

PROPOSAL TITLE

Mapping Irish Female Criminality in Victorian London

PROJECT SUMMARY

This proposed project will map criminal acts committed by Irish women in London from 1837-1901 while simultaneously examining the public responses and perceptions of their illicit behavior. The information for mapping this project will be taken from a database created throughout the course of my previous RCSA from the 2016-7 academic year, simply titled, *Irish Female Criminality*. As a result of this mapping project, further trends, themes and areas of analysis can be gleaned. As stated by Cynthia Padilla, mapping can reveal “patterns and relationships among data that are not readily apparent in spreadsheets or other statistical packages.”¹

PROJECT NARRATIVE

“In them, one sees the most hideous picture of all human weakness and depravity – a picture the more striking because exhibiting the coarsest and rudest moral features in connection with a being whom we are apt to regard as the most graceful and gentle form of humanity.”² These harsh words from English journalist Henry Mayhew, exemplify the public sentiments toward female criminals in Victorian Britain. A distinct shift in attitudes and responses to female criminality occurred in nineteenth-century Britain as perceptions of crime became analyzed through the lens of Victorian respectability.³ Historians Lucia Zedner and David Jones write

¹ Cynthia Padilla, “Historical GIS: Mapping the Past to Understand the Future,” *Online* 32 (2008): 33.

² Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (London: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2008), 50.

³ Lucia Zedner, “Women, Crime and Penal Responses: A Historical Account,” *Crime and Justice* 14 (1991): 320.

extensively about mid-nineteenth century Britain's increasing infatuation with "crimes of morality: sexual offenses, prostitution, drunkenness, vagrancy and illegal gambling."⁴ This moralistic approach to female criminality meant that a woman's crime in the nineteenth century not only violated criminal law but also placed her outside the lauded and conventional Victorian ideals of respectability. A female criminal, who also identified as Irish, would be subjected to the public scorn of a being dubbed a moral deviant- in addition to the virulent strain of anti-Irish sentiment that was prevalent in Victorian England. In the British press, the Irish received consistently more severe coverage rooted in false interpretations of the Irishman's ethnicity, religion and class. As stated by Michael de Nie, "in British eyes, the eternal Paddy was forever a Celt, a Catholic and a peasant."⁵

Throughout the 1840s, waves of Irish migrants poured into Britain as a result of the Irish Potato Famine. For many impoverished migrants, Britain served as the most reasonable choice for relocation. This is largely because of the affordability in financing the trip and the likelihood of finding employment or poor relief upon arrival.⁶ Many of the newly resettled Irish moved into overcrowded, slum-like environments. These spaces are said to have, "displayed the full spectrum of social evils – appalling over-crowding, little or no sanitation, open sewers and cesspools, unhealthy diet, inadequate clothing, vagrancy, disease, alcoholism and general squalor and high incidences of casual violence." Social reformer Mary Carpenter recognized that impoverished living spaces could serve as a catalyst for criminal behavior. In discussing women who resided in the poorer areas of London, Carpenter wrote, "convict women usually spring

⁴ Zedner, "Women Crime and Penal Responses," 328.

⁵ Michael de Nie, *History of Ireland and the Irish Diaspora: The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 15.

⁶ Roger Swift, "The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City: Problems and Perspectives," *Irish Historical Studies* (1987): 265.

from a portion of society quite cut off from intercourse with that in which exists any self-respect, and they are entirely lost to sham or reputation. They belong to a pariah class, which exists in our state as something fearfully rotten and polluted.”⁷ This link between environment and behavior is further iterated by historian Roger Swift. He comments in his article “Heroes or Villains? The Irish, Crime and Disorder in Victorian England,” that the overrepresentation of Irish in criminal statistics can be partially attributed as a “by product of a poverty-ridden and brutalizing urban slum environment.”⁸ These dens of iniquity captured the attentions of social investigators, like Henry Mayhew and Charles Booth. Both men visited and investigated the living conditions of these misfortunates and carefully recorded their findings. Charles Booth’s inquiry into the lives of the poor resulted in one of the most comprehensive and “scientific social surveys of London life that has been undertaken.”⁹ Booth’s dedicated work culminated in the production of a cartography project titled, “Maps Descriptive of London Poverty 1898-99,” a color-coded representation of seven classes of poverty ranging from the lowest, semi-criminal classes to upper and wealthy classes.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The construction of a GIS mapping project occurs in two phases. The first phase, often the most time consuming, consists of the gathering, organization, and analysis of primary source data. The second phase is the construction of a “geodatabase,” which allows for the creation of

