw mill)	1		
	Raftsman	2	2	
	Woodsman	2	12	
	Cook in camp		1	
Skilled Trades	Carpenter (house)	3		2.5
	Carpenter		2	
	Cooper	2		
Services	Merchant (general store)	1		7.1
	Salesman (general store)	1		
	Grocer/Merchant (grocery)	2		
	Merchant (furniture)	1		
	Clerk (dry goods)	1		
	Bookkeeper in store	2		
	Schoolteacher	2	1	
	Music teacher	1		
	Cook	2		
	Teamster	1		
	Saloon Keeper	1		
	Hotel Keeper	1		
	Postmaster	1		

Table 2.6. Census Summary ~ 1910; entire island, multicultural society

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	4	60	29.4
	Farm laborer (at home)		37	
	Farm laborer (working out)		5	
Maritime	Fisherman (gill net)	24		15.8
	Fisherman (pound net)	5		
	Buyer (fish)	2		
	Carpenter (boat builder)	3		
	Engineer (boat, marine, lake)	4	1	
	Foreman (marine)	1		
	Sailor (own vessel)	1		
	Sailor (merchant vessel)	1	2	
	Pilot (fish tug)	3		
	Pilot (towing tug)	1		
	Mender (gill net)	3		
	Life saving station	1		
	Lighthouse Keeper	2	3	
Lumbering	Superintendent (lumber co)	1	2	26.5
	Foreman (lumber mill)	3		
	Sawyer (lumber mill, lumber camp)	1	5	
	Woodchopper (lumber camp)	2	16	
	Cook in camp	1	1	
	Machinist (lumber mill)	1		
	Saw filer (lumber mill)	1		
	Blacksmith (lumber co)	2		
	Teamster (lumber mill, lumber camp)	3	3	
	Engineer (lumber mill)	1		
	Laborer (lumber mill)	36		
	Car loader (lumber camp)		2	
	Barn boss (lumber camp)		1	
	Laborer (camp)	3		
	Bookkeeper (lumber co)	1		
	Foreman (railroad)	3		
	Laborer (railroad)	3		
	Brakeman (railroad)	2		
	Engineer (locomotive)	1		
	Illegible (lumber mill)	1		
Skilled Trades	Carpenter (house)	6		4.3
	Cooper (apple barrels)	1		
	Blacksmith (own shop)	1		
	Painter (house)	1		
	Tailor (own shop)	1		
	Bolter (shingle mill)	1		
	Laborer (shingle mill)	4		

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
	Mason (bricklayer)		1	
Services	Salesman (grocery store)	1		7.9
	Wagon driver (groceries)	1		
	Grocer/Merchant (grocery)	1		
	Butcher (own shop)	1		
	Bookkeeper in store	1		
	Physician (general practice)	1		
	Schoolteacher	2	6 (nuns)	
	Musician (violin)	1		
	Music teacher		1	
	Proprietor (livery barn)	1		
	Teamster	1		
	Hotel Keeper	1		
	Barber (own shop)	1		
	Barber (working out)	1		
	Keeper (ice cream parlor)	2		
	Keeper (billiard room)	1		
	Postmaster	1		
	Dpt. oil inspector (state)	1		
	Catholic priest, clergyman (brother)		2	
General Labor	Laborer (odd jobs)	39	18	16.1
	Laborer	1		

Table 2.7. Census Summary ~ 1920; entire island, multicultural society

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	5	58	38.6
	Farm laborer (at home)	12	21	
	Farm laborer (working out)	2	5	33.8
Maritime	Fisherman (Fish Co.)	4		
	Fisherman (own tug)	54		
	Fisherman (fish tug)	3		
	Owner (fish tug)	3		
	Engineer (fish tug)	3		
	Bookkeeper (steam ships)	1		
	Cook (steam boat)	1		
	Dock laborer (boat dock)	1		
	Buyer (fish)	2		
	Carpenter (ship yard)	1		
	Sailor (Great Lakes)	2		
	Sailor (merchant vessel)	7		
	Life saving station	3		
	Lighthouse Keeper	4	1	

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
Other	Farmer & fisherman	1		0.3
Lumbering	Laborer (lumber mill)	3		3.7
	Wood chopper (lumber camp)	1		
	Foreman (woods)	1		
	Woodsman (lumber camp)	2		
	Lumberman (lumber camp)	1		
	Manufacturer (lumber)	1	1	
Skilled Trades	Carpenter (house)	6		12.7
	Mason (house)	1		
	Blacksmith (own shop)	3		
	Painter (house)	1		
	Bricklayer	1		
	Shipping clerk (auto post)		1	
	Manager (auto rep shop)		1	
	Laborer (box factory)		19	
	Machinist (box factory)		1	
Services	Grocer/Merchant (grocery)	1		10.9
	Retail Merchant (general merchandise)		5	
	Bookkeeper in store	1		
	Real estate & insurance		1	
	Schoolteacher	2	8 (nuns)	
	Baker (in bakery)		1	
	Illustrator house artist		1	
	Proprietor (livery barn, dray line)	2		
	Hotel Keeper	1		
	Keeper (billiard room)	1		
	Postmaster, clerk in post office	1		
	Catholic priest, clergyman; sexton, minister	2	2	

