

LIVING CONDITIONS DURING THE GREAT FAMINE

ART AND THE GREAT HUNGER EXHIBITION, QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY

'SUNSET' (OR 'ROCK OF CASHEL') BY (HENRY) MARK ANTHONY, (1817-86)



1. Describe the type of houses you can see in the town of Cashel in 1847.

2. What does this painting tell us about what living conditions were like in 1847?

3. Why do you think the painter chose to show both the Rock of Cashel (12th cent.) and cottages (19th cent.) in the composition?

PAINTING 2: 'COTTAGE, ACHILL ISLAND' BY ALEXANDER WILLIAMS (1846-1930)

1. Write three sentences to describe the condition of the cottage.

2. Is there any evidence to show that the cottage is not derelict (abandoned) but is in fact inhabited?



3. In 1873, a visitor to the island described the condition of one of the cottages as follows:

a growth of diseased vegetation covers the thatched roof [...]; a cess pool of stagnant water oozes from the dung-heap, at either side of the door; a big slab of flat stone forms a sort of bridge across it; the mud walls have given way in parts [...]; the door is hanging by broken hinges; two holes indicate windows; into one of them, if the weather be damp, the tenant's top-coat is thrust to keep out the cold.

Based on this description, do you think Williams' painting is an accurate depiction of a cottage on Achill in the 1800s?