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Title	The Irish Folklore Commission Questionnaire System, 1936-1945
Author(s)	Folsom, Christina Marie
Publication Date	2015-12-02
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/5463

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**The Irish Folklore Commission
Questionnaire System, 1936-1945**

Christina Marie Folsom

A Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Supervisors: Dr. Mary N. Harris & Dr. Lillis Ó Laoire

Discipline of History
School of Humanities
National University of Ireland, Galway

September 2015

Acknowledgements

*For Joy, Jean, and Joe.
Thank you for all the listening.*

I would like to thank the NUI Galway College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies for four years of funding as a Galway Doctoral Research Scholar.

I would like to thank my PhD supervisors Dr Mary Harris and Dr Lillis Ó Laoire. I am particularly thankful to Mary for her support when conducting my undergraduate degree and her encouragement in applying for the PhD program. Her support was critical throughout the PhD. Mary is one of the smartest people I know and I can only hope to one day have as vast a knowledge of Irish history as she. Go raibh míle maith agat! I am very grateful to Dr Lillis Ó Laoire for coming on board as co-supervisor when the thesis was underway, for providing invaluable insights into the fields of folklore and ethnology and comments on the project.

I would like to thank the members of my Graduate Research Committee, Professor Daibhí Ó Cróinín, Dr Niall Ó Ciosáin, and Dr Alison Forrestal. Their insights into the project each year were influential.

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I will forever be thankful to the staff at the National Folklore Collection at UCD. In particular I would like to thank Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, without his assistance in the archives this thesis would not have been possible.

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I have been so blessed in my personal life to have known so many wonderful people that there are just too many to name here! However, I look back fondly on my years in Norwood, in Dennis (particularly the AquaNuts), at Grace Episcoal Church Norwood, at Camp Betsey Cox, at

Buckies Biscotti, at the Diocesan Youth Council events, at Barbara C. Harris Camp, at the University of Tampa, studying abroad (2008), with my St Mary's Road girls, working at Bass Pro, and at An Cheathrú Rua Irish Summer School. So many amazing people have shaped my perspective on the world and I am eternally grateful to you all.

Children are such a blessing to this world. I was lucky enough to get to know some terrific children throughout the PhD years. A special thanks to Allie, Emily, Ísold, Marita, and Fiachra, for reminding me to always stay young at heart.

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This thesis would not have been submitted without Joe. Your never ending encouragement is much appreciative. Thank you for all the love, discussions, tasty things, long walks, woolly-bully wearing, and listening to all those Minkie stories. I love you.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	II
TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS	IV
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	V
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1	19
TERMS	19
CHAPTER 2.....	36
FOLKLIFE STUDIES IN EUROPE & NORTH AMERICA: 1600-1928.....	36
CHAPTER 3	62
IRISH FOLKLIFE: 1700-1934	62
CHAPTER 4	117
THE IFC AND THE QUESTIONNAIRE SYSTEM, 1935 TO 1945.....	117
CHAPTER 5	158
TYPE A QUESTIONNAIRES REQUESTED FOR SPECIFIC RESEARCH	158
CHAPTER 6	213
TYPE B QUESTIONNAIRES ON CALENDAR CUSTOMS AND LIVING FOLKLIFE	213
CHAPTER 7	247
THE CORRESPONDENTS	247
CONCLUSION	294
APPENDIX	299
BIBLIOGRAPHY	302

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Tables and Illustrations

Tables

Table 1: How to Issue a Questionnaire	25
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Table of Figures

Figure 1: NFC, Old-time Dress Questionnaire	20
Figure 2: Stamp Date Example	21
Figure 3: NFC 749:3	22
Figure 4: NFC 1379:130	27
Figure 5: NFC 899:2	28
Figure 6: NFC 548:293	30
Figure 7: NFC Correspondence Files, I am a Cake from Ballybake Questionnaire	31
Figure 8: NFC 945:3	33
Figure 9: 'Questionnaire Regarding Holy Wells'	109
Figure 10: 'Questionnaire Regarding Holy Wells'	110
Figure 11: Children at Garmna, Co. Galway (Campbell, 1935)	131
Figure 12: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A <i>Seanchas Nodlag</i> (1940), Front Cover	143
Figure 13: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A <i>Seanchas Nodlag</i> (1941), Front Cover	147
Figure 14: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A <i>Seanchas Nodlag</i> (1942), Front Cover	150
Figure 15: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A <i>Seanchas Nodlag</i> (1943), Front Cover	153
Figure 16: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A <i>Seanchas Nodlag</i> (1944), Front Cover	155
Figure 18: Énrí Treinfhear, O.S. of Wexford, NFC 1144:137	191
Figure 19: 'A Bog-butter Vessel'	195
Figure 20: Cecil Woodham-Smith, <i>The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-9</i> (1962)	211
Figure 21: NFC Correspondence Files, Martinmas Questionnaire Distribution Map	224
Figure 22: Picture of Harvest Knots at NMI	227
Figure 23: NFC 902:297, Seosamh Mac Cionnaith, Mohill, Co Mayo	229
Figure 24: NFC 749:385	238
Figure 25: Drawing from a Smith Questionnaire Reply, NFC 1136:39	241
Figure 26: NFC 1379:18	245

List of Abbreviations

BMH= Bureau of Military History

CBÉ. Miont. #^ú Cruinniú = Coimisiún Béaloideas Éireann. Miontuairisc an #^ú Chruinnithe¹

DIB= Dictionary of Irish Biography

FIS= Folklore of Ireland Society

Gearr-Thuar. = Gearr-Thuarasgabháil ar Obair Coimisiún Béaloideas Éireann²

IFC= Irish Folklore Commission

IFI= Irish Folklore Institute

MIFC (1950) = Mid-century International Folklore Conference, Indiana University (July-Aug 1950)

NFC= National Folklore Collection

NMI= National Museum of Ireland

PMLA= Publications of the Modern Language Association of America

RIA= Royal Irish Academy

S.N.= *Seanchas Nodlag*

¹ This abbreviation follows the format set down by Briody in his 2007 book. See Mícheál Briody, *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970: history, ideology, methodology* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2007), p. 500.

² This abbreviation follows the format set down by Briody in his 2007 book. See *Ibid.*, p. 500.

Declaration for PhD Thesis

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing, which is the outcome of work done in a group. I have read, and adhered to, the University's policy on plagiarism, as detailed at: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/plagiarism/>.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

The Irish Gaelic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries renewed an interest in Irish folklore and traditional customs. The Revival had a strong impact on the men and women who fought for, and eventually formed, an independent Irish state in the 1920s. In 1935 the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC) was established by Éamon de Valera's *Fianna Fáil* government. Séamus Ó Duilearga was appointed the honorary Director.¹ The IFC's mission was to study and collect information on Irish folklore and traditional culture. This was important to the early independent Irish state's language and cultural revival policies. Many Irish citizens shared the government's cultural aspirations at the time. Indeed folklorist and linguist Diarmuid Ó Giolláin has noted that 'the Irish Folklore Commission's folklore collection was one of the most important cultural projects in Irish history.'² In a modern context a government funded Commission may not seem extraordinary; however, the newly independent Irish state was under considerable financial pressure and its investment in the IFC demonstrated its significance to the government.

Twenty-one men were elected as IFC board members at the Commission's launch. They included distinguished Irish language scholars, priests, antiquarians, classicists, and educationalists.³ Ó Duilearga selected his own staff, hiring Seán Ó Súilleabháin as the head-archivist, and Máire Mac Neill as the office manager. They worked diligently to promote the IFC's mission in the local and national media and supervised the administration and cataloguing of the collected material. Their mission was to collect as much Irish folklore as quickly as possible. The IFC head staff and full-time collectors were under constant pressure to work faster because of the widely held contemporary belief that the time available to collect 'real' Irish folklore

¹ He had previous experience running folklore organizations and the IFC was the third of his folklore collecting schemes. The establishment of the Folklore of Ireland Society (FIS)(1927) and the Irish Folklore Institution (IFI)(1930) influenced academic support and government funding for the IFC.

² Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, 'Folk Culture' in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 236.

³ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 523.

from the ‘true’ Irish was nearing an end. A postal questionnaire system was one of the ways that the IFC sought to speed up the collecting process. The aim of this work is to analyse the critical role that the questionnaire system played in the history of the Irish Folklore Commission (IFC) from 1936 to 1945.

Fifteen full-time collectors were employed, for various lengths of time, from 1935 to 1945. They helped to further spread the IFC’s mission to remote parts of the country.⁴ Full-time collectors worked predominately in the *Gaeltacht* from 1935 to 1945, because the IFC believed that these districts were richer in traditional culture.⁵ The type of culture the IFC was associated with was tied with native Irish-speakers; therefore, the collectors tended to collect more oral material (folklore).

Scholars have debated the differences in the definition of the term ‘folklore’ as opposed to the term ‘folklife’ since the word folklore was first introduced into English in 1846. Before this period the study of oral tradition and traditional material culture was referred to in English as ‘Popular Antiquities.’⁶

The study of folklore and folklife was institutionalized on continental Europe by the end of the nineteenth century, as part of the Romantic period. ‘The word ‘folklife’ (*folkliv*) was already used in Sweden in the first half of the nineteenth century and the term ‘folklife research’ (*folklivsforskning*) was coined in the early twentieth century.’⁷ During the Romantic period in Ireland the Irish term ‘*Béaloides*’ was redefined to fit the definition of the

⁴ The following men worked as full-time paid collectors at some point in the period 1935-1945: Nioclás Breathnach, Proinnsias de Búrca, Tomás de Búrca, Liam de Noraidh, Séamus Ennis, Liam Mac Coisdeala, Brian Mac Lochlainn, Liam Mac Meanman, Proinnsias Ó Ceallaigh, Seán Ó Cróinín, Seosamh Ó Dálaigh, Caoimhín Ó Danachair, Seán Ó Flannagáin, Seán Ó hÉochaidh, Tadhg Ó Murchadha. *Ibid.*, p. 526

⁵ Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore: tradition, modernity, identity* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), pp. 136-137.

⁶ In 1846 William John Thomas coined the word ‘Folk-Lore’ with the noted spelling format. He later went on to found the *Notes and Queries* antiquarian and folklore journal in 1849 and was an active member of the Folk-Lore Society.

⁷ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 48.

study of folklore.⁸ It has been suggested that the *béal* ‘mouth’ *oideas* ‘teaching’ may have originally referred to the teaching of learned tradition.⁹

Caoimhín Ó Danachair (Kevin Danaher), who was hired as a member of the IFC head office staff in 1946,¹⁰ and became the head ethnologist defined folklore in 1983 as:

Any item handed on by word of mouth or by example from the older to the younger people is folk tradition. Anything learned through formal education or the printed word, or more recently through the cinema, the radio and the television, is not.¹¹

This definition could be applied to the term folklife as well. The two terms can cause considerable confusion in an Irish context for they were adopted differently on each side of the Irish border. This thesis will explore the beginning of organized folklore collecting in Ireland (with the foundation of the FIS in 1927); however, at that time a distinction between the terms folklore and folklife did not exist in Ireland. When the IFC became the main folk culture collecting body in Ireland it referred to folklore and folklife subjects as ‘folklore’ with the occasional reference to ‘ethnology,’ since that was the term used by their Scandinavian colleagues. As late as 1950, Ó Súilleabháin still argued that the terms did not matter in an Irish context because the folklorists and the ethnologists could never be entirely separate from each other’s research.¹²

The terms were used differently in Northern Ireland and thus led to further confusion. When academics in Northern Ireland organized their own folk culture collecting organizations in the post-World War II period, their focus was on folk-museums and the shared traditional material culture, which

⁸ Geoffrey Keating first used the term in the 1620s; however, it was not defined as the study of folklore.

⁹ Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, ‘“Béaloideas”: Notes on the History of a Word’ in *Béaloideas*, vol. 70 (2002), pp. 83-98.

¹⁰ He was a full-time paid collector in Co Limerick from January-May 1940. He then took a leave of absence to join the Irish Defence Forces.

¹¹ Caoimhín Ó Danachair, ‘The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982’ in *Ulster Folklife*, vol. 29 (1983), p. 9.

¹² Stith Thompson, ed. *Four Symposia on Folklore* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1953; reprint, 1976), p. 261. A further examination of this source and how it is used in citation will be provided further on in this introduction.

in many cases transcended sectarian divisions. Scholars researching traditions in Northern Ireland preferred the term ‘folklife.’¹³

Further ambiguities emerged in the post-war period, with renewed interest in American folk studies. The trend in American folklore and folklife studies was the preferred study and discussion of material folk culture. Again, in a melting pot culture like the United States, folklife was an area of study that all Americans could relate to. American scholars used folklore to describe the oral lore and the term folklife to describe material culture. In many cases American folklore was collected and categorised based on the ancestry of the informant. Native American folklore became a popular area of inquiry. However, for all the other non-native ethnic groups living in America the study of their folklore was seen as their home countries’ oral traditions being retold outside the place of origin.

The IFC staff engaged more with American folklorists and American folklore collecting organizations in the post-war period. They published in similar journals where they conformed to the American definitions of the terms. To summarize and clarify, the terms ‘folklore’ and ‘folklife’ will be referred to throughout this thesis. Since Ó Duilearga’s folklore collecting schemes used a wide variety of terms in the 1927 to 1945 period the following terms are being defined for the use in the thesis:

Folklore- oral genres

Folklife- ‘European ethnology’, material culture, traditional: crafts, folk architecture, music, dance, festivals and feast days, life-cycle traditions, folk religion, occupation, folk medicine

The collectors gathered oral folklore traditions from their informants and the questionnaire correspondents were sent questions that related mainly to folklife subjects. These replies were sent to the IFC head office. Through this system, small villages with a correspondent learned about the IFC’s mission.

The work of the IFC, and particularly the use of the questionnaire system, is overlooked by modern scholars in view of the fact that the IFC

¹³ Mark McAuley, 'The Concept of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum' in *Archaeology Ireland*, vol. 4, no. 1, (1990), pp. 15-17.

head office staff did not prepare well for the future of the archive and the training of the next generation of folklorists.¹⁴ However, in recent years a number of successful media and digital projects have begun to change this.

When the IFC was founded, Ó Duilearga desired information on folklife to be collected along with folklore. Some contemporary politicians were interested in how Irish-speakers lived, seeing that to them traditional customs were a direct link with the noble and ‘majestic Gaelic past.’ De Valera and his contemporaries’ main cultural objective was the restoration of the Irish language and projects that promoted this received government funding in the 1930s. Nonetheless folklife collecting was a key element in Ó Duilearga’s plan for the IFC’s future.

Starting in 1936, the questionnaire system was the most cost effective and efficient means to collect Irish folklife material. The IFC circulated forty-nine distinct questionnaires on various folk culture topics between 1936 and 1945.¹⁵ The system peaked in the last year of the Emergency with over four hundred correspondents replying. The IFC failed to reach such successful return numbers again. From the IFC’s perspective, in order for the questionnaire system to succeed as a collecting tool, it required a high number of replies from a variety of areas. The years 1936 to 1945 have been chosen for this thesis for these were the golden years of the questionnaire system, when the IFC, due to the restrictions of the Emergency, was not as focused on other collecting projects and promotional activities. They needed to maintain the amount of material being collected (measured in number of pages) as a result of government spending being tight and if the IFC had reported a reduction in its collecting numbers it could have been disbanded.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ó Súilleabháin noted in 1974: ‘Apart from the shortage of cataloguers, we have also suffered from the fact that there has not been any teaching of folklore in Dublin for the last 20 years. Professor Delargy asked to be released from teaching students so that he could concentrate on directing the Commission and the result is that no students have been coming up at all. The only students that we have at all are foreign students, who work for a year or two towards their degree and then go away.’ Sean O’Sullivan, ‘The Work of the Irish Folklore Commission’ in *Oral History*, vol. 2, no. 2, (1974), p. 14.

¹⁵ Of the 49 questionnaires 41 will be discussed in detail. The remaining seven are short and are too insignificant to warrant inclusion in the overall project. They will be discussed briefly in the first chapter on ‘Terms.’

¹⁶ In many other European countries the amount of folklore an archive had was recorded in weight. The volumes of paper and other materials were weighted on scales and reported to other archives to demonstrate the hard work of that institution. This was not done in Ireland but must have been mentioned once by one of the IFC staff because an article appeared in

A set annual quota of pages collected was not established but the numbers needed to be comparable to the previous years. The IFC's small budget paid for the overhead costs of sending out the questionnaires but the correspondents' work was done on a voluntary basis.¹⁷ The IFC had correspondents who sent in replies from Irish-and-English speaking districts. The relationship between the correspondents and the IFC head office developed into a unique communication system between an official government commission and rural dwellers. Many correspondents reasoned that having friendly relations with a government-funded commission could be used to their benefit in times of need; however, the main motivation in becoming a questionnaire correspondent was a sense of devotion to Irish culture and folklore.

In the past two decades a number of works have been published on Irish folklore and the history of the IFC. It is a topic that also straddles Irish social history and Irish political history from the 1920s to the closing years of the 1940s.

Philip O'Leary's *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939* (2004) and *Writing Beyond the Revival: Facing the Future in Gaelic Prose 1940-1951* (2011) discuss the two time periods in more detail. O'Leary, in both exhaustively documented publications, scrutinizes the history of thought in Irish and considers many of the scholars and language enthusiasts who interacted with the IFC. In particular the second chapter in the 2004 publication entitled 'The Real and Better Ireland. Rural Life in Gaelic Prose,' discusses the FIS, Ó Duilearga, the IFC, and the politics of folklore in the 1922 to 1939 period.¹⁸ In this chapter O'Leary's central argument is that folklore was fundamental to the intellectual discourse of 1920s and 1930s Ireland.

Diarmuid Ó Giolláin's *Locating Irish Folklore: tradition, modernity, identity* (2000) straddles the history of trends in Irish folklore and the

The Irish Times in relation to it. Patrick Kavanagh 'Twenty-Three Tons of Accumulated Folk-Lore is it of Any Use?' *The Irish Times*, 18 April 1939, p. 2.

¹⁷ The obvious exceptions to this were the paid full-time and part-time collectors who also answered questionnaires.

¹⁸ Philip O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2004), pp. 90-164.

historical trends in the folklore of other nations, mainly in Europe and North America. He expertly contextualized the IFC within the wider history of Irish antiquarian studies and the language movement. He provides excellent examples of the other nations that had a similar political history to Ireland and as a result had similar interests in folklore and folklife.

Bo Almqvist acknowledged the potential of studying the history of the IFC in his 1979 pamphlet *The Irish Folklore Commission: Achievement and Legacy*.¹⁹ Ó Giolláin expanded on the topic briefly in his 2000 publication. The next scholar to contribute substantially to the subject was Gerard O'Brien with *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records, 1922-1972* (2004). O'Brien examined and compared three government funded projects - the IFC, the Irish Manuscript Commission, and the Bureau of Military History. His central argument is that throughout the twentieth century successive Irish governments attempted to shape interpretations the Irish past. O'Brien introduced new research into the historical narrative of the IFC. The comparisons with the other government funded projects gives the IFC greater historical context.

However, the definitive in-depth history of the IFC from its inception to its disbandment is Mícheál Briody's *The Irish Folklore Commission 1935-1970: History, Ideology, Methodology* (2007). Briody expertly draws on records in the National Archives of Ireland, UCD archives, and the correspondence between the IFC head office staff and their folklore colleagues in Ireland and abroad. The book neatly summarizes the events of the nineteenth and early twentieth century that led to the foundation of the FIS. Briody briefly highlights Ó Duilearga's 1928 Northern European trip and the events of the IFI. The gem of the whole research project is the detailed analysis of the foundation of the IFC. He seamlessly places the events within the political ideology of the time. Following the foundation section he discusses the history of the IFC decade by decade. With the limits of any publication the 1940 to 1971 sections are not as detailed as those of the founding years.

¹⁹ Bo Almqvist, *The Irish Folklore Commission: achievement and legacy*, in *Paimfleid=Pamphlets*, ed. An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann (Baile Átha Cliath: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, An Coláiste Ollscoile, 1979).

Introduction

After the chronological history Briody has a number of thematic sections. In the collectors and collecting programmes section he discusses the role of the different types of collectors. Moreover, he explains the different IFC run projects- the 1937 to 1938 Schools' Collection Scheme, the collection of music, the questionnaire system, and the collecting done in Scotland. Another section reviews the duties of IFC head office and detailed the background of the staff, the way the archive functioned, and the collections in the library. A further section identifies the various problems the IFC encountered including inter-staff fighting, the struggle for salaries, civil servant status, and the future of the collection. This section is tactfully written; however, the problems that are outlined in it impacted the period in question for this thesis (1936-1945) little. The last section is an assessment of the IFC's work. It explains the value of the collected material and the collectors' diaries. The neglect of urban areas, English speakers, and female collectors and informants are also scrutinized. Briody set a high standard for future researchers to attain when conducting further research on the IFC history. He has published on various, more detailed aspects of the IFC history before and since his 2007 publication.²⁰

Bairbre Ní Fhloinn's 2001 article 'The Correspondence with Tradition' is the most relevant to the topic of the history of the IFC questionnaire system. This short article (fourteen pages) includes much valuable information on primary and secondary sources. It provides a brief examination of the system from its inception in 1936 to the time of her writing (2001). It addresses scholarly aspects of the collecting system, such as who requested specific questionnaires.²¹

Ní Fhloinn starts by praising the collecting done by the IFC and discusses how the Scandinavian scholars' mentoring influenced Irish folklorists. The importance of Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (1942) is highlighted and she states that this work could 'be

²⁰ Mícheál Briody, "'Publish or Perish': The Vicissitudes of The Irish Folklore Institute' in *Ulster Folklife*, vol. 51 (2005), pp. 10-33; 'The Collectors' Diaries of the Irish Folklore Commission: a complex Genesis' in *Sinsear*, vol. 9 (2005), pp. 27-45; 'Énri Ó Muirgheasa agus Scéim na Scol 1934' in *Béascna*, vol. 3 (2006), pp. 1-22; 'Ceapadh Chéad Choimisiún Béaloideas Éireann, 1934-1935' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 78 (2010), pp. 168-186.

²¹ In this thesis these questionnaires are labelled 'Type A' questionnaires.

described as a 700 page questionnaire' itself.²² Ní Fhloinn deals with the questionnaire system's relation to the Schools' Collection Scheme in more detail utilizing the advantage of hindsight.

Hindsight is also an advantage when she reflects on what she defines as the two different types of questionnaire that were sent out by the IFC. She labels the two categories the 'general questionnaires' and the 'specific questionnaires.' Considering the length of the article these terms were most likely chosen to give an overview of the different types of questionnaires; however, the terms are too limited for a more in-depth analysis of the individual questionnaires and they are redefined in the 'Terms' section of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is worth quoting Ní Fhloinn definition of the 'specific questionnaire' and the 'general questionnaire' in full:

One such type [of questionnaire] was the general questionnaire, which was sent to correspondents all over Ireland, and which often varied considerably in its length and breadth of enquiry. Another type of questionnaire was more specific in nature, and was sent only to a limited number of respondents, or to people living in a particular area. This latter type of [specific] questionnaire was often quite short.²³

Ní Fhloinn briefly mentions how the collecting system was applied in Northern Ireland, the uneven gender ratio of the correspondents, and the way that economic backgrounds might have influenced the replies. This examination is concluded with an impressive list of scholars, and works that were influenced by the questionnaire system. The majority of these examples are from the post-1945 period.

Ní Fhloinn's short article is an excellent starting point; however, further research is needed in order to expand on the foundations that she laid in the history of the IFC questionnaire system. The period in question for this thesis (1936-1945) is notably under-referenced in Ní Fhloinn's article because many of the early questionnaires were not listed in the annual reports to the government, which she cites frequently. A PhD thesis offers more space to conduct a more detailed evaluation of the questionnaires. Furthermore, the

²² Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition: The Role of the Postal Questionnaire in the Collection of Irish Folklore' in *Northern lights: following folklore in north-western Europe: aistí in adhnó do Bho Almqvist = essays in honour of Bo Almqvist*, (2001), p. 216. Seán Ó Súilleabháin and The Folklore of Ireland Society, eds., *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Dublin: The Folklore of Ireland Society, 1942).

²³ Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition', p. 219.

focus on the first ten years of the system allows for an analysis of how the questionnaire system was established and functioned, rather than some of the more idealized versions later recounted by Ó Duilearga and Ó Súilleabháin.

In light of having read through all the questionnaire material from this period and many first hand accounts from IFC head staff members it makes sense to expand on the limiting terms for the different questionnaires set out by Ní Fhloinn. The ‘specific’ questionnaires and ‘general’ questionnaires will be redefined as ‘Type A,’ ‘Type B,’ and ‘Type C’ questionnaires to allow for a clearer discussion of the system in this period. The tracking of the number of times individual correspondents replied to a questionnaire, coupled with a thorough reading of the correspondence between them and the IFC head office staff, allows for a more meticulous account of the gender and economic background of the whole correspondence pool.

The fourth chapter of Briody’s 2007 book is entitled ‘The Commission’s Collectors and Collections’ and a section within that is entitled ‘Collecting by Means of Questionnaire’. Briody begins by discussing how the IFC created and maintained a pool of correspondents to answer the questionnaires. He mentions the importance of the Schools’ Collection Scheme and briefly touches upon the issue of a smaller correspondent pool in Northern Ireland. He explores the different types of questionnaires and gives examples of both the general and specific types, using Ní Fhloinn’s terminology. Some questionnaires that he mentions were previously examined in Ní Fhloinn’s article. In examining methods of collection, Briody discusses the language question, the role the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) had in sending out some questionnaires, and the different scholars who requested specific questionnaire topics. Similarly to Ní Fhloinn focuses on the later period (the 1950s & 1960s). Briody’s last questionnaire section highlights the amount of material that was collected through the questionnaire system.

Briody’s book provides useful examples and specific references to questionnaire sources, like the annual reports and meeting minutes. At the end of the section Briody states, ‘Much further research needs to be done on

the Commission's questionnaire system.'²⁴ He indicates that an analysis of the system's achievements and shortcomings would be valuable to this area of historical research.

Historian Mary E. Daly's article in the 2010 issue of *Béalóideas* is the most recent academic work to mention the IFC questionnaire system. Writing from the perspective of a historian, she explores the relationship between folklore and history in twentieth-century Ireland. The article mentions the questionnaires but is more of a summary of the examples given in previous works (Ní Fhloinn, 2001. Briody, 2007).²⁵ The publication's value lies in the excellent summary given of the historical context of the questionnaires. Daly also discusses and reviews many of the recent publications on Irish folklore and folk memory. It is an excellent piece for tying together the fields of history and folklore.

First the article describes the changing climate of Irish history, as a field, in the 1930s. The establishment of The Ulster Society for Historical Studies and the Irish Historical Society in Dublin are mentioned as two examples of this. These two historical societies along with the IFC are highlighted as examples of, '... a number of initiatives that played a major role in defining Ireland's intellectual and cultural heritage...' during the early years of the Free State.²⁶ Moreover, the way in which historians and folklorists viewed each other's scholarly activities at the time is discussed. It is interesting but Daly does not link this discussion directly to IFC questionnaire examples.

In the second section of her article Daly considers some of the earliest examples of historians using the IFC questionnaires as a source in their scholarly research. Drawing on the works of Ní Fhloinn and Briody Daly again focuses mainly on the 1950s and 1960s questionnaires. However, she provides examples of a number of scholars who commissioned questionnaires on specific themes, such as the Famine, and used the responses for their

²⁴ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 288.

²⁵ Also Ó Danachair, 'The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982', which will be discussed throughout the thesis as secondary source.

²⁶ Daly, 'The State Papers', p. 63.

research. This aspect of the questionnaires was not examined in such detail in Ní Fhloinn or Briody's work. In her short article Daly only had space to mention a few scholars who did this. The Famine questionnaire material has been analysed by many researchers and resulted in a number of publications. These publications are discussed in Daly's article.

Lastly Daly quickly summarizes the historiography of 'folk-history' at the time of her writing. She mentions how modern scholars view of 'folk-history' relates directly back to the opposing views of historians and folklorists in the first few decades of the Free State. The folklorists and historians were not in agreement then because the historians wanted to look toward the future in analysing history. The folklorists remained firm in wanting to study only what they perceived as an unchanging Celtic past. At the end of the article Daly is hopeful that modern historians will start to use folklore sources to add to a fresh perspective to Irish social history.

This thesis seeks to address the significant place that the questionnaire system had in the early years of the IFC's history (1936-1945). At the onset of this thesis it is important to understand the way the mechanics of the system functioned. The first chapter entitled '**Terms**' will provide a brief discussion of terminology and an explanation of how the questionnaire system operated. A brief introductory bibliography of Ó Duilearga follows. **Chapter two** focuses on the questionnaire system as a folk culture-collecting tool outside of Ireland, up until its introduction to Ireland in the 1930s. It will specifically focus on the questionnaire usage in Sweden and the other Nordic countries, which provided a model for the IFC. It will finish by exploring Ó Duilearga's 1928 research trip to Northern Europe where he first encountered the questionnaire system and ethnological archives. **Chapter three** examines the evolution of the study of Irish folklore and folklife, from the materials collected in the eighteenth century up to the eve of the formation of the IFC. At that point folklore collecting became a systematic and scientific field of study. The chapter will then consider the events that led to the foundation of the FIS, IFI, and the IFC. **Chapter four** will examine the operation of the IFC from 1935 to 1945 with view to contextualising the issuing of individual questionnaires. Access to a wealth of previously unconsulted NFC materials

and a more limited scope of years under investigation will add greatly to the historical knowledge of the IFC (1935-1945). **Chapter five** explores the background and results for the Type A questionnaires. Type A questionnaires were issued at the request of a scholar. The academic background of the requestors and the structuring of the questionnaires themselves will be considered. **Chapter six** examines the background and results of the Type B questionnaires, which were issued to bolster the IFC's archive, with the eventual goals of contributing to a European wide folk Atlas and building an Irish folk-museum. **Chapter seven** surveys the characteristics of the questionnaire correspondents by discussing their occupations, their gender, and their native language or language preference. Furthermore, it will investigate the relationship that these correspondents had with the IFC office staff (mainly Ó Súilleabháin). It was these close relationships that made the questionnaire system such a success.

The NFC consists of the material that the IFC amassed from 1935 until its disbandment in 1971, and the material collected by the UCD Department of Irish Folklore from 1972 up until the present (now the School of Irish, Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore and Linguistics). The majority of the collection is made up of the IFC's archive and this is what has been utilized for this thesis. The first element the NFC is comprised of is the main manuscript collection, which was amassed (1935-1971) by the full-time collectors, the part-time paid collectors, and the unpaid questionnaire correspondents.²⁷

The element of the NFC collection most important to this thesis is the thousands of pages of correspondence. The correspondence is organized into two sections. The sections are uncatalogued and have no assigned titles but for ease of understanding they have been given labels here. The first is the 'named' correspondence section, which includes letters to the IFC from academics, scholars, the various foreign embassies located in Dublin, and in some cases correspondents who sent in regular contributions to the

²⁷ Throughout the thesis this main manuscript collection will be referenced in the following format- NFC vol. #: page numbers. The second body of material is the Schools' Manuscript Collection, which was amassed by National School students for the 1937-1938 Schools' Collection Scheme. This thesis will not cite the specific parts of the Schools' Collection because the material is too vast to include in a size-restricted thesis.

questionnaires (examples: Jeanne Cooper-Foster and Philip Ledwith).²⁸ This section is being referred to as the ‘named’ correspondence because the name of the letter writer is on the folders that house their correspondence. These correspondence sources are used in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 of this thesis.

The second correspondence section is the ‘questionnaire correspondence’ folders and is comprised mainly of carbon copies of thank you letters sent to questionnaire correspondents. This material was previously uncatalogued; however, I was allowed to organize the majority of this material into folders as I read through the documents. Since most of the correspondents were ordinary individuals, and the specific questionnaire that they replied to is usually referred to in their letters, the bulk of this correspondence is now filed in folders labelled by the questionnaire topic. These documents have not been used previously. This newly available source is extremely valuable in understanding the relation between the IFC and correspondents.²⁹

The NFC as a source has many limitations. The main manuscript collection, which is available for consultation on microfilm in the James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway and elsewhere, does not include scans of blank pages. It is impossible for scholars relying on the microfilm to know if the missing page(s) is blank or was never scanned due to human error. Where one or two pages are missing at the end of a questionnaire reply, the pages are most likely blank in the original volume; however, when five or more pages are missing it is more likely human error. The only way to clarify this is by consulting the original volumes in Dublin. Due to lack of funding the NFC has limited visitation hours.

The correspondence has other limitations that have repercussions for this thesis. The IFC does not appear to have saved all the correspondence for 1936 to 1945. For example only a limited number of no carbon copy thank you letters to correspondents who answered any of the pre-*Martinmas* questionnaires exist.³⁰ The head office was small and they most likely could

²⁸ For more on these individuals see Chapter 7.

²⁹ Formatting for this source will appear as follows: Sender to Receiver (DATE) NFC Correspondence Files, [Questionnaire Name] Questionnaire.

³⁰ For a list of the questionnaires see Appendix 1. The definition of a pre-*Martinmas* questionnaire will be explained in the ‘Terms’ chapter.

not keep all the day-to-day paperwork. Clear holes exist in the ‘named’ correspondence section as well. The correspondence of individuals such as the National Museum of Ireland curator and Nazi supporter Adolf Mahr may have been destroyed deliberately, but for others it seems they may have been lost with time. However, using the original letters and the carbon copies, links can be established between events and individuals.

Ó Duilearga’s diaries will also be referenced in Chapter 4. These are a part of the Delargy Papers at the NFC. These will be utilized to highlight Ó Duilearga’s true feelings about certain individuals who interacted with the IFC and larger IFC run projects. This source has not been consulted extensively before. Ó Duilearga did not comment frequently on the questionnaire system in his diaries, for in the period in question, because he had less to do with the drafting of questions and the reply correspondence.

Lastly the IFC’s Annual Reports will be cited in order to discuss the figures that the IFC were reporting to the Dept. of Finance and Dept. of Education. As shall be mentioned throughout Chapters 5 and 6 the figures reported did not always match the amount of material taken in. Copies of these reports are available at the NFC.

Other scholars have cited many of the newspaper articles utilized in this thesis; however, here the material has been re-examined and in some cases different elements have been highlighted in the articles that pertain more to the questionnaire system. The following national newspapers have been consulted: *The Irish Independent*, *The Irish Press*, *The Irish Times* and *Weekly Irish Times*. The wide variety of national newspapers with different ethos that wrote about the IFC demonstrates that folklore collecting was a popular topic in 1930s and 1940s Ireland and that a further explanation of each newspaper’s sympathies is not necessary. In many cases different newspaper when reporting on IFC events used the same quotes and wording to describe events/projects. The regional newspapers consulted include the *Connacht Tribune*, *Kerryman*, *Limerick Leader*, and *Westmeath Examiner*. They were selected less on account of their specific region but because they wrote about the IFC. However, their interest in the IFC was most likely the result of their regionalism. The *Irish Schools’ Weekly (ISW)* is a useful source

for it detailed opinions of national schoolteachers toward folklore. It was in circulation for all the years in question.

The same is true for the journal publications from the 1930s until the 1950s. The following journals provide valuable insights into how the scholars who requested questionnaires and the IFC head staff published works using the questionnaire material. The following Irish language publications are cited and discussed in the thesis: *An Lóchrann*, *An Stoc*, *An t-Ultach*, and *Comhar*. O’Leary (2004) is a great source for more information about these publications and the type of folklore material that they included in their issues. The following Irish academic journals will be cited: *Béaloides*, *The Irish Journal of Medical Science*, *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, and *Studies: an Irish Quarterly Review*. Like the Irish language journals they published a number of articles on folklore and folklife subjects. In many cases questionnaire material was reproduced in its entirety in certain issues of these journals. The following non-Irish academic journals will be cited: *Études Celtiques*, *Folk-Liv*, *Folklore*, *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, *Stockholms Tidningen*, *Svenska Landsmål*, *Volkskunde*. Similar to the Irish academic journals these various French, American, and Swedish journals published articles on Irish folklore and in some cases reproduced questionnaire material.

One challenge facing scholars seeking to consult both the newspaper and journal articles is the language and script the material is written in. The IFC and the scholars who used questionnaire replies, as a source in their research, wrote in both Irish and English, frequently in the old Gaelic script. Modern search engines still have a hard time deciphering that script and it can make searching for key terms difficult. For the more important journals, such as *Béaloides* a physical search through the hard copy has been performed. This was not possible with all the above-mentioned journals.

Caoimhín Ó Danachair’s 1945 *Béaloides* article ‘The Questionnaire System’ was one of the first academic publications focussing on the questionnaire system.³¹ This article provides useful primary source

³¹ Ó Danachair took over for Máire Mac Neill in organizing the questionnaire system after the Second World War ended. He was able to temporarily increase correspondent numbers and the amount of questionnaires being sent out. Therefore, Ó Danachair had first hand

information about the workings of the system from the perspective of a new member of the head staff who was therefore not part of the initial, near decade long, use of the collecting system.

Although Ó Danachair is brief about some aspects of the questionnaire system he mentions the most important events. The most important comments are about the Schools' Collection Scheme of 1937-38, and by association the National School teachers, and the way they determined the success of the questionnaire system. Moreover he discusses the way in which the questionnaires were sent from the head IFC office.

Ó Danachair's work with the questionnaires was only starting in 1945 but he had high expectations for the future of the collecting system.³² The section of this article that examines all the questionnaires issued at that time is short. The main focus of the article was to review the *Roofs and Thatching* questionnaire sent out in 1945.³³ Ó Danachair's views of different aspects of the questionnaires can be compared to later scholars' reflections on the subject. In addition, the article provides brief but valuable pieces of information on individual questionnaires.³⁴

Another primary source that has been of immense value is the published proceeding of the July to August 1950 Mid-century International Folklore Conference held at Indiana University (*MIFC* (1950)). The proceedings were edited by Stith Thompson and published in 1953 under the title *Four Symposia on Folklore*.³⁵ Ó Súilleabháin was one of fifty-two delegates at the conference. He was the only IFC representative and he gave one of the twelve special evening lectures on Irish folklore. He also chaired the first session on 'Making Folklore Available'.³⁶ It is evident from the transcript that his American and European colleagues viewed him as an authoritative figure in relation to folklore collecting and organization of archives. In his publication the great work the IFC did during the War years

experience with the system he was writing about in the article. Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p.283.

³² Ó Danachair, 'The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982', p. 203.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³⁴ The article has a list of questionnaires that had been sent out by the IFC before the article was published in 1945. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³⁵ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, pp. 1-340.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 155-173.

Introduction

is highlighted numerous times and the Commission is upheld as the ideal government funded folklore archive. Ó Súilleabháin talked at length about the IFC's general collecting work and frequently mentions the IFC questionnaire system. What is so unique about this source is that it is a transcript of what was said in a panel/conversation format. Ó Súilleabháin undoubtedly had notes on certain points prepared; however, for the most part, his opinions of folklore shine through in his own words. Henceforth the references to this source are referring to words spoken by Ó Súilleabháin, unless otherwise clearly noted in the main text.

Chapter 1

Terms

Since this subject has attracted little scholarly attention it is worth clarifying the use of certain terms at the outset.

‘the IFC’- will be used as a generic term throughout the thesis to describe both the Commission as an institution and the head office staff. In many of the primary sources used no indication is given of which staff member in particular wrote something and therefore the generic IFC term will be used. It was such a small workspace and it is clear from other documents that the head office staff communicated with each other about questionnaire replies; therefore, when something was sent in or out of the IFC, the majority of the staff were aware of it.

‘Query’ vs. **‘Questionnaire’**- this thesis focuses on the questionnaire system and therefore will not be discussing the numerous queries that were sent out by the IFC during this period. A questionnaire is being defined here as the same question or group of questions being sent out to more than one person to seek information. In order to be considered a questionnaire one or more of these persons must not be a full-time collector. A **query** is one or more questions sent out to full-time collectors to answer and not to any unpaid correspondents. A number of topics that the NFC lists as questionnaires¹ are actually queries. They will not be discussed as questionnaires because they do not fit this thesis’s definition of a questionnaire. Examples include: ‘Men vs. Women Poets & Storytellers’, ‘Prayers’, ‘Rope-making & clinker-built boats’ ‘AT500’ ‘Pike-drill orders’ ‘Rosary for the Dead’ ‘Bread in former times.’

Requester- a person who requested that the IFC send out a questionnaire on a particular topic for his or her own research or interest.

¹ In the reading room of the NFC is a typed up list of what they believe are all the questionnaire topics. It is entitled ‘Questionnaires/*Ceistiúcháin*. National Folklore Collection/*Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann*, UCD.’

Correspondent- a person who received questionnaires from the IFC, gathered the information into a form that could be posted, wrote a reply letter (see below), and sent the material back to the head office. A full-time collector or a part-time collector could be considered a correspondent if they answer a questionnaire and send the information back like a non-paid correspondent did. It may seem strange to include paid collectors as questionnaire correspondents but the IFC in their official reports to the government counted the full-time and part-time collectors' answers as replies. They answered the same questions as the non-paid correspondents and the material is bound in the main manuscript collection together.

Reply/replies- collected material written down and sent back by the correspondent. This material covers the subject in the questionnaire and does not include the **reply letter** (see below) or extra non-questionnaire related material sent in.

Reply letters- these letters were written by the correspondents in the standard modern letter writing format with a date, standard opening greeting, content, and standard ending greeting. The individuals who wrote these letters are considered '**the correspondents**' and if other persons contributed to the collecting of the materials they are co-collectors but not correspondents.

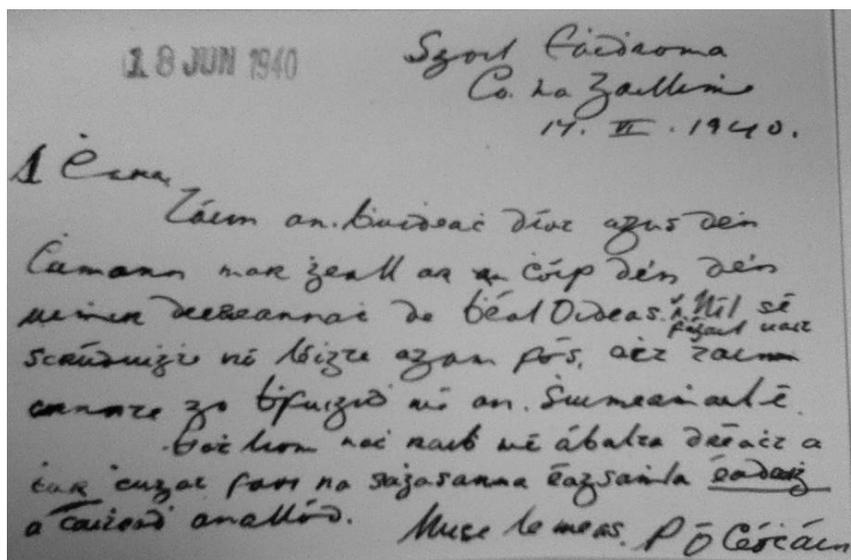


Figure 1: NFC, Old-time Dress Questionnaire

The stamp date- refers to the stamped date put on the reply material by a member of the IFC head staff. Correspondents frequently did not write the date at the top of their reply and this stamp indicates around when the office processed it. Typically this was done within one to two business days.

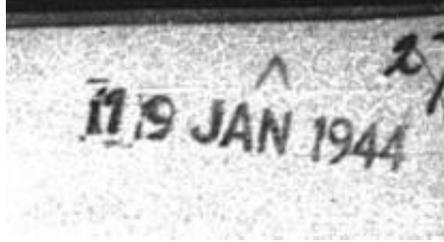


Figure 2: Stamp Date Example

‘Questionnaire cover letter’- a formal cover letter sent with the questionnaire that thanked correspondents for their hard work and gave them details about why the questionnaire was issued or when they would like to have the replies back by. As the Emergency progressed and paper became scarce the IFC stopped issuing cover letters with each questionnaire. Instead they began combining the cover letter and the questions on the same page. Cover letters were almost always signed by Ó Duilearga, even though he had less to do with the questionnaires in this period.

Thank you letters- the carbon copies of the thank you letters are now filed into individual folders with the name of each questionnaire subject on the cover.² These folders start with the December 1938 questionnaire *Concerning Death and Stone Heaps*. The correspondence between the IFC and the questionnaire correspondents, before these two questionnaires were issued, was minimum. A possible reason for this was that any IFC thank you reply letters were either filed under the individual correspondent's folder, now in a separate filing cabinet, or this correspondence was not kept before December 1938. When a correspondent sent in questionnaire material to the head office either Ó Súilleabháin or Mac Neill wrote a one to two page thank you letter in the language in which the correspondent submitted the material (material in Irish resulted in a thank you letter in Irish). These letters began by thanking the correspondent for answering the specific questionnaire, and then oftentimes noted something unusual or helpful about the material submitted. If a correspondent had written about personal information in their questionnaire reply letter a sentence or two was added about these matters. Example of this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Question grouping- when questionnaires were drafted, the formatting took many different forms. Sometime the questions were spaced and numbered individually but frequently the question grouping technique was used where a number of questions, typically 3-7 were grouped together in paragraph form. These questions were typically on a related sub-topic to the main questionnaire topic. This term is being defined for this thesis.

Pre-Martinmas questionnaire(s)- the *Martinmas* questionnaire was issued in November 1939 and it is from this questionnaire that Ó Duilearga claimed the system became fully operational. The reasons behind this were complicated and will be discussed further on in the thesis. However, the term pre-Martinmas questionnaire(s) will be used throughout the thesis to refer to ALL questionnaires issued from 1936 to October 1939.

² The format that is typical for the writing on the actual folders is Comfhreagras Old-Time Dress (1940)

The following three types of questionnaires were issued from 1936 to 1945: Type A questionnaires, Type B questionnaires, and Type C questionnaires. What constitutes each of these questionnaires' classifications will be expanded here.

Type A questionnaire- issued in response to a request from a scholar for a questionnaire on a specific topic. Reply numbers and size of each reply were usually small to medium. These questionnaires did not typically enjoy a network-wide distribution.

Type B questionnaire- requested for the IFC archive to amass as much material as possible. The IFC hoped to use Type B material to build a folk-museum or contribute to a European wide folk atlas. Reply numbers and the size of each reply were usually large (300+). These questionnaires typically were distributed to all active correspondents.

Type C questionnaire- requested for the IFC archive for various, unique individual reasons. Reply numbers were low and the all the replies were short. A limited amount of information exists on these types of questionnaires in the archives and many of the topics are extremely specific. They will not be discussed in this thesis because their issuing warrants little comment here. However, a list of all the Type C questionnaires appears below because they must be noted.

The Type C Questionnaires (1936 and 1945):

- 1) (1936) *Currachs*
- 2) (1939) *'I am a Cake from Ballybake'*
- 3) (1942) *Man on the Moon*
- 4) (1942) *Snáth agus Éadach*
- 5) (1942) *Propheying through a hole in a hone or wood*
- 6) (1943) *Sacráil an Aifrinn*
- 7) (1943) *March Beer*
- 8) (1944) *Dubháin Ainmhidhe mar Bhiadh*

* The spelling of names is inconsistent and at times is clearly incorrect but this thesis follows the spelling as it appears in the documents.

How did the IFC issue a questionnaire?

Type A Questionnaire	Type B Questionnaire
↓	↓
Subject requested	Subject formulated by IFC
↓	↓
Correspondence between the Requester and the IFC head office -Filed under name of requester in NFC Correspondents drawer	↓
↓	↓
Questions drafted (the wording of questions)	
↓	↓
Questions checked with 'requester'	↓
↓	↓
Questions (with cover letter and/or intro. paragraph) sent out	
↓	
Replies and reply letters (sometimes containing personal information) received from correspondents	
↓	
IFC head office stamp showing date of received	
↓	
Thank you letters written by Ó Duilearga, Mac Neill, or Ó Súilleabháin to correspondents, sometimes referencing to specific points from the reply or points in the reply letter OR points about IFC head office/IFC projects. -Sent in language reply received in For a first time correspondent a new card is written up with their name and address for the IFC's correspondents' card index containing the names of all the people who ever wrote down anything for the IFC ³	
↓	
ALL replies back: filed in a pre-binding system	
↓	
When money and resources available at a later date- questionnaire replies and reply letters bound in (250-500) page green volumes. Organized by county => modern references from this	
Questionnaire Complete!	

Table 1: How to Issue a Questionnaire

³ O'Sullivan, 'The Work of the Irish Folklore Commission', p. 12. By 1974 this index included 2,800 names.

The chart on the previous page demonstrates in a clear and concise format how questionnaires were conceived of, drafted, distributed, collected on, sent back, and processed. Each of the steps will be expanded on below and their significance within the IFC history will be explained.

If correspondence survives between the IFC and the requester about why a specific questionnaire topic was chosen it is important to note. Frequently this type of documentation is not bound with the original questionnaire replies and highlighting it allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the material. In the case of the Type A questionnaires this type of documentation may explain why the questionnaire topic was chosen beyond the one-dimensional answer of ‘for a scholar’s research’. To give an example two questionnaires were issued for Irish physicians on folk medicine topics because investigating traditional cures was popular in Irish medical research at the time.⁴ A modern example of this is the NFC questionnaire on the 1916 Rising being issued ahead of the centenary when the topic is the focus of attention across many disciplines. Furthermore, the correspondence about the idea between the IFC and the requester can sometimes explain how the requester learned about the IFC’s work or how the IFC came across a folklife topic in need of further research. This background information is important for a researcher looking to use the collected material in a modern context.

Different Types of Questionnaire Formatting

It is important to note who drafted the questions for each questionnaire. The Type A questionnaires were often detailed and asked only a few carefully selected questions about a specific topic.

⁴ The *Cures for colds, nose, and throat ailments* questionnaire and the *Use of Mouldy Substances in Healing Septic Wounds* questionnaire is discussed in Chapter 5.

Example- *Lake and River Monsters:*

We have been asked by a German Professor for some information about Irish traditions of monsters inhabiting a lake; river, etc. Such traditions exist in abundance but what he particularly desires is information on the following two points :

- (a) Is such a monster described as having its tail in its mouth and lying in the shape of a ring ?
- (b) If it comes on dry land does it cause a flood or other disasters ?

I would be very grateful if you could send me information on these points within the next ten days. A sheet of foolscap is enclosed for your reply.

Figure 4: NFC 1379:130

Correspondents responded well to this formatting of questionnaires since the type of information the IFC was looking for was direct. The replies were often returned with the original labelling numbers.

Another formatting of questions that was regularly used with the Type B questionnaires was the 'question grouping' questions. This format favoured the more open-ended topics in view of the fact that related questions could be compiled together. Often the goal with this type of formatting was for the correspondent to write as much as possible about the word/subject.

Example- *The Feast of St. Brigid*:

2

Irish Folklore Commission. January, 1942

The Feast of St. Brigid

The Feast of St. Brigid is one of the most important festivals of the Irish year, and with both the Saint and her festival are associated a rich body of ancient custom and belief, prayer, proverb and legend. It is hoped that this questionnaire will help to remind you and the old people in your district of much of this important cultural and literary heritage and that this first systematic attempt to gather the lore of Brigid of the Goodwill may be successful. We rely upon you to do all that you can to record what is still available, and to send it to us as soon as it is convenient to you. *Winn an rath ar an mbheagan - Every little helps.*

-----000-----

1. Write down any traditional stories available locally which tell of incidents in St. Brigid's life. (a) Stories about St. Brigid and the Blessed Virgin. (b) Stories about St. Brigid's association with St. Patrick, Colmcille or other saints. (c) Miracles attributed to St. Brigid. Prayers to St. Brigid, or prayers in which the Saint is mentioned.
2. How was (is) the Feast of St. Brigid observed locally? (a) How was (is) the Eve (vigil) of the Feast observed? If a decorated figure (brideog) was (or is) carried in procession from house to house, describe the figure and the custom in as much detail as possible. What songs or rhymes were used on that occasion? Write down local stories and accounts of the procession. Is there any local explanation of the origin of the custom? Was a sheaf or a cake placed on the doorstep on St. Brigid's Eve? Why? Describe the ceremony. (b) How was (is) St. Brigid's Day observed locally? Did people work? Was work or action of a particular kind traditionally forbidden on that day? Why? Give details. Were special prayers said on the Feast or on its vigil? What were they?
3. Are crosses made locally at the Feast of St. Brigid? If so, describe how they are made, when, by whom, material used, where and how installed. Can you draw a sketch of St. Brigid's Crosses made locally or send a Cross to the Folklore Commission? Similarly for St. Brigid's ribbon, belt, (girdle, brice) and cloak (brat). Describe their use.
4. Write down any local lore about the following in so far as they are associated with the Feast of St. Brigid: (a) the weather; (b) the tides; (c) birds and animals; (d) agricultural work; (e) fishing; (f) prosperity and fertility. How was St. Brigid's Feast compared or related with other festivals. (e.g., St. Patrick's Day) in local tradition? Stories about this. Is St. Brigid associated in any way with cows or with milk?
5. Are any local wells, churches, or graveyards dedicated to St. Brigid? Does the name Brigid (or any form of it) occur in local place-names? Are girls named after the Saint in your district? What form does the name take locally (brigid, brice, brighid, brighde etc.)?

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Figure 5: NFC 899:2

The idea with the above format was that if a correspondent did not have an answer to one question, they might answer a similar question in the same group and therefore be able to 'answer' the questionnaire. The challenge for the IFC to overcome with this collecting system was maintaining hobby folklorists' interests in answering questionnaires. This format of drafting questions was overwhelming for many correspondents. Correspondents were reminded frequently that they were not expected to answer all the questions;

however, the correspondents could never fully grasp this concept. They wanted to highlight their area/region to the IFC, and many believed that a reply that did not answer all the questions looked sloppy or rude. As a result the questionnaires issued in this format received all or nothing replies.

The Estonian folklorist Professor Walter Anderson (University of Kiel, Germany) was the first European scholar to conduct a large-scale school scheme and it was from his project that the IFC were inspired to undertake their own. Anderson noted at the 1950 Indiana conference that questionnaires to be effective they needed to be ‘as simple and clear as the recipe in a cookbook.’⁵ It took the IFC ten years to come to this conclusion on their own.⁵ This formating of questionnaire was discontinued at the end of 1945 because the IFC realized that it was overwhelming and alienated correspondents.

A variation to the question groupings questionnaire format involved each question being approached from multiple angles and/or multiple eras.

⁵ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 60.

Example- *Concerning Death*

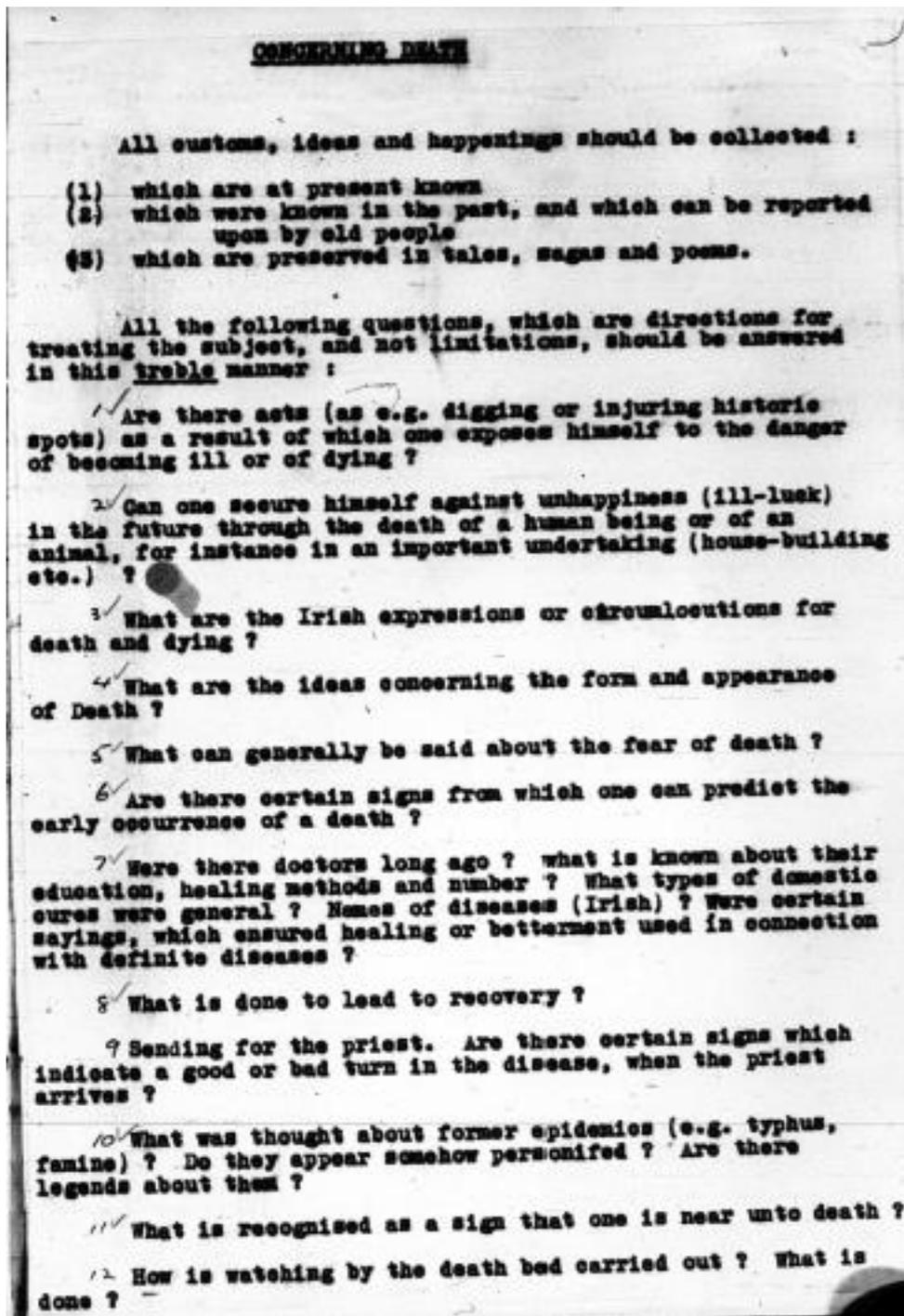


Figure 6: NFC 548:293

This further complicated the already too complex question groupings format. For many correspondents it was overwhelming to view each question from the different angles and/or different eras and this extra task contributed to the loss of some correspondents.

Terms

A third type of question formatting that was used from 1936 to 1945 was the statement question. Often time these questionnaires had only one question- have you heard of [insert questionnaire topic]? This format was typically used for Type C questionnaires but is worth noting.

Example- *'I am a Cake from Ballybake'*:

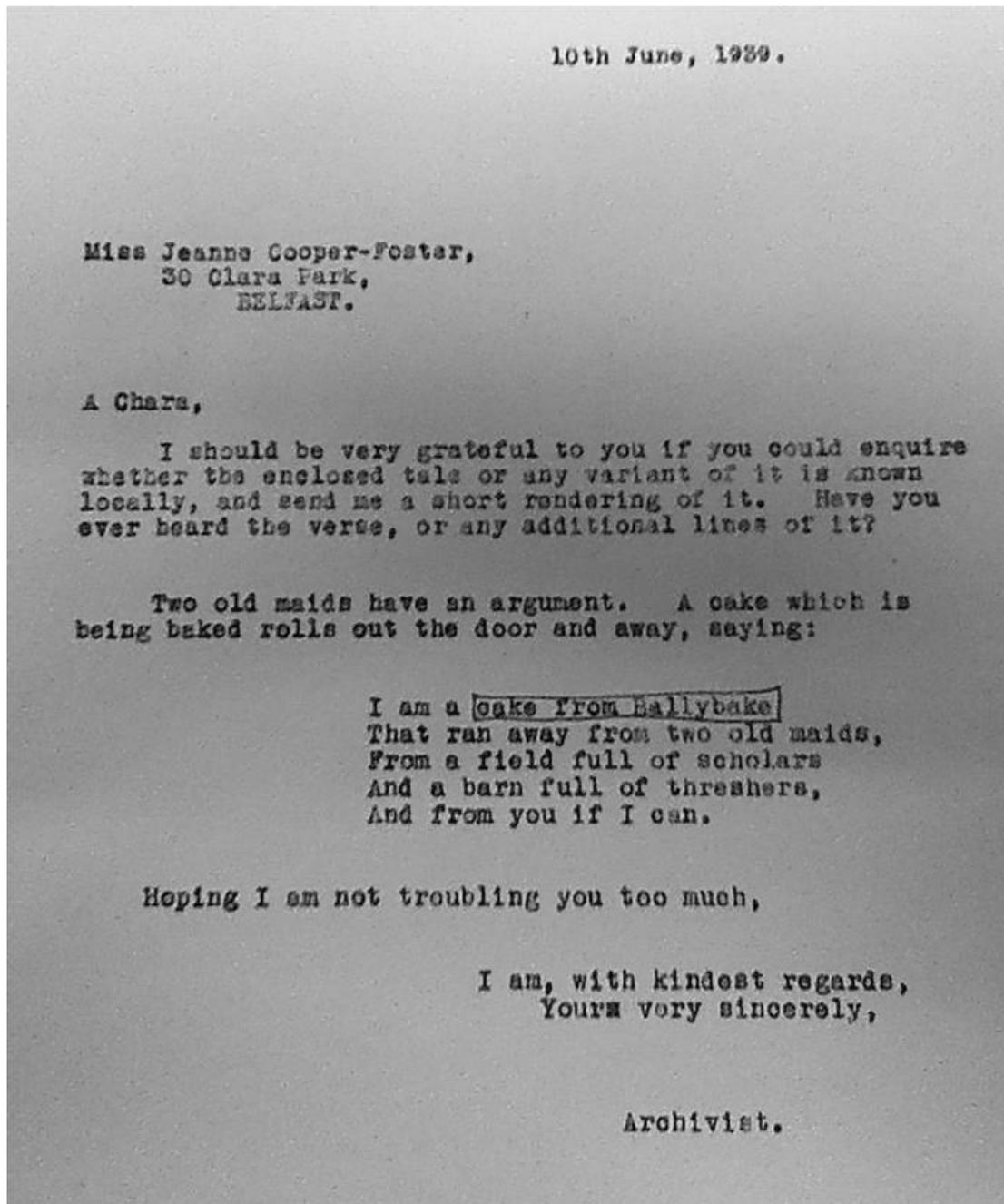


Figure 7: NFC Correspondence Files, I am a Cake from Ballybake Questionnaire

Terms

Frequently this format was used when the IFC was checking to see if a folk custom printed in an antiquarian book was still practiced. This type of questionnaire was easy answered for it usually required a 'Yes/Tá' or 'No/Níl' answer with a limited amount of further explanation. Again correspondents reacted positively to being able to answer the questionnaire quickly.

The last type of question formatting was the joint-issued questionnaire. This was when two different questionnaires were issued on the same page. It was done during the Emergency to save paper and to give correspondents the option to collect on the topic of their choosing, or both topics. The joint-issued questionnaires from 1936 to 1945 were *The Childhood Bogeys & the Local Patron Saint*, *The Names of the Fingers & A Game*, *Cock's Crow at Christmas & Traditional Music*.

Example- The Childhood Bogeys & the Local Patron Saint

Irish Folklore Commission January, 1943.

3

THE LOCAL PATRON SAINT

1. Give the local form(s) of the name of the traditional patron saint(s) of your district. How is the saint associated with the place (e.g. birthplace, burial place, foundation of church etc.)? If the saint was not a native of Ireland, is there any tradition to account for his (her) connection with the district?
2. Are there any local places (churches, holy wells, graves, graveyards, Mass-paths, roads, lakes, rivers, mountains etc.) or objects (relics) associated with the saint? How is each associated with him (her)?
3. On what date is the saint commemorated locally?
4. What form does the commemoration take (pattern, pilgrimage, fair, cessation from servile work, special prayers said, objects made in memory of the saint, special food eaten, certain customs observed, fasting etc.)?
5. Are there any local traditions (story, prophecy, miracle, curae, blessing, prayer, custom, superstition) associated with the saint? Were oaths taken on relic of saint, or was the saint's name mentioned in oaths, e.g. Dár Pádraig?
6. Are there any traditional sayings about the saint or the feast, e.g. weather, prognostication?
7. Is (was) the saint's name given to local children in baptism? If so, what form does (did) the name take? Is the giving of the local saint's name in baptism an old custom, or has it started only recently?

-----OO-----

CHILDHOOD BOGEYS

1. Is any bogey mentioned in your district as a threat to children:
 - (a) When they are naughty?
 - (b) To prevent them going to dangerous places (wells, lofts, etc.)?
 - (c) To prevent them interfering with animals, crops, or tools?
 - (d) To get them in before dark?
 - (e) To induce them to sleep?
 Is the same bogey used in all these cases? Name(s)? How is (are) the threat(s) worded?
2. Is the bogey supposed to have a particular dwelling-place? Where? Are there any other traditions extant about it, apart from its being a children's bogey, or to account for its being chosen as one?
3. Are living persons ever mentioned as bogeys? Who? Why?
4. Is (are) the same bogey(s) used nowadays as in the childhood of older people? If not, please answer all questions for both bogeys of former times and those of today.

(Examples: An Bobogha, Baw Mag, Bogeysman, Boodyman, An Páca, Níleóg, Cailleach na bhFiacla Fada, Johnny Nod, the Sandman, Seán Dearg, Rawley, Moll Sha'nessy, Sir Felim O'Neill, Wee Popes, The Fenians etc.)

-----OO-----

Figure 8: NFC 945:3

The IFC intended to give more options to the correspondents with the joint issue questionnaire, but in practice it overwhelmed many of them. Most wrote

back apologising for not answering all the question groupings. Furthermore, many correspondents took many months to reply. This was not ideal for the IFC.

In the pre-*Martinmas* years a copy of the questionnaire was typically sent to the correspondents in the language they could write competently in. Correspondents who spoke Irish, and could write proficiently in the language were sent Irish language copies, and everyone else was sent English language copies. In the post-*Martinmas* questionnaire period the Irish and English questions were printed and circulated on the same sheet. Again this was a measure taken to cut down on paper usage.

Along with the different types of questions a cover letter was sent. This was addressed to the correspondent directly or had a generic cover message. The cover letter included information about how the IFC's work was of national importance, the development of the questionnaire system, and sometimes some basic facts about the questionnaire being issued. The introduction paragraph was usually in Irish followed by an English main body. They were almost always signed at the bottom by Ó Duilearga. Not all questionnaires had a cover letter. They were typically included with Type B questionnaires and a select number of Type A questionnaires. The cover letters for the different questionnaires are noteworthy because in them the IFC conveyed to its correspondents the main goals of the Commission.

A final noteworthy point about the formatting of questionnaires was summed up by Ó Súilleabháin at the MIFC (1950), 'We send each one of our correspondents... blank paper, gummed slips, and a copy of the questionnaire, and a stamped envelope for the return of what they write down.' 'Now that questionnaire system has worked successfully [as of 1950]. As I say, we follow a kind of definite plan.'⁶

Once all the replies to a particular questionnaire were received by the IFC they were bound in separate volumes, but were still part of the main manuscript collection.⁷ If a questionnaire received many replies they were

⁶ Even though Ó Súilleabháin was writing in 1950 the same held true for the system in the 1940s. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Terms

bound in their own volume (example: *Martinmas*). For the shorter questionnaires the replies to two or more questionnaires were bound together. They were typically organized based on county.

Chapter 2

Folklife Studies in Europe & North America: 1600-1928

‘*Ón áird tuaidh tig an chabhair!* ‘*From the North help comes!*’ But for the never-failing encouragement of Reidar Christiansen of Oslo, Wilhelm von Sydow of Lund and Åke Campbell of Uppsala, the efforts of the few to collect the oral tradition of Ireland would have been of little avail,’ wrote Séamus Ó Duilearga in ‘A Personal Tribute to Reidar Thorolf Christiansen (1886-1971)’ in the 1969-1970 issue of *Béaloides*.¹ Ó Duilearga sought to highlight to those reading the tribute, the enormous assistance that these Nordic scholars gave to the IFC. Irish based ethnology projects, like the IFC questionnaire system, would never have happened without the interest and assistance of Åke Campbell. Without all these men the National Folklore Collection would not exist today and hence one of Ó Duilearga’s most famous quotes ‘*Ón áird tuaidh tig an chabhair!*’

This chapter will focus on the history of ethnology and the questionnaire system as a folk-culture collecting tool in Europe and North America, up until its introduction to Ireland in the 1930s. It will specifically focus on the use of questionnaire in Sweden and the other Nordic countries. Máire MacNeill noted in 1940: ‘Sweden, ... is the country with which the Irish Folklore Commission has had the closest connections.’² Furthermore, Sweden had the greatest influence on the Irish folklife collecting institutions and organizations. This chapter will examine the origins of the questionnaire system in the Nordic countries in the seventeenth century. Next it will discuss how, in the eighteenth century, Sweden like other large nations, began to consolidate and rulers sought to legitimize their nation’s cultural superiority by collecting and registering ‘popular antiquities.’ This concept was revived again in the nineteenth century when countries such as France, Italy, and the United States carried out similar collecting projects. In the Nordic countries

¹ Séamus Ó Duilearga, ‘A Personal Tribute Reidar Thorolf Christiansen (1886-1971) Professor of Folklore, University of Oslo’ in *Béaloides*, vol. 37-38 (1969-1970), p. 347.

² NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 12.

the foundation of the *Nordiska Museet*, and the outdoor folklife museum Skansen, had a monumental impact on folk studies. However, the first large-scale systematic folklore questionnaire research project in Europe was not undertaken until the twentieth century. Some of the elements that contributed toward the Swedes successful folklife questionnaire system will be discussed in the Swedish context. These elements include how the questionnaires were composed and distributed, who was requesting questionnaire information, the role of the museums, the correspondents, and school collection schemes. The use of the material when it was collected will also be discussed. Throughout, the most influential Nordic folklorists of the early twentieth century will be introduced with their respective projects and publications. Background knowledge on these key players allows for a discussion of how and why many of these scholars took an interest in Irish folk studies. The chapter will conclude with a brief summary of Ó Duilearga's research trip to Northern Europe in 1928, where he first encountered ethnology and the various questionnaire systems.³

Early Folklife Studies

Professor and Royal Archivist Johannes Messenius was one of the first to send out a questionnaire for the purpose of collecting folk material in Finland in the 1620s. The ethnologist Ernst Manker believes that Messenius drafted the 'questions after [closely studying] the famous *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* by Olaus Magnus,' (1555).⁴ The questions covered the subject of the Lapp people⁵ living in the Kemi district of Finland. The questionnaire received replies from M. Mansuetus J. Fellman a Finnish-Swedish clergyman. Although Manker admits that these 'cannot be considered products of a systematic research,' it demonstrated the beginnings

³ Due to the researcher's limited knowledge of languages this chapter will only cite works published in English. Publications on this topic, in other languages, exist; however, it is being argued here that many of the most important points about questionnaires and folklore are included in the English language publications. This chapter is meant to be a summary overview and not discuss all cases of folklore questionnaires before the 1930s.

⁴ This work was printed in Rome in 1555 and was considered the authoritative work on Swedish matters at the time. It was translated into many other European languages.

⁵ The Lapps people prefer the modern word Sami to self-identify.

of what would evolve into the modern day use of questionnaires in folk culture research.⁶

However, Messenius's questionnaire is only cited in Manker's article and most historians, folklorists, and ethnologists conclude that the first folklife questionnaire was issued in 1630.⁷ It was then that King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden ordered the clergy to collect on folk culture topics by means of questionnaire. The questionnaire had nineteen questions and covered topics such as, 'folk literature, popular beliefs, customs, folk music' etc.⁸

By the end of the seventeenth century the Swedes had developed a sense of cultural, national assurance that was rooted in a belief that they were descendants of the "mighty" Goths. This led to a movement, which is referred to in English as Gothicism.⁹ King Gustav Adolph II was quoted as saying, 'our forefathers have not been barbarians, as foreigners want to call us,' in traditional Gothic fashion.¹⁰ This movement led to the establishment of folk cultural institutions such as the State Antiquarian Archives (1603) and the Collegium of Antiquities (1666) in Stockholm.

According to the Swedish specialist in religion Åke Hultkrantz, one of the main reasons that questionnaires were used from 1650 to 1730 was to solicit information about folk traditions. Sweden arose as one of the great powers in Northern Europe, and it sought to 'assert its cultural position' by registering its 'popular antiquities'. The collected material was then displayed and published to demonstrate how culturally superior Sweden was at the time. This intellection was not unique to Sweden. Enlightenment philosophers 'saw culture as the definitive mark of the human species.' It was during this period that Jean-Jacques Rousseau first, 'made a clear distinction between what

⁶ Ernst Manker, 'Swedish Contributions to Lapp Ethnography' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 82, no. 1, (1952), p. 39

⁷ This date seems to be disputed. It is also mentioned in Ó Súilleabháin's article that 'When the Swedish king, Gustavus Adolphus, setting out from Sweden in 1630 to conduct the war against Germany, he issued an order that immediate steps be taken for the preservation of certain facets of the cultural heritage of his people which were in danger of being lost...' This is not cited in any other articles. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Folk-Museums in Scandinavia' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. LXXV (1945), p. 64.

⁸ Carl-Herman Tillhagen, 'Reality and Folklore Research' in *Béaloides*, vol. 39-41 (1971-73), p. 336.

⁹ *Göticism* in Sweden.

¹⁰ Cited by: Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 36.

would later be called the ethnologist on the one hand and the historian and the moralist on the other...' Rousseau was particularly taken with the 'myth of the primitive' that was popular in contemporary scholarship. Through his writings the idea spread to other parts of Europe.¹¹

Additionally, this was a 'period of the most intense missionary activities in Lapland.'¹² The Chancellor of Sweden commissioned a group of clergymen to record Lappish customs, particularly their religion and methods of combating their native harsh environment. This information was then used to convert the Sami to Christianity.¹³ A similar phenomenon occurred in France when according to historian Charles Rearick:

In 1790, a member of the National Assembly, Grégoire, sent out a questionnaire on the *patois* and *moeurs* of regions in France. Later as a member of the Convention, he spearheaded the effort to eliminate *patois* in order to unify the French nation, but before taking that step he had sought knowledge of the dialects and cultures to be destroyed. The responses to his letter abound in valuable examples of regional proverbs, popular poems, songs, and fables.¹⁴

This intense religious fervour eradicated certain aspects of folk culture; however, it meant detailed descriptions of traditional practices survived that might have faded away with the passage of time otherwise.

Nineteenth century Interest in Folklife

The end of the age of Enlightenment ushered in the Romantic era in European thinking. The late eighteenth century up until the middle of the nineteenth century saw a dramatic shift in how the study of folklife was viewed by Continental Europeans. According to Rearick, 'When educated Europeans began to try to understand and preserve popular traditions instead of ignoring or attacking them, they opened up a vast area of man's cultural world to scholarly study.'¹⁵ Rearick goes on to highlight how 'one of the

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 18-22.

¹² Åke Hultkrantz, 'Swedish Research on the Religion and Folklore of the Lapps' in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. 85, no. 1/2, (1955), p. 82.

¹³ Ernst Manker, 'Swedish Contributions to Lapp Ethnography' in Ibid., vol. 82, no. 1, (1952), p. 39

¹⁴ Charles Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment: historians and folklore in the nineteenth-century France* (Bloomington; London: Indiana UP, 1974), p. 6.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

important discoveries of the period [in France]: [was] that the popular imagination [i.e. folk-culture] was at the root of literature, law, religion, historiography, and even institutional development.’¹⁶

The Romantic era philosophers were horrified by the ramifications that the Industrial Revolution had on their society. Historian Peter Burke discusses how by 1800:

The upper classes in Europe had withdrawn from popular culture, leaving it to the lower classes... This withdrawal from popular culture was a result of the demand for a learned clergy made by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and of the new aristocratic interest in refinement since the Renaissance...¹⁷

This was the period when antiquarian studies took on its modern negative connotations of the educated upper class studying the less educated lower class. Historian Eugen Weber explains why this shift in cultural traditions was so monumental:

Traditional attitudes and traditional practices crumbled, but they had done so before. What happened after 1880 was that they were not replaced by new ones spun out of the experience of local community. The decay and abandonment of words, ceremonies, and patterns of behavior were scarcely new. What was new and startling, said [André] Varagnac [the French ethnologist], was the absence of homemade replacements: the death of tradition itself.¹⁸

The industrialization of the Romantics’ world meant that the concepts of folklore and folklife were for the first time limited to rural areas. To the Romantics the expanding urban sprawl was cold, heartless, and devoid of any original culture. In their view, the new proletariat were consumed by work and they were unable to revive or create a new ‘pure’ urban culture. The countryside was the only place that the ‘nationally unique’ culture could still be identified. Particularly in relation to the study of folk culture, the mass production of cheap goods in urban areas meant that traditional homemade crafts were replaced.

Romanticism also had links to the political climate in many European countries. In Germany, Romanticism and the idealization of the Golden

¹⁶ Rearick, *Beyond the Enlightenment*, p. 3.

¹⁷ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 10, Citing Peter Burke, ‘Popular Culture and Social Change’ in Peter Burke (ed.) *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1994), pp. 270-271.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 12 citing Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1977), p. 471.

German Age, was a reaction to French expansion into German territory. For larger European countries, glorifying former times was a way to shape a connection with the ‘glorious feudal past.’ For the smaller nations, like Ireland and Estonia, the past became synonymous with freedom.¹⁹ For more on the Romantic Period in Ireland see Chapter 3.

The Romantic Movement was also popular in Sweden. In the early-nineteenth century Sweden industrialised and many Swedes moved into larger urban areas. Large crop failures in the 1860s also resulted in over 100,000 Swedes emigrating to America. The Swede Artur Hazelius, who was trained in Scandinavian languages, took notice of this rapid change in rural Swedish society. He decided to found the *Nordiska Museet* “Nordic Museum” in 1873. Before the opening of the *Nordiska Museet*, Swedish museums typically ‘assembled works of art, trophies, curiosities and archaeology. The great thing about Hazelius’ new museum was that he collected items to do with ordinary people.’²⁰ Furthermore, the museum was unique because it was meant to be assessable to all Swedes and was open year round. The *Nordiska Museet* was designed to highlight to the world, various aspects of the cultural history and ethnology of Sweden.²¹ The museums covered the period from the Early Modern age onwards.²² It contained donated folk objects such as ‘furniture, clothes, toys etc. from all over Sweden and other Nordic countries.’ Both museums were established through private funding and donations. Soon the collections at the *Nordiska Museet* became too large for the original space. Hazelius persuaded the crown to make land available on one of the larger islands of Stockholm for a new location.²³ The new building was completed in 1907. On the same site the open-air museum Skansen was founded in 1891. Hazelius moved original buildings from various parts of Sweden and Norway to his site in Stockholm. One German author noted in 1897 that Hazelius had managed to create ‘a living Pompeii’ of Swedish

¹⁹ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 78.

²⁰ Sten Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums: the history and future of a visionary idea*, trans. Skans Victoria Airey (Carlssons: Jamtle, 2007), p. 4.

²¹ The *Nordiska Museet* was originally established under the name *Skandinavisk-etnografiska Samlingen* Scandinavian-Ethnographic Collection.

²² In Swedish history this period began in 1520.

