The Irish Immigrant Experience

This unit is designed to show the experience that Irish immigrants faced in the mid-19th century. This will include the discussion of the discrimination faced by the Irish as well as the Civil War. The Civil War was a dichotomy between both a horrific time of loss and suffering but also a stepping stone for Irish acceptance into mainstream America. The discussion of the Irish immigrant experience will also be used to initiate a larger discussion of the evolution of immigration in America up through the present day.

The Basics

Subject
11th Grade American History

Standards Addressed (Pennsylvania)
8.1.12.A: Evaluate patterns of continuity and rates of change over time, applying context of events.
8.1.12.B: Evaluate the interpretation of historical events and sources, considering the use of fact versus opinion, multiple perspectives, and cause and effect relationships.
8.1.12.C: Analyze, synthesize, and integrate historical data, creating a product that supports and appropriately illustrates inferences and conclusions drawn from research
8.3.12.A: Evaluate the role groups and individuals from the U.S. played in the social, political, cultural, and economic development of the world.
8.3.12.B: Evaluate the impact of historical documents, artifacts, and places in U.S. history which are critical to world history.
8.3.12.D: Evaluate how conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations in the U.S. have influenced the growth and development of the world.
Ethnicity and race Working conditions Immigration Military conflict
Economic stability

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The Lesson

Introduction
The lesson will basically be broken into three distinct sections. The first section will discuss the hardships that were originally faced by the Irish. This section will include the song "Thousands are Sailing to Amerikay" which will be used to exemplify the feeling of loss associated with leaving home and family and heading off to the unknown. "No Irish Need Apply" will also be used in section one to expose the students to the discrimination faced by the Irish from the "Native" Americans.

Section two will use the songs "The Irish Volunteer" and "Paddy's Lamentation" to contrast the views of the Irish immigrants to the Civil War. "The Irish Volunteer" addresses the feelings of patriotism, pride and duty felt by the Irish towards their new country. "Paddy's Lamentation" on the other hand looks at the war from a different perspective. It discusses

the Irish giving up all they had in Ireland, crossing the ocean and then being thrown into someone else's war. It also discusses the lies told to the Irish in order to get them to enlist as well as the long term effects of death and injury.

The final section will be devoted to taking the experience of the Irish and applying it to other immigrant groups from the 19th century up through the present day.

The use of musical selections for this unit will enable the students to engage with 19th century primary sources in order to determine what the real immigrant experience was. Now it could be said that there are other types of primary sources that could be used such as letters, diaries, art work and early photographs; however, the songs used in this lesson provide the authenticities of these other types of sources, but using a far more dynamic approach for the students. Music portrays emotion and feeling that the students can relate with and therefore engage at a truly heightened level.

Objective
To analyze the experience of the Irish immigrants of the 19th century the discrimination that is experienced by immigrant groups, especially those who have recently immigrated.

<u>Resources</u>

Songs:
"No Irish Need Apply"

"Thousands are Sailing to Amerikay"

"The Irish Volunteer" (Found in "Joe English's Irish and Comic Songster" published in 1864 by Dick & Fitzgerald, 18 Ann St., NY.)
Joe English, was an Irishman and Civil War era music-hall performer/composer in New York City. This might explain his reference to "the 69th" which was an Irish regiment based out of New York. The lyric was written to the well-known tune "The Irish Jaunting Car," also more commonly known to those familiar with the Civil War as the melody to the Rebel anthem "The Bonny Blue Flag," written in 1861 by Irish Confederate Harry McCarthy.