⁷ Mary Carpenter, *Our Convicts* (London: Longman, Green, Roberts, 1864), 219.

⁸ Swift, Roger. “Heroes or Villains? The Irish, Crime and Disorder in Victorian England,” *Albion* (1997): 400.

⁹ “Who was Charles Booth?” London School of Economics, accessed February 3, 2017, [http://www. https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/who-was-charles-booth](http://www.https://booth.lse.ac.uk/learn-more/who-was-charles-booth).

“visualizations that mimic historical change.”¹⁰ These visual representations allow viewers to gain a better sense of historical change over time and the ways in which historical actors produce and change the space around them. Sociologist, Henry Lefebvre expertly describes the ways in which social spaces are reconfigured by daily movements in his publication, *The Production of Space*. “The daily movement of people, commuters, tourists, shoppers, cyclists and taxi drivers, further realigns the city-imbuing them with different meanings and inscribing them with a specific sense of place.”¹¹ Through the careful analysis of the locations and spaces of criminal behavior by Irish females throughout Victorian London, a more complete and thorough understanding of the city itself can be garnered. I have created a database utilizing digitized records from the Old Bailey Courthouse, documenting the names of Irish female criminals, the nature of the crimes, locations and sentencings. With this organized collection of data, this research project is now ready to enter its second stage wherein a mapping of the data may now commence. The mapping of Irish female criminality in Victorian London will mirror the HGIS mapping procedures of the Stanford Spatial History Project as outlined on their webpage. Additionally, the completed mapping project will be juxtaposed with Charles Booth’s *Maps Descriptive of London Poverty* to examine the correlation between poverty and crime in London.

¹⁰ Evgenia Shnayder, “A Data Model for Spatial History: The Shaping the West Geodatabase,” *Spatial History Lab* (2010): 1.

¹¹ Henry Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992), 24.

Name	Age	Date	Sex	Location	Crime
W. Kelly, Ann	32	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	36	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	37	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	38	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	39	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	40	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	41	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	42	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	43	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	44	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	45	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	46	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	47	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	48	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	49	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny
W. Kelly, Ann	50	1840	F	St. George's, London	Theft/Simple Larceny

Example of database that will be used to map Irish female crime in London (1837-1901)

CITATIONS/REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

ARCHIVAL

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

A Letter on the Proceedings of Certain Westminster Magistrates, London, December 1867, London Metropolitan Archives.

Enclosure in No. 2: Statement of Grievances of Roman Catholic Prisoners in the Middlesex County Prison with Suggestions for the Remedy. LMA

Statement of Facts Related to The Dismissal, by the Middlesex Visiting Justices of the Rev. Frederick Hathaway from Attending the Roman Catholic Prisoners at Tothill Fields Prison, LMA.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS

HANSARDS PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

Old Bailey Court Records

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DISSERTATIONS

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TIME LINE (ACTION PLAN)

Tasks	Jan.- May 2017	Aug. 2017	Oct. 2017	Nov. 2017	Dec. 2017	Jan. 2018	Feb. 2018	Mar. 2018	Apr. 2018	May 2018
Research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Archival Research Collecting	X	X								
Archival Research Recording Data	X	X								
Evaluate Data	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Present at Western Conference on British Studies				X						
Present at LA Symposium, Phi Alpha Theta, Oklahoma Research Day								X		
Continue until Completion of Research Paper									X	X

DETAILED BUDGET AND BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

I am requesting \$500.00 for my 2017 RCSA budget to support travel to the North American Conference on British Studies.