²³ Djurgården

culture.²⁴ With the original buildings safely moved to their new location Hazelius was able to:

Fully implement the idea from the displays in the museum, so as to “show household goods in the actual houses,” “whole folklife scenes should be shown, whereby a living impression might be gained of the character and customs of the population.” The role of the objects in the houses was the same as before they arrived there. “It would seem almost as if one had crept in, while the people in the house had gone out for a moment,” “that the poor inhabitants of the stone cottage were only away for the moment doing a hard day’s work.”²⁵

Skansen became the model open-air folk museum. Many European countries had previously built folk villages for European world fairs and various other folk festivals. However, Skansen was revolutionary for its size and permanency. Hazelius worked hard to make sure that at his museum ‘the connection between the natural conditions of an area and the character and attitude of the population was right.’²⁶

The Skansen model for open-air museums was so popular it was copied by other European nations not long after to promote the same ideals of nation building. In 1932 the Riga Museum opened and in 1936 The Museum of the Village, Romania was founded with actual peasants living in the buildings.²⁷ Germany’s Nazi government sponsored the creation of the *Museumsdorf Cloppenburg* in North-west Germany in 1936.²⁸ In the United States the first open-air museum was founded in the 1930s in Dearborn, Michigan. It was sponsored by Henry Ford and was named the Greenfield Village.²⁹

The styling of open-air museums underwent radical changes with the opening of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia in 1932. Expanding upon the Skansen model the vision was to preserve the whole town. Most of existing architecture was from the early eighteenth century and was still inhabited. Nonetheless, with the financial backing of John D. Rockefeller Jr. the project went ahead and buildings were purchased. The project was expensive but

²⁴ Rentzhog, *Open Air Museums*, p. 5.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-113.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 124-130.

hugely successful.³⁰ In the post-war period the open-air folk museum dramatically shaped the way that Europeans and Americans perceived their country's ethnology.

In 1875 the *Skånska Landsmålsföreningen* "Dialect Association" was founded in Lund to collect information on dialects and placenames. In 1930 it acquired annual state funding and was renamed *Landsmålsarkivet*.³¹ In the 1890s local informants replied to questionnaires about dialects, place-names, folk material, and some folk music for the association.³² The questionnaires were sent out to nearly 1,000 distinct Swedish locations. One informant in each region, to avoid confusion over dialect differences, filled in a questionnaire.³³ Furthermore in 1817, the Swedish clergyman and historian Johan Wallman issued a questionnaire on children's games.³⁴

In the nineteenth century France was also interested in asserting its cultural superiority in the wake of the Napoleonic conquests. The *Académie Celtique*,³⁵ with the assistance of the government, issued a folk culture questionnaire in 1807. The questionnaire, 'was designed to uncover and collect the surviving beliefs, poetry, customs and philosophy of their ancestors.' It was sent to the personnel of each *département* (administrative division) in France.³⁶ The topics or themes of these questionnaires were similar to the Swedish equivalents.³⁷ A more centralized French nation was emphasizing its cultural superiority by recording their 'Celtic' past.³⁸ The individuals who worked on this project sought to rediscover the ancient and almost forgotten traditions of the French Celts by studying the beliefs of those

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 135-151.

³¹ Country Grain Archives. Manker, 'Swedish Contributions to Lapp Ethnography', p. 122.

³² Gun Herranen and Lassi Saressalo, *A Guide to Nordic Tradition Archives: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden* (Turku: Nordic Institute of Folklore, 1978), pp. 122-123.

³³ Folke Hedblom, 'Methods and Organization of Dialect and Folklore Research in Sweden' in *Oral History*, vol. 2, no. 2, (1974), p. 44.

³⁴ Tillhagen, 'Reality and Folklore Research', p. 336.

³⁵ The *Académie Celtique* was founded in 1804.

³⁶ Harry Senn, 'Folklore Beginnings in France, The Académie Celtique: 1804-1813' in *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, vol. 18, no. 1, (1981), p. 26.

³⁷ They are also similar to the questions in Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*. Like the *Irish Handbook* in later years, these questionnaires were published in a single volume titled *Mémoires*. Ó Giolláin gives a sample of translated questions from *Mémoires*. One of the customs of picking herbs at midnight on St John's Eve because they are said to have 'supernatural properties' is also mentioned in Ó Súilleabháin and Society, *A Handbook*, , p. 339. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 39.

³⁸ Senn, 'Folklore Beginnings in France', p. 24.

living on the ‘fringes’ of society, the ‘folk’ of France.³⁹ This French interest in Celticism continued into the twentieth century when Breton folklore was collected and compared to Irish folklore.

In an article published in 1936 Ó Duilearga mentioned what he saw as some of the most important areas of French folk studies, attempting to convince students of Irish literary, social, and economic history that oral tradition was an “untapped source” for scholarship.⁴⁰ He mentioned the linguistic study that was undertaken in France between 1897 and 1900 that utilized the question-survey method to obtain information from informants all over France. According to Ó Duilearga, this information was later used to produce *L’Atlas Linguistique de la France*. Atlases that included information about folk culture were published in many of the larger European countries around the turn of the twentieth century. They were typically nationalist pieces intended to show off the more interesting or unique elements of a region of a large country’s culture. The publishing of such Atlases also allowed other countries’ folklorists and ethnologists to compare certain traditions with those of their own nation.

France and Sweden were not the only nations that developed a more scientific interest in folk studies in the nineteenth century. Many international folklore societies were formed in the early nineteenth century. In 1831 The Finnish Literature Society was founded in Helsinki ‘on the initiative of 12 young scholars and university teachers’ who were interested in collecting folk culture material.⁴¹ In 1838 The Estonian Learned Society was founded at the University of Tartu with the intension to study Estonia’s history, literature, language, and folklore. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. However, it is worth noting that in England the Folk-Lore Society was founded in 1878 in London to study English oral lore.⁴² The British, during this period, were interested in gathering information on the British Empire and particularly Ireland.

³⁹ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, pp.39-41.

⁴⁰ The article was the published version of a lecture that Ó Duilearga gave on 10 March 1936 at the Inaugural Meeting of the UCD Historical Society. The article will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4. Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'An Untapped Source of Irish History' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 99, (1936), pp. 399-412.

⁴¹ Herranen and Saessalo, *A Guide to Nordic Tradition*, p. 32.

⁴² Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 47.

In the United States the Bureau of Indian Affairs, under the direction of Henry R. Schoolcraft, issued the first comprehensive systematic questionnaire on a folklife topic in 1847.⁴³ A forty-folio page questionnaire, containing 347 groups of questions was distributed ‘to collect and digest such statistics and materials as may illustrate the history, the present condition, and future prospects of the Indian tribes of the United States.’⁴⁴ This type of questionnaire had a similar political agenda to many of the earlier folklife projects in other countries. The US government recorded information on Native Americans to preserve what they saw as a dying traditional way of life. Furthermore, they hoped the information would help them to better ‘manage’ a ‘problematic’ Native American population through ‘cultural understanding’.

The IFC head staff, by the mid-1930s, were aware of all the major folklife research projects and museum designs in continental Europe and the United States.⁴⁵

Twentieth century

At the end of the nineteenth century, folk studies in the larger nations of Europe that had long-established national languages, such as Britain and France, took less of an interest in their own folk culture. According to Ó Giolláin this was partially the result of their colonial conquests. The focus in these nations was anthropological studies about their newly acquired lands. Countries like Norway and Sweden did not have large colonies on other continents and chose to continue to study the distinct regions of their own country.⁴⁶

In 1914 the *Norsk Folkeminnnesamling* (Norwegian Folklore Institute) was founded at the University of Oslo. Its earliest collections were materials

⁴³ Tillhagen, 'Reality and Folklore Research', pp. 336-337. These findings of these questionnaires are compiled in H.R. Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, 1851), 525-568, which is available for viewing online.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁴⁵ Séamus Ó Duilearga, 'An Untapped Source of Irish History' in *Studies: An Irish Quarterly*, vol. 25, no. 99, (1936), pp. 399-412.

⁴⁶ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 49.

from three famous Norwegian folklorists but it expanded through more extensive fieldwork in the 1920s and 1930s.⁴⁷ In 1920 Reidar Th. Christiansen was appointed archivist. Christiansen was born in Norway in 1886 and taught in high schools for a number of years before taking an interest in folklore under the direction of Moltke Moe. He then travelled to Finland, Denmark, Germany, and Sweden to acquaint himself with the various folklore archives in the other Northern European countries. In 1920 he travelled to Ireland for the first time and went to Ballyferriter, Co. Kerry to learn Irish so that he could pursue his 'research into the inter-relations of the Gaedhil and the Gaill in the encounter of two very different cultures during and after the Viking Wars.'⁴⁸ Before leaving for this Irish trip he studied the Irish language under the Norwegian linguist Carl Marstrander in Norway.

Carl Wilhelm von Sydow

In Sweden the folklorist Carl Wilhelm von Sydow and ethnologist Tobias Norlind founded a folklore archive at the University of Lund in 1913. Von Sydow was born in Småland in 1878 and completed his PhD at the University of Lund in 1909. He financed his studies by teaching at Folk High Schools. In 1910 he was appointed associate professor of Scandinavian and Comparative Folklore Research.⁴⁹ In 1919 he published, his magnum opus, *Våra Folkminnen* "Our Folk Memories." It was a detailed collection of systematically constructed questionnaires. It covered an extensive array of subjects, but was still small enough to be distributed widely and easily carried into the field for collecting. It was distributed to certain schools and collectors.⁵⁰

Von Sydow became interested in Ireland in 1909 while studying Norse motifs that corresponded to references in Irish literature. He learned some Irish from Norwegian linguist Carl Marstrander when in Oslo in 1918. In June 1920 he visited Ireland for the first time. He met with Christiansen on

⁴⁷ The three folklorists were: Magnus Brostrup Landstad, Sophus Bugge, and Moltke Moe.

⁴⁸ Ó Duilearga, 'A Personal Tribute Reidar Thorolf Christiansen (1886-1971)', p. 345.

⁴⁹ Nils-Arvid Bringéus, *Carl Wilhelm von Sydow: a Swedish Pioneer in Folklore*, trans. John Irons (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 2009), pp. 9-89.

⁵⁰ Carl-Herman Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden' in *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, vol. 1, no. 1/2, (1964), p. 28.

arrival. The Norwegian folklorist gave him travel and research suggestions. Thus he headed to Ballyferriter to learn Irish. On this trip he also studied at Coláiste na Mumhan in Ballingearry, Co. Cork. In August 1920 he took his first trip to the Great Blasket Island. In 1921 the Lund archive changed its name to the Institute of European Ethnology and Folklore with von Sydow as its director.⁵¹

Von Sydow's second visit to Ireland was noted in the national newspapers of Ireland. His presence and study further showed how interested Irish academics were in hosting foreign scholars; particularly foreign scholars who had an interest in the Irish language and other Irish cultural matters. Furthermore, these types of visits were apparently interesting to the general public who read newspapers. In 1924 one newspaper article noted that von Sydow was a '... Professor of Folklore and Traditional Culture in Lund University, Sweden,' and that he was in Ireland 'to gather up Irish folklore and Irish cultural traditions.' He was noted as being 'one of the best-known authorities on folklore in the world.' He received a first-class welcome from the Chief Executive Officer of the National Education Office, Pádraic Ó Broilcháin and Deputy Chief Inspector, Séamus Ó Fiannachta. He visited many Irish language schools in Dublin and gave an address, which discussed traditional culture and folklore. The newspaper further reported that he specifically 'pointed out that real national culture in countries such as Ireland and Scandinavia was preserved by the common people of the country,' and that 'the life of the people, or as it is called, "peasant life," is important because it is so national. Books often give us scraps only; the peasant culture is living.'⁵² Von Sydow argued strongly that Irish traditional culture was distinct.⁵³ All of this was meant to flatter the Irish audience and the Irish readership.⁵⁴ As a renowned international scholar his comments were an ego boost for the Irish after negative British press coverage of Ireland during the

⁵¹ Herranen and Saessalo, *A Guide to Nordic Tradition*, p. 124.

⁵² *The Irish Times*, 25 June 1924. Von Sydow's visit was also noted in the *Anglo-Celt*, *Connacht Tribune*, *Connaught Telegraph*, *Freemans Journal*, *Irish Independent*, *Kerryman*.

⁵³ He did this through the numerous lectures he gave in Ireland and abroad.

⁵⁴ He discussed these tactics with Ó Duilearga in correspondence. Ó Duilearga supported these ideas because he knew that they would help him obtain the government funding he needed to establish a folklore commission.

recent violent struggle for independence. He returned to Lund and had learned enough Irish to teach classes at Lund for the academic year 1924. He returned to Ireland again in 1924.⁵⁵

Lund was not the first Swedish government funded folklore collecting archive. In 1914, the *Landsmålsarkivet*, which means “Dialect Archive” in Swedish, was established in Uppsala. The main focus of this archive was to investigate the various Swedish Dialects but ‘the Institute also collected considerable amounts of material related to folk traditions and ethnology.’⁵⁶ Ó Duilearga noted in his 1928 records on various Nordic cultural institutions that it was initially given Kr. 7,500 annually but that funding increased to Kr 28,650 by 1926.⁵⁷ The Swedish government, from the early twentieth century was willing to invest in scientific folk studies.

In 1928, the Nordic Museum began using questionnaires or *frågelistan* to further enhance what was being collected through field research. According to folklorists Gun Herranen and Lassi Saressalo, ‘The collection of folklore material through questionnaires reached its height in the 1940s [in the Nordic countries].’⁵⁸

By the early twentieth century the Swedes, unlike many other nations, had firmly established the field of ethnology, which they defined as ‘the study of folk and popular culture with folklore as a specialization within it.’⁵⁹ This developed understanding of the field would have a monumental impact on the direction that Irish folk studies took. Many other nations at the time still struggled with defining the different areas of folk culture. Including folklore as an aspect in a wider cultural study meant that Swedish researchers could and did draw from different disciplines.

As a young undergraduate Ó Duilearga first met Christiansen in a Dublin bookshop in 1921. The two corresponded afterwards about various Irish language and folklore matters. In 1925 Ó Duilearga wrote to him asking for his professional assistance with founding a folklore society in Ireland.

⁵⁵ Bringéus, *Carl Wilhelm von Sydow: a Swedish Pioneer in Folklore*, pp. 162-177.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁵⁷ Delargy estimated at the time (1928) that the second amount was worth £1600. Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 247.

⁵⁸ Herranen and Saressalo, *A Guide to Nordic Tradition*, p. 135

⁵⁹ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 48.

Christiansen does not appear to have written back this time and the first attempt at forming a society was unsuccessful. In 1926 a second attempt at establishing a society was made and Ó Duilearga was able to contact Christiansen. He was helpful and even wrote a letter for Ó Duilearga to read out at the first preliminary meeting in 1926. It dealt with how folklore collecting was organized in Norway. Christiansen also published an article in the weekly Irish newspaper *The Irish Statesman*.⁶⁰ The newspaper, which had a readership amongst Irish academics and other intellectuals, raised awareness of foreign interest in Irish folklore.

Christiansen also published an article in the first issue of *Béaloides*, further bolstering the academic reputation of the new journal. In July 1927 'An Seabhac'⁶¹ introduced Ó Duilearga to a specific Nordic scholar who eventually grew to be 'like a father' to him, von Sydow.⁶² The two met at the second of Christiansen's two UCD sponsored lectures, after which Von Sydow was invited back to Lily Delargy's home for tea.⁶³ They met a 'number of times' again while von Sydow was in Ireland. Briody notes, 'If Ó Duilearga "was a helper looking for a master", as Irish folktales phrase it, von Sydow was "a master looking for a helper."' After that meeting they assisted each other in scholarship and through friendship.⁶⁴

Christiansen's first UCD lecture discussed the collection of Irish folklife but noted that little had been collected. In the second lecture he argued how folklore needed to be viewed as a serious research topic in Ireland and how it could be 'used as a source, in the same sense as old documents and chronicles from which our knowledge of history of mankind is drawn,' because to Christiansen:

⁶⁰ Christiansen, Reidar Thorolf, 'A Plea for Popular Tradition' in *The Irish Statesman*, (8 January 1927) vol. 7, no. 18, pp. 433-434. Christiansen, Reidar Thorolf, 'Irish Popular Tradition' in *The Irish Statesman*, (23 April 1927) vol. 8, no. 7, pp. 162-164. Christiansen, Reidar Thorolf, 'The Centre of Popular Traditions' in *The Irish Statesman*, (18 June 1927) vol. 8, no. 15, pp. 355-358.

⁶¹ Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha

⁶² J. H. Delargy to J. A. Delargy (4 May 1928) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 156-158.

⁶³ Lily Delargy was Ó Duilearga's mother. The lectures were held on 28 June and 1 July 1927. Ó Duilearga arranged both of these lectures. Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 14, 18, & 334. Ó Catháin cites "Delargy Papers (Diary)" but does not give the reader a date for the entry of this information about the post-talk tea.

⁶⁴ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 87.

Folklore is international as few other things in the world, and I believe that its deepest value is to be found here. It is a link with the past in a deeper sense even than old documents and archaeological remains, leading us in fact not to the empty shell of what was alive, but to the innermost mind of man.⁶⁵

Both of these lectures were well advertised in advanced and the content was afterwards covered in the newspapers.

Von Sydow also gave a series of lectures in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick around the same time.⁶⁶ He delivered the lectures through Irish (his first time doing so) and he discussed the Indo-European common folklore source theory, pointing out that Irish folktales were unique, in his opinion, as they were ‘completely clear of any track or trace of influence from any of those countries.’ He then moved on to explain the origins of the Fenian tales and how pleased he was with the establishment of the FIS.⁶⁷

Reidar Th. Christiansen and Carl Wilhelm von Sydow had an interest in Ireland because of the place they believed Ireland held in international comparative folk studies, a popular approach to folklore studies in Europe in the 1930s. This emphasised the Indo-European origins of Irish folklore. *Märchen* is defined as, ‘folktale characterized by elements of magic or the supernatural, such as the endowment of a mortal character with magical powers or special knowledge; variations expose the hero to supernatural beings or objects.’⁶⁸ The international comparative concept focused mainly on the folktale or *märchen*. It did not impact the questionnaire system since the material being collecting by questionnaires could not be analysed to the same extent. However, it is important to note the original reasons for so many prominent Northern European scholars wanting to see folklore collecting better funded and more efficiently run in Ireland.⁶⁹ In the 1942 issue of

⁶⁵ Christiansen’s [unentitled lecture] (1927) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, *Formations* pp. 321-329 from the original in NFC 1122:39-71.

⁶⁶ ‘Irish Language and Folk-Lore. Swedish Professor’s Address,’ *The Irish Times*, 8 June 1927.

⁶⁷ Both Christiansen’s and von Sydow’s lectures were also mentioned in the second edition of *Béaloides*. Séamas Ó Duilearga, ‘Editorial’ in *Béaloides*, vol. 1, no. 2, (1927), p. 308.

⁶⁸ Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary.

⁶⁹ For more on this see: Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 58-61.

Studies: an Irish Quarterly Review Ó Duilearga's article discussed extensively the comparative folk studies theories.⁷⁰

The last element of the folklife questionnaire, essential for the IFC's own questionnaire conception, was the idea of collecting folklore through national schools. In 1811 the Kingdom of Italy, still under the reign of Napoleon, sent out a questionnaire to first, second, and third level schools about subjects such as, 'costume, rites of passage, calendar customs, songs associated with calendar festivals, dialects and housing.'⁷¹ The Finnish folklore organizations distributed questionnaires to schoolchildren in the 1920s. Finnish ethnologist Uno Holmberg-Harva, at the Fourth Nordic Folklife and Folklore Conference described how the Finns were, 'collecting *folklekar* "popular games" from 330 communes and about 800 schools.'⁷² In Germany in 1928 a similar project was undertaken. German school children collected material by answering 30,000 designated questionnaires. The IFC took direction from all these projects in developing their own schools' collection scheme in 1937. The use of school children in folklore collecting remained popular in many countries into the 1950s.⁷³

The folklorist, and at the time Director of the Department of Irish Folklore at UCD, Bo Almqvist, in an address he gave to mark the 50th anniversary of the IFC, explained how the staff were 'not unguided' in conceptualizing their own definition for Irish folklore but 'looked outside Ireland for the best available models. These models were Scandinavian, more particularly Swedish. These models guided the work of the Commission from its beginning.'⁷⁴ How these models specifically factored in the use of the questionnaire system will be discussed throughout the thesis. The focus in this section is on their origins and development in the Swedish system.

Design of Swedish Questionnaires

⁷⁰ Séamas Ó Duilearga, 'Irish Stories and Storytellers. Some Reflections and Memories' in *Studies*, vol. 31, no. 121, (1942), p. 31-45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁷² Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 62.

⁷³ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, pp. 56-64.

⁷⁴ In this address Almqvist discusses how the IFC staff eventually went on to define 'folklore' as having anything to do with the hundreds of subjects discussed in the *Handbook*. Bo Almqvist, 'The Irish Folklore Commission: achievement and legacy,' in *Paimfleid = Pamphlets*, ed. An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann (Baile Atha Cliath: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, An Coláiste Ollscoile, 1979), p. 6.

As stated above, the Nordic Museum began using questionnaires as a means of collecting folklife material in 1928. Folklorist Stith Thompson described how these questionnaires were on general topics. He explained that the Uppsala Archive, at the time he was writing (1961), had sent out over 150 questionnaires. These questionnaires were ‘mimeographed on long sheets of paper’. The correspondents received a new questionnaire on a particular subject almost monthly.⁷⁵ The questionnaires, writes Karin Becker, were ‘often framed to call forth reconstructions of customs and procedures, particularly how things used to be done.’⁷⁶ The topics ranged from work practices to specific customs such as fishing.

The questionnaires that were sent out by the Nordic Museum in the 1920s were written by scholars with ‘varied academic training’. According to Becker:

Ethnologists worked primarily in the museum’s Department of Peasant Culture (“All-moge-afdelningen”), where data were collected according to traditional conceptions of folk culture, mainly through village studies. The other major division in the museum, the Department of Upper Class Culture (“Afdelningen för de högre stånden”), studied country estates, vicarages, and selected small cities (“herrgårds-“ “prästgårds-“ and stadsundersökningarna”). Most of this research was done by art historians or architects.⁷⁷

The two different branches of the museum had their own preferred methods for collecting information; however, both used the questionnaire system in some form. The way in which the questionnaires were written differed not only in subject matter (upper versus lower class perspectives) but also in the different approaches that the ethnologists took toward the task of collecting, as opposed to the historians. The individuals who phrased the questions in specific questionnaires were experts in their fields.⁷⁸ The *Landsmålsarkivet* and many other folklife museums, archives, and institutes in Sweden also issued questionnaires.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Stith Thompson, 'Folklore Trends in Scandinavia' in *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 74, no. 294, (1961), p. 316.

⁷⁶ Karin Becker, 'Picturing Our Past: An Archive Constructs a National Culture' in *Ibid.*, vol. 105, no. 415, (1992), p. 13.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷⁸ Tillhagen, 'Reality and Folklore Research', pp. 336-337.

⁷⁹ The Nordic museum did not start issuing questionnaires on contemporary culture until well into the 1950s. Becker, 'Picturing Our Past', p. 15.

Tillhagen notes that in 1964 the Nordiska Museet's Folklore Collection (*Folkminnessamlingen*) had a service available for researchers inquiring about a specific folk culture topic. If the museum did not have information available on the requestor's subject, they would issue a questionnaire. Typically a small fee was charged.⁸⁰

Furthermore, Skansen collected in order to add to the knowledge of their displays. By 1964 all of Sweden's twenty-four provinces had a *landsantikvarie* or provincial museum. One of the more famous of these, that Ó Duilearga took notes on, was the *Fristad Folkhögskolas Museum* in Fristad. The museum consisted of 'a large number of ethnographical objects donated by the students of the Folkhögskol[a].'⁸¹ In the larger of these county museums, the research was conducted with the aid of questionnaires.⁸² These country museums and the main *Nordiska Museet* differ from other countries' predictable 'historical museum' because they were interested only in representing the typical. Thompson gave the example of how the *Nordiska Museet* tried to 'obtain a typical coach of the 1830's but it is unimportant whether a Swedish counterpart to Daniel Webster rode in it or not.'⁸³ The objects were displayed to show what was produced in the typical Swedish home.

In order to get an overview of folklife material in all parts of Sweden, and from many different sections of society, the larger of the archives utilized local correspondents called *ortsmiddelare* in Swedish.⁸⁴ At the *Landsmålsarkivet*, Ó Duilearga noted that students were given the task of using questionnaires to investigate dialect and folklife material.⁸⁵ Monetary compensation was also given to the local correspondents who were not students. Thompson explained in detail the way in which that worked.

Thus, they [the Uppsala Archive- *Dialekt- Och Folkminnesarkivet i Uppsala*] employ various people in each Swedish province who serve as correspondents in return for a small salary. Their relationship with the Uppsala Archive is much like that of small-town correspondents with a great newspaper. Serving as correspondents for the great Uppsala Archive,

⁸⁰ Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden', p.26.

⁸¹ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 249.

⁸² Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden', p. 23.

⁸³ Thompson, 'Folklore Trends in Scandinavia', p. 314.

⁸⁴ Karin Becker, 'Picturing Our Past: An Archive Constructs a National Culture' in *Ibid.*, vol. 105, no. 415, (1992), p. 12.

⁸⁵ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 248.

they maintain a certain local standing, almost like that of the local priest or doctor.

The prospective correspondent must go through a period of probation. When someone wants to act as correspondent for the archive, the staff must first find out what he is interested in collecting. He may, for example, be a folktale raconteur; he may sing; or he may merely be interested in folksong or in old practices. As a further part of probation, he is required to send in some of his material, with no pay given. If the material looks good, if it is faithfully taken down, and has not been tampered with, then he is put on the payroll. Thenceforth, he can send in material and receive a certain sum for each item that is acceptable. The archive retains the right to reject material that fails to meet the standard.⁸⁶

The *Nordiska Museet's* questionnaire correspondents, did not receive any monetary compensation; however, they were given free 'courses of instruction and training at the Nordic Museum.' By the 1930's some 600 individuals were replying to the *Nordiska Museet's* questionnaires. The correspondents were 'to be found in all classes of the community and in all grades of education.'⁸⁷ Many of the informants, like their Irish counterparts, supplemented their written information with drawings or photographs and this only served to add to the *Nordiska Museet's* archival collections.⁸⁸ The University of Lund also had a questionnaire system and by 1935 they had some sixty individuals replying.⁸⁹

The emphasis at all the archives mentioned was on receiving replies from all counties. A large correspondence pool was needed to make distribution maps. This was a key element in Swedish folk studies by the 1920s. By plotting the basic material of the questionnaires on maps researchers could see which areas in Sweden certain traditions were more common.⁹⁰ By the 1930s the different Swedish archives were known around the world for their excellent distribution map-making skills. The IFC staff members who went there to study received the best training available at the time.

Von Sydow interceded on Ó Duilearga's behalf with UCD officials to get him a travel stipend to study folk culture collecting in the different Northern European countries. In 1949 Von Sydow recounted that he wanted

⁸⁶ Thompson, 'Folklore Trends in Scandinavia', p. 315.

⁸⁷ Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden', p. 22.

⁸⁸ Becker, 'Picturing Our Past', p. 12.

⁸⁹ Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden', p. 64.

⁹⁰ Thompson, 'Folklore Trends in Scandinavia', p. 318 and Tillhagen, 'Folklore Archives in Sweden', p. 29.

to see Ó Duilearga succeed in the interest of his own research. When Ó Duilearga established an institute that systematically and scientifically collected Irish folklore, it would provide further material for Von Sydow to use in his international comparative folk studies theories.⁹¹ Von Sydow corresponded with Ó Duilearga before his trip and ‘he drew up an itinerary for [him] mentioning places and people in Sweden which [he] should visit and giving [him] details regarding expenses and so forth.’⁹² UCD agreed to finance Ó Duilearga’s trip⁹³ because they sought to build connections with Scandinavia and also wanted to add to the college’s collection of books on the region.⁹⁴

Ó Duilearga’s six month tour of the Northern European countries is detailed in Séamas Ó Catháin’s excellent work *Formations of a Folklorist: Sources Relating to the Visit of James Hamilton Delargy (Séamus Ó Duilearga) to Scandinavia, Finland, Estonia and Germany 1 April- 29 September 1928*. This trip had lasting effects on Ó Duilearga as a scholar and Irish folklife researcher. Furthermore Ó Duilearga claimed that Dennis J. Coffey,⁹⁵ told him before he left Ireland that he ‘hoped to facilitate [him] in establishing a *Folkemminnesamling* [“Folklore Archive”] in University College,’ upon his return.⁹⁶ What form this ‘folklore archive’ was to take changed dramatically after his experiences in Northern Europe. The IFC later adopted the archival and index system that Ó Duilearga learned about at Uppsala University.⁹⁷ Moreover, he was able to observe how archives and

⁹¹ Ó Catháin gives a translation for the interview on pages 4-5 in his book. The original Swedish interview is also reproduced in Appendix 12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹² Ó Duilearga, quoted in: Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 14.

⁹³ He was also released from teaching duties for the duration of the trip. *Ibid.*, p. xi.

⁹⁴ Ó Duilearga collected books on his travels to help build up a Scandinavian Library for the College. *Ibid.*, p. 15. Ó Duilearga reflected in his own diary at a later date that he had already begun to learn Swedish from a native Swedish speaker in Dublin before his trip.

⁹⁵ Dennis Coffey was at the time President of UCD. He will be discussed more in Chapter 3.

⁹⁶ Ó Duilearga quoted in Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 14. The footnote references Ó Duilearga’s diary housed in the NFC but does not give a date for this statement, citing only ‘some time after the trip.’

⁹⁷ It was actual Seán Ó Súilleabháin working under the IFC who went back to do more intense training in the archive and who put the system in place but his trip there would not have happened had Ó Duilearga not chosen to use that particularly indexing system first. More on Ó Súilleabháin’s trip in Chapter 4.

folk museums functioned on a managerial and administrative level⁹⁸ in many different countries.⁹⁹

It was on this trip that Ó Duilearga first encountered the concept of collecting and studying the subject of material folk culture that was within ‘the full register of folk tradition.’¹⁰⁰ In Fristad he was the houseguest of von Sydow’s friend, Åke Campbell.¹⁰¹ Campbell in the following decade became one of Europe’s leading ethnologists and had a profound impact on how Ó Duilearga viewed the field of ethnology afterwards. He wrote to von Sydow from Fristad:

Táim fé árd-chomaoín agat as ucht do cháirde anso a chur i n-aithne dhom... Tuigim-se anois go bhfuil mathas éigin a’ gabháilt le cultúr mhuintire na tuaithe- eolas a bhí i bhfolach orm go dtí so.¹⁰²

In a second letter sent two days later he elaborated further on this point in English:

Your were wise in sending me here [Fristad] for I have learned a great deal. I do not know if you have ever had the sensation of having a new world opened to you. Well Mr Campbell’s talks to me here on *hembygdsvård* [“local heritage conservation”] and the like have 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. But many workers will be required and it will be necessary for others to study at Nordiska Museet and elsewhere. I myself can look after the folklore but it will not be possible

⁹⁸ Ó Duilearga saw first hand how some of the archives and folk-museums were separate from university institutions (Although they might have been physically housed within their grounds). Ó Catháin noted that through Ó Duilearga’s, ‘thorough investigation of the operation of *Landsmålsarkivet*, where he made detailed notes regarding its funding mechanisms, governance and staffing, its collecting and indexing policies and how it functioned in relation to the general public and, in particular, to various voluntary societies whose interests coincided with those of the archive. Later, detailed reconnaissance of this nature was to be repeated by him at other major centres in Sweden as well as in Finland, Estonia, Denmark and Norway.’ Ó Duilearga’s observations of how these bodies function on day-to-day basis and most certainly influenced the way in which he set up and directed the IFC office. Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 248.

⁹⁹ Some of Ó Duilearga’s detailed notes on archives, museums, etc. are reproduced in *Ibid.*, pp. 247-253.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹⁰¹ Ó Catháin’s brief biography for Campbell follows: ‘(1891-1957), became Director of Folklore at the Uppsala Dialect and Folklore Archive in 1930 and, in 1938, docent in Nordic Ethnology at Uppsala University. He was General Secretary of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore for a number of years before the Second World War and conducted pioneering ethnological field work in Sweden, Ireland (1934, 1935) and Scotland (1955) among other places.’ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 255.

¹⁰² Translation provided by Ó Catháin: ‘I am deeply indebted to you for introducing me to your friends here... I now understand that there is some value associated with the culture of country people- something which was hidden from me hitherto.’ Séamas Ó Duilearga to C.W. von Sydow (11 June 1928) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 161-162.

for me to take up the study of the material culture in an intensive and thorough way so we must look out for some one else.¹⁰³

Campbell and Ó Duilearga built up a professional friendship and Ó Duilearga was able to help Campbell organize the details for his research trip to Ireland to study house types.¹⁰⁴ Before leaving Fristad on his first visit Ó Duilearga wrote a summary of his trip so far to his brother, Jack Delargy, noting what needed to be done for Irish folklore:

We may sub-divide this into (a) Collection of folklore (b) Classification & indexing of collections (c) Folklife and study of country life in all its phases. Of all these I have learned a great deal. (a) & (b) I knew something of before I came but of the importance of studying (c) I knew little only guessed that it should be done. Of course no one in Ireland has thought of doing it. My visits to the great Nordiska Museet in Stockholm & to the country museums here have shown me a new world which lay right under my nose in Ireland but which I never noticed. I have, in short, learned enough to convince me that not only can I make a future for myself out of these subjects but that I can also do a great work for Ireland if I get the chance.¹⁰⁵

With this new understanding of ‘the importance’ he returned to Stockholm again and had a fresh appreciation for the work being done at Skansen.¹⁰⁶ He discussed with Ernst Klein, then director of Skansen’s programme section, the possibility of sending an Irish person over to the *Nordiska Museet* to study material folk culture.¹⁰⁷ A folk museum like Skansen and the Nordic Museum¹⁰⁸ was never established in the Republic of Ireland, in Ó Duilearga’s lifetime; however, he called for its creation as part of his vision for an Irish folklore institute. Nevertheless, Ó Duilearga was

¹⁰³ to C. W. von Sydow (13 June 1928) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁰⁴ Campbell eventually came to Ireland in June 1934 and his trip is discussed in greater detail later in Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁵ First visit last from 7-19 June and the second visit lasted from 9-13 August. J. H. Delargy to J. A. Delargy (16 June 1928) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 165-168.

¹⁰⁶ ‘I was intensely interested in what Mr Campbell had to say and when I go to Nord. Mus. [Nordiska Museet] I shall be better enabled to study there with profit.’ Duilearga, Séamas Ó to C. W. Von Sydow, 13 June 1928 reproduced in: Ó Catháin (eds.) *Formations of a Folklorist*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁷ He suggested in a letter to von Sydow that it might be possible to set up a travel and learning exchange between Ernst Klein and Liam S. Gógan. Gógan (committee member of the FIS) had been reinstated as assistant keeper of antiquities at the National Museum of Ireland since 1922. Furthermore, he had written his MA on Old Irish architectural terminology and this may have furthered Ó Duilearga’s interest in sending him to Skansen because many of its exhibits and research focused on traditional buildings.

¹⁰⁸ Ó Duilearga also visited other folklife collections in an open-air setting at Lyngby in Denmark and various local folk high school museums in Sweden.

strongly encouraged by von Sydow and Campbell ‘to ensure that collection of folk museums artefacts be got underway in Ireland as soon as possible.’¹⁰⁹ The concept of the folk museum relates directly to the questionnaire system because the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the IFC collaborated in collecting ethnological objects, recorded information for joint projects, and even issued joint questionnaires.¹¹⁰ Many of the future collaborative projects involving Ó Duilearga’s folklore schemes and the NMI were shaped by what he observed in Sweden.¹¹¹

Most importantly, in Sweden Ó Duilearga was introduced to the concept of the postal questionnaire as a folklore and folklife collecting tool. In his notes on how the *Landsmålsarkivet* functioned he wrote:

Frågelista [Questionnaire]: A series of admirable questionnaires have been published or circulated among people all over the country. They deal with every aspect of folkliv [folklife].¹¹²

By the time Ó Duilearga left Uppsala he had a portfolio of these questionnaires that had been issued over the years.¹¹³ The portions of Ó Duilearga’s travel diary and correspondence from his trip that are reproduced in Ó Catháin’s book do not mention the questionnaire system extensively. However, he was exposed to the general study of folklife and this had an enormous impact on how he sought to incorporate it into his ideal folklore

¹⁰⁹ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 54. Ó Duilearga did start working on that as soon as he returned. Ó Catháin notes in footnote 167: ‘Delargy’s diary entries for 9 and 10 April, 1929, note the following from Iveragh in county Kerry: “At Mike Vihíl Óig’s in Cionárd where I found an old spinning-wheel thrown out. & wh. I hope to get later from N. Museum... Got from M. King [= Mike Bán Conraoi] an old grafán [“chopper”] for cutting furze”. “This evening in Cillrialaig P. Kelly gave me a *corrán cam* formerly used for cutting sea-weed. The handle (not included) was 15 feet long...” Ibid.

¹¹⁰ More information on the IFC sending the NMI donated ethnological objects and giving assistance in answering queries will be detailed in Chapters 4, 5, & 6.

¹¹¹ Chapter 6 will discuss further how the Type B questionnaires were issued in part to build up information that could be used to build a folk museum.

¹¹² Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 27. Chapter 9 ‘Notes on Archives, Museum, etc.’ No citation indicates whether this information came from Ó Duilearga’s journal or that he wrote notes on each site in a separate diary/notebook.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 29. After only three weeks in Sweden Ó Duilearga noted in a letter to his brother that he could speak Swedish. His ability to read the language improved dramatically as well. As a result of this Ó Duilearga would have had access to understanding von Sydow’s great work Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, *Våra Folkminnen en Populär Framställning* (Lund: Carl Bloms Boktryckeri, 1919). This is a 209 page book that details specific folklore but also folklife questions for collectors to ask when collecting in Sweden. It is similar in set up to Seán Ó Súilleabháin’s later *Láimh-Leabhar Béaloideas* (1937) and then *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (1942). With a command of the Swedish language Ó Duilearga would have been able to read this work and help further his ideas about the types of folklife questions worth asking for a scientific study.

institute. The idea of using the questionnaires to collect this type of material was developed fully after the establishment of the IFC.

Ó Catháin sums up Ó Duilearga's research trip with, 'it was a resounding academic success, resulting in the acquisition of new knowledge and new contacts¹¹⁴, new languages, new ideas and the establishment of new horizons for himself and for his country.'¹¹⁵ In a letter written to Eoin Mac Néill from Mistealas, Sweden he noted:

The folklore collections of Sweden, Finland, and Estonia which I have seen and, to an extent, examined were extraordinarily interesting and I wish that we in Ireland had something of the like to show the world. Everywhere I have gone in these Northern countries scholars have complained that Ireland is still, in spite of political changes a *terra incognita*. Nothing is known in Nordiska Museet in Stockholm, for example, of Irish Ethnography. There is not a single book of any worth on Ireland in the Museums large library and only a few photographs... In Dorpat the Estonian National Museum- one of the finest in Northern Europe- had practically nothing about Ireland in the library there... [same situation in Copenhagen, Helsingfors, Abo and Dorpat]¹¹⁶

Further on in the letter he wrote about his discussions with the Director of the Estonian Folklore Institute, Dr. Oskar Loo noting:

He said that he had come to the conclusion from reading newspapers and books about the Irish struggle for political freedom that most Irishmen did not understand what Nationality really meant. A cultural independence, said he, is of far greater importance than political freedom when the soul of the nation is enclosed and I think he was right in the main.¹¹⁷

Mac Néill believed in the duty to foster one's culture through scholarship and this type of nationalistic sentiment was most likely well received by Ó Duilearga.¹¹⁸ In writing this letter Ó Duilearga may have been priming some

¹¹⁴ His contacts were furthered enhanced at the Fourth Nordic Folklore Conference that he was invited to attend in Oslo in August 1928. He was the only outsider invited to the event because the conference was normally reserved only for Scandinavians.

¹¹⁵ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. xii.

¹¹⁶ Ó Duilearga to Dr. Mac Néill, (29 July 1928), UCDA MacNeill Papers LAI/H/155.

¹¹⁷ Ó Duilearga to Dr. Mac Néill, (29 July 1928), UCDA MacNeill Papers LAI/H/155.

¹¹⁸ Briody has the following to say about Mac Néill: '... he was motivated by ideals that few modern historians would aspire to, believing that in loving one's country and fostering its culture one was "only doing the will of God."' [McCartney, p.87] He also held the view that "Ireland's destiny was to be a teaching nation, setting an example to the rest of the world with 'our ancient ideals, faith, learning, generous enthusiasm, self-sacrifice- the things best calculated to purge out the meanness of the modern world.' " [McCartney, p.87] Mac Néill believed that "the true basis of the Irish nation was to be found in the remote Gaelic Past and that the language was the lifeline of nationality." [McCartney, p.92] He considered "the period when Irish was "the island of saints and scholars" as the proudest hour in Irish history." [McCartney, p.92] ' Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 45 citing extensively: McCartney, 'MacNeill and Irish-Ireland', pp. 87-88 and 92

of his key influential Irish supporters through correspondence before his return. He hoped they would support him in his aim of establishing a folklore institute.¹¹⁹

Ó Duilearga was well known for beautifully constructed, sometimes dramatic quotes. He summarized his legendary 1928 trip and what it meant for the future some years later with:

I remember coming in on the mail-boat from Holyhead. I went right out to the bow and I saw the Irish hills. That is a long time ago, 1928, and I said “the tradition of Ireland is behind those hills and we’ve got to rescue it before it’s trampled into the dirt”. Because it was a jewel of a great price and one had to see that it was given a refuge and an appreciation by the Irish people. And then the trouble started.¹²⁰

A month after Ó Duilearga settled back into Irish life he gave an interview about his trip for the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent* (22 October 1928). Ó Duilearga was anxious to mention that both folklore and folklife needed to be collected and viewed as serious subjects of study in Ireland. He reiterated what he had heard so many times on his trip, that foreign scholars were interested in Irish folk culture, due to its potential to contribute to continental scholarship if collected and published properly.¹²¹ He also mentioned that the Director of the Museum of Skansen was planning on sending over an expedition to investigate Irish culture in view of the fact that he felt that the Irish were taking little interest in these plans themselves. Nothing even came of the Skansen’s Director’s plan; however, Åke Campbell’s plan to visit and survey houses, which is mentioned in these 1928 articles did eventually materialise.¹²² These two articles were not the only promotional work that Ó Duilearga did after his trip. He spoke on the radio,

¹¹⁹ Ó Duilearga’s also agreed with many of Mac Néill’s ideas on scholarship and national promotion.

¹²⁰ ‘Transcript of tape-recorded interview made by Dr. T.K. Whitaker in 1974.’ reads the footnote (146) for the long quote cited by: Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 78.

¹²¹ ‘“Sweden impresses me most with its high level of culture,” he said, “and when I studied in the famous Museum of Skansen, Stockholm, everyone lamented the fact that there was no Irish traditional lore available for study. The social history of the Irish peasant seemed to be unknown. The Director of the Museum was intensely interested in Ireland...’ ‘Unknown Ireland. Swedes May Explore it for Us. Our Folklore Heritage,’ *Irish Independent*, 22 October 1928. A piece of this quote is reproduced in ———, *Formations*, p. 85.

¹²² ‘Unknown Ireland. Swedes May Explore It for Us. Our Folklore Heritage.’ *Irish Independent*, 22 Oct 1928. ‘Irish Folk-Lore: its rich harvest yet ungarnered’ *Irish Times*, 22 October 1928.

Ó Duilearga also gave a brief speech about his trip at the Annual General Meeting of the FIS, January 1929. This is reproduced and translated in: ———, *Formations*, pp. 347-350.

gave lectures to various in Dublin societies, and at libraries on what he had encountered.¹²³ He also continued to correspond on folklore collection with many of the scholars he had met on his trip.¹²⁴ It was becoming increasingly clear in his promotional work that the FIS alone was not going to be enough to accomplish what he envisioned.¹²⁵

The main IFC head staff (Ó Duilearga, Ó Súilleabháin, and Mac Neill) were gifted linguists and were able to review many different countries contemporary questionnaire systems. Documentation does not exist demonstrating that they were aware of all the examples summarized in this chapter; however, they certainly did their background research on other European traditions before issuing a questionnaire in Ireland. In addition to Ó Duilearga, Ó Súilleabháin and Mac Neill also received training in Sweden on the questionnaire systems in use there. Their training was more in depth than Ó Duilearga's.¹²⁶ Thus having reviewed the original Swedish questionnaire system a comparison to the IFC system can be made in Chapters 5 and 6 below. As shall be discussed in Chapter 4, the IFC in the 1930s worked hard at creating and maintaining strong scholarly ties with countries mentioned here such as Sweden, Germany, France, Norway, and America. These ties eventually led to various foreign scholars requesting questionnaires for their own research.

¹²³ For more specifics from Ó Duilearga's diary see: *Ibid.*, p. 86

¹²⁴ See *Ibid.* pp. 187-201.

¹²⁵ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 91-92.

¹²⁶ For more on Ó Súilleabháin's and Mac Neill's research trips see Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

Irish Folklife: 1700-1934

Ó Duilearga and Ó Súilleabháin were prolific deliverers of lectures on various folklore and folklife topics during the period in question (1935-1945). Their goal was to spread accurate knowledge about Irish folklore and interest their audiences in the IFC's work. They sought to counteract a number of 'Irish folklore' works published over the years that failed to meet the high standards of scientific inquiry that the IFC wanted to promote. Cultural and political nationalism shaped the way in which folklore was written about in Ó Duilearga's and Ó Súilleabháin's lifetimes. Nonetheless it was from these earlier publications that the IFC head office staff built their knowledge of folk culture before the material in the IFC's archive allowed them to correct previous scholars research indiscretions with a plethora of primary material.¹

This chapter details the evolution of Irish folklife studies and the events that led to the foundation of the IFC. It will briefly discuss Irish folk culture collecting before the 1830s and conclude on the eve of the IFC's founding, at which point folklore and folklife collecting became systematic and scientific academic fields. In Ó Duilearga's own words, it was only after his 1928 trip with his new knowledge of Northern European folk culture history that the real "trouble" started.² Ó Duilearga believed that a new and profound chapter in the history of Irish folk culture studies was beginning; however, Ó Súilleabháin, Máire Mac Neill, and Ó Duilearga were keenly aware of the origins of Irish folklore collecting. The IFC library was filled with printed material and copies of manuscripts on traditions recorded from the earliest surviving Irish manuscript sources. The staff reviewed many of these early sources when searching for the first written record of a tradition being practiced. They were certainly considered when questionnaires were being drafted.³ Examples will be given throughout the chapter of how some

¹ In his first editorial for *Béaloides* Ó Duilearga referred to these works as 'nonsensical rubbish.' Séamus Ó Duilearga 'Ó'n Bhfear Eagair' in *Béaloides*, vol. 1, no. 1, (1927), p. 5

² For the explanation of this quote see the end of the Chapter 2.

³ One example of this in relation to booleying (*buáile*) is found in Ó Duilearga, 'An Untapped Source of Irish History', pp. 402-404.

of Ireland's greatest antiquarians, folklorists, and local historians were cited by and greatly influenced the study of folk culture in the 1935 to 1945 period. Beyond these folk culture publications the IFC and the questionnaire correspondents were also strongly influenced by twentieth-century Irish cultural nationalism. This form of nationalism, and its ties to folk culture, had origins in the eighteenth century and continued to evolve through the decades. The role that the Irish language, perception of the 'Irish peasant' and native Irish speakers, and folk culture played in the ever-evolving Irish identity will be discussed in this chapter to provide better context for the following chapters. The cultural movements and political upheavals of the early twentieth century will also be discussed to set the scene for Irish society in the period when the questionnaires were issued. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the establishment of the FIS and the IFI, as well as a brief summary of how Ó Duilearga expanded his foundation folklore institute into the IFC.

The eighteenth century saw renewed scholarly interest in Celtic studies, and as a result, works like Edward Lhuyd's *Archæologia Britannica* (1701) became popular.⁴ Lhuyd's work formally established Irish (*Gaeilge*) as a Celtic language and henceforth it was studied more scientifically through the field of linguistics. Another popular Celtic Studies publication was James MacPherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands of Scotland and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language* (1760). MacPherson claimed this work-contained material he had collected from native Scottish Gaelic speakers and ancient sources. It was popular internationally but his next publication *Fingal* (1762) incited controversy due to the questionable origins of 'the third-century bard' material. When leading scholars challenged his translation he was unable to produce the original materials. His name was tarnished; nevertheless his works popularized and

⁴ Edward Lhuyd was a Welsh linguist and antiquarian. Eighteenth-century Antiquarian scholars were constantly engaged with works from earlier periods. This thesis does not allow for further view of pre-eighteenth-century scholarship. For more on this see Clare O'Halloran, 'Negotiating Progress and Degeneracy: Irish Antiquaries and the Discovery of the "Folk," 1770-1844' in Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin (ed.) *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Leiden, 2012), pp. 193-206.

increased international readership on Celtic subjects.⁵ It became part of a wider European Romantic Movement in the eighteenth century.⁶

During the eighteenth century the Irish upper classes also became interested in antiquities. Antiquities encompassed the study of physical objects of the ancient past, which specifically included subjects such as language, traditional culture, traditional music, and their contemporary definition of history.⁷ Unlike modern historians or archaeologists, eighteenth-century antiquarians did not place the traditional objects being studied in their historical context. The field lacked the modern scientific interest in context; however, it is still important to understand the origins of folklife in antiquarianism. Nonetheless, as with the church records of pagan practices, information collected by the eighteenth-century antiquarians was still valuable for the twentieth-century ethnologists to use to make comparisons of traditional life in different time periods and to help formulate questionnaires on particular topics.

In the eighteenth century the Anglo-Irish and middle class Catholics who took an interest in Irish antiquities did so with patriot pride and no political aspirations.⁸ The audience for their published works was the educated Protestant middle class in England and Ireland.⁹ However, many of

⁵ Alf MacLochlainn, 'Gael and Peasant- A Case of Mistaken Identity?' in Casey Daniel J. and Robert E. Rhodes (ed.) *Views of the Irish Peasantry 1800-1916* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), p. 28. Reidar Christiansen mentions the lasting role of MacPherson in his *The Irish Statesman* article, 'A Plea for Popular Tradition' (8 January 1927) where he wrote, 'Some books will therefore be taken as expressions of a national spirit, and in this way some popular book, some immense success will for generations determine the interpretation of a nationality. Perhaps no better instance may be given than the case of MacPherson as the voice of the Celtic world; his mistiness, his feeling at home in the neighbourhood of misery and tears, gave to European literature its definitive idea of the Celtic world, an idea which is not quite dead even now, and which has affected not only the Celts, but Northern Europe also.' Reidar Thorolf Christiansen, 'A Plea for Popular Tradition,' *The Irish Statesman*, 8 January 1927p. 433. Reproduced in Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 305.

⁶ John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism. The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 56.

⁷ For more see: Joep Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination: Patterns in the Historical and Literary Representation of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), pp. 68-69.

⁸ Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 55-65. This was not uncommon in other European nations at the time. Timothy Baycroft, 'Introduction' in Timothy Baycroft and David Hopkin (ed.) *Folklore and Nationalism in Europe during the Long Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Leiden, 2012), p. 8.

⁹ For more on Irish writers attempting to explain the 'mysteriousness' of Ireland to the English see: Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 31.

their works were used in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to highlight Ireland's 'continuous cultural distinctiveness'.

According to Caoimhín Ó Danachair, the first practitioner of ethnology in Ireland was Colonel Charles Vallancey who 'sought information among the common people and advanced their customs and beliefs in support of his theories...' ¹⁰ Vallancey's research method dictated that he come up with a theory first and then collect information that proved fruitful to it. ¹¹ To further add to his lack of modern scholarly credibility, Vallancey used the Old Testament as a basis for much of his conceptual framework. ¹² His methods were 'largely fanciful,' nonetheless his works were influential in Celtic studies. ¹³ He was greatly aided by the native Irish speaker and antiquarian the field of Charles O'Connor. ¹⁴ Vallancey's published works contain written material that in modern terms would be considered as belonging to the fields of folklore and folklife. ¹⁵

When the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) was established in 1785, Vallancey was one of its founding members. The society was committed to 'the study of science, polite literature and antiquities.' From its foundation, 'onward it was the centre of serious research into Irish civilization.' ¹⁶ The RIA was an "Ascendancy institution" from the start; therefore, many of the types of scholars that the IFC later attracted would not have been a part of it initially. However, its foundation gave the field of 'Irish studies a social and intellectual respectability' and exposed continental scholars to the idea of Ireland within the wider context of Indo-European languages, literatures, and traditions. ¹⁷

¹⁰ Ó Danachair, 'The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982', p.4.

¹¹ Ibid., p.3.

¹² This was a common practice at his time. Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 72.

¹³ Particularly *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis* (1770), *Essay on the antiquity of the Celtic language* (1772) and *Grammar of the Irish language* (1773).

¹⁴ Monica Nevin, "Vallancey, Charles". *Dictionary of Irish Biography*.

(ed.) James McGuire, James Quinn. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2009 (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a8781>). [*DIB* henceforth]

¹⁵ Many *Béaloides* articles from the period in question (1935-1945) cite Vallancey's works.

¹⁶ Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, p. 55.

¹⁷ For more on the history of the RIA see: Damien Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80* (Maynooth: National University of Ireland, Department of Old and Middle Irish, 2000), pp. 5-7 and Tomas Ó Raifeartaigh, *The Royal*

Edward Bunting was another important eighteenth-century antiquarian, who also participated in the Belfast based 1790s Irish cultural movement.¹⁸ This cultural movement is sometimes referred to as an earlier, shorter, Gaelic revival. In addition to being an Irish harp music collector, Bunting was a Belfast Harp Society and Irish Harp Society founding member. He undertook an extensive tour of Derry, Tyrone, and Connacht to collect music and published the material in his *magnum opus*, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music* (1792).¹⁹ Although Bunting's collecting was not politically motivated his musical publications were utilized in the nineteenth century for political purposes. Traditional music collection was tremendously important to the IFC in its formative years and Bunting's work was influential on the IFC music collectors. Ó Duilearga also took note of Bunting's significance in the evolution of folklore collecting in Ulster in his own notes.²⁰

Many other enthusiasts undertook observational and collection journeys in Ireland and later wrote about their expeditions. Travel descriptions of Ireland were being published by the mid-seventeenth century, but gained greater popularity in the late eighteenth century. Irish and foreign authors recorded a wealth of material on traditional culture in remoter parts of Ireland. Leerssen notes travel descriptions:

Did much to change received images of Ireland, for whereas the Gaelic Irish had universally been seen, until c. 1750, as benighted barbarians, and the Anglo-Irish settlers as the upholders of European civilization, the travel descriptions of men like [John] Bush and [Arthur] Young did much to invert that view and to represent the Anglo-Irish upper class as

Irish Academy: a bicentennial history, 1785-1985 (Dublin: The Academy, 1985), pp. 93-165.

¹⁸ Ó Giolláin notes, 'For them [the Belfast individuals interested in Irish culture] the investigation of native culture was an undertaking of rational enquiry and an endeavour which could interest all those who took the interests of their country to heart.' Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 96. This was in line with the view of the Enlightenment at the time.

¹⁹ Edward Bunting, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never-Before Published and Also the Compositions of Conalan and Carolan, Collected from the Harpers etc., in the Different Provinces of Ireland and Adapted for the Pianoforte, with a Prefatory Introduction by Edward Bunting* (London: Preston & Son, 1796).

²⁰ See: NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library, Special Collections Archives, Ó Duilearga Collection G16, Box 7. In this box is a copy of Ó Duilearga's notes in preparation for an undated lecture or publication. He notes, in his opinion, the most important Irish folklorists of the past.

duelling, profligate, loutish colonialists oppressing the honest, long-suffering Gaelic peasantry.²¹

In particular a number of German travel authors wrote detailed accounts of their journeys through Ireland.²² These types of accounts helped popularize German literature on Irish subjects.

After the 1798 Rising the manner in which the upper classes and Irish peasants were represented in publications, and the way they interacted with each other changed. After the Act of Union (1800) the Anglo-Irish distanced themselves from native Gaelic scholars and the study of peasant life.²³ An exception was, Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1808), which 'helped to make an interest in the Irish past respectable to the elite once again,'²⁴ and some folklore collecting began again in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the relationship between the researcher (Anglo-Irish collector) and the informant (Irish peasant) had changed dramatically.²⁵ In the pre-nineteenth century period the relationship between the two groups is best described as interactive social distance. They frequently interacted with each other and therefore they were closer socially. They practiced different religions and had different socio-economic positions but they both identified with the ancient Gaelic past. However, into the nineteenth-century normative social distance better described the relationship and this transformed perceptions of inquiries into Irish subjects (such as folklore collecting). The social distance between the Anglo-Irish researchers and the Irish peasantry the groups increased. Hutchinson notes, 'Now the gentry, looking to external association for their security and values, refused to know their own country and its people,'²⁶ and instead identified with their British counterparts. As a result this ethnic group identified themselves more as 'outsiders' or

²¹ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 64.

²² Many of these have been edited and translated in Eoin Bourke, "*Poor Green Erin*": *German travel writers' narratives on Ireland from before the 1798 rising to after the Great Famine* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2012).

²³ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 95. For more on what the 1798 Rebellion and Act of Union meant to different sections of society see: Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 71-74.

²⁴ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p.100.

²⁵ For more on the specifics of how the different religious communities reacted see: Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 70-71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

‘foreigners’ in their country of residence. These tensions and new identification influenced folklore research because they radically changed the way the collectors viewed the study of the ‘folk.’ To many members of the Anglo-Irish upper class the Irish peasant became the ‘other’, and they felt, they had nothing culturally in common with them. However, by the 1830s a new smaller ‘wave of cultural revivalists’ emerged who ‘attempted to unify Irishmen by awakening in them an awareness of their common religious and cultural heritage.’²⁷

Thomas Crofton Croker, a well-known Irish antiquarian, began collecting and publishing on folk culture topics in the 1820s. Modern ethnologists have referred to him as a ‘pioneer in the field of folklore in Ireland’ and as ‘the Irish Grimm.’²⁸ Ó Danachair notes about Croker’s *Researches in the south of Ireland* (1824) that:

All aspects of rural life attracted [Croker’s] attention. In this, his first work, published when he was only 26, he tells us something of the food, clothing, dwelling and personal appearance of the poorer country people; of their weddings and wakes, factions and festivals. The ‘popular superstitions’ and the tales, which illustrated them, particularly attract him and where others saw only the ridiculous in these, Croker also saw the sublime.²⁹

This book was popular with the Irish upper classes³⁰ and it even had chapters on folklife themes.³¹ However, Croker’s second publication *Fairy Legends and Traditions in the South of Ireland* (1825) was more popular, and was the first collection of oral tales published in Britain and Ireland.³² Folklorist

²⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

²⁸ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, pp. 160-161.

²⁹ Thomas Crofton Croker, ‘Introduction’ in Kevin Danaher (ed.) *Researches in the south of Ireland, illustrative of the scenery, architectural remains, and the manner and superstitions of the peasantry. With an appendix containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1981), p. (vii). In relation to this study Croker is especially important to note because of the high regard that Ó Danachair and some of the other full time ethnologists had for him.

³⁰ For it offered ‘a window [into] the exotic folk-life of the Irish peasantry.’ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 163.

³¹ It had chapters on ‘History and National Character’, ‘Keens and Death Ceremonies’, ‘Manners and Customs’, and ‘Fairies and Supernatural Agency’. Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland: Illustrative of the Scenery, Architectural Remains, and the Manners and Superstitions of the Peasantry. With an appendix containing a private narrative of the rebellion of 1798* (London: John Murray, 1824).

³² Thomas Crofton Croker, *Fairy Legends and Traditions of the South of Ireland*, ed. Francesca Diano (Cork: The Collins Press; reprint, 1998).

Richard Dorson noted in 1953 that many of the stories collected by the IFC's west-Kerry, full-time, collector Tadhg Murphy matched Croker's.³³

The book caught the attention of the Grimm brothers and the three men (Croker, William Grimm, and Jacob Grimm) began a correspondence friendship, which resulted in the brothers translating Croker's work into German.³⁴ This further exposed Germans to the field of Irish folklore. Ó Danachair remarked how this was a 'foreshadowing [*sic*] of an international comparative research on the subject.'³⁵ However, he also noted:

[Croker's] methods would not find favour now; he was too prone to editing, polishing and refining his material to please his readers, so that it is not always certain which is Croker's interpretation and which the true tradition. Nevertheless his work is usually trustworthy; his refinements have coloured rather than falsified, intended to impart style to his writing, and not to boost any theory. His works attracted wide attention.³⁶

Nevertheless, Croker helped to popularize Irish folklore and folklife. His work later evoked an interest in Jeremiah Curtin, John O'Donovan, Patrick Kennedy, Eugene O'Curry, and Douglas Hyde.³⁷ Moreover, Richard Dorson notes that the IFC 'in raising the technique of collecting and classifying to such high standards, a century after Croker made the first pioneer collection, one realizes the direct line of continuity that runs through this evolution.'³⁸

Another example of an early-nineteenth-century collector and writer was Belfast native Robert S. MacAdam. He made the first collection of Gaeltacht folklore.³⁹ A renewed interest in the Gaeltacht regions was brought

³³ Richard M. Dorson, 'Collecting in County Kerry' in *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 66 (1953), p. 24.

³⁴ The title in German was *Irische Elfenmärchen* Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 101.

³⁵ Croker, 'Researches in the south of Ireland', p. (vii).

³⁶ Ó Danachair, 'The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982', p.4. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, pp. 101-102 & 160-161.

³⁷ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 163 and Croker, 'Researches in the south of Ireland', p. vi

Many twentieth-century scholars cited and utilized Croker in their *Béaloides* articles about various aspects of folklore.

³⁸ Dorson, 'Collecting in County Kerry', p. 24. Thomas Crofton Croker's works were certainly consulted when formulating questions about Irish specific customs.

³⁹ In Ó Duilearga's collection of papers there are copies of sections of: Robert S. Mac Adam, 'Six Hundred Gaelic Proverbs Collected in Ulster' in *Ulster Archaeological Society*, vol. 6 (1858), pp. 172-173. He was using this work as a source for a lecture that he gave at the Glens of Antrim Historical Society on Saturday, 27 November 1965. NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library Special Collections Archive Séamus Ó Duilearga Collection G16, Box 7.

about by the folklore publications as well as domestic and foreign travel descriptions.⁴⁰

However, it was not until work began on the Irish Ordnance Survey in 1824 that research into aspects of folklore and folklife began using more scientific methods. ‘The Ordnance Survey Office was created to carry out a survey of the entire island of Ireland to update land valuations for land taxation purposes.’⁴¹ George Petrie, head of the Topographical Department of the Irish Ordnance Survey from 1833 to 1843, had challenged contemporary Irish antiquarian scholarship in the 1820s.⁴² He insisted Irish historical and antiquarian research was unscientific and therefore exceedingly flawed. In his opinion, it focused on the uncivilized, often-‘mythologically Celtic’ nature of the Irish, before the English arrived. Petrie’s more scientifically based research methods were used for the Ordnance Survey.

The Ordnance Survey’s Captain Thomas Larcom⁴³ and Colonel Thomas Colby⁴⁴ ordered the collecting of material for parish or townland memoirs that would enhance the map content already collected.⁴⁵ Alan Gailey notes that the surveyors collected on the following folklife topics: poteen making, music, wakes, ‘quiltings’, fairs, strand racing, cockfighting, bull-baiting, bullet throwing (i.e. road bowling), hand ball, target shooting at Christmas, festival days, farmhouse/dwelling spaces, and agricultural practices.⁴⁶ The survey officers collected oral and traditional information

⁴⁰ Some examples include: Blake Family, *Letters from the Irish Highlands of Connemara by the Blake Family of Renvyle House* (London: John Murray, 1825), and Henry D. Inglis, *A Journey throughout Ireland, during the Spring, Summer, and Autumn of 1834* (London: Whittaker, 1836). Joseph Stirling Coyne and Nathaniel Parker Willis, *Scenery and Antiquities of Ireland* (London: G. Virtue, 1842) and Samuel Carter Hall and Mrs Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery and Character, etc* (London: How and Parsons, 1840-1843). The photograph’s in the Halls’ book were so well admired by the IFC that they made the ‘Hunting the Wren’ in Cork city, about 1840’ one the inside photo of their Christmas card one year. [Unknown date but pre-1960] See: NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library, Special Collections Archives Ó Duilearga Collection G16, Box 7.

⁴¹ The Ordnance Survey Ireland website, <http://www.osi.ie/About-Us/History.aspx>

⁴² For more on Petrie and his role in popularizing a new wave of cultural nationalism starting in the 1830 see: John Andrews, *A Paper Landscape: the ordnance survey in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

⁴³ Assistant supervisor of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland.

⁴⁴ Director of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland.

⁴⁵ Gillian M. Doherty, *The Irish Ordnance Survey: history, culture, and memory* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p. 17 and p. 21.

⁴⁶ Alan Gailey, 'Folk-life Study and The Ordnance Survey Memoirs' in Kevin Danaher, Alan Gailey, and Dáithí Ó hÓgáin (ed.) *Gold Under the Furze: studies in folk tradition presented to Caoimhín Ó Danachair* (Dublin: Glendale Press, 1982), pp. 150-164.

from locals for the memoirs. This information was similar to what was collected by the twentieth-century IFC folklore collectors. In one surveyor's opinion, 'popular tradition, [was more accurately informative than] any of the theories of the fire worshippers and Budhists [*sic*]'.⁴⁷ 'Starting somewhat later' local civilian assistants were employed and eventually included 'some well-known scholars of the day'⁴⁸ including John O'Donovan⁴⁹ and Eugene O'Curry.⁵⁰ Each piece of information given by an informant was noted with their name and location.⁵¹ The importance and interest in local knowledge and the detailed informant information recorded changed the way folk culture was researched.

Nonetheless the Survey was not without flaws. The report dedicated a considerable amount of space to the concept of the two different 'races' living in Ireland. This information was meant to help the government curtail the rising levels of poverty.⁵² Despite this serious flaw, the Survey published the Derry/Londonderry memoirs in November 1837. The memoir sold well with the public,⁵³ but the British government believed the research into history and politics would only highlight already existing political tensions. Furthermore, the large volume was too costly to continue to produce. Therefore none of the other county memoirs were published at that time.⁵⁴ Henceforth as the surveyors moved south the collection of 'the historical and statistical material lagged behind, thereby accounting for the dominantly northern provenance of the surviving Ordnance Survey Memoir'.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ The reference here being to Henry O'Brien's theory about the origins of round towers. This quote is from Doherty, *The Irish Ordnance Survey*, p. 115. For more information about O'Brien's theory see: Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, pp. 117-120.

⁴⁸ Gailey, 'Folk-life and the Ordnance Survey', p. 151.

⁴⁹ John O'Donovan, also known by his Irish name Seán Ó Donnabháin was employed in October 1830 as an orthographer and etymologist. Diarmuid Ó Catháin, 'O'Donovan (Ó Donnabháin), John (Seán)', *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a6718>).

⁵⁰ Eugene O'Curry, also known by his Irish name Eoghan Ó Comhraí, was employed in November 1835 and dealt mainly with manuscript research. Both O'Donovan and O'Curry learned Irish as children. Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80*, p. 23. Ó Catháin, 'O'Curry (Curry, Ó Comhraí), Eugene (Eoghan)', *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a6664>).

⁵¹ Family, *Letters from the Irish Highlands of Connemara*; A. Day and P MacWilliams, eds., *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland: Londonderry* (1996), p.36.

⁵² Doherty, *The Irish Ordnance Survey*, p. 46.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

⁵⁵ Gailey, 'Folk-life and the Ordnance Survey', p. 151.

On reflection the ordnance survey was, according to Leerssen, ‘a major contribution to the cultural nationalism of later decades, in that it equated the land itself with a Gaelic past and a Gaelic speaking peasantry, thus canonizing the Gaelic tradition as the bedrock.’⁵⁶ It gathered large amounts of material on popular traditions, history, and folklore that were nearly annihilated by the Famine. ‘It helped to give folklore studies... a sense of combined urgency and nostalgia,’⁵⁷ that continued into the 1935 to 1945 period.

The poet and archivist Sir Samuel Ferguson and the Young Irelander Thomas Davis were not interested in systematically collecting folklife; however, their ideals and publications were profoundly influential on ‘Irish politics and culture in the later half of the nineteenth-century.’⁵⁸ Douglas Hyde in particular was influenced by ‘the Fergusonian and Davisian strains of Protestant Gaelicisation.’⁵⁹ In pre-Famine Ireland many Protestants, like Ferguson and Davis were dissatisfied with the contemporary political system and the idea of Ireland as a nation of Catholic people.⁶⁰ Ferguson anguished over these ideas and concluded, ‘...that the Anglo-Irish must save themselves by identifying thoroughly with the Irish past,’ by taking an active part in

⁵⁶ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 102.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁸ Ferguson had no known connections to the study of folk culture. According to Peter Denman he did have an interest in antiquities, but this seems to have been focused on ogham stones, which are typically categorized in the modern subject of archaeology. Peter Denman, ‘Ferguson, Sir Samuel’, *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3058>).

Davis wrote a number of articles in the *Nation* on various subjects. However only one article from 12 July 1845 entitled ‘Habits and Character of the Irish Peasantry’ briefly mentions folk culture but it is more of a commentary of others work and the ideas of collecting. He conveys to the reader an imminent sense of loss of the peasantry’s traditional culture but no original collections were presented. His sense of loss was influential even though he did not add original material to the collected body of Irish folklore.

⁵⁹ It is worth noting here some of the main ideological differences between Hyde and Davis. According to Oliver MacDonagh, ‘Hyde differed from Davis in three respects. First, his de-Anglicisation campaign was proclaimed to be apolitical. Secondly, it was to take the offensive, to aim at the restoration of the vernacular language and the traditional life patterns over the entire country, where Davis’s objective had been merely a holding operation. Thirdly, it was a programme of action rather than a *Nation*-like system of general exhortation. In short, Hyde was concerned to develop and promote a modern product for a modern market.’ Oliver MacDonagh, *States of Mind: A Study of Anglo-Irish Conflicts 1780-1980* (London: George Allen & Unwin (Publishers Ltd, 1983), p. 112.

⁶⁰ ‘Britain’s “betrayal” over Emancipation and the Catholic nationalist threat of O’Connell’, ‘They founded the *Dublin University Magazine* to recapture for the Protestant landlords the leadership of the Irish nation.’ Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, p. 90. D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, Third ed. (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 154.

salvaging Ireland's history.⁶¹ However, his work focused on ancient Irish literature rather than history. Oliver MacDonagh notes it is no exaggeration 'to hail him as the discoverer of the ancient Irish literature on which the later literary renaissance was to be based... nor [is it incorrect] to speak of him as the inventor of a new sort of Anglo-Irish 'nationality'.'⁶² His poem 'A dialogue between the head and the heart of an Irish Protestant' published in the *Dublin University Magazine* (1833) 'outlines a political and cultural philosophy that was to be central to the attitude of many mid-nineteenth-century Protestant intellectuals.'⁶³

'A people without a language of its own is only half a nation. A nation should guard its language more than its territories—'tis a surer barrier, and more important frontier, than fortress or river,' wrote the Young Irelander Thomas Davis in 1843.⁶⁴ This is a peculiar quote, considering it came from a man who had a limited knowledge of the Irish language. Nonetheless, '[Davis] sought to fight a last rearguard action for [his] people, the Anglo-Irish... who could yet give Ireland the cultural leadership from which democratic politics excluded them.'⁶⁵ The Young Ireland movement had a profound impact on Irish nationalism, and the future of the Irish language and politics. It was originally attached to O'Connell's Repeal movement; however, when the two split the Young Ireland movement sought to 'recreate Irish nationalism in their own image.'⁶⁶ Their vision expounded the idea that 'a nation was defined by its culture' and required a 'unique character, otherwise it could not claim to be a nation.'⁶⁷ Maintaining the Irish language was the only barrier to cultural and linguistic Anglicization, Davis wrote,

⁶¹ To Ferguson it was only in looking to the past that the Anglo-Irish could legitimately connect their place in history with the native Irish. MacDonagh, *States of Mind*, p. 109. In Ferguson's opinion a 'current' Irish history needed to be 'gathered, published, studied and digested.' F. S. L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 30.

⁶² MacDonagh, *States of Mind*, p. 109.

⁶³ For more on Ferguson and his ideals see: Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, pp. 90-93.

⁶⁴ 'Our National Language' *The Nation*, 1 April 1843.

⁶⁵ David George Boyce, *Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1990), p. 236.

⁶⁶ Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 154.

⁶⁷ It is important to note that Davis had little command of the Irish language himself. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

‘Ireland must be unsaxonized before it can be pure and strong.’⁶⁸ Davis also sought ‘the essential unity of all Irishmen, of whatever creed, race or class they might be.’⁶⁹ The Young Ireland message was disseminated among the Irish public through their newspaper *The Nation*, in the reading rooms they set up,⁷⁰ and their ‘Library of Ireland.’⁷¹ This was a monthly subscription service for fresh volumes of books, and its formation demonstrated the increase in Irish education and literacy rates.⁷² However, the Young Irelanders’ ideas were not well received by the majority of their contemporaries,⁷³ and the movement faded out after the death of Davis. It was not until the Gaelic Revival of the 1890s that scholars and activists such as Pádraig Pearse and Eoin MacNeill revived Davis’s ideas again.

The collection of folklore and folklife material all but ceased during the Great Irish Famine of 1845 to 1852. Niall Ó Ciosáin has referred to the event as, ‘probably the great[est] cultural break in modern Irish history.’⁷⁴ Likewise Leerssen states, ‘The cultural and social fabric of Gaelic Ireland was to vanish in 1845-1848 with a suddenness that can only be compared to the disappearance of Jewish life in Central Europe.’⁷⁵ According to Hoppen ‘in 1841 almost one-in-three United Kingdom citizens lived in Ireland. Sixty years later barely one in ten did.’⁷⁶ The peasantry that the Young Ireland movement had drawn inspiration from all but disappeared. The notion of the idealized Irish peasant emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century around a large, increasing, agricultural labouring class. Before the Famine ‘these landless or near-landless elements comprised some two-thirds of the

⁶⁸ Thomas Davis, ‘Uniformity and Nationalism’ in Arthur Griffith (ed.) *Thomas Davis, the Thinker and Teacher* (Dublin: 1918), p. 81.

⁶⁹ ‘These ideas ‘did not begin with Davis- they can be found in [Theobald Wolfe] Tone and in [Daniel] O’Connell himself- but they were expressed more fully by Davis than by anyone before him.’ J. H. Whyte, ‘The Age of Daniel O’Connell, 1800-47’ in T.W. Moody and F. X. Martin (ed.) *The Course of Irish History* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1967), p. 214.

⁷⁰ R. F. Foster, ‘Ascendancy and Union’ in R. F. Foster (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 190-191.

⁷¹ Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80*, p. 8.

⁷² K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland Since 1800: conflict and conformity* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 27.

⁷³ Whyte, ‘The Age of Daniel O’Connell, 1800-47’, p. 216.

⁷⁴ Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2010), p. 3.

⁷⁵ Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p.106.

⁷⁶ K. Theodore Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation, 1846-1886* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 87.

population' of Ireland.⁷⁷ By the year 1911 this class in Irish society had fallen by 80% and was replaced as the dominant class by the landowning farmer due to the famine and land reform. According to Boyce 'the farmer was the largest and most influential class in post-famine Ireland; the real 'peasant' – the labourer and the cottier - suffered not only the harsh fate of the famine, but also the indignity of witnessing his name, peasant, being appropriated by his pre-famine employers (and, often, enemies) the tenant farmers.'⁷⁸ The late nineteenth-century Gaelic Revivalists wanted to believe that the Irish-speaking peasants were descendants of individuals stretching directly back to Ireland's glorious Gaelic past. Ó Duilearga was certainly influenced by this theory. He noted the following at a 1942 Irish Book Fair lecture:

The fireside tales of Ireland have their origins- many of them, at any rate- in a world as far removed from the medieval period as that loosely defined period of time is from us. They were told when Homer was a lad, when the Odyssey was unwritten. They are the stuff of the oldest literature of the West and of the Orient, and to this remote island of ours they have come- not all of them, but a good number- by various ways at various times- in them one hears 'the murmurings of a thousand years and yet a thousand years.'⁷⁹

The most important shift during this period, besides a substantial rural population drop due to emigration and disease, was the rapid shift from a bilingual society to a monolingual one. This, according to Ó Ciosáin, was one of the quickest in modern European history.⁸⁰ From a folklore collecting perspective this increased the urgency with which more material needed to be collected before it was 'lost'. To late nineteenth-century folklorists the Irish language had the "best" or "truest" folklore material and they feared that it was rapidly being stamped out by modern advancements.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, p. 170.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁷⁹ J. H. Delargy, 'The Study of Irish Folklore' in *The Dublin Magazine*, vol. XVII, no. 3, (1942), pp. 25-26. In a letter to Carl Wilhelm von Sydow on 31 May 1945, Ó Duilearga commented on the continuity of the Gaelic past when he wrote, 'the most outstanding note in Irish culture is the extraordinary and omnipresent sense of continuity. I show that the sgélaige of the 8th century and the storytellers of today have a great deal in common, in fact the s.teller of today is the plebeian counterpart of the bairied fili of the aristocratic literary culture of the early middle ages in Ireland; that 'bardic school' of the old tradition has its counterpart in the old-time gathering of country people...' (Letter within the NFC SÓD correspondence folder for 1940)

⁸⁰ Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850*, p.7.

⁸¹ For more on the repercussions of the Great Irish Famine see: Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland before and after the Famine: Explorations in Economic History, 1800-1925*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). Christine Kinealy *The Great Calamity: the Irish*

The Anglo-Irish elite, like Wilde, published for a broad audience as the rural Irish population became increasingly literate in the English language. The Romantic Movement influenced Wilde and other published folklore collectors.⁸² This movement in general and folklore have already been discussed in Chapter 2. The movement came to Ireland, slightly later than on the continent, via popularity in England.⁸³ Some literary revivalist folklorists were dissatisfied with the perceived “steeliness” of English Romanticism and sought to place the movement within an Irish context.⁸⁴ Scholars such as France’s Ernest Renan and Britain’s Matthew Arnold greatly influenced how the Celtic people were perceived at the time.⁸⁵ They used words such as ‘... sensitive, spiritual, feminine, imaginative, poetic, passionate, impractical...’ to describe the Celts. These scholars helped to reinforce some of the better-known stereotypes of the Celtic people.⁸⁶ During the 1850s and the 1860s the study of stories and other types of oral tradition became distinctly associated with the term ‘folklore’ in the English language. This was in contrast to the past study of both folklore and folklife, which was commonly carried out in conjunction with the field of antiquities. After the famine, the publication of local stories was more popular than the broader areas covered in works such as Croker’s.

During the 1890s Gaelic Revival scholars and authors lamented the tragedy of the famine and the devastating repercussions that it had on the

Famine, 1845-1852 (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1994). Cathal Póirtéir *The Great Irish Famine* (Dublin: Irish Books and Media, 1995). John Crowley, William J. Smith, and Mike Murphy’s (eds) *Atlas of the Great Famine, 1845-1852* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012).

⁸² Murray notes, ‘One of the problems was that many of the works dealing with the Ireland’s past that were published during the Romantic era were more concerned with giving the reader a feel for ancient Gaelic civilization than with providing an accurate account of Irish history.’ Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80*, p. 8.

⁸³ The Romantic age began in England in the 1780s but came to Ireland later. The movement on the Continent influenced the movement in England but did not have as much of a direct influence on Ireland. *Ibid.*, p. 2. For more on Continental Romanticism see Murray’s work cited above.

⁸⁴ Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80*.

⁸⁵ Ernest Renan, *Le Poésie des Races Celtiques* (Paris: Imprimerie de J. Claye et Cie, 1954) and Matthew Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1867)

⁸⁶ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 26. Murray, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and Irish Antiquarian Societies, 1840-80*, pp. 5-13. Gaelic Revivalists later sought to counteract this image of the Celt.

preservation of folklore and folklife.⁸⁷ As scholars Daniel J. Casey and Robert E. Rhodes highlight in the Preface to their collection of essays on perceptions of the Irish peasant in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ‘The ancient civilization that absorbed Norsemen and Normans and outlived centuries of British domination and survived the flight of the Gaelic nobility finally stood on the threshold of extinction.’⁸⁸ The authors of the Romantic period repeatedly expressed similar views. An example of this is Sir William Wilde’s introduction to his *Irish Popular Superstitions*.⁸⁹ Thus, as the years of the famine subsided antiquarian and folklore research began again.