My name is Tim McDonald, I'm a native of the Isle,
I was born among old Erin's bogs when I was but a child.
My father fought in "'Ninety-eight," for liberty so dear;
He fell upon old Vinegar Hill, like and Irish volunteer.
Then raise the harp of Erin, boys, the flag we all revere--
We'll fight and fall beneath its folds, like Irish volunteers!
Chorus--Then raise the harp, etc.
When I was driven form my home by an oppressor's hand,
I cut my sticks and greased my brogues, and came o'er to this land.
I found a home an many friends, and some that I love dear;
Be jabbers! I'll stick to them like bricks and an Irish volunteer.
Then fill your glasses up, my boys, and drink a hearty cheer,
To the land of our adoption and the Irish volunteer!
Chorus--Then fill your glasses, etc.

When the Prince of Wales came over here, and made a hubbaboo,
Oh, everybody turned out, you know, in gold and tinsel too;
But then the good old Sixty-ninth didn't like these lords or peers--
They wouldn't give a d--n for kings, the Irish volunteers!
We love the land of Liberty, its laws we will revere,
"But the divil take nobility!" says the Irish volunteer!
Chorus--We love the land, etc.
Now if the traitors in the South should ever cross our roads,
We'll drive them to the divil, as Saint Patrick did the toads;
We'll give them all short nooses that come just below the ears,
Made strong and good of Irish hemp by Irish volunteers.
Then here's to brave McClellan, whom the army now reveres--
He'll lead us on to victory, the Irish volunteers.
Chorus--Then here's to brave, etc.

Now when the traitors in the south commenced a warlike raid,
I quickly then laid down my hod, to the devil went my spade!
To a recruiting-office then I went, that happened to be near,
And joined the good old "Sixty-ninth," like and Irish volunteer.
Then fill the ranks and march away!--no traitors do we fear;
We'll drive them all to blazes, says the Irish volunteer.
Chorus--Then fill the ranks, etc.

Now fill your glasses up, my boys, a toast come drink with me,
May Erin's Harp and the Starry Flag united ever be;
May traitors quake, and rebels shake, and tremble in their fears,
When next they meet the Yankee boys and Irish volunteers!
God bless the name of Washington! that name this land reveres;
Success to Meagher and Nugent, and their Irish volunteers!
Chorus--God bless the name, etc.

Recording
"The Irish Volunteer" performed by David Kincaid on *The Irish Volunteer: Songs of the Irish Union Soldier 1861-1865,* Rykodisc, ASIN: B000005Z5R

Vocabulary/Definitions:
98&Vinegar Hill: Reference to the Battle of Vinegar Hill during the Irish Rebellion of 1798

Harp of Erin: Symbol of Irish Identity

69th: Reference to the Fighting 69th an Irish Regiment from New York

Prince of Wales: British Royalty

McClellan: George McClellan General of the Union Army

Meagher: Thomas Francis Meagher leader of the 69th Regiment an Irish unit from New York

Nugent: Robert Nugent Brigadier General of the Irish Brigade 69th Regiment

Discussion Questions:
- Why would an Irish Immigrant choose to enter the Civil War?
- What is the connection between the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the Civil War?
- What is the Irish view on Royalty and why?
- Why would the Irish associate royalty with the southerners?
- What message did the composer want the listener to take from this song?

“Paddy’s Lamentation” (Anonymous)
Sung to the tune “Happy Land of Erin”

Songs of the same name date back to at least the late 18th century, with lyricists “lamenting” the treatment of the Irish people by the British. The lyrics of this version are attributed to the year 1865 and portray the disenchantment felt by many Irish Immigrants who were “forced” into service into the Union Army upon their arrival to the United States.

