

The Boxy Paradox: Everything, Everywhere, All At Once

by

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The archive of information held by the Irish National Folklore Commission (IFC) is astonishing. The Schools Collection is particularly impressive, comprising written interviews conducted between the years 1935 and 1937 by pupils from over 5000 primary schools in the Irish Free State. Approximately 740,000 pages of information have been preserved, on a range of topics including folk tales, oral history, farming, daily life and food. Wanting to explore this vast resource for information about traditional Irish foods, I decided to limit my enquiries to a single dish and the dish I chose was Boxy.¹ My hope was to be able to elaborate on my bare-bones understanding of the dish and hopefully reveal some regional variations to the standard recipe. At the outset, my understanding of Boxy was that it is a traditional dish dating back to Irish Famine, a combination of both cooked and raw potatoes mixed with flour, and that this mixture can be cooked in three different ways, by baking, boiling and frying.

21st Century Boxy

Boxy has seen something of a resurgence in recent years as interest in Irish traditional foods has grown. The Farrelly family, based in Cavan, have been selling traditional Irish Boxy on a commercial scale² since 1983. Padraic Óg Gallagher has been chef patron of the iconic Gallagher's Boxy House in Temple Bar, Dublin, where Boxy features prominently on the menu, since 1988. Boxy can now regularly be found on the menus of gastro-pubs and in food-centric newspaper columns.

Padraic Óg Gallagher's Boxy House website asserts the Boxy dishes they serve there are the three types of Boxy found in the border counties of Leitrim, Cavan and Fermanagh, namely Boxy pancake, Boxy dumplings and Boxy bread. All three types of Boxy served at the Boxy House are made from the same basic mixture of grated raw potatoes, cooked mashed potatoes, and flour. From the Boxy recipes that abound on the internet, whilst this would appear to be the general consensus, modern recipes for Boxy don't seem to share much agreement in the details. Some will contain enrichment in the form of baking powder, green onions, oil, butter or eggs, and yet more will contain either cooked or raw potatoes and only occasionally both.

This degree of interpretation in the wider world begs the question: if Gallagher's Boxy House recipes are the ones favoured in those three specific counties, do other types/variations of Boxy exist elsewhere in Ireland?

The Schools Collection

It's a challenge to find reputable sources of Boxy facts and figures beyond anecdotes and personal online blogs. Even the current 'Boxy' page on Wikipedia is surprisingly scant on detail with almost no history and a tendency to vagueness that even the moderators acknowledge.³

Despite potato bread recipes dating back to the eighteenth century, the Oxford English Dictionary recognises 1829 as the earliest mention of Boxy in print, but sadly, early 19th century published accounts of Boxy are relatively few, which is why The Schools Collection is so important. Not only does it provide a snapshot in time from the 1930s, the accounts the schoolchildren recorded from

1 Boxy will be capitalised throughout this paper except in quotations.

2 Under the name Drumully Boxy.

3 On the Boxy:Talk page, contributor Afn acknowledges both the paucity of information and the difficulty in finding credible sources: "Unable to find sources for all info, other than my granny, but she doesn't count!"

elderly grandparents and neighbours stretch back to those peoples' childhoods in the mid-nineteenth century and their parents' memories from even earlier. To help give some structure to the project, the IFC issued a booklet⁴ of guidelines for teachers, standardising how the information should be recorded, including precise locations and ages of both pupils and the people from whom they sourced their facts. The importance of the project is stressed in the start of the booklet:

"The children should remember that very little is known about the traditions of their district and they should record everything which throws a light on these traditions. It does not matter for the carrying out of this scheme whether similar traditions have been written down already. Even if it is believed that certain people have recorded them before, the only safe standpoint for teachers and pupils is to proceed as if nothing had been recorded in the district, and to remember that if they do not record the material it will die and be forgotten as if it had never been." (Foreword)

The booklet contained a range of umbrella topics such as Festival Customs, Food in Olden Times and The Potato Crop, as well as prompt questions within each topic to help guide respondents.

In a project begun in 2012 and completed by 2016, the entirety of The Schools Project had been digitised, indexed and made available online to the public.⁵ By utilising the Search function of the website, it is possible to retrieve results on a whole range of topics.

Gathering information

Using the term 'Boxty' in the dúchas.ie search function returns thousands transcripts and stories.⁶ Some of the results returned were only a mention of the word Boxty, some consisted of a brief description, whilst occasionally, there were full and detailed descriptions of the ingredients, method and serving suggestions.

A complication to study was the surprisingly high number (over twenty were recorded, although there may be even more) of different spellings used for this dish: Boxty, Boxtie, Bacstai, Bacstaith, Bocksty, Bocsti, Boxtai, Bocstai, Boxdi, Bacstaith, Bogsti, Stampy, Stampi, Stampie, Steampai, Steaimpi, Scratch, Buck Bread/Buckbread, Rasp, Bock.

To break down this wealth of information into more manageable quantities, each result was read to determine the level of detail contained therein, and the text of those with details beyond just a mention of the word 'Boxty' were saved in files by county for more detailed study.

What's in a name?

Each type/description of Boxty was recorded in terms of ingredients and cooking method. It quickly became evident that the recipes recorded for Boxty differed not only from Province to Province, but also from county to county and sometimes even within the counties themselves.

4 A digitised copy of the booklet is available to download at: <https://www.duchas.ie/download/irish-folklore-and-tradition.pdf>.

5 Each page has been scanned and uploaded onto The Dúchas Project website (<https://www.duchas.ie>). The majority of pages have been transcribed by volunteers. It is important to acknowledge and respect the work of the many thousands of individuals that have contributed to this wealth of information. The preferred format for references is as follows: National Folklore Collection Schools' Manuscripts (henceforth NFCS), Manuscript number, page number, informant, age, occupation, address. Collector, date. Following discussions with the NFC, and for the sake of readability, permission has been granted to abbreviate references to: NFCS Manuscript number:Page number, with the reference being detailed in full in the bibliography.

6 'Transcripts returns mention of the search term, 'Stories' are those transcripts with the search term in the title.

Not only this, it also became clear that in various parts of the country broadly the same ingredients, method and cooking manner were being referred to under several different names:

*She also told me how to make **boxty-bread**. First, peel raw potatoes, and grate them. Then mix with flour, and a little soda and salt, until it comes to a paste. Then bake on the griddle or pan.*

Mamie McGrain, Co. Meath⁷

*The principal ingredient of **stampy** were potatoes. Those were grated into pulp with a grater. The water and starch was squeezed out of them and flour was mixed with the pulp. They were kneaded into a dough like our bread of today. It was then placed on a griddle to bake.*

Mr Joseph O Neill, Co. Kerry⁸

***Scratch** used to be made from potatoes. First of all the potatoes used to be grated then they used to be put into a cloth and squeezed and then mixed with flour. Then the used to be put on a griddle to bake.*

Mrs Delaney, Co. Clare⁹

*They also had bread called **Buck-bread**. This was made with potatoes and flour. The potatoes were grated on a bit of tin with holes made in it by a nail. When they had them grated they squeezed them in a bag to take the water out of them. They threw away the water and mixed the grated stuff with the flour. They used not wet the cake at all, as it used be wet enough from the raw potatoes. It used be baked on a gridiron.*

Tom Ryan, Co. Tipperary¹⁰

***Rasp** is made on a pan. The pan is left on the fire and then you melt lard or some sort of grease on it. You get a basin of raw potatoes, wash them, peel them and then rasp them on a rasper into a clean basin. When you have all the potatoes rasped you put in flour and salt and this you beat up well.*

Mrs Lovell, Co. Longford¹¹

*The old generation of people just barely remember the use of Boxty Bread (**Bock** or Buckbread). It was usually made in the following manner: Potatoes were washed, peeled and grated on a hand made grater. The pulp was then mixed with a small quantity of flour as binding material and the whole worked up into a cake. A griddle was used in the baking operation, and the bread was eaten hot with a generous supply of butter.*

Anon., Co. Tipperary¹²

To determine the geographical spread of each term, the occurrences of each spelling variation were recorded by Province/county, and the results are presented in Table 1 below.

7 NFCS 0704:512

8 NFCS 0444:197

9 NFCS 0589:028

10 NFCS 0542:292

11 NFCS 0751:533

12 NFCS 0530:343

		Boxty	Boxtie	Bacstai	Bacstaith	Bocksty	Bocsti	Boxtai	Bocstai	Boxdi	Bacstaith	Bogsti	Stampy	Stampi	Stample	Steampai	Steaimpi	Scratch	Buck Bread	Rasp	Bock	Totals
Connacht	Galway	172	2	1		2	13		12			1	12	1	1		2					219
Connacht	Leitrim	240	2				1						4									247
Connacht	Mayo	285	5	9			5	2	12				4									322
Connacht	Roscommon	180											4							6		190
Connacht	Sligo	149	1										4									154
Leinster	Carlow	8																				8
Leinster	Dublin	8							1				1									10
Leinster	Kildare	14											1									15
Leinster	Kilkenny	10	1										2									13
Leinster	Laois																					0
Leinster	Longford	120	1	1				1					2							28		153
Leinster	Louth	22	5										6									33
Leinster	Meath	83											2									85
Leinster	Offaly	32											1							4		37
Leinster	Westmeath	113											5		1					22		141
Leinster	Wexford	16											2									18
Leinster	Wicklow	7																				7
Munster	Clare	30								1			101	5	5	3	11	5	11		1	173
Munster	Cork	22						1	1				134	6	7		3					174
Munster	Kerry	19					3	1	7				157	6	4	8	28					233
Munster	Limerick	12						1					39	1			2		2			57
Munster	Tipperary	25										1	4					17		5		52
Munster	Waterford	4											4									8
Ulster	Cavan	380	4	1									4						1	3		393
Ulster	Donegal	175	3				2		27				6									213
Ulster	Monaghan	158	4		1						1		14									178
	Totals	2284	28	12	1	2	24	6	60	1	1		513	19	18	11	46	5	31	63	6	3131

Table 1: Name distribution for Boxty/Stampy et al. by Province/County

Overwhelmingly, the most popular term was Boxty, by a factor of more than four. The regions where it was most mentioned were the Provinces of Connacht and Ulster. Stampy in its various spellings, was mentioned mostly in Munster, within which County Clare had the widest range of creative spellings.