In post-famine Ireland research focused on the collection of lore, traditional customs, and material culture. Significant travel advancements were made by the end of the 1850s and the possibility of experiencing the remote folk culture first hand changed the ways in which middle and upper classes viewed the ‘Irish peasantry’. Moreover, it changed the way the Irish interacted with the outside world. In 1851 access to the remoter parts of Ireland (much of which are today within the boundaries of the Gaeltacht) were improved following the opening of the Great Western Railway. Folklore collectors and tourists had greater access to the unindustrialized areas where Irish was still spoken as a first language.⁹⁰ Travel writers were no longer forced to hire a cart to take them through the nearly impassable roads of the West and Northwest coasts.

In the 1850s and 1860s a new Catholic social class emerged to utilize significant improvements in transport and communications. According to scholar Alf MacLochlainn in the wake of the mass post-famine emigration a ‘petty bourgeois class’ made up of mostly Catholics thrived ‘in a better

⁸⁷ Douglas Hyde, ‘The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland’ in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.) *Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1892), pp.153-170.

⁸⁸ Daniel J. Casey and Robert E. Rhodes, ‘Preface’ in Daniel J. Casey and Robert E. Rhodes (ed.) *Views of the Irish Peasantry 1800-1916* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1977), p. 11.

⁸⁹ William Robert Wilde, *Irish Popular Superstitions* (Dublin: James McGlashan, 1852), v-vi. According to Ó Duilearga’s talk at the 1937 Paris Folklore Congress a questionnaire on folklore was appended to this work when it was originally published. Séamus O’Duilearga, ‘The Irish Folklore Commission and its Work’ in *Conférences*, vol. Paris (1937).

⁹⁰ Agnes O’Farrelly, *Smaointe Ar Árainn: Thoughts on Aran*, ed. Ríona Nic Congáil (Galway: Arlen House, 2010), p. 74.

organized British administration.’⁹¹ Historian David Fitzpatrick sums up Ireland in the 1870s:

By 1870 Ireland had assumed an appearance of economic, social, and political stability unknown since the eighteenth-century. Despite the Famine catastrophe, the residual rural population had preserved much of its familiar way of life while achieving unfamiliar prosperity. Destitution was no longer sufficient to exhaust the capacity of the Poor Law system, emigration continued to ameliorate underemployment by removing surplus population. A generation was reaching maturity, which had never known economic collapse, social breakdown, or fear of starvation. The depletion of the poorest classes and the optimism of those more privileged had weakened social animosities... while the growing Catholic middle class and the Catholic church attained a new respectability in Irish social and political life... Many Irishmen as well as Englishmen looked forward to a belated realization of O’Connell’s dream of an Ireland transformed into a ‘modern’ industrial society modelled upon England. Their confidence was sorely misplaced.⁹²

With this newfound economic security some of this middle class took an interest in Irish traditional culture. However, the interest in Irish folk traditions was greater with this generation’s children because they were better educated and emigration prospects slowed after ‘the American recession of the 1870s and the First World War.’ These ‘young men and women who would otherwise have been making their way up foreign social ladders instead devoted their enforced leisure and indignation to collective protest at home’.⁹³ They were involved in both political and cultural endeavours.

Gaelic Revival and the Irish Literary Revival

The 1880s ushered in the both the Irish Literary Revival and the Gaelic Revival and these two movements changed attitudes toward Irish scholarship dramatically.⁹⁴ Many of the most famous Irish folklorists from

⁹¹ MacLochlainn, 'Gael and Peasant- A Case of Mistaken Identity?'

⁹² David Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland Since 1870' in R. F. Foster (ed.) *The Oxford Illustrated History of Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 213.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

⁹⁴ This Gaelic Revival was different from the 1790s Gaelic Revival in Belfast. The eighteenth-century revival thrived amongst ‘the mostly Presbyterian middle class’ and was, ‘For them the investigation of native culture was an undertaking of rational enquiry and an

this period were attracted to this new form of cultural nationalism, which focused on ‘de-Anglicizing’ Ireland.⁹⁵ According to Fitzpatrick it:

... Did much to eliminate the sense of shame formerly felt by many native Irish speakers, and to teach the rudiments of the language to schoolchildren and enthusiastic clerks and shop-assistants in provincial towns. It also popularized “Irish” entertainments such as fiddling, piping, dancing, reciting poetry, and listening to history lectures.⁹⁶

This movement and its ethos had a profound impact on the way that folk studies developed. Most importantly it was during this cultural revival period that many of the IFC head office staff and the hundreds of questionnaire correspondents grew up. Unlike earlier Irish language revival organizations, the Gaelic League ‘sought mass membership,’ and therefore was more accessible to all Irish classes.⁹⁷ The following themes of the revival were central points in the society they grew up in.

This ‘cultural awakening’ that occurred with the Gaelic Revival included the establishment of the Gaelic League in 1893. The Revival also occurred at the same time as the Irish literary renaissance or revival.⁹⁸ Members of the upper and/or educated classes planned these events and movements, which helped to establish communications between Irish intellectuals and the ‘common people.’ Historian Terence Brown notes:

The Irish Literary Revival was a movement that sought to supply the Ireland of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with a sense of its own distinctive identity through the medium of the English language. This movement’s main writers and thinkers believed that a general awareness of the splendours and riches of Gaelic literary antiquity and of the residual fires of the Celtic way of life (still burning in rural districts, particularly in the West) would generate a sense of national self-worth and of organic unity, which would give to the political struggle a dignity and purpose it would otherwise lack.⁹⁹

endeavour which could interest all those who took the interests of their country to heart.’ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 96.

⁹⁵ Ó Danachair, ‘The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982’, p. 7.

⁹⁶ Fitzpatrick, ‘Ireland Since 1870’, pp. 225-226.

⁹⁷ Patrick Maume, ‘Hyde, Douglas (de hÍde, Dubhghlas), *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4185>).

⁹⁸ Miroslav Hroch, ‘From National Movement to the Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-building Process in Europe’ in Gopal Balakrishnan (ed.) *Mapping the Nation* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 81.

⁹⁹ Terence Brown, ‘Cultural Nationalism 1800-1930’ in Seamus Deane, Andrew Carpenter, and Jonathan Williams (ed.) *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991), pp. 516-517.

Of particular importance in relation to the history of the IFC is the involvement of Douglas Hyde in the foundation of the Gaelic League. He played a central role in Ó Duilearga's education and supported the establishment of the FIS.¹⁰⁰

Understanding how the concept of 'the Irish peasant' developed during this period is essential to any analysis of the IFC because the way in which the collectors and questionnaire correspondents viewed themselves and their informants was transformed by historical and societal developments from the 1880s to the 1910s. The concept of what was defined as an 'Irish peasant' and who made that distinction is central to understanding the intended use of ethnological information collected by means of IFC questionnaire. How the IFC and the questionnaire system represented the peasant specifically will be discussed in Chapter 6. A quote from Seamus O'Kelly's novel *Wet Clay* (1923) sums up why these themes are discussed in this period's historical context first. When the returning Yank tells his grandmother that their whole family are Irish peasants the old woman says, 'Faith, I never knew that until you came across the ocean to tell us.'¹⁰¹ It is important to understand the development of the concept and definition of 'the Irish peasant' before the IFC started issuing questionnaires. It is being argued that before this concept was constructed the rural population of Ireland were aware of their class distinction but did not have the scientific means to reflect on their unique cultural standing within a wider European context.

Edward Hirsch in his article 'The Imaginary Irish Peasant' argues that the concept of the 'Irish peasant' was not created until the start of the Irish Literary Revival.¹⁰² The term 'peasant' was not defined broadly before in an Irish context because Ireland, until that period, was a thoroughly rural society and therefore the majority of the population were not in need of a description of their socio-economical state. By creating this concept of the 'Irish peasant' the literary revivalists, most of whom were folklore collectors and observers of folk culture, were able to mould a definition that met their specific literary requirements. One such construct was the Victorian notion that the peasant

¹⁰⁰ FIS, IFI, and IFC. More details on this later.

¹⁰¹ Casey and Rhodes, 'Preface', p. 9.

¹⁰² Edward Hirsch, 'The Imaginary Irish Peasant' in *PMLA*, vol. 106, no. 5, (1991), p. 1116.

had to be respectable. The Celt, from which the ‘Irish peasant’ descended, was cultivated to represent the epitome of respectability. Other groups from the Irish past, such as ‘the Anglo-Irish, Normans, Vikings, and most of all pre-Celtic [people], were ignored or dismissed as irrelevant.’¹⁰³ Furthermore, any traditional folk material that was considered either vulgar or crude was ignored.¹⁰⁴ According to Ó Danachair, ‘This notion pervaded all cultural activity at the time, in spite of the protests of a few scholars such as Eoin Mac Néill and R. A. S. Macalister.’¹⁰⁵

George Petrie had referred to the Aran Islanders as having ‘wholly escaped contamination’ and stated that their characters maintained ‘delightful pristine purity.’¹⁰⁶ However, it was their ‘linguistic purity’ that attracted the first Irish-language scholars and Gaelic League members to the Aran Islands in the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁷ This traditional respectability did not always coincide with social expectations on the mainland. Agnes O’Farrelly in her travelogue *Smaointe ar Árainn* commented on how different the welcoming customs of the islanders were from her own Victorian norms.¹⁰⁸

In her introduction to *Smaointe Ar Árainn* Ríona Nic Congáil discusses how the Gaelic League members were fearful of the influence that returning emigrants from America and England were having on the ‘purity’ of the islanders. The irony of this situation was that the Gaelic Leaguers were ‘contaminating’ the islanders by being on the islands themselves.¹⁰⁹ In addition, the Aran Islanders had been trading and interacting with peoples from all over Europe for many years due to their strategic location at the entrance of Galway Bay.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Ó Danachair, ‘The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982’, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Ó Danachair, ‘The Progress of Irish Ethnology, 1783-1982’, p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ Petrie visited the islands in 1821 and again in 1857. A.C. Haddon and C. R. Browne, ‘The Ethnography of the Aran Islands, County Galway’ in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (1889-1901)*, vol. 2 (1891-1893), p. 803.

¹⁰⁷ O’Farrelly, *Smaointe Ar Árainn: Thoughts on Aran*, p. 75.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.78.

¹⁰⁹ O’Farrelly, *Smaointe Ar Árainn: Thoughts on Aran*, p.75. A.C. Haddon and C.R. Browne also make comment of this with a specific example stating, ‘Since Petrie’s visits (1821 and 1857) the Aranites have come still more under the influence of foreigners, and even politics are not unknown.’ Haddon and Browne, ‘The Ethnography of the Aran Islands’, p. 802.

¹¹⁰ Breandán Ó hEithir and Ruairí Ó hEithir, *An Aran Reader* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press Ltd, 1991).

In an attempt to counterbalance the negative stereotypes the English had developed for the Irish, Irish authors wrote about the distinctly Irish characteristics of Ireland's peasants. These works were so plausible that much of the English and Dublin middle class Irish readership read them as 'historically accurate' works.¹¹¹ The Irish middle class attitudes toward 'the Irish peasants' were somewhat of an oxymoron. They were cognizant of the un-pleasantries and extreme poverty of rural life. Nonetheless they idealized that life through the Gaelic League. Furthermore the literary revivalists searched for a 'rootedness' in Ireland and their works struck a chord with the small but prosperous Irish middle class.¹¹² The most famous of these authors was William Butler Yeats. Yeats was interested in Irish folklore and was one of many literary revivalists who drew inspiration from peasant culture and folklore.¹¹³ Yeats and other Irish Literary Revivalist authors' concepts of the Irish speaking peasant and their use of the Irish language had a colossal impact on what was viewed to be important enough to collect and save in later periods.

A further focus of the Gaelic and literary revival that had a lasting impact on Irish folklore and folklife studies was the concept that Irish peasants embodied an "ancient idealism" which originated in an imaginary Celtic past.¹¹⁴ Douglas Hyde recalled in his 1899 essay 'Irish Folklore' the stories he had heard as a boy from a Roscommon *seanchaí*. Hyde wrote, 'Now when I go to look for them I cannot find them [*seanchaithe*]. They have died out and will never again be heard...'¹¹⁵ He was embodying the idea that these stories were of a specific ancient past and were preserved from generation to generation. Many revivalists argued that these stories remained almost unchanged. In his and other Gaelic Revivalists' opinion when all the late-nineteenth century *seanchaithe* died all the Irish lore from the dawn of Celtic

¹¹¹ Hirsch, 'The Imaginary Irish Peasant', pp. 1117-1119.

¹¹² Ibid., pp.1120-1124. Leerssen, *Remembrance and Imagination*, p. 197.

¹¹³ Some examples of this include: William Butler Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (London: Bullen, 1893), *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* (London: Walter Scott, 1888), and *Deirdre* (Stratford-upon-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1907). For more on Yeats' folklore collecting see: Roy F. Foster, *W.B. Yeats: a life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹¹⁴ Hirsch, 'The Imaginary Irish Peasant', p. 1122.

¹¹⁵ Douglas Hyde, 'Irish Folk-Lore' in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.) *Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1889), p.101.

time would be lost. This was far from true as the ‘glories of ancient Erin’ that the Gaelic Revivalists thought they were encountering out in the Gaeltacht were actually, ‘the remains of the recent and vigorous culture which had flowered in the population boom of the nineteenth-century.’¹¹⁶ MacLochlainn argues that by focusing on the minority Irish-speaking peasants’ ties to this ancient culture they failed to acknowledge or appreciate the ‘real, vivid, and concrete way of life’ of Ireland’s ‘eight million peasants.’¹¹⁷

While many of the Gaelic Revivalists’ ideas and collecting methods would not be supported in a modern folklore or oral history project they did encourage collecting. Ó Duilearga notes in his first editorial to *Béaloides* that the Gaelic League ‘annually, over a period of 30 years, awarded prizes at its *feiseanna* and the annual *Oireachtas* for folk-tales, folk-songs, collections of place-names, and so on.’¹¹⁸ It is possible that a number of 1935 to 1945 questionnaire correspondents participated in these folklore competitions.

It will be argued in greater detail in Chapter 7 that the IFC’s views of the ‘Irish peasants’ were different from the concepts already detailed in this discussion of 1840 to 1915. The IFC was influenced by the research conducted by individuals who had no specific political agenda in collecting folklore. An understanding of the origins of the concept of the Irish peasant being pure, ancient, timeless individuals is needed in order to put the IFC’s view in perspective. These concepts influenced the IFC Director in his vision of how the Commission would be established and what it hoped to accomplish in the specific area of Irish folklore and folklife studies.

The key link between the events and individuals described so far, and the history the IFC, is the work and academic relationships of folklorist and linguist Douglas Hyde¹¹⁹ as his work on folklore was internationally

¹¹⁶ MacLochlainn, ‘Gael and Peasant- A Case of Mistaken Identity?’ p. 24.

¹¹⁷ I am not condoning the idea that Ireland had eight million peasants before the Famine but rather am taking MacLochlainn’s statement as an exaggeration to prove a point and also highlight the fact that it was popular at the time of the Gaelic Revival to state that Ireland’s population was eight million. *Ibid.*, p. 31. The population was over eight million in 1841 but not all of these were peasants. The decline that began during the Famine continued into the twentieth century.

¹¹⁸ Séamus Ó Duilearga, ‘Ó’n bhFear Eagair’ in *Béaloides*, vol. 1, no. 1, (1927), p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Douglas Hyde (1860-1949) was a ‘Gaelic scholar, founder of the Gaelic League, and the first president of Ireland’. Hyde took an interest in Irish at a young age and learned the language by conversing with the ‘country people’ and collecting folklore from them. In 1892 he was elected president of the National Literary Society. His inaugural address, ‘The

renowned and influential on his Irish contemporaries. He was particularly inspiring to Ó Duilearga. Before examining the relationship between Hyde and Ó Duilearga, it is important to understand Hyde's view on the value of Irish folklore, his thoughts on improving collecting, and his folklore publications and legacy.

In an article published in 1890 Hyde lamented that, 'there are countless little gems of music and feelings to be picked up like pearls on almost every mountainside, in almost every valley, in every county, barony, and even townland in Ireland- if only there were anyone to take the trouble to collect them.'¹²⁰ As a young man, he travelled on foot to visit local *seanchaithe* and hear their lore. Despite Hyde's own efforts in later years he bemoaned that Ireland did not have the equivalent of the Brothers Grimm to bring international fame to Irish folklore.¹²¹ Moreover, few examples exist of Irish scholars who were able to 'form an intellectual bond of union between the upper and lower classes,' in relation to published folklore material.¹²² Hyde was one of the first scholars to highlight the discrepancy between the informants (lower class/peasant) and the collectors (upper and middle class).

In an August 1890 *Providence Sunday Journal* article Hyde criticized previous folklorists¹²³ for candidly rewriting original collected material to satisfy their readership. However, he stated he was thankful that the material had been collected at all. He challenged scholars to 'take down and print their folk stories from the lips of the peasantry, in the exact language in which they uttered them.'¹²⁴ Hyde was already doing this in his own collecting work, which included *Leabhar Sgeulaigheachta* (1889), *Love Songs of Connaught* (1893), *Poems Ascribed to Raftery* (1909), and *Religious Songs of Connacht* (1906). Hyde's folklore work was celebrated by other Irish scholars for his

necessity for de-anglicising Ireland' was extremely influential on his contemporaries and inspired the formation of the Gaelic League and he was became the first president.

Maume, 'Hyde, Douglas,' *DIB*,

(<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4185>)

¹²⁰ Douglas Hyde, 'Gaelic Folk Songs' in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.) *Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1890), p. 104.

¹²¹ 'Some Words on Irish Folk-lore' in Breandán Ó Conaire (ed.) *Language, Lore and Lyrics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1890), p. 125.

¹²² ———, 'Gaelic Folk Songs' p. 105.

¹²³ He mentions: Thomas Crofton Croker, Patrick Kennedy, Lady Wilde, and Jeremiah Curtin (in his earlier work) readership. Hyde pp. 122-124.

¹²⁴ Hyde, 'Some Words on Irish Folk-lore', p. 125.

use of Hiberno-English and his translations from Irish. Another problem in previous folklore publications that Hyde highlighted was the failure of authors and editors to cite the names of informants and their addresses.¹²⁵

Upon review of Hyde's folklore publications and his written opinions of how folklore collecting could become more of an exact science it is easy to see why Ó Giolláin proclaimed Hyde the twentieth-century link between the artists interested in folklore and the scholar's interest in folklore.¹²⁶ According to folklorist Richard Dorson, Hyde's 1890 folklore publication *Beside the Fire* 'brought the Irish folktale study to maturity.'¹²⁷

Hyde's cultural nationalist views and his social-economic class distinction were no match for the type of political nationalism that gained traction in the second decade of the twentieth century.¹²⁸ When the Gaelic League was established one of its main principles was that it did not engage in political activity. By 1912 the political climate of Irish society had changed and the radical wing within the League demanded a form of Irish independence.¹²⁹ It was not surprising that a group originally formed to promote a national language became political. According to Timothy Baycroft language was at the forefront of many nations identity and claims for legitimacy.¹³⁰ Padraig Pearse set down his political philosophy about the League in an article published in November 1913 entitled 'The Coming Revolution.'¹³¹ After the outbreak of the First World War Hyde was torn when the Gaelic League split. The majority were politically motivated and believed the war could be used to Ireland's advantage. The political nationalists wanted Ireland to have its own 'representative national state that would guarantee to its members uniform citizenship rights.'¹³² When a

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 122-124.

¹²⁶ Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 113.

¹²⁷ Richard M. Dorson, 'Foreword' in Seán Ó Súilleabháin (ed.) *Folktales of Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. xxiv.

¹²⁸ For more on the history and theories of nationalism in general see: Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983) and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1998).

¹²⁹ Aidan Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language: from the Norman Invasion to Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 205-213.

¹³⁰ Baycroft, 'Introduction', p. 5.

¹³¹ Padraig Pearse, 'The Psychology of a Volunteer' in *An Claidheamh Soluis*, vol. (1914) available at: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/E900007-003/>

¹³² Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, p. 25.

change in the League's constitution was proposed in the spring of 1915 to make the organization committed to the 'ideal of a Gaelic-speaking and independent Irish nation' Hyde resigned from the executive committee.¹³³ The radical faction had won but Hyde was not the only disappointed individual.

In later years the works of Pádraic Pearse in particular would have an impact on the idealization of the peasant.¹³⁴ Nonetheless, Pearse and the IFC head office staff had different views on the potential of understanding and promoting Irish culture. Furthermore, the IFC head staff and full-time collectors were not involved in political nationalism because they were too young and later were uninterested. They did not attribute 'spiritual' elements to the folklore they collected like the Literary Revivalists but the cultural nationalism of the period 1890 to 1915 was central to their collecting and research projects. In time, many of those interested in folklore collecting became disillusioned with the politicization of the League and would interact with a non-politically driven Ó Duilearga based folklore scheme instead. While Ó Duilearga was not involved in politics he believed in Ireland's cultural distinctiveness and that as a result of this Ireland should be able to govern itself.¹³⁵

The 1916 Easter Rising did not have a profound impact on the study of folklife directly; however, it did influence the individuals who headed the collecting twenty years later, the individuals who funded the collecting, and it had enduring consequences on Irish cultural nationalism. Many of the men who were later involved in providing government funding for the systematic collection of folklore were involved in the 1916 Rising and/or the Irish Volunteers.¹³⁶ Through the media and other publication forms the Rising

¹³³ Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language*, pp. 205-213.

¹³⁴ Pearse, Pádraig, 'Traditionalism', *An Claidheamh Soluis*, (1906).

¹³⁵ This theory of legitimacy was popular in many nineteenth-century Europe nations. Baycroft, 'Introduction', p. 1.

¹³⁶ Some of the more famous political figures involved in the establishment of the IFI and/or the IFC who participated in the Rising include: Eamon de Valera, Tomás Ó Deirg, Seán MacEntee, and Liam Gógan. Some other men who played a key role in government-funded folklore and were members of the Irish Volunteers at the time of the Rising but did not participate include the following. Michael Tierney and Seán Mac Giollarnáth. Both men were on holidays (separately) at the time of Rising. Ernest Blythe was in prison at the time for 'posing sufficient danger to warrant deportation to England.'

publically associated many of the leaders of the Gaelic League in 1916 with a new form of cultural nationalism that advocated military action to achieve its aim of independence. These ideals and the Rising itself were initially unpopular with the public; however, the overly heavy hand taken by Asquith's government turned public opinion quickly in favour of the rebels, particularly after the executions.¹³⁷ Some of the writings and interests of the signatories of the republican proclamation also influenced the concept of the "Irish folk" and the promotion of the Irish language. Their writings were of a more radical nature and did not deal directly with the scientific collecting of Irish traditional culture. The IFC head staff were nationalists but were not members of radical sections of any Irish political party.

Briody notes that from 1916 to the end of the Irish Civil War in 1923, Irish cultural exploration was curtailed by the violence with a few exceptions. One of these exceptions was the attempted establish of a Society of Irish Tradition in 1917.¹³⁸ In an article on the history of the society Shane Stephens discusses how the main aim was, 'to make national tradition a source of fellowship for all the people of Ireland and a base for the regeneration of Irish society.' It drew its main inspiration from the Danish folk universities. The society focused on a wide variety of traditional culture subjects. These included, but were not limited to, 'folklore, topography and local terminology, archaeology, history, music, songs, dancing, traditional amusements, manners, customs, and other observances.'¹³⁹ Many of the leading Irish intellectual elites were involved in the society's foundation and committee. Stephens correctly points out that:

A great number of the personnel of the Society seem to have been members or past members of the Gaelic League, who had become uncomfortable with its politicisation or dissatisfied with its reduced productivity.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Fitzpatrick, 'Ireland Since 1870', pp. 239-240.

¹³⁸ Shane Stephens, 'The Society of Irish Tradition 1917-1919' in *Béaloides*, vol. 67 (1999), pp. 139-169.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹⁴⁰ 'These disgruntled Gaelic Leaguers and ex-Gaelic Leaguers wanted to continue to work they had been doing but in an environment of moderate nationalism, where cultural nationalism would be pursued in a way that might make it a 'common ground for Irish people of divergent political, and religious beliefs.' *Ibid.*, p. 162.

No known documented evidence indicates that any of the IFC head office staff or full-time collectors actively took part in the Anglo-Irish War or the Irish Civil War.¹⁴¹ Ó Catháin's *Formations of a Folklorist* recounts a comment made by Ó Duilearga in his diary, about the Civil War:

In July 1922 I went to prepare for the Studentship exam, in the island of Eigg, and I remember while fishing with Iain Johnston in the bay that the estate-boat came from Arisaig and I heard the news of the outbreak of Civil War in Ireland. I returned to Ireland to the digs in Adelaide Road [where his mother, Mary Josephine "Lily" (1865-1951), only brother, Jack (John Alexander, 1901-1960), and he lived at the time] and studied as best I could (at night to the rattle of machine-guns reading Thes. Palaeohibernicus!).¹⁴²

Ó Duilearga did not participate in the fighting, but one particular event during this conflict was to have a great impact on his future and the future of the writing of Irish history. On 13 April 1922 some anti-Treatyite forces, overseen by Rory O'Connor, captured the Four Courts in Dublin.¹⁴³ They fortified the western end of the complex where the Public Records Office was. By the spring of 1922 this building 'had been receiving enormous quantities of records from all parts of Ireland for over half-a-century.'¹⁴⁴ The building was held steadily into June 1922 and as historian Dermot Keogh explains the anti-Treatyite forces 'were intent upon armed confrontation.'¹⁴⁵ The government troops opened fire on the building at 4:00 AM on 28 June 1922. The anti-Treatyite forces had set up their munitions factory in the Records Office because it was separated from the other buildings. Scholarly debate has raged in recent years about what exactly happened within the Four Courts, and who may or may not have been involved in trying to get the records moved once the building had been occupied. This debate is interesting but it

¹⁴¹According to two separate witness statements in the Bureau of Military History files (Liam (William) Archer and John "Jack" Plunkett) in the year 1921 a 'receiving set was purchased in England' and set up in a residence. "After some time a regular operator was employed, to see what he could get, particularly in transmission from the British stations. His name was Jack Delargy, a brother of the Professor of Folklore at University College, Dublin.'

¹⁴² Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 259:9

¹⁴³ Gerard O'Brien, *Irish Governments and the Guardianship of Historical Records, 1922-72* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), p. 20.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁴⁵ Dermot Keogh, *Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: New Gill History of Ireland, 2005), p. 7.

is of little relevance to the current thesis topic.¹⁴⁶ Gerard O'Brien discusses how the 'Treasury was defended by the 'young, poorly-trained men' who piled up heaps of the Records Office material in defence of the 'restless sniper-fire.' The field-gun fire from the government artillery blew large holes in the walls of the Records Office and started fires that 'completed the destruction' in addition to the 'detonation of the TNT' that was housed in the defenders munitions room.¹⁴⁷ They eventually surrendered on 30 June but the damage was irreversible. The documents that did survive the shelling were fragmented and badly damaged. Ó Duilearga lamented in his first editorial for *Béaloides*, that 'during the troublous years, 1916-1921, much valuable material was, to our own knowledge, destroyed,' and he most likely had this event in mind specifically.¹⁴⁸ Historian David Edwards notes, 'the destruction of the Public Record Office of Ireland (PROI) and its contents in June 1922... [is] one of the Civil War's most lasting legacies, namely the handicapping of Ireland's history.'¹⁴⁹

While the Anglo-Irish Treaty settlement remained a cause of conflict, some of the main political ideals in relation to cultural nationalism were less controversial and demonstrated the cultural climate of the period. As Stephens has demonstrated, some of the foundation principles in relation to the importance of traditional culture united Irish politicians. Article 4 of the 1922 Constitution made Irish the national language of the Irish Free State.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ For some of the latest discussions see: John M. Regan, *Myth and The Irish State* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁷ O'Brien, *Irish Governments*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁸ Ó Duilearga, 'Ó'n bhFear Eagair',

¹⁴⁹ David Edwards, 'Salvaging History: Hogan and the Irish Manuscripts Commission' in Donnchadh Ó Corráin (ed.) *James Hogan. Revolutionary, Historian, and Political Scientist* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), p. 117. Mícheál Briody highlights a quote by Eoin Mac Néill about the destruction of documents during the Civil War that is worth noting, 'The real criminals are those who had the education of the people in their hands- no matter who they were- and that crime [*bheith beag beann ar thraidisiún dúchasach na hÉireann*] they and they alone must answer for at the bar of history. They and their successors must atone for this disgrace by as far as possible retrieving the disaster in the present. Every school in Ireland should teach its pupils the duty of saving whatever remains among the people of our national literature either in tradition or in writing.' Briody, 'Énri Ó Muirgheasa agus Scéim na Scol 1934', p. 1. Citing: An Chartlann/Páipéir Eoin Mac Néill (LA1/F/3): 'A National Manuscript Collection' 1ch [1].

¹⁵⁰ *Constitution of the Irish State* (Saorstát Éireann).

Individuals on both sides of the conflict supported the promotion of the language and Irish speaking areas.¹⁵¹

The importance of folk traditions, their identification with ‘national culture’, and views on the Irish language can be seen in the newspapers of the day. The Civil War conflict was bitter and negatively impacted many Irish citizens’ lives. It turned neighbour against neighbour and in some cases family member against family member. At the end neither side won because of the climate of mistrust and violence created. The Civil War had a profound impact on Irish politics and Irish society into the twenty-first century and certainly had an impact on how folklore collecting was funded.¹⁵²

From the beginning of the independent state the Irish public supported the ‘expectation that the Gaelicisation of Ireland... would be achieved through its education system.’¹⁵³ When the Free State government took over the national education system on 1 February 1922 it issued a Public Notice, ‘Concerning the Teaching of Irish Language in the National Schools.’ This notice set down the new regulations in relation to the teaching of the language.¹⁵⁴ The idea behind making Irish a compulsory school subject was that Ireland without its own distinct native language would not survive as a nation.¹⁵⁵ This was not a new idea but for the first time those who upheld it were in positions to implement it. Adrian Kelly explains that the initial enthusiasm for the promotion of Irish in schools waned over time as ‘nobody quite knew what was expected from them- neither teacher, nor pupil, nor parent.’¹⁵⁶ The parents who did object were ignored. Resentment amongst the parents did not bode well for the children’s opinions either. Complaints about the compulsory system in the home can only have trickled down. Furthermore, ‘part of the division on the issue was political, the policy of

¹⁵¹ For more on the language and the Irish Free State see: Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). Seán Breandán Ó hUallacháin, *Pobal an Stáit agus an Ghaeilge, 1920-1939* (Baile Átha Cliath: Binn Éadair, 2010).

¹⁵² For more on how Irish speakers were impacted see: ———, *Pobal an Stáit agus an Ghaeilge, 1920-1939*.

¹⁵³ Áine Hyland and Kenneth Milne, *Irish Educational Documents, Volume II* (Dublin: C.I.C.E, 1992), p. 86.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 87-89.

¹⁵⁵ Adrian Kelly, *Compulsory Irish: Language and Education in Ireland 1870s-1970s* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

compulsion being associated more and more with Fianna Fáil.¹⁵⁷ The teachers were continually dissatisfied over wages in the 1935 to 1945 period and this did nothing to warm them toward a language policy that, in many areas, was difficult to implement.¹⁵⁸ If there was more widespread approval of the role of the language in education at the beginning of the independent state it had waned significantly by the time the IFC conducted the 1937 to 1938 Schools' Collection Scheme.

Two years before the establishment of the Folklore of Ireland Society (FIS) the Irish Free State Government established the Commission of Inquiry into the Preservation of the Gaeltacht (1925) to investigate the precise boundaries of the Irish-speaking districts, the percent of the population that spoke Irish in those areas, and their socio-economic conditions (education, local government, and employment). The main goal was to provide 'a clear and definite national policy in respect of those districts and local populations, which have preserved the Irish language as the language of their homes.'¹⁵⁹ Many of the 'members' of the commission had or would take an active role in folklore collecting.¹⁶⁰ The report was finally published in 1926 and clearly defined the geographical area of the *Gaeltacht* recognised by the government and, therefore the government funded IFI and IFC. Unfortunately many of the commission's recommendations were not implemented because of the newly independent Irish state's financial constraints.¹⁶¹ The report sparked many long debates in the Dáil, Seanad, and in Dublin intellectual circles. A particular emphasis in the debate was put on the poor socio-economic situations.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁵⁸ Séamas Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988), pp. 91-96.

¹⁵⁹ *Gaeltacht Commission Report*, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ The following are examples of men who served on the Gaeltacht Commission and were involved in the FIS, IFI, or IFC: Richard Mulcahy, Séamus Ó hÉochaidha, Risteárd Ó Foghludha, 'An Seabhac', and Michael Tierney.

¹⁶¹ For more on the history of the Gaeltacht Commission see: John Walsh, *Díchoimisiúnú teanga: Coimisiún na Gaeltachta 1926* (Dublin: Cois Life Teoranta, 2002). Nuala C. Johnson, 'Building a Nation: an examination of the Irish Gaeltacht Commission Report of 1926' in *Journal of Historical Geography*, vol. 19, no. 2, (1993), pp. 157-168. Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000* (London: Profile Books, 2005). Angela Bourke, 'Re-Imagining the Gaeltacht: Maps, Stories, and Place in the Mind' in Andrew Higgins Wyndham (ed.) *Re-imagining Ireland* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

On 10 March 1927 the Seanad discussed the Gaeltacht Commission's report. The *Cumann na nGaedheal* senator T. Westropp Bennett quoted a section of the report about folk culture.¹⁶² Afterwards he commented that he hoped the Irish 'race [would not] be absorbed undigested by an Anglo-Saxon civilisation.' In politics at the time the issues the reports raised and how best to deal with them were divisive. As Dr Oliver St. John Gogarty stated further on in the same Seanad debate:

This is a moment which presents great opportunities for a lot of irrational and emotional patriotism... take the fallacies which underlie all this irrational enthusiasm about Gaelic. One fallacy is that the Gaelic-speaking parts of the country are the centre of civilisation. Nothing of the kind... I have nothing to say against the Gaelic language or Gaelic culture, but I do not want to get way with the idea that there is no possibility of being an Irishman except you are in the middle of the Gaeltacht.¹⁶³

Bennett and St. Gogarty's different opinions of the ideals of *Gaeltacht* culture exemplify the two sides to the cultural debate to which the study of folklife was central. However, unlike the Gaelic Revival of the 1890s, the FIS was established at a time when an independent Irish government had the ability to financially promote folklife on a national level.¹⁶⁴ The centrality of this report and the vision of helping the *Gaeltacht* inhabitants it presented may have persuaded some politicians in later years to encourage government-funded folklore collecting schemes.

Ó Duilearga's Folklore Schemes (FIS, IFI, & IFC)

The foundation of the Folklore of Ireland Society (FIS) in 1927 in many ways led to the foundation of the IFC directly. Were it not for the organization and support of the FIS members the government would not have funded the IFI, and in turn the IFC. The scholars and famous folklore enthusiasts who took an interest in the Society's mission helped to boost its status as a serious, intellectual organization in Ireland and abroad.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² *Seanad debates*, vol. 8, 484, 10 March 1927.

¹⁶³ *Seanad debates*, vol. 8, 490, 10 March 1927.

¹⁶⁴ For more on the idealization of the *Gaeltacht* in the early years of the independent Irish State see: O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, Chapter 2.

¹⁶⁵ In total 17 people (Note that Ó Muimhneacháin got the count wrong in his article when he stated 16 people attended. Nonetheless in his article he then lists seventeen names anyways. It is possible that he was not counting himself. Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin, 'An

Furthermore, in time the Society provided an outlet for folklore enthusiasts who wanted collecting projects to maintain ties with the Irish language revival. This allowed Ó Duilearga to focus on his own pursuits for an international scientific-based folklore-collecting institute. The networks of the FIS helped to build up a section of the questionnaire correspondence pool, as well as creating a network of scholars who were interested in using the collecting method for their own research.

As the editor of the Society's journal *Béaloideas*, Ó Duilearga made the FIS a success through his hard work gaining interesting submissions to the journal. Having a journal of such high quality, with well-written material in English and Irish bolstered the popularity of the FIS with Irish academics and folklore enthusiasts alike. The second attempt to form a society was successful (after the failure in 1925) because Fionán Mac Coluim¹⁶⁶ approached wealthy Irishman Pádraig Mac Mághnuis¹⁶⁷ (brother of the famous writer and fellow FIS member Seumas MacManus¹⁶⁸) for the funds

Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann 1927-77' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 45-47 (1977-1979), p. 1). The names of the attendees follow:

1. "An Craoibhín Aoibhinn" (Douglas Hyde) 2. Tadhg Mac an Bháird 3. Seán Ó Catháin 4. Oscar Mac Cárthaigh Uileas 5. Pádraig Mac Cárthaigh 6. Séamus Ó Duilearga 7. Séamus Ó Fiannachta 8. Tomás Ó Fiannachta 9. Máiréad Ní Ghráda 10. Máire Ní Ghuairim 11. "Marbhán" (Seán Ó Ciarghusa) 12. Eoghan Ó Neachtain 13. "An Seabhadh" (Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha) 14. Siobhán Bean Uí Shiochfhradha 15. Mícheál Ó Siochfhradha 16. Fionán Mac Coluim 17. Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin

¹⁶⁶ Ó Catháin summarizes Mac Coluim biography as follows: '(1875-1966) Born in Ballymoney, County Antrim, he grew up in Iveragh, County Kerry. He was a founder member of the Gaelic League in London, and President of the Gaelic League (1922-1925). He was a travelling Irish teacher, song collector, founder member of the Folklore of Ireland Society and member of the Irish Folklore Commission.' Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 257.

¹⁶⁷ Pádraig Mac Mághnuis, did not wish to be named as a donor in the newspaper articles covering the foundation of the society, but he was indirectly referred to in *The Irish Times* 'Irish Folk-Lore. New Society Formed' 12 January 1927, p. 5.

Pádraig Mac Mághnuis (1864-1929) was born into a wealthy well-to-do family in Mountcharles, Donegal. He studied to be a National School Teacher but immigrated to Argentina and attended college at De Plat, Argentina. He was appointed a travelling teacher for the Governor of Buenos Aires and was then he was appointed manager of three family ranches of the Governor. He gave money generously to support Gaelic League causes. In 1929 he was a student in Paris with his wife and they both contracted the flu that was widespread throughout Europe. They both died.

¹⁶⁸ Seumas MacManus (1868-1960) donated prizes in the form of books to whoever could send in worthwhile folklore material to the Society. *Irish Independent* 'Irish Folk-Lore. Move for its Publication', 15 November 1926, p. 8. *Irish Independent*, 'Beul-Oideas Naisiunta', 12 January 1927, p. 8.

to start a Society.¹⁶⁹ In order to attract more members, Mac Coluim put an advertisement in the newspaper.¹⁷⁰

Mac Coluim told the reporter at the preliminary meeting in November 1926 'that the meeting was largely due to the persuasions of Seumas MacManus.' The society's name *An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann*, or The Folklore of Ireland Society in English was set, and the society's purpose was stated: 'collection and publication of folk-tales and other traditional lore, principally from the Gaeltacht districts.'¹⁷¹ Folklife or traditional material culture was not noted as a specific collection aim at the time. The meeting concluded with those present stating they would invite 50 additional individuals to join and that the society already had the written support of many scholars and Irish language enthusiasts.¹⁷² The number and type of individuals who attended the November 1926 meeting for a potential society demonstrated the interest and faith in the project. The attendance also highlighted the fact that most FIS members were not there just to bolster the status of the society, but that they actually enjoyed participating in the planned organization. It was decided, at the end of the preliminary meeting, that a first 'official meeting' would be after the New Year, on 11 January

¹⁶⁹ *The Irish Times* 'Irish Folklore. New Society Formed' article from 12 January 1927 stated that it was a £100 but Mac Mághnuis's donated more at a later date. Upon his death in 1929 Ó Duilearga said the following in his Memoriam in *Béaloideas*: '*Le linn an Chumainn le Béaloideas a chur ar bun is é do chuaidh i n-urraidheacht dúinn go íocfadh sé dá mbeadh fiacha nó costaisí fondúireachta orainn tar eis na céad bhliana. Nuair ná raibh san ann ní raibh sé sásta gan £150 do bhronnadh orainn ar son gnóthaí an Chumainn; agus "na theannta san do fuair (síntiúsóirí) fiala ó n-a chomh-Éireannacha san Argentina. Dob' fhial agus ba duthrachtach an croidhe bhí aige d'Éirinn agus do gach ní a bhain le Gaedhil.'* Séamas Ó Duilearga, 'Pádraig Mac Mághnuis' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 2, no. 1, (1929), p. 112.

¹⁷⁰ The first preliminary meeting was held on 13th November 1926 at 122a St Stephens Green. Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin, 'An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann 1927-77' in *Ibid.*, vol. 45-47 (1977-1979), p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Douglas Hyde chose the society's name.

¹⁷² Such as Tomas Ó Máille, Professor of Irish at Galway University, Rev. L. P. Murray/Lorcán Ó Muireadhaigh, Eibhlín de Buitléir (Eleanor Butler) (translation name given next to all her books)- She is a unknown character but wrote: *A Handbook of Civics: to introduce Irish Students to a knowledge of their rights and duties as citizens, and to a knowledge of the Constitution under which they live*. Also wrote: *Bonn agus Forsgreamh na hÉireann* (Structural Geography of Ireland)(1929). Wrote: *Atlas don ghael óg* (Irish Student's Atlas) (1954). Wrote the first essay in *Saorstát Éireann Official Handbook* 'The Country and its People' pp. 17-24. Diarmuid Ó Cobhthaigh/ Hugh Dermot James Coffey Author of one of Hyde's biographies and public servant who grew up in Dublin literary circles in the 1890s and 1910s. Diarmid Coffey, *Douglas Hyde, An Craoibhin Aoibhinn* (Dublin: Maunsell, 1917).

1927.¹⁷³ Thus having such well-known society members at the preliminary meeting certainly gave the FIS early scholarly prestige.

At the first official meeting many of the recommendations raised at the preliminary meeting were discussed.¹⁷⁴ Douglas Hyde acted as Chairman and Mícheál Ó Siochfhradha took notes as the new 1927 committee was elected.¹⁷⁵ Many famous Irish folklorists, historians, archaeologists, antiquarians, English literary scholars, Irish literary scholars, Celticists, as well as educated members of the civil service, teachers, artists, writers, and the clergy attended the event or wrote letters of support. Thus from the first meeting the FIS, Ó Duilearga, and the scientific study of Irish folklore were well connected to other Irish scholarly fields and the Irish language movement. The official establishment of the Society was covered in many of the local and national newspapers. They noted that an impressive number of Irish scholars and intellectuals attended the event.¹⁷⁶

The society's aims remained the same as those from the 15 November meeting with one notable difference. In 1926 the society's stated interest was collecting 'principally from the Gaeltacht districts' and made no mention of collecting from English language or *Breac-ghaeltacht* areas. The 1927 meeting concluded that it was the society '... intention to publish these folk-stories as they are primarily received, whether in Irish or English.'¹⁷⁷

At the time different opinions existed on whether folklore collecting in English was valuable to the study of the folklore of Ireland. It was a debate

¹⁷³ Ó Muimhneacháin, 'An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann 1927-77', pp. 1-2.

¹⁷⁴ These included including the wording of the society's name, the publishing of a biannual folklore journal, and the fixing of the annual subscription fee. The journal was also to be made available to the public. It is highly likely that many of the later questionnaire correspondents who had an active interest in Irish folklore as a hobby read the first few volumes of *Béaloideas*.

¹⁷⁵ *An Seabhad* was made president; Douglas Hyde was elected honorary treasurer. After being unable to accept the position of presidency. Fionán Mac Coluim was elected financial secretary, Oscar Mac Cárthaigh Uileas was elected general secretary, and Séamus Ó Duilearga, was appointed the librarian and editor of *Béaloideas*. Five additional members consisting of Liam (Ó) Gógan, Donn Piatt, Fionn Mac Cumhaill [Maoghnus Mac Cumhaill], Shán (Sean) Ó Cuív (Ó Caoimh), and Tomás Ó Colmáin were also elected to the committee.

¹⁷⁶ *The Irish Times*, 'Irish Folk-lore. New Society Formed', 12 January 1927, p. 5. Many of the future questionnaire correspondents and full-time IFC collectors most likely read one of the articles about the foundation of the FIS in 1927.

¹⁷⁷ *The Irish Times*, 'Irish Folk-lore. New Society Formed', 12 January 1927, p. 5.

that continued for many years amongst the most active FIS members.¹⁷⁸ The key question was, what was the specific purpose of collecting folklore? Was it to systematically collect Irish folklore because it was a popular topic? And would publication of folklore material further benefit Irish society from a nationalist perspective? Or was the folklore being collected because it was 'pure' Irish material coming from the mouths of the 'Irish Peasant' who had been elevated to a new level of idealization by the new independent Irish State? These debates correlated with the debates within the wider Irish society at the time.

Pádraig Mac Mághnuis,¹⁷⁹ aware of these issues, stated for the *Irish Times* reporter:

There is no fear but that the Cumann will succeed, for these reasons; (1) It fills a want; (2) it is not political; (3) it causes no envy, and (4) it will appeal to the quiet plodding people, who always do the right work.¹⁸⁰

Mac Mághnuis purposely highlighted the non-political stance, because following division relating to the politicization of the Irish language movement, and the bitterness of the Irish treaty debates, Irish society and scholarship were only slowly starting to recover by 1927. Mac Mághnuis made it clear that the Society he helped to finance was not going to become entangled in these issues. The 'native culture' the FIS sought to collect included elements of the Irish language but it was not set up to accomplish the goal of restoring it.¹⁸¹ In the wake of the Irish Civil War this was critical.¹⁸² Through cultural projects, like the FSI, persons from different sides of the language, and previous military conflicts, could agree on one

¹⁷⁸ The debate continued on into the establishment of the IFI in 1930 and then the IFC in 1935.

¹⁷⁹ The newspaper actually wrote that the quote came from: 'A donor, who did not wish his name to be disclosed' but it was Pádraig Mac Mághnuis.

¹⁸⁰ *The Irish Times*, 'Irish Folk-lore. New Society Formed', 12 January 1927, p. 5.

¹⁸¹ The society therefore attracted members who were disillusioned with the Gaelic League's political agenda in the preceding years but still had an interest in the Irish language. Nonetheless, the FIS did not have a specific anti-Gaelic League stance and therefore still welcomed members of that organization. The President of the Gaelic League in 1927 Cormac Breathnach attended the first meeting and the preceding President was Fionán Mac Coluim.

¹⁸² Briody notes, 'Given the bitter legacy of the Civil War, and the fact that many of those who founded and supported this new society had taken opposite sides during the conflict, the setting up of this society was a great achievement in itself.' Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 77.

ideal- promoting Irish folklore.¹⁸³ Most politicians wanted the Irish public to have a deep interest in Irish culture and traditions; they believed it would be positive for society as a whole. The noteworthy *Westmeath Examiner* article summarized the above point with the following:

Clergy, school inspectors, and teachers and public officials and all other whose duties bring them in contact with the people are especially invited to co-operate with the Cumann because of the urgency of the work owing to the rapid disappearance of the best seanachies and narrators and consequent big yearly lose of folklore left uncollected. Those helping in collecting stories are asked to send them in soon as possible in the exact words of the informant.¹⁸⁴

According to Ó Catháin, ‘Once established, the Folklore of Ireland Society swiftly set about publicizing its aims through lectures, press releases and, especially, through its journal, *Béaloideas*.’¹⁸⁵ Ó Duilearga was still relatively unknown in most academic circles and therefore Christiansen and Von Sydow did most of the promotional work.¹⁸⁶

In June 1927 the first issue of *Béaloideas* was published. Ó Duilearga, clarified in the first editorial in Irish, and then in English, the aims of the society and specifically noted that despite the previous decade of ‘wars and civil strife’, FIS members needed, ‘to collect what still remains of the folklore’ which was ‘fast being lost with the passing of the old people in all parts of the country,’ although particular emphasis was placed on *Gaeltacht* dwellers.¹⁸⁷ Readers who had, ‘still in their possession collections of folklore made at various times during the last 30 years,’ ‘in English or in Irish’ were urged to send copies or the original into the Society ‘*do-chum glóire Dé agus onóra*

¹⁸³ ‘In time, however, a conflict of interest would arise between those whose main interest in collecting folklore was the belief that such collections could help in the efforts to revive the Irish language, and those whose primary interest in collecting folklore was scholarly.’ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹⁸⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, ‘Beul-Oideas Naisiunta. Irish Folk-Lore. New Society Formed’, 22 January 1927, p. 5. This style of language would be used again to inspire people to work with the Schools’ Collection Scheme in 1937 and then with the questionnaire system starting in 1939.

¹⁸⁵ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ A few examples: unnamed lecture by Reidar Christiansen at UCD. 28 June 1927, 2nd unnamed lecture by Reidar Christiansen at UCD, 1st July 1927. *The Irish Times*, ‘The Importance of Irish Folklore, Dr Christiansen in Dublin,’ 2 July 1927. *The Irish Times*, ‘Irish Language and Folk-Lore. Swedish Professor’s Address,’ 6 August 1927.

¹⁸⁷ Ó Duilearga, ‘Ó’n bhFear Eagair’, p. 4

na hÉireann.’¹⁸⁸ Ó Duilearga further noted in the editorial that the FIS did not have enough material yet ‘to form an accurate judgment’; however, he was ‘certain that the nonsensical rubbish which passes for Irish folklore, both in Ireland and outside, is not representative in English, French, or German.’¹⁸⁹

Many of the national circulation newspapers published reviews of the first edition. *The Irish Times* highlighted how ‘many of the best living Irish scholars’ had contributed articles.¹⁹⁰ Most of the articles were annotated folklore that the authors collected, with two notable exceptions that dealt with an element of folk culture rather than lore.¹⁹¹ *Béaloides* focused more on ‘folklore’ subjects in its earliest issues and continued to attract well known Irish and international scholars. By the time the second issue of *Béaloides* was published (December 1927) the Society had over 450 members.¹⁹² Soon after the publication of the second issue Ó Duilearga wrote a letter to the editor of *The Irish Times* to clarify a few points that had been incorrectly reported in a previous article about the Society. He noted amongst other

¹⁸⁸ *For the glory of God and the honour of Ireland*. He finished off the editorial by stating that in the FIS’s short existence it had received material from all over Ireland. In the second editorial of *Béaloides* (December 1927) Ó Duilearga lists off twenty-one people who had sent in material in the months since the first edition went to press. Out of the 21 people 6 of them were active questionnaire correspondents in the period 1939-1945.

¹⁸⁹ Ó Duilearga, ‘Ó’n bhFear Eagair’ p. 5. O’Leary also cites this quote and notes that Ó Duilearga ‘and doubtless many like him, were concerned about the negative effect on the national image being generated by ignorant versions of traditional material...’ O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 561:72.

¹⁹⁰ ‘The first issue of *Béaloides*, the Journal of the recently formed Folklore of Ireland Society, contains a highly interesting miscellany, admirably printed. Many of the best living Irish scholars- Dr. Macalister, Dr. Hyde, Mr Robin Flower, Professor O’Toole and others contribute. We confess to finding more interest in the tales, legends, and proverbs recorded than in scientific explanations of their origins. The Journal takes an apposite motto: *Colligite quae superaverunt fragmenta, ne pereant*. A single fault must be found- the selections include no verse.’ 21 Oct 1927, ‘New Books In Irish’, *The Irish Times*, p. 2.

¹⁹¹ The two articles on an aspect of folklife (although it was not specified as such in the article) are Ó Duilearga’s ‘Seana-Shoillse na Gaeltachta’ and An Seabhac’s ‘Cnuasach ó Chorca Dhuibhne’.

¹⁹² Many of whom later became active questionnaire correspondents in the 1939 to 1945 period.

The society was also provided with accommodation at UCD ‘thanks to the kind offices of the President and Governing Body of the College.’ This was the beginning of UCD’s official association with Ó Duilearga’s folklore collecting schemes.

Ó Duilearga, ‘Editorial’.

In a letter to *The Irish Times* on 14 January 1928 Ó Duilearga states the Society had 500 members. James H. Delargy, ‘The Folk-lore of Ireland Society. To the Editor of the Irish Times,’ *The Irish Times*, 14 January 1927.

In *The Weekly Irish Times* article on the Society on 21 January 1928 ‘Bluebird’ (the writer) states the Society had 800 members! Bluebird, ‘Round the World and Home,’ *Weekly Irish Times*, 21 January 1928, p. 3.

points the following, ‘We should be grateful for information regarding local customs; calendar or seasonal beliefs and superstitions, from readers of the *Irish Times* resident in the country.’¹⁹³ It is possible that even before Ó Duilearga’s trip to Northern Europe he had discussed with continental scholars the idea of collecting folklife material. This suggestion does not appear in any of Ó Duilearga’s writings before his 1928 trip, although the material was certainly being published in other journals and newspapers of the day.¹⁹⁴ Ó Catháin correctly notes, ‘*Béaloideas* itself would [go on to] play an important role in presenting the raw materials of Irish folklore to a wide audience, both local and international.’¹⁹⁵

In two articles published toward the end of 1929 in *The Star*¹⁹⁶ and *The Irish Times*¹⁹⁷ Ó Duilearga spoke to the journalists extensively about folklife collecting and his hope of having a Skansen style open-air museum established in Dublin. He described ‘material folklore’ as being:

...Concerned with the acquisition both of material objects, associated with peasant culture, in past times, and of precise and detailed information as to the manufacture and use of these objects and their place in the culture of the folk.¹⁹⁸

This is the first time Ó Duilearga clearly defines what ‘folklife’ constituted to him. He noted to *The Irish Times* readers that collecting oral folklore was still important; however, ‘there is an equally pressing need to keep intact the material evidence of the past culture of the common people of Ireland.’¹⁹⁹

¹⁹³ "The Folk-lore of Ireland Society. To the Editor of the Irish Times," *The Irish Times*, 14 January 1927, p. 11.

¹⁹⁴ O’Leary notes, ‘Miscellaneous categories of traditional material published in journals of the period include games, riddles, fairy beliefs, calendar customs, including some submitted by Mícheál Mac Liammóir to *Fáinne an Lae* (1/5/26)- keens, charms and cures, crafts, the making of *poitín*, place-name lore, prophecies, and various *pisreoga* or ‘superstitions’.
O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 562-82.

¹⁹⁵ Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 17.

¹⁹⁶ 'A Venerable Heritage. Irish Folklore a National and Cultural Asset of Highest Value. The Treasure House of the Gaedheal. A Source of the Political and Social History of the Irish People.,' *The Star*, 23 November 1929.

¹⁹⁷ 'An Irishman's Diary. An Open-Air Amusement,' *The Irish Times*, 17 December 1929, p. 4.

¹⁹⁸ "A Venerable Heritage. Irish Folklore a National and Cultural Asset of Highest Value. The Treasure House of the Gaedheal. A Source of the Political and Social History of the Irish People.," *The Star*, 23 November 1929.

¹⁹⁹ "An Irishman's Diary. An Open-Air Amusement," *The Irish Times*, 17 December 1929, p.4.

Furthermore, he hoped that an Irish ethnographical museum would be established with various types of ‘farm-houses and other buildings associated with the traditional culture of the Irish countryside.’ He noted that the Royal Commission of British Museums was building an open-air museum. He hoped to appeal to the reader that, if England had one, Ireland needed one too. The article then discussed the history and economic success of Skansen in Stockholm.²⁰⁰ In an un-posted letter to Kaarle Krohn from 18 January 1929 Ó Duilearga wrote, ‘that our Nat. Museum is to take up the task of establishing an ethnological department. I am satisfied at this progress and am hopeful for the future.’²⁰¹ The idea of an open-air folk museum was discussed in the *Dáil* up until 1939. However, nothing was ever approved for construction in Dublin because of lack of funding.²⁰²

Not all of the FIS’s senior members were happy with Ó Duilearga’s enthusiasm for material culture. Many believed the point of folklore collecting was to study native Irish linguistics. In an essay entitled ‘Feidhm an Bhéaloideas chun Gaedhealachais’, published in *Fáinne an Lae* in September 1929, An Seabhac wrote:

[Béaloideas] Ar nós na teangan agus na staire is rud beo é gur gádh é chleachtadh go laethiúil chun go maireadh sé ar aon chor. Is é feidhm aicionta dhóibh a triúr ná eolas a bheith ag daoibh ortha. Ní le cur í gcás gloine iad, ná fé ghlas i n-iarsmalainn, mar dhéanfaí le hiarsmaí marbh an lámh-shaothair a dhein ár sínnsear.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ "A Venerable Heritage. Irish Folklore a National and Cultural Asset of Highest Value. The Treasure House of the Gaedheal. A Source of the Political and Social History of the Irish People.," *The Star*, 23 November 1929.

‘In Stockholm, he tells me, there is an open-air museum whither are carried, and set up exactly as they existed in occupation, specimen dwelling acquired all over Sweden. There are to be seen the old scythes and reaping hooks, the out-moded [*sic*] ladders and spindles, the wall decorations, pots, pans and wooden ware, and on holydays the people of Stockholm themselves swell the numbers of students who come pridefully [*sic*] to study they way their fathers and grandfathers lived. It seems an example to be followed and the Phoenix Park gives us the space.’ "An Irishman's Diary. An Open-Air Amusement," *The Irish Times*, 17 December 1929, p. 4.

²⁰¹ Séamas Ó Duilearga to Kaarle Krohn (18 January 1929) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 203-204.

²⁰² *Dáil debates*: vol. 35, 366-373, 30 May 1930; vol. 51, 2207-2256, 25 April 1934; vol. 54, 1575-1580, 18 December 1934; vol. 55, 2437-2475, 11 April 1935; vol. 55, 2484-2544, 12 April 1935; vol. 66, 253-302, 1 April 1937; vol. 74, 480-502, 15 February 1939.

²⁰³ Translation of the text provided by O’Leary: ‘[Folklore] Like the language and history it is a living thing that must be used daily for it to survive at all. The natural use of the three of them is for people to know them. They aren’t to be put into a glass case, nor locked up in a museum, as would be done with the dead remnants of the craftwork our ancestors did.’ *Fáinne an Lae*, September 1929, p.1. Cited and translated by O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 108.

In 1929 luck was again in Ó Duilearga's favour when he set about trying to promote the collection of rural objects and the recording of traditional customs. In that year a book that in many ways would conjure up in the mind of the Irish till the present day, the 'ideal Gael,' was published Tomás Ó Criomhthain's *An t-Oileánach* first appeared in Irish in 1929 and an English language translation by Robin Flower (*The Islandman*), followed in 1934. Ó Criomhthain's story was well received in Ireland and abroad. The book popularized Irish publications about the more remote rural areas and island life. In his book Ó Criomhthain recorded what, in his own opinion, life had been like for him as native islander. It was not specifically an ethnological piece but provided a first hand account of many of the islanders' traditions.

In addition to the publication of traditional life autobiographies, Irish language enthusiasts continued to send in folklore material to many of the periodicals of the day including *An Lóchrann*, *An t-Ultach*, *An Stoc*, and even the *Garda Review*.²⁰⁴ Some of the material submitted was about topics relating to folk material culture although the collectors were most likely unaware of its distinction as a subsection of folklore. In 1929 the diocese of Clonfert, Co Galway issued a twenty-four-page pamphlet filled with questions about parish history. The pamphlet entitled, 'Scéim agus Ceistiúchán le h-Aghaidh Stair Paráiste' was published in Irish and was written mainly by An tAth. Eric Mac Fhinn. The introduction states, 'Le moladh ón Easbog, táthar annseo ag iarraidh eolas do bhailiú faoi stair agus faoi bhéal-oideas na bparáiste i bhfairche Chluana Fearta.'²⁰⁵ Ó Duilearga's collection of personal books has a copy of the pamphlet and in Mac Fhinn's handwriting is the following on the inside cover 'do "bhéul-oideas" cóip le h-aghaidh leirmheasa'.²⁰⁶ The two men personally did not get along but Mac Fhinn was an avid IFC questionnaire correspondent from 1936 to 1945. The title includes the word 'ceistiúchán' but this publication cannot be considered

²⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 111-112.

²⁰⁵ Upon the recommendation of the bishop, we are trying here to gather information about history and about folklore of the Parish of Clonfert.'

[No author noted on document] *Scéim agus Ceistiúchán le h-Aghaidh Stair Paráiste*, (Béal Átha na Sluagh: Coláiste Sheosaimh Naomhtha, Páirc Ghearrbhaile, 1929).

²⁰⁶ James Hardiman Library, Special Collections Archives, Ó Duilearga Collection G16, DEL 4324.

a questionnaire per se because it was issued in a once off pamphlet form. Furthermore the ‘questions’ are of a general nature, or are not questions but statements. However, it is noteworthy that the term ‘ceistiúchán’ was already in use by another folklorist before the foundation of the IFI.

Upon Ó Duilearga’s return from Northern Europe (detailed in Chapter 2), he attempted to get the College authorities interested in funding a folklore institute. However, his ideas were met with little enthusiasm. He therefore turned his attention to lobbying the government and he began promoting a proposal in October 1928.²⁰⁷ He felt the Minister for Finance (*Cumann na nGaedheal*) and Irish language enthusiast Ernest Blythe would be the most sympathetic to the project.²⁰⁸ Blythe wanted the government to finance practical ways to encourage learning Irish. However, as Ó Duilearga noted in a letter to von Sydow, ‘I hear he is prepared to spend £50,000 on publication of Irish books but I am afraid that folklore means as much to him as it does to English people.’²⁰⁹ From the start Ó Duilearga knew that Blythe’s interest lay in publication in the Irish language of any sort, regardless of its value to folkloristics. However, he speculated that he could change his mind and included in his memorandum to Blythe the idea of collecting folklife material noting:

‘(b) Establishment of a committee appointed by Government to enquire into *Allmogekultur* [“popular culture”] and folklore giving the widest interpretation to both.’²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Ó Duilearga to Kaarle Krohn, 21 October 1928, (SKS Letter Collection, Helsinki), reproduced in Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 189-190.

²⁰⁸ Ó Duilearga had this to say about Blythe at the start of negotiations for an Institute, ‘He is a man like myself from the Black North and I think he appreciated the fact that I, a Northerner, was prepared to tackle a big job and get the work of collecting Irish Folklore done at once and in a business like way.’ Briody, “Publish or Perish”, p. 10.

Blythe was originally from Co. Antrim. He learned Irish as member of a Dublin Gaelic League chapter. He joined IRB and later IRA, frequently being imprisoned for subversive activities. He was a member of the first Dáil and supported the Treaty. He served in Cumann na nGaedheal governments as, first, Minister of Local Affairs and then Minister of Finance. O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 711.

²⁰⁹ Ó Duilearga to von Sydow, (30 October 1928) (Lund University Library Letter Collection), reproduced in Ó Catháin, *Formations*, pp. 192-193.

²¹⁰ Séamas Ó Duilearga to C. W. von Sydow (30 October 1928) reproduced in: Ó Catháin, (eds.) *Formations*, pp. 192-193.), pp. 192-193.

Ó Duilearga thought that the written support of the Nordic scholars he met on his trip would help to convince Blythe of the academic prestige that an Irish folklore institute could give the newly independent state.²¹¹

Michael Tierney arranged an interview for Ó Duilearga with Blythe on 23 November 1928.²¹² Regardless of Blythe's personal 'scant regard for folklore' he granted Ó Duilearga permission for an Institute²¹³ believing it was one of his best options to get Irish language material published quickly. It should be noted that 'subsequent negotiations [about the IFI], with the Dept. of Finance at any rate, from January 1929 onwards would appear to have been conducted by Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha.'²¹⁴ Regardless of the interventions of a "well-respected figure's" interventions, Ó Duilearga and his Institute had other obstacles to overcome, the biggest of which was the Irish economy.²¹⁵ As a result of financial straits the Irish Folklore Institute (IFI) was not formally established until early April 1930.²¹⁶ The annual grant was settled at £500 per annum. To compensate for the original small amount of funding Ó Duilearga successfully applied for a £300 Rockefeller Foundation of America grant. The money, which came in July 1930, was well spent remunerating the

²¹¹ Ó Duilearga wrote to Kaarle Krohn stating that he may have needed his and other Northern European folk scholars signatures on a memorandum to help convince the government to support his IFI proposal. This list of signatures was never acquired because Ó Duilearga found that Blythe had more support for the project when he emphasised the Irish language element in his proposals. Ó Duilearga to Kaarle Krohn, 21 October 1928, (SKS Letter Collection, Helsinki), reproduced in Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 189-190.

²¹² Michael Tierney (1894-1975) was a Professor of Classics at UCD and 'influential Dáil member' at the time. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²¹³ 'Blythe also had a poor opinion of many of the members of the FIS,' which stemmed from the role of certain members in the Civil War and also the 'tensions' between the Gaelic League members and the Irish Free State. Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 93-96.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97

²¹⁵ Briody cites a letter from Ernest Blythe to Daniel Binchy from 1 February 1929 which made his position on the Institute and expenditure clear, 'I should like it to be understood that in view of the existing financial stringency it would hardly be possible to contemplate giving State assistance to the proposed Institute but for the fact that its work will be likely to contribute to the success of the general policy of the Government in relation to the Irish language. I hope therefore that the main energies of the new organization will be devoted to the collection and publication of folklore in the Irish Language.' UCDA Blythe Papers P24/369: Blythe to Binchy, dated 1.2.1929. Cited in: Briody ———, "'Publish or Perish'", p. 10.

²¹⁶ The Board members of the Institute: RIA- Douglas Hyde, Prof. Michael Tierney, and Séamus Ó Duilearga FIS- Prof. Éamonn Ó Tuathail, Fionán Mac Colum, and Seán Mac Giollarnáth, and *An Seabhadh*. Government- Énrí Ó Muirgheasa. Séamas Ó Catháin, 'Institiúid Bhéaloideas Éireann (1930-1935)' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 73 (2005), p. 90. The establishment of the Institute was celebrated in Ireland and abroad.

collectors and Ó Duilearga in small amounts. He was also granted a Carnegie Trust (UK) of £300 to purchase books for the IFI's library.²¹⁷

Even with the grant the IFI was still under-funded, and the lack of resources made it ineffectual from the start. Furthermore the Government and the IFI Board members had different ideas about the Institute's purpose. According to Briody:

For many of those on the Board its task was perfectly clear, namely the collecting and preservation of the rapidly diminishing traditional lore of rural Ireland and of the Gaeltacht areas in particular,' however, 'Blythe from the start linked the grant-in-aid to the proposed Institute to publishing material in Irish.'²¹⁸

As a result Ó Duilearga spent the majority of his IFI time trying to convince the Dept. of Finance that the IFI was working on publishing material rather than 'saving the folklore of Ireland.'²¹⁹ The 1933 grant-in-aid was cut because the IFI had continually failed on the publication stipulation.²²⁰ Moreover, as the functioning years of the IFI progressed tensions between it and the FIS grew.²²¹

Plans were continuously being discussed in government circles for the opening of a separate folklife museum. Ó Duilearga continued to work with the National Museum to collect traditional objects. *The Irish Times* notice from 22 February 1930 noted that Dr. Adolf Mahr, Keeper of Irish Antiquities, had received a donation of traditional objects from Ó Duilearga that he had collected on a trip to Luach, Doolin and Ennistymon, Co. Clare.²²² Other objects that were collected by Ó Duilearga or another person working for the IFC were sent to the museum for storage.

²¹⁷ ———, *Formations*, p. 94.

²¹⁸ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 97-98.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 98. For a much more detailed account of these matters see ———, "'Publish or Perish'", pp. 10-33.

²²⁰ In March 1932 the government changed and a new Minister for Finance was appointed for Fianna Fáil, Seán MacEntee. MacEntee was not an Irish-language enthusiast, like Blythe and this hurt Ó Duilearga case even more. Briody———, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 112. According to Ó Catháin a total of three volumes were published under the IFI: Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha, *An Seanchaidhe Muimhneach* (Baile Átha Cliath: Institute Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1932). Éamonn Ó Tuathail, *Sgéalta Mhuintir Luinigh* (Baile Átha Cliath: Institute Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1933). Douglas Hyde, *An Sgéalaidhe Gaedhealach* (Baile Átha Cliath: Institute Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1933).

²²¹ Briody notes more on the matter. Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 99-100.

²²² The objects came from: 'Donncha MacMathúna [*sic*], Tomás Ó Conchubhair, Seán Ó Tiarna, and Mr and Mrs Seán Carún'. 'News From All Ireland. Donation to National Museum.', *The Irish Times*, 22 February 1930, p. 7.

In the summer of 1934 Åke Campbell finally travelled to Ireland, on an invitation from the IFI to conduct folklife research. According to Patricia Lysaght's article on this event Campbell visited County Galway, Carlow, and Wicklow:

...Documenting the cultural landscape, work methods and implements connected with farming, fishing and shore gathering, and also the domestic buildings and household utensils. Campbell photographed, measured and sketched, always relying on his Gaelic-speaking assistants to obtain terminology and other contextual data.²²³

However, the majority of his trip was:

Spent in carrying out a detailed and comprehensive survey of the material culture and the seasonal and daily life of one particular community, that of the small farming and fishing village of Cillrualaig in West Kerry.²²⁴

Cillrualaig was chosen for surveying by Ó Duilearga because he was familiar with the area and the locals. Furthermore, Campbell's research only added to Ó Duilearga's available sources for his *Leabhar Sheáin í Chonaill*.²²⁵ Ó Súilleabháin assisted Campbell on the Cillrualaig part of his research trip.²²⁶ Campbell published his findings for an Irish readership in *Béaloidéas* and for the Swedish readership in *Svenska Landsmål*.²²⁷

Despite the many tensions within the IFI, some folklife research was carried out between 1930 and 1934. The IFI's first questionnaire was issued as a collaboration with the Dept. of Education. The idea of using the primary schools to collect folklore had been discussed within the Dept. of Education as early as 1923.²²⁸ In that same year Gaelic Leaguers in Co. Clare had

²²³ Patricia Lysaght, 'Swedish Ethnological Surveys in Ireland 1934-35 and Their Aftermath' in Hugh Cheap (ed.) *Tools and Traditions. Studies in European Ethnology Presented to Alexander Fenton* (Edinburgh: National Museum of Scotland, 1993), p. 22.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²²⁶ Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Trí Mhí sa tSualainn' in *Comhar*, vol. 2, no. p. 3, (1943), p. 3. This fact is for some reason overlooking in Lysaght article. The first mention of Ó Súilleabháin comes in relation to the 1935 survey.

²²⁷ Åke Campbell, 'Andra Länder' in *Svenska Landsmål*, vol. (1935), pp. 63-64. 'Enskilde Medarbetare Värksamhet inom Arkivet' in *Svenska Landsmål*, vol. (1937), pp. 121-136. 'Resor och Upppteckningsarbeten i Bygderna. Irland' in *Svenska Landsmål*, vol. (1936), pp. 88-102.

'Irish Fields and Houses: A Study of Rural Culture' in *Béaloidéas*, vol. 5, no. 1, (1935), pp. 57-74.

²²⁸ Folklore collecting continued to be brought up in government debates about primary, secondary and third level education. For some examples from 1927-1945 see: *Dáil debates*, vol.29, 391-503, 17 April 1929. *Dáil debates*, vol. 32, 278-302, 24 Oct 1929. *Seanad*

already begun using local children to collect folklore.²²⁹ This may have been where the school inspector and folklore enthusiast, Énrí Ó Muirgheasa formulated the idea to request that the Dept. of Education issue ‘special blank manuscript books’ to primary schools for collecting folklore.²³⁰ The Government did nothing with his suggestion at the time.²³¹ Ó Duilearga appealed to the Dept. of Finance in January 1929 for the schools to be used in the collecting process.

The 1934 Schools’ Folklore Scheme has some similarities to the better-known 1937-1938 IFC Schools’ Collection Scheme. One of the main aims of both of the projects was to:

Interest the pupils in the locality in which they live, in its traditions, its monuments, and its past. Hence [the teacher] should take the pupils into his confidence and use them as members of an intelligence department. They will enjoy this, and it will establish a common bond between [the teacher] and [the pupils]- a thing useful in itself.²³²

However, some key, crucial factors that were to make the 1937-38 scheme successful were missing in the 1934 scheme. The Dept. of Education did not consult the teachers about the project beforehand; therefore, many believed the content was to be critically evaluated as an indicator of their teaching

debates, vol. 13, 13-25, 20 November 1929. *Seanad debates*, vol. 13, 78-100, 27 November 1929. *Saorstát Éireann An Roinn Oideachais, Tuarasgabháil 1928-1929. Dáil debates*, vol. 35, 227-230, 29 May 1930. *Dáil debates*, vol. 38, 1681-1768, 21 May 1931. *Seanad debates*, vol. 19, 1901-1941, 22 May 1935. *Dáil debates*, vol. 63, 1457-1459, 21 July 1936. *Dáil debates*, vol. 79, 1077-1112, 10 April 1940. *Dáil debates*, vol. 79, 1077-1112, 10 April 1940. *Dáil debates*, vol. 79, 2178-2224, 1 May 1940. *Seanad debates*, vol. 24, 1297-1409, 15 May 1940. *Dáil debates*, vol. 97, 504-508, 16 May 1945.

²²⁹ O’Leary cites an anonymous correspondent in *Weekly Freeman*, 27 October 1923 who wrote into the newspaper about this matter. O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 110.

²³⁰ Énrí Ó Muirgheasa, also known as Henry Morris (1874-1945), was a writer and Irish scholar. He founded the 1st Gaelic League branch in Lisdonnan, Co. Monaghan. He collected folklore from the last remaining native speakers in south Monaghan. He qualified as a teacher and published numerous Irish-language and folklore works in the early nineteenth-century. Later he was appointed a schools inspector and was an active founding member of the FIS. In 1932 he was appointed deputy chief inspector to the Dept. of Education. ‘From this vantage point he instilled into the minds of teachers and pupils alike the need for understanding and appreciating the antiquities with which they were surrounded. This is probably his greatest service to the Irish people.’ ‘He was considered by many to have been one of the father-figures of modern Ulster Irish.’ Éamonn Ó Ciardha, ‘Morris, Henry,’ *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5989>).

²³¹ Briody comments that the Dept. of Education and the Irish National School teachers had bigger problems to deal with, many were still recovering from the horrors of the Civil War and were attempting to implement a new policy of teaching through the Irish language. Briody, ‘Énrí Ó Muirgheasa agus Scéim na Scol 1934’, p. 2.

²³² Seosamh O’Neill, ‘National Tradition and Folklore,’ ed. *An Roinn Oideachais* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Roinn Oideachais, 1934), p. 2.

ability. The cover letter stated on the first page, ‘There is nothing compulsory about the work,’ but noted further no ‘official recognition’ of the work was taken and visiting inspectors examined the books. Each teacher was given credit ‘in estimating his general usefulness, for the industry, accuracy and intelligence displayed in its compilation.’²³³ In 1934 Ó Muirgheasa was a full-time schools’ inspector; therefore, it is not surprising that some of the teachers had concerns.²³⁴

The Dept. of Education sent out a brief 15-page pamphlet containing specific questions and topics to collect about. This ‘National Tradition and Folklore’ pamphlet in recent scholarship has been attributed to Ó Duilearga; however, the writing style of these questions and the topics solicited do not match Ó Duilearga’s collecting objectives in 1934. It was most likely penned by Ó Muirgheasa, with possible corrections by Ó Duilearga.²³⁵ The pamphlets were issued on St Patrick’s Day 1934 with the hope that the teacher would instil an ‘interest in and love for the neighbourhood’. In 1934 this was seen as ‘the germ of national patriotism,’ and it was hoped the interest would ‘be healthy, patriotic, mind-developing, character-forming, and a rival to other interests that are less commendable.’²³⁶ This type of ‘nationalistic’ language was not used to the same extent in the IFC questionnaires, but these themes of national pride were often re-iterated in the questionnaire correspondents’ reply letters.²³⁷

The content of the numerous questions sent out in the pamphlet did have a strong inclination toward folklife over that of folklore.²³⁸ Many of the

²³³ Ibid., p. 1. In *The Irish Press* front-page article reminding teachers about the project the above quote is printed in bold text. ‘Collection of Folklore: manuscript books for schools,’ *The Irish Press*, 7 April 1934.

²³⁴ It should be noted that it was overwhelming for the teachers who felt they must have been brilliant ‘true Gael’ answers to so many questions.

²³⁵ The name at the end of the pamphlet is Seosamh O’Neill. However, his name most likely appears because he was the Secretary of the Dept. of Education at the time. His department printed and issued the pamphlet. Ó Catháin incorrectly attributes the documents to Ó Duilearga in: Séamas Ó Catháin, ‘Scéim na Scol’ in Margaret Farren and Mary Harkins (ed.) *It’s Us They’re Talking About, Proceedings of the 1998 McGlinchey Summer School* (Clonmany, Co. Donegal: 1998), p. 6.

²³⁶ O’Neill, ‘National Tradition and Folklore’, pp. 1-3.

²³⁷ For more on this see Chapter 7.

²³⁸ The document has twelve full pages of questions. Each set of questions was broken down under head subject titles. *Linguistic*- 7, *Ethnographic*-5, *Historic*- 19, *Topographic*- 2, *Social*- 11, *Religious*- 11, *Archaeological*- 14, *Scientific*- 4. Under the sub-heading ‘FOLK TALES’ the following: *Animal Tales*- 14, *Other Tales*- 102. The teachers were expected to cover 189 individual questions. This was an overwhelming amount of

topics chosen for the questions were later expanded into full single issued IFC questionnaires. The following are a few folklife subject examples from the pamphlet:

Local... sports, traditions around trade roads, river, industries, markets, agricultural implements, furniture, food, drink, milk, *buaile*, houses, cures, charms, beggars, hedge-schools, saints, feast days, holy wells, relics, friars, tomb-stones, roadside crosses, ruins, funeral customs, marriage customs, etc.²³⁹

The emphasis on the word 'local' was a way to explain to the collectors in 1934 the concept of folklife and ethnology without using those unfamiliar terms.

questions, especially for those teachers who particularly had no interest in the subject or were not well liked by the local population.

²³⁹ O'Neill, 'National Tradition and Folklore', pp. 3-9.

Cir. 9/34.

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS.

CIRCULAR TO TEACHERS OF NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING HOLY WELLS.

In connection with the booklet recently issued regarding the general question of the collection of Irish folk lore and antiquities, it is considered desirable, as an initial step in this direction, that a survey of Holy Wells be made.

It is felt that teachers of National Schools could assist considerably in making such a survey a success and accordingly teachers who are in a position to furnish information regarding Holy Wells in their respective districts are earnestly invited to do so. Many wells, once the scene of devotional pilgrimage, are now forgotten save by some old local people, and it is hoped that before this last remaining source of information disappears such knowledge as they possess will be duly recorded.

In order that the information may be available in a regular ordered form, the particulars should be furnished on the basis and in the order of the Questions set out overleaf.

Ruled foolscap paper should be used and it will be only necessary in the case of each return sent to quote the number of the Question followed by the appropriate particulars. The questions themselves need not be repeated. There should be a separate return for each well regarding which information is given.

The returns when completed should be forwarded post free to the Secretary, Office of National Education, Marlborough Street, Dublin, in envelopes marked **Holy Wells**.

SEOSAMH Ó NÉILL,
Réad.

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS,
BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH.
Aibreán, 1934.

Figure 9: 'Questionnaire Regarding Holy Wells'

QUESTIONS.