And its by the hush, Me Boys
I'm sure that's to hold your noise
And listen to poor Paddy's lamentation
I was by hunger pressed
And by poverty distressed
When I took the thought I'd leave the Irish nation
So I sold me horse and plow
Sold me sheep, me pigs and sow
Me little farm of land and I we parted
And me sweetheart Biddy Magee
I'm afeared I'll never see
For I left her on that mornin' quite broken hearted

Chorus:
And here's you Boys, do take my advice
To Americay I'll have you not be comin'
For there's nothin' here but war
Where the murderin' cannons roar
And I wish I was back home
In dear old Ireland

So me and a hundred more
To Americay sailed o'er
Our fortunes to be makin' we were thinkin'
But when we landed in Yankee-Land
They stuck a musket in me hands
Sayin' "Paddy, you must go and fight for Lincoln"
General Meagher to us said
"If you get shot, or you lose your leg
Every mother's son of you will get a pension"
But in the war I lost my leg
And all I got's a wooden peg
Oh Me Boys, it is the truth to you I mention

Chorus
Now, I'd have thought meself in luck
To be fed an Indian buck
And in Ireland the land that I delight in
But by the Devil I do say
Curse Americay
For I'm sure I've had enough of your hard fightin'

Recording
“Paddy’s Lamentation” performed by David Kincaid on *The Irish Volunteer: Songs of the Irish Union Soldier 1861-1865*, Rykodisc, ASIN: B000005Z5R

Definitions:
Paddy: Irishmen

Americay:The United States

General Meagher: Thomas Francis Meagher leader of the 69th Regiment an Irish unit from New York

Discussion Questions:
- Why did the composer leave Ireland?
- If given the opportunity to relive history do you believe that the composer would have made the same choice to immigrate to the United States? Why?
- Why does the composer feel that the country lied to him?
- What role does the composer feel the Irish play in America in the 1860's?
- How does this song differ both musically and conceptually from "The Irish Volunteer"?

Procedure:
The first day will begin by the students receiving a copy of the lyric and listening to the song "Thousands are Sailing to America". The student will use a graphic organizer to plot the story. The class will then discuss what issues the Irish faced and will then brainstorm what issues/problem they would experience if for some reason they would have to leave their homes and travel around the world. The class will then receive a copy of the lyrics and listen to "No Irish Need Apply" and list all of the examples of discrimination that Irish immigrants faced. The students will then discuss why they believe people are antagonistic to immigrant in the past as well as during modern times. The first day will conclude with a writing prompt on whether or not each student feel that they would be able to leave everything they know to potentially find a better life.

The second day will begin by reviewing the writing prompts from the previous day. The class will then receive a graphic organizer that can be used to compare two songs and the lyrics to both "The Irish Volunteer" and "Paddy's Lamentation". The students will then listen to each of the pieces and complete the graphic organizer. The students will then discuss which vision of the Irish experience they find more authentic and why. The class will then be broken into groups of three. Each group will be assigned a different ethnic group to research. The students will determine the what, when, and where of their group's immigrant experience with regard to motivation for immigration, obstacles faced by the ethnic group, successes and failures and lasting impact on American Society.

The students will be given the third day to find information and images to create a two minute Animoto video displaying the immigrant experience of their assigned ethnic group. These videos will then be played on the fourth day.

Closure:
As a culminating activity for this unit each student will be asked to create their own immigration policy for the United States. This will include a discussion of quotas, what are the qualifications for immigrants, what are the responsibilities of the immigrant towards their new country and what responsibilities does the country have towards their new citizens. The students will be given approximately a week to complete this paper.

Evaluation
The students will be evaluated on a combination of their individual writing prompts, graphic organizers, Animoto video and culminating paper. The writing prompts and the graphic organizers will be graded on completion. The Animoto video will be assessed on

the success of the students to portray the key issues of their assigned immigrant group through the combination of image and text. The culminating paper will be assessed on two areas. First, does it present a coherent view of the author's opinions on immigration in the United States? Second, does it present that view in a well written format?

Reflection

This process has been quite an evolution from my initial plans. Finding music and resources I didn't know existed combined with the frustration of being unable to find things that I was sure must exist somewhere has shaped the direction of this lesson. But in the end I believe that the final result has produced a unit which will be both beneficial to my students as well as practical enough to use in my existing course. Of course it would be ideal if I would be able to teach a Voices Across Time class that would be an elective in addition to the American History course, but alas that will be something that will be out of my control.