The Southern Cross, a newspaper printed for the Irish immigrant community in nineteenth-century Argentina, attempted to create an Irish identity made from elements of the broader diasporic Irish identity to which the immigrant community in Argentina could adhere. This identity was formed by employing romanticized language and pastoral imagery about Ireland and reminding readers of their roots by printing articles about Irish history, arts, religion, and language. Irish readers shared the language of the newspaper editors, demonstrating the function of The Southern Cross as both a vehicle and a catalyst for communicating and creating Irish identity in Argentina.

By Elizabeth A. Cowan
Davidson College

The country around San Pedro is dotted with Irish homesteads; and the genial smile, the gay humour, and the proverbial hospitality of the occupants indicate at once a state of comfort and independence which forms a striking contrast with the forlorn condition of their countrymen at home. Nor are the Irish people of San Pedro forgetful of their traditions, or of that faith which seems to be so mysteriously bound up with their existence.

A n Irish campo correspondent communicated this serene picture to the Buenos Aires-based newspaper The Southern Cross in May of 1881. Though he described an Argentine partido, the author employed many of the rhetorical elements used throughout the global Irish diaspora—pastoral imagery, an oppressed Ireland, ancient traditions of hospitality, and adherence to Irish Catholicism. Such language and imagery infused The Southern Cross, connecting readers with a transnational Irish identity interpreted through an Argentine lens. Using this broader diasporic Irish identity, The Southern Cross’s chief editor and Irish chaplain, Patrick Dillon, and his editorial board attempted to create an Irish identity to which the immigrant community in Argentina could adhere. This was not a one-way process; Irish readers often used the same language as the editors to describe Ireland and their situation in Argentina, as the correspondent from San Pedro did. Despite these similarities, the acceptance of a common Irish identity was not enough to unite the community.

The Irish diaspora of North America and Britain has been subjected to extensive scrutiny by historians, who have examined everything from its use of humor to the influence of clothing choices. In comparison to the abundance of research concerning Irish immigrants to the United States and England, the lives and experiences of the Irish diaspora in South America has been left relatively untouched. Though the number of Irish who moved to countries like Mexico and Argentina was much smaller than those who migrated to North America, the Irish of South America formed their own distinct communities and viewed themselves as part of the global diaspora. Very few studies have touched on the newspaper culture of the Irish community in the Argentine Republic, despite its central place in the formation of identity in the community.

Between 1830 and 1930, about 50,000 Irish immigrants came to the South American city of Buenos Aires and its environs, or the “River Plate,” in search of new socioeconomic opportunities. The majority of these immigrants came between 1860 and 1889, though Irish settled in Argentina as early as the British invasion of Buenos Aires in 1806. Most made a living as sheep farmers in the campo of Buenos Aires province, living isolated existences on estancias (ranches) in the pampas, though others worked in the city of Buenos Aires as merchants, craftsmen, laborers, or domestic servants. The wealthier elite of the Irish community tended to be the earlier immigrants or their sons who usually lived in the city and made their fortunes from their massive estancias, worked and rented by small-scale sheep farmers. Faced with a strange land, foreign tongue, exotic Argentinian celebrations of Catholic Mass, and an unfamiliar governing system, Irish immigrants banded together into a largely self-sustaining community, with their own churches, priests, hospitals, schools, and newspapers. The Southern Cross was created to connect the scattered Irish immigrants in the campo. It was published weekly and sent out from Buenos Aires to inform readers of Argentine, Irish, and international politics, local news and events, and provide moral teachings. It served as a voice for Patrick Dillon, the Irish chaplain and chief editor of...
the newspaper, to connect with those Irish who lived outside his city network, and as a platform for discussion between readers who wrote to the paper. As a product of both the city and the campo, of Dillon and the Irish sheep farmers, *The Southern Cross* reveals the shared and differing anxieties and conceptions of identity amongst the Irish in Argentina.

Extensive research has been dedicated to immigration to the early Argentine Republic and the global Irish diaspora. Argentina is unique as the only destination for Irish immigrants where English was not the native language and Catholicism was the national religion. Despite this, Argentina’s Irish immigrant community remains a topic relatively unexplored by historians of the Irish diaspora or Argentine immigration. Instead, most scholars have directed their attention towards the Irish diaspora elsewhere in the world, the role of British economic and international policy in Argentina’s early development, or Argentina’s larger communities of Italians, Spaniards, Germans, and Jews. The few studies of Irish immigrants in Argentina tend to be broad in geographic and time scope, take either an economic, religious, or biographical perspective, and leave the matter of the construction and negotiation of immigrant identity for both individuals and the community largely untouched. This work focuses on the Irish community and its interests, anxieties, and identities expressed in *The Southern Cross* between its foundation in 1875 and the end of Irish immigration to Argentina following the Dresden scandal of 1889, thereby considering the communal social experience and negotiation of identity for Irish immigrants in Argentina during this period.5