1. Name of Holy Well or Stream in townland.
2. How is the Well situated? Is it in the vicinity of an old Church (name)? Or is it near a Church still in use? Is it near an outstanding landmark, or near the shore (of the sea or a lake), on a height or on an island, etc., etc.? State all which strikes your observation, e.g., whether there is a tree or bush (say what kind, white thorn, elder, rowan, etc.), a cairn of stones, etc., near the Well. If there is a protecting wall built around or over the Well can you state when or by whom was this done? Perhaps you will draw a sketch.
3. Name of Patron Saint of Well (if not already answered sub. (1)).
4. Former name(s), if any.
5. Date of Annual Pattern, if any, or of other days of pilgrimage. If so, on which days (Sundays? Good Friday? Day of local Saint? Week-days?)
6. For what purpose is the Well frequented? State whether for spiritual needs or in fulfilment of vows or for cure of ailments (diseases, etc.) or for temporal benefits?
7. What acts of devotion are performed at the Well? Are there special 'Rounds'? If so, give details (number of 'Rounds,' direction in which performed, other details of ritual, if any). Are stones or pebbles used to count the rounds? How many?
8. What prayers are said? If special traditional prayers (other than decade of Rosary, Our Father, Hail Mary, etc.) are said, please give text or texts in full.
9. For relief of what ailment(s) is the water of the Well considered efficacious?
10. Is the water applied to the affected part? Is it drunk? Is it also carried away?
11. Is the water also used for purposes other than those already enumerated?
12. Are offerings made on completion of the customary ritual?
13. What is the nature of the offerings made? What do men, what do women offer?
14. Where are the offerings placed? In the Well, beside the Well? Or on bush or tree (see next question)?
15. Are pieces of cloth or other objects affixed to tree or bush? If so, when?
16. Give any genuine local traditions (*not emanating from books or newspapers*) relating to the particular Holy Well or its Patron? (Examples: water from Well will not boil if profaned; legend of origin of Well; on profanation Well springs up in another place; supernatural occurrences at Well; foot or other impressions on slabs, etc., etc.). Is a trout or other fish supposed to inhabit the Well permanently? Is it considered unlucky to meddle with this fish? Please give the local traditional narrative in all detail.
17. Is there anything known of the antiquity of the pilgrimage? If the pattern or pilgrimage was suppressed, when and by whom was this done? Are there any traditions as to misfortune befalling the person who suppressed the Pattern?
18. Can you procure a photograph of the Well? If not, can you mention somebody to whom an application could be made?
19. If there is a 25-inch Ordnance Survey Map available it would be helpful if the teacher would state location of Well (number of Sheet, how many inches from the left hand margin and from the bottom of the sheet is the Well situated?)
20. Name of Writer (your own name).
21. School or private address.
22. Name(s) of other informant(s).
23. Date at which this answer was filled in

(4532).K8871.W1.5027/G24.3.8100.5/34.W.P.W.Ltd.2.

Figure 10: 'Questionnaire Regarding Holy Wells'

It is possible that the Dept. of Education realised that the pamphlet was overwhelming for the teachers. In April 1934 a second document entitled ‘Questionnaire Regarding Holy Wells’ was issued. These questions were drawn up by Ó Duilearga and Adolf Mahr allowing the IFI more input into the second folklore circular.²⁴⁰ This is effectively the first questionnaire of one of Ó Duilearga’s folklore collecting schemes. It had a short five paragraph cover letter signed by Seosamh Ó Néill (spelt differently this time) and was issued in English and Irish. The 23 questions were formatted similarly to the IFC’s future questionnaires. The questions asked about folklore subjects, such as names of the Holy Well and stories associated with them. However, the majority of the questions were about folklife subjects, such a physical acts that were preformed at the well.

By the end of the summer of 1934 Ó Duilearga noted in a letter to the Dept. of Education that the returns were unsatisfactory.²⁴¹ He was also frustrated that the Department was not sending acknowledgement letters to the teachers who replied because the Department seemed to think that this responsibility laid with Ó Duilearga and the IFI.²⁴² This would have been an impossible task for such a small office.²⁴³ The IFC in later years worked tirelessly week after week replying to questionnaire correspondents to let

²⁴⁰ NFC Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga diary 1934 (entry: 22 June). Within Ó Duilearga’s personal papers at NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library Special Collections Archives, Séamus Ó Duilearga Collection G16, Box 7, is an original copy of: Philip Dixon Hardy, *The Holy Wells of Ireland, containing an Authentic Account of those Various Places of Pilgrimage and Penance which are still annually visited by thousands of the Roman Catholic Peasantry. With a Minute Description of the Patterns and Stations Periodically Held in Various Districts of Ireland* (Dublin: P. D. Hardy & Walker, 1836 & 1840). It is possible that some of the questions were formulated after a reading of this. Moreover, Mahr’s scholarly background would have furthered an understanding of the types of questions that needed answering.

²⁴¹ This may have been how Ó Duilearga felt personally about the replies however, a different rosy view was presented to the National School Teachers in the 19 January 1935 *The Irish School Weekly* which noted: ‘Up to the present some 500 replies to a questionnaire on holy wells have been received by the Institute, and it is said that it would be difficult for experts in this particular field of research to improve upon the information supplied. Most teachers supplied photographs and drawings of holy wells, and many indicated their exact position on the ordnance map. No one, no matter how great his zeal or knowledge, could hope to accomplish in a life time what the teachers have done already.’

²⁴² It was the Department who had printed and mailed the questionnaires.

²⁴³ Ó Duilearga to Mr O’Neill, Sec to Dept. of Education (20 August 1934) *NFC Correspondence Files, Holy Wells Questionnaire*. The folder that this letter came from is peppered with stern letters from Ó Duilearga and the IFI secretary to the Dept. of Education requesting thank you letters be sent by the Department.

them know how thankful they were for their collections.²⁴⁴ Teachers probably found it rude that their efforts were not appreciated with a written thank you letter.

The 1934 scheme continued into the life of the IFC. In April 1935 Ó Duilearga spoke at the INTO Annual Conference about teachers completing the notebooks sent out for the 1934 Folklore Scheme. He asked for the ‘... co-operation of the teachers of Ireland, in an attempt to rescue from oblivion and to preserve for all time the oral traditions of the Irish people.’²⁴⁵ When the scheme concluded the IFC inherited only 258 replies.²⁴⁶ Briody and Ó Catháin suggest that Ó Duilearga was unable to devote his full attention to this scheme in 1934 because of the many other projects and major life events he had going on.²⁴⁷

When compared to the IFC’s collection capacity in future years the IFI certainly fell short. Briody estimates that between 1927 and 1935 the FIS and the IFI collected on average eleven manuscript volumes per year. This number when compared to the IFC’s average of forty-seven volumes per year from 1935 to 1970 demonstrated the differences in collection ability.²⁴⁸ However, the amount of material does not necessarily equate to valuable content and a proper academic evaluation of the value of the material collected by the IFI would be needed before judgement was passed. The Holy Wells questionnaire scheme was a failure from an organizational and valuable

²⁴⁴ For more on this see Chapter 7.

²⁴⁵ ‘Irish Folklore an Appeal to Teachers’ *Irish Times*, 24 April 1935, p.8. In a July 1936 *Dáil debate* the Minister for Education Tomás Ó Derrig had this to say in relation to the 1934 Scheme ‘A special questionnaire was also issued later by my Department to national schools, seeking information in regard to holy wells, their location, and to the traditions and customs associated with them. It is intended to have a complete survey made of these wells in due course from the information thus collected as well as from information available from other sources.’ *Dáil debates*, vol. 63, 1458-1459, 21 July 1936. According to this statement the scheme was still being using well into 1936.

²⁴⁶ Caoimhín Ó Danachair, ‘The Questionnaire System’ in *Béaloideas*, vol. 15 (1945), p. 205.

It is worth noting that unlike the 1937-1938 scheme the pamphlets in 1934 were sent to ALL rural and urban primary schools in Ireland. Briody, ‘Énri Ó Muirgheasa agus Scéim na Scol 1934’, p. 6. Many of the ‘well-written’ replies received were from teachers who later became active postal questionnaire correspondents.

²⁴⁷ Ó Duilearga at that time was working on getting the IFC established, had recently gotten married, was doing consultancy work for the Irish language films *Oídhe Sheanchais* and *Man of Aran*, and had recently bought his own home.———, ‘Énri Ó Muirgheasa agus Scéim na Scol 1934’, pp. 11-12. Ó Catháin, ‘Scéim na Scol’, p. 6.

²⁴⁸ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 101.

folklore collecting perspective; nonetheless, Ó Duilearga experienced the difficulties of working with the Dept. of Education and the individual schools. The lessons learned in 1934 certainly shaped how the 1937-1938 Schools' Scheme operated. Without that second and more successful scheme the questionnaire correspondent numbers would have been significantly smaller. In contrast to this the IFI's greatest ethnological legacy, Campbell's research trip allowed Ó Duilearga, Ó Súilleabháin, and Ó Danachair first hand experience working with a highly trained ethnologist with 'high tech' equipment. The Swedes did not issue questionnaires on this trip but they certainly exposed the key, future IFC head staff to the potential of folklife collecting.

Ó Duilearga was unhappy with his relationship with different Cumann na nGaedheal ministers. He was encouraged by a switch in political power to try and alter the IFI terms and conditions. Briody notes he found in the new Minister for Education Tomás Ó Deirg, 'a Government Minister with a genuine interest in saving the traditions of Ireland.'²⁴⁹ The Fianna Fáil government was willing to expand the IFI scope and funding.²⁵⁰ Ó Duilearga met with Éamon de Valera in May 1933 to discuss the future of the IFI. In a 1974 interview Ó Duilearga dramatically recounted what happened at the meeting:

It was the night of the Budget, and officials were coming in to... his room, and he was pushing them aside. And he talked about something... he talked about his youth: when he was a boy that he had heard folktales, told in English of course, in Co. Limerick. And he went on talking, and then I couldn't... it was a tense moment for me, and I said: "Excuse me! Sir! I don't speak the language of diplomacy. I have just one thing to say to you. The material is there, it's dying and you know it. You are interested in the Irish language as I am, and I think it is about time that something was done to put to paper or to record in some way the oral tradition of a silent people' (who as I said a moment ago had so much to say). "So please, take that pen in your hand and write "Let it be done!" and I'll do it and get all the people to help me." And that's how the Folklore Commission started.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 106.

²⁵⁰ For more on the problems of the IFI and various ideas for getting the IFC established and what it would look like see: Ibid., pp. 105-107.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 107. Citing: RTÉSA L46/74: 'Unwritten Ireland' (1974). In this programme Ó Duilearga incorrectly recalls 1934 as being the year of this incident.'

Ó Duilearga was happy with the way the meeting went and a week later he sent de Valera a detailed memorandum about what he envisioned for the IFC.

Briody notes:

Much of what Ó Duilearga had to say to de Valera would thus have fallen on fertile soil. In many respects both men shared the same vision, although the former, being politically opposed to de Valera, may not have cared to dwell too much on what they had in common. Their views of rural life were similar and were rooted in nineteenth-century Romanticism, involving an idealisation of a “changeless” peasantry. For both men, as indeed was the case for many of their contemporaries, the real Ireland was situated in the countryside... that scholarly proposals to foster Ireland’s native culture and enhance its international role on the world stage might be well received. [As de Valera] believed that Ireland should actively foster close relations with other Celtic Lands.²⁵²

Both men stood to benefit from the promotion of folk culture. It benefited Ó Duilearga’s research and his wish to dedicate his life to folklore collecting. For de Valera the rural areas were, ‘where some version of a traditional or pre-modern mentality still survived that de Valera and Fianna Fáil attracted the greatest measure of a fairly unreflecting allegiance.’²⁵³ Keeping these individuals happy meant a longer time in government. Thus as Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch notes:

Throughout a period of economic hardship and military threat a large proportion of the Irish electorate responded positively to de Valera’s constant emphasizing of the sovereignty of the people, their superior qualities, their noble history, their glorious cultural heritage, the rightness of their national cause.²⁵⁴

De Valera and Ó Duilearga met to discuss the possibility of an IFC at the exact right time in Irish history.²⁵⁵

Regardless of de Valera and Ó Duilearga’s shared vision the establishment of the IFC was not seamless. The Dept. of Finance was still unhappy with Ó Duilearga the individual, the IFI’s lack of publication, and

²⁵² Ibid., p. 109.

²⁵³ Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch, 'The Primacy of Form: A 'Folk Ideology' in de Valera's Politics' in J. P. O'Carroll and John A. Murphy (ed.) *De Valera and His Times* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1983), p. 49.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., pp. 54-55.

²⁵⁵ For more on de Valera’s romantic rural ideals see: Longford and Thomas P. O'Neill, *Eamon De Valera* (London: Gill & Macmillan, 1970). Michele Dowling, 'The Ireland that I would have' De Valera & the creation of an Irish national image' in *History Ireland*, vol. (1997), pp. 37-41. Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch, 'De Valera's Other Ireland' in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (ed.) *De Valera's Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2003), pp. 155-165. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, pp. 140-149. O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*.

the proposal for the IFC to be connected to UCD. These factors did not make Finance Ministers champions of a bigger, more expensive scheme, to be headed by Ó Duilearga and had less to do with Irish language promotion.²⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the IFC proposals had the support of the Dept. of Education. Ó Deirg was clear in his correspondence to the Dept. of Finance that his office, ‘felt collecting was by far the more important task at the time.’ The stipulation to publish Irish language material frequently was not included in the IFC’s terms of reference because Ó Deirg did not think it was interesting reading material for children.²⁵⁷ Without the pressure to collect tales and lore the IFC was freed to collect on folklife as well.

The Dept. of Finance eventually accepted that a Commission would be formed but made sure costs to the government were low. They were happy when UCD offered to provide accommodation for the IFC.²⁵⁸ MacEntee noted in the ‘Proposal for the Establishment of an Irish Folklore Commission’ that an organization set up would, ‘considerably advance the scientific study of the folklore, manners, and customs of the Irish people.’²⁵⁹ At this point in the discussion the value of folklife was noted.

By late-summer 1934 Ó Duilearga was forced into accepting the government proposal for what had been officially named the ‘Irish Folklore Commission’. His attempts at getting further concessions were futile; however, by the winter of 1934 both Ministers concurred that the new IFC would only be held responsible to the Dept. of Education and not the Dept. of

²⁵⁶ Briody notes that the Dept. of Finance strangely felt that Ó Duilearga lacked the drive to make the IFI a success. Briody is correct in stating that ‘this was a strange accusation’ because all available historical documentation for the IFI implies otherwise. The Department had no suggestion for who might fill the role of folklore director and therefore conceded that Ó Duilearga must be chosen. Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 110-112.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114

²⁵⁸ Three rooms at Newman House, St Stephen’s Green free of charge to physically house the new Commission. Heating and lighting were also offered free of charge from UCD. *Ibid.*, p. 115. Many of the parties involved in the negotiations for the establishment of the IFC were against the new Commission being controlled by UCD. Ó Duilearga’s only real support for it being apart of UCD was from von Sydow and Mac Néill; however, neither was able to convince anyone in office at the time that the connection would be positive. Nonetheless, the objection was that UCD would exercise control over the IFC not to it being physically housed within it and therefore free housing was acceptable.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Finance (on non-financial matters).²⁶⁰ This was a great relief to Ó Duilearga who battled endlessly with that department throughout the life of the IFI.

An examination of Ireland's earliest folklorists and ethnologists provides insights into the printed materials about folklore that were popular and available for consultation in the before the formation of the IFC. In order to track the evolution of a tradition back as far as possible the IFC head staff turned to the works of Vallancey, Croker, and even Yeats. These men's methods were unscientific but not devoid of some accurate information that they provided was all the IFC had to go on, particularly after the substantial loss of historical material in the Four Courts. The staff were also aware of the origins of Irish folklore studies in general Celtic Studies and antiquities. Ó Duilearga, Ó Súilleabháin, Máire Mac Neill all held undergraduate degrees in Celtic Studies. Their background knowledge of the subjects that made up that degree influenced the topics that were picked for questionnaires. The three main staff members not active in politics in this period the events that led to a rise in Irish cultural and political nationalism influenced all Irish citizens. The questionnaire correspondents believed in the IFC's mission and work because of the political climate at the time, which supported a return to 'the land of saints and scholars.'

²⁶⁰ For the many amendments that Ó Duilearga wished to see in a final proposal see *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.

Chapter 4

The IFC and the Questionnaire System, 1935 to 1945

In recent years the studies that have been conducted on the IFC's questionnaire system (detailed in the Literature Review) have tended to focus on the questionnaire system alone and not related it to the evolution of the IFC. This chapter will do just that in order to provide a better context for the following chapters, which focus on particular questionnaires (Chapter 5- Type A & Chapter 6- Type B). For each year previously unconsulted documentation is cited, included Ó Duilearga's personal diaries, questionnaire correspondence files, and the annual *Seanchas Nodlag* issues.¹ This helps to demonstrate how the head office functioned. A chronological account demonstrates how the IFC evolved and how the questionnaire related to the larger IFC projects and events. Many of the IFC board members were prominent Irish scholars and later assisted the questionnaire scheme in various ways. The hiring of IFC head staff and full-time collectors will be detailed, along with Ó Súilleabháin's research trip to Sweden. Ó Súilleabháin's return journey coincided with the 1935 'Swedish Mission' ethnological research trip. This chapter will explore how this project expanded Ó Súilleabháin's and Ó Duilearga's knowledge of folklife studies further and influenced the decision to issue the first questionnaire on *Bataí Scóir* in 1936. The IFC continued to issue a number of shorter questionnaires while planning the 1937 to 1938 Schools' Collection Scheme. Ó Duilearga's trip to Germany in 1937, various international folk studies conferences in the 1930s, and Ó Duilearga's lecture tour of the United States in 1939 will be examined to highlight how effective the Director was at promoting the IFC at foreign lectures and conferences. This in turn influenced the type and number of scholars who requested questionnaires and the impact of the Emergency on the work of the IFC will be considered. Lastly the most prolific years for the questionnaire system were 1939 to 1945.

¹ The *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlets will be explained in great detail further on in this chapter.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

On New Year's Day 1935 Ó Duilearga wrote in his diary (in short hand):

Last year a wonderful year. I got married, made lecturer in U.C.D., made a sound film,² bought a house, got Folklore Commission established. I hope 1935 will also be a successful year for folklore. *Go dheaga Dia bliain mhaith dhúinn fé shaol in jé shláinte & go roice stóráin againn ag baile fé saróta Dé.*³ [sic]

On 18 December 1934, before the Christmas break, the Dáil had approved to finance an Irish Folklore Commission (IFC) with an annual grant of £3,250 for a period of five years.⁴ Twenty-one individuals were invited to be on the board but Douglas Hyde and *An Seabhad* declined the offers.⁵ In place of Hyde, *Cú Uladh* (Peadar Mac Fhionnlaóich)⁶ was asked to act as chairman.

The rest of the elected board members were:

Daniel Binchy, Adolf Mahr, Fr. Lorcán Ó Muireadhaigh⁷, Séamus Ó Casaide, Énrí Ó Muirgheasa, Fr. John G. O'Neill, Prof. Osborn J. Bergin, Dr. Pádraig Breathnach, Prof. Éamonn Ó Donnchadha, Prof. Éamonn Ó Tuathail, Seán Mac Giollarnáth D.J. (Forde), Fionán Mac Coluim, Liam

² Ó Duilearga was a consultant on the Department of Education sponsored film *Oidhche Sheanchais*. According to an article in *Comhar* from 1951 this film was the worst Irish language film that will ever be made. Philip O'Leary, *Writing Beyond the Revival: facing the future in Gaelic Prose 1940-1951* (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2011), p. 540. For more about this film: Natasha Sumner, Barbara Hillers, and Catherine McKenna, 'A Night of Storytelling and Years in the 'Z-Closet': The Re-discovery and Restoration of *Oidhche Sheanchais*, Robert Flaherty's 'Lost' Irish Folklore Film' in *Folklore*, vol. 126, no. 1, (2015), pp. 1-19.

³ NFC, Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga, diary 1935, (entry 1 Jan.).

⁴ *Dáil debates*, vol. 54, 1575-1580, 18 December 1934.

⁵ Ó Duilearga and *An Seabhad* had not been getting along when working together on FIS issues. Ó Duilearga noted in his diary entry for 25 January 1935 that *An Seabhad* was working against him and had made a speech at a FIS meeting 'with an undertone against' him. The relationship continued to sour and that seems to have been the main reason he did not accept the nomination. NFC, Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga 1935 diary, (entry: 25 January).

⁶ *Cú Uladh* was President of the Gaelic League at the time. Briody speculates that he was appointed in order to 'placate the League, as somebody like Osborn Bergin would have had much greater prestige.' Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 130.

⁷ Father Laurence Patrick Murray (Lorcán Ó Muireadhaigh) (1883-1941) was a historian, priest and Irish language activist. He studied at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. He founded the County Louth Archaeological Society and worked with Henry Morris in that organization. Morris inspired him to take a greater interest in 'traditional songs, placenames, and folklore.' He was a member of a nationalist group called 'the Sheiks' at Maynooth and wrote for the organization's newspapers. The college authorities grew frustrated with his 'outspoken character' and he was dismissed. He then went to St. Paul, Minnesota where he was ordained. He stayed in Minnesota teaching mathematics until 1918. When the US entered the First World War he returned to Ireland. He became a church schools' inspector in Armagh and was afforded the opportunity to collect oral history and folklore throughout in that area.

'Aware of his lack of musical literacy, he acquired a phonograph to record songs, and over a hundred of these recordings were later donated to the Irish Folklore Commission.' He founded the magazine *An tUltach* and continued to publish on Irish culture his whole life. James Quinn, 'Laurence Patrick Murray' *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9589>).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Price D.J., Séamus Ó Duilearga, Mon. Eric Mac Fhinn, Prof. Michael Tierney.⁸

Additionally León Ó Broin was nominated as Dept. of Finance representative and Lughaidh Maghuidhir as Dept. of Education representative. A 'Financial Sub-Committee' was also appointed.⁹

The final Board meeting of the IFI was held on 29th March 1935 and Ó Duilearga noted in his diary on that day:

A great relief to me that Inst is now at an end. For almost 5 yrs. I have put in a purgatory there, with people working against every suggestion of mine. But it was I who built up their MS. coll. of 50,000 pp. – more than every cultural body & organization in the country had done before. Something done & no talk!¹⁰

The first official meeting of the Irish Folklore Commission was held on 2nd April 1935.¹¹ The meeting was closed to the public but numerous press reports were released afterwards and the newspaper reading public were aware that a Commission had been established.¹² The collection of folklife material and the use of questionnaires to collect information were not mentioned in the 'Irish Folklore Commission, Terms of Reference'.¹³ However, Ó Deirg noted in his speech that:

To make the Irish people realise who they are- to establish a linguistic, social and cultural history of our own people; not of the wealthy and influential among them, but of the poor and forgotten ones who have preserved the lore and spirit and faith of our forefathers for us.'¹⁴

⁸ Ó Duilearga was unhappy with the appointments initially and noted on 19 February 1935: 'Phone call from Galway from Forde: he tells me Fr. Fair on Commission, also Gaelic Leaguers & Ultonians: I have been let down by Govt. Serves me right for trusting them. Uncertain now if I shld take the Directorship as it may be useless, the work perhaps sabotaged and made impossible. I rang up Price who came with his wife to advise me.' NFC, Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga 1935 diary, (entry: 19 February). Ó Duilearga was known for his theatrics and he put this idea of not taking the directorship to bed quickly. Throughout the years the IFC drama with board members and Ó Duilearga continued but his acting as director of the IFC was not questioned.

⁹ Which included Ó Duilearga, Price, Ó Casaide, Maghuidhir, and Ó Broin. For more on the duties of the Finance Sub-Committee and how they were elected see: Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 131. For more on the appointment of board members see: 'Ceapadh Chéad Choimisiún Béaloideas Éireann, 1934-1935' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 78 (2010), pp. 168-186.

¹⁰ NFC, Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga diary 1935, (entry 29 March).

¹¹ It was held in the Council Chamber of UCD.

¹² 'The Irish Folklore Commission. £3,250 Available for Five Years. The Publication of Material' *Irish Times*, 9 Mar 1935 p. 6 and 'Irish Folklore Commission' *Irish Times*, 3 Apr 1935, p. 6 and 9.

¹³ 'Irish Folklore Commission [Terms of Reference]' reproduced in Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 521-522.

¹⁴ 'Work Abandoned 100 Years Ago Resumed. The Folklore Commission. Minister's Statement at the First Meeting of New Body. For 32 Counties,' *Irish Press*, 3 April 1935.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

These newspaper accounts painted a rosier view of events than what transpired on the day because tensions persisted between Ó Duilearga and some IFC board members. Ó Duilearga was well known by 1935 for having an ineffectual style of leadership and, as León Ó Broin noted in his autobiography, ‘Delargy was short-tempered, and usually raised his voice unpleasantly till he got his way.’¹⁵ Fr. Eric Mac Fhinn also commented on Ó Duilearga’s temper in his journals.¹⁶ Mac Fhinn was an avid questionnaire correspondent for the life of the IFC and regularly suggested new correspondents to the scheme. As a board member he was at the first meeting of the IFC and noted:

Cú Uladh was in the Chair. Tomás Ó Deirg, was there to get us started. He explained to us that Séamus was to be director. (*Cú Uladh* spoke entirely in Irish- Tomás Ó Deirg also spoke in Irish). *Cú Uladh* spoke eloquently about the importance of folklore. Séamus then spoke, He made a long, verbose speech in English, that really was not good as a piece of English- he was too serious. When he had finished, I rose and said that I would like to hear what he had said in Irish. Bergin looked down at the table and said in a kind of whisper: ‘I don’t see the necessity.’ Fr. Lorcán Ó Muireadhaigh’s eyes lit up and he emitted a hearty chuckle, and he was rubbing his hands together. *Cú Uladh* looked at Séamus with a glint of glee in his eye. ‘Are you satisfied?’ he asked him. ‘Yes’ he replied. In my estimation, his talk in Irish was better than the one in English... On our way out, *Cú Uladh* said to me: ‘You taught them a lesson Father.’¹⁷

This quote highlighted some of the board members attitudes toward Ó Duilearga’s, but more importantly it draws attention to the fact that many of the IFC board members were Gaelic Leaguers and believed the IFC’s purpose should be to encourage Irish in yet another government funded institution. Ó Duilearga had drastically different ideas about the Commission’s mission and these disagreements created tensions on the board. The Central Branch of the Gaelic League in January 1935 passed unanimously a resolution criticising the inappropriately elitist attitude on the part of those in charge of the IFC.¹⁸

¹⁵ León Ó Broin, *Just Like Yesterday. An Autobiography* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, n.d.), pp. 100-101. Also cited by Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 135.

¹⁶ Which have been analysed by Gearóidín Ní Nia for an MA thesis.

¹⁷ Gearóidín Ní Nia, ‘An tAthair Eric Mac Fhinn agus Ar Aghaidh’ (University College Galway, 1994), pp. 82-83. Translated and quoted by Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁸ Translation of the resolution provided by O’Leary: ‘That we have no confidence in the people who have been mentioned as members of the IFC because of the kind of work they do; that we think it better to work the scheme for the benefit of the Irish language among the people than to work it for the benefit of the professors.’ Citation and translation provided by: O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 109.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

These questions of language usage did not necessarily influence the questionnaire system because the IFC Gaelic League board members were not arguing that material about folk culture that was orally collected in English should be transcribed in Irish. They wanted to see all the administrative work of the IFC conducted through Irish, and have oral tales collected primarily in Irish speaking areas. However, tensions on the board affected the IFC's work as a whole and certainly contributed to Ó Duilearga's stress levels.

Ó Duilearga's diary entry for 6 March 1935 notes, 'Máire Mac Neill sends in her application for job in Inst. [IFC]'¹⁹ As has already been discussed Ó Duilearga and Mac Neill²⁰ knew each other from childhood and their correspondence with one and other up until Ó Duilearga's death demonstrated that they had a warm and affectionate friendship.²¹ However, friendship was not the only qualification Mac Neill had in applying for the IFC Office Manager job. After receiving her BA in Celtic Studies from UCD in 1925 she worked for *The Star* newspaper.²² She assisted her father with his memoirs and helped her sister illustrate a book.²³ This previous work experience in addition to her high level of spoken and written Irish made her an excellent

On the same page O'Leary also cites the final example of An tAth. Donnchadha Ó Floinn's comments in: 'Folklore in an Irish Island: natural reserves guard the deeper, the more spiritual things,' *The Irish Independent*, 28 September 1938, p. 13, 'I fear that all our collectors are not free from this taint of scientific snobbishness. They may collect much, but they will miss what they should strive above all else to reach- the Gaelic. The abuse of folklore is when it disjoins humanity from the dry bones of science, when it 'clasps the cold body and foregoes the soul'. It cannot have been the intention of those who founded our Folklore Commission that it should exist only in order to supply scholars at home and abroad with data for abstruse speculations. Its main aim was and is, and must be, the re-establishment of spiritual continuity with out past.' O'Leary further cites Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'Folklore Does Not Belong to Cranks and Professors,' *Hibernia*, June 1937, p. 18 and 'Cearnac' [*sic*], Letter, II, 29 Oct 1928.

¹⁹ NFC, Delargy Papers, Séamus Ó Duilearga diary 1935, (entry 6 March).

²⁰ This spelling of Máire's surname is used in the thesis because throughout her work with the IFC and especially with the questionnaire correspondents she officially signed off documents with the following format, 'Mac [space] Neill'. She chose not to use a *fada* like her father did over the 'É' in Mac Néill.

²¹ For some of their correspondence in the 1980s see the Delargy Collection NUI Galway James Hardiman Library.

²² 'From 1927 to 1932 Mac Neill worked as a journalist and later as sub-editor of the *Cumann na nGaedheal* monthly, *The Star*. She edited the paper from September 1931 until the spring of 1932, when *The Star* was replaced by the weekly *United Ireland*. She served as sub-editor until she left to assist her father with his memoirs.' Maureen Murphy, 'MacNeill, Máire,' *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5281>).

²³ Murphy, 'MacNeill, Máire,' *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5281>).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

candidate for the job and she was hired. Briody notes that Mac Neill went on to become a great scholar after leaving the IFC and that due to employment budgetary constraints Mac Neill's duties extended beyond the typical Office Manager duties to include transcriber, assistant, shorthand typists, bookkeeper, and cataloguer.²⁴

Ó Duilearga certainly held more romantic notions of the language in his university days and when the FIS was first established. His enthusiasm waned as the years progressed. The inclusion of the language in the IFI's mission was an attempt to get government funding. By the time the IFC was founded Ó Duilearga had numerous negative experiences with Irish language nationalist and the movement in general.²⁵ New staff may have introduced new opinions into the government funded IFC but it was still Ó Duilearga who was 'steering the ship.' The preservation and promotion of folklore overtook all other objectives. In an interview in the 1970s Ó Duilearga stated, 'The dead words on a manuscript page are a poor substitute for the haunting beauty of the language which lingered and died on the lips of my old friends.'²⁶ Irish folklore happened to be more plentiful in Irish speaking areas and the IFC's interest in the Irish speaking area was not because of an interest in the language itself.

Seán Ó Súilleabháin resigned from his teaching position in Co. Waterford on 8th March 1935 and immediately became the IFC's head archivist.²⁷ He then went on a three-month paid research trip to be trained in the Swedish folk archival systems.²⁸ He spent one week training with von

²⁴ 'Although employed in a secretarial capacity, Máire Mac Neill was one of the most academically gifted of the staff of the Irish Folklore Commission and was to follow in her father's footsteps and become a fine scholar.' Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 324.

²⁵ Ó Catháin recalls how Ó Duilearga was disillusioned with the language movement by December 1931 and was quoted saying, 'having met so many untrue Gaelic humbugs.' Ó Catháin, *Formations*, p. 2.

²⁶ Whitaker, 'James Hamilton Delargy', p. 298.

²⁷ Patricia Lysaght, 'Don't Go Without a Beaver Hat! Seán Ó Súilleabháin in Sweden in 1935' in *Sinsear*, vol. 7 (1993), p. 50.

²⁸ After a day or two in Copenhagen he arrived in Lund, Sweden on 11 March 1935. He stayed with von Sydow in his family's home and was able to attend lectures at the University right away. Albert Nilsson gave one of the first lectures he attended. Nilsson explained much of the day-to-day archival work to Ó Súilleabháin and he wrote highly of his character to Ó Duilearga. Ó Súilleabháin to Ó Duilearga, (14 March 1935), *Seán Ó Súilleabháin with Séamus Ó Duilearga NFC Correspondence Files*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Sydow and the Swedish ethnologist Albert Nilsson (later Eskeröd)²⁹ at *Folkklivarsarkivet*, Lund and then three months with Campbell and Froken Ella Odstedt at *Landsmålsarkivet*, Uppsala.³⁰

Ó Súilleabháin conducted extensive research on all aspects of the archival system including taking detailed notes on the *frågelista* or ‘questionnaires’. In his own personal notes he demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of how the postal questionnaire system was organized in 1935.³¹ In his more formal notes, which were most likely to be read by others upon his return to Ireland, he notes:

Here in Uppsala they keep a special catalogue for answers of questionnaires of which they send out many and from which they have best [*sic*] results.³²

When Ó Súilleabháin was away he regularly corresponded with Ó Duilearga about what he was learning.³³ He noted in one of his letters a problem *Landsmålsarkivet* was having with their questionnaire system, mainly that too much material was coming in for the cataloguers to handle. He wrote:

In Ireland we, I think, must try to keep up with the work, if at all possible. As regards the replies to the questionnaires: They have not been catalogued and are merely excerpted by one blue card in the appropriate sections indicating that, say, replies have been received to the frågelista M39 or Tr. 12. The envelopes containing questionnaire-replies are not separately filed but will, perhaps, later on. Special personal registers are kept for those who reply to questionnaires which is a good plan as it helps to show who is diligent and active and who is not.³⁴

Ó Súilleabháin hoped that the IFC head office would be able to keep up with the IFC issued questionnaire replies. Nevertheless, similar to the situation at

²⁹ At the time Nilsson was the curator at *Kulturhistoriskamuseet*, Lund. For more on Nilsson see: M. Strabó, 'Albert Eskeröd 1904-1987' in *Fataburen*, vol. (1987), pp. 221-222.

³⁰ In Uppsala he lodged with Campbell.

³¹ Notes on the cataloguing of the questionnaire system can be found in *NFC* 'Notes etc. from the time Seán Ó Súilleabháin was in Sweden Studying the Index System There.' Three main sets of notes are grouped together.

³² See above note for location of this source.

³³ Ó Súilleabháin wrote numerous letters to Ó Duilearga during his travels. He even managed to write a thoughtful and detailed letter to Ó Duilearga's mother. Only two reply letters from Ó Duilearga are in the correspondence folders, but while Ó Súilleabháin was away Ó Duilearga was busy getting the IFC set up and trying to convince the teachers to still participate in the original 1934 Folklore Scheme.

Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs Delargy, (24 April 1935), *NFC Correspondence Files Seán Ó Súilleabháin with Séamus Ó Duilearga*.

³⁴ to Ó Duilearga, (7 May 1935), *NFC Correspondence Files Seán Ó Súilleabháin with Séamus Ó Duilearga NFC Correspondence Files, Seán Ó Súilleabháin with Séamus Ó Duilearga*, p. 3.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Uppsala, the IFC after the *Martinmas* questionnaire of November 1939 became overwhelmed with the paperwork associated with the questionnaire system. It is interesting to note that Ó Súilleabháin was aware this was a potential problem with the collecting system before it was implemented in Ireland. Furthermore, a filing system of questionnaire correspondents was created but no documentation indicates that the correspondent name cards were updated regularly to filter out non-active correspondents. A further point about the questionnaires that he noted in the same letter was the potential of using teachers as questionnaire correspondents. He wrote to Ó Duilearga:

I see by the "Irish Press" that you lectured the teachers' delegates on Folklore and also the meetings in other places. If their interest can be awakened we may be able to use them later on in questionnaire-work. I am getting instructions from Dr. Campbell as to how questionnaire are drawn up.³⁵

The teachers eventually became the backbone of the system and it is noteworthy that Ó Súilleabháin suggested using them at this early date.

Ó Súilleabháin's trip was different from Ó Duilearga's in 1928.³⁶ In relation to the questionnaire system Ó Súilleabháin was probably informed by Ó Duilearga about the basic workings of the system before he left. Furthermore, he had a person to write back to in Ireland [Ó Duilearga] who understood the place and projects he encountered. The act of putting these experiences in writing to be posted home probably allowed for greater personal reflection. Ó Duilearga's trip was organised to expose him to as many types of folklore and folklife collecting projects as possible in seven countries. Ó Súilleabháin's trip was designed to give him exposure to the workings of specific archives in Sweden.³⁷ Therefore, by the end of his trip he had learned about specific archives and collecting methods, such as the questionnaire system, in greater detail than Ó Duilearga. This exposure to the system was important in the coming years when Ó Súilleabháin over saw the extensive use of the questionnaires.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

³⁶ For more on Ó Duilearga's 1928 trip see Chapter 2.

³⁷ He did travel to Denmark as well; however, it is being argued that this was more out of necessity. At that time the most direct way to get from Ireland to Sweden was by taking a boat from England to Denmark and then on to Sweden.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

In early June 1935 Ó Súilleabháin's Swedish travels were complete and Campbell and Nilsson accompanied him back to Ireland. The two men were formally invited by the IFC 'to carry out material cultural surveys on a wider scale.'³⁸ The IFC files referred to this project as 'the Swedish Mission'.³⁹ It was arranged before their research trip commenced that the NMI would stage an exhibition on 'the results of Prof. Campbell's investigations' into primitive house buildings.⁴⁰ Furthermore Museum Director and IFC board member Adolf Mahr helped to arrange many of the local contacts for the Swedes in their research regions.⁴¹ Campbell surveyed areas in Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Clare, and Donegal accompanied by either Caoimhín Ó Danachair or another local Irish-speaking assistant.⁴² He conducted research on farming and fishing culture, but was mainly focused on 'rural dwelling houses.'⁴³ He took thousands of photographs, made drawings and maps, and recorded detailed information about his informants.⁴⁴

Ó Súilleabháin's understandings of practical research methods were also furthered when he accompanied Nilsson on his trip to seventeen different counties along the Irish coast, from Dublin to Galway and then across the Midlands.⁴⁵ At the request of the IFC Nilsson also surveyed houses and farming implements. Additionally he collected material on fishing culture because that was his area of expertise.

Lysaght's excellent article on these surveys concludes with an assessment of the work done. It is worth quoting extensively:

The surveys conducted by Campbell and Nilsson were the first serious attempts to study in a systematic and integrated way some aspects of the material culture of rural Ireland. Their aim was essentially to promote

³⁸ Lysaght, 'Swedish Ethnological Surveys in Ireland 1934-35 and Their Aftermath', p. 25.

³⁹ 'The Swedish Mission' as it was referred to by Mahr in some of his correspondence about the project. Mahr to Miss Máire K. Cronin (19 June 1935), *NFC Correspondence Files, Adolf Mahr*.

⁴⁰ Mahr to Ó Duilearga (5 June 1935), *NFC Correspondence Files, Adolf Mahr*.

⁴¹ In some cases he even booked accommodation. One of the women that Campbell stayed with on his trip was later an avid questionnaire correspondent and later was hired as a part-time collector. Miss Máire K. Cronin, Carna Villa, Belmullet, Ballina, Co Mayo.

⁴² At the time Ó Danachair was a UCD student. Lysaght, 'Swedish Ethnological Surveys in Ireland 1934-35 and Their Aftermath', p. 25.

⁴³ For more specifics on this see: *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁴ Although Ó Danachair's time with the IFC lies outside of the years in question for this thesis, his involvement in Campbell's trip exposed him early on to some of the methods of ethnological research, including the use of photography. Ó Danachair went on to become the IFC's most gifted photographer and a prestigious ethnologist.

⁴⁵ Lysaght, 'Swedish Ethnological Surveys in Ireland 1934-35 and Their Aftermath', p. 25.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

and develop an ethnological dimension to the work of the IFC and the NMI- the latter in particular with a view to the establishment of a folk museum. In this way it was hoped to lay a basis for material culture studies in Ireland.⁴⁶

Furthermore:

The surveys also influenced the work of the [NMI] in relation to material culture. The interest generated in the Museum itself and among the public by the surveys and the exhibition gave added impetus to the acquisition of objects from daily rural life.⁴⁷

After 'the Swedish Mission' concluded Campbell published his findings in international and Irish journals.⁴⁸ Additionally a NMI exhibition on folk culture opened on the 26th June 1937. This event will be discussed further on.⁴⁹

Toward the end of 1935 Ó Duilearga returned to Sweden to attend a folklore congress held in Lund.⁵⁰ The event was hosted by von Sydow and Sven Liljeblad⁵¹ and was well attended by leading folklorists and ethnologists from the Nordic countries, Great Britain, the Baltic States, the USA, and Germany. It was at this conference that Ó Duilearga first met the American folklorist Stith Thompson.⁵² A few years later Thompson was the one that introduced Ó Duilearga to the vast world of American folk studies. Many of the queries about folk culture that came from the US to the IFC (and not through the embassy) were through a connection of Thompson.⁵³

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 27.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴⁸ Åke Campbell, 'Notes of the Irish House' in *Folk-Liv*, vol., no. 2/3, (1937), pp. 205-234. 'Rural Irish Architecture. Traditional Style Should be Retained in the New Building Schemes,' *Irish Independent*, 4 October 1938, p. 11. 'Notes on the Irish House. II.' in *Folk-Liv*, vol., no. 2, (1938), pp. 173-196. The Swedish Mission was covered in *The Irish Press* as it was being conducted. *Irish Press*, 9 July 1935.

⁴⁹ Lysaght, 'Swedish Ethnological Surveys in Ireland 1934-35 and Their Aftermath', p. 27.

⁵⁰ 6 November 1935 was the opening date of this Congress.

⁵¹ Sven Liljeblad was a (1899-2000) Swedish folklorist and former student of von Sydow's. He received his doctorate in folklore from Lund University in 1927. He became an associate professor at Lund University in 1936.

⁵² Stith Thompson (1885-1976) at the time was a professor of English and Folklore at Indiana University.

⁵³ For more on the politics behind this conference that were important to European folk studies but that Ó Duilearga seems to have stayed out of see: Bjarne Rogan, 'From Rivals to Partners on the Inter-War European Scene Sigurd Erixon, Georges Herni Rivière and the International Debate on the European Ethnology in the 1930s' in *Arv. Nordic Yearbook of Folklore*, vol. 64 (2008), pp. 281-288, and Petra Gardberding, "'There are dangers to be faced": Cooperation within the International Association of Folklore and Ethnology in 1930s Europe' in *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 49, no. 1, (2012), pp. 25-71.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Thompson's relationship with the IFC will be discussed further on in this chapter.

As the year 1935 drew to a close Ó Duilearga was certainly satisfied that a Commission had been established, he was able to hire and train competent head office staff, attend another international conference on folklore, and that ethnological research in Ireland had been conducted to a high scientific standard. The next substantial task the IFC attempted to grapple with was securing the support of the I.N.T.O and the primary school teachers. In 1936, without the negative intervention of the Dept. of Education this time, Ó Duilearga was able to use better-suited methods and language to gain the support of teachers in folklore collecting. This is evident from the various *The Irish School Weekly* articles that discussed the scheme beforehand.⁵⁴

In addition to his hard work with the teachers on 10th March 1936 Ó Duilearga gave his first academic address about the IFC's work at the Inaugural Meeting of the UCD Historical Society. The lecture was entitled 'An Untapped Source of Irish History' and was well attended by leading academics, government officials, and members of the public.⁵⁵ As Mary Daly has noted, it was at this lecture that Ó Duilearga first used his famous quote that in collecting folklore and traditions the IFC was gathering together 'the State Papers of a forgotten and neglected people'.⁵⁶ Ó Duilearga was

⁵⁴ Patrick T. Walshe, 'The Folklore Sub-Committee,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 11 January 1936, pp. 45-46. T. J. O'Connell, 'Collection of Folklore' *The Irish School Weekly*, 25 January 1936, pp. 76 & 94. 'Folklore Collection', *The Irish School Weekly*, 15 February 1936, p. 154. Patrick T. Walsh, 'The Collection of Folklore,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 7 March 1936, p. 246. 'Folklore,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 14 March 1936, p. 952. These articles encouraged to teachers to collect on the topics given in the 'National Folklore and Tradition' pamphlet, the 1934 Holy Wells questionnaire, and a new set of topics published in the *ISW*. Patrick T. Walshe, 'The Folklore Collector,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 11 April 1936, pp. 364 & 367. 'Animal Folklore,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 16 May 1936, pp. 494-495. Patrick T. Walsh, 'Folklore of the Farm,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 13 June 1936, p. 582. 'Folklore of the Farm (cont.),' *The Irish School Weekly*, 27 June 1936, pp. 645-646. Patrick T. Walshe (Pádraig Breathnach) was the I.N.T.O representative on the IFC board and wrote many of the articles.

⁵⁵ The other speakers present that night included Eoin Mac Néill, Gearóid Ó Murchadha, Dr. Adolf Mahr, and Rev. A. Gwynn. Information from Ó Duilearga's Invitation to the event in the 'Invitations to lectures, talks, etc.' folder at UCD.

⁵⁶ Ó Duilearga, 'An Untapped Source of Irish History', p. 339. For more on other Irish figures who also expounded this particular idea of folklore recording social history as well see: O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, pp. 255-256.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

attempting to convince the '[students] of our literary, social and economic history' that folklore was 'an untapped source' for the historian.⁵⁷ He stated that this information should be viewed as 'the cultural background to the [historical] manuscript literature.'⁵⁸ Although he does not mention the Irish questionnaire system in the address his message went a long way in conveying to his audience that folklore and the IFC were a tool to be used for more than folk research.⁵⁹ The questionnaire system was not used widely by historians in its formative year; however, in more recent scholarship the material has been recognised as a valuable source in understanding people's perceptions of the past.

One of the officials who attended Ó Duilearga's address that evening was the American Consulate General Henry H. Balch. When Balch subsequently got an inquiry from someone in the US about a traditional Irish culture subject he would write to the IFC asking for help. This type of information liaising with the IFC frequently occurred, especially as the functioning years of the IFC progressed and the head-staff was able to promote their work further in Ireland and abroad.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Continuing: 'In this historical lumber-room of forgotten lore- of traditions, songs, tales, music, dance, peasant crafts and agricultural methods-there is much rich material not only for the historian but for the student of the Irish language and literature and for the artist, the poet and the economist.' Ó Duilearga, 'An Untapped Source of Irish History', p. 339.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 400-402. He gave the example of a student wanting to know what Irish social conditions were like in 1800. According to him this type of information was still available in the traditional rural culture (particularly in the Gaeltacht).

⁵⁹ He does mention the German Government's Civil Service questionnaire, which was used to write the *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde* on page 409. An article was published about this lecture in the *Weekly Irish Times*. In it the readers were asked again to collect material and send it on to the IFC. The article notes 'Yet the gathering of oral tradition is of intense value to the future historian, and the collector must be endowed with the life of the Gaeltacht to be able to achieve his object. The work is one of the interesting innovations of University College, and an appeal has been made to Irish people all over the country to communicate any scraps of information they may be able to obtain for the IFC.' Thus begins Ó Duilearga and the IFC's emphasis to the general public that it was not oral tales being collected.

⁶⁰ In 1936 Balch wanted help with a query he had gotten about Irish dances from A. D. McCampbell, Missouri State Teacher Training College, Boonville, Missouri. Henry H. Balch to Ó Duilearga (30 March 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate Dublin 1936-1954*. Ó Duilearga to Henry H. Balch (1 April 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate Dublin 1936-1954*. Henry H. Balch to Ó Duilearga (4 April 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate Dublin 1936-1954*.

Balch wrote again about the planning of the 1939 Golden Gate International Exposition organized by the San Francisco Recreation Commission. Josephine D. Randall to Henry H. Balch (12 May 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate Dublin 1936-1954*. Henry H. Balch to Ó Duilearga (29 May 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate*

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Only two days after Ó Duilearga's first lecture as IFC Director, the Commission issued its first questionnaire on *Bataí Scóir*. The second questionnaire on *Bible Schools* was issued in November 1936.⁶¹ The third questionnaire issued in 1936 was on the topics of 'Currachs on the Coasts of Sligo, Mayo (north coast only) and Kerry (excluding the Dingle Peninsula).'⁶² These questionnaires were issued to a limited number of correspondents but the replies received demonstrated from the beginning the potential of the source.

The relationships and connections that the IFC made in 1936 continued to grow into 1937 along with their number of full-time collectors (8), and the number of questionnaires issued.⁶³ On 8 January 1937 *The Irish Times* reported that the French Ministry of External Affairs had donated 'a large number of rare books to the IFC's library.'⁶⁴ Different European countries were anxious to demonstrate their support for the IFC and Irish research in general.

The next day Ó Duilearga set off on a month long lecture tour of Germany at the invitation of the German Ministry of Education.⁶⁵ He visited Hamburg, Kiel, Greifswald, Berlin, Munich, Heidelberg, Freiburg, Bonn, Cologne, Marburg, and Göttingen.⁶⁶ However, before departing he spoke to an *Irish Times* reporter about his trip noting:

Dublin 1936-1954. Henry H. Balch to Ó Duilearga (3 June 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, U.S. Consulate Dublin 1936-1954*.

⁶¹ NFC 495:145. NFC 495:239.

⁶² NFC 495:315.

⁶³ Three in the Galway-Mayo area, two in Kerry, two in Donegal and one in Waterford.

⁶⁴ The works included folklore from France, North Africa, and other countries. 'Folklore Library. French Government's Valuable Gift,' *The Irish Times*, 8 January 1937, p. 4. A second donation was given in February 1938, 'Presentation to Commission,' *The Irish Times*, 10 February 1938, p. 4. Followed quickly by a book donation from the German Government, 'Irish Folklore. German Government's Fine Gift,' *The Irish Times*, 14 February 1938, p. 3.

⁶⁵ The tour was arranged after Adolf Mahr wrote to German officials requesting it. Ó Duilearga left Dublin on 7 January and arrived in Bremen, Germany on 12 January. 'Irish Folklore Lectures. Forthcoming Tour in Germany,' *The Irish Times* 9 January 1937, p. 10.

⁶⁶ 'Mr Delargy over the course of the coming month [will deliver] a series of public lectures in eleven of the most important German universities on the subject of Irish folklore and the work of the IFC. He will survey the whole field of Gaelic folklore from 1800 to present day, with special reference to recent developments.' *Ibid.*, p. 10. For a copy of the address that Ó Duilearga's delivered to the German audiences see: NFC, Delargy Papers, Folder 'German Lecture 1937', (Jan & Feb 1937).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

About ten years ago a Commission of Research into the oral and written traditions of Germany sent out a *questionnaire* for the purpose of producing an ethnographical and folk map. Thousands of volunteers from among teachers, clergymen, and the professions filled in the particulars in every part of the country; and the central institution in Berlin is now engaged on this monumental work.⁶⁷

Ó Duilearga's own work with the IFC and the questionnaires was influenced by this monumental project and how much government attention it had received.

It was an honour when at Ó Duilearga's lecture in Berlin 25th January the Berlin State University German Society for Celtic Studies was founded. Present and/or elected to the Committee were some of Germany's well-known academics: Rudolf Thurneysen (Bonn), Ludwig Mühlhausen (Hamburg & Berlin), Adolf Mahr (NMI, Dublin), Helmut Bauersfeld (Munich), Elizabeth Clissmann (Dublin)⁶⁸, Josef Weisweiler (Frankfurt-on-Main), Hans Otto Wagner (Berlin), and Gerhard von Tevenar (Berlin).⁶⁹ The society was meant to be non-political but Ó Duilearga was aware of the political loyalties of many of the above names. A few days later in his 3rd February diary entry he noted, 'M. Duignan and I at Karl Meisen's where I heard the truth about Nazi Germany behind closed doors.'⁷⁰ In relation to the questionnaire system on this journey Ó Duilearga made many contacts with Germans interested in using the IFC for research purposes, such as Gottfried Henßen and Hans Hartmann.⁷¹ He noted in a letter to Henßen when he returned to Ireland that the visit was well worth the exhaust 'as it enabled [him] to meet a number of people with whom... the Irish Folklore

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 10. His trip was also written about in the Irish newspapers as it was taking place. See: 'University College Notes. Folklore,' *The Irish Times*, 18 January 1937, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Married to a German but born and bred in Sligo.

⁶⁹ *The Irish Times* article about this event quotes: 'The object of the Society, which is non-political and non-sectarian, is to spread the knowledge of Celtic culture and languages in Germany, and to establish cultural and social relations between the Germanic and Celtic peoples.' 'German Society for Celtic Studies. Mr. O Duilearga in Berlin,' *The Irish Times*, 25 January 1937, p. 4. (NOTE: The original titles of the newspaper articles do not include a *fada* over the 'O' in Ó Duilearga.) For more information on the politics of many of the committee members and their connections to Ireland see: Gerry Mullins, *Dublin Nazi No.1: the life of Adolf Mahr* (Dublin: Liberties Press, 2007). David O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices: the story of German radio's wartime Irish service* (Belfast: Beyond the Pale Publications, 1998).

⁷⁰ NFC, Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1937, (entry 3 February).

⁷¹ Ó Duilearga to Dr. Koester, (6 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, German Legation 1936-1953*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Commission wish to keep in close contact in the future.’⁷² German scholars continued to visit and work with the IFC after the end of the Second World War.



Figure 11: Children at Garmna, Co. Galway (Campbell, 1935)

Reproduced in 'Through a Swedish Lens: Images of Early Twentieth-Century Irish Life' in National Folklore Collection UCD (eds.) (Dublin: Copi-Print- UCD, 2009)

In the spring of that same year the IFC’s international ties were put on display for the public with the official launch of ‘the Swedish Mission’s’ rural Irish culture exhibition at the NMI on 26 May 1937. The exhibition took the form of ‘photographs, sketches, maps and diagrams.’⁷³ The word choice in his interview for *The Irish Times* was not the conventional type used for IFC events. He described the activities he researched such as fishing and seaweed gathering as ‘primitive.’ Furthermore he noted for the reporter:

Ireland is one of the few places in which the prehistoric type of house, the round type, sometimes without windows is still in use. “People can live in the old-fashioned way,” said Dr. Campbell, “if the houses are well prepared.” Unfortunately, many people in the country instead of preserving and improving their houses preferred to wait for the Government to give them a new house, probably of the bungalow type. He did not like these new schemes of houses without tradition. People with their own houses, of old and distinctive character, were a kind of nobility.⁷⁴

⁷² Ó Duilearga to Gottfried Henßen (15 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen*.

⁷³ 'Rural Irish Culture. Modern Research Exhibition. National Museum's New Attraction,' *The Irish Times*, 26 May 1937, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Campbell's strong and condescending language about the *Gaeltacht* was avoided completely by the IFC in their press promotion. His word choice was probably a combination of a language barrier and a cultural misunderstanding of the stigma associated with folk culture in Ireland. The questionnaire system's focus on folk culture was an attempt by the IFC to breakdown the negativities associated with some of the elements that Campbell mentioned.

The Irish Times and *The Irish School Weekly* articles that covered the exhibit launch afterwards used much more nationalistic and positive language in relation to the material on display. De Valera, Ó Deirg, and Mahr were all present at the event, and each praised the Government for founding a Commission to present exhibits like the one they were at.⁷⁵ *The Irish School Weekly* reporter noted that the exhibit influenced the Hiberno-English definition of folklore by stating:

This exhibition, which owes much to Swedish influence, should do much to correct the view, prevalent in this country, that Folklore means only old sayings and old stories. Folklore is really much wider than this. It is the sort of history which does not find its way into history books, the history of which shows how each generation, each district, and each country, but its songs and stories, by its buildings and implements, and by its skill in making, leaves its own peculiar imprint on and makes definite contributions to the culture which it inherits.⁷⁶

After the exhibition was over at the NMI it travelled with Ó Súilleabháin to the Congress of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore, which was held in Edinburgh, Scotland, between 14th and 21 July 1937.⁷⁷ The other European delegates 'eagerly' received it.⁷⁸

Five days after the above *ISW* article was published the IFC issued a questionnaire entitled *The Folklore of Prehistoric Monuments*.⁷⁹ Séan Ó

⁷⁵ 'Importance of Folklore. Mr. De Valera's Tribute. Modern Research Exhibition. Mr. Derrig's Gratitude.', *The Irish Times* 27 May 1937, p. 4. 'Educational Topics. The Teachers and Folklore,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 5 June 1937, p. 568.

⁷⁶ "Educational Topics. The Teachers and Folklore," *The Irish School Weekly*, 5 June 1937, p. 568.

⁷⁷ 'Congress of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore, Edinburgh, July, 1937', in *Folklore*, vol. 48, no. 3, (1937), pp. 335-336.

⁷⁸ Ó Súilleabháin to Ó Duilearga (19 July 1937) *NFC Correspondence Files*, Ó Súilleabháin with Ó Duilearga. 'I got [*sic*] the Exhibit at midday on Sat. and Ake and myself spent 6 hours on Sat. afternoon getting it up. By vigorous use of saw and hammer we got it well done. Only for the eagerness of the European delegates to see the exhibit I would not have opened the box at all. They were enquiring for news of the photos day after day and it has ahead made a great impression. Campbell is to read his paper on the Irish House in the exhibition room now after lunch and he will explain the photos to the delegates.'

⁷⁹ The questionnaire was dated 10 June 1937.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Súilleabháin's *Láimh-Leabhar Béaloideas* was published not long afterwards on 23rd June 1937 (*Lá'le Eoin*).⁸⁰ This monumental work, which could be viewed as a giant questionnaire book, was definitely influenced by von Sydow's 1919 *Våra Folkminnen en Populär Framställning*.⁸¹ The *Láimh-Leabhar* was published only in Irish and was 139 pages long. It contained thousands of questions and was designed to give the full-time and part-time collectors 'practical guidance on how to approach' folklore collecting scientifically.⁸² The sub-headings included questions on both folklore and folklife. Unlike Ó Súilleabháin's later mammoth *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* this 1937 publication was easier for collectors to bring with them into the field because it was smaller and soft bound. It was broken down into thirteen sub-headings:

Lonnú & Comhnuidhe, Tionnscail & Ceárdanna & Gnóthaí Beatha, Cúrsaí softboudaistil, An Pobal, An Duine, An Nádúir, Leighiseanna na nDaoine, Ranna na hAimsire: an t-Am: Féilí, Piseógacht agus Draoidheacht, Samhluíocht i dTaobh Nidhthe & Daoine, Seanchus Stairiúil, Litridheacht na nDaoine, Caitheamh Aimsire.⁸³

This book was an immense work of scholarship; however, it out-grew its purpose for the amateur folklorist quickly. All the full-time collectors had excellent spoken and written Irish but many of the part-time collectors and questionnaire correspondents did not. Most of the questionnaires were typed up in Irish and English, but frequently only the English questionnaires were posted to non-full-time collectors. When more native English speakers (questionnaire correspondents) began collecting for the IFC a new handbook in that language was needed.⁸⁴ However, drafting the many questions that

⁸⁰ Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *Láimh-Leabhar Béaloideas* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann, 1937), p. 5.

⁸¹ von Sydow, *Våra Folkminnen*.

⁸² O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 116.

A short review of the book was published in *ISW*: 'Educational Topics. The Folklore Collector,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 6 November 1937, p. 1088.

⁸³ Ó Súilleabháin, *Láimh-Leabhar Béaloideas*, pp. 7-11.

⁸⁴ By publishing *Láimh-leabhair* only in Irish the IFC was limiting its use by foreign scholars who lived in Ireland, came to visit, or had no Irish. Around the same time that *Láimh-leabhair* was published Stith Thompson paid a visit to Ireland and was entertained by the IFC. This is a fine example of a scholar who later found the *Handbook* useful in understanding his own countries collecting potential. 'Irish Folklore. Distinguished American's Views. Professor S. Thompson in Dublin,' *The Irish Times*, 24 June 1937, p. 4. The disadvantages of not having an English version of the *Láimh-leabhar* to consult were noted in a review by Gearóid Mac Eoin. Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'Folklore of Ireland. How To Find It,' *Irish Independent*, 16 November 1937, p. 4. Also cited by O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 536.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

went into *Láimh-leabhar* certainly gave Ó Súilleabháin more practice for writing clear and concise questionnaires.

Ó Duilearga may have first encountered the idea of using school children and teachers to collect folklore on his 1928 Northern European trip. A number of different countries school collecting schemes have been detailed in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, it was most likely Estonian Prof. Walter Anderson's successful schools' scheme conducted in San Marino that Ó Duilearga had in mind for the model.⁸⁵ Ó Duilearga's original vision for something similar to the San Marino project had not crystalized in 1934. Official meetings and plans for a new schools' collection scheme began on 17 April 1937.⁸⁶ To help prepare teachers and students for the collecting process once a month Ó Súilleabháin did a short segment on the national radio called 'Béaloideas'. Teachers were encouraged to have their students listen. The radio broadcast went a long way in explaining exactly what type of material the IFC was looking for, especially for teachers with little collecting experience. Many of the teachers who became questionnaire correspondents heard these radio broadcasts.⁸⁷ The Dept. of Education agreed to provide only 'practical assistance' with this scheme and this more hands-off approach certainly made the teachers more comfortable. The Northern Ireland educational authorities were contacted about the scheme, when it was being drafted, but declined to participate.⁸⁸ As a result in the post-Schools' Scheme period the number of IFC Northern Ireland questionnaire correspondents was minimal.⁸⁹ The scheme officially began on 1st July 1937; however, the

⁸⁵ Walter Anderson (1885-1962) was a German ethnologist and folklorist who worked at the University of Tartu, Estonia between 1920 and 1939. He was the first person to hold the chair of folklore.

For more on the San Marino scheme see: Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol', p. 1. Citing: 'Collection of Folklore. Irish Commission's Work. Success of Primary Schools' Scheme,' *The Irish Times*, 1 February 1939, p. 3.

⁸⁶ This time the scheme was organized with the folklore sub-committee of the C.E.C. T. J. O'Connell, 'Organization Gittings by the General Secretary. Meeting with Folklore Commission Representatives,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 24 April 1937, pp. 415 & 418.

⁸⁷ *The Irish Schools Weekly* reported on these radio broadcasts on the following days in 1937: 13 February, 20 February, 24 April, 22 May, 5 June, 19 June.

⁸⁸ This is in contrast to what has already been discussed about the 1934 Schools Folklore Scheme and these two institutions (IFI and the Dept. of Education). Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol', p. 4.

⁸⁹ Once the Committee of Ulster Folklife and Traditions was founded in 1954 they had their own schools' scheme. For more about this scheme and the credit that they gave to the IFC

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

circular to the schools entitled ‘Scheme for the Collection and Preservation of Folklore and Oral Traditions,’ along with the pamphlet that contained the questions entitled, ‘Irish Folklore and Tradition’ was not officially sent out until September 1937.⁹⁰ The pamphlet’s 55 subject headings included a mix of folklore and folklife subjects and it was written by Ó Súilleabháin. It was also presented in an easier to follow format than that of the 1934 Folklore Scheme pamphlet.⁹¹ Ó Catháin estimates that around 5,000 primary schools participated in the scheme. In 1945 Ó Danachair stated that the IFC gained hundreds of questionnaire correspondents from the system.⁹² The value of the material collected, the details of how the scheme worked and contemporary criticisms of the scheme have all been covered well by other scholars and do not need to be added to further here.⁹³ However, it is important to note, that other than the head office research trips to Northern Europe, no event had a greater influence on the IFC questionnaire system than this scheme.

It will therefore come as no surprise that Máire Mac Neill was also eventually sent to Sweden to train with von Sydow and then Campbell in

see: K. M. Harris, 'The Schools' Collection' in *Ulster Folklife*, vol. 3, no. 1, (1957), pp. 8-13.

⁹⁰ Irish Dept. of Education, *Irish Folklore and Tradition* (Dublin: Department of Education, 1937), p. 1.

Ó Duilearga and Ó Súilleabháin had only returned from the International Folklore Conference, Paris, which lasted from the 21 – 28 of August. Ó Duilearga gave a lecture at the event and was able to spread the message of the work the IFC was doing even further. For a copy of his lecture see: NUI Galway, James Hardiman Library Special Collections Archives. Séamus Ó Duilearga Collection G16, Box 4, Folder 3, ‘Conférences. The Irish Folklore Commission and its Work’. For more on the European wide political debates that were heavily discussed at this conference see: Gardberding, "'There are dangers to be faced": Cooperation within the International Association of Folklore and Ethnology in 1930s Europe', pp. 25-71 and Shanny L. Peer, 'French Uses of Folklore: The Reinvention of Folklore in the 1937 International Exposition' in *Folklore Forum*, vol. 22, no. 1/2, (1989), pp. 62-77. For *The Irish Times* article detailing the event see: 'The Folklore Congress. Large Gathering in Paris. An Irish Delegate's Impressions,' *The Irish Times* 2 September 1937, p. 13.

⁹¹ Ó Súilleabháin wrote the guideline section and as a former teacher had a clearer understanding of the teacher’s perspective on the task. Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol', p. 8.

⁹² Ó Danachair, 'The Questionnaire System', p. 204. Ó Danachair wrote that by 1945 they had about 400 correspondents. A majority of these were teachers.

⁹³ Ó Catháin notes, 'It is tempting to think of [The Schools' Manuscript Collection] as a snapshot of the state of Irish tradition across the greater part of Ireland, a long exposure, as it were, taken over a period of eighteen months.' For more on contemporary criticism of the scheme see: Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol' p. 10. For more on the Scheme see: Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 260-270. Séamus Ó Catháin and Caitlin Uí Sheighin, *A mhuintir Dhu Chaochain, labhraigi feasta* (Indreabhan, Co. na Gaillimhe: Clo Chonamara i gcomhar le hOidhreacht Iorrais, 1987). Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, pp. 10, 28, 5-64, 72, & 211.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

archival methods, cartography and the use of questionnaires. She left Ireland on 12 December 1937 and returned in the New Year on 22 February 1938.⁹⁴ Unlike Ó Duilearga's and Ó Súilleabháin's trips this research trip has attracted little scholarly attention; therefore it is difficult to know what exactly she studied in Sweden. However, it can be safely assumed that she was exposed to the questionnaire system in Lund and Uppsala. Upon her return she was much more involved with the IFC's questionnaire system and even began drafting some of the questions herself.

Amazingly even throughout the Schools' Collection Scheme the IFC still managed to issue questionnaires. One on *Cor Shúgán*⁹⁵ was issued in November 1937 before Máire Mac Neill departed for Sweden.⁹⁶ Furthermore as the Schools' Collection Scheme was drawing to a close a questionnaire on *Concerning Death* was issued.

According to Ó Catháin, 'by the end of March 1939, some 4,575 notebooks' from the school were crowding the head office.⁹⁷ Considering the amount of paperwork from that scheme alone it was a difficult task to keep up with the addition of the questionnaire correspondence. Nonetheless, the IFC still managed to issue five questionnaires in that calendar year. A questionnaire was issued on *Stone Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals* in February 1938. Over the summer three further questionnaires were issued on *Lake and River Monsters, Devil's Son As a Priest/The Story of Nera*, and a second questionnaire about the topic of *Bataí Scóir*. As the year came to a close a questionnaire on *Stone Heaps* was issued on 10th December. This questionnaire received a large number of replies.

A series of articles written by leading folklorists on various aspects of Irish folklore was published in the *Irish Independent* between June and October 1938.⁹⁸ This is addition to all the Schools' Scheme promotional

⁹⁴ Lysaght, 'Don't Go Without a Beaver Hat!', p. 50.

⁹⁵ The questionnaire was about what could be described as a 'rope-twist,' but the material collected on is never referred to in these English language terms.

⁹⁶ There is limited information about her trip compared to Ó Súilleabháin's and Ó Duilearga's.

⁹⁷ Ó Catháin, 'Scéim na Scol', p. 10.

⁹⁸ 'A Striking New Series of Special Features. The Folklore of Ireland,' *The Irish Independent*, 20 June 1938, p. 4. 'Five More Features of Interest. Folklore,' *Irish Independent*, 10 September 1938, p. 12. Eoin Mac Néill, 'The Meaning of Folklore. We Are

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

lectures, radio broadcasts, and other non-series newspaper articles helped disseminate the IFC's mission to the Irish public. In Ó Súilleabháin's *Irish Independent* article he mentioned the questionnaire system in detail. His comments are worth quoting in full, as it was the first time a head office staff member went into such detail about the system in English, in a high circulation Irish newspaper. The *Irish Independent* (3 October 1938) printed:

Network of Helpers. The Commission is also hoping to build up slowly a network of correspondents all over the country to whom questionnaires may be sent from time to time. The questionnaire system gives better results than any other as it is widespread in scope and looks for information of a special character.

Questionnaires issued in recent years dealt with such varied subjects as Holy Wells, Bataí Scóir, Cor Shúgain, Currachs, lake and sea serpents, stone axes, arrowheads and buried animal heads, prehistoric monuments, Bible Schools, usages and beliefs pertaining to sickness and death. The replies received were of a high standard and served to show what excellent results can be attained by this means of collection. The Commission is extremely anxious to make contact with people in each county for questionnaire purposes. The reliability of the correspondents is the pivot on which the success of the system rests and the Commission has high hopes of adequately supplementing the work of collection by this means in the future.⁹⁹

Many of the questionnaire correspondents in 1938 and some future correspondents read this long article about material culture.¹⁰⁰ It helped to explain the purpose of the questionnaire system and the importance of ethnology in folk studies.

The Schools' Scheme finally came to a close in December 1938 and the IFC was delighted but overwhelmed with the huge amount of material collected. It took the head office staff three months to arrange and organize the thousands of returned copybooks. As a result, dealing with the

Witness of the Rebirth of Our National Tradition,' *Irish Independent*, 26 September 1938, p. 4. Séamas Ó Duilearga, 'The Survival of Folklore. Recording Tradition We Work In Haste with Death at Our Elbow,' *Irish Independent*, 27 September 1938, p. 8. Dr. Robin Flower, 'Folklore And Ireland's Past. Ancient Literature Is Intelligible Only in Light of Oral Tradition.,' *Irish Independent*, 29 September 1939, p. 6. Dr. Albert Nilsson, 'Material Folk Culture. Folklore Must Not be Dissociated from its Natural Background,' *Irish Independent*, 30 September 1938, p. 6. "Rural Irish Architecture. Traditional Style Should be Retained in the New Building Schemes," *Irish Independent*, 4 October 1938.

⁹⁹ Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Folklore Collector At Work. Willing Volunteers All Over Ireland Gather Up the Fragments,' *Ibid.*, 3 October 1938, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ Correspondent Kathleen Hurley noted that she was reading these articles and that many of her neighbors found the subject interesting. Kathleen Hurley to Ó Súilleabháin (26 November 1938) NFC 552:240.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

correspondence for non-school material was put aside temporarily.¹⁰¹ Two short questionnaires were issued in these months on *Lineages Associated with Animals, Fish, Birds, and Seals* and *Maiden-hair Fern Tea* but the replies were minimal. The questions were not sent to many correspondents.

In his discussion of collecting by means of questionnaire Briody has stated:

Despite the fact that the Commission had sent out a number of questionnaires in the first few years of its operations, Ó Duilearga himself felt that the Commission's questionnaire system proper got under way in November 1939 with the issuing of a short questionnaire on the Feast of St. Martin.¹⁰²

For evidence of this idea Briody cites a letter Ó Duilearga wrote to von Sydow in January 1940 where he called the 1939 *Martinmas* questionnaire a 'new departure.' However, the bound volumes of questionnaire replies and correspondence for the 1936 to 1939 period demonstrate that the IFC started issuing typed postal questionnaires on various folklore and folklife topics at the request of various scholars before November 1939.¹⁰³

Ó Duilearga may not have considered the questionnaire system fully operational until 1939 for two reasons. First, the successful 1937 to 1938 Schools' Collection Scheme, which resulted in a larger pool of correspondents, had not been completed in 1936. Even by the winter of 1939 all the informant information (teachers names) had not been completely processed. Therefore the 1936-1939 questionnaires were only sent to a limited number of correspondents. The replies were excellent but reply numbers were too limited for comparative research and map making. Mac Neill had been sent to Sweden specifically to learn map-making skills but at least 100 replies, from all parts of Ireland, were needed in order to make a map accurate enough for analysis. She noted in 1940 that one Swedish archive found it most 'desirable to get replies' from over 700 correspondents because 'less than that would not be enough to show the variation of traditions and customs from district to district.'¹⁰⁴ This may have been why Ó Duilearga did

¹⁰¹ Seán Ó Súilleabháin to David H. Greene, (28 April 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, David Greene*.

¹⁰² Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 281.

¹⁰³ NFC 495:2.

¹⁰⁴ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 12.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

not mention these smaller-scale questionnaires to his Scandinavian colleagues. The number of replies received was not high enough before November 1939 to warrant the advertisement that the IFC was working on comparative cartography.

The second reason may have been because the IFC had only been granted an initial period of five years. At the beginning Ó Duilearga's main priorities were hiring paid full-time collectors and running a successful schools' collection project. He did not have enough time to devote to a school scheme and a paper intensive questionnaire system. Before November 1939 most of the correspondence thank you letters and drafting of questionnaires were done by Ó Súilleabháin and Mac Neill. It was logical for the Director to put his effort into the Schools' Collection Scheme, because the IFC obtained a larger return of material from that project. The thirteen 1936 to 1938 questionnaires should have been considered IFC questionnaires from Ó Duilearga's perspective, but it was unknown even at the end of 1938 if the 'system' would be able to continue if the IFC was disbanded. By the end of 1939 the IFC had been 'given informal assurances that its terms of office would be extended.'¹⁰⁵ After these assurances and the process of teachers' copybooks it made sense for the head staff to devote a substantial amount of time the questionnaire system. From November 1939 onwards Ó Duilearga became much more involved in the system.

Ó Duilearga's comments to von Sydow were not mirrored in other documents with his signature on them.¹⁰⁶ In September 1940 he attempted to encourage Northern Ireland natives to enlist as IFC correspondents. He wrote in a formal letter to a number of individuals that the questionnaire system had been in use for a number of years and then listed nine previously issued

¹⁰⁵ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 137 citing: ULMA Saml. Åke Campbell, subnr. 203: Seán Ó Súilleabháin to Åke Campbell, 17 December 1939.

¹⁰⁶ The one exception to this was his letter bound in the 1940 *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlet where he also stated that the questionnaire system was 'inaugurated in 1939.' It is strange that he wrote this because many of the individuals receiving these pamphlets had answered questionnaires before 1939. Again Ó Duilearga's definition of 'began' may be different from a historian with hindsight. For more on the *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlets see this Chapter's 'Seanchas Nodlag (1940)' section.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

questionnaires.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the word ‘questionnaire’ appeared in the title of many of the pre-*Martinmas* questionnaires.

To add to the daunting task of sorting through the copybooks, the IFC was without its Director between 3 February and 24 May 1939. The remaining IFC staff replied to all of his personal correspondence for him. Ó Duilearga went on a four-month, Irish Government sponsored, tour of the United States. De Valera told those present in the Dáil on 15th February that Ó Duilearga’s tour would cost around £150 and was part of a plan that included the launch of the Irish exhibit at the New York World’s Fair. To de Valera the tour marked ‘the beginning of an effort to make our national culture more widely known and appreciated abroad, particularly in America.’¹⁰⁸ Ó Duilearga had a more detailed vision and noted:

My main reason for going to the US is to try to interest the Americans in the traditions, which the Irish people brought with them from this country... In the past it has been nearly all politics with us [the Irish]. I hope that in the future the interest will be in cultural collections and such similar subjects. All that our people need in America is a lead.¹⁰⁹

It was Stith Thompson, who originally asked Ó Duilearga to undertake a lecture tour of the US to promote the study of Irish-American folklore. When the Government also expressed an interest, Thompson made many of the lecture and accommodation arrangements for Ó Duilearga. The correspondence before February 1939 between Ó Duilearga and the liaison for each lecture location was extensive. His many pre-departure contacts allowed him to visit 23 states and lecture at some of America’s top universities and colleges.¹¹⁰ As a result of the tour the ties with American academics were strengthened for the IFC. None of the Americans who requested questionnaires between 1936 and 1945 met Ó Duilearga on this tour but his promotion of the IFC resulted in expanded potential for academic collaboration.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ó Duilearga to a chara (10 September 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Questionnaires and Cover Letters*.

¹⁰⁸ *Dáil debates*, vol. 74, 483, 15 February 1939.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Irish Folklore. Director to Lecture in U.S.’, *The Irish Times*, 3 February 1939, p. 4.

¹¹⁰ For more on the specifics of this tour see *NFC Folder American Lecture Tour 1939*. There are hundreds of documents in this folder and it would be impossible to cite them all here.

¹¹¹ One academic that Ó Duilearga met in Massachusetts David H. Greene wrote to the IFC with a folklore inquiry before Ó Duilearga was even back home! A questionnaire was not

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

When Ó Duilearga was in the US, Ó Súilleabháin and Mac Neill worked tirelessly on writing thank you letters to correspondents who had sent in questionnaire replies. A few days after Ó Duilearga returned from the US, another shorter questionnaire on the rhyme ‘*I am a cake from Ballybake*’ was issued. However, the Director was not involved with office work at the time as he noted in a letter to von Sydow, that upon his return to Ireland, ‘I did not want to do anything, felt completely worked-out, listless and oh! How tired I was. That feeling lasted all the summer.’¹¹² He was in Galway with his mother and brother at a Mass when he learned that England had declared war on Germany.¹¹³ Ireland had already declared its neutrality by the time the first calendar custom questionnaire on *Martinmas* was issued.

‘The Emergency’

For a man with so many friends living abroad in countries that were transformed by the Second World War the stress of not knowing about their safety coupled with the fear that an attack on Dublin could destroy the collection was too much for Ó Duilearga.¹¹⁴ He broke down physically toward the end of September 1940 with appendicitis.¹¹⁵ He admitted in his correspondence that he had experienced extreme mental unrest as well.¹¹⁶ Despite the Director’s periodic absence and ‘the Emergency’, the head office staff issued 34 questionnaires from the beginning of 1940 to the end of 1945. The questionnaires issued during this period received some of the most

issued as a result but information was gathered from the main manuscript collection. See: *NFC Correspondence Files, David H. Greene (1939-1940)*.

¹¹² Ó Duilearga to von Sydow, (29 January 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow*.

¹¹³ NFC Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1939, (entry 3 September).

¹¹⁴ Ó Duilearga to von Sydow, (28 & 29 January 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow*. And Ó Duilearga to Breandán Ó Míodhcháin (21 June 1940) *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to Seán P. Ó Ceileachair, O.S. (20 September 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁶ Seán Ó Súilleabháin to Seán P. Ó Ceileachair (2 September 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*. Séamus Ó Duilearga to Joseph Polin, (4 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Joseph Polin*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

interesting replies, and despite paper shortages, towards the end of ‘the Emergency’ the system was not altered by the events unfolding outside of Ireland. Moreover the head office had more physical space to process the replies. In September 1939 what is now referred to as the Schools’ Manuscript Collection was transferred for safe keeping to Woodtown Park, Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin. The remaining Main Manuscript material was moved to Altnabrocky Lodge, Ballina, Co. Mayo.¹¹⁷

Most of the replies for the *Martinmas* questionnaire were returned in the first few months of 1940. The IFC staff were ecstatic about the reply numbers. A deal was worked out with the FIS committee in 1940 that anyone who answered questionnaires became an honorary free FIS member.¹¹⁸ This was a highly successful way to reward the correspondents for their work without payment.¹¹⁹ A questionnaire on *Bainis agus Pósa* was originally meant to be issued in early 1940¹²⁰ but at the last moment the topic was switched to *Old-time Dress*.¹²¹ This was another highly successful questionnaire because numerous correspondents sent in long and detailed replies from all over the country. As Ó Duilearga admitted in a letter to a correspondent, the IFC office staff was ‘very small and’ did ‘not find it easy to cope with’ the ‘correspondence and office work.’¹²² When the staff returned from summer holidays they were overwhelmed with the amount of replies that had been sent in. Mac Neill set about organizing the material¹²³ and Ó Duilearga and Ó Súilleabháin prepared the second calendar custom questionnaire *The Last Sheaf* for issuing. Since the inception of the questionnaire system the IFC attempted to get as many Northern Ireland

¹¹⁷ Ó Catháin, ‘Scéim na Scol’, p. 11.

