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'Lashings and Leavings': Foodways as represented in the National Folklore Collection

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Beginnings

The majority of the collections held today at the archives of the National Folklore Collection (henceforth NFC), University College Dublin, were amassed under the auspices of *Coimisiún Béaloideasa Éireann*, the Irish Folklore Commission (1935–1970). However, the groundwork for these collections predates the Commission, having been laid down by its predecessors, *An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann*, The Folklore of Ireland Society (1927–) and *Institiúid Bhéaloideas Éireann*, the Irish Folklore Institute (1930–1935). These organisations made important contributions to the study of foodways in Ireland, mainly through the expansion of their collecting efforts, beyond an initial focus on the study of oral literature, to include broader consideration of many aspects of material culture and social tradition. The archives and library of the NFC offer unparalleled research opportunities in the field of popular tradition, and in recognition of its world significance and outstanding universal value to culture, the NFC's Irish Folklore Commission Collection has been inscribed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register.[1]

The Folklore of Ireland Society, established by James Hamilton Delargy (Séamus Ó Duilearga) (1899–1980)[2] and others in January 1927, had as its aim to 'collect, arrange and if feasible publish … a journal dedicated to the study of Irish folklore'.[3] In attempting to bring broader awareness to its field of enquiry, the Society aimed to publish collections of folklore submitted by its membership through its journal *Béaloideas*.[4] To this end, Delargy as editor of *Béaloideas* penned a series of editorials in which he petitioned members of the Society to begin collecting folkloric texts themselves,[5] a process which he guided by means of a list of simple instructions, emphasising the importance of verbatim recordings and the provision of contextual data.

These first editorials, while entreating members of the Society to collect folk tales, place names, calendar customs, nature and plant lore, folk-medicine, charms, prayers, beliefs, superstitions and proverbs, made no explicit mention of foodways or other aspects of material and social culture. It was only after a six-month study trip to Scandinavia and parts of Germany undertaken by Delargy from April to October of 1928, that his field of folk cultural enquiry had broadened sufficiently to include these topics also. On this trip, Delargy visited Scandinavia, Finland, Estonia, and Germany, where he met with international scholars of folklore and ethnology who instructed him in the methods of collection and classification of folk tradition employed in their respective

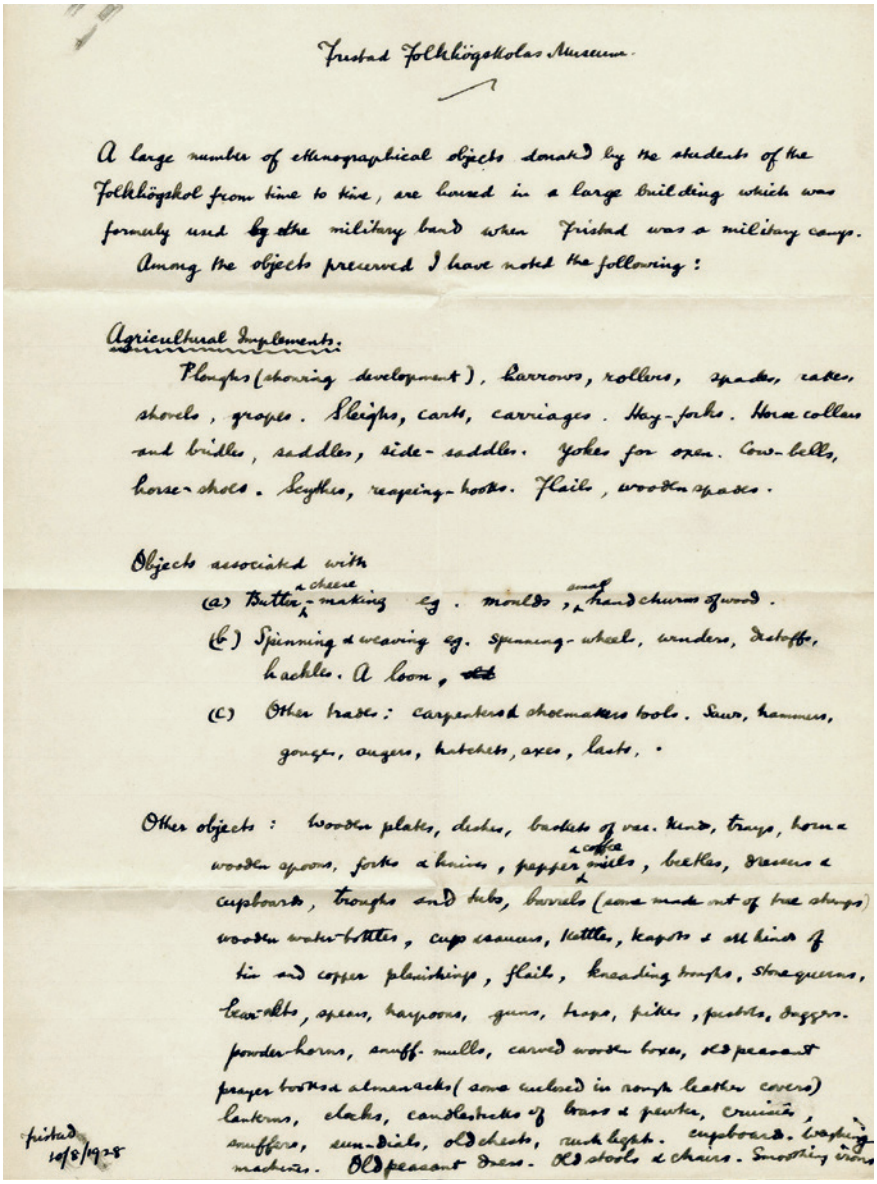
1 The Irish Folklore Commission Collection 1935–1970 (2017) UNESCO. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/memoryoftheworld/registry/449 **2** https://www.dib.ie/biography/o-duilearga-seamus-james-hamilton-delargy-a6353 **3** NFC, CHR/1926/1,Séamus Ó Duilearga to Reidar Christiansen (14 January, 1926), pp. 1–2. **4** Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'Editorial', *Béaloideas* 1: 1 (1927), 4–5. **5** Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'Editorial', *Béaloideas* 1: 4 (1928), 416.

institutions and countries.[6] The impetus for Delargy's travels abroad came about as a result of his introduction in Dublin to the Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (1878–1952) of the University of Lund. Von Sydow, who was in Dublin to attend a lecture of The Folklore of Ireland Society, had long recognised the importance of comparative study between Scandinavian and Irish folk traditions,[7] and, having established a folklore collection in Lund in 1908,[8] he was keen to assist Delargy in his work to document Ireland's folk traditions. For two and half months, Delargy attended von Sydow's lectures in Lund,[9] during which he learnt 'how to organise … and also how to deal with [folkloric] material when collected'.[10] He was, however, also particularly inspired and influenced at this time by Åke Campbell (1891–1957), of the *Landsmålsarkivet* ('The Dialect and Folklore Archive'), Uppsala, a friend of von Sydow's and an authority on ethnology. It was Campbell who impressed upon Delargy the importance of the material aspects of folk culture with visits to Skansen[11] and the Folk Life Museum at Fristad, sites that expanded Delargy's understanding of the scope of folk culture. It was these trips that revealed to Delargy 'a new world which lay right under my nose in Ireland but which I never noticed'.[12]

That 'world' was displayed at the Folk Life Museum in Fristad **(**Figure 1**)**, where Delargy noted the display of various objects associated with butter and cheese making, moulds, small hand churns of wood along with wooden plates, dishes, baskets, trays, horn and wooden spoons, forks and knives, pepper and coffee mills, dressers and cupboards, wooden water-bottles, cups, saucers, kettles, teapots, all kinds of tin and copper plenishings, flails, kneading troughs, stone querns, and other items. Concerning this period, Delargy wrote that Campbell's 'talks to me here on *hembygdsgård* [local heritage conservation] … opened my eyes and "made me furiously to think". I see now what a great work lies to be done in Ireland and how necessary it is for us to get our people interested in their own country-life'.[13]