There were sufficient instances of each name to be able to plot their occurrence by county. As can be seen from the following six images, they present a much clearer idea of whereabouts these differing names were used, than the table.

Figure 1: Boxty Popularity (number of mentions, all spellings) by County

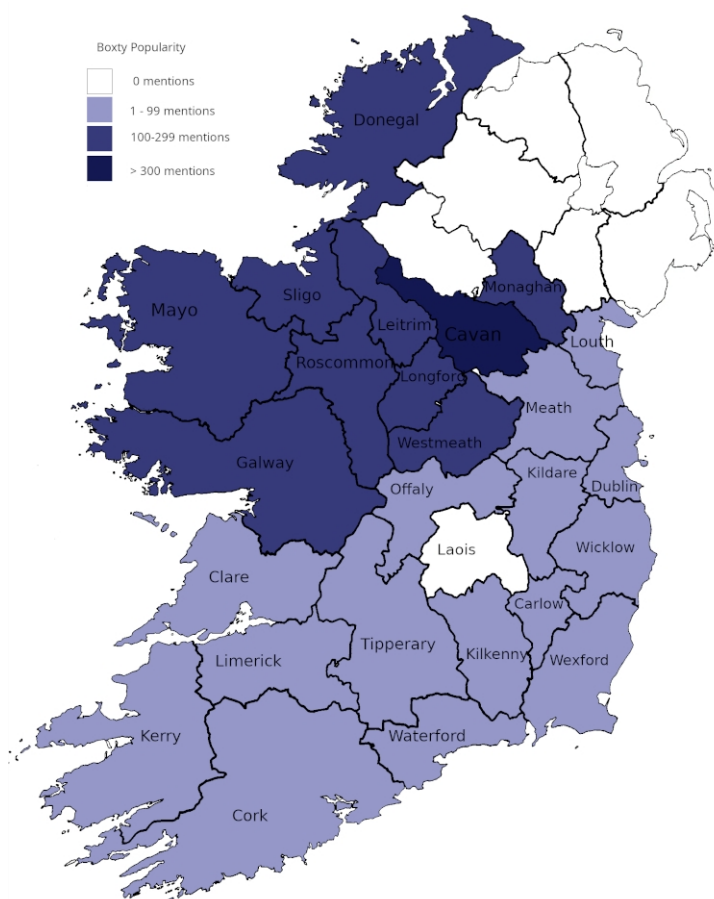


Figure 2: Stampy Popularity (number of mentions, all spellings) by County

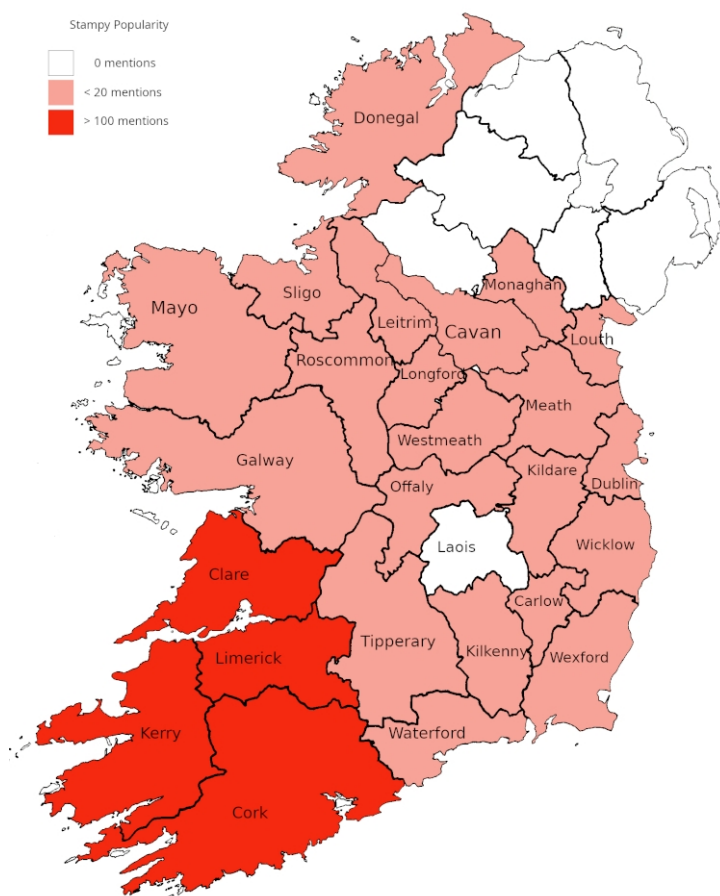


Figure 3: Rasp Popularity (number of mentions) by County

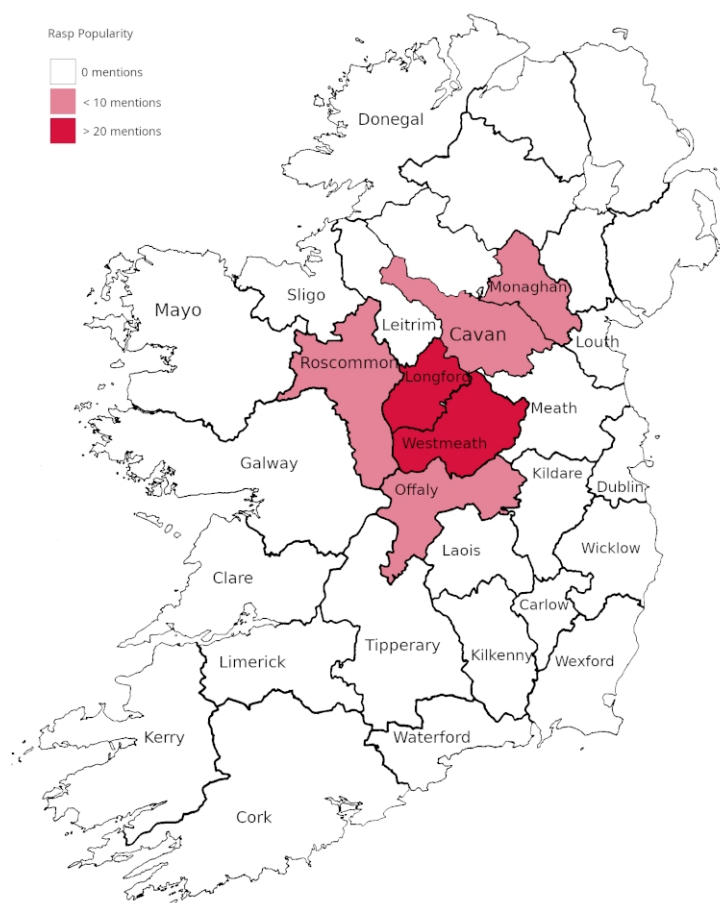


Figure 4: Buck Bread Popularity (number of mentions) by County

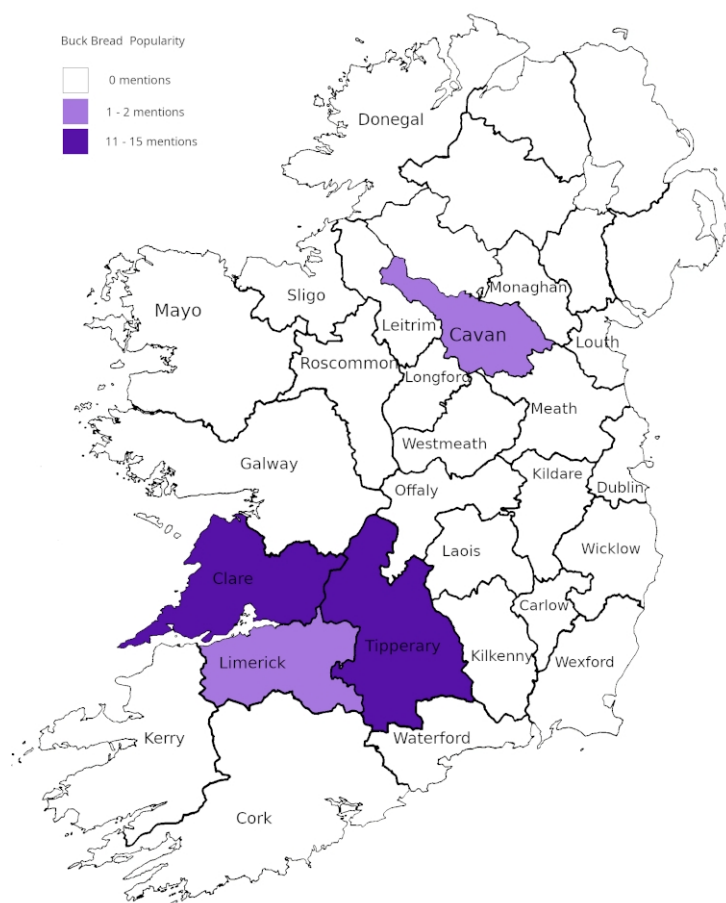


Figure 5: Scratch Popularity (number of mentions) by County

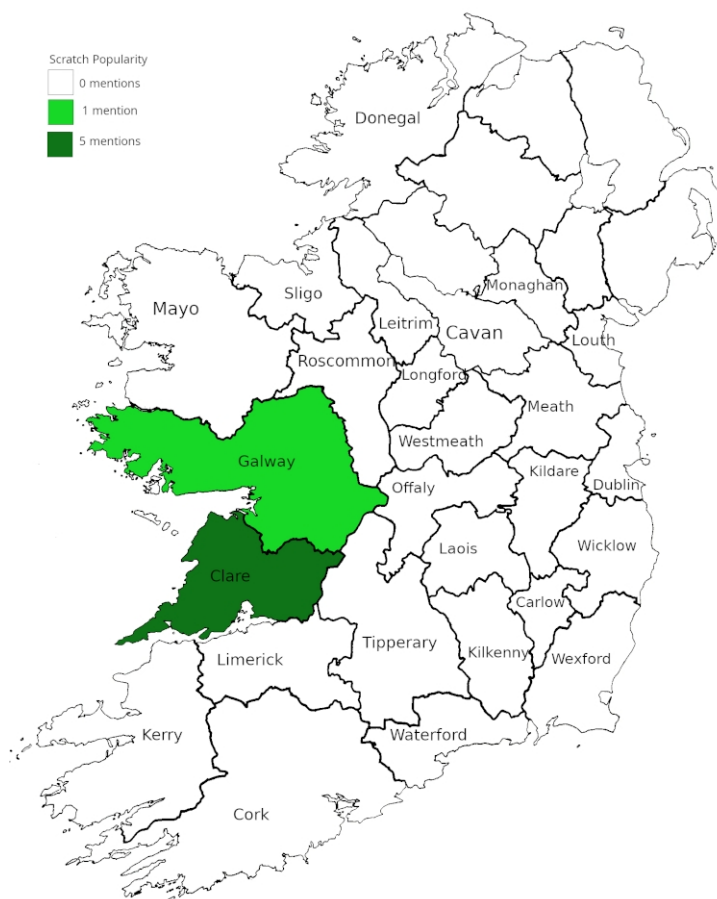
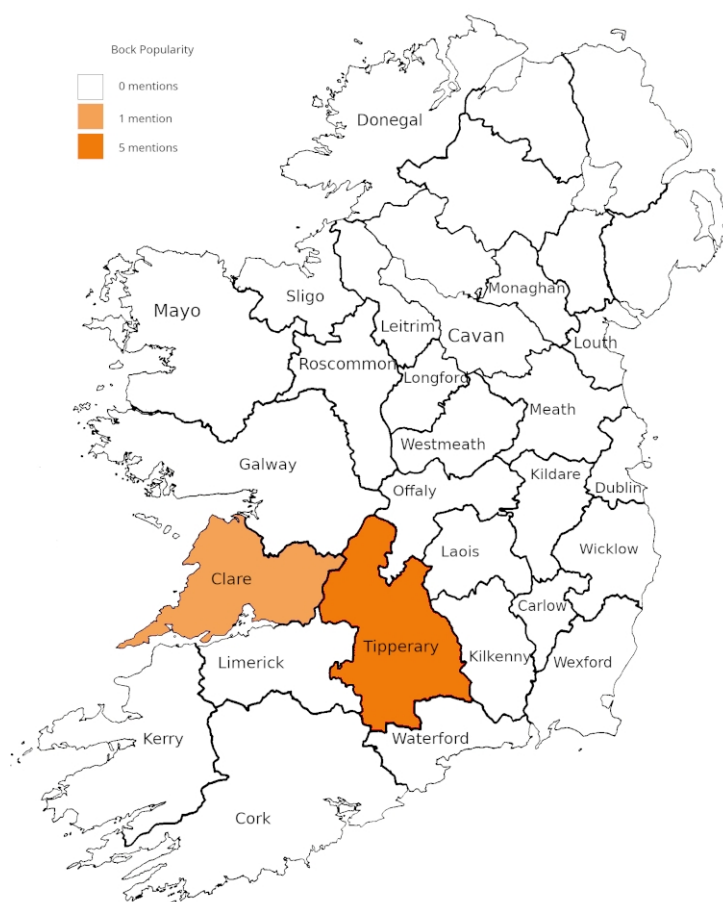


Figure 6: Bock Popularity (number of mentions) by County



Boxty (Figure 1) was a term known countrywide, with a clear concentration in the northern counties, and especially high numbers of mentions in Co. Cavan. Stampy (Figure 2) was another term known throughout Ireland, albeit in much fewer numbers. The greatest concentration of mentions are geographically in the southwestern counties of Clare, Limerick, Cork and Kerry. Rasp was a term used in the northern central counties, most popular in Co. Longford and Co. Westmeath. The remaining terms occur in much reduced numbers, but still retain a noticeable geographical region.

Within these results is a noticeable anomaly: Co. Laois. This county stands out because of its lack of information returned on Boxty. Given the numerous names and spellings of Boxty/Stampy, it is puzzling that Laois has recorded no mention of this otherwise extremely well-known and popular potato dish. Might this county be the only place in Ireland at this time that did not care for Boxty? Given that the Schools Project was teacher-led, it is understandable that a teacher preference might influence, to some extent, the topics for essays, but for this to be the case in every school in this county seems unlikely. Revisiting the food-related transcripts, just two mentions of a dish similar in composition, but with a unique name, were found:

Staugún Bread

Staugún bread was made before bare¹³ bread. It was made from decayed potatoes mixed with bare and salt and soda. Staugún bread was baked on a griddle.

Patrick Conlan. Co. Laois¹⁴

There was a potato famine in Ballinakill in the year 1847. All the potatoes blackened and the people had no food. They used bury the black potatoes in the ground for nine days and then they took them up and scooped out the white part of them and mixed it with flour and made what was known as "stagoon" cakes.

Mrs Fitzpatrick, Aged 76, Co. Laois¹⁵

This notwithstanding, the records for Laois do contain many accounts mentioning food, and further detailed study might prove an interesting investigation, but one that is beyond the scope of this paper.

There are three types of Boxty (Part 1)

For simplicity, unless otherwise stated, ‘Boxty’ will be used in discussion as an umbrella word covering results from all terms.

A system of classification for the Boxty recipes was devised, assigning to each method of making Boxty a unique number, which could then also be allotted to similar accounts should they match up. In doing so, Instruction Number 4 in the NFC booklet of guidelines was observed, which stated “Every composition irrespective of it’s length is valuable, provided the matter has been obtained locally.” Since the NFC considered every composition being of equal importance, so every account found, was recorded and classified, irrespective of whether or not it added significantly to the topic. In practical terms, this meant that an account that the potatoes were peeled and grated was recorded as a separate method to an account whereby the potatoes were left unpeeled. Similarly, two recipes that were identical except for the detail of one containing salt, were also recorded as separate methods. This approach might seem trivial, especially when one considers the possibility of a simple error of omission in an account not mentioning salt, but out of respect for the source material, it was necessary in order to faithfully record the accounts as written.