¹¹⁸ More on the correspondents’ reactions to this in Chapter 7.

¹¹⁹ NFC ‘Garr-Thuar. /1939-1940,’ p. 5.

¹²⁰ Ó Duilearga to Carl Wilhelm von Sydow (28 & 29 January 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹²¹ Mac Neill to a chara (11 April 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹²² Ó Duilearga to a chara (19 June 1940) *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹²³ Ó Súilleabháin to Mícheál S. Ó Mainnín (9 August 1940) *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

correspondents as possible. In a mass produced letter addressed to individuals living in Northern Ireland and dated 10 September 1940, Ó Duilearga stated:

It has not hitherto been possible for us to get collection underway in Northern Ireland owing to certain difficulties. In the absence of an active body of correspondents in the North no satisfactory scientific conclusions can be arrived at regarding most aspects of Irish oral tradition. The problem of getting the oral traditions of the six northern counties collected has been discussed several times at meetings of the Commission. On a recent occasion Fr. [Laurence] Murray promised to let me have a list of people in the North who, he felt confident, would give active assistance. Your name was included among those mentioned, so I am glad to take this opportunity of explaining the matter to you.¹²⁴

He went on to explain the workings of the questionnaire system and included a copy of *The Last Sheaf* questionnaire. This questionnaire subject was most likely selected to send to Northern Ireland correspondents because the traditions surrounding the end of the harvest were still widely celebrated there.¹²⁵



Figure 12: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), Front Cover

In a mass distributed letter dated 14 November 1940 Ó Duilearga reminded the correspondents who had not returned replies for the two 1940 questionnaires to do so soon. He also noted that ‘before Christmas we hope to issue a bulletin to all our correspondents informing them of the progress of

¹²⁴ Ó Duilearga to a chara (10 September 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Questionnaires and Cover Letters*.

¹²⁵ Mac Neill to Mrs. Cooper-Foster (2 October 1940) *NFC Correspondence Files, Jeanne Cooper-Foster*. Kevin Danaher, *The Year in Ireland* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1972), pp. 190-199.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

our work with their kind assistance.’¹²⁶ The ‘bulletin’ that he referred to ended up taking the form of a Christmas pamphlet and was entitled ‘Seanchas Nodlag.’ The IFC sent these to all questionnaire correspondents, before every Christmas between the years 1940 and 1944.

Each issue included different folklore and folklife information. However, a standard format in presentation was done throughout. The cover (like the one shown above) was a ‘folk’ scene taken from a famous painting or drawing. An explanation of the selection was given inside the pamphlet. For the 1940 issue the IFC was able to get the famous Irish printer Colm Ó Lochlainn¹²⁷ to reproduce the Sir E. A. Waterlow¹²⁸ 1889 painting ‘Lá Mhic Dara. St. MacDara Day.’ The faithful questionnaire correspondent Domhnall Ó Cearbhaill wrote a short piece about the island from information he heard from a native to the area, Pádraic Mac an Iomaire (70).

In addition to the standard pamphlet cover the *Seanchas Nodlag* issues always included a letter from Ó Duilearga, which began in Irish and then switched into English. The letters always thanked the correspondents for their hard work and asked them to continue it into the New Year. They were also welcomed to visit the Dublin head office anytime.

Ó Duilearga was able to craft great emotion into his statements about folklore’s place within the identity of the Irish nation. The closing paragraph of his 1940 S.N. letter is a fine example of this:

The importance of the task upon which you and the other workers of the Commission are engaged cannot be over-stressed. We are living to-day in a world of change and upheaval, and the future is uncertain. The old Irish world which our fathers knew (and which is still in evidence in certain secluded or remote districts) is passing away before our eyes, yielding place to a new order which is largely not of our making. The age-old culture of the rural district gives place to a syncopated international culture, the bitter enemy of our national traditions; the old is despised, and the new esteemed. We owe it to our own people, to the Irish dead of the ages, to chronicle before it is too late the half-forgotten memories of the past, “to collect the fragments which remain, lest they perish.”¹²⁹ It is a noble work, as you well know. We work not only for

¹²⁶ Ó Duilearga to a chara (14 November 1940) *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹²⁷ Colm Ó Lochlainn (1892-1972) was a printer, typographer, collector of Irish ballads and traditional Irish Uilleann piper. For more on his life see: Patrick Maume, ‘Colm Ó Lochlainn’ *DIB* (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a6392>).

¹²⁸ Ernest A. Waterlow (1850-1919) was an English painter. For more about his life see: C. H. Collins Baker, *Sir E. A. Waterloo, R.A., P.R.W.S.* (London: Art Journal Office, 1906).

¹²⁹ John 6:12.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

the Ireland of to-day, but for our children and our children's children, to preserve the memories of an ancient world- the oral traditions of a forgotten people.¹³⁰

The body of the pamphlet was put together by Mac Neill and first discussed *The Last Sheaf* questionnaire replies. It was noted:

We feel our correspondents would like to learn something of the results of the questionnaire we have selected two accounts, one in English from Co. Down, which is fairly representative of the replies received from Antrim and Down, and one in Irish from Kerry, which is remarkable as traditions of the "Last Sheaf" seem to be very faint in Munster.¹³¹

The Co. Down reply was from M. J. Mac Lean of Burrenbane, Castlewellan and the Co. Cork reply was from Seán Ó Loingsigh O.S. Clochán, Caisleán Griaire. Peppered throughout the pamphlet are other short excerpts of collector and correspondent replies. For the correspondents, folklore collecting was a pastime and being able to read more about what other correspondents sent in was interesting. Furthermore it gave them the sense that their contribution mattered.

The thirteen-page pamphlet concludes with an essay by Máire Mac Neill entitled 'Questionnaire work in Sweden.' She detailed over two pages how the questionnaire system worked at the Folklore Archive, Uppsala. She mentioned how the IFC was modelled on this archive and how successful it was. Multiple 'folk-culture' questionnaire topics were mentioned. After reading this piece the correspondents were informed about the larger role their questionnaire replies had in European ethnological studies.

At the beginning of the New Year 1941 Ó Duilearga did an extensive radio interview with Mr Niall Boden on Radio Éireann. The interview focused mainly on the collectors' work and the questionnaire correspondents. Ó Duilearga asked the Radio Éireann listeners to write to the IFC if they were interested in becoming correspondents.¹³² Those who were interested and wrote to the head office were sent copies of the *Old-time Dress* and *The Last Sheaf* questionnaires the replies to which continued to pour into the office throughout the winter and spring. As a result, the next questionnaire *Freehold*

¹³⁰ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 6.

¹³¹ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 5.

¹³² NFC, 'Script of Radio Éireann "interview" Jan, 1941'

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight was not issued until April 1941. This questionnaire was short and the reply numbers were low but the following month one of the largest questionnaires on *The Blacksmith* was issued. This topic was popular with correspondents and a wealth of information was returned to the IFC. The traditions of the Smith were ‘pretty much the same from everywhere.’¹³³ In contrast to the variation of the last sheaf traditions this topic’s uniformity counter-balanced the regional distinction of others. Another short questionnaire on the *Cake Dance* was issued in July 1941 and it received positive replies from a select number of the IFC’s most loyal correspondents. Particularly harsh winter weather in 1941 meant that the November issue of the *Ornamental Tomb-Slabs* questionnaire was not as successful as the IFC hoped.

¹³³ Mac Neill to John Gibson (27 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

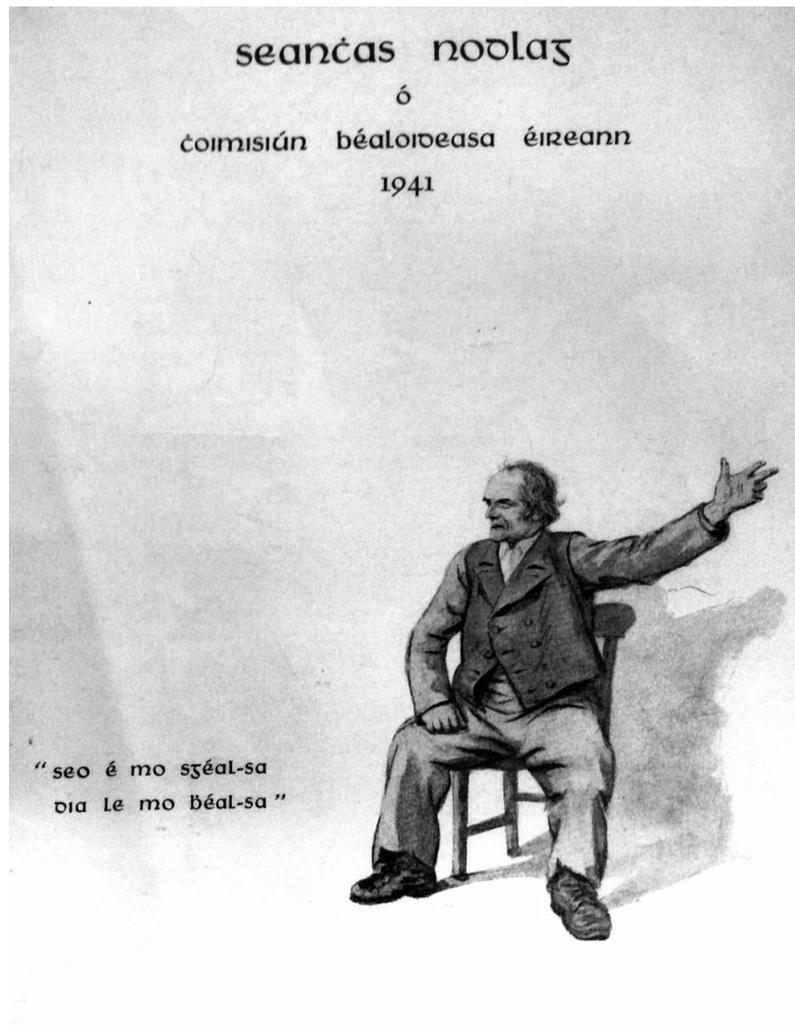


Figure 13: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1941), Front Cover

The cover picture was a reprint of one of Hugh Thompson's painting 'The Shanachie' from Stephen Gwynn's book *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1914).¹³⁴ The book was lent to the IFC by the monks of Roscrea Monastery and was printed by Colm Ó Lochlainn. In his cover letter for the S.N. 1941 Ó Duilearga thanked the correspondents and especially noted, 'we hope that in spite of the many calls on your time as a result of the war, you will favour us with your co-operation during the coming year.'¹³⁵ The 1941 issue focused on *The Smith* questionnaire replies and included excerpts from correspondents' replies and full-time collectors' material. At the back of the pamphlet the correspondents were asked to send on names of potential

¹³⁴ Stephen Gwynn *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (Dublin: Maunsell, 1914).

¹³⁵ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1941), p. 1.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

correspondents in Northern Ireland. Furthermore, the IFC requested that objects of historical and traditional value be sent to Michael Duighan at the NMI. It is not surprising that these specifications were included in the 1941 issue because *The Smith* questionnaire resulted in some correspondents sending in physical objects with their replies.

The year 1942 was one of the most prolific questionnaire years as eleven were issued between January and November. The year began with a short questionnaire on basket-making and the third calendar custom questionnaire on St. Bridget's Feast Day. This was another popular questionnaire amongst the correspondents and the IFC was overwhelmed again with the quality and quantity.

In March a short questionnaire on *bog-butter* was issued at the same time that Ó Súilleabháin's *magnum opus*, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* was published. The numerous book reviews sang Ó Súilleabháin's praises and it became an instant staple in the English-speaking world's folklore anthology.¹³⁶ To quote Bairbre Ní Fhloinn again the *Handbook* could, 'be described as a 700 page questionnaire.'¹³⁷ The research that Ó Súilleabháin conducted in order to draft each section and individual question positively influenced the questionnaire system going forward. Nonetheless, the *Handbook* was too large to carry on extensive field work and too expensive to print for all the active correspondents. The enormous size was possible because of the left over grant money from Patrick MacManus's 1926

¹³⁶ Kenneth Jackson, 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Book Review)' in *Folklore*, vol. 57, no. 1, (1946); M.T., 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Book Review)' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 13, no. 1, (1943); Marcel Maget, 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Book Review)' in *Le Mois d'Ethnographie Française*, vol. 1, no. 9, (1947); John McKiernan, 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Book Review)' in *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 77, no. 306, (1964); H. G. T., 'Reviewed Work: A Handbook of Irish Folklore by Sean O Suilleabhain' in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, vol. 10, no. 2, (1942); Archer Taylor, 'Review: A Handbook of Irish Folklore' in *California Folklore Quarterly*, vol. 3, no. 3, (1944); Stith Thompson, 'A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Book Review)' in *The Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 58, no. 227, (1945).

¹³⁷ Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition: The Role of the Postal Questionnaire in the Collection of Irish Folklore' 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), p. 219.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

donation.¹³⁸ Thus the questionnaire system continued to play an important role in the IFC's mission.

The IFC head office staff continued to promote their work in Ireland because by 1942 many of their outlets and connections abroad were closed. On 12th March 1942 Ó Súilleabháin gave a lecture at the Women's Social and Progression League entitled, 'Women in Folk Lore.'¹³⁹ Ó Duilearga also spoke at the Irish Book Fair event and had some scathing comments about scholars who 'had no knowledge, whatever, of the Irish language.'¹⁴⁰

Over the summer months numerous questionnaires were issued. The shorter questionnaires included: *Man in the Moon*, *Snáth agus Eadach*, *Bróg agus Barróg*, and *Propheying Through a Hole in Bone or Wood*. A longer, Type B joint questionnaire was issued on *Name of the Fingers* and a *Children's Game*. This was followed only a short time later by the *Garland Sunday* questionnaire. This questionnaire received some of the best replies of all the calendar custom questionnaires and the head staff was kept busy with reply letters into September. A medium sized questionnaire was then issued on *Cures for Colds, Nose, and Throat Ailments*.

The promotional work continued as Ó Duilearga's The Irish Book Fair lecture was published in the July-September issue of *The Dublin Magazine*.¹⁴¹ An Irish language Radio Éireann broadcast on 28th October 1942 entitled 'Gaedhilgeóir i Meirice' detailed Ó Duilearga's 1939 lecture tour and a few days later Ó Duilearga spoke 'at the opening of the Oireachtas proceedings at the Mansion House.'¹⁴² In December Ó Súilleabháin gave a lecture to the Dublin area Irish Girl Guides on 'Stories and Story-Telling.'¹⁴³

¹³⁸ 'Irish Folklore Argentine Bequest' *The Irish Times* (9 December 1942), p. 3.

¹³⁹ NFC Folder: 'Invitations to lectures, talks, etc' and 'Women in Folklore' *The Irish Times* (13 March 1942), p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ 'Irish Book Fair, the Playwright' *The Irish Times* (26 March 1942), p. 2. 'An Irishman's Diary' *The Irish Times* (30 March 1942), p.2.

¹⁴¹ Delargy, 'The Study of Irish Folklore', pp. 19-26.

¹⁴² NFC, Folder: Invitations to Lectures, Talks, etc.

'Be Loyal to Irish, Dr. Browne's Advice' *The Irish Times* (31 October 1942), p. 1.

¹⁴³ Stories is spelled incorrectly in the original source. NFC Folder: 'Invitations to Lectures, Talks, etc.'



Figure 14: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1942), Front Cover

The painting on the cover of S.N. 1942 is entitled, ‘The Blind Piper’ and was the work of Galway artist Joseph Haverty (1794-1864). Séamus Ó Casaide, biographer, civil servant, and Irish cultural enthusiast wrote a short piece about the painting and the painting’s subject, Pádraig Ó Briain.

Ó Duilearga’s cover letter had a similar format to the proceedings issues. He mentioned the publication of the *Handbook* but did not use language that implied the correspondents should buy a copy. This issue deviated from the previous issues because it did not print excerpts from questionnaire replies. Instead pieces of full-time collector’s work, essays by

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Ó Duilearga and quotes by famous past scholars, such as nationalist historian Alice Stopford Green and Scottish folklorist Alexander Carmichael were included.

The year began at the IFC with two long, joint issue questionnaires entitled *The Childhood Bogey* and *The Local Patron Saint*. However, not all the questionnaires in early-1943 were as detailed. Four short questionnaires entitled *Stáca tré Choirp chun ná hÉireaochadh an Sprid, Sacráil an Aifrinn, Beoir Mháirta*, and *Donn Fírinne nó Mac Míle* were issued in the Spring. The long calendar custom questionnaire on *Midsummer- St. John's Feast* was issued near the date of the festival and is one of the few questionnaires where reply material detailed a traditional custom that was popular with Irish adolescents, rather than young children or adults.

Not long after this questionnaire was issued the IFC, working with the Royal Irish Academy and the Irish Antiquities Section of the NMI began a survey of traditional cottages 'in and around' Lusk, Co Dublin.¹⁴⁴ They had the assistance of some UCD architectural students who set about 'measuring, map-making, and doing pencil and water-colour drawings of their subjects.' They 'also noted peculiarities of the houses, their fixtures and their history.'¹⁴⁵ It was noted that some of the houses' residents were 'unduly sensitive about the humble nature of many of their goods and chattels' but that they warmed to the project after a day.¹⁴⁶ The scheme was noted in the newspapers as being similar to the 1935 'Swedish Mission' but native scholars and students were conducting the investigation this time.¹⁴⁷ As the busy summer-long project continued on, another shorter questionnaire was issued by the head office on *Reilig an tSléibhe*.

The sixth calendar custom questionnaire was issued in October 1943 on *Halloween* traditions in Ireland. This questionnaire was particularly popular with Irish school children and it received an excellent number of replies. Ó Súilleabháin continued his IFC promotional work throughout 1943;

¹⁴⁴ A second group of students conducted a smaller, similar project in Ardmore, Co. Waterford.

¹⁴⁵ 'Survey of Cottages Starts in Co. Dublin' *The Irish Times* (7 July 1943), p. 1.

¹⁴⁶ Robin Walker, 'Ruling, But with a Difference' *Times Pictorial* (7 August 1943), p. 3.

¹⁴⁷ Survey of Cottages Starts in Co. Dublin' *The Irish Times* (7 July 1943), p. 1.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

however, unlike previous years his various lectures were more focused on adult audiences. He gave a second lecture to the Women's Social and Progressive League on the topic of 'Customs and Beliefs Associated with Marriage.'¹⁴⁸ He also gave an untitled lecture at The Morning Star Hostel in Dublin to the homeless.¹⁴⁹ At the very end of the year he wrote an article for *Comhar* about his trip to Sweden and his experiences there.¹⁵⁰ He highlighted how he had been training in the Swedish system of folklore classification at the Lund archive under the direction of von Sydow, Campbell and Froken Ella Odstedt.¹⁵¹

Ó Duilearga complained in his diary that his workload was too much and that he had little time to complete projects that he began.¹⁵² However, he still found time to give a lecture about the IFC's work to The Women Writers' Club.¹⁵³ He was also busy getting the IFC's terms of office extended to two additional years from 1 April 1944.¹⁵⁴ This extension, while not the permanent position the staff desired, gave the IFC security in continuing on with long-term projects like the questionnaire scheme.

¹⁴⁸ Pamphlet 'Women's Social and Progressive League: Cómhlucht Ban Éireann. Sessions January through May 1943' in NFC Folder: Invitations to Lectures, Talks, etc.

¹⁴⁹ Herbert O'Niall to Mr. O'Sullivan (January 1943), NFC Folder: 'Invitations to Lectures, Talks, etc.'

¹⁵⁰ Ó Súilleabháin, 'Trí Mhí sa tSualainn', pp. 12-14.

¹⁵¹ Froken Ella Odstedt was an archival assistant.

¹⁵² NFC, Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1943, (entry: 11 January).

¹⁵³ Miss Madeline Ross to Ó Duilearga (undated), NFC Folder: 'Invitations to Lectures, Talks, etc.'

¹⁵⁴ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, P. Ó Cinnéide to a chara (26 November 1943).

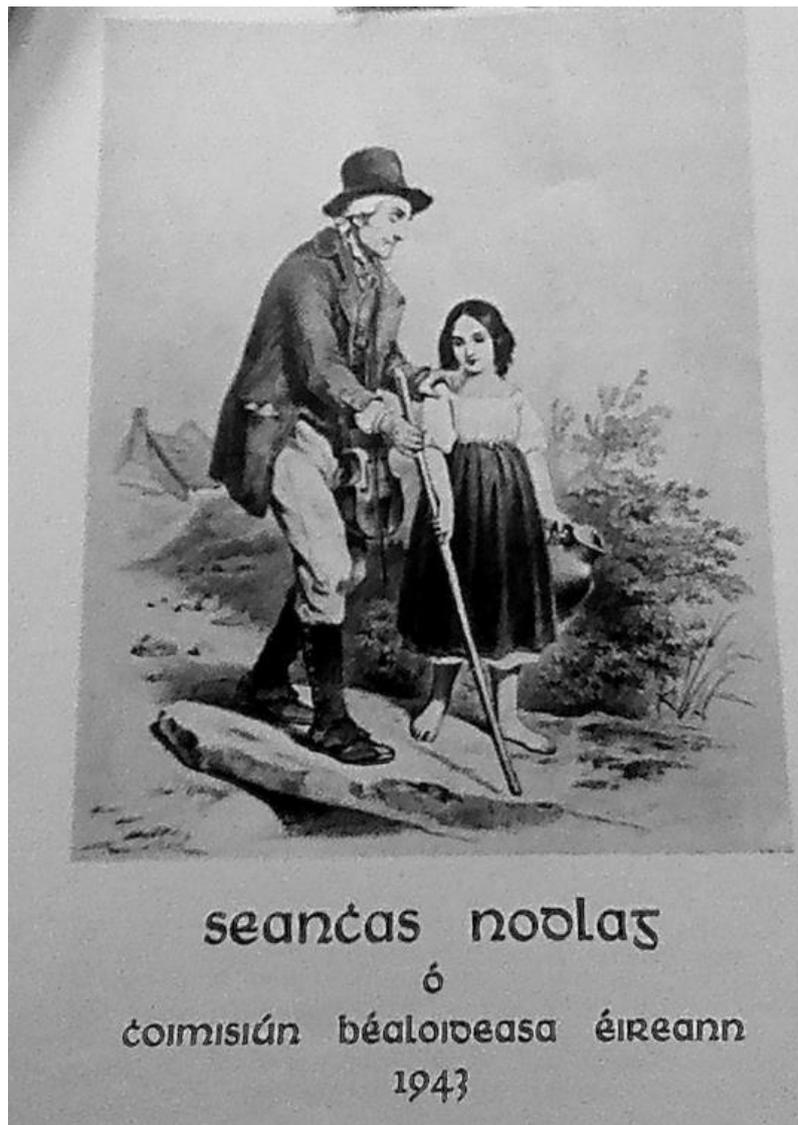


Figure 15: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), Front Cover

The cover of S.N. 1943 was ‘a reproduction of a coloured print in the possession of the National Library, Dublin.’ It was ‘a charming and tender portrayal of an old-time country musician.’¹⁵⁵ As Ó Duilearga detailed in the cover letter the IFC requested that correspondents send in information about local ‘traditional singers or musicians’. A series of questions about traditional music followed this request and this was the first of two questionnaires within a S.N. issue. The questionnaire is referred to as the *Musicians* questionnaire. The second questionnaire within the issue was entitled *Cock’s Crow at Christmas* and it was printed on its own page at the back of the pamphlet. Paper shortages were a problem in late-1943 Ireland and the IFC may have

¹⁵⁵ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 11.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

included these two questionnaires in that year's S.N. to save have to send the correspondents further paper.

The other content of the pamphlet was similar to previous years. There were excerpts from full-time collectors work, quotes from Seán Ó Conaill and Peig Sayers, a portion of William Stokes *Life of George Petrie* (1868), and a typed section of a lecture by Christiansen. A noteworthy difference was an essay by Ó Duilearga entitled 'Results and Possibilities of the Questionnaire System.' In the opening paragraph Ó Duilearga sets out, 'Enough time has passed [since the beginning of the questionnaire system] to enable us to speak of the value of the system as a means of collecting information, and to compare results obtained with the hopes we held at the outset.'¹⁵⁶ He thanks the correspondents for their hard work and emphasises how important their continuous contributions are toward the success of the system. At that point the IFC had '300 widely scattered districts in Ireland' covered by questionnaire correspondents and Ó Duilearga noted:

For comparative studies the value of this well-documented testimony from all over the country can easily be understood. It satisfies the demands of modern learning for ample data in contradistinction to the schools of the past, which so often built up faulty theories through relying on isolated and uncorroborated evidence. We believe that the material when studied will yield valuable contributions to the religious and social history, not of Ireland only but of Western Europe, and will form a source, which no serious student in these fields could afford to neglect.¹⁵⁷

He went on to give examples of past questionnaires and their potential for research into the various topics. The tone of this issue of S.N. was different than the previous issues and Ó Duilearga most likely had more input into the content of the pamphlet.

It is surprising that with the IFC's terms extended for another two years the number of questionnaires issued in 1944 dropped significantly from the previous year (1943- eleven & 1944-four). Two short questionnaires were issued on *Dubháin Ainmhidhe mar Bhiadh* and *Manaigh agus Bráithre* before Ó Duilearga noted his diary the invasion at Normandy.¹⁵⁸ A further short questionnaire was issued in November on *Use of Mouldy Substances in*

¹⁵⁶ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 7.

¹⁵⁷ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 7.

¹⁵⁸ NFC, Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1944 (entry 6 June).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Healing Septic Wounds. Ó Súilleabháin and Ó Duilearga continued to promote the IFC at lectures and newspaper interviews but the time between the issuing of long, Type B questionnaires was significant. After the October 1943 *Halloween* questionnaire, the next calendar custom questionnaire was issued on 6 December 1944 on *Christmas* traditions. The delay in issuing another longer Type B questionnaire was possibly the result of paper shortages; however, the NFC correspondence documents do not detail this.

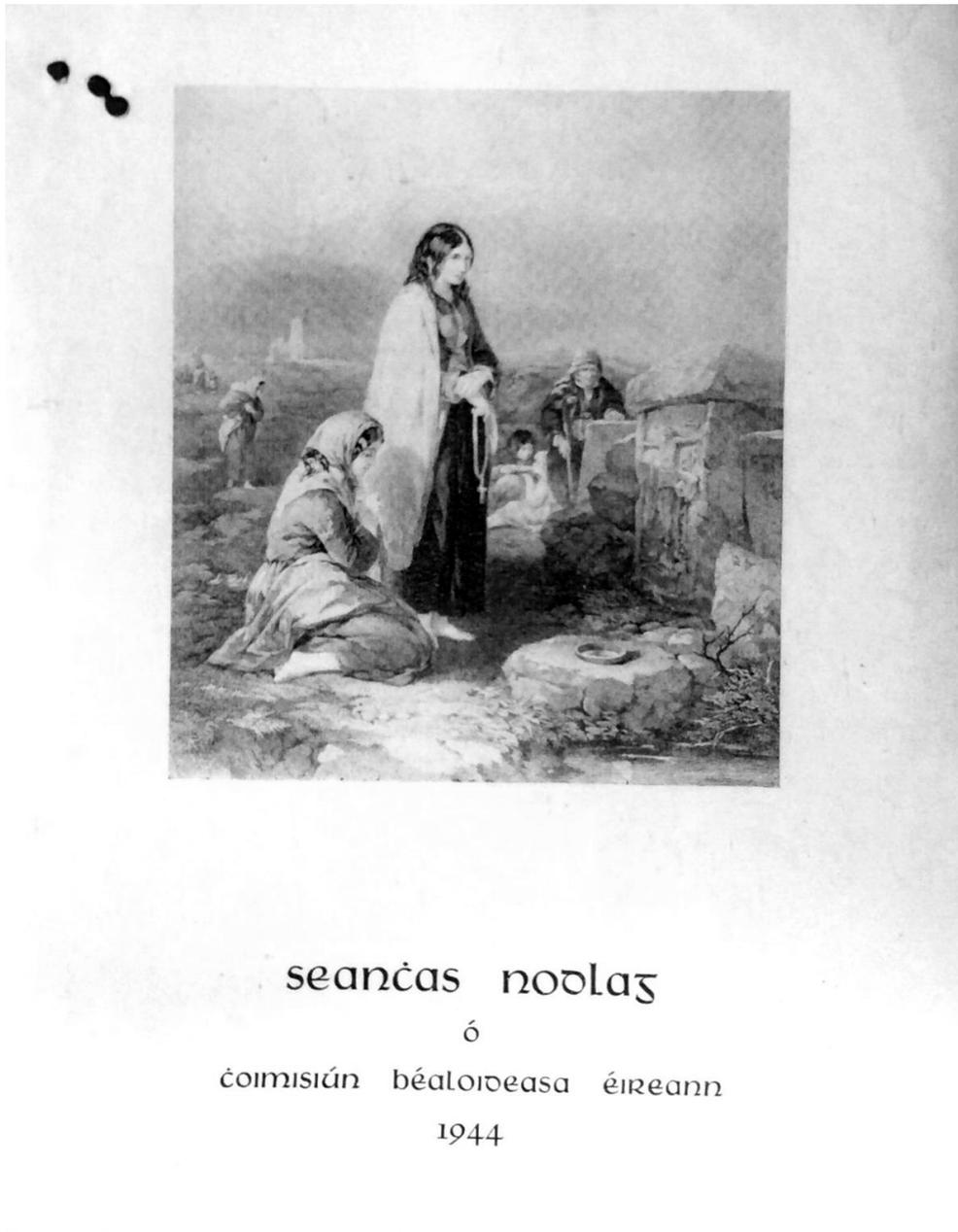


Figure 16: NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1944), Front Cover

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

The 1944 issue of S.N. was the last copy sent to correspondents for Christmas. Many correspondents were still active in 1945; however, paper shortages and the time consuming task of processing *The Great Famine* questionnaire (March 1945) probably did not allow the head staff to publish a pamphlet.

The cover illustration was ‘The Sister at the Holy Well: a scene in the West of Ireland’ (1848) by Francis Hall. Ó Duilearga’s cover letter was similar in tone to previous issues. He closed the letter with Tomás Ó Criomhthain’s famous quote, ‘Ní bheidh a leithéid arís ann.’ Some of a *Cock’s Crow at Christmas* replies were printed, in addition to the typical excerpts of folklore. Unlike with previous issues an essay detailing an element of the questionnaire system was not included in 1944.

In the year 1945 the questionnaire system went through considerable changes. Only two questionnaires were issued but they reflected the potential and peak of the system. *The Great Famine* questionnaire was issued in March 1945 and a questionnaire on *Roofing and Thatching* was issued in November 1945. *The Great Famine* questionnaire will be described in greater detail in Chapter 5; however, it is important to note here that through this questionnaire Ó Duilearga was finally able to gain the support and cooperation of established Irish historians. His dream of folklore and folklife material being collected to write social history came true. In hindsight the material was not used to its full potential by his contemporaries but at the time it was issued he was unaware of this.

In September 1945 Caoimhín Ó Danachair re-joined the IFC staff, this time working at the head office.¹⁵⁹ Briody notes one of Ó Danachair’s main duties was to ‘“improve and reorganise the [IFC’s] Questionnaire System.”’¹⁶⁰ The first questionnaire issued under his direction was about *Roofing and Thatching*. Traditional architecture was one of Ó Danachair’s favourite areas of folk culture studies. The questionnaire was successful but the approach

¹⁵⁹ For more on why Ó Danachair left see page 3.

¹⁶⁰ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 283.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

taken toward the collecting system was very different from when it was being directed by Ó Súilleabháin and/or Mac Neill.

Nonetheless, the IFC offices closed for the holiday period of 1945 having issued two successful questionnaires. The end of the War and the assurance of a further year meant the IFC staff were hopeful for the questionnaire system's future.

In conclusion, the first five years of IFC's existence were hectic with new staff hiring, hosting foreign scholars, numerous trips abroad for research, conferences, and lecture tours. The head staff worked tirelessly to promote the IFC's mission in Ireland and abroad. Nonetheless, they still found the time to organize a research questionnaire system on a scale that had never been undertaken before in Ireland. The timing of the first 49 questionnaires was not ideal for future scholars' research because of the many other IFC events that have gotten more attention in recent years. However, when each questionnaire is placed in the clear and comprehensive narrative it demonstrates how important this system was in the history of the IFC. The IFC managed to weather the Emergency and the questionnaire system benefited as a result of it. From November 1939 to 1945 other than the full-time collectors work, the IFC promotional work, and the questionnaire system not much else happened academically. Unlike in previous years the IFC staff did not participate in extensive prestigious foreign lecture tours, international academic conferences, show renowned foreign scholars around the countryside, organize schools' collection schemes, etc. The staff had more time to devote to the drafting of questionnaires and encouraging active correspondents. The system came into its own at a time when it had to be given priority because many of the other collecting methods were curtailed. With the knowledge of each questionnaire's context in the IFC's history the discussion can turn to detailing why and how each questionnaire was issued.

Chapter 5

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research

The IFC issued 26 Type A questionnaires between 1936 and 1945 to further distinct research interests. Indeed, in the period in question folklorists were not the only requestors but also Irish language scholars, archaeologists, an anthropologist, a botanist, Celticists, historians, civil servants, medical doctors, an ethnologist, museologists, and an English language scholar. These were scholars from universities and other research institutions in England, Wales, Germany, America, Sweden, and of course Ireland. As outlined in the introduction above, requested questionnaires are designated Type A questionnaires. Type B questionnaires, relating to calendar customs and living folklife topics are discussed in the next chapter. This chapter considers the types of scholars who requested questionnaires, the way questionnaires were drafted, the quality of the reply material, and how the material was utilized subsequently.

Requestors' sought questionnaires for their own research; however, in recent scholarship the benefits the IFC obtained from the Type A questionnaires have not been analysed fully. One explanation for this is that the main goal of the IFC, as an organization, was to collect, and therefore 'save', as much folklore material as quickly as possible before the death of, what was perceived to be, the last generation of *seanchaithe*. The Type A questionnaires do not fit into this motif because they were designed not to yield large amounts of material.

The IFC staff were dedicated to the IFC's main goal in ways that extended beyond personal research goals and job security; however, they realized that in order for the IFC to continue to function it needed to promote itself beyond collecting. Chapter 4 has highlighted some of the ways the IFC did this through various forms of media. The Type A questionnaires also allowed the IFC to promote its collecting abilities abroad and within non-folklore related academic circles. The scholars who went to the trouble of requesting a questionnaire were, by nature, active researchers and were well connected with various academic societies and prestigious journals. The IFC continuously reported to the Government about the prestigious scholars who

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

were utilizing the system.¹⁶¹ Although the return numbers were lower than in the case of Type B questionnaires, these questionnaires furthered Ireland's cooperation in European academia and promoted the use of the archive abroad. This was something de Valera was interested in and it certainly helped the IFC maintain funding during the difficult 'Emergency' years.

Another overlooked aspect of the Type A questionnaires in recent history is the questionnaires issued before the November 1939 *Martinmas* questionnaire.¹⁶² It was with this questionnaire that Ó Duilearga declared in 1940 that the system had officially 'begun.' The pre-*Martinmas* questionnaires were almost all Type A questionnaires and therefore further detailed inquiry will be given. The pre-*Martinmas* Type A questionnaires are key elements in the IFC questionnaire history.

To determine whether each Type A questionnaire was viewed as successful is not straightforward. For the Type B questionnaires and the material collected by collectors the 'success' of the material depended on the quality, the amount, and the use/inclusion of Irish language material. The Type A questionnaires were designed to lead to shorter replies because requestors did not want to sift through volume after volume of material to answer their question. Furthermore, from a practical approach, some requestors lived abroad and the IFC's budget did not allow for the expense of shipping large amount of material overseas. Thus how was a Type A questionnaire determined to be successful or not? For the requestor's perspective it was successful if the material was clearly presented, replies came in from different areas of Ireland, and the correspondents gave information on the central research questions. The IFC believed a Type A questionnaire was successful if the requestor indicated they were happy with the results, information was collected on a topic not then in the IFC archive, and/or the requestor used the material in a publication.

Thus having reviewed the workings of a Type A questionnaire it is beneficial to list a few shortcomings of its use as a folklore collecting method. Firstly, eleven of the twenty-six specific requested questionnaires issued from

¹⁶¹ The main way the IFC reported to the Government about its work was through the Annual Reports.

¹⁶² For more on the definition of the 'pre-*Martinmas* questionnaires' see introduction above.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

1936 to 1945 were issued to assist foreign scholars' research. This number would have been much higher if the Second World War had not broken out. The postal service between the European continent and Ireland continued after the hostilities commenced but with the passing of each month letters took longer to arrive or did not arrive at all. Foreign scholars found requesting questionnaires to be more difficult. When considering the ten foreign scholars who requested questionnaires from this period it is noteworthy that six were issued before 1940. They assisted English, Welsh, German, and American scholars' research. In the post-1940 period the four remaining foreign scholars were originally from Germany, America, Wales, and Sweden. The German scholar who requested a 1943 questionnaire was at the time seeking refuge in Ireland with her family. Moreover, it appears the American scholar requested the questionnaire before the United States declared war on Germany (11th December 1941). Additionally, the age of the American and Welsh scholars disqualified them from their countries' draft.¹⁶³ It is therefore being argued that it was difficult for younger foreign scholars to request questionnaires during the later part of the period in question; however, this did not indicate a lack of interest in the system but rather an inability to concern themselves with matters not relating to the war.

Secondly, the IFC had strict rules about sharing questionnaire information with other scholars if it had originally been collected for a specific requestor. This rule was documented when Ó Duilearga wrote to the requestor Leslie V. Grinsell: 'I need hardly say that we would not make the material available to anyone else except yourself.'¹⁶⁴ Grinsell replied with, 'I think it would be in the best interests of science if the resulting material were made accessible to anyone who desired to use it. I should certainly not wish

¹⁶³ The 1942 questionnaire on *The Names of the Fingers & A Game* was requested by Paul G. Brewster and resulted in an article on the subject in *Béaloides* (1943) co-written with Séan Ó Súilleabháin. More on this questionnaire on p. 194. Brewster was born in 1898 making him 44 years old in 1942. The United States military, as a result of a presidential executive order, changed the age of the draft range on 5 December 1942 from 21 to 45 years of age, to 18 to 38 years of age. Brewster, regardless of his physical condition in 1942 did not have to concern himself with the chance of being drafted.

¹⁶⁴ *The Folklore of Pre-historic Monuments and Stone-Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals*. Ó Duilearga to L. V. Grinsell (11 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

to keep it all to myself!’¹⁶⁵ The closing of material, and, from the 1950s, the necessity of gaining permission from the IFC Director before citing the IFC, became a contentious issue amongst the head staff members. It lies outside the scope of this research but is detailed excellently in the “Cogadh na gCarad” (‘The War of the Friends’) section of Briody’s book (2007).¹⁶⁶ In relation to the questionnaire material it is important to note that if one scholar requested a questionnaire the IFC’s policy was to not provide access to the reply material to other researchers.

A third criticism of the system is that it is unknown how much material was physically borrowed from the IFC and not returned. On a couple of occasions the IFC sent requestors the original questionnaire reply material. Not surprisingly it took some effort to re-acquire the material after a prolonged period. Moreover, questionnaire material must have been lost in the post or misplaced in the overcrowded head office. This is a challenge for a contemporary researcher attempting to analyse the number of replies and the type of individuals who replied.

Fourthly, some of the Type A questionnaires were issued only in Irish; however, the replies were for a non-Irish speaking requestor to use. The IFC attempted to continue its promotion of the Irish language amongst its native Irish-speaking correspondents but in the case of these particular questionnaires this may have been an unnecessary oversight. When Irish material was returned for a Type A questionnaire Ó Súilleabháin or Mac Neill translated it into English and sent that translation to the requestor. In many cases the correspondent’s informant(s) may have also had a command of English; however, issuing the questionnaire in Irish meant that the correspondents wrote back in that language. In many cases the correspondents were not informed the information was for a foreign or non-Irish speaking Irish scholar. Irish-speaking scholars requested questionnaires as well and the language of distribution was not an issue for them, but the previous observation was a fault in the system.

¹⁶⁵ L. V. Grinsell to Ó Duilearga (13 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

¹⁶⁶ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 373-409.

Type A Questionnaires (1936-1945)

The following are 26 of Type A questionnaires. The material is presented chronologically in order to discuss some of the formatting changes as the system evolved through the months and years. Each questionnaire is scrutinized in detail because previous scholarship has not been able to do so. In order to fully comprehend the amount of work that went into the issuing of Type A questionnaires this level of detail is necessary. Furthermore, the Type A questionnaires were issued to accomplish individual research goals and understanding them allows for a better grasp of the collected material.

Analysing each of the individual Type A questionnaires serves a two-fold purpose. Firstly, it allows for a detailed description of how individual requestors come in contact with the IFC, formulated a questionnaire topic based on IFC recommendations and the requestor's previous research experience, executed the collection process, and finally what was done with the collected material. Secondly, a detailed analysis of each provides examples of the overarching objectives of the IFC offering such a service to scholars.

Pre-Martinmas Questionnaires

- 1-2) *Bataí Scóir*
- 3) *Bible Schools*
- 4) *The Folklore of Pre-historic Monuments*
- 5) *Cór Shúgáin*
- 6) *Concerning Death*
- 7) *Stone-Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals*
- 8) *Lake and River Monsters*
- 9) *Devil's Son as a Priest/The Story of Nera*

Bataí Scóir I

12 March 1936 (NFC 495)

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

The first IFC questionnaire issued concerned ‘*bataí scóir*’ as used in the National Schools in Ireland,’ in the early-nineteenth century.¹⁶⁷ The questionnaire cover letter was signed by Séan Ó Súilleabháin on 12th March 1936. He was most likely the author of the questions. The request was made that replies be returned within an unrealistic ten days.¹⁶⁸ The questions were not issued in Irish. At the beginning of the system the IFC had unrealistic expectations for how quickly material could be collected and returned. This was probably a result of their experiences with full-time paid collectors whose job it was to collect quickly. For the part-time collectors and unpaid correspondents more time was needed.

Ó Súilleabháin had an interest in this subject and the questionnaire was issued near the starting date of the 1937-1938 Schools’ Collection Scheme. The IFC may have been testing questions related to school/education subjects. It was noted in the *Irish Schools’ Weekly (ISW)* on 11th April 1936:

Many teachers are also in a position to supply information concerning the “*bataí scóir*” as used in Irish National Schools about a century ago, and about which a questionnaire appears in our next issue. The Director hopes that teachers will furnish replies to this questionnaire where the information is available.¹⁶⁹

The *ISW* was the newspaper of the Irish National Teachers’ Organization. However, the questionnaire does not appear in the next issue.¹⁷⁰ The IFC may have initially wanted to use the *ISW* as a questionnaire publication platform but in practice this was never done. A realistic concern could have been that by opening up the collecting process to the *ISW* readership the IFC could have obtained too many replies on a topic they only wanted a small sample on.

It is noteworthy that despite the 1937-1938 Schools’ Collection Scheme’s *Irish Folklore and Tradition* pamphlet having a section for questions on school related topics, the *bataí scóir* was not included as a point

¹⁶⁷ NFC 495:145.

¹⁶⁸ NFC 495:145-146.

¹⁶⁹ Patrick T. Walshe, 'The Folklore Collector,' *The Irish School Weekly*, 11 April 1936, p. 364 & 367.

¹⁷⁰ The next issue was due for circulation on 18 April 1936. The numbers 44 to 50 do not appear to have ever been issued (31 October- 12 December 1936).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

for collection.¹⁷¹ However, an expanded set of questions about the subject was included in the *Handbook*.¹⁷²

The most famous reference to the bataí scóir prior to the questionnaire's issue was in the widely read *Irish Popular Superstitions* by William Wilde.¹⁷³ Many of the correspondents were familiar with the former use of the tally stick from this work, or possibly from other scholars' publications mentioning it.¹⁷⁴ Furthermore, Ó Súilleabháin noted in an article a source from 1645 that documented a similar stick scoring system being used in England.¹⁷⁵

For more on what was done with this collected material see the section below on *bataí scóir* II 1938.

Bataí Scóir II

30 August 1938 (NFC, 657)

The *bataí scóir* questionnaire is unique in the IFC's questionnaire system because it was reissued on 30th August 1938. This was the only time that a second questionnaire on the exact same topic was reissued in the 1936 to 1945 period. Instead of reissuing the exact questions used before, Ó Súilleabháin sent correspondents individual letters asking for general information on the subject.¹⁷⁶ The 1936 questionnaire received 24 replies and the 1938 questionnaire 28 replies.¹⁷⁷ By reissuing on the same topic the IFC were attempting to test the system. A greater pool for correspondence was

¹⁷¹ Irish Dept. of Education, *Irish Folklore and Tradition*, p. 10.

¹⁷² Ó Súilleabháin and Society, *A Handbook*, p. 160. Clearly the information received from the 1936 and 1938 questionnaire allowed for more detailed questions about the names used to describe the sticks.

¹⁷³ Wilde, *Irish Popular Superstitions*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁴ Hyde also had a reference to it: Hyde, 'Irish Folk-Lore', p. 101.

¹⁷⁵ When students were being taught not to converse in English but in Latin. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Bataí Scóir' in Rev John Ryan (ed.) *Essays and Studies Presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday May 15th 1938* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1940), p. 551. Ó Giolláin also notes a similar system that was used in 1950s Kenya. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 66.

¹⁷⁶ For an example of such a letter addressed to Peadar Mac Dhomhnaill (Dún Bleisce, Co. Limerick) see: NFC 657:85. Mac Dhomhnaill wrote his reply information on the cover letter that Ó Súilleabháin sent on 30 August 1938 and that is why it is the only one bound in with the reply material.

¹⁷⁷ The correspondent and later part-time IFC collector Seán Mac Mathghamhna was the only person to send in a reply for both questionnaires.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

available in 1938, from a wider variety of places, than was the case in 1936. By 1938 many of the individuals who would reply to almost all the IFC questionnaires in the period in question, had already started collecting and replying regularly.¹⁷⁸

In 1938 Ó Súilleabháin wanted to gain a more diverse number of replies for his essay contribution to *Essays and Studies Presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (1940). Ó Súilleabháin's essay was written in Irish and, other than a brief introduction and conclusion, was comprised of extracts of 19 different replies to a combination of the 1936 and 1938 questionnaires (8 replies were from 1936 & 10 replies were from 1938). The replies were published in the language the correspondent originally wrote the material in.¹⁷⁹ In the two concluding paragraphs Ó Súilleabháin listed the further correspondents who gave replies but did not have extracts included in the essay body. They were listed under the categories of 'positive' replies and 'negative' replies. This formatting became standard practice for published questionnaire material henceforth. This was one way in which the IFC intended on sharing the collected material with a wider academic readership. The combination of the two different questionnaires' reply material allowed Ó Súilleabháin to pick the most interesting extracts and present them in a clear format. The double issue and double publication of collected material demonstrated one way the IFC hoped the new questionnaire system would function from start to finish. This system of publication became overwhelming as the amount of material the IFC took in increased; however, it is worth noting that the IFC, in the pre-1945 period, hoped to publish as much of the interesting questionnaire reply material as they could.

Ó Súilleabháin's essay of 1940 was one of his first publications since he joined the IFC staff. A long and distinguished publication career began with an essay based on IFC questionnaire material.

¹⁷⁸ Many counties that did not send in a reply in 1936 were able to in 1938 (S, LN, LE, & WM). Similarly counties that gave negative replies in 1936 were skipped in 1938 (D, G, and LA).

¹⁷⁹ The one exception being that replies received in *cló Gaelach* were standardized to Roman print.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Mícheál Mac Énrí, O.S., (Beannchor Iorrais, Béal an Átha, Co. Mayo) sent in one of the longest replies to the 1938 questionnaire on 5 September 1938.¹⁸⁰ A short extract of his reply was included in Ó Súilleabháin's essay; Mac Énrí published the entire Irish language reply in the 1940 issue of *Béaloides*.¹⁸¹ The article was entitled 'Bataí Scóir' and detailed the information he obtained from his 87 year old informant Antoine Ó Maóil (Beannchor Iorrais, Co. Mayo).¹⁸² Mac Énrí collected the information that was reproduced completely; it was Ó Duilearga who edited the material for publication.¹⁸³ This is one of the only examples of questionnaire material published in its integrity under the name of the correspondent.

Bible Schools

November 1936 (NFC 495)

The *Bible Schools* (also referred to in Irish as *Scoileanna Bíobla*) questionnaire was issued in November 1936. Seán Ó Súilleabháin noted in the cover letter that the questionnaire was sent 'out to help a student of Trinity College, Rev. MS [Francis Joseph] Roycroft- he is studying this topic at school.'¹⁸⁴ Roycroft was a Church of Ireland rector in Monamolin, Co. Wexford between 1933 and 1934.¹⁸⁵ He worked in the Dingle parish between 1935 and 1944. Ó Súilleabháin does not mention what type of degree Roycroft was studying for in 1936 but in his later correspondence to the IFC he mentioned working on a dissertation ('tráchtas') on the bible schools.¹⁸⁶

Little secondary information exists on Roycroft's personal life. His 1934 wedding ceremony was noted in the *Irish Independent* because it was conducted entirely in the Irish language.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, all his

¹⁸⁰ For more on Mac Énrí see Chapter 7, NFC 657:103.

¹⁸¹ Ó Súilleabháin, 'Bataí Scóir', p. 555.

¹⁸² Ó Súilleabháin's essay about *bataí scóir* is footnoted at the end of Mac Énrí's article.

¹⁸³ For a comparison of the original reply and the article see Mac Énrí's reply: NFC 657:103-122. On page 107 of this volume Ó Duilearga's signature appears at the top along with the note 'checked with typescript 22/11/1938.'

¹⁸⁴ NFC 495:239. C. Folsom's translation.

¹⁸⁵ Information from Francis Joseph Roycroft's gravestone in Ballyseedy Churchyard, Tralee, Co Kerry.

¹⁸⁶ Proinnsias Ua Radhcraift [Roycroft] to Ó Duilearga (26 February 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*

¹⁸⁷ J.A. Murphy, *The Church of Ireland in Co. Kerry: a record of church & clergy in the nineteenth century*, (Raleigh, North Carolina: Lulu.com, 2014), Ebook PDF , p. 42.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

correspondence with Ó Súilleabháin was through Irish. Therefore it can be concluded that he was already an enthusiastic supporter of the Irish language by the time he requested the 1936 questionnaire.¹⁸⁸ He may have come in contact with the IFC through his interests in Irish language organizations. An *Irish Times* article noted that by 1940 he was doing ‘splendid work’ with promoting Irish ‘in the heart of the Kerry Gaedhealtacht, where he was respected by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike.’¹⁸⁹

The questionnaire’s cover letter and the two questions were printed on the same page. In Irish the correspondents were asked to write the information in the language their informant spoke. The questions are signed by Ó Súilleabháin and he was most likely the author or co-author with Roycroft.¹⁹⁰ Scholars like Roycroft, who had a better background knowledge on the requested topic than the IFC’s head office staff, and who were also competent in Irish and English, had more input into the way the questions were phrased. This was in contrast to many of the foreign non-native English-speaking scholars who requested questionnaires, but lacked the language skills or the background knowledge to draft questions for an Irish correspondent to understand and answer.

The majority of the replies were processed by the IFC before Christmas 1936.¹⁹¹ In this correspondence with the IFC head office staff, Roycroft used the name ‘Proinnsias Ua Radhcraift’; however, no other known documentation exists to support the idea that he used this *ainm eile* in other capacities.¹⁹² Roycroft requested that the original replies be sent to him and he had them by 22 December 1936.¹⁹³ Sending on the originals was a risky move because it was difficult for the head office to get the documents back.

He married Mary Anne (May) Blennerhassett of Culleeny, Beaufort.

¹⁸⁸ The one short biographical reference to Roycroft is found in: *Ibid.*, p. 42. According to his gravestone in 1945 he began ministering at Ballymacelligott & Ballyseedy parish in Co Kerry until his death in 1969.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Teaching Through Irish. Lecturer’s Pleas For the Language,’ *The Irish Times*, 10 December 1940, p. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Similar to the situation with the *bataí scóir* questionnaire the *bible schools* questions were not included in: Irish Dept. of Education, *Irish Folklore and Tradition*, p. 10.

¹⁹¹ Ó Súilleabháin to Proinnsias Roycroft (15 December 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*.

¹⁹² Proinnsias Ua Radhcraift [Roycroft] to Ó Súilleabháin, (22 December 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*.

¹⁹³ Proinnsias Ua Radhcraift [Roycroft] to Ó Súilleabháin, (22 December 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*, p. 1.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

In November 1937 Ó Súilleabháin wrote to Roycroft in a friendly tone requesting that the material be sent back to the IFC because it was due to be bound.¹⁹⁴ However, when the material had not been returned by February 1938, Ó Duilearga wrote a stronger toned letter asking for the material. He reiterated that the material was lent under the premise that it would be returned.¹⁹⁵ A few days later Roycroft wrote a letter to Ó Duilearga and another to Ó Súilleabháin explaining that he had gone through a difficult period in his life and that he had not continued work on the dissertation. This was why he had not returned the material sooner.¹⁹⁶ Nonetheless Ó Súilleabháin and Ó Duilearga's experiences with temporarily losing material to a scholar meant that henceforth they typically made copies of information for individuals and did not loan the original material. Two exceptions to this rule were the November 1941 *Ornamental Tomb Slabs* questionnaire material sent to Ada Leask and the January 1942 *basket-making* questionnaire material that was lent to Mr J. Ingram of the NMI. Ó Súilleabháin noted at the MIFC (1950) that by 1950 the IFC, 'never allows an original manuscript out of the IFC Office because we know what human nature is and we know that manuscripts may never come back again.'¹⁹⁷

In hindsight this was a unique questionnaire because it dealt with an element of the Irish Protestant tradition and was requested by a clergy member of a Protestant faith. Roycroft's enthusiasm for the Irish language meant that he may have been viewed differently; however, it was not a subject that the IFC typically requested information on. Some of the Type A questionnaire topics added information to the IFC archive that would not have made it into the collection otherwise. The topic and questions themselves do not appear in the *Handbook*. It is significant that the first questionnaire requested by a non-IFC head staff member was on a topic relating to schools and education. Roycroft selected the questionnaire topic but the IFC benefited

¹⁹⁴ Ó Súilleabháin to Proinnsias Roycroft (23 November 1936), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*.

¹⁹⁵ Ó Duilearga to Rev. Mr. Roycroft (18 February 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*.

¹⁹⁶ Proinnsias Ua Radhcraift [Roycroft] to Ó Duilearga (26 February 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, Rev. Mr. Proinnsias Roycroft*.

Roycroft returned the material to the head office eventually because the Secretary sent a confirmation letter on 1 March 1938.

¹⁹⁷ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, , pp. 100-101.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

from the reply information as well. Plans for the school scheme were underway in 1936 and this questionnaire (along with the 1936 questionnaire on *Bataí Scóir*) demonstrated the potential of collecting on an educational topic. Furthermore, this is one of the few examples of a questionnaire from the 1936 to 1945 period that was related to a historical topic. Most of the questionnaire topics were too general to be considered historical in a modern context. When the IFC issued the questionnaires on *Manaigh agus Bráithre* and the *Great Famine* they asked for local folklore about these historical subjects rather than the more defined questions about specific local bible schools that existed and who operated them.

‘Francis Roycroft’ never submitted a thesis to Trinity. He notes in his apology letter to Ó Duilearga that he noted he hoped to return to it again one day but whether he did on this particular subject is not known.

Folklore of Pre-Historic Monuments

10 June 1937 (NFC 496)

The *Folklore of Pre-Historic Monuments* questionnaire was issued on 10 June 1937. This questionnaire was meant to complement the February 1938 questionnaire on *Stone Axes, Flintheads and Buried Animals* and vice versa.¹⁹⁸ The cover letter requested that the replies ‘not be long.’ The 9 printed questions were lengthy and Ó Súilleabháin may have been afraid that correspondents would be overwhelmed and therefore not reply.

Leslie V. Grinsell, who was a well-respected, amateur, English archaeologist drafted this questionnaire.¹⁹⁹ Grinsell was working as a bank clerk at Barclays Bank when he wrote to ‘The Secretary of the Folk-lore Society of Ireland’ and asked for more information about Irish scholars studying prehistoric monuments and if any English language publications on

¹⁹⁸ NFC 496:2a.

¹⁹⁹ He was at the time ‘a member of the Prehistoric Society and also of the English Folk-lore Society and on the Council of the latter society.’ L. V. Grinsell to The Secretary of the Folk-Lore Society of Ireland (14 February 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

Note: The correspondence sent from the IFC head office misspells Grinsell’s name ‘Grinzell’ and therefore the title of the folder is incorrectly labelled Grinzell.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

the topic were known.²⁰⁰ Irish archaeologist R. A. S. Macalister received a similar letter from Grinsell and called into the IFC head office to inquire if Ó Duilearga had already sent Grinsell a reply.²⁰¹ Macalister replied first to Grinsell informing him of what he and Ó Duilearga had discussed. He suggested to Grinsell that he draft a questionnaire of 15-20 items. Grinsell agreed and cited the success the French Folklore and Prehistoric society had with collecting by means of questionnaire.²⁰² Ó Duilearga also wrote to Grinsell suggesting that he drawn up a short questionnaire and the IFC would issue it ‘to a number of correspondents, say 60-100, in different parts of the country and we would let you have a copy of the material collected as a result.’ Furthermore Ó Duilearga wrote, ‘you would be conferring a favour on us because we would be glad to have the information among our records.’²⁰³ The 1937 IFC head office staff had limited background knowledge on archaeological subjects and having Grinsell’s help in collecting on this topic was valuable. Grinsell returned a questionnaire draft only two days after Ó Duilearga sent a letter requesting it. Included with the questions was a short bibliography on the topic ‘which may be of help to your correspondents.’ This was not sent out because the IFC had clear guidelines about taking information from printed sources; however, Grinsell’s background was archaeology and he had no problem with this practice.²⁰⁴

Less than a week after sending the questionnaire draft Grinsell gave a paper at the Folk-Lore Society, London (17 March 1937) entitled ‘Some Aspects of Folklore of Prehistoric Monuments’ and it was published in the next edition of the society’s journal (September).²⁰⁵ Grinsell argued that archaeologists should use collected folklore material to aid their research on various prehistoric monuments and stated, ‘As the archaeological section

²⁰⁰ He noted in his first letter that he could not read Irish.

²⁰¹ Ó Duilearga to L. V. Grinsell (11 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

²⁰² L. V. Grinsell to R. A. S. Macalister (7 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

²⁰³ Ó Duilearga to L. V. Grinsell (11 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

²⁰⁴ L. V. Grinsell to Ó Duilearga (13 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

²⁰⁵ L.V. Grinsell, 'Some Aspects of the Folklore of Prehistoric Monuments' in *Folklore*, vol. 48, no. 3, (1937), pp. 245-259.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

throws light on the material culture of prehistoric man, so the method of folklore may be able to elucidate his mental and spiritual outlook.’²⁰⁶ The article focused specifically on ‘prehistoric monuments’ examples in England, Scotland, Brittany, Denmark and other parts of Scandinavia. He called for those present to do work on collecting folklore material in England. The correspondence between the IFC and Grinsell was respectful and pleasant. He did not mention Irish research in his 1937 paper; however, it is fair to assume that he made an oral note about the collaboration on the day. The IFC was looking to forge these types of collaborative projects with foreign scholars because it allowed their work to be further showcased. The attendees of a Folk-Lore Society, London event were aware of the IFC’s work in general but through Grinsell they were informed about the IFC’s new questionnaire system and that it was available for use by foreign scholars. In the days before a more central institute, like the Institute for Advanced Studies (1940), which specialized in Celtic scholarship, the IFC became the logical place for research queries.

Specific questions about prehistoric monuments that he mentioned in the 1937 article were similar in wording and structure to the questions he drafted for the IFC questionnaire. This IFC questionnaire is unique amongst the pre-1945 questionnaires because within the NFC Correspondence Files are the original questions that Grinsell sent and Ó Súilleabháin’s handwritten corrections. Grinsell stated in his questionnaire cover letter that ‘if [the IFC] deemed any modifications advisable by all means alter it accordingly.’²⁰⁷ Small linguistic changes were made the questions more accessible to the Irish correspondents.²⁰⁸

Additionally the section on ‘Witchcraft’ was removed. Ó Súilleabháin possibly did this because limited information on Irish witches existed, compared to other European countries, or because this particular

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

²⁰⁷ L. V. Grinsell to Ó Duilearga (13 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, L. V. Grinsell*.

²⁰⁸ The word ‘barrows’ is changed to ‘forts’ and an alternative spelling of Diarmuid and Gráinne was given. The one noteworthy linguistic change is that all the references in the original to ‘megaliths’ are crossed out and replaced with ‘stone-monuments’, which is strange because in December 1938 the IFC issued a questionnaire entitled ‘Stone Heaps and Megalithic Monuments’. However, maybe Ó Súilleabháin was not aware in February 1937 that the correspondents would be familiar with the term ‘megaliths.’

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

questionnaire had too many questions already. Each of the 9 question groupings from the final questionnaire had a heading: animism, treasure, fairies, legends, curative property & fecundity, Christianisation, offerings, immovability, petrification'. Under each heading was 1 to 4 questions relating to the heading title.

Ó Duilearga wrote to Grinsell on 23 March stating that they had received the questionnaire draft but that it would not be possible to issue the questionnaire until after the Easter holiday.²⁰⁹ Since the majority of the correspondents were teachers the schools where they received their official mail were closed for this period. Additionally, the postal system was halted for a number of days for the holidays. In October 1937 Grinsell sent the IFC office an offprint of his 1937 article and most likely politely asked when the collected questionnaire material would be sent on to him. Ó Duilearga lied in his reply, writing that the material was coming in slowly and that they would send it to him as soon as possible. In fact almost all the replies were returned.²¹⁰ The last letter in the Grinsell correspondence folder is stamp dated 4 December 1937 and is a brief thank you letter.²¹¹ No documents remain in the NFC to prove that the IFC sent the collected material to Grinsell; however, Grinsell's work presents indicators that he reviewed the material. In a second article he wrote about the subject entitled 'Scheme for Recording the Folklore of Prehistoric Remains' (December 1939) he noted:

It has been decided, by the council of the Folk-Lore Society and with the support of the Prehistoric Society, to prepare and publish as complete a collection as possible of items relating to the folklore of prehistoric monuments and implements in England.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Ó Duilearga to L. V. Grinsell (23 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files L. V. Grinsell*.

²¹⁰ At the time the IFC was overwhelmed with sorting the Schools' Collection Scheme material and had not yet organized the questionnaire replies. By 25 October 1937 thirty-five replies received only six had not been processed by the IFC. to L. V. Grinsell (25 October 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files L. V. Grinsell*. This is the first questionnaire with mass-produced thank you letters. The thank you letters for this questionnaire were generic and the address or name of the individual correspondents is not listed at the top of the documents. The idea of time running out for collecting information was expressed to the correspondent as a closing remark. 'Ní fada go mbeadh Béaloideas ár sinnsear slán ó bhaol a chaillte.'

²¹¹ L. V. Grinsell to Ó Duilearga (stamp dated: 4 December 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files L. V. Grinsell*.

²¹² It continues: 'It is hoped that kindred societies may undertake to do the same for Wales, Ireland, and Scotland.' L. V. Grinsell, 'Scheme for Recording the Folklore of Prehistoric Remains' in *Folklore*, vol. 50, no. 4, (1939), p. 323.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

The rest of the introduction explains the ‘scope of enquiry’, the ‘method’, and a ‘short bibliography’ on the ‘Folklore of Prehistoric Monuments.’²¹³ Following is the heading ‘Folklore of Prehistoric Monuments: Provisional Classification and Questionnaire,’ which begins a 6 page section detailing many of the exact same questions and/or topics as the IFC questionnaire. The aim of Grinsell’s 1939 project was to publish the material arranged under counties and parishes of England with distribution-maps.²¹⁴

In order to understand what was done with this questionnaire material and the role that the IFC had in this project, there must be an analysis of the second questionnaire issued for Grinsell’s research. This questionnaire focused on *Stone-Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals* (28 February 1938).

*Cór Shúgáin*²¹⁵

27 November 1937 (NFC 495)

The *Cór Shúgáin* questionnaire was issued on 27 November 1937 and the cover letter was printed in Irish. No traditional ‘questions’ were drafted for this questionnaire because correspondents were simply asked to ‘record on this sheet of paper the current situation of the cór shúgáin (crúicín), the people who have them, or anywhere else that you know of the cór shúgáin or straw twist.’²¹⁶ That special sheet of paper had a loose diagram on it of how the IFC wanted the information drawn and recorded. Luckily for the IFC many of the correspondents, in addition to having beautiful script, were talented artists. This could be considered one of the most visually appealing questionnaires. Again the IFC stated that the replies should be returned within ten days.

Once the material was bound Ó Súilleabháin wrote a note on the first page stating, ‘The summaries and translations into English of some of the

²¹³ The only publication he suggests that mentions Ireland in the title is W. C. Borlase’s ‘Dolmens of Ireland’ in *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries*, vol. 7, no. III, (1897), pp. 247-248. Mentioned on page 325 of Grinsell (1939).

²¹⁴ Grinsell, ‘Scheme for Recording the Folklore of Prehistoric Remains’ p. 324.

²¹⁵ Cor= a twisted or curved implement

Cor shúgáin= twist-rope (Donegal)

²¹⁶ NFC 495:4 & 21. C. Folsom translation.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

following replies were made by me for Prof. R[oderick] U[rwick] Sayce of the Manchester, Museum.’ At the end of each reply a uniformed drawing details the different variants of the types of *cór shúgáin* appears with an English summary of the material, including the full (Anglicized) correspondent’s name.²¹⁷

Sayce was a social anthropologist who was born in Wales in 1890. He studied Geography at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. From 1921 to 1927 he worked as head of the Department of Geography and Geology, University of Natal, South Africa. He then lectured at Cambridge University in the Department of Physical Anthropology and Material Culture, and was the Keeper of the Victoria Museum, Manchester University from 1935 to 1957. Furthermore, he edited the *Anthropological Journal*²¹⁸ from 1934 to 1936 and the *Montgomeryshire Collections*²¹⁹ from 1930 to 1966. In 1933 he published *Primitive Arts and Crafts: an introduction to the study of material culture* and was familiar with some aspects of Irish material culture through his visits to Ireland.²²⁰ It is unknown whether Sayce ever used the questionnaire replies in his research publications.²²¹ In April 1941 Sayce requested a second questionnaire on the topic of *Freehold Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight*.²²² Furthermore, he remained involved in the workings of the IFC and even published an article in *Béaloideas* (1942)

²¹⁷ Up to ten different varieties of the *cór shúgáin* existed. Ó Danachair in 1945 made a detailed distribution map of the replies. NFC 495:24-25.

²¹⁸ The Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain’s journal.

²¹⁹ Powysland Club’s journal.

²²⁰ Roderick Urwick Sayce, *Primitive Arts and Crafts: an introduction to the study of material culture* (Cambridge: University Press, 1933).

Ó Duilearga notes that Sayce and himself were in Donegal in 1936 photographing mountain shielings. Henry Morris, Séamas Ó Duilearga, and Domhnall Ó Cearbhaill, ‘Varia’ in *Béaloideas*, vol. 9, no. 2, (1939), p. 296.

Sayce was also present at the July 1937 Congress of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore, Edinburgh that the IFC had an exhibit at. ‘Congress of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore, Edinburgh, July, 1937’, ‘Congress of the International Association for European Ethnology and Folklore, Edinburgh, July, 1937’, p. 336. For more on this exhibit see Chapter 4.

²²¹ The barrier may be that the term ‘*cór shúgáin*’ does not translate naturally into a definite word in English; therefore, the search of Sayce and this topic may be coming up empty because he chose to modify the term in translation.

²²² For more on this questionnaire see page 35 on this Chapter.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

entitled 'Folk-Lore and Folk-Culture.'²²³ Through his many journal and society connections he helped to promote the IFC's work.

This questionnaire was unique because English translations were included in the bound volumes of the reply material. The IFC may have wanted to provide translations of all the Irish language folk culture material, so that non-Irish scholars could consult it. Nonetheless the IFC became overwhelmed as the number of correspondents grew and the number of replies to transcribe and translate became too much. The *Lake and River Monsters* (1938) questionnaire was the only other questionnaire that had full translations of the replies bound with the original replies.

Concerning Death

December 1937 (NFC 548-555)

The Concerning Death questionnaire was sent out in December 1937 to the collectors and a limited number of correspondents to assist the research of the German Celtic scholar Hans Hartmann. This questionnaire had the most questions of any previous; it had 66 questions. The instructions stated that each question should be looked at from what the perspective of what was known of death customs: in the past, in the present, and what was told through 'tales, sagas, and poems' about death. The questions were detailed but dealt with one of the following themes: things that cause death (natural and supernatural), things that prevent death (supernatural), the Irish linguistics of death, what death looked like, fear of death, doctors and priests, the deathbed, the soul, preparation of the body, the grave, the wake and the funeral, the dead coming back for a visit, and the death of an 'unholy person'.²²⁴

²²³ Roderick Urwick Sayce, 'Folk-Lore and Folk-Culture' in *Béaloidias*, vol. 12, no. 1/2, (1942), pp. 68-80. Ó Duilearga and Sayce kept up correspondence with each other until the mid-1960s.

²²⁴ NFC 548:293.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

The IFC did not distribute this questionnaire widely because they were afraid that unpaid correspondents would be scared off by the enormous collecting task required. Another questionnaire was sent out on death customs in 1978 and various shorter questionnaires on matters related to death were issued throughout the years; however, this is considered the main 'death questionnaire'.²²⁵

In 1928 Ó Duilearga registered as a PhD student at Lund University to write a thesis on 'Irish Death Customs.' He never completed this degree but in 1937, when in Berlin, he met Hans Hartmann, a young German scholar interested in Irish death customs. In March 1937 the German legate Dr. Koester wrote to Ó Duilearga detailing the German Minister for Education's plans to send Hartmann to Dublin 'to familiarize himself with practical research in several branches of Celtic Studies, principally in connection with Archaeology, Folklore, and Cultural research.' The German Legation asked for Ó Duilearga's support in this matter and he replied, 'I am only too willing to give every facility for study to Dr. Hartmann in the IFC.'²²⁶

Hartmann was born in North Germany in 1909. He studied Classical Philology, Indology, Indo-European languages, and Classical Archaeology at the University of Marburg between 1928 and 1929. In 1930 he moved to Berlin to further study linguistics, culture and religion at Friedrich-Wilhelm University. At this time he claimed he was forced to join the Nazi Party in order to pursue academia further. He graduated in 1936 with a thesis completed on Russian adjectives.²²⁷

A 27-year-old Hartmann arrived in Cobh, Co. Cork on 3 April 1937. When in Dublin he socialized with Adolf Mahr and was one of a number of German and Austrian students studying in Ireland in the late 1930s. He was even the Santa Claus at the Irish German Society's Christmas party one year.²²⁸ His activities within these German social circles led to him being

²²⁵ Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition', p. 223. The 1978 death questionnaire is in: NFC 2027, 2074, 2105-2153.

²²⁶ Ó Duilearga to Dr. Koester, (6 Mar 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files German Legation 1936-1953*.

²²⁷ Breathnach, Diarmuid & Máire Ní Mhurchú, 'Hartmann, Hans' *ainm.ie* [<http://ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=1545>]

²²⁸ O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, p. 22.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

closely surveyed by G2 (the Irish Army's Intelligence section).²²⁹ He began work at the NMI but he did not thrive in that environment and was soon transferred to work with the IFC.²³⁰

Hartmann began researching in the IFC's collections for material about Irish death customs, with the goal of eventually writing a doctoral thesis on the subject under the supervision of Ó Duilearga's friend the German scholar Ludwig Mühlhausen. Ó Duilearga was able to get his student exchange extended past the typical year allowance. According to O'Donoghue, 'Hartmann was in his element' working with Mac Neill and Ó Súilleabháin at the IFC head office. He became particularly close with Ó Súilleabháin and the two drew up the December 1938 questionnaire together.²³¹

This questionnaire received 26 extremely long replies. The majority of the correspondents sent in over two hundred pages. The correspondent Bríd Ní Ghamháin (Ballindoon, Boyle, Co. Sligo) sent in 523 pages of material between 29 June and 27 September 1938!²³² The date range is noted with Ní Ghamháin's reply because the majority of the correspondents and collectors sent the material in at two or three different dates at some time between March and September 1938. The bound material fills 7 full volumes. Hartmann must have been happy with the results.

Less than a year after the IFC head office received the last death questionnaire reply the British government declared war on Germany. It must have been particularly upsetting for Hartmann, who along with the other members of the German colony in Ireland knew that their best option was to head back to the continent. Historian Gerry Mullins states:

the group of Irish Nazis gathered in Dublin... were mostly concerned that, in the likely event of a British invasion of Ireland, they would be interned. Even if Ireland was not invaded, some of them expected that the Irish government might intern them anyway as a precaution.²³³

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 8 O'Donoghue cites Hartmann's G2 files at the Irish Military Archives: G2/007 & G2/0071. This file is not currently available for consultation.

²³⁰ He also spent time in different Gaeltachtaí and surprised everyone by learning to speak fluent Irish in only two years. He was in Bunbeg, Co. Donegal from January to February 1939 and in Teelin, Co Donegal in April 1939.

²³¹ O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, pp.8-11.

²³² NFC 552:1-29 & 555:1-397.

²³³ Mullins, *Dublin Nazi No.1*, p. 101.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

De Valera and Eduard Hempel of the German Legation organized the German colony's return to Germany via Holyhead and Holland. Hartmann was amongst those who left on 11 September 1939.²³⁴

Upon his return to Germany Hartmann was exempted from military service in order to continue working on his doctoral thesis.²³⁵ When Mahr was put in charge of Irland-Redaktion in May 1941 he assigned Hartmann to broadcasting.²³⁶ Hartmann's broadcasts, which were conducted mainly through Irish, were popular in the Gaeltacht regions that he had visited.²³⁷ The full-time IFC collector Seán Ó hEochaidh, who sent in a 95-page reply to Hartmann's death questionnaire, commented favourably on Hartmann's broadcasting skills, and noted that the few Donegal Gaeltacht inhabitants who owned a radio listened to the broadcast regularly.²³⁸

When Hartmann was working at Irland-Redaktion he continued to study at Berlin University. He presented his thesis which had a translated title of 'Sickness, Death, and Concepts of the Hereafter in Ireland,' in 1941. It cited 1938 questionnaire material extensively. In 1942 it was published under the title *Über Krankheit, Tod und Jenseitsvorstellungen in Irland* and he was appointed a lecturer in Berlin.²³⁹

Hartmann made his final broadcast to Ireland via Germany on 2 April 1945 and then fled to his relations' home in Apen 'just ahead of American troops.' He stayed there between 1945 and 1948. British secret service officers at one point interrogated him.²⁴⁰ However, he was never charged with any war crimes and therefore, unlike his colleague Mahr, he did not spend time in a detention camp. He wrote to Ó Súilleabháin not long after the war ended asking for money for his struggling family. Ó Súilleabháin was a

²³⁴ For more on their experiences on this trip see: O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, pp. 29-32.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²³⁶ According to Gerry Mullins Mahr's German accent was too strong for him to conduct the broadcasts. Mullins, *Dublin Nazi No.1*, p. 116 & 128. See the same book for more on what types of program material was broadcast to Ireland when Hartmann worked there.

²³⁷ When O'Donoghue asked Hartmann in a 1990 interview why he broadcasted only in Irish he replied, 'It was quite natural... my aim was to promote the Irish language and Irish culture as much as I could from the German side. O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, p. 42.

²³⁸ O'Donoghue acquired this information from a 1992 interview he conducted with Ó hEochaidh. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

²⁴⁰ For an excellent account of what life was like for occupied Germany see: Pól Ó Dochartaigh, *Germany Since 1945* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

charitable man and obliged.²⁴¹ Considering the IFC head office staff members' pro-Allied position it may seem questionable that Ó Súilleabháin was so willing to give money to a member of the Nazi propaganda regime; however, as Ó hEochaidh's stated, 'Mühlhausen was a real Nazi but to my mind Dr. Hartmann was the opposite, which I think helped to save him in the end...'²⁴²

Mühlhausen was shunned by his fellow academics after the war Hartmann was welcomed back and eventually obtained a lecturing position in Celtic Philology at Göttingen University. Furthermore he continued to research and publish on different aspects of Irish culture after the war.²⁴³ He went on to have a long and distinguished academic career. Ní Fhloinn called attention to Hartmann's citations of the questionnaire material in his *Der Totenkult in Irland. Ein Beitrag zur Religion der Indogermanen* (1952).²⁴⁴

Stone-Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals

28 February 1938 (NFC, 496:171-247)

The *Stone-Axes, Flintheads, and Buried Animals* questionnaire has a question grouping about stone-axes and flintheads, and another question grouping on burying animal heads in specific places.²⁴⁵ The cover letter was dated 'February 1928' and the IFC sent paper for the correspondents for their replies.²⁴⁶

This was the second questionnaire that was sent out in aid of Leslie V. Grinsell's research. Grinsell's 1939 article included an additional 1½ page of questions on what he termed 'Folklore of Prehistoric Implements'. Unlike

²⁴¹ O'Donoghue, *Hitler's Irish Voices*, p. 174.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 47. Tomás de Bháldraithe and him recorded Irish dialects in the West coast Gaeltachtaí in the 1960s.

²⁴⁴ Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition', p. 223 citing: Hans Hartmann, *Der Totenkult in Irland. Ein Beitrag zur Religion der Indogermanen* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1952).

²⁴⁵ Henceforth in the thesis for the sake of word count, the title of the questionnaire will be shortened to *Stone Axes*. The custom of burying animal bones and other objects under a house was known in many European countries. Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Foundation Sacrifices' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 75, no. 1, (1945), p. 52.

²⁴⁶ Included in the instruction was the note to 'leaving a margin of an inch at the left-hand side of the paper' to help facilitate the eventual binding of the replies.'

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

with the *Folklore of Pre-Historic Monuments* questionnaire, this questionnaire did not include all of the questions in Grinsell's article. However, the subject and design are still similar enough to conclude that he played a role in the drafting and distribution of this questionnaire.

The questionnaire received an incredible number of replies (31). However, Grinsell was unable to bring his larger research project to the publication phase. Material may have been collected in Wales, Scotland, and England but Britain's declaration of war a few months before the article and questionnaires were published brought Grinsell's collecting to a halt, as he noted in the 'postscript'.²⁴⁷ No IFC staff member was included in the thank you section for having helped draft the questions for the article although they certainly did.

Grinsell became a pilot officer in the Air Photographic Branch of the Royal Air Force in 1941. He was stationed in Egypt and became fascinated with Egyptian archaeology, a topic that he later published extensively on. In the post-war period he became a Devizes professional archaeologist and was elected treasurer of the Prehistorical Society.²⁴⁸ He was later employed as the Keeper of Archaeology, Bristol City Museum.²⁴⁹ According to his contemporary Peter J. Folwer, Grinsell's 'greatest single contribution to knowledge' was that of fieldwork archaeology.²⁵⁰ In 1976 Grinsell published *Folklore of Prehistoric Sites in Britain* and in the acknowledgements states, 'the writer began as long ago as 1930 to assemble the English part of the material which has resulted in this book, and since that date many correspondents have sent items...'²⁵¹ In the preface he mentions that the study of Ireland's (and north-western France) 'abundant and well-published archaeology and folklore is indispensable for a proper understanding of the

²⁴⁷ *Postscript*. As war conditions have come into being since this was written, it is clear that little can be done in the way of collecting material until happier times return. I have collected material for Southern England to the best of my ability, and when the war is over it should not be a big task to collect the remainder.' Grinsell, 'Scheme for Recording the Folklore of Prehistoric Remains', p. 332.