While the outlines of Ireland's folk tradition began to appear in the initial volumes of *Béaloideas*, Delargy, on returning to Ireland, realised that the work that needed to be done was beyond that which could adequately be carried out by a volunteer organisation such as The Folklore of Ireland Society.[14] Immediately after his return to Dublin, therefore, he approached the State in search of support

6 Séamas Ó Catháin, *Formation of a Folklorist: The Visit of James Hamilton Delargy to Scandinavia, Finland, Estonia, and Germany*, *Scríbhinni Béaloidis/Folklore Studies* 18 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), xi–xiv. **7** Bo Almqvist, 'C. W. von Sydow agus Éire: Scoláire Sualannach agus an Léann Ceilteach', *Béaloideas* 70 (2002), 3–49, 6–8. **8** Nils-Arvid Bringéus, 'Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, A Swedish Pioneer in Folklore', *Folklore Fellows Communications* 145: 298 (2009), 1–272, 105. **9** Micheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2008), 89. https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/32115 **10** NFC, Delargy Diaries (7 June 1928). **11** The open-air folk-museum located on the island of Djurgården in Stockholm, Sweden. **12** Séamus Ó Duilearga to his brother Jack Delargy (16 June 1928) reproduced in: Séamas Ó Catháin, *Formation of a Folklorist*, 165. **13** Séamus Ó Duilearga to Jack Delargy (16 June, 1928) reproduced in: Séamas Ó Catháin, *Formation of a Folklorist*, 163; the word *hembygdsgård* also means local folk museum, living history museum, usually run by the local community. **14** Bo Almqvist, 'The Irish Folklore Commission: Achievement and Legacy', in pamphlet 3, *Scríbhinni Béaloidis/Folklore Studies* (Dublin: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1979), 4.



Fristad Folkhögskolas Museum.

A large number of ethnographical objects donated by the students of the Folkhögskol from time to time, are housed in a large building which was formerly used by the military band when Fristad was a military camp. Among the objects preserved I have noted the following:

Agricultural Implements:

Ploughs (showing development), harrows, rollers, spades, rakes, shovels, grapes. Sleighs, carts, carriages. Hay-forks. Horse collars and bridles, saddles, side-saddles. Yokes for oxen. Cow-bells, horse-shoes. Scythes, reaping-hooks. Flails, wooden spades.

Objects associated with

(a) Butter- & cheese-making eg. moulds, small hand churns of wood.

(b) Spinning & weaving eg. spinning-wheels, winders, distaffs, hackles. A loom,

(c) Other trades: carpenters & shoemakers tools. Saws, hammers, gouges, augers, hatchets, axes, lasts.

Other objects: wooden plates, dishes, baskets of vac. kind, trays, horn & wooden spoons, forks & knives, pepper & coffee mills, bottles, dressers & cupboards, troughs and tubs, barrels (some made out of tree stumps) wooden water-bottles, cup saucers, kettles, kapps & all kinds of tin and copper pannikins, flails, kneading troughs, stone querns, tear-kits, spears, harpoons, guns, traps, pikes, pistols, daggers, powder-horns, snuff-mulls, carved wooden boxes, old peasant prayer books & almanacks (some enclosed in rough leather covers) lanterns, clocks, candlesticks of brass & pewter, cruisies, snuffers, sun-dials, old chests, rush lights. cupboards. Weaving machines. Old peasant dress. Old stools & chairs. Smoothing irons

fristad 10/8/1928

Figure 1 Delargy's notes regarding the displaying of tools and implements at the Folk Life Museum at Fristad, Sweden, 1928. (National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin)

and funding for an institute tasked with the collection and preservation of Irish folklore.[15]

Through support provided by the Department of Finance, the Irish Folklore Institute was established in 1930.[16] By 1931, Delargy was reporting that the Institute had already recorded a collection of 'over one million five hundred thousand words', representing 'the largest manuscript collection of the folklore of a Celtic country in existence', and containing a body of material illustrative of the social, economic and cultural life of the Irish peasantry.[17] In addition to the recording of oral literature, the Institute conducted a pioneering material culture survey. Åke Campbell—who had so inspired Delargy during his travels in Scandinavia in 1928—was invited by the Institute to visit Ireland in June of 1934. He spent five weeks travelling through parts of the country in order to survey the 'culture landscape',[18] a project that resulted in the creation of over 400 drawings, sketches

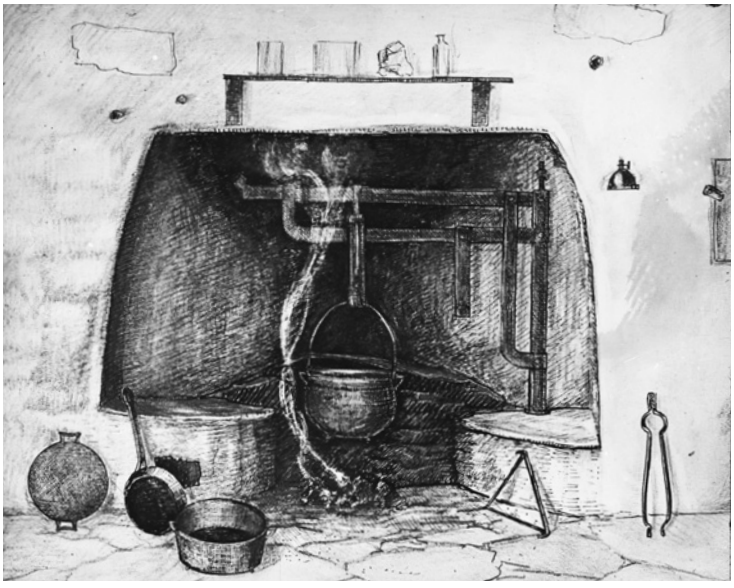


Figure 2 Åke Campbell's sketch of the hearth of Pats Ó Conaill, Cill Rialaigh, showing, left to right: a bread griddle, a frying pan, a pot-oven, a three-legged pot, pot-hooks, hanger and fire crane, a trivet (griddle stand) and a tongs. County Kerry, 1934. Reference: NFC A021.18.00056 (National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin)

15 Séamas Ó Catháin, 'Institiúid Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1930–1935', in *Béaloideas* 73 (2005), 87–88. **16** NFC, AB/135/2 Irish Folklore Institute Minutebook (12 March 1930), 7. **17** NFC, AB/135/2, Irish Folklore Institute Minutebook, 'Memorandum: The Grant-in-Aid to the Irish Folklore Institute, Dublin' (1931). **18** Åke Campbell, 'Irish Fields and Houses', *Béaloideas* 5 (1935), 58. **19** NFC, CHR/1934/2, Séamus Ó Duilearga to Reidar Christiansen (12 November, 1934). **20** Pats Ó Conaill was Seán Ó Conaill's eldest son who had inherited the Cill Rialaigh holding—see Séamus Ó Duilearga (ed.), *Leabhar Sheáin Í Chonaill* (Baile Átha Cliath: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1977), x; Máire MacNeill, *Seán Ó Conaill's Book* (Baile Átha Cliath: Comhairle

and plans of farm buildings.[19] Visual records of house interiors, along with information concerning common household implements and utensils used in food production, were also generated as part of this project. At Cill Rialaigh, in south-west Kerry, Campbell made a detailed drawing of the hearth in Pats Ó Conaill's house[20] (Figure 2) which shows a bread griddle, frying pan, a baking pot, a three-legged pot on a cooking arm, a trivet (griddle stand), and a tongs.