*The Southern Cross* was an English-language newspaper with Irish editors published in Buenos Aires and marketed to the Irish Catholics living in the River Plate. Four years after the death of Father Anthony Fahey, the Irish chaplain who unofficially lead the Irish community of the River Plate in both spiritual and secular matters, his protégé, Patrick Dillon, founded *The Southern Cross*. The newspaper assumed the role as a unifying force for the Irish immigrant
community in Argentina. While articles about Catholicism, Irish culture, and both Irish and Argentine politics are revealing in themselves, the newspaper also served as a platform for dynamic interactions between editors and their audience through the sections for readers’ correspondence and letters to the editor. Here, readers asserted their own political and moral views and reported on their daily lives outside of the Buenos Aires metropolis. The Southern Cross and its notes from readers demonstrate that the Irish of Argentina considered themselves to be distinctly Irish in both religion and heritage, and part of a global group of exiles who could still influence political events in Ireland through written and monetary support. The Irish immigrant community of Argentina, as presented by The Southern Cross, considered itself to be part of Ireland, Argentina, and the Irish diaspora—transnational citizens rooted in religion, nationality, and economic opportunities in an increasingly mobile world.

Scholars of the Irish diaspora have argued that by the nineteenth century, Irish nationalism was redefined by immigrants and took the form of money sent back to Ireland, creative nationalist expressions, and means of political engagement. Irish nationalism within the diaspora was a combination of an Irish identity founded on shared religion, traditions, territory, and language and a dynamic process of “political imagination and discursive invention.” The Irish of the diaspora, including those in Argentina, contributed to the imagining and defining of Irish nationalism and added a transnational aspect to it.

The editors of The Southern Cross asserted that “our ambition is to make our creed and country respected, not by empty vaunting, but through the conviction contact with us would induce.” In creating respect for “creed and country” for both Irish and non-Irish readers, The Southern Cross printed reports about Ireland’s culture and history and poems expressing longing for home. Through these articles, the editors of The Southern Cross tried to craft community solidarity by way of a shared Irish identity for their audience drawn from elements of Irish nationalism—an Irish Catholic association, an emphasis on a “Celtic” past, a pastoral idealization of Ireland, a tragic but fortifying historical memory of English oppression that shaped an Irish worldview, and language of exile. The editors also engaged with the global Irish diaspora in this way, by reprinting articles from Irish-American or Irish newspapers and fitting their readers’ experience in the framework of the broader exile narrative of the Irish immigrant. Though scholars have neglected the Irish of Argentina in their diasporic studies, the writers and readers of The Southern Cross certainly saw themselves as part of that global community.

The Irish identity articulated and promoted by The Southern Cross involved more than what one called one’s homeland; it also indicated a certain interpretation of past events and identification with a global Irish community. The Southern Cross served both as a means to communicate to readers the diasporic Irish identity and as a channel for readers and editors to contribute their own ideas to what it meant to be Irish. Dillon and the editors attempted to express and propagate this common identity as a means for the Irish immigrant community to come together despite socioeconomic divisions. Though they ultimately failed to reunite the community based on Irish identity alone, readers’ responses indicate that they did incorporate some elements of this identity into their own conceptions of themselves.

REMEMBERING ERIN: HISTORY, MUSIC, AND PASTORAL LANGUAGE

Irish culture was celebrated as a way to distinguish the Irish and their works from English art, history, music, and language, thus emphasizing their validity as a distinct nation and culture in their own right. The Irish culture expressed in The Southern Cross did not specifically draw on the lived experiences of many of the Irish immigrants in Argentina, most of whom came from the Midlands and southeastern coast of Ireland (Counties Meath, Westmeath, Longford, Offaly, and Wexford). This differs from the origins of the Irish immigrants who moved to North America, many of whom were from the western Irish coast, which particularly suffered from the Great Famine that devastated Ireland from 1845 to 1852. A foundational part of an Irish identity for these North American immigrants was the trauma of the Famine and the fact that some were forced to emigrate for their survival. In contrast, the Irish immigrants to Argentina were from relatively prosperous areas less impacted by the Famine and chose to go to Argentina for increased economic opportunities, rather than out of necessity. While the language of the Irish exile and invocation of Famine horrors might not have touched the Irish in Argentina on a personal level, the pastoral references would have almost certainly resonated with natives of the Midlands, the fertile agricultural center of Ireland. Additionally, many of the ancient Celtic sites described and explained in The Southern Cross, such as Tara and Newgrange, are located in County Meath and other parts of the Midlands, although the predominantly farm-working residents’ awareness of the ancient relics surrounding them is debatable.

