

# Online Irish History Course

## The Great Hunger/*an Gorta Mór* 1845 – 1852

Mondays 7:30 – 9 pm / Nov. 8, 22, 29 and Dec. 6, 2021

In the past two centuries no event has shaped the Ireland of today more than the Great Hunger/Famine of 1845 – 1852. No event stirs the emotions of Irish people more. No other event demonstrates so clearly the failure of British colonial policy in Ireland.



The Great Hunger/Famine was the direct result of colonial policies that began with the destruction of Gaelic Ireland in the period 1540 to 1603.

This was followed by the Cromwellian settlement of the 1650's, the military defeat of Catholic Ireland in the 1690's, and the subsequent imposition of Penal Laws for the suppression of the Gaelic people of Ireland. After three hundred years of conquest and destruction, millions of Irish people were reduced to destitution, poverty, illiteracy, and were made dependent on the potato by British government policy and landlord greed.

John Mitchell in his famous writing "The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)" describes the function of the 1843 British "Landlord and Tenant Commission" as being to devise the best means of getting rid of what Englishmen called "the surplus population" of Ireland. There was to be more grazing, more green cropping; there were to be larger farms; and more labor was to be done by horses and by steam. But consolidation of many small farms into one large one could not be effected without clearing off the "surplus population;" and then, as there would be fewer mouths to be fed, so there would be more produce for export to England. The problem to be solved was, how to get rid of the people. This was the issue dominating the minds of the political class in England as disaster loomed for the people of Ireland.

This course will focus on the events that resulted in the worst ever preventable disaster in Ireland; the subsequent death of over one million people, and the mass emigration of Irish people. It will examine the great hunger/famine years in detail to clarify the reasons why people died of starvation and disease while the bulk of the food they produced was taken out of Ireland under armed guard.

It will deal decisively with any notion that the Irish people brought this upon themselves or that it was God's will.

**Course fee is \$80. To enroll, email [seanmurphy630@gmail.com](mailto:seanmurphy630@gmail.com)**