¹³ Bere: a barley-like grain.

¹⁴ NFCS 0836:280

¹⁵ NFCS 0831:121

This approach would obviously expand the numbers of classifications of Boxtý recipes. What was not foreseen, however, was by just how much. Far from there being just three types, the list ballooned to over one hundred and fifty differing accounts of how to make Boxtý (see Appendix 1).

There were indeed recipes for Boxtý cooked in a pan/griddle, in an oven and by boiling. However, the transcripts revealed that within those three broad categories were a surprising number of variations, as well as methods/ingredients that did not fit into any. Potatoes were a popular, although not universal, Boxtý ingredient; sometimes they were cooked, sometimes they were left raw, sometimes they were peeled, sometimes not. When grated, sometimes the solids were squeezed of their juice, sometimes not. Several accounts advocated the use of bicarbonate of soda, whilst others expressly forbade it. A recipe where the liquid is squeezed from the shredded potato before flour is added will obviously produce a result very different in texture to one where the liquid is retained. Some details might seem minor, but the variation in these personal accounts added to the richness of the information as a whole. Consequently, each account of Boxtý making was deemed individual, unless the methods matched exactly.

These results were far too unwieldy a number to analyse as is, so the different types were grouped together into six broad categories as follows, based on composition, and omitting additional details that did not greatly impact the end result, such as whether or not the potatoes were peeled, the use of seasonings or raising agents:

- raw potatoes only
- raw potatoes + flour(s)
- raw potatoes + cooked, mashed potatoes
- raw potatoes + cooked, mashed potatoes + flour(s)
- cooked, mashed potatoes only
- other

The results are displayed in Table 2 below. At first glance there are a number of inferences that can be drawn. The most frequently mentioned composition of Boxtý was a simple mixture of grated raw potatoes and flour. Boxtý was most mentioned in the provinces of Connacht and Ulster. The cooking method most favoured was a pan or griddle, and that Loaf Boxtý had the fewest mentions, behind Pan Boxtý and Boiled Boxtý.

However, these simple results need to be interpreted more broadly than the numbers in Table 2 indicate at first glance. With every transcript being treated as equally important, and the level of detail being given in each transcript varying wildly, the results for some columns do not reflect as clear-cut a picture as might first be imagined. It is very much a Catch 22 situation. For example, an account might mention Boxtý being made from raw potatoes, cooked on a griddle, eaten with lots of butter as part of the celebrations at the end of the potato harvest- all pertinent and interesting information, but the mention of only the raw state of the potatoes meant it was recorded in column 1. Omitting the account altogether is not acceptable, due to NFC Instruction Number 4 (above). Similarly, the method by which Boxtý was cooked is also potentially problematic. As has already been mentioned, Boxtý may be cooked in a number of ways, and so three cooking methods might be mentioned in a single account. Conversely, a single cooking vessel such as a pot oven, be used to cook multiple types of Boxtý. What the results do indicate, therefore, is potential for further more detailed examination of both of these aspects of Boxtý, employing methods tailored more specifically to the information than this initial examination.