Despite these advances, the Institute ultimately failed to live up to Delargy's hopes,[21] and in May of 1933, he sought renewed support from the State for the collection and preservation of Ireland's folk traditions.[22] Following a meeting with Éamon de Valera, Delargy was promised a sum of £3,000 per year to support the work of folklore collecting in Ireland, and in 1935, the Irish Folklore Commission was established.[23] A government memorandum from that period describes how the Commission's collectors would travel the country recording and transcribing oral traditions, which they would post back to headquarters in Dublin,[24] along with diaries recording details of places visited and the results of their enquiries.[25]

With a systematised collecting structure beginning to take shape, Delargy sought out an individual who would oversee the arrangement and description of the material received by the Commission from its collectors. To this end he recruited 'excellent fellow and first-rate collector'[26] Seán Ó Súilleabháin (1903–1996).[27] Ó Súilleabháin had carried out some collecting work on behalf of the Irish Folklore Institute, and at the establishment of the Irish Folklore Commission in 1935, he was appointed Archivist by Delargy. Following his appointment, Delargy immediately sent Ó Súilleabháin to *Landsmålsarkivet* in Uppsala, located to the north of Stockholm in Sweden, where he was trained in the cataloguing of folk traditions.[28]

It was during this period that Ó Súilleabháin familiarised himself with the classification and subject indexing systems which had been developed by Åke Campbell, Herman Geijer and Sven Liljeblad at *Landsmålsarkivet* in 1934. Here, the broader panorama of folk tradition, including the subjects of material culture and foodways, along with many other expressions of popular custom and tradition, was opened up to Ó Súilleabháin. Reflecting on his time at *Landsmålsarkivet*, Ó Súilleabháin remarked that 'it was only when I went

Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1981), iii. Seán Ó Conaill (1853–1931) was considered one of the best storytellers in Munster, and Delargy had collected his repertoire between 1923–1931. **21** Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 101. **22** NFC, AB/135/2, Irish Folklore Institute Minutebook (22 May 1934) 118–22. **23** NAI, TSCH/3/S9244, 'Proposal for the Establishment of an Irish Folklore Commission'. **24** UCDA, P150-2535, 'Notes on the Collection of Irish Folklore' (13 February 1935). **25** NAI, TSCH/3/S9244, 'Memorandum—Collection of Oral Tradition in Ireland', Séamus Ó Duilearga to Éamon de Valera (18 May 1933), 11. **26** NFC, Delargy Diaries (19 May 1933). **27** https://www.dib.ie/biography/o-suilleabhain-sean-a6442 **28** Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Preface', in *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Dublin: Educational Co. of Ireland, 1942), vii.

to Uppsala that I saw the real scope of folklore. Many of the people in Ireland think of folklore as merely folktales, riddles, and proverbs. But working with Herman Geijer, Sven Liljeblad, and Åke Campbell completely wipes that idea out of one's mind'.[29]

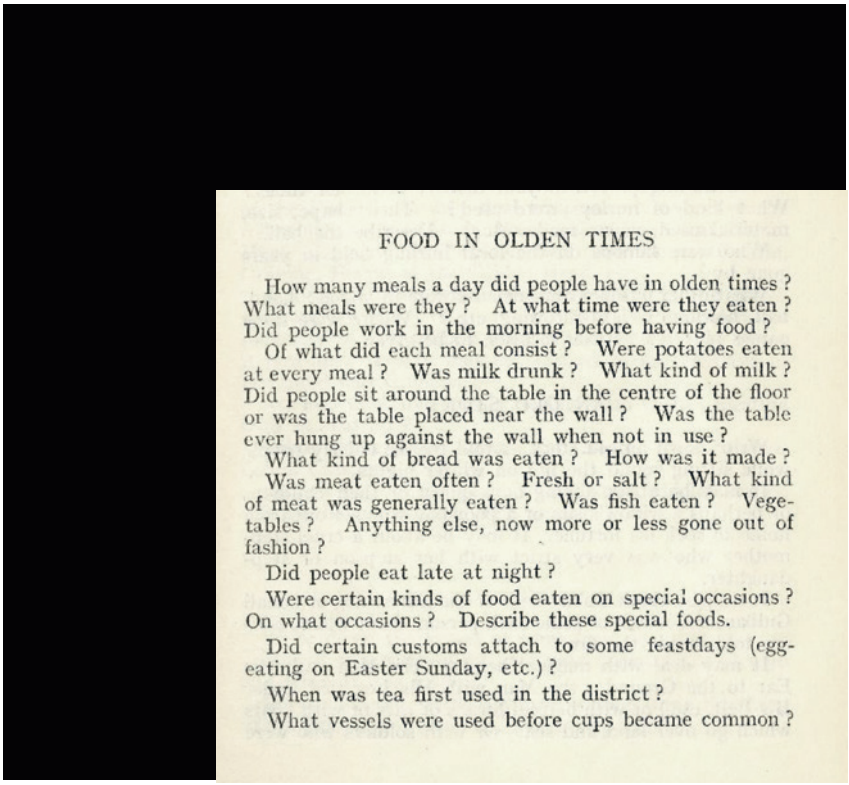
In adapting the Swedish system for use in an Irish context, Ó Súilleabháin developed and implemented a framework by which fieldwork collections made by the Commission's folklore collectors could be meaningfully described and managed. Now that the Commission had systematised its primary collecting methods through a network of full- and part-time folklore collectors, Delargy and Ó Súilleabháin endeavoured to undertake a new and hugely ambitious folklore-collecting initiative. They would broaden that network to include approximately 50,000 people, when, with the support of the Department of Education, they recruited an entire generation of schoolchildren as folklore collectors from 1937 to 1939.[30]

The Schools' Collection (1937–1939)

The Schools' Collection was a once-off collecting scheme initiated by the Irish Folklore Commission in collaboration with the Department of Education and the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), which commenced in September 1937, and ran until January 1939.[31] The scheme worked on the basis that folklore collecting would replace the element of 'composition' on the school curriculum for that period, meaning that schoolchildren, while the scheme was in operation, would collect folklore from their parents, grandparents, and others, and transcribe the material thus collected into their school copybooks as part of their school work. Though the scheme was voluntary, Delargy and Ó Súilleabháin spent time speaking to branches of the INTO around the country about its operation and the work that it would entail, with the result that more than 5,000 primary schools participated in the endeavour,[32] generating 1,128 bound volumes of material and 1,124 boxes of unbound children's copybooks.[33] This work was undertaken by children aged between eleven and fourteen years of age who were in the fifth and sixth classes in primary schools across the twenty-six counties of the Irish Free State, at that time.[34]

Two booklets, one in English and another in Irish, distributed to schools in preparation for the scheme, provided detailed instructions to be followed by teachers and pupils regarding the kinds of material and metadata that should

29 Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Archiving Folklore' in Stith Thompson (ed.), *Four Symposia on Folklore* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1953), 113.
30 Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Willing Volunteers All Over Ireland Gather Up The Fragments', *Irish Independent*, 3 October 1938.
31 Séamas Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol' in Margaret Farren and Mary Harkin (eds), *It's us they're talking about: Proceedings from the McGlinchey Summer School 1998* (Donegal: 1998) https://www.duchas.ie/assets/pdf/schools-scheme-ocathain.pdf
32 Patricia Lysaght, 'Collecting the Folklore of Ireland: The Schoolchildren's Contribution', *Folklore* 132: 1 (2021), 1–33, 8.
33 Rosita Boland, '"Men who could catch horses and rabbits by running after them": the Schools' Collection' in Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Séamas Ó Catháin, Ríonach uí Ógáin and Seosamh Watson (eds), *Treasures of the National Folklore Collection/Seoda as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 139. https://www.duchas.ie/assets/pdf/15.03.30-fiontar-duchas-ie-alt-rosita-boland.pdf
34 Séamas Ó Catháin, 'Súil siar ar Scéim na Scol 1937–1938', *Sinsear* 5 (1988), 19–30; A similar Schools' Scheme was initiated in Northern



FOOD IN OLDEN TIMES

How many meals a day did people have in olden times? What meals were they? At what time were they eaten? Did people work in the morning before having food?