²⁴⁸ He held that position between 1947 and 1970.

²⁴⁹ He retired in 1972.

²⁵⁰ Peter J. Fowler, 'Preface' in Peter J. Fowler (ed.) *Archaeology and the Landscape: essays for L. V. Grinsell* (London: John Baker, 1972), p. 11.

²⁵¹ Leslie V. Grinsell, *Folklore of Prehistoric Sites in Britain* (London: David & Charles, 1976), p. 300.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

British material.²⁵² Nonetheless the book does not go into more detail on Ireland, nor is there a thank you or reference the IFC, Ó Duilearga, or Ó Súilleabháin. This questionnaire and the material later published by Grinsell demonstrated that material collected was not always used and/or published by the scholar who requested it.

Ó Súilleabháin wrote an article about the answers to the second question grouping for this questionnaire in the March 1945 issue of *JRSAI*.²⁵³ In the article the question was reproduced with a summary of the findings. Then 16 copies and/or summaries of replies were published. Albert Sandklef also cited Ó Súilleabháin's article and his use of the questionnaire extensively in a 1949 article published in the *Folklore Fellows' Communications*.²⁵⁴ Sandklef requested the 1941 questionnaire on *Freehold Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight*.

Lake and River Monsters

9 May 1938 (NFC 593, 1379)

The IFC worked with another German scholar for the *Lake and River Monsters* questionnaire. On 9 May 1938 Ó Súilleabháin sent 40 correspondents a letter which began, 'We have been asked by a German Professor for some information about Irish traditions of monsters inhabiting a lake, river, etc.'²⁵⁵ He then listed the two questions for inquiry and asked that the replies be returned within ten days on the paper provided.²⁵⁶

This is the first time that the correspondents and collectors were informed in a formal letter who the information was being collected for.²⁵⁷ The 'German Professor' was folklorist Dr. Gottfried Henßen of Berlin.²⁵⁸

²⁵² Ibid., p. 9.

²⁵³ Ó Súilleabháin, 'Foundation Sacrifices', pp. 45-52.

²⁵⁴ Albert Sandklef, 'Singing Flails: a study in threshing-floor constructions, flail-threshing traditions and the magic guarding of the house' in *Folklore Fellows Communications*, vol. 56, no. 136, (1949), pp. 1-76.

²⁵⁵ The number of questionnaires sent out was stated here: NFC 1379:132.

²⁵⁶ '(a) Is such a monster described as having its tail in its mouth and lying in the shape of a ring?

(b) If it comes on dry land does it cause a flood or other disasters?'

NFC 593:93

²⁵⁷ For how this influences the language that they wrote the replies in see Chapter 7.

²⁵⁸ His name is often Anglicized in the IFC correspondence to Henssen.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Henßen was born in Northern Germany in 1889. In 1936 he was the founder and first director of the *Hauptstelle für deutsche Erzählforschung* in Marburg (today: *Zentralarchiv der deutschen Volkserzählung*).²⁵⁹ Ó Duilearga met Henßen on his 1937 German lecture tour and noted in his subsequent correspondence how thankful he was for his ‘kindness’ on his visit and how ‘happy’ he was to see his institute and make his acquaintance.²⁶⁰ The two men corresponded about books and travel plans frequently; Ó Duilearga wrote in English and Henßen replied in German.²⁶¹ On 25 March 1938 Henßen wrote to Ó Duilearga asking him for information on:

A monster (crab, eel, ox, dragon, lindworm, fish) lies in a lake or another water, often chained or with its tail in its mouth, and it lies in a circular fashion. When this monster goes ashore, there is a flooding or other misfortunes occur. This motif of storytelling is encountered along the whole German Baltic coast and I would be interested to know, whether there are corresponding parallels in Irish.²⁶²

Ó Duilearga’s reply was, ‘I need not say that we shall be only too pleased to be of any service to you,’ and he put him in contact with Máire Mac Neill,²⁶³ who drafted the questions.

All but one of the replies came back to the office by the end of May. Mac Neill spent most of June typing up and translating the material for Henßen, who could read English. Henßen also received typescript references to the main manuscript collection references to monsters. The following collectors were referenced in this section: Mac Meanman, P. de Búrca, Mac Coisdeala, and Ó Dálaigh.²⁶⁴ Additionally the IFC sent on two extracts from

²⁵⁹ ‘Head Office for German Narrative Research’ was the original name. ‘Central Archive for German Folk Narrative’ is the modern name’s translation.

²⁶⁰ He welcomed him to Ireland anytime and asked that he help Ó Súilleabháin with his future German travel plans. Ó Duilearga to Gottfried Henßen (15 March 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen*.

²⁶¹ See *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen* with letters dated: 23 March 1937, 6 April 1937, 8 April 1937, 10 April 1937, 1 May 1937, 12 May 1937.

²⁶² Gottfried Henßen to Ó Duilearga (25 March 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen*. Original: ‘Ungeheuer (Krebs, Aal, Ochse, Drache, Lindwurm, Fisch) oft an einer Ketter oder den Schwanz im Maul, und liegt ringförmig da. Wenn dies Ungeheuer an Land ster gibt es eine Ueberschwemmung oder andere Unglücksfälle treten ein. Dieses Erzählmotiv begegnet längs der ganzen d eutschen Os seeküste und es würde mich sehr interessieren, ob Sie auch im Irischen entsprechende Parallelen dazu hätten. Für Übermittlu entsprechender Stoffe wäre ich Ihnen herzlich dankbar.’

²⁶³ Gottfried Henßen to Ó Duilearga (4 April 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen*.

²⁶⁴ All the collectors mentioned above also replied to this 1938 questionnaire.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

printed sources.²⁶⁵ All of this printed material was translated and bound with the original replies. Henßen received the information by July 1938 and offered to return the favour of inquiries at the request of the IFC.²⁶⁶

No documentation has been found to indicate what Henßen did with the material sent to him. He was still working at his own folklore collecting organization at the time and it is possible that the information remained there for reference. His friendly relationship with the IFC head office staff extended up until the outbreak of WWII. He wrote in January 1939 requesting help with his daughter's stamp collection and Mac Neill sent back some select stamps.²⁶⁷ He continued to publish on German folk narrative subjects, but it is unknown whether the Irish material was incorporated into these works.

Devil's Son as a Priest/ The Story of Nera

5 July 1938 (NFC 593)

This questionnaire is referred to as 'The Story of Nera questionnaire' because it is a common tale in the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology. It was issued in Irish to a select number of individuals and was the first questionnaire issued on a specific folk tale topic. This was a topic that Ó Duilearga was interested in and he signed the cover letter. No set questions were stated but rather the letter provided that correspondents should write down any version of the story known to them. A bullet point summary of the story was given for clarification.²⁶⁸

All the replies were received by mid-September 1938 and Ó Duilearga wrote an article about the topic for a collection of essays honouring Eoin Mac

²⁶⁵ The printed sources are:

M. E. MacKesy, 'The Comeragh Mountains: their lakes and legends' in *The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. XXXV (1849) unknown page numbers. Patrick Kennedy, *Evenings in the Duffrey* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1869).

²⁶⁶ Gottfried Henßen to Ó Duilearga (5 July 1938), *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen. Ó Duilearga to Gottfried Henßen* (5 July 1938), *NFC 1379:131*.

²⁶⁷ See letters back and forth with the following dates: *NFC Correspondence Files, G. Henßen* 16 January 1939, 24 January 1939, 5 April 1939, and 17 April 1939.

²⁶⁸ This is the version of the story as stated in the cover letter: *Sean duine d'fhág a phaidrín amuigh sa pháirc i na dhiaidh- a mhac á lorg san oidhche- an diabhal aige á thabhairt ar a dhrom ó thigh go tigh- mac an diabhail i na shagart- dortadh an uisce choisreacan.* 'P.S. Má ceastar leagan don sgéal so leat a bhfuil tagairt ann do chomhacht uisge na gcos cuir chugainn é, le do thoil.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Néill (1940).²⁶⁹ At the start of the article he explained that The Story of Nera was ‘one of the oldest Irish folk-tales’ and listed some of the MSS that contain versions of the tale.²⁷⁰ Ó Duilearga had practice working with Irish-language manuscripts because of his assistantship to Kathleen Mulchrone in the Royal Irish Academy in the late 1920s.²⁷¹ After a brief introduction he included extracts of the questionnaire replies and also non-questionnaire main manuscript material about Nera. All of the Irish replies were translated into English. Ó Duilearga mentioned in the article 5 correspondents who returned material but their material is not included in the bound volume of replies.²⁷² Furthermore, Ó Duilearga does not include Tadhg Ó Murchadha in the thank you section even though he sent in a 3-page reply on 28 July 1938.²⁷³

This questionnaire is unique because it was issued on a folk tale subject and was sent out to aid the Honorary Director’s research. In the pre-1939 Ó Duilearga had less to do with the questionnaire system. This is also one of the shortest requested questionnaires issued, with only 23 known replies received.²⁷⁴

Lineages associated with Animals, Fish, Birds, and Seals February 1939 (NFC 1142, 1306)

This questionnaire was referred to as ‘Families Associated with Animals (Seals) and Birds’ and ‘Líntighthe Airithe go bhfuil baint ag Ainmhidhthe, Éisc, etc.’²⁷⁵ One of the 13 replies was bound separately from the others.²⁷⁶ The original questionnaire cover letter and/or questions are not

²⁶⁹ For another example of a questionnaire that was issued so an article could be written for this collection see the *bataí scóir* questionnaire.

²⁷⁰ He also mentions some of the works that had been published on the tale from the 1880s to the 1930s. Séamas Ó Duilearga, 'Nera and the Dead Man' in Rev John Ryan (ed.) *Essays and Studies Presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday May 15th 1938* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1940), p. 522.

²⁷¹ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 84.

²⁷² Donegal- Pádraig Mac a’ Ghoill, Seán Ó hEochaidh, & Éamonn Mac Durnáin. Cork-Seán Ó Cadhla & Donnchadh Ó Floinn.

²⁷³ Tadhg Ó Murchadha, Co. Kerry, Gaeilge, 28 July 1938, NFC 593:2-4.

²⁷⁴ This number is reached by adding the 19 known replies in NFC 593:1-93 and the 5 replies (see above) that Ó Duilearga mentions in his article but are not bound with the original material.

²⁷⁵ NFC 1306, 1142.

²⁷⁶ The exact number of replies is unknown because Ó Súilleabháin in an article on the subject, claimed that Seán Ó hEochaidh sent in a reply; however, no reply from Ó

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

bound with the volume; however, the replies make reference to specific questions that were stated.

This questionnaire was originally requested to aid Ó Súilleabháin's and the Irish Celticist Gerard Murphy's research into the subject. Murphy contributed numerous articles to *Béaloideas* on folklore, Irish literature, and folklife topics.²⁷⁷ He was acquainted with Ó Duilearga from his student days at UCD. Furthermore, at the time this questionnaire was issued he was working as an assistant in the Department of Irish in UCD. In 1933 Ó Duilearga envisioned getting the government to appoint Murphy 'Assistant to the Lecturer' in Folklore. Unfortunately this never came to fruition. Nonetheless, Ó Duilearga's nomination demonstrated his high regard for Murphy.²⁷⁸ The IFC's head office was located so close to the rest of UCD's campus it is not surprising that Ó Súilleabháin and Murphy knew each other and collaborated on the research for a *Béaloideas* article.²⁷⁹ They chose to write a review for a new folklore book that they were both interested in.

In 1938 the well-known Scottish Celticist William Matheson published his edited version of the Scottish text *The Songs of John MacCodrum, Bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat*.²⁸⁰ This work was one

hEochaidh exists in NFC 1142 or NFC 1306. It could be that it is bound elsewhere or was never bound. The reply in NFC 1142 is from Proinnsias de Búrca, who at the time was collecting information in Clanmorris, Co. Mayo. The reply is stamp dated 23 March 1939 (similar to the other replies).

²⁷⁷ Murphy's Article from *Béaloideas*: Ó Murchadha, G. 'Eachtraí Véursai agus Paidreacha, ó Iarthar Chorcaighe, Réamhrádh' vol. 3, uimh. 2 (Dec 1931), pp. 212-239. Ó Murchadha, G. 'Eachtraí Véursai agus Paidreacha, ó Iarthar Chorcaighe, Réamhrádh, II' vol. 3, uimh. 4 (December 1932), pp. 456-466. Murphy, G. 'The Puzzle of the Thirty Counters' vol. 12, uimh ½ (June-December 1942), pp. 3-28. - 'Review *The Origins of the Grail Legend* by Arthur C. L. Brown', vol. 13, uimh ½, (1943), pp. 295-301. - 'Cutting Nails on Monday' vol. 15, uimh ½ (1945), pp. 274.

²⁷⁸ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 106.

²⁷⁹ Gearóid Ó Murchadha and Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Reviewed Work: The Songs of John MacCodrum, Bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat by William Matheson' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 9, no. 1, (1939), pp. 135-138.

²⁸⁰ Rev. William Matheson (1910-1995)- born in Sollas, North Uist and brother to Angus Matheson, who later became the Chair of Celtic Studies at Glasgow University. In 1933 he graduated with honours from University of Edinburgh and began postgraduate studies with Prof. W. J. Watson, who encouraged Matheson to 'prepare an edition of the poems of John MacCodrum, an eighteenth-century Uist bard, for publication in the newly-founded Scottish Gaelic Texts Society series.' To assist his research he made trips to Uist in the summers of 1935 and 1936 and then published the work which Ó Súilleabháin and Murphy reviewed. After the publication he 'studied for the ministry of the Church of Scotland, to which he was ordained in 1941, and spent about ten years in active ministry before returning to academic life as a lecturer in Celtic at Edinburgh University in 1952.' V. S. Blankenhorn, 'The Rev. William Matheson and the Performance of Scottish Gaelic "Strophic" Verse' in *Scottish Studies*, vol. 36 (2013), pp. 15-17.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

in a series of volumes for the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, which continued to publish a number of groundbreaking books on various Scottish Gaelic writings. Ó Súilleabháin and Murphy were impressed with Matheson's field research that supplemented the text. In their review in the 1939 issue of *Béaloides* they noted that Matheson's work was 'a model of how an 18th century Gaelic poet's songs should be edited.'²⁸¹ The article's authors noted that 'readers of *Béaloides* would find the books discussion of Scottish seal-lore interesting in order to draw an Irish comparison with the Scottish lore, Ó Súilleabháin and Murphy issued the 1939 questionnaire. In the review all 12 correspondents were named, along with their basic addresses, and the authors thanked the IFC 'for their kindness in sending out the questionnaire.' General statements are made about the IFC correspondents' replies and Peadar Mac Giolla Choinnigh's reply is quoted directly.²⁸² Ó Súilleabháin and Murphy issued this questionnaire for their own research and it is another example of a native Irish scholar, from a disciple outside of folklore, requesting information.

One confusing aspect of this questionnaire that relates to the material's later use is the note in Ó Súilleabháin's handwriting on the first page of the material in NFC 1306. The note states the questionnaire's title and then, 'query in connection with BBC Programme (D. Thomson) on Seals ("Sons of the Sea").'²⁸³ This undated note could lead researchers to assume that the questionnaire was originally requested for Thomson. However, what most likely happened was that Thomson requested information on the same topic at a later date, most likely either the closing years of the 1940s or the early 1950s. The IFC prepared the material that they had already collected in 1939 for him by removing the binding of the original volume and making copies. This would explain why material from 1939 is in a higher number volume than the other material from that period.²⁸⁴

The 'D. Thomson' that Ó Súilleabháin notes was David Thomson, a British writer and radio producer, who in the 1950s began producing a radio

²⁸¹ Ó Murchadha and Ó Súilleabháin, 'Reviewed Work: The Songs of John MacCodrum, Bard to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat by William Matheson', p. 135.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

²⁸³ NFC 1306:193.

²⁸⁴ NFC 1306.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

show about the grey seal in Ireland and Scotland's coastal communities.²⁸⁵ The program was originally called "The Sons of the Sea" when it aired for the first time on 20 November 1950 but the name was eventually changed to 'The People of the Sea' when it became a regular series. Thomson also published a book entitled *The People of the Sea: Celtic Tales of the Seal-Folk* (1954) with an introduction by poet Seamus Heaney and an afterword by folklorists Stewart Sanderson.²⁸⁶ Thomson's interest in traditional Scottish culture came from his Scottish ancestry. His interest in Irish culture was the result of the time he spent employed as a tutor to the daughter of the Kirkwood family in Co. Roscommon. This is an example of a foreign researcher requesting information (albeit outside the period in question) from the IFC and instead of issuing a new questionnaire they sent previously collected questionnaire material to answer the query.

Maiden-hair Fern Tea/ Té Scailpreach

April 1939 (NFC 657)

The *Maiden-hair Fern Tea* questionnaire was issued in April 1939 after the Irish naturalist Robert Lloyd Praeger wrote to Ó Duilearga asking for information about the subject. Praeger received 'a letter from an American who [was] writing a book on beverages, and he enquired about it.'²⁸⁷ Praeger indicated in the letter that he had already looked the item up in Dineen's dictionary but could not find other references. Ó Súilleabháin sent out the questionnaire to 4 of the full-time collectors working in Galway, 1 full-time collector in Limerick, and an Inishmore man. Ó Súilleabháin sent the information to Praeger on 19 June 1939 and he in turn forwarded it onto his American correspondent. Unfortunately Praeger did not mention in his correspondence with Ó Súilleabháin who the American scholar was; however, the American was happy with the results and even asked for one of the correspondents to send him a specimen.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Thomson was born in India to Scottish parents but spent most of his childhood in Scotland, Derbyshire, and London.

²⁸⁶ David Thomson, *The People of the Sea: Celtic Tales of the Seal-Folk* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 1954).

²⁸⁷ NFC 657:2.

²⁸⁸ NFC 657:10 & 12.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Since the replies to this questionnaire were so short and largely negative it is impossible to know if this material was included in a publication. Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that when Ó Súilleabháin agreed to draft and send the questionnaire for Praeger he asked for help in return. Praeger in early June 1939 was holidaying in Craigavon, Co. Down and Ó Súilleabháin asked him to make enquiries about ‘an interesting rhyme’²⁸⁹, which was the next questionnaire issued by the IFC- *I am a cake from Ballybake*.²⁹⁰

Post-Martinmas Questionnaires

- 1) *Lineages Associated with Animals, Fish, Birds, and Seals*
- 2) *Maiden-hair Fern Tea/Té Scailpreach*
- 3) *Ornamental Tomb-Slabs*
- 4) *Freehold Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight*
- 5) *Basket-making*
- 6) *Bog-butter and the use of salt*
- 7-8) *The Names of the Fingers & A Game*
- 9) *Bróg agus Barróg*
- 10) *Cures for colds, nose, throat ailments*
- 11) *Stáca tré Chorip- chun ná héireochadh an sprid*
- 12) *“Donn” Fírinne nó Mac Míle*
- 13) *Reilig an tSléibhe*
- 14-15) *Cock’s Crow at Christmas and Traditional Musicians*
- 16) *Use of Mouldy Substances in Healing Septic Wounds*
- 17) *The Great Famine*

Freehold Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight

1 April 1941 (NFC 1143)

The questionnaire on building and occupying a house in one night has no official title and therefore it is referred to in many different ways in IFC documents. The title above is what is written on the first page of the bound replies. Individual letters were sent out to 30 individuals 6 of which were full-time collectors.²⁹¹ It could be argued that this inquiry was more of a ‘query’ than a ‘questionnaire’ but given that it was requested, it can be considered a

²⁸⁹ NFC 657:10.

²⁹⁰This was a Type C questionnaire and will not be discussed in greater detail in this thesis. For more about Type C questionnaire see introduction above.

²⁹¹ We know the number because a ‘List of Correspondents to whom the foregoing query was sent,’ is bound with the replies. NFC 1143:329.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Type A questionnaire according to the classification laid out at the start of this thesis.

Prof. R. U. Sayce, Keeper of the Victoria Museum at the University of Manchester, requested this questionnaire. He had previously requested the *Cór Shúgáin* questionnaire (November 1937). For more on Sayce's background and information on that questionnaire see the *Cór Shúgáin* section. The Annual Report 1941-1942 recorded that 70 pages of material were received.²⁹² Ó Duilearga also noted in the IFC Meeting Minutes for 27 October 1941 that much detailed information had been received of great importance to the folklore community.²⁹³

Ó Súilleabháin summarized and translated the replies and they were sent off to Sayce. In September 1942 he published a two-page article in *Folklore* entitled, 'The One-Night House, and Its Distribution' which discussed this custom of free-holding in Wales (*tŷ unnos*), Cornwall, Scotland, some parts of England, and of course Ireland. The IFC questionnaire material is only mentioned in one sentence.²⁹⁴ Sayce may have had intentions to expand his research into this folk-practice in a larger work.

Ornamental Tomb-slabs

November 1941 (NFC 1144)

The *Ornamental Tomb-slabs* questionnaire was sent out in late-November 1941 at the request of the historian and antiquarian Mrs. Ada Kathleen Leask. In her correspondence and publications she was referred to as 'Mrs. H. G. Leask,' which was a reference to her husband Harold G. Leask, who at that time was inspector of national monuments.²⁹⁵ The 4 questions, which were approved by Leask²⁹⁶, were sent to forty correspondents²⁹⁷ in

²⁹² NFC 'Garr-Thuar. /1941-1942,' p. 4.

²⁹³ 'That was of great importance for the folklore community.' NFC 'CBÉ, Miont. 27 September 1941', p. 3.

²⁹⁴ Roderick Urwick Sayce, 'The One-Night House, and Its Distribution' in *Folklore*, vol. 53, no. 3, (1942), pp. 161-163.

²⁹⁵ Afterwards in this thesis Ada K. Leask will be referred to as 'Leask' and any reference to her husband instead of her will list his full name.

²⁹⁶ It was actually H. G. Leask who made the corrections to the questions. Ada Leask to Ó Súilleabháin (12 November 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, H.G. Leask*.

²⁹⁷ Ó Súilleabháin to H. G. Leask (18 November 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, H.G. Leask*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Wexford, Wicklow, and East Carlow. This region was chosen because those were the areas that typically had the ‘elaborate carvings of crucifixion scenes and of the instruments of the passion’ appearing at the top of head stones. The correspondents were informed with the questions that these head stones dated from 1760-1800 and that Leask was looking local graveyard carving done by Dennis Cullen, Miles Brien, K. Byrne, and other cutters. Along with the questions the IFC also sent a ‘snap’, which was meant to demonstrate the type of information Leask was looking for.

Leask was born in India in 1899 but spent the majority of her childhood in West Cork. She was an excellent BA student at Trinity College and went on to complete an MA in the London School of Economics. Her MA thesis was eventually published. She taught for a short period before being hired in 1932 as an employee of the NMI, art and industrial section. She received training for this position at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. In 1939 she was forced to leave the position because of the marriage bar²⁹⁸; however, she continued to work on her research and according to Mairead Dunlevy she, ‘concentrated for much of her life on subjects which received little or no previous attention.’²⁹⁹ After her marriage she often accompanied her husband on inspections and took an interest in the study of eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century tombstone sculptors.³⁰⁰ This is what prompted the questionnaire to be distributed.

Considering the small number of questionnaires distributed to correspondents the IFC received a large number of replies (12). Two replies were received from Co. Carlow, six replies from Co. Wicklow, and four replies from Co. Wexford. As is demonstrated by the following scans from the main manuscript many of the correspondents sent in beautiful drawings, rubbings from graveyards, and one set of pictures.

²⁹⁸ Frances Clarke, ‘Ada Kathleen Leask (Longfield)’ *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4742>).

²⁹⁹ Mairead Dunlevy, ‘Ada K. Longfield (Mrs. H. G. Leask) 1899-1987’ in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 118 (1988), p. 169.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

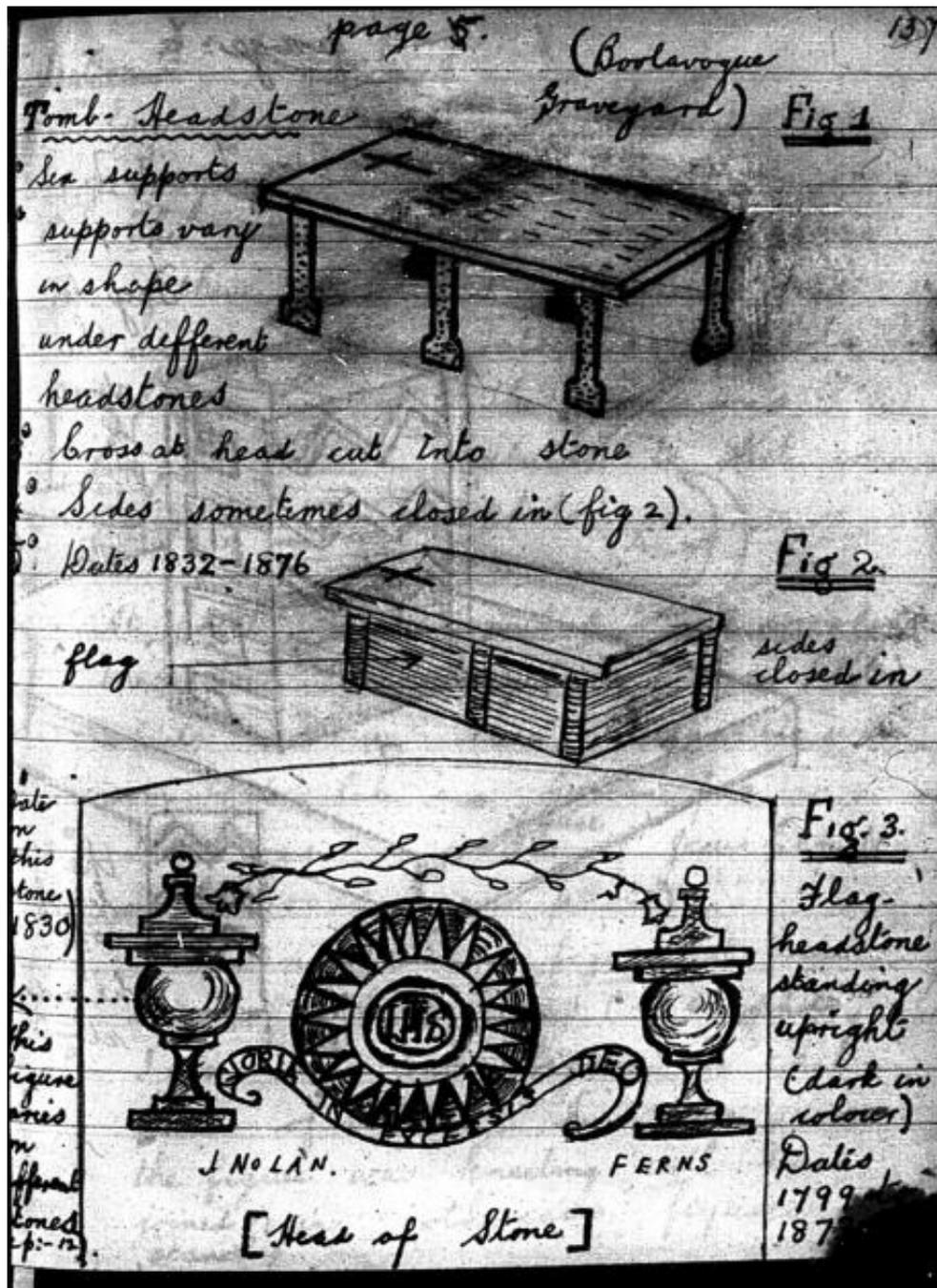


Figure 17: Énrí Treinfhear, O.S. of Wexford, NFC 1144:137

The thank you letter from Leask is short but she must have been happy with the material she received from the IFC.³⁰¹ She was allowed to keep the original replies for some time because of the close and trusting relationship

³⁰¹ The thank you is in postcard form. A D. Leask to Ó Súilleabháin (12 December 1941), NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

between her, Harold, and the IFC.³⁰² The descriptions and drawings are detailed and gave her places that she herself could visit for her own research.³⁰³ She published numerous articles about Irish Tombstones, mainly in the *JRSAI*. The first of these articles cites the information sent in by Miss Mabel Vaughan, a correspondent from Wexford-Wicklow border³⁰⁴ and she thanked the IFC for collecting the information via questionnaire for her.³⁰⁵

Basket-making/Déantus Ciseán

January 1942 (NFC 1143:92-109)

The questionnaire on basket-making was sent to a small number of correspondents at the request of the chief inspector of the Irish technical instruction branch of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, John Ingram.

Ingram was born in Derry City in 1887 and studied first at the Londonderry model school before transferring to St Columb's College, Derry. His experience with both denominations at an early age allowed him to relate better to persons of all faiths. He attended the Royal College of Science, Dublin from 1904 to 1907 and 'he was assistant to the professor of mechanical engineering in the college from 1907 to 1911, a junior inspector (Ulster district) in the technical instruction branch of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (1912–18), then district inspector (Munster district) (1918–22), and senior inspector, Department of Education (technical instruction branch) (1923–37).'³⁰⁶ From 1926 to 1927 he worked as the chairman of the technical education commission and was

³⁰² Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Leask (8 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

³⁰³

Ó Súilleabháin to Margaret M. Maher (8 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

³⁰⁴ Mabel Vaughan's reply- 1144:157-163. Ada K. Longfield (Mrs. H. G. Leask), 'Some 18th Century Irish Tombstones' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 13, no. 2, (1943), p. 32

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39. The other journal article that she published on this topic do not use the questionnaire replies. They are: 'Some 18th Century Irish Tombstones (Contd)' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 14, no. 2, (1944), pp. 63-72. 'Some 18th Century Irish Tombstones III James Byrne & His School (Contd)' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 75, no. 2, (1945), pp. 76-84.

³⁰⁶ Jim Cooke, 'John Ingram (1887-1973), *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4208>).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

influential in the passing of the 1930 Vocational Education Act and the 1931 Apprenticeship Act. From 1937 to 1943 he was chief inspector of the technical instruction branch and from 1928 to 1943 he was the official representative of the Department of Education on the Gaeltacht (economic development) committee. ‘An examiner for the civil service commission (1934–43), he acted on many interview boards for the local appointments commission (1926–50). During the 1939–45 emergency he acted as regional commissioner for the counties of Louth, Monaghan and Cavan under the emergency scheme of regional administration.’ According to Jim Cooke, ‘John Ingram was the most influential figure in the development of vocational and technical education in the new Irish state. His seriousness, charm and diplomacy, and his reputation for openness and fairness, made him respected by all.’³⁰⁷

Even though this questionnaire was only limitedly issued it had a formal typed up cover letter. In English only the correspondents were asked to name local basket-makers, what the baskets are made of, and how they were sold.³⁰⁸ The IFC received only four replies (11 pages) but managed to get material from Munster, Ulster, and Leinster. Only one letter in the NFC is from the IFC to Ingram and it is the only indicator that this questionnaire was issued for him.³⁰⁹ Ingram may have wanted this information for many reasons. Based on the wording of the questions it is possible that he wanted to try and create employment in these areas through traditional basket making. There is no indication that Ingram ever published something on this topic in an academic journal.

Bog-butter and the use of Salt

March 1942 (NFC 1305)

A questionnaire on *bog-butter and the use of salt* was issued by the IFC on behalf of the NMI in March 1942. The IFC received 19 pages in reply.

³⁰⁷ Cooke, ‘John Ingram (1887-1973), *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4208>).

³⁰⁸ NFC 1143:97.

³⁰⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to John Ingram (18 February 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, John Ingram*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

This number was low compared to previous Type A questionnaires; however, the information returned was not available everywhere in Ireland.

The questionnaire was sent out to help the NMI and, more specifically, archaeologist Joseph Raftery's research on bog-butter. In May 1939 a man cutting turf for a company in Killeenan More, Tuam, Dunmore, Co. Galway 'came upon a decorated wooden vessel filled with the fatty substance popularly known as "bog butter."' ³¹⁰ The vessel was handed over to Dr. T. B. Costello, whose wife was a folklorist, and from there it was sent to the NMI. By the time it reached Dublin its condition had deteriorated and the NMI could not preserve it, however, drawings were taken (See Figure 1 below). It is not surprising that Raftery asked the IFC for help in finding more information because, as was highlighted in Chapter 4, the two organisations had a good working relationship. Raftery was born in Dublin but spent most of his childhood in Co. Laois. He was awarded a BA in Celtic Studies and MA in archaeology at UCD. He obtained a bursary to travel around Europe and observed different countries archaeology collections. Upon his return he worked on the Harvard Archaeological Mission and obtained his doctorate from University of Marburg in 1939. He returned to Ireland right before the outbreak of the war and was hired at the NMI. In 1945 he replaced Adolf Mahr as acting keeper of Irish antiquities. He worked hard in that post until his promotion to director of the NMI in 1976. There he was the main contact for the IFC within the period in question. ³¹¹

This was the first questionnaire issued for the NMI and this tradition of cross research by means of questionnaire continued into the 1960s. ³¹² By issuing the questionnaire to specific correspondents and collectors they were able to get replies back fast from areas they knew had peat bogs.

Raftery wrote an article for the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* (1942) about the vessel. It included more information about other discoveries of bog-butter vessels in Ireland. He does not cite the IFC questionnaire because it is possible that the type of information he was

³¹⁰ Joseph Raftery, 'A Bog-Butter Vessel from near Tuam, Co. Galway' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, vol. 20, no. 1/2, (1942), p. 31

³¹¹ Michael Ryan, 'Joseph Raftery' *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a7570>)

³¹² Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 285.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

looking for was not found in the replies; however, bound with the questionnaire replies is a letter from Raftery dated 8th June 1951 stating that he was returning the material on the subject that 'Seán' had lent him all those years ago.³¹³ This is another case of a scholar being lent the original material and its being lost or forgotten about. Thankfully the replies were eventually returned.

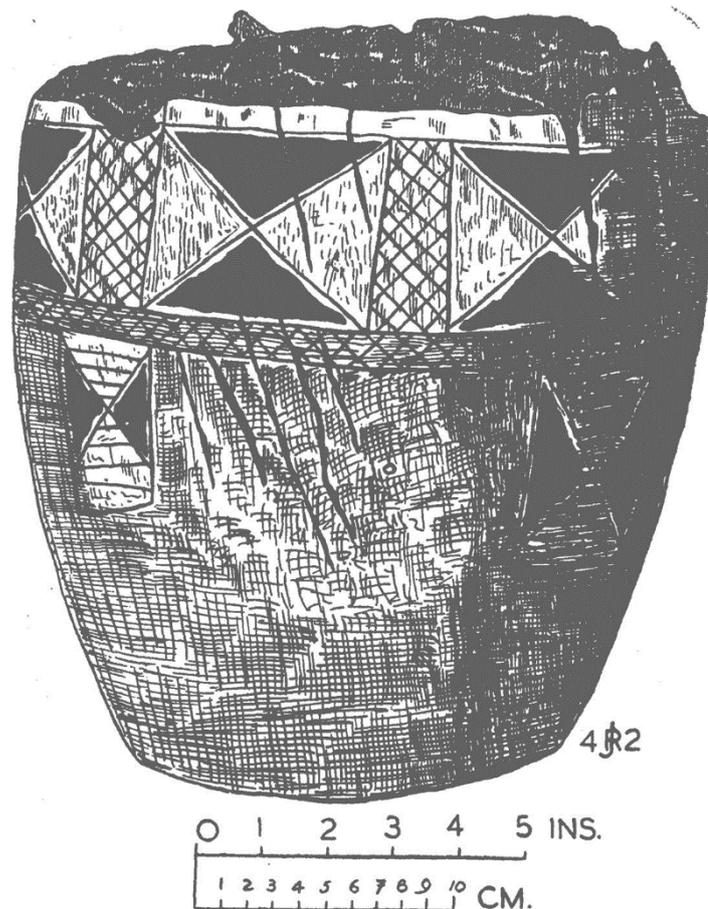


Figure 18: 'A Bog-butter Vessel'

Raftery, 'A Bog-butter Vessel' *Journal of the Galway Archeological and Historical Society*, vol. 20, no. 1/2, (1942), p. 35 (Fig.1)

The Names of the Fingers & A Game

14 July 1942 (NFC 892-898, 1136, 1144)

The questionnaires on *The Names of the Fingers* and *A Game* were the first joint issued questionnaires. They were distributed on 14th July 1942, shortly after the issuing of the *Garland Sunday* questionnaire (the *Garland*

³¹³ NFC 1305:202.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

Sunday questionnaire will be discussed with the Calendar Custom questionnaires). These two questionnaires included a lengthy cover letter, signed by the director, stating that some correspondents had sent back quick replies to the *Garland Sunday* questionnaire because the custom was not known at all in their area. This joint questionnaire on Fingers and a children's game were meant to be easier for correspondents to collect on. The cover letter noted that the IFC wanted the correspondents to, 'be able to... obtain the names used by children' in the playing the specific games. Further questions inquired what the names of the fingers were called in a non-game setting.³¹⁴ The game was sometimes referred to in Ireland (Gaeilge and English) as 'Hurley Burley' or with a lesser-known translation 'Lúrabóg Lárabóg'. According to the cover letter this game was widely known in Scotland, the Europe continent, the United States, and 'Spanish America.'³¹⁵

The questions were printed on two different sides of one page. This is not surprising considering the Irish paper shortages. The questions about fingers were printed in Irish at the top of the page and a translation of the questions into English followed below.³¹⁶ On the reverse side were the questions about *A Game* and these were only printed in English.³¹⁷ Asking about this particular game was extremely specific and documentation states that by 1944 the IFC had 280 replies of which 156 were positive, 101 negative, and 23 doubtful.³¹⁸ The questions about the *Names of the Fingers*

³¹⁴ The text of *The Names of the Fingers* questionnaire follows:

'Each finger of the hand is called by a different name in Irish and in English. By means of simple diagram please tell us (a) By what name is (was) each finger called locally? (b) By what by-name (slang name) is (was) each finger called e.g. by children, or in the playing of games (Master Thumb, Tall Man High, Jiggedy, etc.)?'

NFC 896:2.

³¹⁵ NFC 892:2.

³¹⁶ NFC 896:2.

³¹⁷ The text of the *A Game* questionnaire follows:

'Do you know of a game such as the following was (or still is) played locally? One of a number of players bends down his head. Another member thumps h'm [*sic*] on the back with each of his hands alternately saying some rhyme like this: "Hurly Burly thump on the back, How many horns do I hold up?" The first guesses how many fingers the second holds up at the end of the thumping. If wrong, the second says: "Two, you said, and three it was, Hurly Burly etc."

The thumping and guessing continue until the first guesses the correct number of fingers.

This game was (is) played in the *Gaedhealtacht* with Irish words.

Can you send us a detailed account of how the game is played locally? How many take part? What words are used?' NFC, 896:3.

³¹⁸ Paul G. Brewster and Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Some Notes on the Guessing-Game "How Many Horns Has the Buck?"' in *Béaloides*, vol. 13, no. 1/2, (1943), p. 79.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

(in a non-game setting) were added for correspondents who had already given a negative reply to *Garland Sunday* and to the *A Game*. The general finger topic gave them something they would be able to collect information on and therefore feel like they were contributing to the IFC collection. The different fingers on the hand have different names in many languages including Irish and English.

Children's games were an area of folklore research that Ó Súilleabháin was interested in. Ó Súilleabháin co-wrote a *Béaloides* article with the American folklorist Paul G. Brewster entitled, 'Some Notes on the Guessing-Game "How Many Horns Has the Buck?"' which utilized both questionnaire replies.³¹⁹ The article discussed the other countries where the game was known to have existed and how it was played.³²⁰ Brewster was born in Indiana in 1898 and graduated with a B.S. in 1920 from Oakland City College, Indiana. In 1925 he completed an MA at the University of Oklahoma and went on to teach at Tennessee Technological University. He co-founded the Hoosier Folklore Society in 1937 and was not a member of the American Folklore Society. According to Janet M. Cliff:

During the middle of the twentieth-century, Brewster became better known internationally than in America by often co-writing works with foreign folklorists, having these works published overseas, and writing about such people as Czechoslovaks, Hungarians, East Indians, Nigerians, Malaysians, Egyptians, Russian, Iranians, and Tibetans, amongst others,³²¹

which clearly included the Irish. It is not known how Brewster first made contact with the IFC or Ó Súilleabháin. It is possible that it was Brewster who requested that this questionnaire be sent out but no documentation in the NFC indicates that. Ó Duilearga did not make a note of having met him on his 1939 US tour. Cliff describes how despite Brewster's:

Early promise, competent scholarship, and more than 100 publications, he never completed his Ph.D. in folklore at Indiana University, he lacked professional advancement, and he shifted to international contacts in midcareer. American folklorists tend to explain these anomalies through

³¹⁹ Ibid., p. 79.

³²⁰ Italy, Portugal, England, Germany, Sweden, Scotland, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Greece, Denmark, Estonia, the United States, Belgium, Herzegovina, Turkey, Norway, Argentina, Japan, Switzerland, and India. Ibid., p. 42.

³²¹ Janet M. Cliff, 'Brewster, Paul G. 1898-?', in *American Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Jan Harold Brunvand (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 209.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

multiple and inconsistent stories- none verifiable- usually involving some type of scandal.³²²

Therefore, it could be that Brewster reached out to foreign folklore institutes and journals like the IFC and the FIS for *Béaloidias* because his fellow American folklorists had ostracized him. Brewster wrote a further article about the game (without the co-author Ó Súilleabháin) in the 1944 issue of *Volkskunde*.³²³ He continued to publish on various children's games and folksong topics until 1965.

Bróg agus Barróg

20 July 1942 (NFC 973, 1136)

The questionnaire on *bróg agus barróg* was issued on the 20th July 1942 to aid the research of Gerard Murphy. It is not listed with the other questionnaires of the Annual Report 1942-1943 but received 38 pages in reply and therefore can be considered a questionnaire. This questionnaire was only sent out to Irish speaking areas/correspondents because Murphy was researching the lexicon of the two words. Murphy used information to write an article entitled 'English "brogue" meaning "Irish accent"' in the 1943 issue of *Éigse*.³²⁴ *Éigse* is a journal devoted to the Irish language and Irish literature and Murphy was the journal's editor at the time of this publication.

This questionnaire was the first issued on a linguistic subject. The IFC had attempted to steer away from the linguistic end of folklore studies in the early years of the Commission because of the political associations the language carried with it. Nonetheless, Murphy was Ó Duilearga and Ó Súilleabháin's friend and a regular visitor to the IFC head office.

³²² Ibid., p. 209.

³²³ Paul G. Brewster, "'How Many Horns Has The Buck?'" Prolegomena to a Comparative Study' in *Volkskunde*, vol. 4 (1944), pp. 361-393. He wrote extensively about other children's games his whole academic life.

³²⁴ Gerard Murphy, 'English "brogue" meaning "Irish accent"' in *Éigse*, vol. 3 (1943), pp. 231-236.

Stáca tré Choirp- chun ná héireochadh an sprid

19 February 1943 (NFC 1142)

The *Stáca tré Choirp* questionnaire was issued only in Irish on the 19 February 1943. The cover letter was signed by Seán Ó Súilleabháin and contained four questions. The questions were about the spirit of the dead and if a stake was ever driven through the body of the heart. The introductory paragraph informed the correspondents that the information was being collected for a Swedish man. The IFC's questionnaire system was based on the Swedish equivalent and this was the first questionnaire requested by a Swedish scholar. There certainly would have been more requests if it was not for the slow international post during the Emergency.

The material was collected for Swedish ethnologist and museologist Albert Sandklef. Sandklef was born in Sweden in 1893 and when he was a child his father was particularly interested in the study of popular culture. In the 1910s he studied the dialects and folk memory of the southwest Swedish provinces of Halland and Bohuslän at Gothenburg and Lund. He joined the military for a number of years and then worked at a newspaper. His experience with journalism helped to make his later scientific research more accessible to the public. He also worked in Swedish radio and at various magazines. From 1921 to 1931 he was the unpaid curator of the local museum in the Varberg Castle and Fortress. It was the main museum for the North Halland Cultural Association. In 1931 he was appointed full-time paid director of the museum.³²⁵ It is possible that Sandklef first came in contact with the IFC when either Ó Súilleabháin or Mac Neill studied in Sweden (1935 and 1937-1938). The Varberg museum would have been a logical place to visit considering how much the IFC wanted Ireland to have its own ethnological museum. Nonetheless, at the time this questionnaire was issued Sandklef was the director of the *Länsmuseet Varberg*.

The IFC received 64 pages in reply to this questionnaire by 1944. The material was sent off to Sandklef in Sweden but no documentation in the NFC

³²⁵ 'Albert Sandklef (1893-1990), *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon* (SBL), vol. 31 (2000-2002), p. 369.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

indicates that it was ever used in a publication. Nevertheless, Sandklef continued to conduct ethnological fieldwork in countries such as Belgium, England, Ireland, and Scotland. He published many of his findings. Ó Danachair met him on his 1947 training trip to Sweden³²⁶ and wrote a review of Sandklef's English language book *Singing Flails: A Study in threshing-floor constructions, flail-threshing traditions and the magic guarding of the house* (1949) in the 1953 issue of *Béaloideas*.³²⁷ He stayed in contact with Irish scholarship and media into the 1960s and was featured in a number of *Irish Press* and *Irish Independent* articles.³²⁸

Cures for colds, nose, throat ailments

November 1942 (NFC 1145)

In November 1942 the *Cures for colds, nose, throat ailments* questionnaire was sent out to aid Dr. Thomas George Wilson's research.³²⁹ Wilson was a busy man in November 1942 because he was employed as the assistant surgeon at Baggot Street Hospital, surgeon at Dr. Steven's Hospital, laryngologist at Mercer's Hospital Dublin, Ears Nose and Throat consultant surgeon at Royal Hospital Donnybrook and the Children's Sunshine Home Stillorgan, honorary aurist in Mageough Home Dublin, and visiting laryngologist at Royal National Hospital for Consumption Newcastle. In addition to this he had published dozens of articles on Ear, Nose and Throat topics in *The Irish Journal of Medical Science* and published a biography of Sir William Wilde in 1942 (*The Victorian Doctor*). He also had an interest in medical history, was a Connemara enthusiast, was a MRIA, and a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine at the time this questionnaire was issued. However, the most peculiar aspect of Wilson from this time period was that

³²⁶ Patricia Lysaght, 'In Memoriam: Kevin Danaher (Caoimhín Ó Danachair), 1913-2002' in *Folklore*, vol. 113, no. 2, (2002), p. 221.

³²⁷ Caoimhín Ó Danachair, 'Review: *Singing Flails: a Study of Threshing Floor Constructions, Flail-Threshing Traditions and the Magic, Guarding of the House* by Albert Sandklef' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 22 (1953), pp. 202-203.

³²⁸ 'Your Radio Programme for the Week,' *Leitrim Observer*, 7 January 1952; *Ibid.*; 'Corp sa Phortach,' *Irish Press*, 21 May 1958, p. 2. 'Seán Ó Súilleabháin,' *Irish Press*, 21 May 1958, p. 2. 'Tamall le Maraíocht,' *Irish Press*, 20 January 1959, p. 2. 'Seán Ó Súilleabháin,' *Irish Press*, 3 June 1969, p. 9. 'Creatlaigh nach Lobhann,' *Irish Press*, 3 June 1969, p. 9.

³²⁹ Wilson was born in Belfast in 1901 but his family moved to Dublin when he was young. Two of his siblings also became physicians. Cathy Hayes 'Wilson, Thomas George' *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9080>).

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

in October 1942 he was standing trial for ‘assisting a British serviceman, stranded in Ireland, to return across the border,’ and was eventually found guilty. He ‘received a suspended sentence of twelve months imprisonment and a fine of £200’³³⁰ but still managed to request a questionnaire a month later!

The thirteen collection points³³¹ were sent to correspondents with an English language cover letter. They were told that the answers were for a Dublin Nose, Ear, and Throat doctor and this information most likely influenced the answers, if only slightly.

By the end of 1943 the IFC had received 158 pages in material. With the results of the questionnaire Wilson wrote a four-page article in *The Irish Journal of Medical Science* entitled, ‘Some Irish Folklore Remedies for Diseases of the Ear, Nose, and Throat.’³³² Wilson had a long and distinguished career until his death in 1969.

He was the first of two doctors to request a questionnaire from 1939 to 1945 (Dr. Oliver Roberts- *Mouldy*).³³³ His request demonstrated the renewed interest in folk medicine by professional physicians. The IFC head office’s location near most of the large Dublin hospitals meant more medical staff may have encountered their work. Wilson’s publication in a non-humanities focused academic journal also exposed those studying or practising medicine to the potentials of folklore research.

³³⁰ Cathy Hayes, ‘Thomas George Wilson’, *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a9080>).

³³¹ The thirteen collection points were: 1) Colds in the head 2) Bleeding from the nose 3) Growth in the nose 4) Obstructed Breathing 5) Sore throats 6) Abscesses in the throat 7) Hoarseness and loss of voice 8) Hair-lip and cleft palate 9) Perforations (breaks) in the palate 10) Swelling of the tongue 11) Glands in the neck 12) Relaxes uvula (*sine seáin* at back of mouth falls in cold weather, etc.) 13) Cancer of tongue and lip.

³³² Thomas George Wilson, ‘Some Irish Folklore Remedies for Diseases of the Ear, Nose, and Throat’ in *The Irish Journal of Medical Science*, vol. 18, no. 6, (June 1943), pp. 180-184.

³³³ Please see page 207.

“Donn” Fírinne nó Mac Míle

May 1943 (NFC 1144)

In May 1943 a questionnaire on *Donn* was sent out to correspondents in West Munster at the request of the German speaking³³⁴ Celtic scholar Käte Müller-Lisowski. Born Katharina Müller in 1883 and studied in the early 1900s at Jena University, she was one in a long line of German scholars who took an interest in Celtic and Irish Studies. She then studied Old Irish with Kuno Meyer in Berlin, Modern Irish with Sir John Rhys at Oxford, and Old Irish with Robin Flower at Univeristy College London. She lectured at the University of Berlin from 1914 to 1920 and translated Hyde’s *Irish Gaelic Folk Stories* into German in 1920.³³⁵ In 1923 she submitted her doctoral dissertation on an Irish folklore subject at Vienna University. She continued to work and publish until the family felt the situation in Germany was intolerable and they moved to Ireland in 1937. Müller-Lisowski encountered financial difficulties after starting a new life in Ireland and did not publish as frequently after 1937; however, she found time to request this questionnaire in 1943.

The five question groups were issued in a cover letter format only in English. The main point of the questionnaire was to collect information about the legend of Donn Fírinne, also known as Donn Mac Míle. The IFC received sixty-one pages in replies, which was a small number for a typed formal questionnaire but it was region specific.

Müller-Lisowski used the material to publish an article in the 1945 issue of *Béaloides* and a 1954 article in the French academic journal of Celtic Studies, *Études Celtiques*.³³⁶

³³⁴ She was born in the town of Arnswalde to a German speaking family in what was then the Kingdom of Prussia. The town is now part of Poland and is called Choszczno.

³³⁵ 1923 edition with preface from Pokorny.

³³⁶ Käte Müller-Lisowski, 'Contributions to a Study in Irish Folklore: traditions about Donn' in *Béaloides*, vol. 18 (1945), pp. 142-199. 'Donn Fírinne, Tech Duinn, An Tarbh' in *Études Celtiques*, vol. (1954), pp. 21-29.

Reilig an tSléibhe

August 1943 (NFC 1144)

The questionnaire on *Reilig an tSléibhe* was sent out in August 1943 at the request of the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs P. J. Little. The title page for the material clarifies the title with, ‘Cúntaisí iad-so leanas ar Reilig an tSléibhe in-aice le Dúngarbhán i gCo. Phortláirge. Reilig ó am an Ghorta í.’³³⁷ Little was born and lived most of his life in the Dublin area. However, he was a TD for Waterford from June 1927 to 1954, and this was probably why he was interested in this subject.³³⁸ Little had studied law at UCD and had a history of journalism and political activism through Sinn Féin in the first two decades of the twentieth-century. He stood for office for the first time in 1918 as a Sinn Féin candidate but was defeated. He was a founding member of Fianna Fáil and was a TD for Waterford from 1927 till 1954. He served as parliamentary secretary to de Valera from 1933 to 1939. He was then promoted to minister for posts and telegraphs and served in that position until 1948.³³⁹ As minister for posts and telegraphs his office was not far from the IFC head office and he would have know about the IFC because of his work with de Valera when the IFC was founded.

This questionnaire did not come with a set of questions because it was a regionally specific topic. The correspondents received individual letters clarifying exactly what the IFC wanted collected. The ‘Reilig an tSléibhe’ is also referred to as ‘Slievegrine’ and it is a mass famine graveyard situated two and a half miles South-West of Dungarvan.³⁴⁰

The IFC received seventeen pages in replies for this questionnaire and it is not known what P. J. Little wanted the information for or what he did afterwards. He was a politician and does not appear to have published research material himself. The IFC were constantly worried about having

³³⁷ NFC 1144:209.

³³⁸ Maire Coleman, ‘Patrick John (P. J.) Little’ DIB, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4851>).

³³⁹ Coleman, ‘Little, Patrick John (‘P.J.’)’ DIB, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4851>).

³⁴⁰ For more see:

<http://www.waterfordcountymuseum.org/exhibit/web/Display/article/99/2/?lang=en>

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

their grant extended until the point that they deemed all the folklore collecting work done. In hindsight this proved to be an impossible goal to achieve; however, having high ranking politicians and ministers interested in their work and collecting methods must have been reassuring.

Cock's Crow at Christmas and Traditional Musicians

December 1943 (NFC 1143)

The *Cock's Crow at Christmas and Traditional Musicians* questionnaires were unique because they were not posted to the correspondents in the traditional sense, but were included in the annual *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlet for 1943. They were not listed as questions side-by-side in the issue of *Seanchas Nodlag* but discussing them together makes sense because the correspondents who replied sent in the material on both questionnaires together. The IFC bound the material together, even though it was on an unrelated subject.³⁴¹ The majority of the individual replies are about the *Cock's Crow at Christmas* because this had set questions asked while the *Traditional Musicians* question was left open ended and the IFC was seeking general information about local musical talent.³⁴²

The *Cock's Crow at Christmas* question page opened with a line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* about 'the crowing of the cock' at Christmas time and the correspondent was to inquire about the tradition in their area. At the bottom of the page a note stated that the questionnaire was issued for the research of Professor J. J. Hogan, UCD.³⁴³ Hogan was a native of Dublin and had been professor of English at UCD since 1934 and 'his lectures on Shakespeare and the romantic poets were fondly remembered by a generation

³⁴¹ NFC 1143:2-58.

³⁴² Ó Duilearga wrote in his cover letter to *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943): In your district there may still be some traditional singers or musicians (pipers, fiddlers, flute-players, etc.) who have songs and airs which have not yet been recorded. The most important element was that they should have heard these items from those who preceded them, and not obtained them (as far as is known) from printed sources. Can you let us have a list of the names and addresses of these singers and musicians? Also, can you let us know if there is in the possession of any local family a manuscript-book of old Irish airs? The compilation of a registers of such a kind would be an important starting-point, and would be of great service to us in our work. Please enquire in your district, and send us the information we require.'

³⁴³ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 11.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

of students.³⁴⁴ This is another example of an Irish scholar who was aware of the IFC and availed of its collecting methods because of their location in UCD.

This method of asking questions in *Seanchas Nodlag* (including a questionnaire) was fruitful because the IFC received fifty-six pages in replies to both questionnaires combine. The *traditional musicians* information was kept for the IFC's own use but the *Cock's Crow at Christmas* was sent on to Hogan. It became a short note in his 1944 edition of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* where he noted that while the custom was unknown in England it still existed in Ireland.³⁴⁵ The note was only thirteen words long but demonstrated that the IFC was willing to issue a questionnaire in this period to answer even the smallest query. Hogan continued to use and publish on folklore related subjects in *Béaloides* after this questionnaire was issued.³⁴⁶

Use of Mouldy Substances in Healing Septic Wounds

16 November 1944 (NFC 1142)

The questionnaire on the *Use of Mouldy Substances in Healing Septic Wounds* was sent out in on the 16 November 1944 to aid Dr. Oliver Roberts of U.C.D in his research on penicillin. The IFC issued the question in a cover letter format to forty-one correspondents.³⁴⁷ The first two questions cover the topic of the title and the last question asked about other traditional cures using 'cabbage, onions, sea-weed, etc.'.³⁴⁸ These traditional cures had been used in Ireland for hundreds of years. The local healers may not have known the science behind using seaweed to cure wounds but they knew it worked. The

³⁴⁴ Donal McCartney, 'Jeremiah Joseph Hogan', *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a4050>).

³⁴⁵ J. J. Hogan, ed. *The Tragedy of Hamlet: prince of Denmark* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1944), p. 154.

³⁴⁶ J. J. Hogan and Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Notes on the Study of Anglo-Irish Dialect' in *Béaloides*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, (1944) Liam Ua Broin and J. J. Hogan, 'A South-West Dublin Glossary: A Selection of South-West County Dublin Words, Idioms and Phrases' in *Béaloides*, vol. 14, no. 1/2, (1944) J. J. Hogan, 'A North-County Dublin Glossary' in *Béaloides*, vol. 17, no. 1/2, (1947); J. J. Hogan and Pádraig Ó Conchubhair, 'An Offaly Glossary' in *Béaloides*, vol. 20, no. 1/2, (1950).

³⁴⁷ NFC 1142:149-150.

³⁴⁸ NFC 1142:151.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

IFC requested that replies be sent back by the end of November and by 8 December 1944 they had received thirty replies.³⁴⁹

In 1943 Roberts and his research partner Dr. Diarmuid Murphy began working in the botany laboratory, U.C.D. Merrion Street on naturally occurring penicillin. They were working for the government's Emergency Scientific Research Bureau, which had been established in February 1941, 'to give technical advice on problems relating to industrial processes and to advice on the use of native or other materials to replace unavailable imports.'³⁵⁰ Most of the projects that the Bureau funded were unsuccessful. Despite this the two men produced a penicillin like drug by using parts of Irish Sea Moss. This breakthrough happened in June 1944 and therefore the questionnaire was issued after the breakthrough; however, Roberts was looking for confirmation that this technique was already a folk cure in different parts of Ireland. He had read about the folk cure in an old 'herb book'.³⁵¹ Ó Súilleabháin sent Roberts a summary of the thirteen positive replies but no correspondence exists between Roberts and the IFC, this research was successful because it was given its own paragraph in the IFC Annual Report for 1944-1945.³⁵²

An *Irish Press* article from the 9 November 1944 called Roberts, 'the first man to produce penicillin in Ireland.'³⁵³ Roberts spoke about the medicinal properties of cabbage juice and green moss at the Dental Students' Society event days before the IFC questionnaire was issued. Robert's lab research combine with his folk cure research meant that by the start of 1945 an Irish brand of penicillin was available. This new drug was available to civilians; this was in contrast to other countries where penicillin was reserved only for soldiers. Roberts did not publish his findings in an academic journal but rather the economic and humanitarian rewards were most likely sufficient for him. He continued to collect and research on popular Irish cures and attempted to interest the UCD medical students in the practice as well.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁹ NFC 1142:150.

³⁵⁰ http://www.ucd.ie/merrionstreet/1940_emergency.html

³⁵¹ 'Irish Brand of Penicillin Being Manufactured From Seaweed,' *Kerryman*, 24 March 1945, p. 1.

³⁵² NFC 'Gearr-Thuar. /1944-1945,' p. 129B.

³⁵³ 'Irish Dental Experiments With New Drug,' *Irish Press*, 9 November 1944, p. 1.

³⁵⁴ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 49.

The Great Famine of 1845-1852

March 1945 (NFC 1068-1075, 1136)

The Great Famine questionnaire was sent out in March 1945 at the request of Ó Duilearga and a team of Irish historians tasked by the government to write a book on the event to mark the 100th anniversary.³⁵⁵ This is considered a Type A questionnaire even though a committee of scholars requested it and it is the most famous of all the IFC and NFC issued questionnaires. Ó Duilearga noted in his diary on 31 December 1943 that he had a meeting with de Valera to discuss having a volume published in 1946 to mark the Irish Famine. De Valera agreed to the idea and suggested that a committee of TCD and UCD historians be appointed.³⁵⁶ It would appear that Ó Duilearga and T. P. O'Neill drafted the six different questions, which had a similar format to the IFC's Type B questionnaires even though it was being requested (Type A). The questionnaire was sent to a wide variety of correspondents; however, for the first time the IFC chose fifty of its best correspondents and wrote to them individually.³⁵⁷ The letters were signed by Ó Duilearga and stated that the correspondents had been hand selected to fill in a special 96-page copybook. They were given a copy of the questionnaire that the general correspondents' got but were informed that they were going to be paid for their effort.³⁵⁸ This is the first documentation of the IFC paying correspondents. The full-time collectors were of course paid but correspondents, by their nature were not. Not all fifty correspondents were up to the task; however, the IFC received excellent material.³⁵⁹ It is hard to imagine the amount of paperwork that went into writing to each of the individual correspondents and then getting fifty letters back saying 'yes' or

³⁵⁵ Cathal Póirtéir, *Famine Echoes* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995), p. 15.

³⁵⁶ NFC Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1943 (entry 31 December).

³⁵⁷ Carmel Quinlan claims that 328 questionnaires were circulated but does not provide a source for this information. Carmel Quinlan, 'A Punishment from God: The Famine in the Centenary Folklore Questionnaire' in *The Irish Review*, vol. 19 (1996), p. 71.

³⁵⁸ Ó Duilearga to Corkery (April 1945) *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

³⁵⁹ To note one example of someone who kindly declined to collect- Patrick Corkery to Ó Duilearga (12 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

‘no’ to the collecting. Then copybooks had to be sent back along with stamped addressed envelopes.³⁶⁰ Another distinct feature of this questionnaire was that while the topic did lend itself well to pictures or drawings many correspondents sent in documents (letters, newspapers, clippings, etc.) from the Famine years.³⁶¹

By June 1946 the IFC had collected 908 pages from the ‘general’ correspondents and 3,744 pages of material in the special copybooks sent. The Annual Reports 1945-1946 noted that the committee already had the material sent to them.³⁶² Ó Súilleabháin in his thank you letters to correspondents praised their work, as in the following letter to Siobhán Nic Shiomóin (2 October 1945):

I feel certain that it [your reply] will be of great value to the compilers of the proposed volume about the Famine. The large number of detailed stories of local happenings which you gave added greatly to the interest and value of your collection as one or two stories of this kind are the real bones of history rather than the general statements which one reads so often in so-called history books.³⁶³

Unfortunately the vision that the IFC had for material and what was actually done with it were different.

Historian Cathal Póirtéir highlights in his book *Famine Echoes* that the only, ‘major study of Famine folklore carried out before the 1900s refers only to the material gleaned from the replies to the [Famine] questionnaire,’ or the main manuscript material.³⁶⁴ He is referring here to Roger McHugh’s ‘The Famine in Irish Oral Tradition’ from *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History*. This was the book about the Famine that Ó Duilearga originally spoke to de Valera about in 1943. He was thanked in the opening acknowledgements for his idea and the IFC’s help.³⁶⁵ *The Great Famine*, which was published for the Irish Committee of Historical Sciences, in 1956

³⁶⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Nora Wheeler (27 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

³⁶¹ Ó Súilleabháin to Francis McPolin (24 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*. and Ó Súilleabháin to Liam Ó Danachair (23 August 1945) *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

³⁶² NFC, ‘Gearr-Thuar. /1945-1946,’ p. 4.

³⁶³ Ó Súilleabháin to Siobhán Nic Shiomóin (2 October 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

³⁶⁴ Póirtéir, *Famine Echoes*, p. 15.

³⁶⁵ R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845-1852* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan Limited, 1956), vi.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

with historians R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams as the editors. It included articles by well-known scholars³⁶⁶ about the period before the Famine, agriculture and the Famine, the political background of the Famine, the organisation and administration of relief, the medical history of the famine, Irish emigration to the US and the British Colonies during the Famine, and McHugh's article on oral tradition and the Famine.

McHugh's article is the only one to make use of the questionnaire material. He used it well, with two hundred and one references to the questionnaire replies in his sections on 'the blight' 'food during the famine' 'relief: food and work' 'disease' 'death and burial' and 'changes in the Irish countryside'. Not unlike modern scholars, many scholars in the 1950s questioned the usefulness of oral history in writing about things that did not happen in the informants' lifetime. McHugh addresses this in the first sentence of his article:

In this chapter an attempt is made to present the picture of the Famine retained in Irish oral tradition, as far as it can be pieced together from the tradition of hundreds of our people who still discuss the experiences of their ancestors in famine times.³⁶⁷

His conclusion, 'for it seems clear that oral tradition, by the way in which it relates experience to daily life, can play its part in adding something human and vivid to our understanding of the past and can also bring information to light,' must have made Ó Duilearga happy.³⁶⁸ McHugh's article is well written and well researched and was the only academic work based on *The Great Famine* questionnaire until the 1990s. However, Bríd Mahon highlights in her autobiography that the playwright Gerard Healy did research at the IFC on the questionnaire replies to write the play *The Dark Stranger* (1950)³⁶⁹ and Cecil Woodham-Smith did the same for her popular *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-1859* (1962). The cover of the first edition of this book includes a painting called 'The Eviction' that is owned by the IFC (see below).³⁷⁰

³⁶⁶ R. B. McDowell, E. R. R. Green, Kevin B. Nowlan, Thomas P. O'Neill, William P. MacArthur, Oliver MacDonagh, and Roger J. McHugh.

³⁶⁷ Roger McHugh, 'The Famine in Irish Oral Tradition' in R. Dudley Edwards and T. D. Williams (ed.) *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History* (Dublin: Published for the Irish Committee of Historical Science and Browne and Nolan, 1956), p. 391.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 436.

³⁶⁹ Mahon, *While Green Grass Grows*, p. 164.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 169-172.

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

The more modern publications that discuss the *Great Famine* questionnaire have challenged the value of the replies and the role of folk memory in evaluating historical events. This concept was first discussed in Póirtéir's *Famine Echoes*, in which he discussed how the folklore material is flawed but allows for a fragmented understanding of what the ordinary people experienced in Ireland. Carmel Quinlan's article in *The Irish Review* gives more statistical information about the questionnaires and expands the comments on whether the material can tell modern historians anything about the Famine.³⁷¹ Patricia Lysaght also used the questionnaire material to write a *Béaloides* article entitled, 'Perspective on Women during the Great Irish Famine from the Oral Tradition'. Historian Cormac Ó Gráda has a chapter called 'Famine Memory' in his 1999 book *Black '47 and Beyond*, which deals exclusively with *The Great Famine questionnaire*.³⁷² In this work he gives statistical breakdowns for region and language of the correspondents. In the first decade of the new millennium Niall Ó Ciosáin wrote two articles about the concept of folk memory and the Famine.³⁷³

³⁷¹ Quinlan, 'A Punishment from God: The Famine in the Centenary Folklore Questionnaire', pp. 68-86.

³⁷² Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: the Great Irish Famine in history, economy, and memory* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999)

³⁷³ Niall Ó Ciosáin, 'Famine memory and the popular representation of scarcity' in Ian McBride (ed.) *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: 2001), pp. 95-117. 'Approaching a Folklore Archive: The Irish Folklore Commission and the Memory of the Great Famine' in *Folklore*, vol. 115, no. 2, (2004), pp. 222-232.

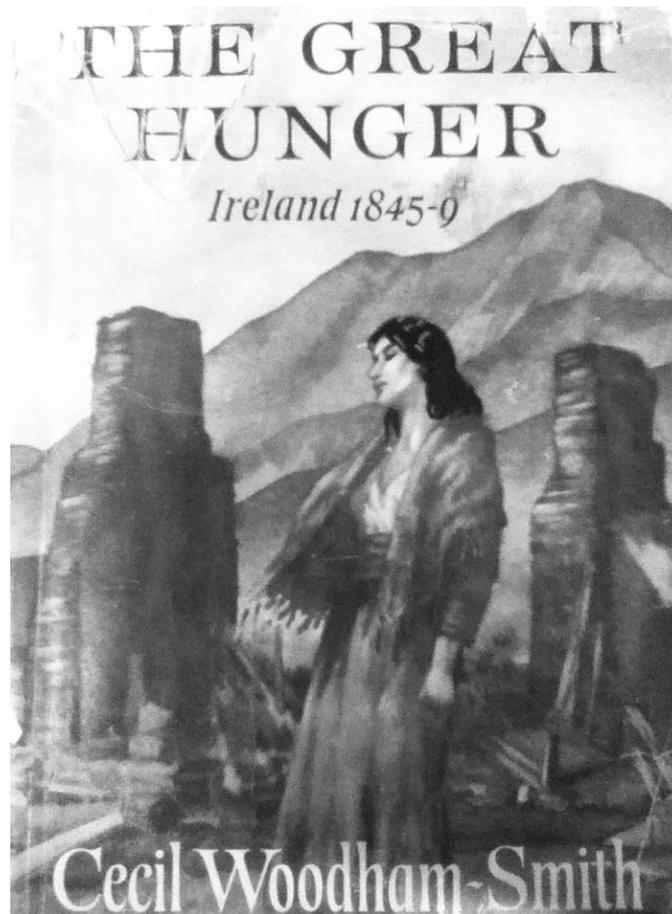


Figure 19: Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-9* (1962)

In conclusion the numerous case study examples have demonstrated how the Type A questionnaires had certain similar characteristics but that each one was issued for a unique scholar's research. The correspondence, drafting of questions, issuing of questionnaires, processing of replies, and incorporation of the material into publications was a tedious process too. Nonetheless, the IFC were willing to work hard to assist scholars' research. Folklore was a popular subject in the early years of the independent Irish state and the IFC knew that in order to maintain that popularity in and outside of academia they needed to promote research and citation of original folklore sources. The Type A questionnaire was one of the many ways that they promoted their work and the archival collection amongst their fellow Irish scholars. They were highly successful as has been demonstrated through the numerous case examples of Irish theologians, linguists, Celticists, historians, archaeologists, medical doctors, and civil servants requested questionnaires

Type A Questionnaires Requested for Specific Research Purposes

for their own research projects. Through word of mouth the requestors were able to tell other scholars in Ireland and abroad how rewarding they found the IFC questionnaire process for their research. Additionally the publications in the *JRSAI*, the *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, *Éigse*, *The Irish Journal of Medical Science*, an edition of *Hamlet*, and *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History* helped to bolster the image that the IFC was attempting to present. By the end of 1945 the IFC had an excellent academic reputation that was backed up not only by government funding, but also with an impressive bibliography of works that cited Type A questionnaire material. Each of the twenty-six questionnaires was successful in their own way. Not all the questionnaires resulted in innovative publications; however, the IFC formed further academic ties with each issuing and the IFC archive obtained new, more diverse, material. The shortcoming of the Type A questionnaires have been explored; however, when looking at the twenty-six questionnaires together in the 1936 to 1945 period it was a successful collecting method.

Chapter 6

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

The Type A questionnaires required a considerable amount of formal corresponding and meeting time for the IFC head office staff. Standard societal protocol dictated polite communication, both postal and face-to-face, between the IFC and their fellow scholars (requestors). The work required for the Type B questionnaires was significantly different. This chapter will explore the fourteen Type B questionnaires in detail. The classification of a Type B questionnaire, as set down in this thesis, will allow for clearer analysis henceforth. The IFC's objectives in issuing Type B questionnaires will be scrutinized. This will allow for a discussion of how each questionnaire's success was measured. Furthermore, it will consider whether all the Type B questionnaires together accomplished broader goals. Next some shortcomings of the Type B questionnaires will be highlighted. Finally the fourteen Type B questionnaires will be investigated individually. The Type B questionnaires had more in common with each other than the individualistic Type A questionnaires, but the system as a whole changed and improved with each issuing. Surveying a list of the calendar custom questionnaires it could be argued that individual analyses are not necessary; however, each questionnaire had a slightly different presentation style and different material collected and these are noteworthy to the scholarship of the questionnaires.

Type B questionnaires were requested for the IFC's use in their head archive and are classified, for this thesis, into two categories: calendar customs questionnaires and living folklife questionnaires. Type B questionnaires typically received a large number of replies (+300) because they were distributed to all active correspondents. The IFC's main goal with these questionnaires was to quickly amass as much information as possible, from the parts of Ireland without a full-time collector. As has previously been stated a sense of urgency prevailed in receiving questionnaire replies because the IFC and the newly independent Irish state believed that the traditions of the 'Gaelic past' that still survived in rural Ireland, were rapidly disappearing

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

and whatever could be preserved for the future needed to be done quickly. The Type B questionnaires were drafted to be open ended and the questions were more general. This allowed correspondents to write as much as possible about an open topic. Furthermore, the IFC hoped to use the replies to contribute to a European wide folk atlas and/or to use the questionnaires to build an Irish folk museum.

The IFC head office staff wanted to collect large amounts of material on the Irish calendar customs since the foundation of the Commission. Similar questionnaire systems around the world had discovered that the collecting method was well suited to obtaining information on celebrations and/or feast days. In the 1936 to 1945 period IFC questionnaires were issued on saints' feasts days such as *Martinmas*, *St. Bridget's Day*, *Local Saints Days*; the harvest customs such as *The Last Sheaf*, *Lughnasa*, and *Midsummer*, and two events on the liturgical calendar, *Halloween (All Saints Day)* and *Christmas*. Furthermore, seven living folklife questionnaires were issued between 1936 and 1945. The topics were on traditions still in living Irish memory such as *Stone Heaps*, *Old-time Dress*, *The Smith*, *The Childhood Bogeys*, and *Roofs and Thatching*. The historical topic of *Manaigh agus Bráithre* also had a questionnaire issued in this period. These more general themes were common amongst other European archives for questionnaire issuing.

Outside scholars were not involved in the Type B topic selections or issuing process. For the calendar custom questionnaires and the living folklife questionnaires the main goal was to acquire as much varied material as possible. This was why the questions were sent to all active correspondents. The reply information was then stored in the IFC's temporary Dublin archives and saved for two future projects the IFC intended to participate in, a substantial contribution to a European wide ethnology atlas and the opening of an Irish open-air folk museum.¹

Ó Duilearga wanted the IFC to produce an island wide cultural atlas and one day contribute to a European wide atlas (after the end of the Second

¹ The rest of the archive was stored outside of Dublin for the period in question. The questionnaire replies comprised the majority of the archival material left in the office.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

World War).² These atlases could be compiled of a multitude of traditional customs and show the break downs of 'different ethnic groups, regions, and countries.'³ Historically the information was obtained by the issuing of questionnaires.⁴ Plans for a European wide atlas were first formulated at the April 1936 International Association of Folklore and Ethnology/Internationaler Verband für Volksforschung (IAFE) amongst the twenty different member states; however, the plans for this were dropped when the organization fractured due to political differences.⁵

When the war broke out the IFC head staff thought they had a rare opportunity to collect and get ahead of the other nations whose archives had stopped collecting.⁶ They began with calendar customs because they knew from their collectors' daily work that plenty of information was still available in rural areas. Furthermore, Ireland was a traditional Christian society and many of the saints' days and/or feasts in the liturgical calendar were celebrated across Europe. Some harvest customs were also multi-national for example *The Last Sheaf* traditions were celebrated in Ireland and Sweden. In order for a comparative cultural atlas on feast days to work a majority of the nations needed to celebrate the same tradition, but in a distinct enough way to warrant comparative research. The Swedish ethnologists Åke Campbell, Sven Liljeblad, and Herman Geijer had already devised a system of indexing Swedish traditional customs. The IFC wanted to adapt this model to meet Irish needs and be able to cross-index with other nations.⁷

Living folklife topics were also an excellent selection of subjects for atlas contributions. Many other nations marked significant sites with stone structures (*Stone Heaps*), made traditional clothing (*Old-time Dress*) had

² The Germans had already started producing cultural atlases as part of the *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde* [Atlas of German folk culture], which collected material between 1929 and 1935. The Swedes also began to organize a Nordic culture atlas when the Germans suggested that they could do it first. It was also halted at the outbreak of the war. Gardberding, "'There are dangers to be faced': Cooperation within the International Association of Folklore and Ethnology in 1930s Europe", p. 32 & p. 39.

³ Ibid., p. 31.

⁴ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, pp. 133-135.

⁵ Gardberding, "'There are dangers to be faced': Cooperation within the International Association of Folklore and Ethnology in 1930s Europe", pp. 25-71. For some of Ó Duilearga's comments on this see, NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 8.

⁶ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1943), p. 8.

⁷ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 125.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

traditional local craftsmen (*The Smith*), told scary stories to children to make them behave (*The Childhood Bogeys*), celebrated local church traditions and history (*The Local Patron Saint* and *Manaigh agus Bráithre*), and had traditional regionalized architecture (*Roofs and Thatching*). Furthermore, these topics were of such a general nature that the IFC head staff were assured that future scholars would make enquires about the subjects. When they did the information would already be available for consultation.

The IFC using its time and funding to build up large collections of folklore and folklife to produce an atlas was not a popular idea with everyone in Ireland. In 1938, Maynooth Professor of Irish An tAth. Donnchadh Ó Floinn, wrote in the *Irish Independent* that in his opinion folklore was being abused by the IFC “ ‘in order to supply scholars at home and abroad with data for abstruse speculations.’ In his opinion folklore should be collected to re-establish the ‘spiritual community’ of the Irish past.’ ”⁸ Ó Floinn was not the only one who held this opinion but the government at the time, under the leadership of de Valera, was in favour of Ireland participating in pan-Celtic and European wide research projects.⁹ Irish scholars contributing to European and American scholarship only demonstrated the academic strengths of the newly independent Irish nation further.¹⁰ The Irish government was flattered by the Scandinavian interest in Irish folklore in the pre-War decades and criticism from people like Ó Floinn was not enough to sway them.¹¹

A further reason for the issuing of Type B questionnaires was to increase the amount of material to assist the IFC in building of a Skansen style Irish folk-museum.¹² To quote Ó Súilleabháin the IFC had been ‘lecturing and thundering and imploring the government ever since we made our contacts with Sweden to get a similar folk-museum established in Dublin.’¹³ The considerable amount of effort that they put into this campaign has been overlooked by historical scholarship because that style of museum was never

⁸ O’Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 109.

⁹ Máirtín Ó Murchú, *Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh. Tuarascáil Leathchéad Bliain/School of Celtic Studies. Fiftieth Anniversary Report 1940-1990* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1990).

¹⁰ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 307-309.

¹¹ For more on this see Chapter 4.

¹² For more on the history of Skansen and other open-aired museums of the 1930s and 1940s see Chapter 2.

¹³ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 181.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

built in Dublin. However, in the 1930s and 1940s the IFC still hoped one would be established. As has already been explained in Chapter 2 Skansen was not the ‘traditional’ museum where patrons looked at objects of historical significance through glass cases. The objects and buildings were meant to be interactive and docents demonstrated objects’ original functions. In order for an Irish organization to build such a historically accurate museum, they needed a plethora of collected folklife material to reference for the construction and function of the different elements. The Type B questionnaire replies would have played a key role in this. In relation to the calendar custom questionnaire replies, the IFC intended on using the wide variety of answers from different regions to recreate traditional festival celebrations on the museum grounds. This may have included activities like seminars on the making of St. Bridget’s cross on her feast day or the carving of root vegetables for Samhain. Traditional food, crafts, songs, and dances would have also been displayed if they coordinated with the Irish festival. The IFC knew that if the construction of the museum was given substantial funding it would be popular with visitors because of the success of Skansen.¹⁴ If such a museum had been established the calendar custom questionnaire replies would have been invaluable at helping the IFC include all regional variations of festivals and feast into their museum.