		Raw potatoes	Raw + flour	Raw + cooked	Raw + cooked + flour	cooked only	Other	Pan	pot oven	griddle	loaf	Boiled	Totals
Connacht	Galway	16	56	0	21	0	7	17	13	47	0	3	180
Connacht	Leitrim	18	44	8	34	0	0	34	23	12	19	53	245
Connacht	Mayo	24	95	2	25	0	0	49	18	24	1	1	239
Connacht	Roscommon	14	75	0	23	1	1	49	11	17	0	12	203
Connacht	Sligo	6	50	1	5	0	0	18	21	7	0	2	110
Leinster	Carlow	0	2	1	2	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	9
Leinster	Dublin	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	7
Leinster	Kildare	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	3	2	1	0	11
Leinster	Kilkenny	3	5	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	13
Leinster	Laois	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leinster	Longford	9	50	1	11	0	2	24	15	18	2	11	143
Leinster	Louth	0	8	0	1	2	4	2	3	4	0	0	24
Leinster	Meath	8	24	0	13	3	1	11	7	15	0	1	83
Leinster	Offaly	1	18	0	2	0	4	4	1	8	1	1	40
Leinster	Westmeath	5	47	2	11	0	5	17	8	22	0	6	123
Leinster	Wexford	1	3	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	0	0	16
Leinster	Wicklow	0	3	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	7
Munster	Clare	16	26	1	0	2	1	0	6	19	0	1	72
Munster	Cork	26	47	2	2	3	21	5	21	29	0	1	157
Munster	Kerry	4	17	0	0	2	5	1	5	14	0	0	48
Munster	Limerick	5	10	0	1	0	2	1	0	7	0	0	26
Munster	Tipperary	9	17	2	2	0	1	0	4	8	0	0	43
Munster	Waterford	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	5
Ulster	Cavan	16	37	18	90	0	0	34	58	10	13	54	330
Ulster	Donegal	12	44	4	20	0	2	25	17	17	0	0	141
Ulster	Monaghan	9	47	2	26	0	2	12	15	32	0	4	149
	Totals	206	730	46	293	15	62	309	257	319	37	150	

Table 2: Composition & Cooking Methods of Boxt/Stampt et al. by Province/County

There are three types of Boxt (Part 2)

Pan Boxt

Unlike modern recipes, which generally use the same basic mixture for all styles of Boxt, there emerged clear preferences in the transcripts. By far the most mentioned style of Boxt recipes was Pan Boxt, and the most popular recipe was variations on a mixture of grated raw potatoes mixed with flour and baked on a pan or griddle. As already remarked, there was surprising variety within this style of Boxt. The potatoes could be peeled/unpeeled, the gratings squeezed of liquid or not, extra liquid added, or not and the remains mixed with a range of farinaceous substances. There were two main styles of Pan Boxt, and this was based on the consistency of the mixture. The first style was for a 'cake' to be formed of shredded, squeezed raw potatoes firmed up with some kind of flour. The majority of accounts do not elaborate on what kind of flour, but others mention oatmeal, barley meal, rye and even yellow cornmeal(yalla buck). Salt was generally added, and occasionally baking soda and this 'cake' was then cooked on a griddle or a pan (Pan Boxt) in some kind of fat and then eaten hot. Whilst any kind of fat could be used to cook the Boxt (bacon drippings were frequently mentioned), this style was always eaten well buttered. Accounts describe the raw cake varying from thin to over an inch thick.

Another form of Pan Boxty was made with a much more liquid mixture – Pancake Boxty. This was achieved either by not squeezing the shredded potatoes, draining but not squeezing them dry, or by adding milk/buttermilk/ale/water to make a batter. Salt and baking soda were occasionally added, and as with the more solid form of Pan Boxty, the type of flour would be whatever was at hand. This batter was either poured into the pan in small amounts, cooking several small pancakes at once, or sufficient batter was added and spread over the pan to form a single, large, thin pancake. As with the other form of Pan Boxty, these were usually eaten hot and buttered.

Boxty Dumpings/Boiled Boxty

The style of Boxty with the second greatest number of mentions was Boxty Dumpings/Boiled Boxty.

The number and spread of the mentions of Boxty Dumpings/Boiled Boxty indicate it was a favourite of the northern regions of Ireland. The dish was especially popular in the counties of Longford, Leitrim and Cavan. The method of preparation is much less diverse than with Pan Boxty. The broad details are for raw potatoes to be grated and squeezed of as much moisture as possible, before being mixed with varying proportions of cooked, mashed potatoes, flour (occasionally specified as oatmeal), salt and at times flavoured with caraway seeds. This mixture was formed into dumplings and cooked in boiling water. Once cooked, the dumplings can be eaten hot or left to cool until the following day. Cold boiled Boxty can then be sliced thinly and cooked in a pan for breakfast.

The starch collected from the squeezed potato liquid was frequently incorporated back into the dish. The most usual method was to add the starch to the potato mixture, to help bind the mixture together, although one Leitrim account mentioned using it to help thicken the sauce served over the freshly cooked dumplings.

The boxty dumplings are taken hot with sauce made from sweet milk thickened with the residue of starch left after ringing of grated potatoes through bag and sweetened with a little sugar.

Anon., Co. Leitrim¹⁶

The size of dumplings varied. Some were small (variously described as little ball, large egg, little cakes, pups, hurleys/hurlies), for others a saucer was frequently mentioned both as a means of shaping the dumplings in addition to describe their size. The greatest amount of details were for actual measurements, describing the dumplings as being 8 ounces (226g), 4-6 inches (10cm-15cm) in diameter, and up to 2 inches (5cm) thick.

Unlike Pan Boxty, many Boxty Dumpings were cooked at a time, and to keep them from sticking to the cooking pot, two large spoons or a plate were placed in the bottom of the pot, and the water was constantly stirred during cooking. Other methods employed for keeping the dumplings from sticking include coating the outsides with flour or wrapping them individually in pudding cloths, and sliding them gently into the simmering water from a saucer.

When eaten hot, Boxty Dumpings were served with butter, honey or a sweet milk sauce thickened either with flour, oatmeal or the starch obtained from squeezing the raw potato pulp, called brocán/brawhan/braughan/broughan/brachan. In lean times, when milk was not available, the starchy water that the dumplings had been cooked in was thickened and sweetened, and used instead. On fasting days, brocán was made by boiling oatmeal and salt in water.

When allowed to cool overnight, Boxty Dumplings were either sliced thinly and fried in bacon fat, or split, toasted and served with butter and sugar. One transcript recorded that, in pre-famine times, sowens was the preferred accompaniment. Boiled Boxty was a popular food for Halloween festivities.

Boxty Loaf/Baked Boxty

Boxty Loaf, or Baked Boxty, is another form of Boxty which also has a varying degree of styles. The most mentions were made in accounts from Leitrim and Longford. These accounts frequently mention the basic mixture being enriched through the addition of currants and/or raisins, caraway seeds and lemon peel.

The methods given call for a mixture of grated and squeezed raw potatoes, together with cooked potatoes mashed smooth. The proportions vary, from 1/3 raw and 2/3 cooked to equal quantities of whole potatoes each. When squeezed, the raw potatoes would be roughly 2/3 the volume of the cooked. The potatoes are mixed together, flour and salt added, occasionally some bicarbonate of soda, milk or buttermilk (optional) and shaped like a soda bread loaf. The cooking times vary from 45 minutes in a bastable or pot oven, with embers above and below, to overnight in either a hot or warm oven.

Fruited Boxty Loaves are made for special occasions such as Christmas Eve, Halloween and Little Christmas Night (Twelfth Night).

Nearly all of the accounts suggest that Boxty Loaf was not eaten as soon as it was baked, rather it was allowed to cool and eaten toasted for breakfast.

Most accounts end with the cooking of the Boxty Loaf, but a few include serving suggestions. The loaf is sliced and the slices warmed/toasted in the pan/griddle in bacon fat/butter/dripping/lard. One account says that it wasn't divided into farls, but rather cut through the middle horizontally and toasted in one large piece.

"Boxty is always made for the Breakfast on Christmas Morning."

P. Mac Giolla Choinnigh, Co. Leitrim¹⁷

"No Christmas supper was complete without a boxty loaf."

James Kiernan, Co. Leitrim¹⁸

The Other Boxtys

This catch-all category was for all the non-standard ingredients and methods of making Boxty. It proved to be the most fascinating and surprisingly emotional. There are many reasons why an account of Boxty might end up in this category, the main being that it does not easily align with any of the other main styles: either the method, or the ingredients or both. The cause might lie in human error: the informant's unintentionally inaccurate recall or the recorder's error in relaying the information they have gathered. Even with these caveats, the unusual nature of many of the dishes in this category give much pause for thought.

The time of the famine people made cakes out of rotten potatoes because they had no other kind.

John Coyne, Aged 63, Co. Galway¹⁹

¹⁷ NFCS 0221:113

¹⁸ NFCS 0228:087

¹⁹ NFCS 0004:329

It is distressing to read the numerous mentions of Boxty being made from black or decaying potatoes during the time of The Famine (see also Appendix 2)

My grandmother remembers when the people used to grate the black peotatoes and make boxty bread. They used it to burn straw to cook the little food they could procure for themselves.

Alice Finegan, aged 85, Co. Monaghan²⁰

When they got black and the famine came the people wished to have their crops back again. They wouldn't treat them badly if they had them. They had to eat the black potatoes and black bread. They used to call the black bread boxty. That was the black potatoes and barley mixed up.

Mrs Kane, Aged circa 48, Co. Meath²¹

These accounts are even more upsetting since so many of them are written in such matter of fact tones.

The rot was cut from the potatoes and the blackened remains were grated. The usual method of cooking potatoes was to boil them in their skins, and families would then sit around a basket of cooked potatoes and peel them, usually by using their thumbnails, as they ate

In making a boxy cake a basket of rotten potatoes was picked and the bad spots cut out of them. Then a piece of tin with holes in it was got and the good part was rubbed up and down. It was then gathered in a basin, the water squeezed out of it and mixed with flour and a pinch of salt also. Sometimes enough of bread was baked for a week.

Dominick Morrisroe, Aged 48, Co. Roscommon²²

Surprisingly, some accounts assert that blackened potatoes were actually preferred when making Boxty, maintaining that they made for a sweeter dish.

Black potatoes partly decayed were the best if they could be got.

Mrs Hussey, Aged 67, Co. Longford²³

The blight fell on our potatoes and the potatoes rotted in the ground. The people used make boxty with the potatoes which were black but not altogether decayed. That was the Chief food.

Anon., Co. Offaly²⁴

Stampy Bread - It was made with black potatoes not rotten, and yellow meal. A grater was nailed on to a piece of timber, and the potatoes were rubbed up and down on it till they were like powder. Then yellow meal was added, as well as milk. It was baked like an ordinary cake, and was supposed to be very sweet.

Mrs Mary Cronin, Co. Cork²⁵

Also reminiscent of these hard times were the transcripts describing Boxty being made with yellow meal mixed with the grated, blackened potatoes. This yellow meal (cornmeal from America) was distributed as part of famine relief efforts.

20 NFCS 0930:144

21 NFCS 0697:388

22 NFCS 0243:125

23 NFCS 0750:165

24 NFCS 0812:429

25 NFCS 0361:549

Black bread was eaten, it was made from Indian Meal and Black Potatoes.

Anon., Co. Cavan²⁶

Moving away from potato-based Boxty recipes, there are transcripts with accounts of more unusual ingredient combinations: flour and fermented potato juice, mixtures of wheat, oats and barley moistened with goats milk or leaven, yellow Indian meal, with milk, soda, barley flour and flour, turnips, potatoes parsnips flavoured with caraway, and small square loaves of oatmeal (See Appendix 3).

