What is the Symbolism of the Irish Flag?

Rarely has a flag possessed such lasting relevance as that of the "Tricolour," the national flag of the Republic of Ireland. Its three equal stripes illustrate the Irish political landscape as accurately today as in 1848, the year the flag was first unfurled.

Orange — standing for Irish Protestants
Green— signifying Irish Catholics and the republican cause
White — representing the hope for peace between them

The color orange is associated with Northern Irish Protestants because of William of Orange (William III), the King of England, Scotland, and Ireland who in 1690 defeated the deposed King James, II, a Roman Catholic, in the Battle of the Boyne near Dublin. William III's victory secured Protestant dominance over the island, to the enormous benefit of the 17th-century colonizers of northern Ireland — the English and Scots. Sometimes called Orangemen, Protestants in Northern Ireland celebrate the anniversary of the battle each July 12th.

Green, as the color standing for the Irish Catholic nationalists of the south, may have something to do with shamrocks and verdant landscapes, but more importantly, green symbolizes revolution. An earlier, unofficial Irish flag —the gold harp on a green background— served from 1798 until the early twentieth century as a symbol of nationalism.

Although it was not adopted as the national flag of Ireland until independence from Britain on December 6, 1921, the Tricolour was first unfurled in public on March 7, 1848, by the militant nationalist, Thomas Francis Meagher, as an emblem of the Young Ireland movement. Explaining the significance of the Tricolour, Meagher expressed a hope for his country that is unfortunately still unrealized today:

"The white in the center signifies a lasting truce between the "Orange"
and the "Green," and I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish
Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic
brotherhood."

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See: **www/proud2beirish.com/National-Flag.html**
                 www.infoplease.com/spot/irishflag1.html