The Southern Cross often used images of a green and idyllic Ireland to evoke a longing for the simplicities of home, a theme that was used in nationalist Irish narratives. Scholars of fiction written by Irish immigrants to the United States and England in the late nineteenth century note images of a Famine-stricken wasteland that contrast with descriptions of an idealized, green Ireland. Depictions of a post-Famine, ravaged Irish landscape are less common in The Southern Cross, but portrayals of the Emerald Isle abound. The imagery often avoided addressing the harsher economic realities that forced many of the Irish to emigrate, and instead cultivated
a bittersweet sense of loss for a place that never truly existed. One 1875 report from Ireland, for example, began, “News from the old country is almost as refreshing and cool as a draught of iced water. Jack Frost has been hard at work over the lakes and ponds, so skating is the order of the day and he has pinned the stones as tight to the very road as if they had been fastened there by twelvepenny nails.” This description gave readers a tantalizing reminder of winter in Ireland, especially compelling given that it was published in January, the middle of Argentina’s hot summer. The author ignores the more realistic concerns about farm work or food, setting a serene scene made all the more charming by the mythical “Jack Frost,” a distinctly European character.

The Southern Cross communicated efforts to revive the traditional Irish Gaelic language in Ireland, another feature of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century. A report celebrating the adoption of an Irish language prayer by the Board of National Education in Ireland expressed the hope that “the ancient and honoured tongue of the Irish race will form a portion of the curriculum in Irish Primary Schools.” From 1366 until the nineteenth century, Irish Gaelic had not been an honored language—English officials since the time of the Tudors had suppressed the native tongue of Ireland. In the nineteenth century, Counties Kerry, Cork, and Donegal (on the west coast of Ireland) still spoke Irish, but the Anglicized Midlands did not. Though these English-speaking Irish immigrants in Argentina did not have a personal stake in the resurgence of Irish Gaelic, the article argued, “on the whole, every patriot has a reason to be proud of the present condition of this question. The love of the Irish soil, Irish history, Irish ruins, the Irish language, the Irish race is a broad platform of true patriotism, which can include men of every creed and political opinion.” The celebration of Irish “culture”—here, embodied in language, history, and ancient sites—was seen as a common ground on which all Irish could gather, showing that inevitable fractures in the Irish community as a whole were anticipated and addressed, just as The Southern Cross aimed to do with the community in Argentina by reminding all Irish immigrants of their shared roots.

Occasionally The Southern Cross printed informative pieces on “Irish ruins” and the ancient Irish past in response to burgeoning interest in Celtic archeology in Ireland. In the late nineteenth century, studies in Irish literature and history contributed to increased Irish patriotism, though this interest originated with German and English scholars. Alongside this Celtic Revival and under the influence of archeologist and scholar George Petrie, Irish interest in Irish archeology increased in the nineteenth century, both domestically and internationally. Petrie in particular saw his work as part of a larger nationalist and ethno-cultural movement in Ireland. This application of an ancient past to modern nationalism was not only a product of efforts by elite intellectuals, but also by Irish immigrants. These pieces in The Southern Cross, usually reprinted from Irish or Irish-American newspapers, emphasized a shared pride in the Irish past that defined itself as distinctly not-English. In 1880, a brief report on Tara—a site of political and ritual importance in ancient Irish kingship—invoked the reader’s imagination by introducing the topic: “the origin of Tara, obscured by the mists of time, has given rise to a great deal of discussion among the antiquarians.” The rest of the article adopted a more scholarly tone, including excerpts from a Trinity College Dublin study explaining the dimensions of the ancient structure at Tara and the Celtic system of making laws “for the general defense of the Kingdom, as well as the preservation of domestic tranquility.” This emphasis on the civilized and legal aspects of Celtic society refuted stereotypes about savage and violent Celts that the English used to legitimize their invasion and colonization of Ireland. The reclaiming of the Celts thereby restored respectability to the history of the Irish as a civilized people.

The report added that “of course the sacred rites of hospitality were not neglected; and, where so many Irish men and women assembled, it may well be supposed that there was a good deal of music, dancing, and fun generally, to assist legislation.” This projection of contemporary Irish customs and gatherings on the ancient rituals of Tara exhibited the peaceful and artistic nature of Celtic culture, but more importantly connected present readers to the past, mirroring the Irish hospitality cited in the San Pedro article. The description of an artistic and cultural celebration with music and dancing emphasized the sociability of the ancient Irish, reminding readers of similar gatherings involving Irish music and dancing with neighbors not only in Ireland but also in Argentina. With a less scholastic tone, in 1887 The Southern Cross reported on the origins of Guinness, the famous Irish beer, in a rags-to-riches tale of the company’s founder. Arthur Guinness had worked as a servant for the Protestant Bishop of Meath until the bishop died, leaving him unemployed. Undaunted, Guinness “erected a hovel,” from which he began brewing his famous ale. Guinness embodied the broader Irish dream of overcoming Protestant dominance to be successful and independent. The writer also noted Guinness’ use of Irish resources, specifically malt from “Wicklow barley, the finest in the world,” and water from “the Hill of Allen… pure as crystal.” The author argued for the natural beauty and quality of Irish resources, despite depictions of Ireland as a barren, overpopulated land. Besides giving the history of a successful Irish businessman, this article also made a case for Ireland’s wealth and value in its people and resources, making Irish readers proud of their homeland, especially since “time and again the English brewers have tried to manufacture «stout porter» [sic]…[and] all their attempts have been failures.” The Irish, in this instance at least, triumph over the English specifically because of where they came from and the “flavor of the native grain and native water.”
Our Exiled Eyes