However the most unusual form of Boxty was recounted as being a two circles of pastry enclosing the seasoned, strained pulp of potatoes, baked on a griddle in the form of a pie.

Boxty bread was generally used in old times when the potatoes were partly unsound. The unsound part of the potato was scraped away. Scrapers made of tin, pierced with small holes were used. The potatoes were scraped fine - shredded like shavings at a saw mill. The scrapings were then put into a calico cloth and squeezed, so that they became dry pulp. A flour paste was then made and the pulp inserted, so that the paste covered the pulp on both sides. The method was something similar to that adopted in making an apple pie. The whole was then baked. When baked it was something similar to our modern potato cake, but darker in colour, and of a somewhat tougher texture.

Anon., Co. Roscommon²⁷

Stampy Bread. After digging potatoes in Autumn the people gathered the ones that were beginning to get black and scraped them with a scraper and then mashed them. Then they made two flat pieces of pastry and put the potato crumbs in the middle and baked it on the griddle and there was usually a big dance that night after the digging of the potatoes.

Laurence Conwey, Aged 58, Co. Galway²⁸

Boxty Utensils

Many of the transcripts describe activities in daily life, and in examining the preparation of the various Boxty dishes, it has necessarily touched on the topic of the kitchen utensils employed (see also Appendix 4).

The vast majority of Boxty recipes, whether at home or for larger quantities at a social event, and irrespective of whichever cooking method is ultimately used, begin with the preparation of the potatoes.

Depending on the Boxty dish being prepared, the potatoes are sometimes peeled beforehand. Curiously, it is difficult to deduce the utensil used. In the transcripts, the term 'Peeler' refers exclusively to a policeman. Knives are mentioned rarely. One account mentions a wooden knife, but only in reference to removing the skin from boiled potatoes, which were generally peeled using the fingernails.

A couple of transcripts mention a Boxty mill, where presumably large machinery does the work, but there are no accounts mentioning the use of these places, only that they exist(ed). Most preparation

²⁶ NFCS 0975:195

²⁷ NFCS 0269:132

²⁸ NFCS 0060:0142

is done in the home with the use of a grater or rasp as it is known in some areas. The local blacksmith is occasionally the source for graters/rasps, but a more common source is from travelling tinsmiths or tinkers. More frequent still, the rasps/graters are home-made, by flattening an old tin can, driving a nail through it and nailing the sheet of metal to a wooden frame.

Wherever the graters are sourced, the rough side of the grater consists, not of angled holes like modern graters, rather holes with jagged edges of metal, reduce the potatoes to a liquid pulp. This pulp is then squeezed of moisture and the resulting solids used in whichever style of Boxty is planned. The texture would thus be much smoother and more dense than 21st century recipes. Modern recipes, where potatoes are grated into shreds, are probably closer in texture to the Swiss potato rosti than the Boxty recipes of yesteryear.

The squeezing of the potato pulp is accomplished in a number of ways, each according to the resources available. The most humble method is to use a cloth. A more permanent solution is to make a Boxty bag

The grated potatoes were usually strained through a fine cloth bag called a Boxty Bag. In former times this was a precious possession especially when potatoes were scarce.

Anon., Co. Cavan²⁹

The grated potatoes were collected in a large basin and the next process was “wringing the boxty”. For this part of the work a coarse linen or fine muslin bag, called a “boxty bag” was used.. It was about 9 inches in depth and 4 or 5 inches wide.

Mrs Mary O’ Dowd, Co. Leitrim³⁰

When large quantities of Boxty were made, the solution was to scale production up

Once squeezed of all moisture, the potato solids are mixed with flour on a tabletop or losset. The losset/lossad is a curious item that is subject to variance. For some it is a simple wooden board, whilst for others it was similar in shape to a wooden tray, with a raised edge.³¹ Some were adorned with condiment containers,³² other examples were of a box similar in size and shape to a bread trough, with a wooden top.³³

Even the material of wood seems to be optional, as at least one account describes a lossad fashioned from a sheepskin.

“When making bread sufficient oatmeal was put into a losset (made from a sheep-skin) and mixed with water or perhaps buttermilk with neither soda nor salt.”

Mrs Cullen, Aged 80, Co. Wexford³⁴

After the mixing comes the cooking.

The main cooking utensils are the griddle, the bastable and the pot. In general, Pan or Pancake Boxty was cooked on the griddle, Loaf Boxty was cooked in the bastable and Boiled Boxty/Boxty Dumplings were boiled in a large pot.

29 NFCS 0966:127

30 NFCS 0228:045a

31 NFCS 0401:257

32 NFCS 0888:274

33 NFCS 0758:026

34 NFCS 0899:090

The griddle was the most basic of the cooking utensils consisting of a sheet of metal, usually iron, that was heated over coals. It was frequently circular, with a curved handle over the top, by which it could be hung from a chain over the fire. Occasionally, griddles were flat pieces of metal that were rested on a separate metal trivet. Sometimes Boxtý was cooked propped up against a metal stand, frequently fashioned out of an old tin can. If none of these were available, pieces of slate or the hot flagstones of the hearth were used instead.³⁵

The bastable was a pot with a sunken lid, upon which coals could be heaped to heat the pot from above as well as below. Variouslý called a bácuś, oven, oven-pot, pot-oven or baker, the bastable was used to cook/bake loaves of Boxtý, as well as other types of bread.

The bread was baked in an oven or bastable hung over the fire. The lid was then put on and "spreece" or burned embers put on top of that to bake the top part of the cake.

Anon., Co. Tipperary³⁶

Dumplings were boiled for up to several hours (depending on size), and the water needed to be kept moving in order to prevent them sticking. To help in this, many accounts mention putting spoons, crossed, in the bottom of the pot.

The bread was baked on the griddle which consisted of a flat round, piece of iron placed on the red coals of turf. They also had the bastable which was a round pot about three or four inches in height with a cover on top. The people used to place a fire underneath it and a fire on the top. The bastable is still used in some parts of the country. The potoven was the same as the bastable but it had three short legs underneath.

Mr J. Roycroft, Co. Cork³⁷

As with recipe variations, there are also some non-conventional methods employed in the cooking of Boxtý. The griddle, the pot oven and the pan were all heavy, cast iron pieces, of large size, and probably expensive to purchase. In the poorest of cottages, even these simple utensils might have been unavailable, or a single vessel serve multiple purposes. This did not prevent at least some forms of Boxtý being made. A flagstone or a piece of slate were listed in several transcripts as being very serviceable substitutes, albeit ones which required an extended cooking time. Either laid flat upon the hearth, or propped up at an angle before the fire, the solid cakes of Boxtý could be toasted first on one side and then the other. In extreme situations, cabbage leaves were employed as cooking vessels, being laid under or wrapped around the Boxtý mixture, wetted and laid in the embers of the fire, sometimes with a pot laid over the top, but also with them being the sole protection against the raw heat of the fire.

Boxty was made of a mixture of boiled and raw grated potatoes and salt. This was sometimes made into dumplings and boiled with water in a pot or formed into a cake and baked on the hearth with a cabbage leaf under and a pot turned down over it.

Mr John Mc Cabe, Aged 86. Co. Cavan³⁸

The bread they ate was the boxtý loaf was they grated raw potatoes squeezed it in a flour bag when they had it grated (raw) to take water out of it. They made it from half raw and half boiled potatoes, they mixed the to together put some salt in it and dried it up with flour, it was at night they made this. They brushed over the fire put a cabbage

35 NFCS 0357:339

36 NFCS 0578:091

37 NFCS 0291:486

38 NFCS 0994:036-7

leaf the red put down the cake on that and turned a pot over the cake and left it there all night.

May Mc Clelland, Co. Cavan³⁹

Oidhche Nodhlag iseadh deintear an bunóg. Saghas cáca mór iseadh í. Seo é an chaoi a deintear í. Cuirtear plúr agus fataí brúite agus mín agus bainne isteach i bpota agus measgtar na ceithre rudaí lé chéile agus deintear taos díobh. Glantar an teallach annsin agus cuirtear duilleóga glasa cabáiste ar an lich. Annsin cuirtear an cáca síos arna duilleogaibh agus cuirtear cúpla duilleog eile ós a chionn. Cuirtear aibhleógaí dóighte ar na duilleógaibh agus fágtar ann é go dí an mhaidin.

[Translation] On Christmas Eve, the bunog is made. It's kind of a big cake. This is how it is made. Flour, grated and smooth mashed potatoes and milk are put into a pot and the four things are mixed together and made into a dough. The hearth is then cleaned and green cabbage leaves are placed on the lich. Then the cake is placed down on the leaves and a few more leaves are placed on top. The leaves are soaked in water and left there until the morning.

Labhrás Ó Ciaragáin, Co. Mayo⁴⁰

A Dish For All Occasions

The transcripts reveal the importance of Boxty throughout the year. It was an integral part of feast days, both spiritual and secular and scarcely a month went by without some event being marked by the inclusion of Boxty.

Boxty was also closely connected with the milestones of life, as well as more mundane activities. Wherever there was a gathering, Boxty would be an integral part of the celebrations. Halloween was the occasion most associated with Boxty, with both Pan Boxty and Boxty Dumplings being almost compulsory. There was also much Boxty enjoyed over the festive season, with spiced and fruited Boxty Loaf enjoying a special place at Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Little Christmas.⁴¹

Shrove Tuesday, St Patrick's Day and Easter were all occasions when Boxty was enjoyed as well as weddings, births and wakes. The gathering together of large groups of people meant that there were always extra hands available to make quick work of both the preparation and the cooking. But it was not just high days and holidays. Children would take a piece of Boxty to school with them, it was a traditional fasting Friday-night supper and an acceptable refreshment at card parties.

If they had visitors they would make boxty of potatoes scraped into a very fine pulp and mixed with wheaten flour and baked between two cabbage leaves beside the fire.

Patrick Flynn, Co. Galway⁴²

Occasionally, during the dark autumn and winter evenings, it was an excuse for socialising, when groups of young people would gather together at a house and share both the workload and the fruits of their labours.

39 NFCS 0993:160

40 NFCS 0131:577

41 The Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th. Also called Old Christmas, Small Christmas and Women's Christmas (*Nollaig na mBan*).