The calendar customs information would have enhanced the museum experience at a select number of days each year but the Type B living folklife questionnaires would have assisted substantially in the building and maintenance of the folk-museum. The information from the questionnaire on *Roofs and Thatching* would have helped the museum designers recreate accurate buildings issuing traditional building techniques. Similar to Skansen the IFC’s ideal folk-museum would have had building types from all parts of Ireland. The most efficient way to gather this information was by questionnaire because the correspondents had the opportunity to talk to a wider variety of people with traditional building skills than the IFC alone. Once the buildings were built the docents who were to interact with the patrons would be garbed in traditional clothing that correlated with the region

¹⁴ Swedes still gather at Skansen to celebrate traditional festivals today. www.skansen.se.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

they were representing. Again the replies to the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire would have been combed through and possibly correspondents with excellent replies would have been called upon to reproduce some of the items written about in their replies. At Skansen along with wearing traditional clothing the docents typically demonstrated the use of traditional tools and handicrafts. One of the most popular places to visit in a folk-museum (even today) was the blacksmith's house/forge. The proposed Irish folk museum would have had such a building and full-time blacksmith. *The Smith* questionnaire replies demonstrated that the traditions and work of the smith was still in living memory all over Ireland.¹⁵

Thus, having reviewed the original reasons why the Type B questionnaires were issued it is important to note whether the IFC head staff viewed this type of questionnaire as a success. The main goal of the Type B questionnaires was to amass as much information about these topics from a wide geographical area as possible. The IFC's hopes of high return numbers was met by each of these questionnaires. This allowed them to report high collecting numbers to the Government in their Annual Reports. This in turn helped the IFC keep its funding during a financially strained period. Moreover, while the Government made no investigations into the quality of the Type B questionnaires reply material; the IFC were exceptionally pleased with it. The IFC knew that sending out questionnaires on holidays would be popular with the correspondents and therefore successful for the IFC. The topics were easy for the correspondents to respond too. As members of small rural communities the correspondents knew if a special celebration took place on a certain day. The topics were fun and the correspondents who were teachers asked their pupils to write down the ways in which their family celebrated different holidays. The appeal of the topics meant that the replies were more detailed and in many cases multiple informants were consulted.

The children may have been interested in the collecting but the IFC was concerned that the next generation would not carry on practicing such

¹⁵ When Bunratty Folk Park opened it included an exact replica of a forge found in Athea, Co. Limerick. Christopher Lynch, 'The Bunratty Folk Park' in Etienne Rynne (ed.) *North Munster Studies. Essays in Commemoration of Monsignor Michael Moloney* (Limerick: The Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967), p. 502.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

traditions. The government, Irish language enthusiasts, and most members of the clergy were concerned about the influence that the American and English media were having on Irish citizens. Films in particular were educating the masses in the flashy, materialistic ways of American society and a real fear existed that Irish traditions would be pushed aside for more materialistic types of holidays.¹⁶ To give an example, for the Christmas questionnaire, correspondents' were asked not to write about topics such as Santa Claus or Christmas cards. The IFC had no solution for stopping the influence of a more globalized culture but acknowledged the urgency to collect the traditions of the past that persisted in the memories of Ireland's elderly. Just as Skansen had revived the Swedish interest in Sweden's traditional culture Ó Duilearga hoped that an Irish equivalent would be an example of living folklife for the Irish people. In order to accomplish this they needed as much material as possible.

One element of the Type B questionnaires that the IFC most likely felt was lacking was the use or inclusion of the Irish language in the reply material. Type A questionnaires were often times sent to specific correspondents because of their knowledge of the language. However, the IFC had less control over the percentile of correspondents who had a command of the Irish language and were sent Type B questionnaires. Therefore, when reviewing the reply numbers for all the Type B questionnaires together the percentile of replies in Irish or a combination of Irish and English were much lower than those for the Type A questionnaires. The language element of the Type B questionnaires is one that could be considered unsuccessful.

The IFC's head staff members viewed the Type B questionnaires from 1936 to 1945 as an overall success. Nonetheless with the gift of hindsight the Type B questionnaires were not without shortcomings. A European wide folklife atlas that included various contributions from the IFC's questionnaire replies was never produced. Ó Danachair's *The Year in Ireland* (1972) is the closest publication to an Irish calendar customs atlas. This book is exceptionally well written but unfortunately he was not permitted to cite the

¹⁶ O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, pp. 248-249.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

NFC questionnaire material.¹⁷ Ó Danachair indirectly cites the material by making statements such as ‘I heard from so and so’ and then recounting questionnaire material but these statements are not followed by citations. Therefore the first real attempt at explaining the yearly cycle in Ireland by use of questionnaire material was cut short.

Furthermore, a large open-air folk museum was never established in Dublin.¹⁸ After the period in question for this thesis (post-1945) the task of establishing such a museum fell on Ó Danachair. Ó Súilleabháin noted in 1947 that if Ó Danachair ever had a chance ‘he is the one man in a generation to make an Irish folk-museum.’¹⁹ Budget constraints were Ó Danachair’s biggest obstacle in getting the project up and running. The Government was willing to fund the IFC’s collecting into the 1970s because of its associations with the language. The planned folk-museum certainly would have incorporated the language into its displays and possibly certain docents would have been native speakers, but the museum could not be upheld as a language revival project. As a result, the material collected by means of Type B questionnaires was not consulted or incorporated into a large-scale open-air folklife museum. Considering the amount of material collected this may have been one of the better ways for the public to interact with the information.

A last shortcoming of the Type B questionnaires was the amount of time it took to process the large number of replies. The time consuming process of issuing all the questionnaires and then writing thank you letters to the correspondents perhaps could have been spent better on other projects. The IFC was unable to obtain more help from the head office because of budget constraints. If even two more individuals had been hired to work only on the questionnaire system it would have made a huge difference in efficiency. More questionnaires on a wider variety of subjects could have been issued.

¹⁷ For the reasons behind this see Briody (2007) ‘Cogadh na gCarad’ (‘The War of the Friends’), pp. 373-409.

¹⁸ The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra, Northern Ireland is considered a large open-air folk museum but the individuals who worked on the creation of that project do not appear to have consulted the IFC’s archival collections. Furthermore a small folk park was opened at Bunratty Castle in the 1960s. However, the scale and amount of planned activities is not similar to the original vision of an Irish Skansen. Lynch, ‘The Bunratty Folk Park’, pp. 499-502.

¹⁹ This quote appears in Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 374.

Type B Questionnaires (1936-1945)

The following are the fourteen case studies of the Type B questionnaires. For ease of discussion the calendar custom questionnaires will be discussed in the first section. Then the living folklife questionnaires will be discussed in the second section. Each section is presented chronologically in order to discuss some of the formatting changes as the system evolved. Each questionnaire is scrutinized in detail because previous scholarship, due to size restrictions and a wider scope of inquiry, has not been able to do so. For full comprehension of the amount of work that went into the issuing of Type B questionnaires this level of detail is necessary.

The Calendar Customs Questionnaires (1936-1945)

- 1) *Martinmas* (1939)
- 2) *The Last Sheaf* (1940)
- 3) *The Feast of St. Bridget* (1942)
- 4) *Garland Sunday* (1942)
- 5) *Midsummer-St. John's Feast* (1943)
- 6) *Halloween* (1943)
- 7) *Christmas* (1944)

Martinmas/ Féile Naoimh Mártain

11 November 1939 (NFC 766, 1135)

On 11 November 1939, (St. Martin's Feast Day), the first of seven questionnaires on Irish calendar customs was issued. *Martinmas* was chosen as the first calendar custom topic because the IFC knew that traditions surrounding it persisted in many parts of the country. The one regional exception to this (as demonstrated in the distribution map below) was the southwest part of Ireland. There the feast day was unknown, even in 1939.

The *Martinmas* questionnaire had thirteen questions in total: six in Irish and seven in English. The questionnaire drafter consulted previous publications mentioning Martinmas folk customs, such as slaying a cock and

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

not turning wheels on the day.²⁰ Extensive planning went into this questionnaire; its issuing was mentioned in the IFC Meeting Minutes the month before it was sent out.²¹ It was issued to 727 schoolteachers who participated in the 1937-1938 Scheme, but were not known 'personally' to the IFC.²² The bilingual cover letter stated, 'Remembering the help you have already given in the work of saving our national traditions I take the liberty of sending you a questionnaire about the Feast of St. Martin.'²³

By 20 June 1940, the IFC reported to the Government that this questionnaire had received 2,500 pages from 503 replies.²⁴ When the last reply was received, the IFC had filled 13 volumes with *Martinmas* questionnaires. The replies are unique amongst the calendar customs questionnaires because in the modern era the main customs of the feast day have completely disappeared and in many areas been forgotten from living memory. Martinmas stands alone when grouping the other calendar customs questionnaires into the general categories of harvest customs and liturgical calendar events. Harvest and liturgical customs are possibly still remembered today because the church liturgical calendar has not changed and Ireland is still an agricultural society. The main event of the Feast of St. Martinmas exemplified in the questionnaire replies, was to sacrifice a cock so that the other farm animals would have good health throughout the year. This practice in a modern context is seen as boldly pagan. Animal sacrifices were an important theme in the Old Testament but the church deemed them unnecessary after the crucifixion on Jesus Christ. Jesus was deemed the ultimate sacrificial substitute.

It is likely that the IFC had the hindsight to see that this messy and in some cases unhygienic custom of killing poultry and spilling blood on the threshold would soon go out of fashion. Certainly this was not a custom that the educated Dublin middle class participated in. Maud Delargy's sitting

²⁰ Mason, W. Shaw, *Parochial Survey of Ireland*. (Dublin: J. Cumming and N. Mahon, 1814-1819).

²¹ NFC 'CBÉ. Miont. 18ú Cruinniú, 27 October 1939', p. 3.

²² Ó Duilearga to Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, (29 January 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow*.

²³ NFC 647:3.

²⁴ As with most of the other questionnaires reply numbers cited by the IFC varied. *NFC*, 'Garr-Thuar. 1930-1940,' says 509.

Ó Danachair, 'The Questionnaire System' in his article *SAYS*: 504

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

room was probably not sprinkled with blood every 1 of November. The IFC prioritised the collecting of this feast day before the waves of modernization and industrial farming swept it away.²⁵

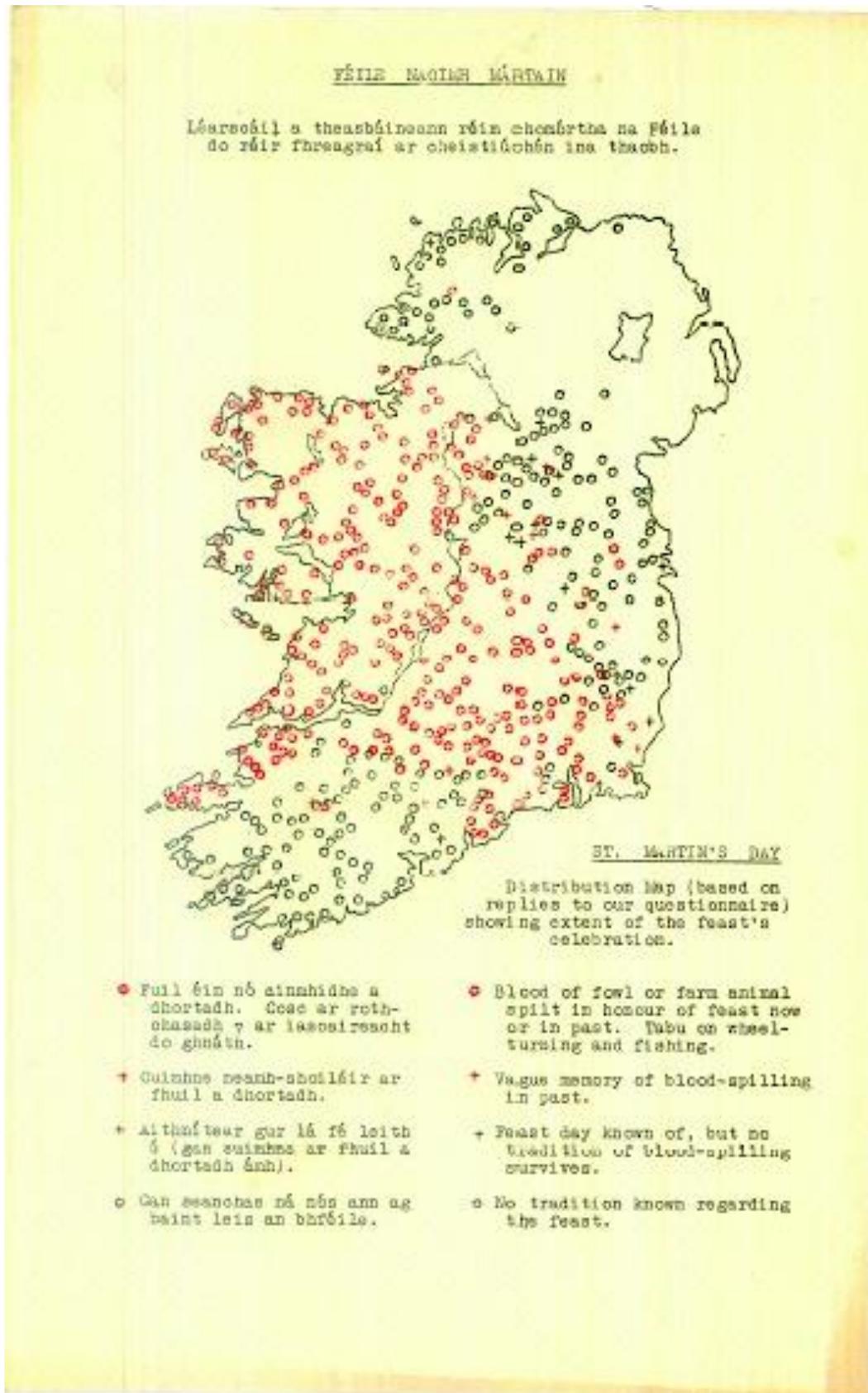
Máire Mac Neill drew up the impressive distribution map for the feast day. The advancements in presenting the research on a distribution map are noticeable when compared to earlier questionnaires maps.²⁶ It is interesting to note that the tradition was not known anymore in the areas of Co. Kerry that Ó Súilleabháin and Ó Duilearga were the most familiar with. Ó Súilleabháin gave a detailed explanation for why the feast day was not known there at the MIFC (1950).²⁷

²⁵ Industrial farming was noted as one of the reasons why the customs associated with Martinmas are no longer practiced. Billy Mag Fhloinn, 'Martinmas Traditions in South-West Co. Clare: A Case Study' in *Ibid.*, vol. 75 (2007), pp. 79-108.

²⁶ For a comparison see: *Cór Shúgáin* map NFC 495:24-25 and *Lake and River Monsters* map NFC 593:97a-b.

²⁷ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 25.

Figure 20: NFC Correspondence Files, Martinmas Questionnaire Distribution Map



The Last Sheaf/ An Phunann Deireannach

7 September 1940 (NFC 758-765, 1136)

On 7 September 1940 the questionnaire on the Last Sheaf or *An Phunann Deireannach* was issued to 619 correspondents. The four questions were sent out in Irish with an English translation at the bottom. It was issued only 7 months after the long questionnaire on *Old-time Dress*. The *Last Sheaf* questionnaire is discussed here with the other calendar customs but for a better understanding of the evolution of the questionnaire system it may be worthwhile to read the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire along side this one.

This topic had been collected on in Sweden through the folklore archive at Uppsala.²⁸ Von Sydow began writing about the last sheaf and fertility demons in 1934. He discussed the various theories about the last sheaf that the nineteenth-century German folklorist Wilhelm Mannhardt had first proposed.²⁹ Von Sydow's article about Mannhardt was published in English and the IFC may have been attempting to add the Irish perspective to the arguments that surrounded the debunking of Mannhardt's theories.

The IFC questionnaire received 336 replies, (1,064 pages), substantially less than *Martinmas*'s 509 replies. Possible explanations for this include that the Irish were devoting more time to Emergency volunteer activities and a high retirement rate amongst School Scheme schoolteachers.³⁰ Furthermore, while the *Martinmas* custom only required an animal and a rest day, the last sheaf customs were centred around the urgency of getting the ripe corn 'gathered in without undue delay lest the grain be shed from the ears or the crop damaged by bad weather or by disease.'³¹ This sense of urgency was lessened with the advancements in harvesting machinery. Not all Irish

²⁸ The Folklore Archive at Uppsala sent out this questionnaire. NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag*. (1940), p. 12.

²⁹ Carl Wilhelm von Sydow, 'The Mannhardtian Theories About the Last Sheaf and the Fertility Demons from a Modern Critical Point of View' in *Folklore*, vol. 45, no. 4, (1934), pp. 291-309.

Albert Eskeröd later wrote a further critic of Mannhardtian and his theories- Máire Mac Neill, 'Reviewed Work: Etnologiska studier i skördens och julens tro och sed. With an English summary by Årets Äring, Albert Eskeröd' in *Béaloides*, vol. 19, no. 1/2, (1949), pp. 194-196.

³⁰ This idea of teachers retiring is also mention in: Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition', p. 210.

³¹ Danaher, *The Year in Ireland*, p. 190.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

farmers owned such technology in 1940 but the number was increasing. Moreover, the custom was associated with the whole community coming together to work in the fields (men, women, and children- young and old). It was according to Ó Danachair a time of 'great merriment' in the community.³² At the end of the harvest gathering a 'harvest home' was organized. The farmer hosted a feast for his workers both paid and voluntary.³³ A high emigration rate, coupled with the exposure to the modern world through foreign radio, cinema, and 'the returning Yank' left Ireland's youth of the 1940s disillusioned with the older, more traditional customs. For this custom to have been passed on to the next generation the youth needed to take an interest. Those who did take over the family farm made improvements in agricultural practices and the need for community assisted farming was reduced.

However, the information that was still available for collection on this topic in 1940 was of excellent quality. To encourage and thank the questionnaire correspondents for their 'dedication and diligence' in sending in replies, in addition to FIS membership in December 1940 they were all sent copies of the Christmas booklet *Seanchas Nodlag*.³⁴ The 1940 issue of *Seanchas Nodlag* included two examples from different correspondents' *The Last Sheaf* questionnaire replies.³⁵ The IFC head office thought the correspondents might be curious to know how the progress of the questionnaire turned out.³⁶

Other than the *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlet the information seems to have remained in the archive for a number of years. In the modern era scholars such as Alan Gailey and Anne O'Dowd have used the questionnaires in their own publications.³⁷

³² Ibid., p. 190.

³³ Ibid., p. 193.

³⁴ For more information on the *Seanchas Nodlag* pamphlets see Chapter 4.

³⁵ Reply 1 (English): M. J. M' Lean, Burrenbane, Castlewellan, Co Down. Reply 2 (Gaeilge): Seán Ó Loingsigh, O.S., Clochán, Caisleán Griaire, Co. Kerry.

³⁶ On 14 November 1940 correspondents were told that some of the *Last Sheaf* replies might be included in a future pamphlet the IFC was working on. Honorary Director to a chara, (14 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*. Henry Morris's short reply to this questionnaire was also printed in: Henry Morris, 'Varia. An Punann Deirionnach' in *Béaloidéas*, vol. 11, no. 1/2, (1941), pp. 192-193

³⁷ Alan Gailey, 'The Last Sheaf in the North of Ireland' in *Ulster Folklife*, vol. 18 (1972), pp. 121-125.



Figure 21: Picture of Harvest Knots at NMI

The Feast of St. Bridget

January 1942 (NFC 899-907, 1135)

In January 1942, the *St. Bridget* questionnaire and the *Last Sheaf* questionnaire were connected for the correspondents in Donegal because it was often from the last sheaf cut that the St. Bridget's crosses were made the following year.³⁸ The questionnaire was sent before the feast day because the IFC had experimented with sending out calendar custom questionnaires on the feast day (*Martinmas*- 11th November) and right after the feast day (*The Last Sheaf*- 7th September). The cover letter and five questions were in English and the main questions were similar to the other calendar custom questions- folklore, celebration traditions, and holy sites.³⁹

The IFC head staff were thrilled with the number and types of replies they received. In the Annual Report 1942-1943 they recorded that 1,843 pages were sent in and that knowledge of St. Bridget's feast day was known in every part of Ireland. Furthermore, question number 3 asked for detailed descriptions of the St. Bridget's crosses. Some correspondents simply sent in drawings; however, 212 correspondents out of the 385 who replied sent in sample crosses. The head office sent back wonderful thank you letters to those who sent specimens and many of these thank you letters gave detailed

Anne O'Dowd, *Meitheal. A Study of Co-operative Labour in Rural Ireland* (Dublin: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, 1982).

³⁸ Danaher, *The Year in Ireland*, p. 198. 'go foirleathan ar fuaid na tire' NFC 'Garr-Thuar. / 1941-1942,' p. 5.

³⁹ NFC 899:2.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

descriptions of the objects.⁴⁰ The design of crosses varied greatly depending on the region. As early as the 13 March 1942, Ó Súilleabháin wrote to correspondents saying the donated crosses were sent to the NMI and would be displayed for the general public.⁴¹ The crosses were eventually displayed in 1944, as one element in a larger exhibit about rural material culture.⁴²

In relation to academic publications that utilized this work, Ó Súilleabháin wrote a brief paragraph about the donated crosses in the *JRSAI* in December 1944. In 1945, amateur Irish ethnologist Thomas H. Mason wrote a longer piece about 'St. Brigit's Crosses' for the same journal. Ó Súilleabháin gave him information about the questionnaire replies and he built his argument around that information. The making of crosses is one of a few examples of a calendar custom tradition that is still practiced in Ireland today. The simplicity and beauty of the Saint Brigit's crosses allowed them to survive into the modern period.⁴³

⁴⁰ For more about these letters and crosses see Chapter 7.

⁴¹ Ó Súilleabháin to Lewis P. Mullooly (13 Mar 1942) *NFC Correspondence Files, St. Bridget Questionnaire*.

⁴² Seán Ó Súilleabháin, 'Irish Folklore Commission: Collection of Folk Objects' in *The Journal of The Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, vol. 14, no. 4, (1944), p. 225. It is worth noting that any other physical object donated to the IFC was almost always given to the NMI for storing because the IFC did not have the space.

⁴³ A more modern work that draws excellently on the St. Bridget questionnaire material is: Séamas Ó Catháin, *The Festival of Brigit* (Dublin: DBA Publications Ltd., 1995).

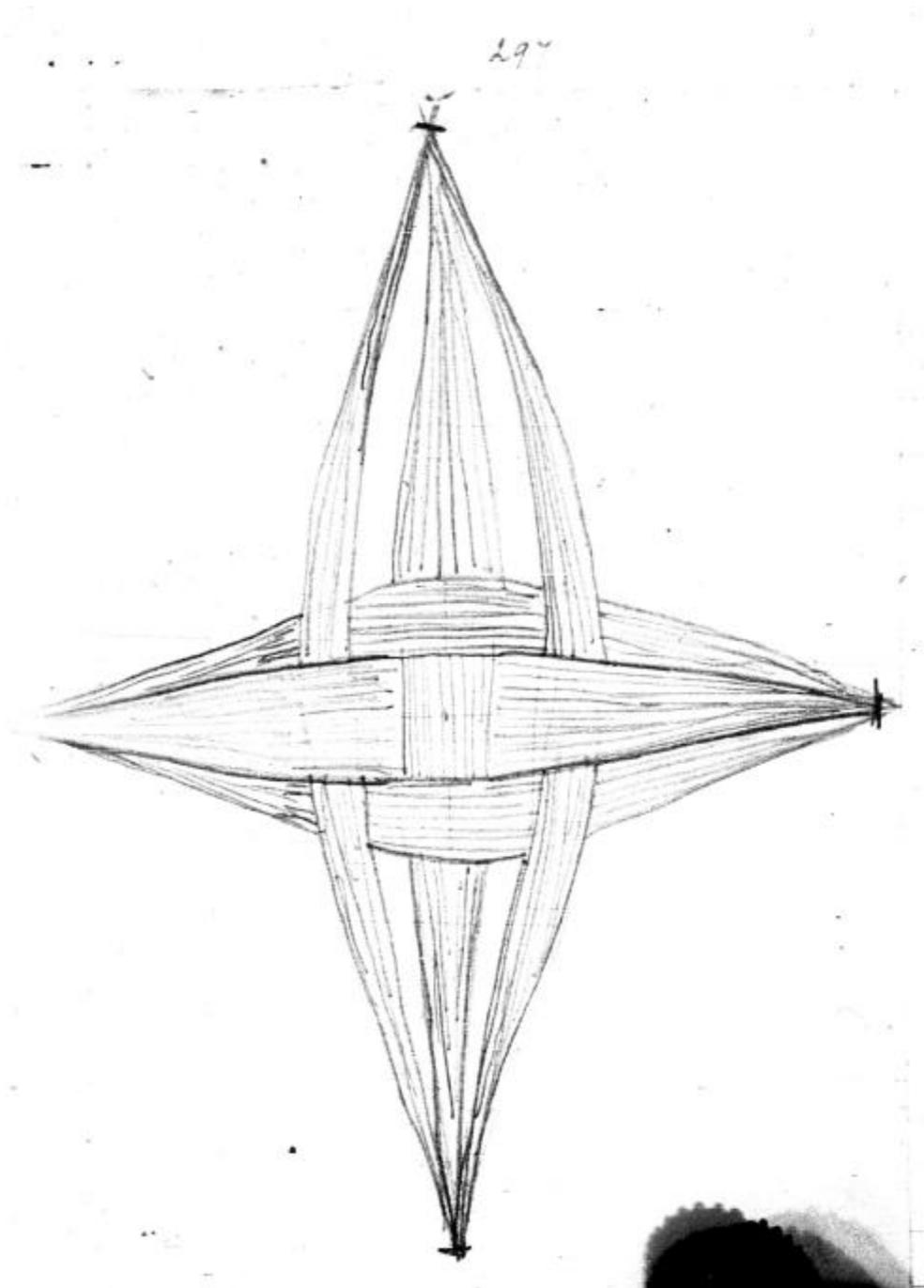


Figure 22: NFC 902:297, Seosamh Mac Cionnaith, Mohill, Co Mayo

Garland Sunday/Domhnach Chrom Dubh
July 1942 (NFC 888, 889, 890-891, 1143, 1565)

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

The questionnaire entitled *Garland Sunday* is more commonly known today as the ‘Lughnasa questionnaire’ because of the popularity of Máire Mac Neill’s *magnum opus The Festival of Lughnasa* (1962). The majority of Mac Neill’s research for this publication was conducted by combing through the IFC’s archives for information on Lughnasa, which included questionnaire material; although, this questionnaire was not issued originally for Mac Neill’s research.

It was issued in early July 1942 and Ó Duilearga noted soon after that this was the most important questionnaire issued to date.⁴⁴ The questions were issued separately in Irish and English. This format was most likely chosen because of the length of the questions; six questions were printed with a lengthy introductory paragraph. It was longer than usual because of the regional variation in the naming of the day(s).⁴⁵ One question worth noting that does not appear in any of the other calendar custom questionnaires was, ‘Was the festival approved by the clergy?’ In contrast to some of the other calendar customs questionnaires the Lughnasa feast was not always associated with Christian tradition. It is noteworthy that the question was included with this custom and not with the *Martinmas* or *Halloween* questionnaires.

This questionnaire received 316 replies, which equated to 1,073 pages of material. Mac Neill played a central role to this questionnaire’s issuing. She eventually left the IFC in 1949 when she married John L. Sweeney and moved to Boston. Once in Boston she continued to research the festival of Lughnasa and eventually published the previously mentioned work. In the words of Maureen Murphy this work, ‘did for Irish folklore scholarship what [Eoin Mac Néill] did for Irish historiography.’⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Ó Duilearga to a chara (14 July 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Garland Sunday Questionnaire*.

⁴⁵ The following terms were listed to described the festival in addition to ‘Garland Sunday’: Lammas Sunday, Garlic Sunday, Mountain Sunday, Height Sunday, Rock Sunday, Domhnach na bhFear, Domhnach Mhám Éan, Domhnach Lughnasa, Tory Hill Sunday, Donagh Sunday, Bilberry Sunday, Fraughan Sunday.

⁴⁶ Maureen Murphy, ‘MacNeill, Máire’ *DIB*, (<http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5281>).

Midsummer- St. John's Feast/ An Fhéile Eoin

June 1943 (NFC 956-959, 1135)

The *Midsummer* (St. John) questionnaire was issued before the traditional celebration day in June 1943. It was the first of three 'large questionnaires' sent out in 1943. This was the only year that three Type B questionnaires were issued.⁴⁷ Seven question groupings were drafted and the questions mimicked the other calendar custom questionnaires.

Separate Irish and English questionnaires were issued and the introductory paragraph thanked the correspondent for their hard work. The correspondent was sent the questions in the language of their choice.⁴⁸ The introductory paragraph also noted that information 'on a country-wide basis' about the 'customs and beliefs' associated with St. John had never been collected before.⁴⁹

The IFC were satisfied with the quality of replies because they demonstrated that St. John's Feast traditions were still known and practiced throughout Ireland.⁵⁰ By 1945, they had received 262 replies. According to Ó Danachair it was mainly the young who kept the traditions going as 'the interest of the elders in the festival had clearly died out.'⁵¹ The young would light bonfires on 23 June and have an all night party. They participated in dancing, music, games of a sexual nature, and competition amongst the males demonstrating strength. It is not surprising that in the sexual repressive society a holiday that allowed for such revelry was popular amongst the young. Furthermore, it was easier for schoolteacher correspondents to get their pupils to give and collect information on customs they still participated in.

⁴⁷ The questionnaire is noted as being a 'céistiúcháin mhóra' in the Annual Report. NFC 'Gearr-Thuar. /1943-1944,' p. 5.

⁴⁸ NFC 956:2-3.

⁴⁹ NFC 956:3.

⁵⁰ NFC 'Gearr-Thuar. /1943-1944,' p. 5.

⁵¹ Danaher, *The Year in Ireland*, p. 135.

Halloween/Oidhche Shamha

October 1943 (NFC 949-953, 1135, 1306, 1670)

The *Halloween* questionnaire was sent out in October 1943 and was the second ‘large questionnaire’ sent out in 1943.⁵² It received the most number of replies for any questionnaire that year (282). The typed questions were formatted like the *St. John* questionnaire; except the English language copy for this questionnaire was more formal with an IFC heading and title. Nine questions were printed on the page.⁵³

Replies demonstrated that traditional Halloween customs persisted in many areas.⁵⁴ By 1945, the IFC had 1,353 pages of material. An ‘interesting’ or ‘fun’ subject such as Halloween helped to keep the correspondents interested in the collecting process. In 1940s Ireland Halloween was a holiday that centred on children. In many cases the schoolteachers had their pupils write about their family celebrations.

In a more modern context Ó Danachair mentioned the questionnaire in a 1965 article on ‘Distribution Patterns in Irish Folk Tradition’ stating that the *Halloween* questionnaire ‘yielded a mass of information the full examination of which would demand a large volume similar to Máire Mac Neill’s *Festival of Lughnasa*.’⁵⁵ A large work such as the one suggested by Ó Danachair has yet to be completed.

Christmas/ An Nodlaig

6 December 1944 (NFC 1084-1087, 1135)

The *Christmas* questionnaire was sent out before the start of the Christmas holidays on 6 December 1944. Teachers asked children to collect information over the break and the adult correspondents had more time to interview locals. Some correspondents returned to their home-place during breaks and asked informants there for information. The cover letter stated that

⁵² ‘Céistiúcháin mhóra’ NFC ‘Gearr-Thuar./ 1943-1944,’ p. 5.

⁵³ NFC 949:2-3.

⁵⁴ NFC ‘Gearr-Thuar./1943-1944,’ p. 5.

⁵⁵ He cites the bound volume numbers for this questionnaire material. Caoimhín Ó Danachair, ‘Some Distribution Patterns in Irish Folk Life’ in *Béaloidéas*, vol. 25 (1957), p. 111.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

correspondents should leave out information about St. Stephen's Day. That holiday had a separate questionnaire issued at a later date.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Ó Duilearga reminded the correspondents that the IFC wanted traditional Christmas customs and not 'recent innovations (such as Santa Claus, Christmas cards, mistletoe).' Ten question groups were printed on the sheet, each with their own heading.⁵⁷ Similar to the *St. John* and *Halloween* questionnaires the *Christmas* questionnaire was issued in the correspondent's language of choice.

By 1945, the IFC had received 238 replies to this questionnaire. They had predicted it would be a successful questionnaire because they had 'tested' the subject with their full-time collectors first. The collectors were able to amass a huge amount of material from their informants and therefore they knew the correspondents in other areas would be able to do the same.⁵⁸

Living Folklife Questionnaires (1936-1945)

- 1) (1938) *Stone Heaps*
- 2) (1940) *Old-time Dress*
- 3) (1941) *The Smith*
- 4-5) (1943) *The Childhood Bogeys and The Local Patron Saint*
- 6) (1944) *Manaigh agus Bráithre*
- 7) (1945) *Roofs and Thatching*

⁵⁶ NFC p. 1084:2. A questionnaire on this topic was sent out in 1947.

⁵⁷ The headings follow: Terminology, Christmas Decorations, Fasting and Food, The Fire at Christmas, Christmas Candles, Christmas Eve, The Livestock at Christmas, Christmas Day, Christmas Weather and Sickness, Modern Innovations.

⁵⁸ NFC 'Garr-Thuar./ 1944-1945,' p. 129B.

Stone Heaps

10 December 1938 (NFC 651, 652-653, 767, 1379)

On the 10 December 1938, the Stone Heaps questionnaire was issued to an initial fifty people, with an Irish cover letter and a set of seventeen questions. After the Christmas holiday, on an unspecified date, the IFC issued the questionnaire to another 210 people.⁵⁹ The introductory paragraph defined exactly what the IFC was referring to when using the term ‘stone heaps’ by stating, ‘In many parts of Ireland stone-heaps are to be seen on which it is (or was) customary for passers-by to add to a stone.’⁶⁰ In a 1940 essay Mac Neill noted that the questions were based on a questionnaire on ‘*Leachtaí na Marbh*’ sent out by the Folklore Archive at Uppsala University.⁶¹ The questions requested information about: practices associated with the topic, the linguistics of the topic, oral tales about the topic, local history of certain stone heaps, superstitions surrounding the topic, etc.⁶² This is one of a number of questionnaires issued on a topic related to death; however, the focus of this questionnaire was the archaeological aspects of ‘death cairns’ and focused less on the existential experience of death. The IFC had experience researching such topics and considering it was the first Type B questionnaire they must have known they would get a high number of replies.

The questionnaire received more replies than any previous questionnaire at that point (137).⁶³ It is surprising that the IFC was able to obtain such high return numbers because the questions asked were detailed and long. The cover letter asked for responses to be returned by the end of January.⁶⁴ This was an extremely unrealistic timeframe; however, the IFC

⁵⁹ NFC ‘CBÉ. Miont. 17ú Cruinniú 9 June 1939’, p. 2.

⁶⁰ NFC 651:8.

⁶¹ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 12.

⁶² For the original questions see: NFC, 651:8-10.

⁶³ Máire Nic Néill, ‘Wayside Death Cairns in Ireland’ in *Béaloides*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, (1946), p. 49.

The Annual Report 1939-1940 claimed that the IFC received 150 replies for the *Stone Heaps* questionnaire but this was most likely an exaggeration to make the IFC’s work seem more important to the government. NFC ‘Gearr-Thuar. 1930-1940.’

The year before Ó Danachair stated that 129 replies were sent in for this questionnaire: Ó Danachair, ‘The Questionnaire System’, p. 205.

⁶⁴ ‘Ba mhaith liom t’fhreagraí ar na ceisteanna so fhagháil roimh deire Mhí Eanáir, 1939.’ NFC 651:7.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

issued the questionnaire near the Christmas holidays and possibly thought the correspondents would have free time to collect.⁶⁵ This was the first questionnaire mentioned in an IFC Annual Reports to the Government; therefore, statistical information is available about the replies.⁶⁶ Most of the correspondents who replied were new to the questionnaire system and were the majority were schoolteachers.⁶⁷

This topic was chosen originally to bolster the IFC's archives, but it was utilized in some publications at a later date. In the 1946 edition of *Béaloides* Máire Mac Neill published an article entitled 'Wayside Death Cairns in Ireland,' which cited and discussed the questionnaire. The article discussed a number of the answers to specific questions and cited the volume and page numbers from particular correspondents' replies.⁶⁸ Furthermore, this was the first questionnaire to be noted in Eleanor Fein Reishtein's comprehensive 1968 article entitled 'Bibliography on Questionnaires as a Folklife Fieldwork Technique: Part Two.' This 44 page bibliography detailed works written about questionnaires, and questionnaires distributed by folklore organizations around the world. Including 'Questionnaires of the Irish Folklore Commission, Dublin, 1938-1966' section,⁶⁹ and a separate section entitled: 'Questionnaires of the Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra, North Ireland, 1961-1967.'⁷⁰ The information about the IFC was sent to Fein Reishtein by Ó Súilleabháin. In noting this questionnaire format as the first the IFC were presenting the ideal potential of the system. To keep the reply numbers high the IFC offered free membership to the FIS for the first time with this questionnaire.

⁶⁵ In the 16 December 1938 minutes under the sub-heading 'questionnaire' is a paragraph about the IFC sending out the 'Cháirne Cloch' questionnaire and that they did not expect to receive replies until after the Christmas. NFC 'CBÉ. Miont. 16 December 1938,' p. 3.

⁶⁶ As of 20 June 1940 the IFC had 950 pages of material sent in on 'Cáirne na Marbh.' NFC, 'Gearr-Thuar./1930-1940.'

⁶⁷ NFC 'CBÉ. Miont. 17^ú Cruinniú 9 June 1939,' p. 2.

⁶⁸ The correspondents' names are not mentioned but their region is.

⁶⁹ Eleanor Fein Reishtein, 'Bibliography on Questionnaires as a Folklife Fieldwork Technique: Part Two' in *Keystone Folklore Quarterly*, vol. XIII (1968), pp. 152-153.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 153-154.

Old-time Dress

March 1940 (NFC 745-757, 1137)

Ó Duilearga informed von Sydow that it was the IFC's intention to send out a questionnaire on *Bainis agus Pósa* in February 1940;⁷¹ however, Mac Neill noted to the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) organizer Ella Walsh that the topic had changed to *Old-time Dress*.⁷² No documentation in the NFC explains why this switch occurred. It was noted in the questionnaire's cover letter that research on traditional dress had been 'common-place in continental literary-historical studies for many years.'⁷³

In March 1940 *Old-time Dress* questionnaire was issued to 480 correspondents.⁷⁴ Mac Neill's letter to Walsh included some copies of the questionnaire for distribution to the ICA members.⁷⁵ The ICA members who replied became FIS members and helped to increase the number of female correspondents. Following the success of the previous questionnaire on *Martinmas*, the IFC was overly enthusiastic about the number of questions that could be sent with one questionnaire. For the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire different questions inquired about gendered dress (Women's Dress, Girls' Dress, Dress of Men and Boys), as well as the dress of different age groups (Infants' Dress, Children's Dress). In hindsight, it would have been better to issue this questionnaire in three different parts over three years. There should have been one on women's dress, one on men's dress, and one about the dress of infants and young children.

The cover letter stressed that the over fifty question groupings were 'suggestions' and that correspondents should not answer them all. Nonetheless, correspondents felt obligated to answer a good portion, as demonstrated by the length of replies and the self-deprecating reply letters.⁷⁶ By the start of September 1940, the head office began writing letters to

⁷¹ Ó Duilearga to Carl Wilhelm Von Sydow, (29 January 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Carl Wilhelm von Sydow*

⁷² For more on the IFC and the ICWA see Chapter 7.

⁷³ NFC 746:3

⁷⁴ NFC 'Gearr-Thuar./ 1940-1941,' p. 6.

⁷⁵ Máire Mac Neill to Miss Ella Walsh (11 April 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*

⁷⁶ For examples of the letters see Chapter 7.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

individual correspondents asking them to return their answers.⁷⁷ This practice may have seemed pushy but the IFC had limited funding and it was important to obtain high return numbers. In November 1940, Ó Duilearga wrote to the correspondents who had not replied and admitted the questionnaire's scope was overly ambitious. He asked them not to trouble with the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire and instead focus on replying to the next questionnaire on *The Last Sheaf*.⁷⁸ This communication from the IFC demonstrated the fear that the long questionnaire would frighten potentially good correspondents. Furthermore, the IFC did not want the dedicated correspondents spending a full year collecting only on this subject, and not answering the other important questionnaires they had prepared for 1940.

Most of the replies were returned by the end of 1941 and were outstanding. The number of pages returned per correspondent was more than earlier questionnaires, some of the correspondents even included drawings like the drawing below.

⁷⁷ On 7 September 1940 seven different letters were sent to individual correspondents from the Honorary Director asking them to send in their replies soon.

⁷⁸ Ó Duilearga wrote, 'You may remember that we sent you a long questionnaire on Dress about the middle of last March. To reply to all the points raised and questions asked would involve a great deal of inquiry and subsequent writing for which perhaps you have not much time to spare. When sending out that heavy questionnaire we realized that some of our correspondents might not find it convenient to reply. We decided, however, to issue it in an endeavour to obtain as much information as possible about Irish Dress, a subject about which little was known. We have now in our possession a large body of material dealing with the subject, and accounts are still trickling in from our correspondents. Many others have promised to send us a reply as soon as they can find time to do so.'
Honorary Director to a chara, (14 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.



Figure 23: NFC 749:385

This was the first questionnaire to be reissued throughout the 1940s to first time correspondents. The IFC did this because the new correspondents

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

were usually from an area of Ireland that the IFC did not have a correspondent or collector in from when this questionnaire was originally issued (1940). A 1941 example of this was the letter Mrs. Mahon (Nucella Lodge, Omeath, Dundalk, Co. Louth) received in reply to her *The Smith* questionnaire:

We would be grateful indeed if you could use this questionnaire to get an account of old-time country dress for us from the Omeath district. We have no account from this district, which preserved so tenaciously the old ways and I am sure you would be able to get together a most interesting compilation.⁷⁹

By 1945, the IFC had received 210 replies on this topic. It was a dramatic drop compared to the previous questionnaire (*Martinmas*); however, it must be remembered that the majority of these 210 replies were over 20 pages long. The replies for *Martinmas* were typically 2-5 pages. If the estimations in the Annual Report 1941-1942 to the government are correct then this questionnaire received 4,175 pages in material.⁸⁰ In reality, the information was not utilized in the immediate aftermath of the replies coming in. In the more modern period, a number of works written about the subject of traditional Irish dress and some of them mention this questionnaire directly.⁸¹

The Smith/An Gabha

May 1941 (NFC 876-887)

In May 1941 *The Smith* questionnaire was issued to 1,285 people. This was the largest distribution of a questionnaire on one topic. In the Meeting Minutes for 20 June 1941, Ó Duilearga explained that 700 hundred of these individuals had never answered a questionnaire before. Issuing so many questionnaires led to a high number of replies (487 by 1945), 'from almost every part of Ireland.'⁸²

⁷⁹ Secretary to Mrs. Mahon (8 July 1941) *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁸⁰ NFC 'Gearr-Thuar./ 1941-1942,' p. 4.

⁸¹ Síle de Cléir, 'Léann an Fheistis: Ábhar Machnaimh' in Stiofán Ó Cadhla and Diarmuid Ó Giolláin (ed.) *Léann an Dúchais: aistí in Ómós do Ghearóid Ó Crualaoich* (Cork: Ollscoile Chorcaí, 2012); "...Bhí bród as sin i gcónaí...": cruthaitheacht agus cultúr na mban i dtraidisiún fheistias Oileain Árann' in *Béascna*, vol. 1 (2002), Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland: A History* (Cork The Collins Press, 1999).

⁸² NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A *Seanchas Nodlag* (1941)

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

The six questions were issued separately in Irish and English. They asked about the smith as a tradesman and the supernatural nature of the smith. The answers received were longer than many of the previous questionnaires and this was a topic for which a wealth of material still existed in 1941. By 1944, 3,337 pages had been returned.

The detailed information collected by means of this questionnaire would have been put to good use if a folk-museum had been established in Ireland. The forge became a staple in the many folk parks across Europe and North America before and after the Second World War. It was one of many buildings in Skansen's town quarter when Ó Duilearga visited in 1928, and when the Ulster American Folk Park and Bunratty Folk Park were opened they also included a forge amongst their buildings. With such detailed information on the work of the local smith the IFC would have been able to build an accurate and interactive craftsman building.

At the time the IFC wanted to use the information gathered right away and thus some of the more interesting replies were printed in the 1941 *Seanchas Nodlag*. This demonstrates one way the IFC hoped to keep correspondents informed about the system. After this pamphlet was issued, not many publications utilized the collected material. In the modern period Anne O'Dowd's wonderful work *Meitheal* draws heavily on *The Smith* questionnaire material.⁸³

⁸³ O'Dowd, *Meitheal. A Study of Co-operative Labour in Rural Ireland*.

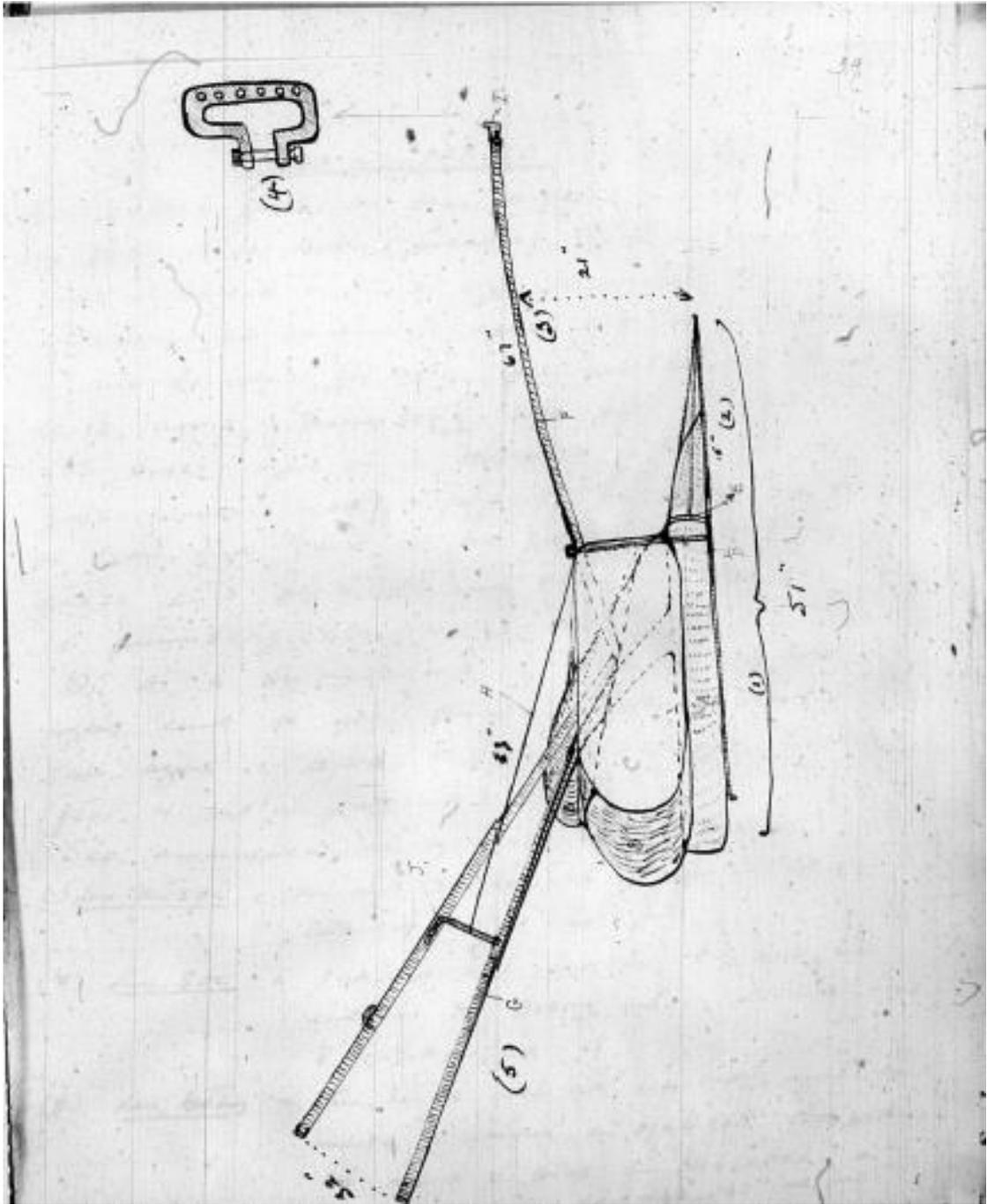


Figure 24: Drawing from a Smith Questionnaire Reply, NFC 1136:39

The Childhood Bogeys and The Local Patron Saint
January 1943 (NFC 896-898, 1136, 1144)

Immediately after the Christmas holidays, in January 1943, the joint-issued questionnaire on *The Childhood Bogeys and The Local Patron Saint*

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

was distributed. This questionnaire was printed with the English questions on one side and the Irish questions on the other. Seven questions asked about the local patron saints, covering obvious inquiries similar to the calendar customs questionnaires about saints. Four questions were about childhood bogeys. These questions inquired about what children were told these creatures were like and what names were used to describe them.⁸⁴

This joint questionnaire received a high number of replies and was most likely sent to a large correspondents pool. By 1945, the IFC had 241 replies for *The Childhood Bogeys* and 264 replies for *Patron Saints*.⁸⁵ The IFC had predicted that these two topics would be highly obtainable collection points.⁸⁶

No publication used the material in the 1940s or 1950s. While the two topics were issued together their function in being issued may have been different. Folklore relating to children was one of Ó Súilleabháin's main topics of interest and this questionnaire may have been issued because he planned on publishing something at a later date. Furthermore, the IFC was still under slight pressure to publish larger works of folklore occasionally. A book on childhood bogeys, which contained a substantial amount of information in Irish, would have made an excellent book for the Department of Education to utilize in the teaching of Irish. The majority of the people who collected information for this questionnaire were schoolchildren or schoolteachers and therefore possibly included stories and antidotes in their replies that appealed to them personally.

The local patron saint questionnaire was similar in style to the calendar customs questionnaire and while not all the questions dealt with celebration or veneration this may have been the IFC's attempt at covering all the local celebrations without having to issue a distinct questionnaire on each of the Irish canonized and popular folk saints. If a particular saint was widely venerated in a particular region but had not had its own questionnaire issued one could have been issued at a later date.

⁸⁴ Examples given include: An Bobogha, Baw Ma, Bogeyman, Boodyman, An Púca, Núileóg, Cailleach na bhFiacla Fada, Johnny Nod, the Sandman, Seán Dearg, Rawley, Moll Sha'nessy, Sir Felim O'Neill, Wee Popes, The Fenians, etc.

⁸⁵ Ó Danachair, 'The Questionnaire System'

⁸⁶ NFC 'Garr-Thuar./1942-1943,' p. 5.

Manaigh agus Bráithre

May 1944 (NFC 1082-1083)

In Ó Duilearga's own words the *Monks and Friars* questionnaire was issued in May 1944 to mark 'the centenary commemoration of the death of Brother Michael O'Clery⁸⁷' and to record, 'from the lips of the elder people of Ireland any traditions they may have handed down orally to them across the centuries about the monasteries and friaries which were so numerous in this country in the Middle Ages and earlier.'⁸⁸ The ten question groupings appear to have been issued only in Irish, which is strange because the cover letter that preceded it was written only in English.

This was a subject that Ó Duilearga would have had a great interest in and the high reply returns (147) indicate that correspondents were also interested in the topic. He may have planned to publish a book or article about monks in commemoration of O'Clery's centenary, similar to his idea for the Famine centenary; however, the NFC documents do not indicate any publications. Another possible explanation for this questionnaire's issuing is that because monks and friars lived all over Ireland and Europe it made them an ideal topic for a folk atlas.

Roofs and Thatching

November 1945 (NFC 1079-1081, 1306, 1379)

In November 1945 the *Roofs and Thatching* questionnaire was issued in a new formatting style for the IFC questionnaires. Following the introductory paragraph, space was provided for the correspondent to write their name, address, and the district to which the information referred (including the County, Barony, and Parish). Then eight questions were listed individually with lines below each one to record answers.⁸⁹ In using this new form of formatting, the IFC was attempting to make the informant and correspondent information clearer; in addition to limiting the length of

⁸⁷ One of the Four Master.

⁸⁸ Ó Duilearga to a chara (undated May 1944), *NFC Correspondence Files, Monks and Friars Questionnaire*.

⁸⁹ NFC 1379:18.

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

replies. It was hoped that if correspondents thought their answers were to be short, they would reply more frequently.⁹⁰ It is impossible to know if this strategy was the reason for the spike in replies but the IFC was certainly pleased with the 452 received by the end of December.⁹¹ The second half of Ó Danachair's 1945 *Béaloides* article is dedicated to reviewing the replies to this questionnaire; however, this questionnaire was not issued so that Ó Danachair could write an article. This was a subject that he was particularly interested in.

⁹⁰ NFC 'Garr-Thuar. / 1945-1946,' p. 4.

⁹¹ Ó Danachair, 'The Questionnaire System', p. 205.

18

THE IRISH FOLK LIFE COMMISSION
Coimisiún Béaltoideasa Éireann
CEISTIÚCÁN : TUIGHEADÓIREACHT

Tuigse cinntuige (vín) na tuigse ba coirdeanta i nÉirinn le sinneireacht. Ní mór a déile a veinici (veincear) an tuigheadóireacht i nGaeil nó i nGaeil, ámh. Cíir sráit ceisteanna ar an leathanac seo arís le h-éolas i nGaeil na tuigse cinntuige ba tuigheadóireacht do' ceanncair féin. Do beirís bunúeac vici ac fíreagrai na ceisteanna san do scríobad istead sa spás arís follam in a gcóir.

T'ainm féin.....

Do' áedú.....

An ceanncair go mbeann an t-éolas leis.....

Co.:..... **Dáireacht:**..... **Paróiste:**.....

(1) Tuigse gabat-éadain arís i gceanncairib ámhice (tuigse go bfuil na píuníri ionnca geall leis ar com-áirde leis na fallai tuigheadóireacht, agus go gcuirtear tuigse nó vici ar an leac uacárac den píuníri com maic le dá caob éinn an tuigse). I mballaib eile ní cuirtear tuigse (vici) ac ar an dá caob de ceann an tuigse; fallai ar fad iseac píuníri na tuigse sin agus iac com háir le buac an tuigse i nGaeil éis. Cíaca sažas tuigse vici san a vici id' ceanncair-sa? Má tá (bí) an dá sažas ann, cao é an cuic vici, id' cuicinn, a bair le saó sažas?

(2) Ar gúeac sráit nó lícair v'áobair éigin mar fóir a ceangal des na ractai mar leabair vici tuigse (vici)?

(3) Cao a nésáirici éinn vici: cib, seisc, tuigse de sažas éigin, fraoc, luacair, píneá, nó cao eile?

(4) Cíaca vici san ab fearr éinn vici, vici le vici?

(5) An mair a cuic (cuictear) vici ar na tuigse?

(6) Cé cuictear suas an vici: viciadóir (tuigheadóir) fé leic, nó mairtear an tuigse?

(7) An cuictear (cuictear) vici nuac ar an vici go léir i n-éiríeac, nó an vici cuic de saó bliam?

(8) Tá sažas fé leic éinn an vici (tuigse) a gceamú ar búir an tuigse. Tabair gearr-cúncas ar an tuigse a veinici (veincear) id' ceanncair féin é.....

[is péiric san éolas breise a scríob ar a cúl so.]

FALCONER, DUBLIN

Figure 25: NFC 1379:18

The Type B questionnaire may not be as varied in subject as the Type A questionnaires but they were as important to the IFC head office staff's mission for the questionnaire system. The issuing of Type B questionnaires evolved considerably in the period in question. By 1945 an abundant amount of valuable material, on numerous subjects, had been collected by means of Type B questionnaire. The value of this material was not only the new topics, but also the regional variations of the replies. Unlike with the Type A questionnaires, the Type B questionnaire received replies from all over the

Type B Questionnaires on Calendar Customs and Living Folklife

island. This would have been exceedingly useful for the planned atlases and folk-museum. Both of which never materialized; however, in the period in question (1936-1945) the IFC head staff were still hopeful and they took comfort in the material they had built up. The 15 individual questionnaires were a success because of the quantity and quality of the material they produced. The topics proved to be popular with the correspondents and most certainly went along way in maintaining a faithful pool throughout the period in question.

Chapter 7

The Correspondents

This chapter aims to discuss the role correspondents played in making the questionnaire system such a successful collecting tool. The majority of the individuals who collected for the IFC between 1939 and 1945 did so as questionnaire correspondents. The IFC was the first contact that some Irish rural dwellers had with a larger government funded organization based in Dublin. Even local establishments such as the National Schools and village post offices were connected to the IFC through the questionnaire system. The cordial relationship between the IFC head office and the correspondents demonstrates that the IFC acted as the government's *Gaeltacht* and remote rural regions' public relations assistants.

In order to fully understand the questionnaire correspondents, how their various life styles and employment shaped the material they collected must be detailed. Ó Danachair reported in 1945 that 'a full two-third of the total correspondents were primary school teachers' and his estimation has been checked for accuracy.¹ Furthermore, examples of the other one-third of the non-teaching correspondents will be explored. The correspondents' occupations played a key role in their success at obtaining replies. This argument will be developed and explained further. The second section will detail how an individual became a correspondent. Modern scholars have documented that an initial surge in correspondent numbers occurred after the end of the Schools' Collection Scheme 1937-1938. However, new correspondents were acquired after this surge and this process will be discussed. The third section will discuss the extent and significance of female correspondents collecting folklore at a time when Irish society was more divided along gendered lines. The last section looks at (both sides of)

¹ Ó Danachair, 'The Questionnaire System', p. 204. Ní Fhloinn says that an honest attempt was made to have information collected from individuals 'of all walks of life' but of course, with any project, discrepancies existed. Ní Fhloinn, 'In Correspondence with Tradition', p. 219-222. Briody confirms this statement in relation to the general questionnaires. Briody states that questionnaires were sent to correspondents and not collectors because collectors were not found in every area. Most of the general questionnaires were sent to correspondents all over Ireland, even areas without collectors. Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 281-3.

correspondence between the IFC and their correspondents, between 1936 and 1945. Exploration of these relationships provides insights into the way the system operated.

The correspondents' occupations and professions were the most important factors in why the questionnaire system was successful between 1936 and 1945. Ó Súilleabháin said the following about the IFC's selection of full-time collectors at the MIFC (1950):

We looked amongst the fishermen along the coast, and to young primary teachers who had not yet got positions in schools, and from them we picked our collectors. Because they were of the people they had not been spoiled, as we say in Ireland, by university education and by city ways. Because anyone who does go among the people must go among them as one of the themselves and have no highfaluting nonsense about them. He must become as they are and talk to them in their own language.²

The documented evidence does not suggest that many fishermen became questionnaire correspondents. However, primary school teachers became the backbone of the questionnaire system. The same 'ideal' formula was used in the selection of questionnaire correspondents. Ó Súilleabháin referred to fishermen in his statement but in actuality he was referring to only one fisherman, Seán Ó hEochaidh.

The vast majority of the correspondents were National School teachers, as indicated by their letters N.S. or O.S. after their names. In other cases their occupation can only be concluded from the use of the school's address in correspondence. Furthermore, some of the teachers noted in letters that they were the 'head teacher' or 'School Principal'. Once teachers retired many began adding ex-N.T./O.S. after their full names on the documents they sent the IFC. For those teachers who had a passion for folklore collecting. The task of writing to the IFC continued long after their official duties as teachers encouraged it. Sister M. Alphonsus (Convent of Poor Clares, Kenmare, Co. Kerry) wrote in 1943, 'I have retired from the School Staff so I am not in a position to set the children to work at Folklore; but if I can collect any from friends I shall be pleased to do so.'³

² Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 4.

³ S. M. Alphonsus to Sir (1943) *NFC Correspondence Files*.

Starting with the *Stone Heaps* questionnaire (1939)⁴ and fully functioning with the *Martinmas* questionnaire (1939) the IFC began writing to the National School teachers who had sent in interesting and well-written copybooks.⁵ For many years before this the IFC had discussed the use of teachers as questionnaire correspondents but there is no indication of when this began. However, an approximate date can be concluded from the lists of people who replied for the first time to a questionnaire, and their correspondence with the IFC. Delia McHugh (Cliffoney, Co. Sligo) along with her husband Patrick McHugh replied to a questionnaire for the first time at the end of March 1939 (*Stone Heaps*). Before Mrs. McHugh sent the reply material for this questionnaire, she sent in, presumably of her own accord, a rubbing of a stone at a St. Brigit's Well. In this correspondence she asked how the IFC was progressing with reading her National School students' copybooks.⁶ Máire Ní Léadús, O.S. also asked if the IFC had looked at the schools copybooks she sent in when she replied to the *Stone Heaps* questionnaire.⁷

In some cases when a correspondent teacher retired they recommended that the IFC formally write to their replacement in the school and ask them to continue on the collecting work.⁸ As the 1940s progressed the new teachers appointed were less enthusiastic about folklore collecting. Most of these new teachers had not participated in the Schools' Collection Scheme 1937-1938.

In 1936 over ninety-three percent of Ireland's population was Catholic and that figure rose to ninety-four percent by 1946.⁹ The Catholic population of Ireland was served by a large number of clergy. The clergy were also in a great position to collect folklore because the nature of their vocation allowed them to visit the oldest members of their community. An Bráthair Naithí (De

⁴ 19.23% women

⁵ O'Sullivan, 'The Work of the Irish Folklore Commission', p. 12.

⁶ Unsigned copy of a letter- to Mrs. Delia McHugh (22 February 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, St. Bridget Questionnaire*.

⁷ Unsigned copy of a letter- to Máire Ní Léadús (22 March 1939) *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone Heaps Questionnaire*.

⁸ Tomás Ó Séoda to a chara (25 April 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone Heaps Questionnaire*. M. L. McMorrow to Secretary of the Folklore Commission (30 January 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, St. Bridget Questionnaire*.

⁹ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 408.

la Salle, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal) was a faithful IFC correspondent for many years. In Cork An tAth. Pádraig Mac Suibhne of Kinsale took time out of his busy schedule to answer a number of questionnaires. In the North Rev. Fr. Gilgunn of West Fermanagh answered questionnaires for the IFC. Nuns answered questionnaires as well because many of them worked for teaching orders. By 1941 one in every four hundred Irish women were entering a convent.¹⁰ Not all of these were stationed in Ireland but many were and it is not surprising that a percentile chose to collect folklore. Sister M. Alphonsus (Kenmare Convent of the Poor Clares, Co. Kerry) answered many questionnaires.¹¹ Her residence in Kenmare meant she was also close to a large Gaeltacht area.¹²

The army men who answered questionnaires came from all different parts of Ireland as well. Listening to and recording folklore and folklife involved discipline and depending on how much material was collected could be a tedious task. It suited the armed servicemen's characteristics. Donal B. O'Connell (Maulagh, Lakeview-Fossa, Killarney, Co. Kerry) was a Commander in the Irish Army and answered a number of questionnaires. Conchubhar Mac Suibhne (Eachdruim Uí Bhroin, Co. Wicklow) was a Major in the Irish Army and sent in a well-written reply to the *St. Bridget's* questionnaire. Liam Hickey (Mitchelstown, Co. Cork) was a Major in the army and an Irish teacher and answered most of the 1939 to 1945 questionnaires. Even retired RIC men like Patrick Lyons (Post Office Lane, St. Mary's, Clonmel, Iffa and Offa East, Co. Tipperary) took time to answer questionnaires.¹³ The locations where these men collected were diverse and the IFC enjoyed having such diversity within one occupational group.

¹⁰ Joseph J. Lee, 'Women and the Church Since the Famine' in Margaret MacCurtain and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (ed.) *Women in Irish Society, the Historical Dimension* (Dublin: Arlen House, 1978), p. 40.

¹¹ For further comments on nuns as female correspondents see the Mná section of this chapter.

¹² See map in Report of *Coimisiún na Gaeltachta*, 1926.

¹³ Lyons was a particularly important correspondent and Ó Duilearga mentions him (although not by name but it is most certainly him) in a January 1941 RTÉ interview: 'One of these men [correspondent] was a retired police officer, a man of great intelligence and of methodical habits, one of which was to get up at 6 o'clock every morning. He put aside 20-30 minutes each day to write down in this large volume what he remembered and what he had heard his father tell. We sent him this book on the 31 May 1940 and we received it back, completely full, on the 21 May 1941. The information which he gave us was most

People who worked at post offices were also a great resource for the IFC. The collectors sent telegraphs and letters to the IFC head office from the small village post offices. Therefore the post office workers were familiar with what the IFC was doing through the collectors. If the post office workers did not have a full-time collector in their area they probably had questionnaire correspondents. They would have probably chatted to them about what they were doing sending letters to a Commission in Dublin when dropping letters and small packages in. In many of Ireland's smallest villages the post office and the parish church were the hearts of the community. Most post offices had shop and sometimes a pub in the same building. Proinnsias Ó Gallchobhair (Tullach na gCloigeann, Na Gleanntaí, Cill Rioghain, Co. Donegal) was the local post master and replied to many of the questionnaires. Pádraig Bairéad (Mullach Ruadh, Clochar P.O., Béal an Mhuirthid, Co. Mayo) was also a postmaster and a faithful questionnaire correspondent. Brigie Reynolds (Gorvagh P.O, Mohill, Co. Leitrim) was a postmistress and replied to the *Death Questionnaire*.

Not all the correspondents' occupations are obvious to the researcher. Some people gave no indication of their employment in the letters and materials they sent the IFC. In the case of Dennis F. O'Sullivan, (Kells, Ballybeg, Co. Meath) he stated in his *Stone Heaps* reply letter that he worked in some type of office. Some questionnaire correspondents are better known in folklore scholarship because they sent in so much material to the IFC. A good example of this is the farmer Seán Mac Mathghamhna of Co. Clare.¹⁴ He sent in a reply for nearly all the questionnaires in this period. Another faithful correspondent was Jeanne Cooper-Foster (30 Clara Park, Belfast) and her occupation was writer, folklore collector, and radio broadcaster for both the BBC and RTÉ.¹⁵ These better-known correspondents are important to the

interesting, and extremely valuable as it referred to a remote part of the country where ancient ways of life had been continued right down to the present.'

¹⁴ For more about Mathghamhna see: Ríonach Uí Ógáin, 'Seán Mac Mathúna (1876-1949): Bailitheoir Béaloideas' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 68 (2000); 'Part of the Family: Correspondence between the Folklore Collector, Seán Mac Mathúna and the Irish Folklore Commission' in *The Other Clare*, vol. (2003), pp. 63-70.

¹⁵ Jeanne Cooper-Foster was a interesting individual and contributed extensively to the questionnaire system. In 1951 she published a book of Ulster folklore and folklife she collected in Jeanne Cooper-Foster, *Ulster Folklore* (Belfast: H. R. Carter Publications Ltd., 1951). The introduction thanked the IFC but the book does not include citations and

questionnaire history; however, it was the lesser-known individuals that made the system so successful.

The occupations of the correspondents are important to understanding how they obtained access to informants; however, the most important factor in determining their value to the IFC was the locations in which they lived. With a handful of exceptions almost all the correspondents for this period lived in rural areas. The IFC were focused on obtaining information from such areas, but the head office lacked the funds to hire full-time collectors for non-Irish speaking regions. One alternative may have been to do some part-time collecting themselves; however, the travel restrictions during the war ultimately prevented this. Nonetheless, it is being argued here that this would not have been done even if restrictions had not been imposed. As Briody highlights, Ó Duilearga and the other head office staff were not paid well but their occupations made them members of Ireland's 'up-and-coming Catholic bourgeoisie.'¹⁶ They went on collecting and inspecting holidays in the summer months to the most beautiful parts of the Gaeltacht. They did not make a habit of visiting remote and dull corners of for example Co. Offaly, during the winter months. This is where the non-Gaeltacht correspondents played an important role in building up an archive that included information from many different parts of Ireland. The correspondent from the frugal and more self-sufficient parts of Ireland, glorified by the government, had no choice but to remain in those areas because of their employment or landownership. A few correspondents were unemployed but they were in a minority. These non-Gaeltacht correspondents allowed Ó Duilearga to live and work in cosmopolitan Dublin but also boast that the IFC was collecting information on folk traditions all over this island. He did this without paying more collectors, or visiting such places himself. Having these people responding also justified Ó Duilearga, and sometimes Ó Súilleabháin, inspecting collectors and searching for informants only in the most beautiful parts of the Gaeltacht, where there happened to be great fishing as well.¹⁷

therefore it is difficult to know what material was utilized from her questionnaire replies. Throughout the book she makes brief mention of the IFC questionnaires in the text.

¹⁶ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 53.

¹⁷ After folklore, fishing was Ó Duilearga's greatest passion in life. His diary is full of references to how well he got on with fishing.

Ó Duilearga certainly had a comfortable life but he had a much more realistic understanding of the areas correspondents lived in and of the Gaeltacht than many of his contemporaries in Dublin. In Micheál Ó Gríobhtha's 1937 book *Cathair Aeidh* in the story 'An tSrúill,' 'a stranger explains to a Gaeltacht man how lucky he is "The poverty in this district is like a fortification around you to keep the evil of the world far away from you. Virtue is still here; the occasion of sin is not."¹⁸ This view was also common among Gaelic revivalists in the early twentieth century. The stranger's view was not uncommon in 1920s and 1930s Ireland. Some government officials and Irish language enthusiasts argued that the Gaeltacht people were happy in their poverty because it protected them from the modern world. Although after the report of the Gaeltacht Commission, 1926 this view was held by a minority. It is not being argued that some people were not content with their lives in the Gaeltacht, but that this approach to the issues facing the Gaeltacht people was unrealistic and romanticized. The IFC did not turn a blind eye to the poverty of the rural correspondents and informants. They knew the best lore was available for collection in these areas, but did not advocate measures to make sure people continued to live in unhealthy conditions. They did not want the Gaeltacht to remain untouched by the modern world. They knew that was unrealistic. However, it is important to note they did not offer solutions to the economic problems of these people.¹⁹ Furthermore, the IFC head staff as urban dwellers, who frequently visited disadvantaged rural areas, may have seen the rural poverty as preferable to the squalor of parts of the larger Irish cities.²⁰

The IFC had a lot of help in obtaining new correspondents, particularly in Northern Ireland where teachers did not participate in the Schools' Scheme. With the assistance of the IFC board member Fr. Laurence Murray²¹, the IFC sent out a mass letter in September 1940 to a number of

¹⁸ Micheál Ó Gríobhtha, *Cathair Aeidh* (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig Díolta Foillseacháin Rialtais, 1939), p. 107. Translated and cited in, O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*. See Chapter 3.

¹⁹ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*.

²⁰ For more the poverty of these two areas see Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 392.

²¹ For more on Fr. Laurence Murray see Chapter 4.

persons in Northern Ireland that he felt might be willing to become questionnaire correspondents. The one page letter explained the questionnaire system in incredible detail.²² A number of people wrote back and said that they would be willing to help. Another appeal for Northern correspondents appeared a few months later in the 1940 issue of *Seanchas Nodlag*:

It occurs to us that you may have a friend in some other part of the country who is interested in folklore or ethnological studies, and who in your opinion would be willing to assist us. If so, would you be good enough to communicate his address to us, or to have your friend write to us himself? For example, we are most anxious to have trustworthy correspondents in certain parts of Galway and in Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh.²³

Stiophán McPhillips, O.S. (Edenmore N.S., Emyvale, Co. Monaghan) took note of the *Seanchas Nodlag* request and sent the IFC a list of teachers in Co. Tyrone who he thought might be willing to collect folklore.²⁴ This example demonstrates that sometimes the request for correspondents led to a correspondent sending in a list of people. A further appeal went out for Northern correspondents in 1943. Considering the more intense wartime volunteering in these areas the response was not as great as it had been in 1940.

Some correspondents suggested only one person they knew. The correspondent Énrí Treinfhear (Buaille Mhaodhóg, Farna, Co. Wexford) found it too difficult to answer the *Ornamental Tomb-Slabs* questionnaire because of the bad weather, but he recommended the IFC send on a questionnaire to his friend M. Dempsey (Monaseed N.S., Gorey, Co. Wexford).²⁵ Recommendations like these sometimes got the IFC new correspondents; however, in this case M. Dempsey did not send in a reply. Another example is when E. Ní Chuagáin, O.S. (Dún Seachlainn, Co. Meath) recommended a Mr Coldrick.²⁶

²² Include a copy of this in the appendix.

²³ NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 11.

²⁴ S. McPhillips to a chara (25 July 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Smith Questionnaire*.

²⁵ Unsigned to a chara (2 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Dempsey (2 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

²⁶ Secretary to a chara (18 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

Becoming a correspondent was voluntary and therefore, all correspondents regardless of how they came in contact with the IFC had a personal interest in folklore. This fact is not surprising when the questionnaire system is placed in historical context. Less than three decades earlier Patrick Pearse, amongst others, was spreading the idea that:

A free Ireland would embark upon a radically adventurous program to restore the ancient language, to discover the vitality residual in a nation devastated by a colonial power, and would flower with new social and cultural forms, testaments to as yet unrecognized genius of the Gael.²⁷

Many correspondents came of age when this idea was promoted in Irish society. However, after the Civil War a multitude of people became disillusioned with the main organization that had expounded these views, the Gaelic League. Interest in the Gaelic League declined as the strong emphasis on promoting the language through the educational system in the 1920s and 1930s reduced its educational role. Furthermore, plenty of the correspondents were familiar with or had read works on folklore topics such as popular Gaelic fiction, the Blasket autobiographies, and collections of folk stories in the 1920s and 1930s. This interest in folklore and all things Gaelic was the essential quality in the ideal IFC questionnaire correspondent. In many ways the IFC filled the void that was left for many hobby folklorists by a disassociation with the Gaelic League. As rural dwellers, many of the correspondents were supporters of the Fianna Fáil government.

Recommendations by correspondents already active helped to bring the correspondents pool numbers up slightly but these methods alone were not sustainable. The number of people who replied after *The Great Famine* questionnaire (1945) continuously decreased.

The full-time collectors under-utilized female informants, because they were interested in collecting *märchen* (folktales). At the time the theory was that women did not tell long folktales but focused more on 'shorter kinds of lore.'²⁸ Modern scholars have discussed and questioned the gender

²⁷ Terence Brown, *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. 13.

²⁸ Internationally this was also true. Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*, p. 235

imbalance of the material collected by the IFC.²⁹ The topic is too vast to add comment to in this thesis but Mícheál Briody's article in the 2015 issue of *Béascna* discusses gender and Irish storytelling excellently.³⁰ Furthermore, a full-time IFC female collector was never hired and the following reasons have been noted for why this was: the marriage bar in Civil Service employment, period sexism, and the fact that no woman was appointed to the IFC board.³¹ A concern for female safety travelling alone in the countryside was also noted.³² How 'unsafe' this was has been open for debate. Another factor that contributed to a lesser number of female informants was the idea that male collectors were able to talk more freely to other males. This was most likely true in such a gender-polarized society as 1930s and 1940s Ireland. Ó Duilearga noted in his personal diary at the start of the IFC:

Mrs Seán MacEntee, the wife of the Minister for Finance rang up to recommend as a collector a Miss Kathleen Brady. I don't want women on this job- it is a man's job; and the old people wd. not give material to women who, they think, shd. look after their homes.³³

He interviewed her a few days later, possibly under pressure from the Minister, but declared the idea of hiring her 'impossible!'³⁴ Ó Duilearga's blatant sexism should not be excused; however, it should be noted that he was on unfriendly terms with both the Minister and his wife, Margaret MacEntee (Nee Browne), who lectured in Irish at UCD.

The full-time collectors were all males. Many of them were married and their wives may have influenced what they collected and whom they collected from. Tadhg Ó Murchú's wife Máire often accompanied him on his

²⁹ See: Fionnuala Nic Suibhne, "'On the Straw" and Other Aspects of Pregnancy and Childbirth from the Oral Tradition of Women in Ulster' in *Ulster Folklife*, vol. 38 (1992), pp. 12-24. Patricia Lysaght, 'Perspectives on Narrative Communication and Gender: Lady Augusta Gregory's Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland' in *Fabula*, vol. 39 (1998), pp. 256-276. Éilís Ní Dhuibhne, 'International Folktales' in Angela Bourke (ed.) *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing. Volume IV. Irish Women's Writing and Traditions* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), pp. 1214-1218. Anne O'Connor, *The Blessed and the Damned: sinful women and unbaptised children in Irish Folklore* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). Clodagh Brennan Harvey, 'Some Irish Women Storytellers and Reflections on the Role of Women in the Storytelling Tradition' in *Western Folklore*, vol. 48, no. 2, (1989), pp. 109-128.

³⁰ Mícheál Briody, 'The Socialisation of Storytellers and the Role of Women in the Irish Storytelling Tradition' in *Béascna*, vol. 9 (2015), pp. 62-97.

³¹ Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 58.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ NFC Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1935 (entry: 3 January).

³⁴ NFC Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1935 (entry: 11 January).

collecting trips.³⁵ Furthermore, Seán Ó hEochaidh's wife Anna Ní Gabhann came from a famous traditional story-telling family. The influence of collectors' wives should not be overlooked in relation to a female influence on the material in the NFC.

These points are being mentioned again because it is being argued here that the questionnaire system can and should be looked at separately in relation to the gender question. Ó Duilearga personally chose the full-time collectors; however, the IFC head staff had less control over who became a questionnaire correspondent. In the pre-1939 period the majority of the correspondents were hand picked by a member of staff and the percentile of women who replied to questionnaires averages out to 9.6%.³⁶ The majority of these women answered multiple questionnaires. These women were known to the IFC through various outlets. The accommodation owner Máire Ní Chróinín (Ballina, Co. Mayo) helped the 'Swedish Mission' in 1935 with travel arrangements in her area and was considered a useful source of lore by Ó Súilleabháin and Ó Duilearga in correspondence³⁷. She replied to three questionnaires in the pre-1939 period. Many of the rural women who ran accommodation out of their homes were involved with the IFC in some way. When Ó Duilearga or Ó Súilleabháin went to inspect collectors' work they often stayed in such houses. Likewise, if a collector travelled far from their home place to collect the IFC covered lodging. Meals were typically served at such accommodation and these afforded the visitor time to get to know the woman of the house better. The Blasket Islander and author Máire Ní Ghuithín was another female who replied to multiple (3) questionnaires before 1939.³⁸ It is not surprising that a different Blasket Island woman was a source of folklore information. Peig Sayers, as a female storyteller, was

³⁵ Patricia Lysaght, 'Folklore Collecting in County Clare: Tadhg Ó Murchú's Second Visit (1943)' in *Béaloideas*, vol. 75 (2007), pp. 109-169.

³⁶ These are the author's own statistics based on charts made for each pre-Martinmas questionnaire.

³⁷ For more on the 'Swedish Mission' see Chapter 4.

³⁸ Máire Ní Ghuithín (1909-1988) was born on the Great Blasket Island. When she was growing up she assisted her parents when visitors came to the island to learn Irish. This must have given her a unique understanding of the island's distinct culture from an early age. She also learned to write in Irish well because of it. She spent some time working at the Church of Ireland preparatory Irish language college, Coláiste Mobhí. In her popular publication, *Bean an Oileain* (1986) she discussed the traditions of island life.

often quoted as the exception to the rule that women did not tell long tales. The percentile is low in the pre-1939 period it should be noted that in this same period 21.5% of the replies came from full-time collectors (all males).