REMEMBERING EXILE
A fundamental part of Irish identity, both in the diaspora and for Irish immigrants in Argentina, was the interpretation of their immigration as unwilling exile, regardless of the actual circumstances of their departure from Ireland. Like pastoral imagery, the language of exile conveyed a sense of longing for “home” that was sparked by any number of things. Instead of disheartening the Irish abroad, however, *The Southern Cross* used this language to rally the Irish community’s members in solidarity with each other, as exiles determined to thrive, and with Irish around the world, including those back in Ireland suffering physically and emotionally.

Poems as well as readers’ submissions expressed a poignant identification as exiles. One, titled “Shamrock Leaves,” was printed in 1879, a week after Saint Patrick’s Day:

Oh! if for every tear
That from our exiled eyes
Has fallen, Erin dear,
A shamrock could arise
We’d weave a garland green
Should stretch the ocean through
All, all the way between
Our aching hearts and you!33

The author immediately identified Irish immigrants as forlorn exiles painfully separated from their homeland. He personified Ireland as “Erin,” the traditional Irish name for the country, and hinted at the pastoral beauty associated with Ireland with the mention of the shamrock and “garland green.” The imagery of “tears” and “aching hearts” explicitly addressed the emotional pain of immigrants, as does the overwhelming desire of the exile to return home—not just to familiar villages or family members, but Ireland itself. Even if not every Irish immigrant in Argentina felt this level of sorrow when remembering his or her homeland, many Irish immigrants throughout the world discussed their immigration in such a way.

One writer for *The Southern Cross* in 1875 related a short anecdote employing the tropes of exile:

Yesterday, whilst passing along the Paseo Julio, we were surprised to see a number of our countrymen evidently listening with attention to a poor blind hurdy-gurdy man. On approaching we caught the last few strains of what was intended for St. Patrick’s day, but it sounded quite melancholy, evidently mourning its exile. When it had quite finished, and our feelings were wrought up to extreme agitation, we dropped the sympathetic tear, and, a few dollars into the musicians [sic] hat.36

The “hurdy-gurdy” musician, who was probably Irish given his knowledge of Saint Patrick’s Day melodies, evokes the image of the Irish travelling bard. Interestingly, the song is the active subject, “mourning its exile [emphasis added],” speaking to the role of music itself as a response to the homesickness of Irish exiles. The speaker displays a sense of solidarity not only with his “countrymen,” whom he recognized despite walking around a large city, but also with the poor musician, illustrating the unifying power of “Irishness” beyond class status. This was particularly relevant to the readers of *The Southern Cross*, given the growing tensions at the time between the wealthy, landowning estancieros living in Buenos Aires and the rural laborers and farmers who rented their land. The editors of the newspaper tried to reconcile the Irish rural and urban workers by reminding them of the common love they shared for Ireland. Irish immigrant readers of *The Southern Cross* were reminded that despite their homesickness, they were not alone in their exile. A few months prior, an editorial had asserted that “we do not love our native land with an abstract love: our love embraces her people, for we are of them.” Though readers might have felt distanced and isolated in Argentina, they were a part of a global and local Irish community made up of people united by a love of homeland, common sense of exile, and shared cultural and religious traditions in Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations and songs.

Dillon and his editorial board were not the only ones projecting a romanticized recollection of their homeland. An 1880 letter to the paper signed by “A Leinster Maid,”
who identified herself as “an Irish girl who has been some years in this country,” reminisced about “pleasant winter nights when we all sat by the fireside and one of the boys read a chapter of some pious book or some funny story. It is a pity the practice is not kept up in this country.”

The letter writer relied on her memory of Ireland, which was influenced by the presence of her family and the familiarity of a distinctly rural Irish home setting. Her inclusion of the fireside memory was particularly significant, since a characteristic of Irish farm life often mentioned in diaspora literature was the scent and warmth from a peat fire. “A Leinster Maid” used imagery that aligns with the view and language found in The Southern Cross, confirming an exchange between the editors and readers. She also related to the homesickness of the exile, showing that despite many years in Argentina during which she could have assimilated and acculturated, she still felt a strong, bittersweet connection to her homeland.