Table 2.8. Census Summary ~ 1930; entire island, multicultural society

General Category	Specific Occupation	# of men St. James (north)	# of men Peaine (middle, south)	% of labor force
Agriculture	Farmer	4	40	34.7
	Farm laborer, helper (general farm)	1	14	
Maritime	Fisherman (commercial)	55		42.8
	Engineer (marine)	5		
	Cook (steam boat)	1		
	Buyer (fish)	1		

	Laborer (fish packer)	1		
	Carpenter (ship yard)	2		
	Watchman (boat)	1		
	Fireman (boat)	1		
	Helper (shore hand)	1		
	Life saving station	2		
	Lighthouse Keeper	3		
Lumbering	Laborer (lumber camp or log camp)	4	4	7.6
	Lumberman (wholesale)	1		
	Foreman (saw mill)	1		
	Superintendent (lumber camp)		1	
	Laborer (saw mill)		1	
	Cable splicer (lumber camp)		1	
Skilled Trades	Carpenter (house)	2		2.9
	Engineer (stationary)	1		
	Mechanic (general)	1		
	Laborer (U.S. Construction)	1		
Services	Schoolteacher	1	5 (nuns)	10.6
	Chauffeur (taxi co.)	1		
	Merchant (retail, dry goods)	3		
	Orderly (hospital)	1		
	Warden (fire)	1		
	Physician (medical)	1		
	Butcher (meat)	1		
	Postmaster, clerk in post office	3		
	Catholic priest, clergyman; sexton, minister		1	
General Labor	Laborer (garden)	1		1.2
	Laborer (coal mine)	1		

fishermen, farmers, and laborers varied from census enumeration to census enumeration, the overall percentage of skilled trades and service occupations on the island remained relatively low (Table 2.9). From 1860 to 1880, skilled trades and services represented less than 20% of public economic activity and even declined between each of these decennial census years (from 18.2% in 1860 to 17.2% in 187 to 14.1% in 1880). These occupations were at their lowest levels during the 1900 and 1910 enumerations when they were 9.6% and 12.2%, respectively. The slight increase by 1910 may be a reflection of an increased need for skilled trades and services that accompanied the arrival of the Beaver Island Company in 1903. Indeed, by 1920, nearly one-quarter (23.6%) of all male occupations on the island fell in this category, but declined again by the 1930 enumeration to 13.5%.

The high degree of self-sufficiency for more than seven decades would have had important implications for individual households. Each family would have had to produce much of their own food, dispose of their own waste, and met most of their other needs within the household in a customary pattern for rural households (Stewart-Abernathy 1986; Rotman and Nassaney 1997). Importantly, women would have made significant contributions to the domestic economy and, therefore, had relatively high status vis-à-vis men on the island (Rotman 2009).

Rather than simply representing demographic shifts in the island's population, the cultural exchanges that accompanied each of these transitions profoundly shaped Irish identity and *ethnogenesis* (the process of

Table 2.9. Summary by percentage of male occupations ~ 1860-1930.

General Category	1860	1870	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
Agriculture	10.4	33.8	33.3	40.1	29.4	38.6	34.7
Maritime	25.3	24.1	14.9	42.2	15.8	33.8	42.8
Combined Fisher/Farmer	1.3					0.3	
Lumbering			0.4	8.1	26.5	3.7	7.6
Skilled Trades	14.3	11.0	7.8	2.5	4.3	12.7	2.9
Services	3.9	6.2	6.3	7.1	7.9	10.9	10.6
General Labor	44.8	24.9	37.3		16.1		1.2

forming new cultural identities). Ethnic identities were defined and solidified through contact with other peoples. Instead of a straight line of one group becoming like another, however, interactions between these entities represented a series of negotiations in which some ethnic traditions continued, individual choices and adaptations made, and cultural norms rejected or subverted.

As Irish identities and lived experiences on Beaver Island were transformed through cultural interaction with non-Irish groups so too were their material and social worlds. Through these varied cultural contacts, such as with the Mormons in the mid-nineteenth century and the multiethnic workforce of the Beaver Island Lumber Company in the early twentieth century, Irish families continued traditions from their homeland, incorporated new cultural norms and practices, and otherwise navigated the multifaceted and ever-changing social landscapes in which they lived.