Of what did each meal consist? Were potatoes eaten at every meal? Was milk drunk? What kind of milk? Did people sit around the table in the centre of the floor or was the table placed near the wall? Was the table ever hung up against the wall when not in use?

What kind of bread was eaten? How was it made?

Was meat eaten often? Fresh or salt? What kind of meat was generally eaten? Was fish eaten? Vegetables? Anything else, now more or less gone out of fashion?

Did people eat late at night?

Were certain kinds of food eaten on special occasions? On what occasions? Describe these special foods.

Did certain customs attach to some feastdays (egg-eating on Easter Sunday, etc.)?

When was tea first used in the district?

What vessels were used before cups became common?

be recorded.[35] These booklets, compiled by Ó Súilleabháin and published by the Department of Education as *Irish Folklore and Tradition* and *Béaloideas Éireann*, respectively, contained simple, example-based questions grouped under fifty-five subject headings. Many of these topics were formulated with a view to the gathering of local traditions, and many of the subjects included would have appealed directly to children.[36] Of the topics mentioned, traditions surrounding food were directly sought after under four headings: Food in Olden Times (*Bia na Seanaimsire*), The Potato Crop (*Na Prátaí*), Bread (*Arán*) and Churning (*An Chuigeann*), though food could also be mentioned indirectly under sections concerning the Famine, marriage customs, festival observances, markets, and herbs.

The topics were selected so that one single subject, such as 'Food in Olden Times', might prompt several different kinds of composition content (Figure 3).[37]

Figure 3 'Food in Olden Times' from 1937 booklet, *Irish Folklore and Tradition*.

Ireland in 1955–56; for the background to the collecting of folklore in Northern Ireland, see Briody, *Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 290–96. **35** Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Folklore and Tradition* (Dublin: the Department of Education, 1937) https://www.duchas.ie/assets/pdf/irish-folklore-and-tradition.pdf and Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *Béaloideas Éireann* (Dublin: the Department of Education, 1937) https://www.duchas.ie/assetspdfbeal-eireann-1937a.pdf **36** Lysaght, 'Collecting the Folklore of Ireland: The Schoolchildren's Contribution', 7. **37** Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Folklore and Tradition*, 5.

While the sections on food and bread focused primarily on the past, prompting children to ask their elders for more information, the sections concerning the potato crop and churning pose questions in the present tense, resulting in many children giving an account of their own direct experience of these food-provision practices in their answers. It seems that many of the teachers were very diligent in following the directions set out under the scheme, and the material in the Schools' Collection often gives direct answers to the questions asked, thus providing detailed accounts about agricultural practices, food-production strategies, and recipes. In 2013, the Schools' Collection manuscripts began to be digitised and made available on the online platform, Dúchas.ie.[38] Since 2015, the scanned material has been open to volunteer public transcription on Meitheal Dúchas.ie, and to date over 440,000 pages of material have been transcribed by members of the public at home and abroad. Because of the digitisation process and the subsequent crowd-sourced transcription of this material, the Schools' Collection has become much more accessible and searchable for a wide audience nationally and internationally.

The questions listed under the heading 'Food in Olden Times' prompted the participating children to gather material about mealtimes—when they were eaten, where and how they were eaten, and what they consisted of. Questions posed under this topic also enquired about food eaten on special occasions and on feast days, as well as making enquiries regarding the introduction of tea to the district, and information about drinking vessels. A survey of the accounts shows that the meals most often reported on were breakfast, dinner and supper, with children commonly stating that breakfast was not eaten until after a period of work had been completed in the morning. The most popular foods listed for all three meals were porridge, potatoes, milk of different kinds, and bread (particularly oaten bread). Many festivals are also mentioned in these accounts, and the collection features descriptions of customs regarding the consumption of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the practice of fasting throughout Lent, the eating of eggs at Easter, and the consumption of apples and nuts at Halloween, as well as a goose or cock at Martinmas.[39] However, more detailed descriptions of festive foods are generally found in accounts concerning specific festivals of the year, such as the following collected in Inniscarra, Co. Cork:

38 A collaboration between the National Folklore Collection, UCD and Gaois, Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, Dublin City University. See also Gearóid Ó Cleircín, Anna Bale agus Brian Ó Raghallaigh, 'Dúchas.ie: ré nua i stair Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann' in *Béaloideas* 82 (2014), 84–100. https://doras.dcu.ie/24926/3/14.07.25%20Alt%20B%C3%A9aloideas.pdf

39 For further information on food in various festive and calendar days see Patricia Lysaght, 'Bealtaine: Women, Milk, and Magic at the Boundary Festival of May', in Patricia Lysaght (ed.), *Milk and Milk Products from Medieval to Modern Times* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academic, 1994), 208–29; Caitríona Nic Philibín, Exploring Food Traditions within the four Quarter Days of the Irish Calendar year. (M.A. Thesis: TU Dublin, 2021). https://doi.org/10.21427/tz8n-nc09 ; Caitríona Nic Philibín and Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire, 'An exploratory study of food traditions associated with Imbolg (St. Brigid's Day), *Folk Life* 59: 2 (2021), 141–160 https://doi.org/10.1080/04308778.2021.1957428; Stephanie Byrne and Kathleen Farrell, 'An investigation into the food related traditions associated with the Christmas period in Rural Ireland', *Folk Life* 59: 2 (2021), 123–40 https://doi.org/10.1080/04308778.2021.1957427.

> [Hallowe'en is a] popular time with youngsters who can provide apples and hot-cross buns. Barmbracks are also in evidence and provide food for comment. Apples are used in two ways. An apple is suspended from the ceiling by means of a string and children, in turn, try to get a grip on it with the mouth. Use of the hands is strictly forbidden. A successful grip leads to possession of the apple when another is provided and the fun continues. Later a tub of water is provided into which an apple is dropped. Attempts at withdrawing the apple with the mouth are made with a view to getting possession and hands must be kept off. This game involves considerable wetting of the head but the inconvenience is borne cheerfully in the hope of securing the prize. A sixpenny bit or three penny bit is sometimes subs[t] ituted for the apple, and proves equally fascinating. The barmbrack is produced at tea time and the main idea is to get the ring which suggests early marriage. The pea is supposed to bring poverty; the rag is an indication that the [recipient] will finish up as a tramp and the stick entitles the receiver to exercise stern authority over his or her spouse later on. Even very poor people manage to secure a barmbrack, however small, which means a busy time for our local baker.[40]

The section on bread prompted children to ask their elders about bread in past times, enquiring specifically as to the types of cereal grain used to make bread, and the various types of bread made in former times. Children were also prompted to enquire about methods employed when making bread, the frequency of bread-making in their household and the kinds of baking vessels used, along with questions concerning the marking of bread loaves before baking. The children provided detailed responses to all of these questions, with the most common descriptions of bread-making relating to oaten bread, wheaten bread, and soda bread. Griddle bread, baked on a griddle over the fire or on a griddle placed on a trivet over embers on the hearth, is also frequently mentioned in the Schools' Collection, as are accounts with information concerning potato cakes and boxty.[41]

There are over 2,700 accounts concerning the potato crop in the Schools' Collection, with detailed descriptions of planting methods, and the growing and harvesting of the crop, along with explanations of the various methods and utensils employed in undertaking this work, being provided.[42] The questions

40 NFCS 347: 435–3. Collector: Conchobhar Ó Liatháin, Teacher at Matehy National School, Inniscarra, Co. Cork. https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4921718/4893367

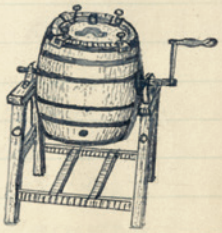
41 Further descriptions of different kinds of bread can be found in Kevin Danaher, *Irish Country People* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1966), 44–50, and Bríd Mahon, *Land of Milk and Honey: The Story of Traditional Irish Food & Drink* (Swords, Co. Dublin: Poolbeg Press, 1991).

