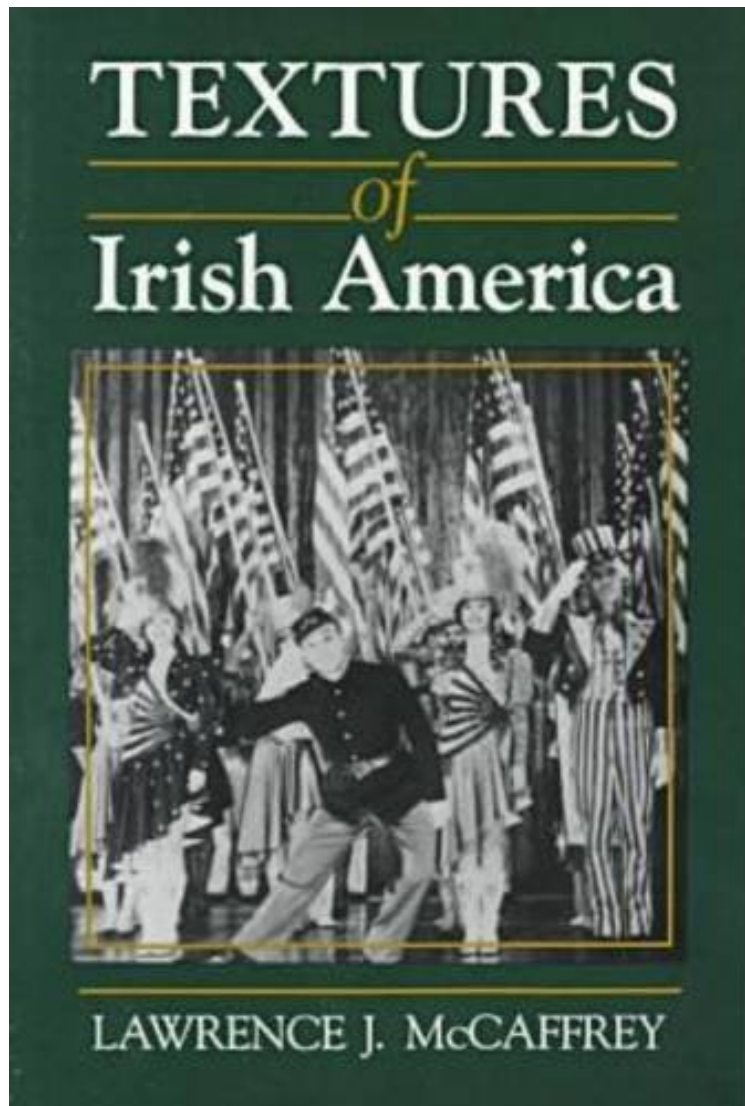


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Textures of Irish America (Irish Studies)

Lawrence McCaffrey

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#3971317 in Books Syracuse Univ Pr (Sd) 1998-10-01Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.94 x .67 x 5.97l, .85 #File Name: 0815605218256 pages | File size: 33.Mb

Lawrence McCaffrey : Textures of Irish America (Irish Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Textures of Irish America (Irish Studies):

The author documents his thesis that American urban history begins with the arrival of large numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants in the 1820s. He argues that Irish Americans' material success, which took them as a group from the ghetto to middle-class, has caused a fading of Irish identity.

From Publishers Weekly
McCaffrey, a professor of history at Loyola University of Chicago, amply documents his thesis that American urban ethnic history begins with the arrival of large numbers of Irish Catholic immigrants in the 1820s. Their descendants have contributed significantly to politics, sports and entertainment, but McCaffrey argues that Irish-Americans' material success, which took them as a group from the ghetto to middle-class prosperity, has caused a fading of Irish identity. Contemporary Irish-Americans' tendency to assimilate, their relaxed attitude toward Church authority and their under-appreciation of their cultural heritage, he contends, "reduces the brilliance and threatens the permanence of the ethnic mosaic that has made the United States the most interesting and energetic country in the world." Many such challenging judgments fill this comprehensive and entertaining popular history. Illustrated. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
McCaffrey (history, Loyola Univ. of Chicago) presents an overview of the Irish immigrant experience in America, arguing that its texture was woven from three basic threads. One was "an aggressive and combative Catholicism" that reacted with American nativism to create a cohesive Irish-American community. Politics gave the immigrants an opportunity to gain access to power and jobs, especially at the municipal level. The third thread was Irish nationalism, which permitted them to express their rage, frustration, and--eventually--their respectability and the comfort of being Irish. This well-written book reveals the richness of the interaction between rural immigrants and urban environments. Recommended for general readers as well as academic libraries.- Charles Abshire, Mt. Hood Community Coll. Lib., Gresham, Ore.
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From the Back Cover
The "textures" of the Irish-American experience have been manifold, greatly influencing this country's economic, social, and cultural development over the past two centuries. Unlike that of many other European immigrants, the Irish journey to America was viewed largely as a one-way trip. They quickly adjusted to America, soon becoming citizens and active participants in politics. By the end of the 19th century, they dominated not only most American cities but also sports, especially baseball, and many were prominent in show business. In this entertaining study of one of America's most engaging and controversial groups, Lawrence McCaffrey reveals how the Irish adapted to urban life, progressing from unskilled working class to solid middle class. Denied power and influence in business and commerce, they achieved both through politics and the Catholic church. In addition to politicians and churchmen, McCaffrey discusses the roles of writers such as Finley Peter Dunne, James T. Farrell, Eugene O'Neill, J. F. Powers, Edwin O'Connor, William Kennedy, Elizabeth Cullinan, Tom Flanagan, Thomas Fleming, Jimmy Breslin, and John Gregory Dunne, as well as such film stars as Jimmy Cagney, Bing Crosby, Grace and Gene Kelly, and Spencer Tracy. McCaffrey completes the story with a look at the role of Irish nationalism in developing the personality of Irish America and in liberating Ireland from British colonialism. The result of some forty years of thinking and writing about Irish-American life, McCaffrey's *Textures* will appeal to scholars and general readers alike and may very well become the standard work on Irish America.