Research Questions of Interest

Rather than simply representing demographic shifts in the island's population, the cultural exchanges that accompanied each of these transitions profoundly shaped Irish identity and *ethnogenesis* (the process of forming new cultural identities). Ethnic identities were defined and solidified through contact with other peoples. Instead of a straight line of one group becoming like another, however, interactions between these entities represented a series of negotiations in which some ethnic traditions continued, individual choices and adaptations made, and cultural norms rejected or subverted.

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It is these varied cultural contacts between circa 1840 and circa 1920 that are the foci of this project. Identity is contrastive by nature: 'we' exist by reference to a distinguishing 'them' (Newton 2010:96). How was Irish identity and ethnogenesis (the process of forming new cultural identities) shaped by interaction with peoples of varied ethnicities? How was "Irishness" performed when the island was occupied by disparate cultural groups, such as Native Americans and Mormons? How was identity mediated in the second half of the 19th century when the island was so homogenously Irish? How were consumer choices, food ways, and uses of space shaped and transformed as Irish immigrants on Beaver Island navigated the multifaceted social worlds in which they lived?

Assimilation of cultural groups into new surroundings is a process; one that means both "to make like" as well as "to take up and incorporate" (Kivisto 2004:155). Rather than a straight line of one group becoming like another, it is a series of complex negotiations in which some ethnic traditions may continue, individual choices and adaptations made (Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77), and cultural norms rejected or subverted (Joseph 2004:19). Murray (2006:6) describes this process as that of *becoming* or *devenir*; "Becoming never stops yet occasionally changes its direction, or ripples in turbulent flows, forever following its course towards a new identity."

Issues of identity and culture contact are of key importance to other scholars interested in ethnogenesis and the experiences of other diasporic peoples. This proposed project investigating Irish-

America on Beaver Island, therefore, will both draw from and contribute to these interdisciplinary discourses. Research at Fort Michilimackinac, for example, has focused on interactions between the areas indigenous people and the French and British soldiers and fur traders at the Fort. Scott's (2001) investigation of the site, however, revealed that Fort Michilimackinac was a multicultural place occupied by German Jews, French Canadians, Native Americans, African Americans, and Métis. Each of these groups "used religion, language, dress, food, and house style to emphasize their cultural traditions" (Scott 2001:32). In this context of colonialism, uses of the material world were both symbols of ethnic identity and overt displays intended to reinforce superior-inferior statuses among the colonizers and the colonized. Consequently, the process of ethnogenesis at the fort was not about acculturation, but rather the reassertion of traditional cultural norms in response to conflict among highly varied ethnic groups.

Franklin (2001) observed a similar phenomenon in colonial Virginia. Foodways were used as a vehicle for racial and cultural identity, to construct and maintain group boundaries. Although the Afro-Virginians in her study were enslaved on Tidewater plantations, they were able to use their resources and knowledge to produce foodways that both demonstrated some measure of autonomous cultural production within the context of slavery as well as their own within-group construct of identity.

An isolated marine community of Overseas Chinese along the central California coast was studied by Greenwood and Slawson (2008). Their analyses revealed both continuity and change in this immigrant enclave. Foodways and traditional dishes persisted in their use, while architectural changes to houses and associated furnishing were somewhat more malleable through time. Rather than simply "measuring assimilation according to percentages of imported vs. domestic manufactured items, [critical analyses of the material world of this village] illuminated broader issues such as evidence of continued ethnic traditions, resistance to American cultural norms, individual adaptations, and the persistence of a small but distinctive culture with its own values and behaviors" (Greenwood and Slawson 2008:77; see also Joseph 2004:19). Importantly, their study highlights the complex negotiations that constitute the process of *becoming* and the ways in which identity is selectively mediated through material culture, often with reference to both the world people currently inhabit and the worlds they left behind upon emigrating.

A transnational perspective is imperative for understanding continuity and change in Irish immigrant experiences. Significantly, "processes of dispersion were historically and socially distinctive for captive Africans, Irish migrants, and the Overseas Chinese, but scholarship on all these diasporas centers around the articulated, constructed, and unrecognized connections displaced peoples have with their origins" (Mullins 2008:155). In addition, "social networks consist of the local and Ireland" and that "it is important to understand that their *Ireland* (not the geographical but the one in their minds) has been relocated" to their new communities (Murray 2006:16, emphasis in the original). Much of this constructed identity on Beaver Island continues to be reified by local historians, oral traditions, and popular institutions, but has not yet been informed by the archaeological record. This interdisciplinary and collaborative project will investigate 19th-century homesteads associated with Irish immigrants on Beaver Island and explore the process of becoming Irish-Americans.