42 For further information on potatoes within the Schools' Collection, see Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Dónall Ó Braonáin, 'Seventy-two Words for Potato: Exploring Irish language resources for Food History' in Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Dorothy Cashman (eds), *Irish Food History: A Companion* (Dublin: EUt+ Academic Press and Royal Irish Academy, 2024), chapter 19, https://doi.org/10.21427/5WHY-0K87.

17

Different kinds of Churns

There are no creameries in this part of Co. Roscommon so all the churning is done in the homes of the people. There are three kinds of churns in use; the barrel churn, the box or cylindrical and the plunger or upright. The one most commonly used is the barrel churn as it is easy to manipulate and clean.



As shown it rests on a frame and the complete barrel is turned round by means of the handle There is a circular glass in the lid so that we know when the churning is done; there is also a ventelator in the lid to let off excessive heat. There is also a large plate of iron on the bottom to balance the heavy lid

The box or cylindrical churn is an ideal one for churning small quantities. There are revolving dasheas on the inside to which the handle is screwed on the outside. It is worked by twisting the handle and holds from 3 to 8 gallons

Figure 4 NFCS 260: 17. Descriptions of Churns. Collector: John Ryan, Kilteevan National School, Co. Roscommon. Teacher: Patrick Ryan

also prompted children to give information regarding types of potatoes grown locally, and whether or not any local names existed for them. Practices concerning the preparation of the ground for planting by ploughing and harrowing, for example, were also mentioned by the children, along with information concerning the use of animal dung or seaweed as fertiliser, and the processes of moulding and spraying the growing plants. In some instances, children directly describe their own part in helping to pick the potatoes after they were dug out in the autumn in preparation for storage and for use as food during the winter and spring months.

Information regarding butter and churns can be found in over 3,200 Schools' Collection accounts, with participants in the scheme providing detailed descriptions of churns (Figure 4), the frequency with which churning was carried out in the home, by whom, and how it was done.[43] Information regarding local stories, sayings or proverbs connected to churning was also sought as part of this topic, opening up the possibility for children to include information relating, not just to the practicalities of food production, but also to aspects of popular belief and custom pertaining to the topic. Many first-hand accounts are provided regarding churning, with children's mothers most often being described as taking charge of butter production in the home. Various common churning methods are described, as well as a general description of the family churn, its dimensions, and its constituent parts. Popular customs and beliefs are at times also noted with regard to butter production: it was for example, a common practice for anyone entering a house where churning was in progress, to declare, 'God bless the work!' or to take a 'dash' at the churn, in order that they might not be thought to have 'stolen' the butter 'profit'[44] from the home, either accidentally or through malevolence. Risk to the butter 'profit' could also, it seems, be guarded against by the placing of a piece of a glowing coal or ember from the fire, or an object made of iron, beneath the churn as a means of protection.

A Handbook of Irish Folklore

With the growth of the Commission's holdings through the success of the Schools' Scheme, coupled with the increase in material being received from full and part-time fieldworkers around Ireland, Ó Súilleabháin began to formalise a subject-based card catalogue for the description of folkloric material collected by the Commission's field workers. This system was based on the Swedish model in use at Uppsala, which Ó Súilleabháin had adapted for use in the Irish context.[45]

43 For detailed illustrated accounts of butter making drawing on sources from the Schools' Collection, see Claudia Kinmonth, '"Joined in Butter": the material culture of Irish home butter-makers, using the dash churn, up to the late nineteenth century' in Mac Con Iomaire and Cashman (eds), *Irish Food History: A Companion*, chapter 16.

44 The ability of the milk to yield butter; for further details about popular beliefs associated with butter making, see Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Caitríona Nic Philibín, 'Exploring the Food-Related Intangible Cultural Heritage of *Bealtaine* (May Day) within the Irish Folklore Commission's Schools' Collection Digital Archive', *Études Irlandaises* 47: 1(2022), 15–32. https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesirlandaises.12548

45 Ó Súilleabháin, 'Preface', *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, viii.

The subject index was arranged under fourteen major subject headings,[46] under which were grouped further sub-headings, in a hierarchical structure, which allowed the archival collections to be approached from a variety of cross-referenced topics by researchers. Throughout the late 1930s, this system was adapted by Ó Súilleabháin to form a practical guidebook for folklore collectors, containing thousands of questions and examples of traditions, which had 'already been recorded from oral sources in Ireland'.[47] The book, first published by The Folklore of Ireland Society in 1942, was a ground-breaking work. It was hailed at the time of its publication as an 'invaluable' tool for the student working in the field, and serving as a template, which would allow one to create an 'archive of all the folklore of his chosen district'.[48]

'Food and Drink' as a sub-heading appears in chapter two of the *Handbook*, under the main subject heading 'Livelihood and Household Support', and the range of topics included are broader than one might at first assume. Featured questions concern appetite, hunger and thirst, fasting and abstinence, eating and drinking, household beverages, the cooking of food, special kinds of food, vegetables, condiments, and the preservation of food, and bread. Concerning the preservation of food, the *Handbook* enquires as follows:

> What means were adopted locally to preserve food from contamination and decay? The use of salt and pickle in the preservation of fish, meat, butter, and other foods should be described. Methods of using salt for food-preservation. Use of smoke as a preservative (smoked bacon or fish). Was sugar used for preserving purposes? How? Describe the methods by which milk, eggs, and jams were preserved. Sun-drying of fish or meat. Methods of excluding air from food (burial, use of grease or oil etc.).[49]

In addition to avenues of enquiry regarding food and drink, queries concerning the types of meals eaten are also found in the *Handbook*. These include detailed questions being posed regarding mealtimes, the names of meals consumed throughout the day, the times at which meals were taken, whether or not work was performed before taking breakfast, and changes of habit in this regard. As well as questions focusing on the material aspects of food production and consumption, detailed enquiries are also made in the *Handbook* concerning customs and practices around the table at mealtimes:

46 Settlement and Dwelling, Livelihood and Household Support, Communications and Trade, The Community, Human life, Nature, Folk-Medicine, Time, Principles and Rules of Popular Belief and Practice, Mythological Tradition, Historical Tradition, Religious Tradition, Popular Oral literature and Sports and Pastimes.

47 Ó Súilleabháin, 'Preface', *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, xi.

48 M.T., 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore by Seán Ó Súilleabháin', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* Seventh Series 13: 1 (31 March, 1943), 27.

49 Ó Súilleabháin, 'Preservation of Food', *A Handbook of Irish Folklore,* 88.