The perceived gender issues, which account for the absence of full-time paid female collectors, did not apply to female correspondents because the questionnaire topics were generally related more to folklife than folklore (*Märchen*) oriented. Many female teacher correspondents continued to teach after the 1934 marriage bar on female National School teachers had been implemented by the Department of Education.³⁹ This was not challenged by The Irish National Teachers' Organization, possibly because of the campaign for better wages and the issue 'attracted little public comment' during the period in question.⁴⁰ Many in rural Irish society believed that a woman's place was by the hearth and that they should not engage in work to the neglect of 'their duties in the home'⁴¹. Women's Studies scholar Maryann Gialanella Valiulis notes, 'In the government's definition of a postcolonial identity, women's role would be restricted to the hearth and home wherein they could keep alive the traditional cultural values.'⁴² It was seen as their responsibility to promote "Irishness" amongst the next generation of children, in particular the males.⁴³ These ideas and ideals were challenged by a select number of feminists but they were mainly Dublin based and middle class.⁴⁴ Their campaign for gender equality in Ireland was not always relevant to the majority of rural dwelling women who were strongly influenced by Catholic social teaching and the 'rural traditional ethos of Irish nationalism.'⁴⁵

Nonetheless, folklore collecting and in many cases teaching did not negatively alter either of these. Teachers received long holidays and agreeable

³⁹ Mary Daly notes, 'Women national teachers who married after 1934 lost their jobs.' Furthermore, when women did resign upon marriage they 'were generally replaced by younger women rather than by men.' Mary E. Daly, *Women and Work in Ireland* (Dublin: Dundalgan Press Ltd., 1997), pp. 49-50.

⁴⁰ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 421.

⁴¹ *Bunreacht na hÉireann*. Article 41. Section 2.

⁴² Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, 'Power, Gender, and Identity in the Irish Free State' in Joan Hoff, Moureen Coulter, and Eavan Boland (ed.) *Irish Women's Voices: past and present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 128.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁵ Mary Daly, 'Women in the Irish Free State, 1922-1939: The interaction between economics and ideology' in *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 7, no. 1, (1995), p. 111.

workday hours for raising children and in the IFC's opinion folklore was best collected at the hearth. Some women may have taken up collecting because of this. It was perfectly acceptable hobby for a woman to take up.

In the case of female questionnaire correspondents, safety was not an issue because in many cases the teachers (of both sexes) sent the children to gather information for the questionnaires or the correspondents collected the information themselves from their neighbours. They knew the people of the village because of their occupation, and in many cases they were native to the areas. In some cases the female schoolteacher, as an educated individual, may have been seen as the most authoritative person in the village, second to the priest. This was probably particularly true for un-married older female teachers.

Other common occupations for women in the 1930s and 1940s included agriculture and domestic service.⁴⁶ These occupations were labour intensive and as a result these women did not have as much interaction with writing and reading on a daily basis as teachers would have. Even though they made up the majority of the Irish female population farm assistants and domestic servants are under represented amongst questionnaire correspondents. However, many male and female correspondents used female farm assistants as informants to answer folklife questionnaires. In the context of information collecting, the fact that these women were not as 'well read' was an advantage because it meant the information came from memory and not from a written source.⁴⁷

Nuns were certainly a group of women versed in reading daily and in most cases writing. They also made up a smaller percentile of female correspondents who were not school teachers. As Yvonne McKenna notes:

Arguably the most important model of womanhood outside marriage and motherhood was religious life. Certainly, it was the only other form of

⁴⁶ Maria Luddy, 'Women and Work in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-century Ireland' in Bernadette Whelan (ed.) *Women and Paid Work in Ireland* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 44-56.

⁴⁷ For more on the life of women in Northern Ireland see: Clare O'Kane, 'To make good butter and to look after poultry': The Impact of the Second World War on the Lives of Rural Women in Northern Ireland' in Gillian McIntosh and Diane Urquhart (ed.) *Irish Women at War, The Twentieth Century* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2010), pp. 87-102.

The Correspondents

womanhood the Church publicly advocated conforming, as it did, with Catholic ideologies of de-sexualised womanhood.⁴⁸

Folklore collecting was also an acceptable hobby for a nun. The nuns who worked in teaching orders had access to children to do the collecting. The nuns who worked in nursing orders had access to the elderly and in some cases may have travelled to care for their patients.

By the year 1940 the IFC had a pool of correspondents that included males and females. The percentages were considerably imbalanced; however, it was a much better gender balanced situation than the pre-Martinmas period. After the initial surge in correspondents the IFC recruited new correspondents on the recommendation of active correspondents and this appears to have led to more males being recommended than females. Although exceptions to this existed like when Mrs. Grehan recommended that Mrs. Nora Wheeler (Linn, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath) answer *The Great Famine* questionnaire.⁴⁹ Lists sent in by friends of the IFC or board members favoured male recommendations as well.

Chapter 5 recounted how the IFC sent copies of the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire to the ICWA organizers to distribute to the organization's members. The ICWA was a good source for obtaining new IFC correspondents because it focused amongst other things on handicrafts and farm produce for market.⁵⁰ These skills were directly related to traditional culture and membership in such an organization meant the potential female correspondents were already accustomed to volunteering and/or participating in activities outside the home. According to Ferriter the ICWA, 'dismissed the romantic idealisation of life on the farm'⁵¹; however, as has been argued in Chapter 5 the IFC did not want the correspondents to record 'idealised' material. The *Old-time Dress* questionnaire was the only one in the 1936 to 1945 period sent to the ICWA to send on to their members, but the two organizations worked together on questionnaires afterwards. The work

⁴⁸ Yvonne McKenna, *Made Holy: Irish Women Religious at Home and Abroad* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006), p. 27.

⁴⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Wheeler (27 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁵⁰ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 424.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

between the two organizations helped to keep the number of female correspondents high.

The history of the Irish language and the Irish language movement's connections with the IFC was discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Some more general comments about specific questionnaires and the use of the Irish language were noted in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6; however, a thesis about the questionnaires would not be complete without a separate section discussing general comments about the use of the Irish language in the system.

As mentioned in Chapter 4 the IFC had initially started out as a institution interested in the Gaeltacht and the 'riches of traditions' among Irish speakers. When moving from the IFC and Irish in general, to the questionnaire system and Irish the discussion changes. The date of the switch in language preference coincides with the switch to the larger questionnaires being issued (November 1939). In regards to the thirteen pre-Martinmas questionnaires, 47% of the replies were written in Irish and 5% of the replies were written in a combination of Irish and English. It is important to note that the full-time collectors account for 21.5 % of the replies and they collected in the Gaeltacht.⁵² However, that is not to say that all these Irish replies were from paid collectors. The other Irish language correspondents in this period clearly had a strong command of written Irish.

A reply is being defined as being written in 'Both' languages when more than three sentences of the questionnaire reply were in the other language. In some cases correspondents wrote reply letters in Irish and the material in English, or vice versa. Five percent of correspondents wrote in both languages between 1936 and 1945. In some cases this was done because the informant provided the information to the correspondent in a combination of the two languages. Lastly, some correspondents who lived in the Breac-Ghaeltacht had one informant give information in Irish and a different informant give a reply in English. Correspondent Tomás Ó Riain, N.T. (Newtown N.S., Borris, Co. Carlow) noted in his *Basket-making* questionnaire reply that the area he was collecting in was 'poor' in folklore

⁵² They were expected to send back Irish material.

‘although Irish idioms were a plenty and many local people used Irish words amongst their speech.’⁵³ Writing in 1945 Ó Danachair made it clear that correspondents were asked to record the information in the language the tradition was preserved in.⁵⁴ The ‘Both’ classification demonstrates how many correspondents took this request seriously.

In relation to the questionnaires issued from November 1939 onwards the growing pool of correspondents resulted in fewer replies in Irish. The native speaking informant numbers dwindled, as did the number of teachers whose first language was Irish. In 1936 the INTO annual congress published the statement, ‘the use of a teaching medium other than the home language of the child in the primary schools... is educationally unsound.’⁵⁵ The Irish language was a contentious topic amongst some teachers. In relation to the questionnaire system the teachers had the choice to use the language or not.

This trend was a problem for the IFC who wanted to collect folktales in Irish; however, it was less of a problem for questionnaire topics as they focused mainly on traditional customs. The language of a tale could be ‘touched up’ to make the whole account in Irish; however, when recording a traditional custom it did not make sense to do this. The way the words were spoken by the informant and put to paper by the correspondent did not influence the tradition. The word choice and ordering did not matter with the questionnaires replies. When Ó Duilearga was asked in a 1941 RTÉ interview ‘I suppose all these note books and questionnaires are answered in Irish?’ his reply was:

No, not by any means... for example [Patrick Lyons (TI)] although he is an excellent Gaelic speaker, and comes from a Gaelic speaking district, he cannot write Irish as the language wasn’t taught in the schools in his

⁵³ T. Ó Riain to unaddressed (stamp dated 8 January 1942), NFC 1143:98.

⁵⁴ Ó Danachair, ‘The Questionnaire System’, p. 204. Ní Fhloinn also quotes from Ó Danachair in her article and admits that she has not done a detailed linguistic breakdown of all the questionnaires because that ‘lies outside the scope of [her] paper,’ but that she is confident in saying as the number of people who spoke Irish continued to decrease after 1930 so did the number of people who responded to questionnaires in Irish, Ní Fhloinn, ‘In Correspondence with Tradition’ p. 223. Briody cites this quote from Ó Danachair as well but makes the mistake of saying that Ó Danachair was wrong and that ‘not all the questionnaires were issued in bilingual form.’ He uses an example that in 1959 the Commission had sent out a questionnaire on furze only in English, on behalf of the National Museum of Ireland, Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, p. 285. However, what Ó Danachair was arguing was that as of 1945 (the time he was writing) all the questionnaires were being released in a bilingual form. More research and a solid timeline are needed in order to prove Ó Danachair was correct but most likely this was not an over exaggeration on his part.

⁵⁵ Brown, *Ireland*, p. 113.

The Correspondents

day, so he wrote in English, and his writing by the way, could serve as a headline for most scholars and for many teachers, including University Professors.⁵⁶

This must have been a problem that other correspondents had to deal with as well; however, it is difficult to conclude how many correspondents were in this situation with a search through all written evidence housed in the NFC.

IFC to the Correspondents

By 1945, the Irish public were familiar with the IFC through the full-time collectors visiting their areas, through the 1937-1938 Schools' Scheme, through newspaper articles and radio broadcasts, and through the questionnaire correspondents. In recent years scholars have looked at many aspects of the above-mentioned contacts the IFC had with the Irish public, but the relationships the IFC had with individual correspondents has been undeveloped. This section will look at the various forms of communication that the IFC sent to correspondents, what correspondents sent back, and the biggest issue that influenced both groups in this period (1939-1945), the Emergency.

The IFC thank you letters attempted to make each correspondent's reply seem special and valuable. The standard level of written politeness that permeated Irish society at the time required this and it was also in the IFC's interest to make correspondents feel like their contribution meant something to the national cause of folklore collecting. If correspondents felt like IFC contributors then they were more likely to correspond for longer. One-way that they ensured this was done was by mentioning in the thank you letter if the correspondent was the first one to send back a reply. Sometimes the letter mentioned that the correspondent was the first person anywhere in Ireland to send a reply and other times a specific county or region was mentioned. Tomás Ó Riain, O.S. was informed that his *Stone-Heaps* reply was the first from Co. Carlow.⁵⁷ For the *Old-time Dress* it was Seán Ó Maolain

⁵⁶ Transcript of Radio Éireann Interview of Ó Duilearga by Mr Boden (January 1941).

⁵⁷ Address: Cilluachtair Fhionáin, Buirgheas, Co. Cheatharlach.

Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Riain (16 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

(Grangecon, Co. Wicklow) who sent in the first reply for all of Ireland.⁵⁸ John D. O'Dowd (The Laurels, Westport, Co. Mayo) got a letter saying his was the first reply received to the *Cake-Dance* questionnaire and he was thanked 'heartily for being so prompt.'⁵⁹ Francis McPolin (Ballymaghera School, Hilltown) was one of the first people to send in a reply to *The Great Famine* questionnaire.⁶⁰ The correspondents mentioned here must have felt pride in knowing that their hard work was appreciated. These letters are an added bonus for researchers studying this collecting system because the documents allow for estimations to be made of how quickly the average reply was returned. The times varied considerably depending on the questionnaire topic.

In the 1940 issue of *Seanchas Nodlag* Ó Duilearga wrote to the correspondents about 'the importance of having positive or negative replies from the entire net-work.'⁶¹ This point of wanting to receive negative replies was emphasised constantly to the correspondents. Many correspondents may have felt guilty about not having anything to report; therefore, they did not reply to particular questionnaires. In order to get an idea of how widespread a custom was, the IFC needed positive and negative answers. For example if the IFC got no replies back from Co. Leitrim then they could not say if the custom was practiced there or not. The negatives were extremely important and this is why the IFC continuously thanked correspondents who did send in negative replies. Eilís Ní Choistealbhaigh (Baile an Chlocháin, Cill Chormaic, Co. Offaly) received a thank you letter for her negative reply to the *Stone Heaps Questionnaire*. She was informed that the IFC hoped to make a study of the custom throughout the country and therefore negative replies were important.⁶² The IFC hoped that they would be able to amass enough

⁵⁸ Secretary to Seán Ó Maoláin (22 March 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁵⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Dowd (28 July 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁶⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr McPolin (21 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁶¹ In the original quote the words are underlined. NAI, TSCH/3/S6916A, *Seanchas Nodlag* (1940), p. 2.

⁶² Ó Súilleabháin to Miss Costelloe (20 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

positive and negative information to contribute to European wide folk atlases on certain shared folklife subjects.

Frequently the IFC asked specific questions about the information the correspondent sent in. Sometimes this was to clarify a point the IFC believed was inaccurate because the correspondent copied information out of a book or wrote down what they heard on the radio. This frustrated the IFC and was a particular problem with *The Great Famine* questionnaire. Ó Súilleabháin noted, 'Some of the accounts which we have received were disappointing in that they were made up almost wholly of general statements, devoid of detail, and might have been taken holus-polus out of a school history text book.'⁶³

Another problem was sometimes the correspondent did not provide enough detail about an unusual point. In the case of Mrs. Cleary's N.T. (Murrintown, Co. Wexford) *Old-time Dress* reply, two points greatly stuck out to Ó Duilearga and he requested more clarification and description. The points were that a feather was worn in a hat on All Soul's Day to allow power over spirits, and that the best clothes were not worn on Christmas Day because this was a humble day. Both of these customs were counter to the practices in other parts of Ireland.⁶⁴ Ó Súilleabháin also asked Diarmuid Ó Cruadhlaoidh (Cill Colmán, Inis Céin, Co. Cork) to get more information about marriages on the Skelligs and Skellig's Lists after reading his *St. Bridget* reply.⁶⁵ In the case of Máire bean Mhic Suibhne's *Old-time Dress* reply, the IFC did not want more detailed information but samples of the 'luibhins' that she said young girls used to sew.⁶⁶ The historical committee set up to prepare a book on the famine asked Ó Súilleabháin to write to a number of correspondents to clarify and add detail to some of the points raised in their replies. One such correspondent was Máire Bean Uí Cheallaigh, O.S. (Baile Muadh, Kilcock, Co. Kildare) and she was asked about the following detail:

⁶³ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr John D. O'Dowd (1 September 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁶⁴ Ó Duilearga to a chara (19 June 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁶⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to Diarmuid (11 March 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files St. Bridget Questionnaire*.

⁶⁶ Ó Duilearga to Máire bean Mhic Suibhne (22 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

The Correspondents

You said that there was an old man named John Reid, aged 101 (in 1945) who lived in Courtown, Kilcock, and was in good health. Do you know him personally, or do you know if he has any memories or traditions of the Famine? Would it be possible for you to take a photograph of him, if you have a camera; if not, could some local person oblige?⁶⁷

Another reason that the IFC mentioned something that the correspondent wrote down was due to its unusual nature. They let correspondent know that their reply was distinct and therefore contributed greatly to the understanding of the custom in different regions. An example of this is when Mrs. Sarah Warde (Parke, Castlebar, Co. Mayo) wrote in her *Stone-Heaps* reply that in her area the coffin shroud was typically dipped in a stream or river when the funeral attendees returned from the graveyard. Ó Súilleabháin did not question whether this custom was genuine but noted that it was ‘hitherto unheard of’.⁶⁸ John J. Fitzpatrick (9 Hyde Terrace, Newry, Co. Down) surprised Ó Súilleabháin with his reply to *The Smith* questionnaire by including the custom of a smith’s curse breaking a horse’s legs the day after the shoes were put on by him.⁶⁹ Padhraic Ó Flannghaile’s (Áth Tíge Mheasaigh, Beul an Átha, Co. Mayo) *Basket-making* questionnaire reply included a reference to ‘green and white baskets made before Christmas’ and the IFC noted it was delighted to get this information because they had no reference to it in their archive.⁷⁰ In Proinnsias Ó Sandair’s (Sráid an Mhullaigh, Mullach, Sráid na Cathrach, Co. Clare) *Old-time Dress* reply he mentioned the unheard of custom of ‘a boy baby when born was wrapped in the father’s shirt and a girl baby in the mother’s nightdress.’ In the IFC’s thank you letter they noted to him that when they were going to send out a questionnaire in the future on ‘birth customs’ they would include this information as a question.⁷¹ These small special items of information contributed to the phrasing of questionnaires and certainly the questions included in the *Handbook*. Detailed information for *The Great Famine*

⁶⁷ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (8 November 1946), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁶⁸ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Warde (25 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

⁶⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Fitzpatrick (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁷⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to Paddy (21 January 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Basket-making Questionnaire*.

⁷¹ No such questionnaire was ever issued. Unsigned to a chara (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

questionnaire was praised by Ó Duilearga. Stiophán Mac Philib's (S.N. Éadan Mór, Sgarbh na gCaorach, Co. Monaghan) questionnaire reply was one of the best. Ó Duilearga noted:

One of the most pleasing features of your reply was the number of detailed stories, which you told of local happenings during the Famine. A few documented accounts of that type are of far more value to the compiler of the history of the Famine than pages of remarks of a general kind.⁷²

The IFC was genuinely interested in local folklife information but the view that Irish culture was distinctive was widely held. Ireland had not been subjected to the same waves of barbarian invaders that much of continental Europe had. It had its own distinct language, sports, music, dance, folklore, and folk material culture. It was popular in 1930s and 1940s Ireland to over emphasise these distinctive features to continue to justify the independent Irish state.⁷³ It is no wonder many correspondents wrote back overjoyed that they had contributed something unique.

Sometimes the reply material was not the only information that the IFC needed to have clarified; the provenance of the material was also significant. Many of the schoolteachers taught in areas that they were not originally from. When Eibhlís Ní Chuagáin, O.S. (Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath) sent in her reply to the *Old-time Dress* questionnaire the IFC had to write back and clarify whether the information pertained to her school district of Co. Meath or to her home place of Co. Sligo. She clarified for them and they added this information to her reply.⁷⁴ Frequently correspondents overlooked this clarification in their original reply because they assumed that the IFC knew the region they were collecting in. In Ní Chuagáin's case she may have assumed that the IFC thought no traditional material was available for collecting in Co. Meath and that she would automatically collect when on a visit home. Correspondents regularly forgot to include a reference to where the material came from. The IFC also attempted to remain strict in their

⁷² Ó Duilearga to A Stiopháin (14 August 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁷³ Ó Crualaoich, 'The Primacy of Form: A 'Folk Ideology' in de Valera's Politics', p. 55.

⁷⁴ Unsigned to a chara (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*. Secretary to a chara (18 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

standards of knowing who the informant was. Particularly in the early years of the system the correspondents did not always record such information in the original reply. A possible explanation for this was that the information was being relayed from an earlier period and the correspondent did not remember which informant said what. Another possibility is that the correspondent believed the informant might have repeated information from a written source. The touching up of information was also an issue.⁷⁵

Another regular occurrence was schoolteacher correspondents sending their pupils out to collect information on the questionnaire topic. In the early 1940s some of the students who sent replies into the School Scheme may have still be in the same school, or had become the teachers' assistants. It was logical for the teachers to utilize their students. The IFC did not mind the students collecting information as long as it was accurate and not recorded from printed sources. In many cases, like with Eilís Ní Choistealbhaigh's reply to the *Stone-Heaps* questionnaire, the children who collected and wrote down information were thanked by the IFC through the adult correspondent.⁷⁶ The correspondent E. bean Uí Bhuachalla (Baile Mhic Íre, Maghchromtha, Co. Cork) wrote the reply letter for 'this little piece of information' that one of her students Máire B. Ní Chéilleabhair collected for the *Martinmas* questionnaire. The use of the word 'little' to describe the reply is comical because it totals 29 full pages!⁷⁷ In the case of the National School teacher Maighréad bean Uí Mhártan (Cubhar a' Chair, Co. Clare) the students were sent a cheque for a few guineas as a reward for their collecting efforts.⁷⁸ Bean Uí Mhártan informed the IFC that she would spend the money on something for their last day of school before the holiday break. In the post-Emergency years some of the part-time collectors were paid⁷⁹ but this is the only reference found to-date that demonstrates a questionnaire correspondent being paid.

⁷⁵ O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, pp. 114-116.

⁷⁶ Ó Súilleabháin to Miss Costelloe (20 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

⁷⁷ E. bean Uí Bhuachalla to a chara (stamp dated 16 January 1941), NFC 766:155 and for the whole reply see NFC 766:155-183.

⁷⁸ Maighréad bean Uí Mhártán to a chara (18 December 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

⁷⁹ For more on part-time collectors and their pay see Briody, *IFC 1935-1970*, pp. 241-243.

Considering the time of payment this may have been a special Christmas gift for the children from the IFC. Once the Emergency began the government cut the IFC's budget and cheques were not regularly given out.⁸⁰

In one of the steadiest examples of handwriting in the whole NFC, the National School pupil Aingeal Ní Chuinn (Cnocmine, Baile an Mhóta, Co. Sligo) wrote in May 1940 to submit her reply to *Old-time Dress* questionnaire.⁸¹ It was uncommon for students to write the reply letter. In return for her efforts Ó Súilleabháin sent Aingeal a small songbook gift. Her teacher Mary Scanlan (Backmount, Ballymote, Co. Sligo) wrote a thank you note to Ó Súilleabháin for Aingeal stating she enjoyed the book.⁸²

Sometimes students did not collect information orally but brought objects into school for the teacher and fellow classmates to inspect. Mairéad Ní Chiaráin's (Doire Leathan, An Ghráinseach, Co. Sligo) thank you letter included the following point about collaboration:

I would like to say a special word of thanks to Maggie Kate Keegan who brought the "Tally Iron" for your inspection and to Mattie Kerins for the good drawing made of it. It seems to be a fine sample of its kind and one that I am sure is cherished by the family, which owns it. May I congratulate you on having awakened the interest of the children in sean-aimsireacht.⁸³

Teachers used their students to collect; however, they were mindful of the weather conditions that permitted collecting. The IFC unwisely sent out the *Ornamental Tomb-Slab* questionnaire, which required visits to graveyards, in the horrible December weather. Margaret McCleane (Glynn Girls' School, Killutin, Co. Wexford) wrote to the IFC saying, 'In the spring but on no conditions at the present time [I suggest] sending some of my senior girls to collect' on the number, design, year, and maker of the tomb-slabs.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ During the Emergency the government cut the IFC's budget from £4,500 to £3,500. Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 7.

⁸¹ Aingeal Ní Chuinn to a Dhuine Uasal (16 May 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁸² Mary Scanlan to Sir (25 May 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁸³ Ó Duilearga to a chara (19 June 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁸⁴ Margaret McCleane to The Irish Folklore Commission (7 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

In many cases the teacher would send in a questionnaire reply written by a student with only the student's name on the material and no information on the teacher or the school. An example of this was when Ó Súilleabháin wrote to Brighid Puirseál, O.S. about *The Smith* reply they had received:

Sí Áine Ní Iarnáin as Uaimíní, Leitirmealláin, [Galway] do scríobh cúntas. Ar mhiste leat nóta gearr a chur chugham á innsint dom an tusa do chuir an cúntas chughainn. Teastuigheann an t-eolas uainn le haghaidh na hoifige annso.⁸⁵

They had to write to Séamus P. Mac Gearachaigh, O.S. (Eidhneach, Co. Clare) about the same problem.⁸⁶ In order to catalogue the material properly the IFC needed all the information they could get about where and how a reply came to them. Most of the students collected the information from their relatives and grandparents.⁸⁷

The IFC strove to make the correspondents feel appreciated by continuously inviting them to visit their head office in Dublin. In the modern age this may sound like a token gesture, but when the IFC sent M.H. O'Donnell (Kilmeena, Westport, Co. Mayo) a letter saying 'You will be welcome anytime you will be able to call,' they meant it.⁸⁸ For correspondents who lived far away from the capital, like Seosamh Ó Gríbhthín of Lios Póil, Co. Kerry and Máire Ní Choileáin, O.S. of Gleann Cholm Cille, Leithbhearr, Co. Donegal⁸⁹ having a trust-worthy and friendly contact to visit in Dublin was comforting. Particularly during the Emergency years when travel was restricted, people in the country did not visit Dublin regularly. For correspondents who lived closer to Dublin, such as Mrs. Kate Murrin (Kilcock, Co Meath), it was probably one of the many exciting places to visit on a day trip to Dublin.⁹⁰ Some correspondents were told in the IFC's letters

⁸⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁸⁶ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence File The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁸⁷ Unsigned to Proinnsias Ó Sandair (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁸⁸ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Donnell (14 April 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

This welcoming atmosphere was reiterated not only in individual letters but in each of the *Seanchas Nodlag* issues.

⁸⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (3 December 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁹⁰ Murrin was invited to visit: Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Murrin (23 June 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

the exact times that they should visit, ‘between 10 and 1:30 and 2:30 and 5:30.’⁹¹

Considering the hundreds of people the IFC invited to come and visit the office it is no surprise that visitors constantly called in. Oireachtas Week in Dublin was particularly busy as Ó Súilleabháin noted to Ada Leask in November 1941 that the excitement had upset their office routine.⁹² Ó Súilleabháin noted to a correspondent that the same surge in visitations happened in November 1945 stating:

It was ever so busy during the Oireachtas Week; our office was crowded out each day with Gaeltacht competitors who called to see us. We were able to make some gramophone recordings from them, both songs and tales, and were quite pleased with the result.⁹³

The busy times like Oireachtas Week might have been exhausting and overwhelming for the IFC staff; however, they enjoyed being able to show correspondents and informants the archives. It certainly meant a lot to the correspondents to know they had a welcoming reception in a government office.

The full-time collectors were constantly told by the IFC head office to thank their informants and the same request applied to the questionnaire correspondents. The IFC did not have the same type of contact with the correspondents’ informants because many of them could not read or write. Thus they made sure to express their thanks in the letters they sent to the correspondents. In a letter dated the 24th April 1939 Mrs. Daly (Mallow Co. Cork) was told to thank her informant ‘Mr Sheahan’ for the information he supplied her about stone-heaps.⁹⁴ John J. McGovern (Arva, Co. Cavan) got his information for the *Stone-Heaps* questionnaire from a ‘Mr O’Reilly of Loughdavin’ who had visited the IFC office on two occasions. Ó Súilleabháin wrote that McGovern should thank him from the staff and to remind Mr O’Reilly that he said he would send in a collection of his traditions recorded

⁹¹ Unsigned to a chara (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁹² Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. H. G. Leask (10 November 1941) *NFC Correspondence Files, Leask*.

⁹³ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Ó Cadhla (8 November 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

⁹⁴ Secretary to Mrs. Daly (24 April 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

by his daughter.⁹⁵ The correspondent Owen O'Neill (Meelick N.S., Co. Limerick) asked Ó Súilleabháin to send a thank you note directly to his informant Mr Michael Collins, because he believed it would mean more coming from the IFC. They gladly obliged.⁹⁶ As the correspondents enjoyed being appreciated, the informants must have been happy to hear that the IFC treasured the traditions they remembered.

In a December 1926 essay on 'An Ghaeltacht' Gaelic League President Cormac Breathnach stated, 'there are in the Gaeltacht- and there alone- special things, such as culture and civilization and folklore and true genius of the Gaelic race.'⁹⁷ Considering this essay was published a month before the FIS was founded this may have been an idea that Ó Duilearga agreed with then. However, by 1939 this was not part of the IFC's mission. Correspondents in remote areas were given extra special attention by the IFC staff. They needed to make sure that these correspondents continued to send in replies in order to conduct Ireland-wide surveys, essential for the European wide Atlas. Ó Duilearga wrote in a letter to correspondent Áine bean Uí Bhreathnaigh, O.S. (Baile Mháirtín, Buirgheas, Co. Carlow), 'I have always been of [the] opinion that tradition is by no means so scanty in those parts of Ireland where Irish is no longer spoken as some people seem to think.'⁹⁸ The IFC secretary was delighted to get Patrick Mac Aler's *The Smith* reply because he was from Greencastle, Omagh, Co Tyrone and 'up to this we have had no contact whatsoever with your part of Co. Tyrone, a district which is probably as rich in oral traditions as you know it to be in archaeological remains.'⁹⁹ The IFC constantly struggled to get replies from people in Northern Ireland because they did not participate in the Schools' Collection Scheme 1937-1938. It is important to further bear in mind that a percentile of the population would not engage with an Irish Government funded

⁹⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr McGovern (16 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

⁹⁶ Owen O'Neill to Sir (31 May 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*. Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Collins (3 June 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

⁹⁷ Cormac Breathnach, 'An Ghaeltacht' in *Fáinne an Lae*, vol. I (1926)- reproduced and translated in O'Leary, *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State 1922-1939*, p. 555:3.

⁹⁸ Ó Duilearga to a chara (19 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

⁹⁹ Secretary to sir (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

Commission. Furthermore, Northern Irelanders, regardless of their background, were living in a region at War and this made projects like folklore collecting more difficult. However, exceptions existed such as Patrick Mac Aleer and Jeanne Cooper-Foster (30 Clara Park, Belfast). The letters from the IFC to these correspondents demonstrated that they went out of their way to keep Northern Ireland correspondents active.

Another way in which the IFC encouraged busy correspondents, on both sides of the border to stay active was by mentioning and asking about their family members. Ó Súilleabháin must have known the correspondent Mrs. May Harrington, N.T. (Lack, Eyeries, Castletownbere, Co. Cork) personally because he informed her about what was going on in his own family and his recent visit home to Kerry.¹⁰⁰ Another example was when the correspondent John Cunningham (Lifford, Co. Donegal) wrote to Ó Duilearga all about his family and inquired about specific things going on in Ó Duilearga's life.¹⁰¹ He may have known Ó Duilearga from one of the many trips he took to the county. In the thank you letter sent to Joseph O'Kane, N.T. (Dromore West, Co. Sligo) for his reply to *The Cake-Dance*, Ó Súilleabháin made sure to give his best to O'Kane's wife and children. He also mentioned seeing one son's name 'in a recent success-list' and wanted to congratulate him.¹⁰² These items of a more personal nature made the IFC-correspondent relationship similar to that between pen pals. Writing to pen pals was a popular pastime in the first half of the twentieth-century and only served to strengthen the relationship the IFC had with their rural correspondents.

The IFC believed that what they were doing was work of 'national importance.' In nearly every printed document, from the period in question, Ó Duilearga included nationalist statements about the place of folklore in Irish heritage. This was in line with the philosophy of the day that 'the true

¹⁰⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to May (6 August 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁰¹ John Cunningham to Ó Duilearga (22 December 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁰² Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Kane (31 July 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Cake Dance Questionnaire*.

The Correspondents

Ireland is Gaelic Ireland,' and that this was exhibited best in the countryside.¹⁰³ The IFC thank you letters expressed these ideas to the correspondents. The majority of the letters with these flowing statements were signed by Ó Duilearga (rather than Ó Súilleabháin). Ó Duilearga wrote in Gerald Kelliher's (Urbal National School, Dowra, Co. Leitrim) thank you letter:

For many years now I have been aware that a vast amount of information about the social life of our ancestors is possessed by our country people and that they alone have it. In other lands with a more settled history in the past there are parish records, books and manuscripts, paintings, illustrations and sculptures, but in Ireland so divorced were the government and ascendancy from the people that only in the people's memory can be found the material from which to reconstruct our old social life.¹⁰⁴

Another example was the following paragraph written in a letter to Eibhlís Ní Chuagáin:

...When added to information gleaned from other replies and from old books, will greatly help in reconstructing this important part of the life of our ancestors. It is these small details, passed over by many as insignificant which give the greatest light on the past and we count ourselves fortunate whenever we come across a correspondent who has the insight to realise this.¹⁰⁵

The Great Famine questionnaire, unsurprisingly, did not escape the nationalist sentiments of the era and Ó Duilearga wrote to correspondent Brighid Bean Uí Chadhla, O.S. (Bodyke, Co. Clare):

That future generations will thank him [your brother] and you and all our other correspondents for their truly patriotic work. These pages which your brother and yourself and Mary Byrnes have written for us will, we hope, remain and stand our people in good stead in the years to come, and will be a more lasting memorial to our forefathers who have handed on these precious scraps of lore than any amount of empty talk and boasting.¹⁰⁶

The next quote from a letter to Mrs. Doyle (Grangeclith National School, Slane, Co. Meath) was not exactly nationalistic but demonstrated the urgency

¹⁰³ Brown, *Ireland*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ Ó Duilearga to Mr Kelliher (19 June 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁰⁵ unsigned to a chara (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁰⁶ Ó Duilearga to Mrs. Ó Cadhla (8 November 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

with which the collecting process was viewed. This urgency was tied into collecting the nation's folklore before it was 'lost.' Ó Súilleabháin wrote:

What you say about the number of old with traditions who have passed away in recent years is something of which I am only too keenly aware. As you realise so well there is a great difference between the traditional knowledge of the oldest generation and that of their immediate successors. Our work is indeed a race against time. Let that be the excuse for so urgently asking the co-operation of the hard-working teachers like yourself. If we of this generation do not do this work it can never be done.¹⁰⁷

The Irish government and many Irish intellectuals also lamented this concept of a dying culture from the 1920s into the 1940s.

Correspondents collected folklore because it was an enjoyable hobby and they most likely had similar nationalist views as Ó Duilearga. Nonetheless, their letters typically did not contain such well-crafted statements as the examples given above. Some examples of correspondents' nationalist statements are discussed in the next section, sub-section V.

The information that correspondents often included in their letters provides a treasure trove of anecdotes about life in 1930s and 1940s Ireland. These letters present clear ideas of what volunteering as an IFC correspondent was like. Furthermore, these reply letters indicate how many correspondents collected before they came in contact with the IFC because collecting was already a passionate hobby. Mícheal¹⁰⁸ Ó hEachthighearna (Doon, Coonagh, Co. Limerick) noted in his *Martinmas* reply letter that he, 'really enjoyed collecting the [questionnaire] information. It provided [him and his family] with some interesting nights around the firesides- my own and 2 or 3 others- my seanchaí enjoy it also.'¹⁰⁹

It is interesting and important to note at the start of this discussion, about the correspondents' perspectives of the questionnaire process, that the correspondents, because of their education and occupations, did not express self-deprecating feelings toward Irish folklife. From 1929 Ó Duilearga understood that getting the public interested in folklife collecting was not

¹⁰⁷ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Doyle (18 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁰⁸ This is the way that this name chose to spell his first name.

¹⁰⁹ Mícheal Ó hEachthighearna to a chara (22 March 1940), NFC 766:204.

going to be easy because many Irish people still felt ashamed of their ancestors' level of poverty. He noted:

All that is needed is to shed false pride, and admit even if only as evidence of our progress, that our ancestors did not all dwell in slated houses, and that still there are some who have not substituted the Ford for the ass car. We are getting knowledgeable about the old Gael and knew next to nothing of popular life and century back. Yet the continuity is there if it could be exhibited.¹¹⁰

The majority of informants still wanted to celebrate 'their glorious cultural heritage,'¹¹¹ because this idea was popular rhetoric at the time. However, they wanted to do so on an impersonal level, without having the details of their families' poverty recorded and studied. The nature of asking questions about folk material culture only highlighted the inability of the informant and/or the informant's family to purchase goods in an increasingly materialistic society. This self-consciousness about personal poverty amongst folklore informants was not unique to Ireland. Miss Maud Karpeles, the Honorary Secretary of the International Folk Music Council in London noted at the MIFC (1950):

I think one great failing, if you call it a failing, of the folk, or a characteristic of the folk, is lack of confidence in themselves. When they are brought in touch with urban life and with material progress and self-conscious barriers, I am quite sure that we by our appreciation of their art can enormously assist them to restore their belief and confidence in it.¹¹²

She suggested that it was the duty of the folklorist to 'restore their belief and confidence' in the folklore and folklife information they have to impart.

Questionnaire informants may have felt these self-deprecating emotions but they were not recorded. Furthermore, some correspondents may have had similar emotions surrounding their own upbringing or in a limited number of cases their economic situation at the time of replying to questionnaires. This is also not evident in the replies or reply letters. This is probably a result of the fact that Irish people were very private about such matters in the period in question. It may seem odd to note something for which no documentation exists at the start of a section; however, it is a worthwhile point to keep in mind for the issues discussed below that just because it was not noted in documents does not mean that these concerns did not heavily

¹¹⁰ "An Irishman's Diary. An Open-Air Amusement," *The Irish Times*, 17 December 1929, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Ó Cruaíoch, 'The Primacy of Form: A 'Folk Ideology' in de Valera's Politics', p. 55.

¹¹² Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, p. 164.

influence the way correspondents and informants interacted with the collecting system.

By far the most exciting element of becoming a correspondent was free FIS membership. Educated rural dwellers may not have had interaction with academic social circles on a daily basis, living in the country; therefore, having this connection to the world of scholarship was important. Correspondent Henry Evanson, N.T. (Altar National School, Toormore, Skibbereen, Co. Cork) wrote to the IFC, 'I shall be happy to act as your local correspondent, and I shall feel proud not only to become a member of the Irish Folklore Society [*sic*] but also that I have been accounted worthy of the honour of membership in the Society.'¹¹³ Eibhlín Ní Cholgáin, ex-N.T. (Knockerra, Killimer, Co. Clare) also noted, 'I shall be charmed to feel I am a member of the Folklore Society of Ireland, and shall try to deserve the honour.'¹¹⁴ Many correspondents also wrote thank you letters when they received each issue of *Béaloides*.¹¹⁵ The correspondents becoming members also boosted the FIS membership numbers and allowed them to boast about the island wide interest in their work.

The IFC correspondents sometimes included extra information with their replies. One example of this was the hand drawn maps of where stone-heaps were located in correspondents' regions. Mr T. O'Sullivan (Lehanmore, Allihies, Bantry, Co. Cork) sent in such a map and the IFC archivist Ó Súilleabháin noted in the thank you letter that it was 'extremely interesting' and added greatly to the subject because he thought he knew the area well himself.¹¹⁶ Maighrhead Ní Ailpín, O.S. (Dysart N.S., Dunleer, Co. Louth) also sent in a distribution map with her reply to *The Smith*

¹¹³ Henry Evanson to Sirs (3 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁴ Eibhlín Ní Cholgáin to a chárde (10 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁵ Liam P. Mac Choiligh to a chairde (June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Unfiled*.
Donal Ua Chearbhaill to Sir (15 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁶ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Sullivan (7 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

questionnaire.¹¹⁷ Moreover the *Ornamental Tomb-Slab* questionnaire leant itself well to correspondents sending in maps and drawings and Rev. Bro. D. C. Healy (Christian Brothers' Wexford) sent in both.¹¹⁸ This type of information was helpful when the IFC head staff drew up the official distribution maps for each questionnaire. It also allowed full-time collectors to double check the information and add to it when they were collecting in the area.

Another type of alternative information sent in by correspondents was a physical object. These were typically posted to the head office. Tomás Ó Riain, O.S. sent the IFC a 'little booklet' on the topic of stone-heaps and it must have been valuable because Ó Súilleabháin asked Ó Riain if the IFC could keep it for their library.¹¹⁹ Francis McPolin sent in 'extracts from letters and other documents' about the famine for the 1945 questionnaire. The IFC were happy to get these because this topic did not lend itself well to other forms of visual or physical material.¹²⁰ Liam Ó Danachair's (Sunvale, Athea, Co. Limerick) *The Great Famine* reply including clippings from a 1840s English newspapers about the famine.¹²¹ Depending on what newspaper(s) these were from they may have been valuable.¹²²

The correspondent Anthony Fitzgerald, N.T. (Clonbulloge N.S., Co. Kildare), when replying to *The Smith* questionnaire, offered to lend the IFC a local account book (ledger) of a former blacksmith. The Secretary wrote back stating they would 'take the utmost care of it whilst it is in our hands and shall return it to you be registered post.'¹²³ At the end of June 1941 Ó Duilearga wrote to Fitzgerald saying that the NMI were interested in the ledger and that

¹¹⁷ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (25 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁸ Ó Súilleabháin to Bro. Healy (12 December 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Ornamental Tomb-Slabs Questionnaire*.

¹¹⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr O'Riain (16 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

¹²⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr McPolin (21 April 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

¹²¹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Danaher (23 August 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Great Famine Questionnaire*.

¹²² The titles of the newspapers are not included in the source mentioned above.

¹²³ Secretary to a chara (7 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Th Smith Questionnaire*.

a museum inspector was coming to the IFC to look at it.¹²⁴ Another object that was sent in by correspondents was the sample crosses for the *St. Bridget's* questionnaire. Peadar Mac Giolla Choinnigh's (Sunach Beag, Cluain, Co. Leitrim) cross was so beautiful that when:

Dr. F. S. Bourke, Fitzwilliam Square, called into our offices on Friday afternoon, and liked your large rush cross so much that he wanted to have it for himself. We could not, however, part with it, as it now belongs to our official collection- as a matter of fact, it is one of the finest specimens which we have received, splendid both in design and execution. Dr. Bourke asked me to write to you to know if you would be kind enough to get a similar cross for him.¹²⁵

Correspondents also periodically sent in pictures of folk objects that had to do with the questionnaires. The IFC was thankful to Mr and Mrs. McHugh who sent 'snaps' of local stone-heaps.¹²⁶ Most of the correspondents did not own a camera because of the expense; however, the correspondent who did, covered the cost of the film and the development to send the pictures to the IFC.

Sometimes the correspondents sent in extra folklore collected that was not related to the questionnaire topic. The IFC enjoyed getting this surprise information.¹²⁷ The extra information was typically folktales, prayers, and/or rhymes. Tomás P. Mac Garaedh (Ráth Eoghain, Co. Westmeath) sent in 'snatches of old local songs' with his *Old-time Dress* reply.¹²⁸

Husband and wife correspondents like Delia and Patrick McHugh were not the only 'correspondent teams' or co-writers in this period. Some schoolteacher correspondents' wrote replies together. If one school had more than one teacher interested in collecting questionnaire information, the replies were sometimes written in different handwriting. In this case a 'head

¹²⁴ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (25 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹²⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to Peadar (3 March 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, St. Bridget Questionnaire*.

¹²⁶ Ó Súilleabháin to a cháirde (30 March 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

¹²⁷ Ó Duilearga to Tomás P. Mac Garaedh (23 October 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*. This is the way in which Tomás chose to spell his own surname.

¹²⁸ Ó Duilearga to Tomás P. Mac Gareadh (23 October 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

correspondent' usually wrote and signed the single reply letter. It is under this person's name that the information is typically catalogued. The IFC had no problem with people sending in information together as long as the material was authentic. The more individuals who engaged within the system the better the system functioned.

Most of the praise for the collecting was sent to the correspondents via the IFC; nonetheless, sometimes the correspondents sent appreciative letters to the IFC for all their work. Mr R Hylaund¹²⁹ (Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford) wrote back to the head office in May 1940:

It is a pleasure to get such a nice letter in recognition of the little I was able to do for your praiseworthy work in connection with collection of Folklore and I thank you much. To us- teachers and you know something of it- now a days there is never a spark of recognition from official quarters no matter how hard we may work- on the contrary it is all mind this, watch that, be careful and so on. Your letter was to me like a breath of fresh air to the Black Hole of Calcutta.¹³⁰

The Smith questionnaire correspondent Eibhlín Ní Cholgáin, ex-N.T. felt similarly, writing, 'I shall be only too pleased to co-operate in the noble and patriotic work on the Commission.'¹³¹ These statements were in stark contrast to how teachers felt when they were first asked to collect folklore in 1934 by the Department of Education. It demonstrates that being appreciated for their work made all the difference. Ó Súilleabháin, as a former teacher, was also better able to relate to their position on the matter. The relationship between the Department of Education and the teachers during the 1930s and the 1940s was precarious. Teachers and the INTO were concerned that the government's Irish language education policies were damaging students' abilities to learn. Furthermore, disagreements over wages raged throughout this period. The examples given above demonstrate that the teaching correspondents appreciated praise for their work coming from the IFC, as a government funded body.

¹²⁹ This is the way in which this man chose to spell his own surname.

¹³⁰ Mr R. Hylaund to a chara dhílis (3 May 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹³¹ Eibhlín Ní Cholgáin to a cháirdhe (10 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

Furthermore, the rural dwelling correspondents were living in the more conservative areas of Ireland. Many would have believed in the writing of Daniel Corkery and the Irish Ireland movement. A 'heightened sense of Irish identity' accompanied and was nurtured by Fianna Fáil control of the government between 1932 and 1948.¹³² They were happy the government cultivated national distinctiveness through projects like folklore collecting.¹³³ They were living in a society, in which, according to Brown, 'An almost Stalinist antagonism to modernism, to surrealism, free verse, symbolism, and the modern cinema was combined with prudery and a deep reverence for the Irish past.'¹³⁴ Irish society was still upholding Victorian virtues in the 1930s and 1940s because they coincided with Irish Catholic teachings and the respectable standards set down by the new middle class.¹³⁵ Volunteering as a questionnaire correspondent was to them an act of civil importance, because it promoted Irish culture and turned away from the evils of cosmopolitanism.

Nonetheless, in Ireland a huge shift occurred in the views of rural dweller from the late-1920s (when the FIS was founded) to the time the questionnaire system was operating at its best (1939). There was 'a widespread rejection of the conditions of rural life similar to that which had characterized most Western European countries since the end of the nineteenth-century.'¹³⁶ The small farmers became demoralized when modern communication opened their eyes to the wealth of the outside world and the wealth of those who returned from the US and England with money. Catholic social teaching and the government warned against modern greed and envy. However, the individuals issuing the warnings were the more comfortable members of Irish society. A new level of hypocrisy classified this era. Individuals who decried the horrors of Ireland losing its traditional ways still attended the American films every weekend in Dublin. In the 1940s many of the questionnaire correspondents may have felt these social changes.

¹³² Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 359.

¹³³ Brown, *Ireland*, p. 113.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹³⁵ Valiulis, 'Power, Gender, and Identity in the Irish Free State', pp. 117-136.

¹³⁶ Brown, *Ireland*, p. 141.

In the 1930s the prevailing view amongst many politicians was that Ireland needed to maintain a strong central government. A patriarchal outlook existed from the top down and even though many government ministers had grown up in financially less well off homes, by the 1930s their political power put them in the new Irish middle class. As a result the government repeated the ‘we know best’ rhetoric even more to the lower income Irish.¹³⁷ The majority in this less well off group did not question this; however, in return for this type of dynamic the people expected benefits from the government. This took the form of small farmland redistribution, improved rural housing, and assistance with unemployment and the elderly. Although some of these developments were initially viewed with suspicion by the older generation, the Irish warmed in time.¹³⁸

The IFC head office staff also belonged to the new Irish middle class. They were not civil servants but the government paid their salaries. Therefore, it is not surprising that some correspondents developed a relationship with the IFC where they admired the staff as more ‘respectable’ and ‘intelligent’ than themselves. The correspondents sought the IFC’s help with various personal problems and difficulties. Unlike other government employees, the IFC staff were not seen by the rural dwellers as, ‘championing a bureaucracy devoid of empathy with the culture and conditions of rural life.’¹³⁹ Ó Súilleabháin in particular was a charitable person and he was the staff member who made inquiries for questionnaire correspondents with problems and replied to their letters.

This matter of correspondents and/or informants requesting help was not unique to the IFC. At the MIFC (1950) Mr Alan Lomax the famous American folk music collector and radio broadcaster noted this about helping his folk music informants:

The other side of the folklorist’s job, which is to tell the folk, or to help the folk to tell themselves, things that they need to know and that they can’t find out through ordinary channels of communication. The department of health has been for the last five years carrying on a program, a campaign for blood tests for venereal disease. You can imagine the number and kinds of prejudices there are against getting blood tests and even opening up this subject in our puritan country, and

¹³⁷ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 266.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

The Correspondents

radio has been the medium for reaching the carriers of syphilis. They invited me to write one show for them. It was written by Roy Acuff...the champion of all the hillbilly singers. I went to see him. And we had a long talk about it. He told me how he felt about syphilis and in the process told me how his whole southern rural folk audience felt about the subject. So it was very easy for me to go back and write a little story using Roy's principal hillbilly songs and when this program was broadcast, the people came into those southern syphilis centres by the hundreds. They were saying everything from, "Roy said it was all right, so I guess we should come in," or—this program was called "Looking for Lester"; Roy was supposed to looking for a friend who was lost with the disease germ and was going to die—they would come and say, "Wonder what's happened to poor old Lester," and offer their arm for a blood test.¹⁴⁰

Lomax continued to talk about this subject for several more paragraphs, but summed up his spoken points at the end by saying he felt as someone who interacting with 'the folk' it was his duty to provide them with information and help in a way that was accessible to them. What he referred to as 'using folklore for the benefit of the people'.¹⁴¹ Lomax's language (bearing in mind this source was a word-for-word transcription of symposiums) was more patronizing than Ó Súilleabháin's when discussing these matters. Nonetheless, the moral obligation to help the less fortunate was an element in other folklore collecting projects.

Life for the correspondents in the countryside was not easy but as has already been discussed, most of them were employed in some way. However, unemployment amongst adolescent males was particularly high in the 1940s. The government offered little solution to this problem. Many individuals inquired about jobs through their local politicians; however, desperate to find work for themselves or their children men who did not find help with them often turned to charities for help.¹⁴² While using connections correspondents like Mrs. E. Foley, N.T. (Laune Mount, Killoughan Co. Kerry) wrote to the IFC in April 1940 looking for a job in Dublin for her son. In this case her son was qualified with an Honours BA from UCC (1938) but had been unemployed since leaving university. Her daughter, who had a "B.Comm. with Honours Higher dip. in Ed," was forced to go to England and work as a nurse because of the lack of employment opportunities in Ireland. She did not

¹⁴⁰ Thompson, *Four Symposia on Folklore*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹⁴² Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, pp. 396-397.

want to see the same situation happen to her son.¹⁴³ Many correspondents viewed the IFC staff with respect but at the same time they had a personal connection with them that made the line of communication more comfortable than writing to others for help, like a nameless politician. Furthermore, the head office being located in Dublin meant that correspondents believed more jobs were available in the big city. The IFC always wrote a letter back and tried to assist the employment seeker. In the case of this boy, he was well educated and this may have made the task easier; however, many of the others who inquired about such matters had no qualifications.

The faithful correspondent Philip Ledwith (Ballycloghan, Ardagh, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford) wrote a long, detailed, letter to Ó Súilleabháin in October 1942 about his troubles. He had been unfairly passed over for promotion and was hoping that the IFC might help him find a job in Dublin.¹⁴⁴ Since Ledwith had spent time answering numerous questionnaires Ó Súilleabháin's reply was also long and detailed. It is worth noting in full because it explains his position of helping correspondents find jobs:

I should like much to help you in securing a post in Dublin, and will keep your letter in mind. The trouble is that I am a stranger in Dublin myself, am comparatively young, and have no influence whatever with business firms here. Most of the people I know are in the educational line, and even with them my influence would not be strong. Please do not think that I am merely making excuses. I am telling you exactly how I am situated. Several people like yourself have written to me from time to time asking me to use influence on their behalf in some connection. Whenever I can do so, I do it gladly, but in most cases I am powerless to assist them.¹⁴⁵

In December 1943 the correspondent Francis Kennedy (Ardaghey, Inver, Lifford) wrote that he was finished corresponding with the IFC because his daughter was applying for the position of sub-postmaster in Inver and this was going occupy his time. He does not make clear what role he was to have in his daughter's employment but asked the IFC to say a kind word to the 'higher officials of the Ministry of Posts and Telegraphs' about her application.¹⁴⁶ The IFC reply letter stated that they were sad he was leaving

¹⁴³ E. Foley to Sirs (25 April 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁴⁴ Philip Ledwith to Sir (12 October 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Philip Ledwith*.

¹⁴⁵ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Ledwith (15 October 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Philip Ledwith*.

¹⁴⁶ J. K. to Sirs (13 December 1943), *NFC Correspondence Files, Francis Kennedy*.

the correspondents pool but that they would inquire at the ministry for his daughter.¹⁴⁷

Correspondents also wrote letters seeking assistance with other matters not related to employment. One such problem was chronicled in Bríd Mahon's autobiography.¹⁴⁸ Mahon began working for the IFC as a secretary in 1939 and recalled that sometime in the 1930s or 1940s a young girl wrote to the IFC for help. Her aunt was a questionnaire correspondent and this is where the connection originated. The young girl had been set up to marry a man who was older than her father. This arrangement was made because her older brother had got married and her sister-in-law was expected to move into the house.¹⁴⁹

From the IFC historian's perspective what is interesting is that this young girl felt that writing to the IFC staff might improve her prospects of not having to marry. Mahon does not go into any detail about why the girl thought the IFC staff members would be able to help her, but it raises the question of the correspondents believing that the staff members' 'higher place in society' might assist them in difficult situation like this.

Cáit Ní Bholguidhir wrote to the IFC in September 1943 requesting assistance in getting her teaching position extended by the Minister for Education. She turned sixty in June 1942 but wanted to continue teaching and informed the IFC that she was in good health. This would have been her third extension granted. She notes, 'I appealed to your Commission to speak to the Minister for Education on my behalf, and with your kind assistance I got the extension to the 31-12-1942.' In this four-page letter she detailed her need to keep working because so many family members were sick and dependent on her income.¹⁵⁰ She cited multiple cases of tuberculosis in her family. This disease in particular wreaked havoc on rural dwellers with poor housing conditions.¹⁵¹ A IFC reply to her letter is not in her NFC correspondence

¹⁴⁷ Unsigned to Mr Kennedy (16 December 1943), *NFC Correspondence Files, Francis Kennedy*.

¹⁴⁸ Mahon, *While Green Grass Grows*, pp. 28-29

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁵⁰ Cáit Ní Bholguidhir to a chara (3 September 1943), *NFC Correspondence Files, Kate Bolger*.

¹⁵¹ Greta Jones, *Captain of All These Men of Death: the history of tuberculosis in nineteenth and twentieth-century Ireland* (New York: Rodopi, 2001).

folder; however, what is interesting is that her appeal in the past for assistance from the IFC was fruitful.

Some correspondents, knowing that the IFC head office was located at a university, wrote asking about courses and possible admission for their children. Sergeant Johnson (Gárda Siochána, Blacksod, Belmullet, Co. Mayo) wrote to Ó Duilearga in October 1944 asking about courses for his son, who wished to study Agricultural Science.¹⁵² Philip Ledwith wrote a similar letter when his son was contemplating studying at UCD¹⁵³ and the IFC replied in multiple letters with all the information the young man could have needed about dentistry, medicine, and chemistry.

Lewis P. Mullooly, N.T. (Ardagh, Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford) appealed to the IFC when he and his wife got into a disagreement with their landlord and were threatened with eviction. Ó Súilleabháin was sorry to hear of their situation and wanted to help, but he pointed out that the landlord, ‘would probably resent the intervention of a complete stranger like [himself] in his private affairs’ but offered, ‘if you could give me Mr McGeeney’s [the landlord] address and some details as to who are his friends or acquaintances in Dublin, it may lead to something, but at the moment I cannot see any light in the matter.’¹⁵⁴

Another land matter the IFC weighed in on concerned correspondent and part-time collector Patrick Barret. In an undated application of support Ó Duilearga noted that Barrett had been collecting for the IFC since 1937 and he was a hard working person from a respectable family. He supported Barret’s ‘application... for additional land,’ that was adjacent to his existing small farm.¹⁵⁵

Correspondents who wrote to the IFC about property and land matters were searching for government support or intervention. It is strange to think these correspondents equated a folklore collecting commission with these matters, but the government in general was involved in rural property

¹⁵² Ó Duilearga to Sergeant Johnson (2 October 1944), *NFC Correspondence Files, Questionnaire Misc. Letters*.

¹⁵³ Philip Ledwith to Sir (3 September 1945) and (10 September 1945) and (9 October 1945) *NFC Correspondence Files, Philip Ledwith*

¹⁵⁴ Ó Súilleabháin to Mr Mullooly (27 March 1945), *NFC Correspondence Files, Questionnaires Misc. Letters*.

¹⁵⁵ *NFC Correspondence Files, Patrick Barrett*.

development in this period. Contacts in Dublin may have helped applications for housing along.

Some assistance on matters other than employment were of a more light-hearted nature. When Máire Bean Uí Thuathail, O.S. (An Grianán, Cluain Cearban, Co. Mayo) sent her reply to the *Cures* questionnaire she asked for someone at the IFC to inquire at Ging's Theatrical Stores, Dublin about a costume she needed for the school's bazaar. Ó Súilleabháin gladly helped but it turned out they did not rent the type of costume she was looking for¹⁵⁶

It is important to note that some correspondents may have answered the questionnaires because they believed connection with the IFC might better their position in life. This is certainly one way these requests could be viewed. However, it is being argued here that this was not the case for the majority. Some documents in the NFC suggest that some part-time collectors may have been trying to use the IFC for a small income or to move up the social ladder. Nonetheless, all the examples given above were active questionnaire correspondents, who replied to nearly all the questionnaires issued in this period. Their replies were detailed and well constructed. The amount of effort they put into each reply demonstrates that they were questionnaire correspondents because they enjoyed folklore collecting first and foremost. Through the multiple questionnaires they answered they got to know Ó Súilleabháin better and may have felt that he would not be offended by them asking for help considering the amount of help they had given the IFC. The tone and word choice of the letters going in both directions does not suggest that in these cases the correspondents were looking to use the IFC to their own advantage. In asking for Ó Súilleabháin for help they were in many ways asking a pen pal friend.

The correspondents also wrote to the IFC about many of the general problems in their lives. Questionnaire material was sometimes delayed because of illness, death, or some other unpleasant situation in their area.

¹⁵⁶ Ó Súilleabháin to a chara (7 December 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Cures Questionnaire*.

European countries and the United States made significant breakthroughs, before the outbreak of WWII, in regards to advances to fight major diseases. The Irish government made some improvements to health care before the Emergency with the National Health Insurance Acts (1933 and 1941) funded through the hospitals sweepstakes. Hospitals still favoured paying patients; however, the situation system was much better than the workhouse system.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, disease and death were still prevalent amongst rural communities. Poor home sanitation, lack of education about causes of illness, and depression from unemployment impacted the correspondents and informants. In May 1940 Michael Ó Beirn (Cor a' tSilín, Corroch, An Bábhún Buí, Co. Cavan) returned his *Old-time Dress* questionnaire with a note that stated his school had an 'epidemic of whooping cough' and was closed for a month.¹⁵⁸ Mrs. Doyle's reply was delayed because her junior-assistant at the National School died and it was particularly hard on her.¹⁵⁹ Peadar Mac Giolla Choinnigh, O.S. also wrote to the IFC to explain that his reply to *The Smith* questionnaire was late because of his father's death. The IFC replied with a sympathy letter.¹⁶⁰ Joseph O'Kane's *Cór Shúgáin* reply was delayed at the death of his mother-in-law.¹⁶¹ In the reply letter to her delayed *Basket-making* questionnaire material Mrs. B. M. Shine told the IFC that her son and her brother-in-law had died a few weeks before.¹⁶² Ó Súilleabháin's reply follows and reflects a devout man:

It was kind of you to send us the letter, which we received last Friday. We were shocked to hear of the sudden death of your little boy, which occurred a few weeks ago. It must have been a severe blow, especially at that age when he was practically reared, but God has his own way for doing things, and perhaps it was all for the best. It is naturally hard to bear, but God in His goodness usually strengthens people to carry such cares. The death of your brother-in-law coming so soon after the passing of your little boy must have made the blow doubly hard to bear. May God have mercy on him.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, pp. 399-400.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Ó Beirn to a chara (31 May 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁵⁹ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Doyle (18 November 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁶⁰ Ó Súilleabháin to Peadar Mac Giolla Choinnigh (undated), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹⁶¹ J. O'Kane to Sir (5 December 1937), *NFC Correspondence Files, Cór Shúgáin Questionnaire*.

¹⁶² B. M. Shine to Gentlemen (25 February 1942), NFC 1143:93-94.

¹⁶³ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Shine (3 March 1942), *NFC Correspondence Files, Basket-making Questionnaire*.

Not all the obstacles to collecting were so dramatic. James Crosbie wrote in February 1939 that his *Stone Heaps* reply had been delayed because of the ‘bad weather’.¹⁶⁴ Pádraig Ó Lochlainn (Rush Hall, Mountrath, Co. Laois) wrote in June 1941 that his reply to *The Smith* questionnaire would be late due to the parish’s upcoming confirmations and the general inspection by the Head Inspector.¹⁶⁵

The War

The Emergency in Ireland impacted on the correspondents and the head office staff, although in different ways. It was a common topic that the two parties discussed in their correspondence. The correspondents who lived in more remote areas felt the effects of the Emergency less than the Dublin dwelling staff. According to Brown:

The truth is probably more simple- for the majority of Irishmen and women the years of the war represented scarcely more of an experience of cultural isolation and deprivation than had any of the years preceding them.¹⁶⁶

Ó Duilearga recorded a good example of how the ordinary Irishman was not interested in the events that were transpiring outside of Ireland in his diary (6th June 1944):

A most beautiful morning in Killarney. Before breakfast I went off to get the morning paper and then I learned to my amazement of the start of the Second Front- the invasion of Normandy. But the people of Killarney did not appear to understand what is happening. After breakfast I cycled to Beaufort where, as I was pushing my bike up the hill, a big man came along and asked me if I had seen any dogs after deer. When I mentioned the war- new to him he was quite indifferent- what worried him were his dogs.¹⁶⁷

Correspondents and informants who lived in poorer areas before the war the shortages were not as noticeable. As Diarmaid Ferriter points out, ‘survival and subsistence remained the goal for “the majority” of Irish people

¹⁶⁴ James Crosbie to a chara (28 February 1939), *NFC Correspondence Files, Stone-Heaps Questionnaire*.

¹⁶⁵ Pádraig Ó Lochlainn to a chara (3 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹⁶⁶ Brown, *Ireland*, p. 135.

¹⁶⁷ NFC, Delargy Papers, Ó Duilearga diary 1944, (entry 6 June).

as it had in the previous decades.’¹⁶⁸ Few people in the Gaeltacht owned cars, burned coal, and bought regular quantities of luxuries like sugar.

In contrast the IFC were in the thick of the Irish Emergency experience. The threat of Dublin being bombed was high. Moreover, many American and English servicemen visited Dublin on leave from Northern Ireland and through this contact the IFC staff learned about what was actually happening in Europe, rather than in censored newspaper reports.

Many correspondents upon being invited to Dublin returned the favour and invited the IFC staff to visit them at their homes. In the earlier years of the Emergency Ó Duilearga discussed taking up some of these offers of hospitality.¹⁶⁹ However, as Ó Duilearga explained to Seán Mac an Adhastair, O.S. (Manulla, Castlebar, Co. Mayo) in 1941 ‘I wish the petrol arrangements were such that I could arrange to visit your district soon, but the times being what they are, many a plan of this kind must be postponed.’¹⁷⁰ Mac an Adhastair was not the only person to ask Ó Duilearga pay a visit¹⁷¹ and this also demonstrates the high respect that correspondents had for the Director and how much they wanted to highlight the traditions in their area.

The war certainly influenced some of the answers that correspondents gave to questionnaire material. The reply of Mary Harrington (Scoil Chill Mhic Eoghain, Eyeries & Beara, Co. Cork) to the *Basket-making* questionnaire originally noted that baskets had not been made in the district for some time, but an additional letter noted:

This is the 3rd year of war, and since I began to write up this account, basket-making has again come into its own for, owing to the scarcity of boxes, of wood for making of troughs, of canvas bags for holidays or storing things in, & of message bags, the basket is again an essential article in the kitchen as well as in the farmyard- within the last six months. I have seen home made (made from twigs grown in the “garden of rods” which every farmer owned years ago) baskets of all kinds- hand baskets, ciseáns, punthers, & the sgiathógh.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland, 1920-2000*, p. 360.

¹⁶⁹ Ó Duilearga to Proinsias Ó Sandair (1 July 1940), *NFC Correspondence Files, Old-time Dress Questionnaire*.

¹⁷⁰ Ó Duilearga to a chara (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹⁷¹ Ó Duilearga to a chara [Patrick J. Haran, N.T.] (26 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, The Smith Questionnaire*.

¹⁷² M. H. to Seán (9 December 1943), NFC 1143:108-109.

Many of the Northern Ireland correspondents were, for obvious reasons, more impacted by the conflict. Ó Súilleabháin wrote to Jeanne Cooper-Foster in May 1941 asking if her friends and family were harmed during the bombings in Belfast. He noted, ‘we have often thought of yourself and our other northern correspondents during the recent months, and hoped that you had come safely through. The worst is over now, with God’s help.’¹⁷³ She eventually did write back and informed Ó Súilleabháin that she had not been hurt. The reply to that letter noted:

It was kind of you to reply to our queries at such a time. As a matter of fact our northern correspondents (new and old) are responding well. Your reply was interesting and detailed. The blacksmith craft was generally hereditary as far as one can judge from the replies concerned.¹⁷⁴

While those who sent and received questionnaires may have been negatively impacted by the Emergency, the questionnaire system as a collecting tool was positively affected. Since the mobility of the full-time collectors was curtailed during this period, the questionnaire correspondents made up for the lack of lore coming in from this paid outlet.

In conclusion, the communications between the IFC and their correspondents provides insights into how the questionnaire system functioned day to day. This is important to the history of the IFC in the 1936 to 1945 period because the majority of individuals who interacted with the Commission did so through the questionnaire system. The system was just as important to the IFC as their other promotion work in the media and at academic events. For many correspondents the system was one of the few ways that they interacted with larger, urban-based government institutions. The correspondents believed in many of the Irish language, cultural superiority, and self-sufficiency ideals that the Fianna Fáil ministers promoted at the time. By collecting folklore they were helping to contribute to the ideal national image. As teachers, post office workers, clergy, and members of the armed sources the correspondents were ideally suited for

¹⁷³ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Cooper-Foster (May 1941), *NFC, Comfhreagras Jeanne Cooper-Foster*.

¹⁷⁴ Ó Súilleabháin to Mrs. Cooper-Foster (25 June 1941), *NFC Correspondence Files, Jeanne Cooper-Foster*.

The Correspondents

collecting by means of questionnaire. All of the afore mentioned situations meant that the correspondents lived in rural areas but were educated enough to effectively record and send in information to a head office. Through the questionnaire system many women were allowed to collect folklore and send in replies that the full-time employed opportunities did not allow because of their gender. The IFC's goal was to get as many correspondents as possible and they were willing to compromise their personal opinions on gender and occupation to get this accomplished. Through this goal of collecting as much as possible the IFC unintentionally broke down barriers that made the rest of the IFC's collection imbalanced in relation to gender. The most unique element of the system was the personal relationships that many of the correspondents developed with IFC head office staff. It was one of the key elements in making the system successful from the perspective of having one correspondent reply to many different questionnaires. The correspondents had enormous respect for the IFC's work and the IFC in turn were grateful for each questionnaire reply. Life in rural Ireland was not easy during this period, as has been exemplified with a number of correspondents' letters, but for many of those involved in the system it was not all that different from what it had been like ten years previously. In the post-Emergency era rural dwellers, through improved mass communication, were much more aware of just how disadvantaged their situations were. This dramatically altered the potential for folklife collecting by means of questionnaire. Many of the correspondents who sought help from the IFC did so because they felt the relationship was similar to a friendship and did not necessary expect help in return for answering questionnaires. As Irish society moved into the second half of the 1940s this relationship and expectation may have changed. The system would not have functioned at all if it were not for the dedicated effort of hundreds of questionnaire correspondents from this period.

The Correspondents

Conclusion

This thesis has examined the rationale behind a particular system for gathering information on Irish folklife, and the evolution of that system. The findings facilitate a further analysis of Ireland in this period by consulting previously underused documentation in the NFC. This documentation was utilised to provide a further analysis of Irish identity during this period, the relationship between the Dublin middle class, running the Government and conducting research at the Dublin universities and the rural population, and Irish intellectual life between 1936 and 1945.

Those who participated in the Gaelic Revival were concerned about the negative image of Ireland presented in publications by British and Anglo-Irish politicians, writers and academics in the past. This image did not match the way the Irish felt about their own identity. With the formation of an independent Irish state the Dublin based politicians, who made up the majority of the Government, had the opportunity to promote an Irish identity they felt was more reflective of reality. The IFC promoted a sense of identity that extended beyond its first year of 1935. In reality the questionnaire system was a much more practical way of recording and fostering a clearer, more accurate, Irish identity since it was conducted on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire correspondence files are a unique collection of letters and greatly enhance the understanding of this period in question not in one individual's home place but in a random and varied scattering of villages and towns all over the island of Ireland. The correspondents wrote to the IFC staff in a similar style to that of a pen pal. They were not necessarily aware of the fact that their correspondence would later be analysed by scholars. This allows for considerable insights into their ideas of general Irish identity and what their own Irish identity meant to them. This identity was shared by Ó Súilleabháin who grew up in similar circumstances to those of the correspondents.

It was Ó Súilleabháin's approachable personality that made the system so successful. The questionnaire correspondence is a wonderful

Conclusion

source of material and also provides great insight in the relationship between a Dublin based Government funded Commission employee(s) and a substantial number of people in rural Ireland. Some correspondents asked favours of the IFC but in the cases of the surviving, saved, letters they were from very active correspondents. The individuals who sought help were also exceptions to the rule and the majority of the correspondents interacted with the IFC because it excited them to answer questionnaires. They felt comfortable engaging with the IFC and must have felt they were contributing to the newly independent Irish state's cultural identity.

Irish intellectual circles changed constantly throughout the 1930s and 1940s. As demonstrated throughout the thesis the IFC head staff and the office on St. Stephen's Green were constantly engaging with these Irish circles and before the Emergency with intellectual circles abroad. Through the Type A questionnaires the IFC was able to offer a folklore research tool to researchers who were not necessarily folklorists. In doing so they helped to expand the previously more rigidly defined academic disciplines in Ireland. Historians, archaeologists, and even medical doctors and botanists, requested questionnaires on various folk culture subjects and found the reply material scientifically legitimate and useful in their own research. Their interest in the IFC and the publications that resulted from questionnaire inquests, only served to further promote Irish scholarly research domestically and abroad. Ireland had become a global hub for academic research into Irish subjects. The IFC head office staff played a significant role in that. As has been detailed the questionnaire system was one of their most important methods to quickly and accurately answer a scholar's query on a folk culture subject.

The modern historian can benefit from knowledge of the scholars and researchers who interacted with the IFC through the questionnaire system. It gives great insights into the extent of Irish intellectual networks and where and how they overlapped with those formed in other nations. In particular the relationship between Ireland and Sweden has been discussed extensively by modern folklore researchers but is underrepresented in the trans-national history of Ireland. The questionnaire system is but one element in the Swedish-Irish folklore network.

Conclusion

The findings of this thesis have implications for IFC scholarship. Henceforth when discussing the IFC history between 1935 and 1945 more emphasis needs to be placed on the questionnaire system, which was time consuming but produced fantastic results. The relationship with the Irish government, the Gaelic League, the FIS committee, and the media are important elements of the IFC's history; however, the majority of the day-to-day IFC's office hours were spent working on this system. The system became less effective after 1945 as the number of individuals responding dwindled but for the first nearly ten years of the IFC existence the questionnaire system was extremely important. This time period also coincided with the first ten years of Ó Súilleabháin and Mac Neill's employment at the IFC as folklorists. They both went on from working on this system to become influential scholars. The ten years that they spent on the questionnaire system must have had an influence on their views of folklore studies.

Furthermore it is important for folklorists utilizing this questionnaire material to discuss traditional folk culture to understand why individual questionnaires were issued on particular topics. This background information shaped the wording of the questions and the way in which correspondents answered them. Some of the overarching themes of the IFC were tied to an appreciation of the Irish language and a strong cultural nationalist philosophy but to focus only on those issues is unhelpful. Scholars who requested a questionnaire had their own theory or agenda to prove.

The IFC mission with the questionnaire system in general, inclusive of Type A and Type B questionnaires, was to create as large and regionally representative folklore archive as possible. The material had to be rich in folk culture and contribute to the IFC head office staffs understanding of traditional customs. When taking into consideration the value of particularly Type B questionnaire reply material to the modern historian timing was everything. Many of customs collected on by means of questionnaire were on the verge of disappearing with the modernization and globalisation of rural Ireland. The IFC's timing was a real last minute effort. Some of the traditions had been recorded before in other published antiquarian works, but the

Conclusion

questionnaire correspondence demonstrates that the IFC head office staff were constantly surprised by replies detailing traditions they had never heard of from places they had never collecting folk culture material in. This information is valuable because it provides insights into rural dwellers' lives that otherwise would have gone undocumented.

Irish researchers did not utilize much of the 1936 to 1945 Type B material because most of it was collected during the Emergency. Publication did not stop completely during this period but it was certainly hindered. Moreover, the IFC thought it would be utilized this material later for a folk atlas and/or folk-museum. Nonetheless, the questionnaire replies are a rich source of material for the modern historian. The calendar custom questionnaires provide insights into how the cycles of festivals were practiced in different regions of Ireland. When considering larger historical events the time of year for certain festivals should be referenced. The reason the reply material for the calendar customs was so rich was because the festivals were central points in Irish persons lives and involved many elements to be celebrated properly. Questionnaire material, like that of the *Blacksmith* questionnaire, provides further insights into the change in Irish rural social composition. Changes in urban and middleclass living are often well documented in historical works but such modernizations were slower to come to rural Ireland and this is why there is value in material collected on subjects having to do with traditional craftsmen. While the changes happened slower understanding the role of different crafts people in local communities is valuable.

The Schools' Collection Scheme 1937-1938 material is an excellent source for those researching children's history but so is much of the questionnaire material. Topics that centred on children and youth include *bataí scóir*, *Hurly Burly*, *Childhood Bogey*, *Halloween*, and *Midsummer-St. John's*. Much valuable material is available there. Additionally children wrote many of these replies. This is a rare opportunity for research into first hand documents from this under documented section of society.

Conclusion

Ó Danachair was successful initially at raising the number of correspondents but, as a result of a number of factors beyond his control, it never regained its early significance. Ó Súilleabháin informed the delegates at the MIFC (1950) that 45 questionnaires had been issued by the IFC to date. The subjects chosen for issuing in the remaining years of the 1940s and the 1950s were similar to the period in question here. All the major Irish calendar customs had a questionnaire used by 1947 with the issuing of *Michaelmas* (September 1946), *St. Stephen's Day* (December 1946), and *May Day* (April 1947). Historical subjects which questionnaires were issued on included *the Danes & the Vikings* (1949) and *Spanish Armada* (April 1951). Folklife subjects remained central to the mission of the system and some of the examples included *the Slaughter of Animals* (March 1951), *Corn* (1955), and *Milk* (1956). Ó Danachair's imprint of the system can also be seen in the issuing of questionnaires on *Building Materials and Outshot* (May 1946) and *The Dwelling House* (1951). The questionnaire system continued to be employed as a collecting method by the IFC up until its disbandment on 31 March 1970. The NFC continues to issue questionnaires today, mainly through the FIS members. Recent questionnaire topics include Oliver Cromwell, the Schools' Collection Scheme, and the 1916 Rising. In the digital age it will be interesting to see if the questionnaire system continues on through an online platform.

Appendix

Year	Date	English title	Irish title	NFC volume(s)	TYPE
1934	Apr.	Holy Wells		466-468, 493, 1136, 1305, 1823	n/a
1936	12th Mar.	Bataí Scóir I		495:145-238	A
1936	Nov.	Bible schools	<i>Scoileanna Bíobla</i>	495:239-311	A
1936	Dec.	Currachs		495:312-346	C
1937	10 th Jun.	The Folklore of Pre-historic Monuments		496:1-170	A
1937	27 th Nov.	(No English title)	<i>Cór Shúgáin</i>	495:3-144	A
1937	Dec.	Concerning Death		548-555	A
1938	28 th Feb.	Stone Axes, Flintheads and Buried Animals		496:171-247	A
1938	9 th May	Lakes and River Monsters		593:93-141, 1379:130-49	A
1938	5 th Jul.	Devil's son as priest (story of Nera)		593:1-92	A
1938	30 th Aug.	Bataí Scóir II		657:51-143	A
1938	10 th Dec.	Stone Heaps		651:1-614, 652-653, 767, 1379:93-101	B
1939	Feb.	Lineages associated with Animals, Fish, Birds, and Seals		1142:15-21, 1306:193-236	A
1939	Apr.	Maiden-hair fern tea		657:1-13	A
1939	10 th Jun.	I am a cake from Ballybake'	(No Irish title)	657:15-50, 1306:187-190	C
1939	11 th Nov.	Martinmas		674-684, 766, 1135	B

Appendix

1940	Mar.	Old-time Dress		745-757, 1137:1-151	B
1940	7 th Sept.	The Last Sheaf		758-765, 776, 1136	B
1941	May	The Blacksmith	<i>(an) Gabha</i>	876-887, 1136, 1144	B
1941	1 st Apr.	Freehold Claimed on Land by Building a House on it Overnight		1143:226- 329	A
1941	27 th Jul.	(the) Cake Dance		1144: 1-105	A
1941	Nov.	Ornamental Tomb-Slabs		1144:106- 186	A
1942	Jan.	Basket-making		1143:92- 109	A
1942	Jan.	Bridget (St. Bridget's Feast day)		899-907, 1135	B
1942	Mar.	bog-butter		1305:201- 233	A
1942	Jun.	Man in the Moon		1144:228- 250	C
1942	14 th Jul.	Names of the Fingers		896-898, 1136,1144: 240	B
1942	14 th Jul.	(a) Children's Game, Hurly Burly, Trom Trom	<i>Lúrabóg, Lárabóg</i>	892-895, 1136, 2028, 2074	B
1942	Jul.	Garland Sunday		888- 891, 1143, 1565	B
1942	Jul.	(No English title)	<i>Snáth agus Éadach</i>	1143:330- 352	C
1942	20 th Jul.	(No English title)	<i>Bróg agus Barróg</i>	973:1-34	A
1942	Jul.	Propheying through a hole in bone or wood		1142:122- 134	C
1942	Nov.	Cures for colds, nose, throat ailments		1145:76- 269	A
1943	Jan.	The Childhood Bogey	<i>Chugat an Púca</i>	945-955, 1135	B
1943	Jan.	The Local Patron Saint	<i>Naomh Pátrúin</i>	945-948, 1135, 1305:56-57	B
1943	19 th Feb.	(No English title)	<i>Stáca tré Choirp= chun ná héireaochadh an</i>	1142:49- 121	A

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1943	Mar.	(no English title)	<i>Sacráil an Aifrinn</i>	1144:195-208	C
1943	Spring	March Beer	<i>Beoir Mháirta</i>	1142:135-148	C
1943	May	(no English title)	<i>Donn Fírinne nó Mac Míle</i>	1145:1-75	A
1943	Jun.	Midsummer- St. John's Feast		956-959, 1135	B
1943	Aug.	Reilig an tSléibhe		1144:209-227	A
1943	Oct.	Halloween		949-953, 1135, 1306, 1670	B
1943	Dec.	(the) Cock's crow at Christmas		1143:2-58	A
1943	Dec.	Musicians (traditional musicians)		1143	A
1944	Jan.	(no English title)		1142,1773	C
1944	May	(no English title)	<i>Manaigh agus bráithre</i>	1082-1083	B
1944	16 th Nov.	Use of Mouldy Substances in Healing Septic Wounds		1142: 149-324	A
1944	6 th Dec.	Christmas	<i>An Nodlaig</i>	1084-1087, 1135	B
1945	Mar.	The Great Famine of 1845-1852	<i>(an) Gorta</i>	1068-75, 1136	A
1945	Nov.	Roofing and Thatching	<i>Tuiodóreacht</i>	1079-1081, 1306, 1379	B

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