42 NFCS 0096:666

Boxty was a favourite dish for informal social occasions as well as working parties (meitheal), when friends and neighbours would gather together and pitch in to complete a task in the quickest time, such as lifting the potatoes or scutching flax, as well as being part of the celebrations of Harvest festival.

Boxty in Poetry and Song

There are a surprising number of poems and rhymes about Boxty to be found amongst the transcripts. These short rhymes and couplets have the feel of school-yard or skipping chants. The most popular is a short rhyme which appears in various forms at least fifteen times, and one that is frequently quoted on many websites even today alongside recipes for Boxty is as follows:

*Boxty on the griddle, boxty on the pan,
If you don't ate boxty, you'll never get a man.*

Séan Ó Máille, Aged 75, Co. Mayo⁴³

The rhyme also appears multiple times with slightly different wording in the second line:

*"Boxty on the griddle, boxty on the pan
If you don't eat boxty you will never be a man."*

Richard Forrestal, Co. Offaly⁴⁴

It appears to provide encouragement to young people to 'eat up', and in doing so they will reap the rewards in later life by either becoming a man, or acquiring one. It is surprising that a dish so popular needs any such encouragement. This might be an approach adopted if the food was dull or unpalatable, but all accounts assert that Boxty is delicious, in all its forms.

Although Boxty is delicious to eat, the making of it can be hard work. This couplet about the trials of making Boxty turns up in numerous places and is easily adapted to apply to different areas by simply substituting local names.

Boxty Bread, was made locally and I heard an old rhyme about it when I was young.

*"The Rathmore girls, their eyes are red
Blowing the fire to the boxty bread."⁴⁵*

Authorship of another rhyme is attributed to one Michael Reynolds (Micky) of Ballygeer Johnston's Bridge Dromod, Co Leitrim. The persons mentioned in the rhyme were supposedly known to him:

*" "Boxty bread took its head and travelled o'er the nation
Until it came to Micky Reynolds' and there it took its station
And when Pat Foley id came in and see the boxty making
He'd say "God bless your work Miss Catherine For I see that you are grating"
Anon., Westmeath⁴⁶*

43 NFCS 0089:071

44 NFCS 0806:32

45 NFCS 0695:371

46 NFCS 0741:173

Variations of this rhyme were also recorded in other parts of Westmeath, namely Rathmire⁴⁷, Killulagh⁴⁸, Lisclogher Great⁴⁹, with the latter two providing an alternative couplet ending to the verse:

There is also mention of at least one popular folk tune:

Roddy Mc Maguire Killybandrick was a good fiddler and at the dances he would play a tune called the Three Pans Of Boxy.

Frank McEnroe, Aged 84, Co. Cavan⁵⁰

Conclusion

This paper ended up much different to the one planned. What was planned was a deep dive into Boxy, a single, simple Irish potato dish, and to better understand both the ingredients and preparation by exploring the thousands of transcripts available at the Irish National Folklore Schools Collection. The aim was to confine investigations to a single recipe and ultimately to bring to light some heretofore hidden nuggets of Irish food heritage. This aim failed – spectacularly - because it is impossible to investigate Boxy without also investigating almost every aspect of Irish life.

The several aspects discussed in this paper are just a small proportion of the fascinating lines of enquiry that can be followed. It is impossible to speak of the history of Boxy in the nineteenth century, without speaking also of the horrors that were wrought upon the people and the land during The Famine times. It is impossible to separate accounts of Boxy being made with blackening potatoes and yellow Indian meal when those accounts are so intertwined with accounts of the desperate conditions the people suffered during those times. It is impossible to speak of the occasions when people ate Boxy without touching on the coming together of friends, neighbours and family for the great milestones in life, and the celebrations of the year. Nor is it feasible to speak of the turning of the calendar months without mentioning the turning of the seasons, and the growing, tending and harvesting of the potato crop itself: the implements used, discussing the most favourable potato varieties for the soil, the region and the county, because this necessitates mentioning the working parties, to both plant and harvest the potatoes and the celebratory dances and gatherings and feasting when this is accomplished. Researching Boxy is as cyclical as the turning of the seasons

Boxty provided meals for fasting days, celebrations at Halloween and Christmas, weddings and wakes, and Boxy-making parties offer an excuse for the young folk to gather together and socialise. Through the numerous accounts related to Boxy, we learn of the fortitude and resilience of the Irish people. The efforts to wring – literally – food from the blackened potatoes of The Famine. The leftover potatoes from suppertime provided the mashed potatoes for the Boxy loaf, or for the Boxy Dumplings. The creativity and practicality in the accounts mentioning fashioning Boxy graters from old tin cans, the repurposing of flour sacks for Boxy bags, the improvising of metal stands for toasting Boxy cakes in front of the fire and the use of cabbage leaves as makeshift cooking utensils.

This one potato dish is not a single dish, nor is it, as initially understood, even three dishes. It is dozens of different dishes, with a range of ingredients and styles, spread across the entire nation.

47 NFCS 0727:495

48 NFCS 0726:296

49 NFCS 0725:0329

50 NFCS 0972:481

Boxty enriches the language through its many names – Stampy, Rasp, Scratch, Buckbread – as well as the many varied spellings thereof.

This paper might not have been successful in achieving its initial aims, but following the various threads of enquiry through the thousands of transcripts in the National Folklore Collection has revealed the potential for further research in numerous subjects. The Collection is an incredible resource, whether for academic study or for anyone with even a passing interest in Irish folklore and customs. It is a veritable goldmine of stories, anecdotes and insight into Irish life and habits captured at a brief moment in time over eighty years ago, whose testimonials stretch back far into the nineteenth century and bring to life the harsh conditions and everyday lives of the Irish people. It is all at once irresistible, intriguing, captivating and moving.

Particularly poignant are the efforts that have been made, dating right from the start of the initial survey, to respect and preserve the role played by many thousands of Irish people who contributed either by speaking of their experiences or those that have collected and recorded them. All too easily valuable personal experiences such as these can disappear and the measures that the NFC have in place to ensure the contributions are acknowledged and respected are admirable.

With all the generosity and warmth of a great admirer of this collection, however, a word of warning is also necessary: Reader Beware. It is all too easy to begin diligent, focused research, yet wander from the path of single-minded study and be enticed away, as if by The Fair Folk themselves, down paths of unrelated topics. I myself have fallen victim to such enchantments, only to surface later to find that hours have slipped away whilst I have been engrossed in anecdotes only tangentially related to the original subject.

At the outset, the degree to which the humble Boxty permeated Irish life quite so extensively was not appreciated. It turned into a journey of discovery that ranged across language, social studies, agriculture, poetry, history and tradition so broad, the limits of this paper can barely contain it.

To study Boxty is to study Irish history in all its aspects. Boxty really is everything, everywhere, all at once.

Boxty isn't just *an* Irish potato dish, it is *the* Irish dish.

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Appendix 1

Methods of making Boxty retrieved from The National Folklore Collection Schools.

1. Raw potatoes, grated.
2. Raw potatoes, grated and squeezed.
3. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated and squeezed, with salt.
4. Raw potatoes, grated and squeezed, with salt.
5. Raw potatoes, grated and squeezed, with salt and soda.
6. Raw potatoes, grated with salt, pepper, ginger, cinnamon.
7. Raw potatoes, grated with milk.
8. Raw potatoes, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes.
9. Raw potatoes, grated, then boiled.
10. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes.
11. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and salt.
12. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and salt.
13. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and salt and raisins/currants and caraway seeds.
14. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, soda and salt.
15. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes and milk.
16. Raw potatoes with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour
17. Raw potatoes, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour.
18. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour.
19. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour.
20. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour.
21. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt.
22. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt.
23. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt.
24. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt.
25. Raw potatoes, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt.
26. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and milk.
27. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and milk.
28. Raw potatoes, grated with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and caraway seeds.
29. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and caraway seeds.
30. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and ground cloves.
31. Raw potatoes, cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, and currants.
32. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, currants, salt, sugar and milk.
33. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, and water.
34. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, and baking soda.
35. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, baking soda, and milk.
36. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, and baking soda.
37. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, baking soda, and buttermilk.
38. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, potato starch, flour, salt, sugar and milk.
39. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, potato starch, flour,

salt and baking soda.

40. Raw potatoes, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, buttermilk and salt.
41. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes and buttermilk.
42. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, salt, milk and currants.
43. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, salt and pepper.
44. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and salt. Boiled.
45. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour. Boiled.
46. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and flour. Boiled.
47. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and buttermilk. Boiled.
48. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt. Boiled.
49. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt. Boiled.
50. Raw potatoes, grated, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and caraway seeds. Boiled.
51. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and caraway seeds. Boiled.
52. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and caraway seeds. Boiled.
53. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt and baking soda. Boiled.
54. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, soda and buttermilk. Boiled.
55. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, potato starch, sugar and milk. Boiled.
56. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour. Boiled.
57. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour and salt. Boiled.
58. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt and milk. Boiled.
59. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt and buttermilk. Boiled.
60. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, raisins, caraway seeds, spices, sugar and salt. Boiled.
61. Blackened potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes, flour and salt. Boiled.
62. Blackened potatoes, grated, squeezed, with cooked, mashed potatoes and salt.
63. Blackened potatoes and barley.
64. Blackened potatoes and oatmeal.
65. Blackened potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour.
66. Blackened potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour.
67. Blackened potatoes, grated, with flour and salt.
68. Blackened potatoes, grated, with flour, salt and milk.
69. Blackened potatoes, grated, with yellow meal and milk.
70. Blackened potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt, buttermilk.
71. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour.
72. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour.
73. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with flour.
74. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour.
75. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour and salt.
76. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed with flour and salt.
77. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with flour and salt.
78. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed with flour and salt.
79. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with flour, salt and pepper.
80. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, salt, sugar and milk.
81. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt and milk.
82. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt and milk.
83. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour and milk.

84. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour and milk.
85. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour and milk.
86. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, milk, salt, soda, cream of tartar or baking powder.
87. Raw potatoes, with flour, butter and milk.
88. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, salt and potato starch.
89. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, skimmed milk and salt.
90. Raw potatoes, with flour, baking soda, milk, currants and caraway seeds.
91. Raw potatoes, with flour, baking soda and buttermilk.
92. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, baking soda, salt and milk.
93. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with flour, baking soda and salt.
94. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, baking soda and salt.
95. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, baking soda and salt.
96. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, baking soda and salt.
97. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, baking soda, milk, caraway seeds and salt.
98. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, baking soda, milk, currants, caraway seeds and salt.
99. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour and water.
100. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, water and milk.
101. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed with flour and butter.
102. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, butter and sugar.
103. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed with flour, cream and salt.
104. Raw potatoes, peeled, with flour and buttermilk.
105. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, buttermilk and salt.
106. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, buttermilk and salt.
107. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, buttermilk and baking soda.
108. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, buttermilk, baking soda and salt.
109. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour, currants, raisins, spices and ginger.
110. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with flour, currants and caraway seeds.
111. Raw potatoes, grated, with flour, treacle, brown sugar, lard, candied peel, eggs and nutmeg.
112. Wheat, with oats and leaven.
113. Raw potatoes with oatmeal, buttermilk, baking soda and salt.
114. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with oatmeal.
115. Raw potatoes, with oatmeal and flummery.
116. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, with oatmeal, flour and salt.
117. Raw potatoes, grated, with oatmeal.
118. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with oatmeal or flour.
119. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with flour and buttermilk.
120. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with flour, buttermilk and salt.
121. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with meal and flour.
122. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with flour and water.
123. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with barley flour.
124. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with butter.
125. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with flour, milk and soda.
126. Cooked, mashed potatoes, with flour and salt.
127. Cooked, mashed potatoes.
128. Raw potatoes, peeled mixed with dough, buttermilk, pepper, salt, vinegar.
129. Raw potatoes, squeezed, with potato juice and butter.
130. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed, with milk and baking soda.
131. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with milk.
132. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, squeezed.
133. Raw potatoes, grated, with barley flour.

134. Raw potatoes, with flour and yeast.
135. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with flour and potato juice.
136. Raw potatoes, grated, squeezed, with potato starch.
137. Raw potatoes, grated, with buttermilk and soda.
138. Raw potatoes, grated, with butter, salt, water and milk.
139. Raw turnips, grated, with potatoes, parsnips and caraway.
140. Flour, soda, sour milk.
141. Fermented potato juice and flour.
142. Oatmeal and barm.
143. Flour and barm.
144. Softened oats/barley/wheat with goats milk.
145. Butter meal and flour, and water.
146. Oatmeal in small, square loaves.
147. Potato pulp in a flour paste crust.
148. Raw potatoes, peeled, grated, steeped in water, squeezed, with cooked mashed potato, flour and salt.
149. Raw potatoes, grated, steeped in water, with flour and sugar.
150. Raw potatoes, grated, steeped in water overnight, squeezed, with cooked mashed potato and flour.
151. Raw potatoes, grated, steeped in water, squeezed, with oatmeal.
152. Indian meal, with salt and water.
153. Indian meal with boiling water.
154. Indian meal, with milk, soda, barley flour and flour.
155. Yellow meal with flour and buttermilk.
156. Yellow meal with boiling water, flour and salt.

Appendix 2

A Selection of Extracts Mentioning Black Potatoes in Famine Times

The year of the famine Boxty bread was made from black potatoes.⁵¹

In the year of the famine 1847, the potato crop failed and the people had nothing to depend on but it, for it was their staple food at that time. They could not afford flour so they made use of old rotten potatoes for making boxty bread.⁵²

If it was a boxty cake it would be made of black potatoes, they had to scrape the potatoes with a scraper, this scraper was made of something like the bottom of a strainer. When the potatoes would be scraped they would be mixed with flour and baked in a griddle.⁵³

In the year of the Great Famine all the people lived on this bread, which was made from black potatoes.⁵⁴

Boxty bread was made in the time of the Famine. The potatoes were black so the people grated and squeezed the starch out of them and mixed it with flour.⁵⁵

Boxty was made in the following manner long ago. First of all the rotten potatoes were picked out as the old people were too careful to use good ones. Then they were peeled, washed, grated, and mixed. Then it was put on the tongs until they were baked.⁵⁶

Boxty Bread made during the time of the famine. The potatoes were black and when boiled were not good to eat, but when used for boxty were much better. Flour was scarce and expensive and only a little was needed when used in this way. The raw potatoes were grated and allowed to remain over night. Then they were squeezed through a cloth and mixed with a few boiled potatoes, a little flour and salt. This was rolled out about 1" in thickness and baked on a pan or griddle. Practically unknown at present time.⁵⁷

The boxty bread is made from rotten potatoes. The old people had to make a scraper and a squeezing bag. The scraper was used for scraping the rotten potatoes and the squeezing bag was made for squeezing the water out of the potatoes. They used to squeeze the boxty until it would dry. They would mix a few boiled potatoes through it and last of all they would put some flour through it and in that way they made the 'boxty Bread' Then they baked it in a 'Grid iron'.⁵⁸

51 NFCS 0868:019 Informant: unknown. Collector: Marion Byrne, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny. School: Ballyragget Convent, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny. Teacher: unknown.

52 NFCS 0028:0117 Informant: Mrs Laffey, Mounthazel, Co. Galway. Collector Mary Gilmore, Mounthazel, Co. Galway. School: Gardha Fionn, Garrafine, Co. Galway. Teacher: Bean Uí Mhuirgheasa

53 NFCS 0027:0054 Informant: Mr Daly, Tuam, Co. Galway. Collector: Annie Daly, Tuam, Co. Galway. School: Clochar na Trocaire, Tuam, Co. Galway. Teacher: an tSiúr M. Oilibhéir

54 NFCS 0989:188 Informant: Mrs Margaret Smyth, Lismacanigan Upper, Co. Cavan. Collector: Brigid Smyth, Lismacanigan Upper, Co. Cavan. School: Garrysallagh, Garrysallagh (O'Reilly), Co. Cavan. Teacher: P. Greally

55 NFCS 0936:008 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Moys, Moy Oira, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: P. Dawson, C. Mac an Ghirr

56 NFCS 0170:0169 Informant: unknown. Collector: Michael Carty. School: Cloonagh Boys' National School, Coolrawer, Co. Sligo. Teacher: P. O Braonáin.

57 NFCS 0957:307 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Killymarley, Killymarly, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: Bean Uí Chléirigh

58 NFCS 0081:308 Informant: M. Cottle, (14) Collector: Maighréad Ní Coitile, Gorteen, Co. Galway. School: Cúl Umha (Cailíní), Cooloo, Co. Galway. Teacher: Bríd Ní Mhurchú

*They used to eat Boxty. That is rotten potatoes scraped and peeled. They used to scrape the potatoes with a piece of tin. Then they would squeeze it through a cloth to take all the water out of the scraped potatoes. Then they would get a lid of a big tin and roll it with the flour. They used to bake it on a pot-lid. They used to call this Boxty. It would be like a stone to eat it.*⁵⁹

*Stampy Bread. After digging potatoes in Autumn the people gathered the ones that were beginning to get black and scraped them with a scraper and then mashed them. Then they made two flat pieces of pastry and put the potato crumbs in the middle and baked it on the griddle and there was usually a big dance that night after the digging of the potatoes.*⁶⁰

*Stampy. First they used get a lot of black potatoes and grate them. They would squeeze the potatoes and add flour to them and bake it.*⁶¹

*Stampy Bread - It was made with black potatoes not rotten, and yellow meal.*⁶²

*Blight - Jerry Buckley told me that his father told him, that in the year 1846 A.D. a great wind blew, and that this was followed by a thick fog, which caused the stalks to wither in the district. When the potatoes were dug, they seemed sound, and good, but they blackened and rotted in the pits later on. It was of these black, and half rotten potatoes, that "Stampy Bread" was made.*⁶³

*Early potatoes rotted in the pits and the late potatoes rotted in the gardens. When the potatoes were turning black they used to make stampy out of them.*⁶⁴

*The women used to make a special kind of Potatoe-cakes, called "Stampy". When the potatoes were turning black, they used to scrape the outer part of them with a grater, mix it with a little flour and bake the cakes on the griddle.*⁶⁵

59 NFCS 0083:178 Informant: James Finn, Brierfield South, Co. Galway. Collector: Chrissie Finn, Brierfield South, Co. Galway. School: Páirc na nDriseóg, Brierfield, Co. Galway. Teacher: Séamus Ó Conaire

60 NFCS 0060:0142 Informant: Laurence Conwey (58), Killeenadeema, Co. Galway. Collector: unknown. School: Baile Locha Riabhach (Clochar), Loughrea, Co. Galway. Teacher: An tSr. M. Proinnsias

61 NFCS 0278:137 Informant: Dómnall Ó Cathasaigh (50), Shanavallyleigh, Co. Cork. Collector: Caitlín Ní Chathasaigh, Shanavallyleigh, Co. Cork. School: Béal Átha Uisce, Felane West, Co. Cork. Teacher: Pádraig Ó Séaghdha

62 NFCS 0361:549 Informant: Mrs Mary Cronin, Banteer, Co. Cork. Collector: John Barry, Banteer, Co. Cork. School: Bán-Tír (B.), Banteer, Co. Cork, Teacher: Seán Ó Síothcháin.