> Which was the seat of honour at the table? Was a guest placed at the head of the table, or alone at one side of it? Where were the parents, grandparents or other relatives, children and servants seated at table when no guests were present? Who sat at the head? Did any members of the household eat apart (*ithe iargcúlta*)? Give details. Lucky and unlucky numbers at table. Who served the food before or during the meal? How was the food served? Who got the first portion (*an chéad ruth do'n bhidh*)? Table-manners. Give details of these as illustrated by the manner of eating, removal of head-gear, solicitude shown for others, methods of asking for something, passing food and condiment to others, leaving some food uneaten (*fuighleach an táilliúra*), rising from the table before all have finished their meal etc. Conversation at table (*scéal* or *comhrádh búird*). Washing up after meals.[50]

Information concerning food in folk tradition is not limited to the sections dealing specifically with food, drink, and meals in the *Handbook*. Indeed, prompts and queries concerning food in folk tradition may be found under an array of different headings throughout the *Handbook*. These include material relating to household implements and utensils, descriptions of certain trades and occupations, explorations of relations between rich and poor, details regarding specific population groups, nature, folk medicine, calendar customs, religious observances, historical tradition, popular beliefs and customs regarding the otherworld and the fairy host, and so on. The *Handbook*, and the large subject-index card catalogue which was developed from it, are still employed today as the primary finding aids for material contained in the Main Manuscript Collection. This series of manuscripts consists of over 2,400 bound volumes of folklore, recorded and transcribed by full- and part-time collectors for the Irish Folklore Commission, and its predecessors, The Folklore of Ireland Society and the Irish Folklore Institute, as well as by the Commission's successor institutions.[51] Select materials collected today under the auspices of the NFC are still bound, paginated, and added to this series.

50 Ó Súilleabháin, 'The Table for Meals', *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 91–92. **51** The Department of Irish Folklore 1971–2005, The UCD Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore and the National Folklore Collection, 2005-2015, The National Folklore Collection/Cnusach Bhéaloideas Éireann 2015–.

The Audio Collection

Unlike the Schools' Collection, which was a standalone project, the Audio Collection is not an entirely separate entity from the Main Manuscript Collection of the NFC. The Commission, working on limited resources since its foundation in 1935, used Ediphone recordings on wax cylinders mainly as an aid for transcription,[52] and when recordings were transcribed and checked for accuracy against paper transcriptions submitted to the Commission by the fieldworkers, the wax cylinders were then shaved blank and sent back into the field for reuse by collectors.[53] As a result, many of the accounts recorded in the earliest years of the Commission are held only in the form of manuscript transcriptions. The Commission began to produce higher quality audio recordings from the late 1940s, when they procured a disc-cutting machine,[54] and the use of tape recorders in the 1950s and early 1960s further changed how the collectors worked, as well as the medium and formats on which material was collected by the Commission. From the early 1960s onwards, all full-time collectors were equipped with tape recorders,[55] and, as a result, the capacity to capture permanent sound recordings of traditional material expanded enormously.

The creation of the audio collection was, therefore, a continuation of the work done by full-time collectors for the Irish Folklore Commission, and later by the staff of the Department of Irish Folklore. The audio collection also contains material that has been gifted or donated to it by other bodies, collectors, and so on. As a result, the audio material often has a content range similar to that contained in the Main Manuscript Collection. An internal subject catalogue of audio recordings can be parsed by NFC staff as part of their own work, or on behalf of researchers. Thus, a search for 'food', references 154 recordings, while searches using other keywords such as 'milk', 'bread', 'meal', etc., unveil further audio material. Tape references also exist for Irish language food terms such as '*bia*', '*arán*' and '*bainne*'. Some examples of Irish-language accounts dealing with food include material recorded in 1966 by Leo Corduff of the sound archive of the Irish Folklore Commission and the Department of Irish Folklore, from Mícheál Ó Guithín, son of Peig Sayers,[56] who spoke about pickling mackerel and other foods on the Great Blasket Island.[57] The audio collection also contains material recorded by Séamas Ó Catháin, Department of Irish Folklore, from the *seanchaí* Seán Ó hÉinrí from Cill Ghallagáin, Co. Mayo, talking about food eaten during the Great Famine.[58]

52 Anna Bale, 'Guthaí agus Glórtha: an Chartlann Fuaime', in Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Séamas Ó Catháin, Ríonach uí Ógáin and Seosamh Watson (eds), *Treasures of the National Folklore Collection/Seoda as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 164. https://www.duchas.ie/assets/pdf/guthai-agus-glortha-an-chartlann-fuaime.pdf **53** Briody, *Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 338. **54** Caoimhín Ó Danachair, 'Sound Recording of Folk Narrative in Ireland in the Late Nineteen Forties', *Fabula, Journal of Folktale Studies* 22 (1981), 312–15. **55** Briody, *Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 346. **56** https://www.dib.ie/biography/sayers-peig-peig-mhor-a7940 **57** See NFC To331 and To332. **58** NFC SOC0004.1, NFC SOC0008.1.

One fundamental difference, however, between the content of the Audio Collection and the Irish Folklore Commission's manuscripts' collection, is that the former captures the later collection of material carried out in urban areas. The Commission, in terms of its work, was strongly focused on rural and Irish-speaking areas of Ireland, from 1935 onwards. This tendency is generally reflected in the earlier material in both of the manuscript collections already mentioned.[59] The later recordings carried out by the Department of Irish Folklore and held as part of the Audio Collection under discussion here, present a broader picture of Irish society, featuring, as they do, previously ignored urban areas and societal groups.

The Urban Folklore Project (1979–1980)

The Urban Folklore Project (UFP), under the direction of Séamas Ó Catháin, was an important collecting project as it aimed to record material from people living in the inner-city Dublin area, as well as from counties around the greater Dublin region. The project was hugely successful, generating over 700 tape recordings and 14,000 photographs. Foodways feature in many of the accounts recorded from the inner-city inhabitants, ranging from recipes and meal practices to photographs of urban markets (Figure 5). Social conditions, oral histories, and foodways of the early twentieth century are featured in the UFP recordings, which also contain accounts of the distribution of food during the 1913 Lockout, descriptions of the looting of food during the 1916 Rising, and examples of food cooked as part of tenement life in Dublin. Coddle, the famous Dublin dish, is mentioned in the following extract collected from Mary Spencer from Ringsend:

> You made your coddle … well you were supposed to get ham rashers, but I can tell you in them days we didn't get ham rashers, we hadn't got the money for them. You went down to the aul' shop, and he'd have all these bacon bits. There'd be ham bits, there'd be bacon bits in it. Now, he'd keep them for you, if you asked him to, say the day before, say I'll be down tomorrow, keep me, he kept the bits and you got a half pound of sausages or maybe a pound of sausages. Now beef sausages you got, not the pork sausages, the big beef sausages. And two good Spanish onions, which you won't see nowadays. Aw they were beautiful, I haven't seen them in years. They were beautiful big

59 The introductory note, written by Delargy to *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* reads; '[In Ireland], as elsewhere the shoddy imported culture of the towns pushes back the frontiers of the indigenous homespun culture of the countryside…', Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, v.

Figure 5 NFC C050.06.00115. Woman scaling fish at a fruit and vegetable market, Arran Street. Photographer: Bróna Nic Amhlaoibh, November 1979 as part of the Urban Folklore Project.

> onions, but there was a lovely mild taste off them. Aw they were beautiful now. Well, you got two good Spanish onions. Now, you put your bacon bits, and your sausages and your Spanish onion in, and you simmered it. And you never tasted anything like it. Now if you could buy potatoes, you could throw potatoes in, if you wanted to make a kind of a stew out of it, for the kids. Many a time I done that for their dinner. But if you didn't, you could take it with bread. You know what I mean, aw it was gorgeous. Gorgeous. But that was a relish, if you had that for your tea you were lucky, you generally only had a bit of bread and butter for your tea. Or maybe a bit of rye bread, you know what I mean. But if you had a coddle you were well off.[60]

The Photographic Collection

The Photographic Collection of the NFC is extensive, containing over 80,000 photographs, almost all of which were taken by collectors and staff of the Irish Folklore Commission and the Department of Irish Folklore, with some being donated to the Collection by friends of the archive, as well as by other related bodies.[61] While the photographs capture many aspects of folk tradition, they are of the utmost importance in the documentation of material culture. Photographs are catalogued by subject and follow the format applied in *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, with each subject heading corresponding to a chapter in the *Handbook*: A: Settlement and Dwelling, B: Livelihood and Household Support, and so on.[62] Most photographs containing images of food can be found under category B: Livelihood and Household Support, although, in similar fashion to the Main Manuscript Collection, material of interest regarding foodways can also be found under other sections, such as Trades, Time and Festivals, and a number of other categories.

