

Thus, the cycle has begun anew, with social conditions—rather than alien cultural traditions—shaping organized crime in Chicagoland.

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An Unlikely Union: The Love-Hate Story of New York's Irish and Italians.

By Paul Moses.

New York: New York University Press, 2015.

380 pages.

Paul Moses has written a delightful book, part academic and part journalistic. The story of Irish-Italian relations in New York City across nearly two centuries is a rich, funny, disturbing, and ultimately positive history. Initially viewing Italian Americans as ethnic rivals with strange religious practices, New York's Irish Americans wanted no part of them. Irish American clergy relegated Italian Americans to the church basement for services, and the Irish American community fought Italian Americans in the neighborhoods they shared, withheld political positions, and stereotyped them as criminals. While an adversarial experience between ethnic groups is not unusual and, as the author notes, still continues today, though with different communities, the history that brought the Irish and Italians from foe to friend makes for fascinating reading.

Moses begins his account in 1850, with the start of a two-decade-long clash centering around the Italian struggle for unification. In New York City, leaders of the Risorgimento like Giuseppe Garibaldi and local followers were at odds with the Irish American Catholic community and hierarchy over the movement's strong antipapal sentiments. Under Archbishop John Hughes, mid nineteenth-century New York City was fast becoming an Irish-dominated city, and Italian Americans, although relatively few in number, aggravated Irish American sensibilities with their support of the Risorgimento's claims to papal territory. In addition, the ways Italian Americans practiced Catholicism disturbed Irish Americans, who had their own manner of worshipping.

The communal conflicts in New York sparked by the Italian Risorgimento, Moses argues, set in motion a long period of frequently hostile relations between the two Catholic groups, who were increasingly in daily contact with each other. All the indicators of modern-day ethnic conflict—such as intergroup violence, as in the Mulberry Street riots of 1884; residential flight or succession, when the arrival of one group

seems to cause the departure of another; forces of order, including the police, that are dominated by one ethnic group at the expense of another; and competition in many sectors of public life that often lead to intergroup violence seemed almost never ending in the Irish-Italian world of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century New York City. For Irish Americans, jobs, cultural values, political power, and a secure sense of being were threatened by the newer group and became the basis of fierce conflicts.

Through these conflicts, Moses relates human-interest stories that personalize the broad rapprochement that was eventually to characterize Irish-Italian relations. These anecdotes, while they do not necessarily make the author's arguments about the nature of the Irish-Italian encounter stronger, do nonetheless provide a refreshing individual touch that helps illuminate complicated historical events. The love story Moses recounts between the Irish American socialist Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and the Italian American anarchist Carlo Tresca, two radical organizers, is a fascinating tale that encapsulates the way some ethnic differences were beginning to be overcome.

In a chapter on crime, the author delves into the personal life of Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, the famous Italian American New York City police detective who fought criminals in the city and in Sicily at a time when Black Hand and Mafia stories filled the newspapers and the mainly Irish American police force was often accused of mistreating innocent Italian Americans. The parallels to today's news, as Moses relates, are noteworthy if the reader substitutes white for Irish American and black and Hispanic for Italian American. Petrosino, leading the department's four-member Italian Squad, fought crime in the Italian American community. His 1909 murder while on assignment in Palermo, Sicily, deeply affected the Italian American community, who mourned their hero. While attitudes among the police changed slowly toward the "menace" Italian immigrants were said to pose, Petrosino's superb police work demonstrated the important role non-Irish Americans could play in the force. At this time the city (which was 10 percent Italian American) had 8,100 police officers total, of whom just seventeen were Italian Americans.

On the waterfront, in unions and gangs, Irish Americans and Italian Americans eventually learned to work together. The rivalry among gangsters was particularly intense as Irish American criminals gave way to Italian American as well as Jewish American mobsters. Woven through his account of the Irish-Italian encounter in crime and gangs are illustrative stories, such as the one of the marriage between Mae Coughlin and Al Capone. Politics became another arena where the two groups fought and later found common ground. Tammany, the Democratic Party organization of New York County, dominated politics throughout the city. The Tammany machine excluded Italian Americans from positions of power, although some early mutually beneficial deals developed between crime leader Paul Vercarelli and Tammany boss Big Tim Sullivan. However, it was not until Fiorello La Guardia was elected mayor in 1933 and defeated the Irish American Tammany machine that Italian Americans began to gain attention and power. La Guardia represented a major ethnic shift, as did the taking of Tammany control in 1949 by Carmine DeSapio, the Greenwich Village district leader. These political battles were still hard fought as the Irish resisted giving up their many decades of influence and control. Yet these groups did come together politically, perhaps, as the author suggests, as Italian American voters and politicians drew steadily closer to Irish American culture and conservatism.

Chapter 11, "Cool," explores interethnic dynamics in entertainment. The rivalry between Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby, sometimes real and sometimes concocted, is humorously chronicled by Moses as the unseating of a great Irish American singer by a great Italian American newcomer. Describing each singer's rise to stardom, the author traces not only their competitiveness but also the closing gap between the two singers as well as between their ethnic groups.

Nowhere is this development more vividly shown than in the post-World War II intermarriage rates between the Irish Americans and Italian Americans. Again turning to personal tales, Moses provides the love story between Joseph Petrosino's daughter Adelina and Michael Burke, the son of a Queens Irish family whom she met when they both worked at a Manhattan publishing house, or that between Frank Macchiarola, the late city schools chancellor, and the educator Mary Collins, who grew up together in the same Brooklyn parish, revealing the subtle tensions between the families over Irish-Italian relationships and marriages. But acceptance came. As Irish American and Italian American New Yorkers became more Americanized and walked the same paths in neighborhoods, jobs, parish schools, and liturgies, the old animosities declined. Did Irish and Italian ethnicity survive intermarriage and Americanization? The author's conclusion is yes, even as he acknowledges that ethnic attachments might be fading. In most facets of modern life, Irish Americans and Italian Americans share much: religious beliefs, political views, occupations, neighborhoods, and schools. After many years of competition and conflict, an unlikely union has now become a likely union.

This book will not satisfy everybody, especially those who desire a more rigorous treatment of ethnic relations based on extensive empirical research and more analytical coverage of the scholarship on history and culture. Historians and sociologists will not find much that is new here or that advances the field. More could be said regarding elections and politics in general, contemporary neighborhood relations, issues of whiteness and gender, and the local effects of such international concerns as the "Troubles" between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, Paul Moses's book for the nonacademic reader uncovers much and does so in a most enjoyable, readable way.

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