

## **Bringing the Colonies Home**

Abstract: This presentation defines the character and consequences of post-colonialist culture in modern Europe in the context of national identity, popular culture, and politics. The study of colonies' impact on the European countries is a new field of research, and scholars have debated to what extent, if any, Europe was influenced by their colonies. From extensive research, it can be seen that there was a small yet distinct culture developed from New Imperialism and Europe is still facing the consequences of their 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century expansionism. This study uses primary source documents, scholarly articles, books, newspapers, and government documents to arrive at this conclusion. As a result of having possessed colonies, Europe's culture has undergone significant changes, and faces the consequences of post-colonial politics and an increasingly heterogeneous society. Most major Western powers had owned colonies overseas, and liberating them ended a centuries-old concept of national power with possession of external territories. Complications ensued due to the need to reconcile strong nationalist prejudices with the presence of immigrants culturally and politically, producing a distinct new European culture.

## **The Irish Gangster: A Product of Discrimination**

Content:

This presentation follows the history of the Irish American gangster and examines how social, political, and economic discrimination encouraged organized crime among Irish Americans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Visual:

The presentation uses photographs and quotes from gangsters and other key figures to relate the character and extent of Irish participation in organized crime. Photographs, charts, and graphs are also used to help illustrate the social, political, and economic conditions that encouraged organized crime among Irish Americans.

Abstract:

This study will argue that social, political, and economic discrimination determined the character of organized crime among Irish-Americans during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. By examining personal accounts, newspapers, public records, secondary sources, and scholarly articles, my paper will follow how organized crime developed among Irish-Americans and the extent to which social, political, and economic conditions encouraged and constrained the existence of Irish gangs between the 1870s and 1930s. Research shows that the Irish have a history of organized crime, beginning with the 'secret resistance societies' formed to violently protest English rule, and that the prejudice Irish immigrants faced once arriving in America contributed to the continuance of this tradition, as organized crime was turned to as a way to combat discrimination and to gain political power and wealth. Organized crime took shape in many Irish-American communities first as an enforcement branch of political machines and then grew to include other activities such as gambling, prostitution, and extortion as individual gangs

struggled for power and influence. The rise of Prohibition extended the activities of Irish-American gangsters to include the immensely profitable business of trafficking illegal alcohol and helped Irish gangs to acquire even more wealth and political influence. After the end of Prohibition, the conditions that had sustained organized crime among Irish-Americans began to change and the prominence of the Irish American gangster began to decline.

### **Title: Museums and Historic Sites: A Reflection of American Values**

Content Description: (limit 50 words)

Using Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History as case studies, this presentation addresses how popular values and conceptions of the American identity affect the interpretations of history offered at museums and historic sites and discusses the impact that these interpretations have on the public.

Visual Description: (limit 50 words)

The poster uses photographs from the sites and images from promotional and educational material to relate the interpretation offered at each site. Excerpts from letters and other documents demonstrate the motivation behind choosing particular interpretations. Tables and graphs show the significant influence that museums and historic sites have on the public.

Abstract: (150-200 words)

This study uses Colonial Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian Museum of American History to demonstrate that decisions to preserve historic sites and artifacts are made consciously with the intention of presenting a particular image of history. Exploring the founding and history of each of these sites show that these decisions are affected not only by historical and social context, but also by popular and deeply-held American values. Examining the current interpretation of history offered at each site shows the extent to which some American values have changed while others remain cherished. This study argues that it is important to consider the motivation behind choosing particular facts, items, and narratives for presentation at museums and historic sites because, according to recent research, Americans trust the information they encounter at such places more than they trust information received from any other source. Therefore, the interpretation offered at museums and historic sites play an important role in shaping the American perception of the past.