Of the staff of the Irish Folklore Commission, Caoimhín Ó Danachair (Kevin Danaher) (1913–2002)[63] took a significant portion of the photographs, which today comprise the NFC Photographic Collection. Ó Danachair took nearly 20,000 photographs in total, and his specialisation in ethnology led to his documenting traditional houses and settlement patterns, as well as crafts and many other aspects of material culture. Writing in 1977, Ó Danachair articulated succinctly the purpose of assembling 'a body of visual material' in the context of the work of the Commission and its successors:

60 NFC UFP0588. Collector: Ann O'Reilly, Urban Folklore Project, July 1980. For further examples see NFC UFP0494 and NFC UFP0641.

61 Anne Burke, 'Framing the Archive: The Photographs', in Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Séamas Ó Catháin, Ríonach uí Ógáin & Seosamh Watson (eds), *Treasures of the National Folklore Collection/Seoda as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann*, 124.

62 The identifying letters used in the Photographic Collection are as follows; A. Settlement and Dwelling, B. Livelihood and Household Support, C. Communication and Trade, D. The Community, E. Human Life, F. Nature, G. Folk Medicine, H. Time and Festivals, I. Popular Belief and Practice, J. Mythological Tradition, K. Historical Tradition, L. Religious Tradition, M. Folklore Collecting, N. Games and Pastimes.

63 https:// www.dib.ie/biography/o-danachair-caoimhin-danaher-kevin-a2392

1. To preserve the visual characteristics of the tradition.
2. To provide illustrations for the aural and written materials.
3. To provide teaching materials.[64]

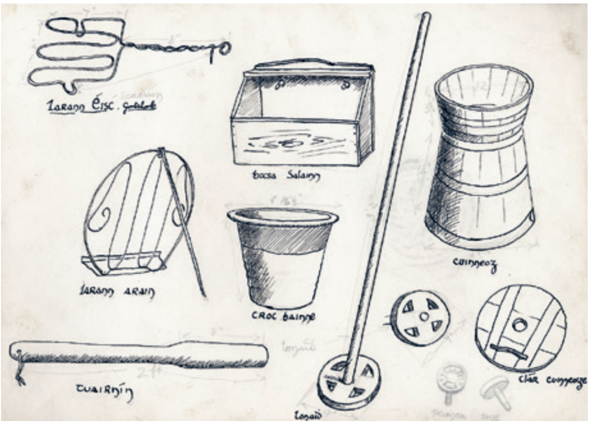
A series of photographs taken by Ó Danachair in Dún Chaoin in 1947 captures the process of making soda bread (Figure 6), and many other photos document the hearth, dressers, tables, and other physical objects used in the making, eating, and the serving of food.[65] Full-time collector Michael J. Murphy, working mainly in the northern part of Ireland, also took many photographs of agricultural life, including depictions of threshing, potato spraying, and the saving of the harvest.[66]

Not all of the full-time collectors carried cameras, however, but in 1949, and again in 1959, Delargy hired the artist Simon Coleman to accompany three collectors in order to sketch various aspects of material culture. Coleman accompanied Seán Ó hEochaidh in Co. Donegal in December 1949, and ten years later, he returned to work for the Commission again, this time accompanying the collectors Ciarán Bairéad and Proinsias de Búrca in their work in Co. Galway, briefly also visiting north-west Co. Clare. This second visit lasted several months.[67] On both occasions, Coleman, in addition to depicting farm machinery, farming implements, and farming practices, also sketched the interiors of houses, hearths and dressers, as well as providing detailed drawings of household objects, such as butter prints, iron bread stands, and tools for the churning and the making of butter (Figure 7). One of his sketches depicts a scene in which a farmer is preparing the ground for potatoes on Inis Oírr, Co. Galway,[68] and in another, a family in Co. Donegal is seen sitting together eating potatoes from a wicker basket placed on top of an old, disused churn (Figure 8).

Photographs donated by Domhnall Ó Cearbhaill[69] depict people collecting seaweed (Figure 9) and beach combing, as seaweed and shellfish were consumed as a useful supplement to the ordinary diet, and they were also used as a form of fertiliser for crops.[70] Photographs by Maurice Curtin include images of collecting

64 NFC CÓD/02/03.
65 Several of these photos and drawings by Åke Campbell and Simon Coleman from the NFC are utilised and discussed in Clodagh Doyle, '"*Níl aon tinteán mar do thinteán féin*": Hearth Furniture from the Famine to Rural Electrification' in Mac Con Iomaire and Cashman (eds), *Irish Food History: A Companion*, chapter 18 https://doi.org/10.21427/5WHY-0K87.
66 See NFC B028.25.00003–B028.25.00016, NFC B024.25.00001–B024.25.00008 and NFC B024.32.00001–B024.32.00003 for some examples. **67** Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, 'Sketches from the field: the Simon Coleman collection', in Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Séamas Ó Catháin, Ríonach uí Ógáin and Seosamh Watson (eds), *Treasures of the National Folklore Collection/Seoda as Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 15–23; See also Patricia Lysaght, 'Simon Coleman, RHA, in Northwest County Clare (1959) on Behalf of the Irish Folklore Commission', *Béaloideas* 76 (2008), 267–75; Patricia Lysaght, 'Simon Coleman RHA and the Irish Folklore Commission: Fieldwork in North County Galway in 1959', *Béaloideas* 78 (2010), 148–67; Patricia Lysaght, 'An Artist on Inis Oírr and Inis Meáin: Simon Coleman's Visit to the Aran Islands in 1959 on Behalf of the Irish Folklore Commission', *Folklore* 131: 1 (2020), 1–33.
68 NFC B024.01.00033.
69 Domhnaill Ó Cearbhaill (1891–1963), a Co. Offaly native, was a Primary School Principal in Glasnevin, Dublin. He worked closely with the Irish Folklore Commission and was a member of The Folklore of

Figure 6 Opposite top. NFC B110.18.00007. A woman making soda bread in Dún Chaoin, Co. Kerry. Photographer: Kevin Danaher, 1947.
Figure 7 Opposite below. NFC B129.29.00001 Household implements drawn by Simon Coleman, Gort a' Choirce, Co. Donegal, 1949.


Iarann Éisc
Bosca Salainn
Cuinneog
Iarann Arain
Croc Bainne
Tuairnín
Clár Cuinneoige
Loinid

the harvest, markets, and oyster sellers in Co. Louth (Figures 10 and 11), as well as games played at the Hallowe'en feast (Figures 12 and 13).[71]

The Research Library

The process of amassing the specialist library of the NFC began before the founding of the Irish Folklore Commission, as Delargy wrote in the first issues of *Béaloideas* that donations of books had already been received by The Folklore of Ireland Society by June of 1928,[72] and that *Béaloideas* was being exchanged for several other journals of folklore by Christmas 1928.[73] This exchange process continues today, allowing the NFC to accumulate other national and international journals of folklore and related subjects, thereby creating a large collection of print journals spanning many decades. Following the foundation of the Irish Folklore Institute in 1930, a grant was received from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust for the purchase of a number of books.[74] The Commission continued the accumulation of published material, receiving many donations from institutions and individuals in Ireland and internationally, but also by purchasing books over the years. It acquired several important specialist libraries, including that of the aforementioned Swedish folklorist Carl Wilhelm von

Figure 8 This page. NFC A026.29.00003 Interiors: *Ag ithe na bpreátaí* (eating potatoes from a basket) by Simon Coleman, Donegal, 1949.
Figure 9 Opposite. NFC B039.01.00010 Shore Gathering: Gathering Seaweed, Co. Galway. Photographer: Domhnall Ó Cearbhaill, date unknown.