This sense of belonging to the global Irish diaspora meant more than fondly remembering the old country. Though Irish immigrants viewed themselves as exiles, they also acknowledged that from an economic point of view, they fared much better than their countrymen who remained at home. This financial stability was called upon when The Southern Cross reported the first signs of famine in Ireland in 1880, and implored readers to donate to the Famine Relief Fund, stating, “[t]he Irish in the States and other countries have nobly and spontaneously come forward; and we trust, for the honour of the flourishing Irish colony in La Plata, that it will not be found one iota behind its brother exiles in helping on the good work.”

The writer utilized Argentine Irish pride as a distinct part of the Irish diaspora to match the generosity of Irish elsewhere. The ultimate goal, however, was not to divide the diaspora into regional factions but to come together for the benefit of its homeland. The mention of the Irish in the United States demonstrates the awareness of the Argentine Irish community for the rest of the diaspora. Not only were Irish immigrants called upon to consider their duty within the larger diaspora, but The Southern Cross also printed the names of those who donated, leading to comparison within the community in Argentina.

REMEMBERING SAINT PATRICK: THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF CATHOLICISM

The Southern Cross willingly embraced stereotypes of the Irish celebration of Saint Patrick. Following Saint Patrick’s Day in 1875, The Southern Cross’s editors, presumably Dillon, printed a homily about the holy day in which he asserted, “Catholicity and Ireland are so identified that the same day proclaims our creed and native land.”

Saint Patrick, and Catholicism more generally, were frequently invoked by individuals throughout the Irish diaspora, including in the pages of The Southern Cross, when discussing Irish nationalism, politics, and nostalgia for Ireland. Dillon and the editors asserted that:

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the example of your Catholic ancestors is a precept you are bound to follow, and their voices are crying out to you to-day to pass on to your descendants, pure and untainted, the holy inheritance preserved for you at such a price: and surely you cannot allow yourselves to hide away for ever [sic] this glorious talent, lest it should reach and enrich your children.

For them, the survival of the Catholic faith in Argentina was in question, particularly the brand of Catholicism passed on from Irish martyrs and sufferers for the faith. They enjoined readers to embrace and support it, hinting that they could do so through donations to the Irish schools, hospital, or charities run by the Irish Catholic priests and nuns in Argentina. Celebrating an Irish Catholic identity united the Irish in Argentina not only with their homeland, but also with the Irish diaspora. As the editors remarked,

To-day [sic] the Feast of Saint Patrick is being celebrated all over the known world. Our display is doubtless humble compared with other gatherings in lands where our brethren are more numerous, their union better organised, and—shall I say it?—their pride of race and creed more warmly entertained. But our attempt is surely accepted in His sight who bids us do honor to His saints.

They employed Saint Patrick’s Day as a reminder to their readers that the Irish in Argentina were not alone in exile on this day that they might feel particular longing for Ireland. At the same time, they gently encouraged immigrants to actively claim their Irish identity, as other, more successful and united parts of the Irish diaspora had.

The fusion of Irish patriotism and Catholicism was prolific throughout The Southern Cross. Reporting on Saint Patrick’s Day celebrations in Carmen de Areco, one writer remarked, “[t]he well-known patriotism of the Rev. Mr. Leahy has undoubtedly been the mainspring of this respectable and worthy movement.”

John Leahy, an Irish priest who served the Irish immigrant community in Argentina from 1867 to 1882, embodied both the Catholic faith as a priest and Irish “patriotism” as a supporter of Irish nationalist causes, demonstrating that the two were effectively one and the same. Dillon and his editorial board also viewed Saint Patrick as belonging exclusively to the Irish Catholics. In 1880, they disparagingly noted that “a certain class of Protestant dignitaries…claim Saint Patrick; not that they know much about his life and beliefs, but that somebody has insisted on making a Protestant of him.”

While some parts of Irish nationalism strove to include Irish Protestants, Dillon and the other editors chose to emphasize the Catholic nature of Irishness.

That being said, Irish Catholicism in The Southern Cross was not foisted on an unreceptive audience. On Saint Patrick’s Day in 1875, Father Leahy gave a homily entitled “Panegyric of Saint Patrick,” which The Southern Cross then
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printed. The following week, the editors announced, “[t]here are so many persons applying for copies of the number which contains the Panegyric a second time, in a fly sheet.”50 Thus, it appears that many readers of The Southern Cross enthusiastically subscribed to this Irish Catholic identity.

The article for Saint Patrick’s Day in 1887 employs an impressive blend of religious, historical, and traditional Irish mythology allusions. With an optimistic tone, Dillon and the editorial board declared, “in former times the national feast was welcomed with feelings which, however hopeful, were not unmixed with anguish and affliction.”51 Their immediate categorization of the religious celebration of Saint Patrick as an Irish “national feast” demonstrates their view of Ireland as an intrinsically Catholic nation. They continued, “our forefathers believed in the deliverance of Ireland, just as the prophets believed in the coming of the Saviour, and they readily suffered hardship and persecution.”52 Though the editors celebrated that this generation would “reap with joy what other men sowed in affliction,” they did not undervalue the sacrifices of past Irish nationalists who had died in failed rebellions.53 By comparing them to Biblical prophets and later explicitly stating “they died martyrs and patriots because they had hope in the resurrection of their country’s liberty,” the editors cast patriotic loyalty to Ireland not only as a nationalist but also religious duty of any truly Irish individual.54

In addition to Biblical references, they also invoked a traditional Irish tragedy when they compared the fate of the children of Ireland with the children of Lir and declared “all the sufferings which the ancient legends tell us were endured by Finuola and her brothers under the magic spell of enchantment for seven hundred years, were endured in reality by Ireland and her children for the same period of time at the hands of her cruel step-mother.”55 The editors reminded readers of past injustices suffered by the Irish and warned them to stay united so as to prevent “the despoiler” from “lay[ing] waste to the entire country as Mountjoy did, or spear[ing] infants upon his lance as Carew did, or spatter[ing] the Cross with the blood of women and children as Cromwell did.”56 This imagery, while deviating from the images usually associated with the beloved, green-robed Saint Patrick, still invoked religious descriptions of martyrs, again conflating those who die for religious and national causes. The editors constantly used the language of ownership when referring to Ireland, its past, and its impending victory—“our proud privilege,” “our forefathers,” “our countrymen in their present struggle,” and “we shall see our country crowned with the crown of freedom.”57 The article ends with a call to action, for readers to recognize “whether the day of our deliverance arrive in one year or in a century, our duty is plain to second by every means in our power, our countrymen in their present struggle, and to remember the example which our ancestors gave us.”58

REMEMBERING ENGLISH OPPRESSION
In addition to celebrating their Celtic heritage, the editors of The Southern Cross often recalled the long history of oppressive English rule and celebrated the stalwart steadfastness of the Irish throughout their trials. Looking toward the future, these experiences were portrayed in a way that granted Irish immigrants a degree of authority and experience in Argentine politics and society because of and not despite their Irishness.

A tale reprinted in 1880 from Haverly's Irish American Almanac describes an incident during the Penal Times in Ireland. The “Penal Times” or “Penal Days” refer to the post-Reformation Penal Laws passed against Irish and British Roman Catholics by the British government in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Catholic worship was highly restricted and Catholics were not permitted to hold office or participate in government. The story tells of Mr. K. Geoghegan of Donower in County Westmeath who, “though remaining faithful to his creed, enjoyed the esteem and respect of the Protestant resident gentry of his country.”63 One of these gentry, Mr. Stephney, gives Geoghegan twenty pounds for his team of four fine carriage horses. Geoghegan begs the gentleman’s pardon and returns with two pistols, offering one to Stephney. The gentleman “declined the combat and quitted the room leaving Geoghegan the object of the unanimous condolments [sic] of the rest of the party, regretting the perversion of the law.”64 The narrator concludes the tale by reminding any confused reader that during the Penal Times, “no Catholic was allowed to possess a horse worth over five pounds. If that were offered by a Protestant
he became possessor of the horse.”65 This tale portrays the respected Catholic Irishman Geoghegan as both the victim and the hero. Though the law is against him, his challenge to the cowardly Stephney for a duel redeems his questioned masculinity and honor; Geoghegan remains the perfect gentleman, “offering him [Stephney] the choice of either pair of pistols.”66 Despite his personal victory, the story ends with a focus on the past injustices the Irish faced, regardless of how they reacted to them. Irish Catholic readers would walk away from this story with a sense of pride in the conduct of their countryman, but also reminded of the subjugation of the Irish.

The editors of The Southern Cross did not curb their criticisms of restrictive English policies that suppressed Irish unrest over the issue of home rule, a nationalist movement begun in the mid-nineteenth century that campaigned for Irish self-governance. They announced in 1889: “it would seem that the English Government are determined to renew all the horrors of the Penal Days in Ireland.”67 They felt particularly targeted by the laws which allowed for the governing of Ireland by mainly Protestant English officials. Though increasingly ignored in the eighteenth century, the Penal Laws were only officially nullified by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829.68 The alarmist language of the newspaper indicates the editors’ investment in events happening in Ireland as well as their eagerness to inform their readers of them. It also demonstrates the tendency of The Southern Cross’s editors to frame current events in Ireland within the context of the past, which allowed their readers to understand the present situation in Ireland through their own past experiences and memories, or the historical memory of the Irish people, thus connecting them emotionally to happenings in a distant Ireland. Even if Irish immigrants in Argentina had no personal memories of such events, these stories put a face to the consequences of British rule.