Ireland Society. https://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=3054 . **70** See NFC B039.01.00003–B039.01.00017 for more images of seaweed gathering by Domhnall Ó Cearbhaill. **71** See NFC N013.06.00021–N013.06.00082 for Hallowe'en games, NFC C050.15.00006–C050.15.00009 for markets and oyster sellers and NFC B028.15.00001–B028.15.00006 for images of the harvest. **72** Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'Editorial', *Béaloideas* 1: 3 (1928), 308. **73** Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'Editorial', *Béaloideas* 1: 4 (1928), 418. The countries listed by Delargy in this exchange are Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Austria and Czecko-Slovakia. The journals received in NFC in exchange for *Béaloideas* continue to be listed in current issues of the journal. **74** Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 350.

Figure 10 NFC C050.15.00006. The oyster vendor Peter McKevitt, Carlingford Co. Louth. Photographer: Maurice Curtin, *c.* 1950.

Figure 11 NFC C050.15.00009. The oyster vendor Peter McKevitt, Carlingford Co. Louth. Photographer: Maurice Curtin, *c.* 1950.

Figure 12 NFC N013.06.00021. Hallowe'en games, Bobbing for Apples, Co. Dublin. Photographer: Maurice Curtin, *c.* 1935

Figure 13 NFC N013.06.00026. Hallowe'en games, Snap Apple (with candles), Co. Dublin. Photographer: Maurice Curtin, *c.* 1935

Sydow, and the library of the Icelandic scholar Sir William Craigie (1867–1957). Both of these acquisitions demonstrate Delargy's wishes for the library to reflect international folkloristics and comparative folklore study, as well as the study of Irish folklore, and the library holds publications relating to folklore from many parts of the world.[75]

The library does not follow the standard Dewey Decimal Classification, but is instead organised by subject in a way that is reminiscent of *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, though it does not follow the *Handbook* directly. The library is a closed-access library, and a large portion remains uncatalogued, though books can be accessed by requesting titles and subject matter from NFC staff.

While there is a particular section of the library dedicated to the subject of food, further material may be found under sections pertaining to agriculture, time, particular localities, and so on. Memoirs written by Blasket Islanders are particularly rich in material on foodways, as is demonstrated by Patricia Lysaght in Chapter 20 of this book and in other publications.[76] Older publications on food held in the NFC library include Catherine Alexander's *Cheap Receipts and Hints on Cookery: Collected for Distribution amongst the Irish Peasantry in 1847*. This book, significant for its publication during the worst year of the Great Famine, includes advice on cooking, as well as recipes for the use of Indian corn and other cereals, soups, and other meals.[77] More recent publications include work by staff of the Commission and the later Department of Irish Folklore. Caoimhín Ó Danachair published *A Bibliography of Irish Ethnology and Folk Tradition* in 1978,[78] which categorised publications by subject, following the layout of *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*. A supplement to this bibliography was published by Ó Danachair and Lysaght in 1980,[79] and both works include articles and other publications relating to food. Bríd Mahon,[80] drawing on the manuscript material of the NFC collection, published *Land of Milk and Honey: The Story of Traditional Irish Food and Drink* in 1991.[81] Lysaght has worked closely with the primary fieldwork collections of the NFC and has published and edited widely on foodways in Ireland and internationally.[82] The NFC library also holds publications on the foodways of Italy, Germany, France, Sweden and Denmark, as well as of Great Britain and the USA.

75 Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935–1970: History, Ideology, Methodology*, 350–53. **76** Patricia Lysaght, 'The Wake for the Dead and Traditional Hospitality in Ireland in the Twentieth Century: Continuity and Change', in Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire and Dorothy Cashman (eds), *Irish Food History: A Companion* (EUt+ Academic Press, 2023), chapter 20. See also Patricia Lysaght, 'Food-Provision Strategies on the Great Blasket Island: Strand and Shore' in Séamas Ó Catháin (ed.), *Northern Lights: Following Folklore in North-Western Europe: Aistí in Adhnó do Bho Almqvist/Essays in Honour of Bo Almqvist* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2001); and Patricia Lysaght, 'Food-Provision Strategies on the Great Blasket Island: Livestock and Tillage' in Trefor M. Owen (ed.), *From Corrib to Cultra: Folklife Essays in Honour of Alan Gailey* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast in association with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 2000). **77** Catherine Alexander, *Cheap Receipts and Hints on Cookery: Collected for Distribution Amongst the Irish Peasantry in 1847* (Armagh: Printed by J. M'Watters, 1847). NFC 400.V.69 **78** Kevin Danaher, *A Bibliography of Irish Ethnology and Folklore* (Dublin and Cork: Mercier Press, 1978). **79** Kevin Danaher and Patricia Lysaght, 'Supplement to a Bibliography of Irish Ethnology and Folklore' in *Béaloideas* 48/49 (1980), 206–227. **80** https://www.dib.ie/biography/mahon-brid-bridget-a10273 **81** Mahon, *Land of Milk and Honey: The Story of Traditional Irish Food & Drink*. **82** See Lysaght's work as Chair of the International Ethnological Food Research Group, including many of the Proceedings of the Ethnological Food Research Conference since 1994. **83** Ó Súilleabháin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, xv.

Conclusion

The earliest systematised, large-scale collections of folk tradition in Ireland, while initially focusing largely on oral literature, were expanded upon to include foodways and various other aspects of material culture, by the late 1920s and early 1930s. These early collections, made by the Folklore of Ireland Society and the Irish Folklore Institute, offer valuable insights into foodways in Irish life and custom, and served as the foundation on which later collections by the Irish Folklore Commission were amassed, classified, and managed. The early broadening of intellectual horizons concerning folklore beyond the sphere of oral literature, occurred largely as a result of the inspiration and assistance provided by Swedish folklore scholars to their Irish counterparts, and by Åke Campbell in particular in the field of material culture. Campbell, who introduced Delargy to this 'new world' of material culture which he had not previously noticed, and who assisted Seán Ó Súilleabháin in adapting the Swedish system of folklore/folklife classification to suit the Irish material, was a friend and guide to folklore scholars in Ireland. His work and that of other Swedish folklore scholars had a formative influence on the development of folklore studies in this country. Indeed, Ó Súilleabháin's *Handbook* is dedicated to 'the Swedish People whose scholars evolved the scheme for folklore classification outlined in these pages' along with the Irish people who preserved for us a 'rich treasure of traditional lore' over generations.[83] Through the successes of the 1937–1939 Schools' Scheme, many thousands of accounts concerning food production, consumption and custom were recorded by schoolchildren from their parents and grandparents. This material, now hosted online on Dúchas.ie, and undergoing transcription by the public, allows for easy access to, and detailed research into Irish folk tradition, including various aspects of food traditions in Ireland, by a broad and diverse audience. Between these digitised collections and the fieldwork collections and publications accessible by means of in-person visits to the NFC archive, the avenues for exploration, research, collaboration and outreach in the areas of foodways at the NFC offer a particularly rich panorama of traditional life and culture in Ireland.

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