While the Irish often railed against the dispossession of their land and culture by the English and cited it as their reason for leaving Ireland, they were participating in a similar process against the indigenous peoples of Argentina. Another article about the Irish language concluded, “it is a point on all hands conceded that neither colonies nor conquerors can annihilate the aboriginal language of a country.”72 But the Argentine Republic encouraged Irish, and European, immigration and settlement of the pampas as a means of establishing “colonies” to crowd out indigenous people from their ancestral land.73 The editors of The Southern Cross never took note of the similarities between their situation and that of Argentine native people. Instead, articles throughout the nineteenth century declared “the first in rank [of national afflictions] have been the frequency and disastrous effects of Indian raids,” and demanded “the repression of the evil” of attacks on estancias by Indians.74 The editors actively celebrated government and military efforts to put down Indian violence, including when “a young ensign and civilian are said to have been shot for joining the Indians in a looting expedition. Served them right.”75 This complete lack of empathy demonstrates the uncompromising Irish view of Indians and those associated with them. Racial prejudices and the differences in setting and history prevented the Irish from identifying with the plight of the indigenous people of Argentina despite their similarities. Alternatively, realization of the parallels between Irish and Indians made the Irish all the more adamant about their suffering under the English, thus justifying their search for a new life in the pampas.

The Southern Cross’s desire to present and argue for a united Irish immigrant community was not without reason. An 1886 letter to the paper signed “Ardshallagh” freely criticized the “wealthy Irish” in Argentina.76 The author asserted that of the rich Irish immigrants,

there are a few who are heart and soul with the national movement, there are others who care no more about the fate and destiny of the land which gave them birth, than they do about colonizing the Gran Chaco...these men are always proud in being styled and styling themselves 'British citizens'...There is another class who profess to hold national sympathies, but are very careful of expressing them lest they by so doing should offend Mr. So and So.”77
The harshest critique that “Ardsallagh” (presumably from the campo) hurls at these wealthy Irish is their lack of loyalty towards Ireland as well as their willingness to adopt a British identity. This accusation might have stemmed from the fact that wealthy Irish were more likely to live in the city of Buenos Aires and therefore associate with the diverse members of the English-speaking community, while Irish immigrants in the campo were typically only able to socialize with their neighbors, usually other Irish immigrants.\textsuperscript{78} The Irish of the city were more willing to move beyond Irish circles, though “Ardsallagh” sees the self-reliant Irish immigrant community as an expression of loyalty to both the community in Argentina and Ireland in general. The Southern Cross worked to remind both the urban and rural Irish immigrants of their shared ties and interests, but evidently some of their readers disagreed with the unified front that the newspaper presented.

This condemnation of the adoption of a British identity was echoed elsewhere in The Southern Cross. While fighting against negative stereotypes of drunkenness and improvidence, the editors strongly encouraged readers not to renounce or hide their Irish identifiers—namely, their accent. An article reprinted from the American Exchange in 1886 quoted Archbishop Croke: “There is no man more contemptible than the Irishman who wishes to change his accent.” The American Exchange further argues an Irishman, who has any pride of manhood, or knowledge of the history of his race, who tries to ape the manners and accent or country’s oppressors, is too mean to be classed among the lowest elements of humanity… The evil influences of this class of people may be set down as not among the least of the curses under which Ireland suffers, and we trust that the system of Boycotting [sic] will be vigorously enforced against them in future, both in this country as well as in Ireland.\textsuperscript{80}

Though the editorial board of The Southern Cross itself did not use such strong language, by reprinting the article it tacitly approved the sentiments expressed, and agreed that Irish throughout the world should and must stay completely committed to their Irish identity, especially in the face of English influences.
Endnotes

[2] Also called the “camp” by Irish immigrants, the campo was the countryside (pampas) of Buenos Aires province where farmers and herders made their living.
[3] Buenos Aires Province was divided into partidos, or counties. These administrative units had a main town, usually the same name as the partido, and were surrounded by pampas and estancias. The partidos most inhabited by Irish immigrants were Carmen de Areco, San Antonio de Areco, Santa Fe, Esperanza, Chacabuco, Arrecifes, and Salto.
[4] The River Plate, or “el Rio de la Plata,” was another name for the territory surrounding the River Plate in the Argentine Republic, including the city of Buenos Aires and parts of what is today Uruguay. See map of “Buenos Aires Province and Partidos, 1877,” page 3; Edmund Murray, *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina, 1844-1912* (Buenos Aires: Literature of Latin America, 2005), xv. This number is an estimate, and historians continue to debate its accuracy. About 50% of this population re-emigrated to North America or returned to Ireland, though this statistic is often questioned as well.
[5] The Dresden disaster of 1889 occurred when Irish immigrants gathered from lower socioeconomic classes of Dublin and Cork were left to languish in the harbor of Buenos Aires on the ship Dresden, unaided by both the Argentine government and the Irish community. Illness and dehydration resulted in numerous deaths of the newly-arrived immigrants, including many children. The highly-publicized reaction to this incident effectively stopped the already-decreasing numbers of Irish immigrants to Argentina. Patrick McKenna, “Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration To, and Settlement In, Argentina,” MA Geography Thesis (St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, 1994), 279.
[6] See Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*; Coogan, Wherever the Green is Worn; Mulligan, “Erin’s Hope”; 171; Brundage, *Irish Nationalists*, 5; Of course, Irish nationalism existed in Ireland long before the diaspora took it up and redefined it. See Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*.
[9] Ibid.
[10] The “Celtic” past discussed by these newspapers revolved around historical events specific to Ireland that had been romanticized over the years, and was a slightly different image than what historians might think of being Celtic now. Technically, the Celts were a culture and civilization that was spread not only throughout Ireland and Britain, but also as far as France and Germany. In this paper, I refer specifically to the concept of the Celts being the ancient forerunners of the native Irish population. [11] For discussions about the role of the exile trope and Irish worldview, see Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*. For more about Catholic and not-English identity, see Coogan, Wherever the Green is Worn.
[14] Based on census data from 1841, Niall Ó Ciosáin estimates 50 to 70% of Counties Offaly, Dublin, and Wexford and 30-50% of Counties Cork, Longford, Westmeath, and Meath were literate, while less than 30% of County Waterford was able to read. Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), 35.
[23] Miller asserts, “for them [Irish emigrants], history was not something finished and unalterable; it lived in songs and stories and traditions which were remarkably archaic and which promised that someday, somehow, the seemingly brief interlude of ‘Saxon domination’ would end and that the mythical glories of the Gaelic past would return”; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 10.
[24] A number of articles in *The Southern Cross* were reprinted from newspapers that originated in Ireland, Britain, or the United States. Reprinted articles were usually scholarly or more factual in nature, or were the transcript of a speech from an individual in Ireland or the U.S. This practice might explain some of the similarities in the characteristics that defined U.S. and Argentine Irish nationalism, but the fact that the editors of *The Southern Cross* chose these particular pieces from an array of options should not be discounted. Articles concerning Argentina specifically or were opinion pieces about local issues either within the Irish immigrant community or the Argentine Republic more generally were nearly always by writers for *The Southern Cross*.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] In his analysis of Irish emigration to North America, Miller argues “both collectively and individually the Irish – particularly Irish Catholics – often regarded emigration as involuntary exile, although they expressed that attitude with varying degrees of consistency, intensity, and sincerity”; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 3.
[35] Ibid.
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[37] There is a long history of oral storytelling and bardic culture in Ireland. In the nineteenth century, a bard were often romanticized as a threadbare man who rambled along the roads and fields of Ireland, trading his fantastic tales and songs of ancient times for a bed and a hot meal. John O’Kane Murray, Lessons in English Literature (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co, 1887).

[38] Miller, Emigrants and Exiles, 560.


[40] “Letter from an Irish Girl in the Camp,” The Southern Cross, March 5, 1880.


[43] “St. Patrick Praying for Ireland,” The Southern Cross, April 1, 1875.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] “General Items,” The Southern Cross, April 1, 1875.

[47] Ussher, Los capellanes irlandeses, 163.


[49] Boyce, Nationalism in Ireland, 155.

[50] “General Items,” The Southern Cross, April 8, 1875.


[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] “The Children of Lir” tells the tales of an ancient Irish King, Lir, who had four beautiful children who were hated by their stepmother, an enchantress. In a fit of jealousy, the stepmother turned Finuola and her three brothers to swans – a curse that could only break when the children-swans heard the ringing of a church bell and the coming of a great holy man. Seven hundred years passed until the coming of Saint Patrick to Ireland. The children-swans, hearing a church bell, transformed into people and were discovered by a monk. The children of Lir, now seven hundred years old, told their story to the monk, who baptized them just before they died.

[56] Charles Blount, the Baron Mountjoy (1563-1606), George Carew (1555-1629), and Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) are remembered in Ireland as English authorities who suppressed Irish rebellions in notoriously brutal and violent fashion. Colm Lennon, Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995.

[57] “St. Patrick’s Day,” The Southern Cross, March 17, 1887.

[58] Ibid.

[59] I presume this is one of the five Murphy brothers, whose letters are published in Murray, Becoming Irlandés, 37-84.


[61] Legislation passed against Irish and British Roman Catholics by the British government in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that restricted their involvement in politics, religion, and society.


[63] “An Incident of the Penal Times,” The Southern Cross, April 9, 1880.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.


[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.


[76] Ardsallagh is a small townland in County Meath.


[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.