63 NFCS 361:561 Informant: Jerry Buckley (69), Glen North, Co. Cork. Collector: George O' Callaghan, Killavoy, Co. Cork. School: Bán-Tír (B.), Banteer, Co. Cork, Teacher: Seán Ó Síothcháin

64 NFCS 0414:041 Informant: Mrs Savage, Ardfert, Co. Kerry. Collector: Eileen Savage, Ardfert, Co. Kerry.

65 NFCS 0467:346 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Doirín na nDamh, Derreenneanav, Co. Kerry Teacher: Máire, Bean Uí Shúilleabháin

Appendix 3

Mentions of Unusual Boxty Ingredients

*"Bocstí" or "Yellow Boc" was made with yellow meal wet with boiling water. A little salt and sometimes a tiny pinch of flour were added. It was baked on a griddle in quarters. Sometimes it was baked in an oven over the fire.*⁶⁶

*Boxty bread was made from Indian meal, salt and water.*⁶⁷

*The stampy bread was made with indian meal, boiled and raw indian meal mixed together.*⁶⁸

5. *Stampy bread was made from the potatoes left after the dinner.*

6. *Boxty bread was made from wheat and oats mixed, and leaven was used as a moisture.*⁶⁹

Boxty Bread

*Flour was mixed from the fermented juice of coddled or rasped potatoes which had been standing over in a tightly closed crock. This bread was made during the periods when butter milk was scarce in the locality.*⁷⁰

*The ingredients for the Boxty bread were milk, soda, barley, flour, indian meal.*⁷¹

*Stampy was made with flour and milk mixed with a spoon and baked in a pan. It was baked between two leaves of cabbage when there was no pan to be had.*⁷²

*People ate boxty bread, long ago. Boxty bread was small square loaves, made from oatmeal.*⁷³

Boxty bread

*This was made from oaten meal, mixed with yeast, and wetted with milk or water, and baked on a griddle, or left standing against a support before the fire.*⁷⁴

*The ingredients for the Boxty bread were milk, soda, barley, flour, indian meal.*⁷⁵

66 NFCS 0454:375 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Tir na bPoll (C.) Teernaboul, Co. Kerry Teacher: Máighréad Ní Dhonchadha

67 NFCS 0913:171 Informant: R. Murphy, Crosscool-harbour, Co. Wicklow . Collector: unknown. School: Blessington, Blessington, Co. Wicklow. Teacher: Séamus Ó Cuinn

68 NFCS 1090:239 Informant: Mrs Morrow, Carrowkeel Glebe, Co. Donegal. Collector: Jasmine Morrow, Carrowkeel Glebe, Co. Donegal. School: Drom Fada, Drumfad, Co. Donegal. Teacher: Bean Mhic Coluinn

69 NFCS 0673:217 Informant: Mrs Mc Ardle, Dunleer, Co. Louth. Collector: Kevin Mc Ardle, Dunleer, Co. Louth. School: Dunleer (B.), Dunleer, Co. Louth. Teacher: M. Ó Ceallaigh.

70 NFCS 0732:546 Informant: (name not given) (75), Collector: Maureen Mountaine, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. School: Kilbeggan (B.), Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: P. Mac Siúrtáin

71 NFCS 0385, Page 310 Informant: unknown. Collector: Lily O' Keeffe, Barryscourt, Co. Cork. School: An Clochar, Carraig Thuathail, Carrigtohill, Co. Cork. Teacher: An tSr. Celestine

72 NFCS 0022, Page 0260 Informant: Thomas Roche, Ummoon, Co. Galway. Collector: Patrick Roche, Ummoon, Co. Galway. School: Cathair Loisgreáin (B), Caherlustraun, Co. Galway. Teacher: Pádhraic de Chlár

73 NFCS 0797:90 Informant: Mr M. Hayden, Woodtown, Co. Dublin. Collector: Bridie Holmes, Ballyboden, Co. Dublin. School: Edmondstown (C.), Edmondstown, Co. Dublin. Teacher: Bean Nic an tSamhraidh

74 NFCS 0724:291-2 Informant: John Heffernan, Delvin, Co. Westmeath. Collector: John Heffernan, Delvin, Co. Westmeath. School: Crowenstown, Crowinstown Little, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: M. Ní Bhriain

75 NFCS 0385:310 Informant: unknown. Collector: Lily O' Keeffe, Barryscourt, Co. Cork. School: An Clochar, Carraig Thuathail, Carrigtohill, Co. Cork. Teacher: An tSr. Celestine

Appendix 4

A Selection of Kitchen Utensil Mentions

*They made a grater from a sheet of tin about 9 ins. by 6 ins. with holes bored in it - as close to each other as possible - and nailed it to a piece of board smooth side under.*⁷⁶

*The grater used was often a home-made one, made from an oblong piece of tin cut from an old leaking can. Holes were pierced in the tin, by a nail driven by a hammer. The piece of tin was then nailed to a flat board, the rough edges of the holes being on the outside.*⁷⁷

*The boxty was made in this way. The biggest potatoes were got, and mark this, the worst - those that were scabby or half-rotten, Then they were grated that is rubbed against a grater (this article is made by the local tin-smith or travelling tinker, from tin which is perforated, and the potatoes are rubbed against the coarse or raised edges of the perforations) until they were a pulpy mass.*⁷⁸

*The "boxty bag" is usually a clean flour bag or a pillow case.*⁷⁹

*The water is then shired off them and the grated mass is put into a clean sheet, table-cloth, or bolster-cover. This is caught at each end by two strong men, who twist it in opposite directions, until the contortions drive up the substance into the middle of the sheet etc.; this of course expels the water also; but lest the twisting should be insufficient for that purpose, it is placed, like a cheese-cake, under a heavy weight, until it is properly dried.*⁸⁰

*All I can find out about boxty is that raw potatoes were scraped into a sort of jelly. This jelly was put into a bag and squeezed. then the dried raw potatoes were put into a losset and mixed with meal. This was kneaded and then baked.*⁸¹

*The board on which it was worked was called a losset.*⁸²

*The bread was made in a "losset". This was a square board with a rim all around it.*⁸³

*They used to call the board on which they made the bread, a losset. These lossets had two holes in them, the one at the right held salt, and the other held soda.*⁸⁴

76 NFCS 0048:0193 Informant: James Davenport, Kinvarra, Co. Galway. Collector: unknown.

School: Cill Éinne (Killina), Killinny East, Co. Galway. Teacher: Máire C. Ní Ghriobhtha

77 NFCS 0750:323 Informant: unknown. Collector: B. Toole, Forgney, Co. Longford, School: Forgney, Ballymahon Forgney, Co. Longford. Teacher: Mrs B. Higgins.

78 NFCS 0211:499 Informant: John Mulvey, (82), Bunrevagh, Co. Leitrim, Collector: Joseph Conifry, School: Aughacashel, Aghacashel, Co. Leitrim. Teacher: Joseph Conifry

79 NFCS 0221:112 Informant: unknown. Collector P. Mac Giolla Choinnigh. School: Drumloughan (Dromlachan), Sunnagh More, Co. Leitrim. Teacher: Peadar Mac Giolla Choinnigh

80 NFCS 0947:179 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Cor na Péiste, Cornapaste, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: M. Ní Théinfhir

81 NFCS 0267:264-5 Informant: M. Heavey, (55), Mount Talbot, Co. Roscommon. Collector: Máirín Ní Eimhthigh Mount Talbot, Co. Roscommon. School: Mount Talbot, Mount Talbot, Co. Roscommon. Teacher: M. Ó Héimhthigh

82 NFCS 0607:428 Informant: Unknown. Collector: Nancy Reynolds. School: Clarecastle (C.), Clarecastle, Co. Clare Teacher: Aoife Ní Mhíodhcháin

83 NFCS 0401:257 Informant: Mrs C. Relihan (55), Coolkeragh, Co. Kerry. Collector: James Relihan, Coolkeragh, Co. Kerry. School: An Chúil Árd, Coolard, Co. Kerry. Teacher: Seán Ó Duilleáin

84 NFCS 0888:274 Informant: unknown. Collector: May Bass, Ballingarry Lower, Co. Wexford. School: Hollyfort Hollyfort, Co. Wexford. Teacher: Mabel Vaughan

At the front, under the kitchen window, was the losset. This was a table about six feet by three. The top was hinged, and when raised revealed a receptacle about a foot deep (and six feet by three in length and breadth).⁸⁵

The stampy used to be baked by putting a slate against the stand and by putting a cake against it and when the side turned to the fire, it would be toasted the other side and would be turned.⁸⁶

Long ago the cakes used to be wet with water, and baked on a griddle or on a flag.⁸⁷

The bread was baked in an oven or bastable hung over the fire. The lid was then put on and "spreece" or burned embers put on top of that to bake the top part of the cake.⁸⁸

The bastable or bÁCÚS was the name given to the vessel in which a covered cake was made. Red cinders were put on the cover.⁸⁹

The bread was baked on the griddle which consisted of a flat round, piece of iron placed on the red coals of turf. They also had the bastable which was a round pot about three or four inches in height with a cover on top. The people used to place a fire underneath it and a fire on the top. The bastable is still used in some parts of the country. The potoven was the same as the bastable but it had three short legs underneath.⁹⁰

Boxty was made of a mixture of boiled and raw grated potatoes and salt. This was sometimes made into dumplings and boiled with water in a pot or formed into a cake and baked on the hearth with a cabbage leaf under and a pot turned down over it.⁹¹

The bread they ate was the boxty loaf was they grated raw potatoes squeezed it in a flour bag when they had it grated (raw) to take water out of it. They made it from half raw and half boiled potatoes, they mixed the to together put some salt in it and dried it up with flour, it was at night they made this. They brushed over the fire put a cabbage leaf the red put down the cake on that and turned a pot over the cake and left it there all night.⁹²

At Hallow E'en they used to make a boxty cake and boxty dumplings. When the cake (made from raw potatoes grated, squeezed and mixed with flour) was ready to cook the hearthstone was swept very clean and the cake was put on it. A cabbage leaf was spread cover it and this was covered with red ashes. In the morning it was ready for use.⁹³

85 NFCS 0758:026 Informant: Katie Burbage (50) Greagh, Co. Longford. Collector: Anna Lacy, Drumlish, Co. Longford. School: Drumlish (C.), Drumlish, Co. Longford. Teacher: Brigid Lacy.

86 NFCS 0357:339 Informant: John O' Connell (80), Knockyhen, Co. Cork. Collector: Seán F. Cróinín. School: Cnoc na Groighe (B.), Ráth Mhór, Knocknagree, Co. Cork. Teacher: Diarmuid Ó Muimhneacháin

87 NFCS 0181:086 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: St. Jame's Well, Carrowmore, Co. Sligo. Teacher: S. Ó Conchobhair

88 NFCS 0578:091 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Baile Nua, Gabhal tSulchóide, Newtown, Co. Tipperary. Teacher: Donnchadh Mac Thomáis

89 NFCS 0288:076 Informant: unknown. Collector: Cornelius Cadogan, Ratooragh, Co. Cork. School: Cill Thiomáin, Durrus, Bantry, Kilcomane, Co. Cork. Teacher: Máiréad Ní Mhathúna

90 NFCS 0291:486 Informant: Mr J. Roycroft, Ballydehob, Co. Cork. Collector: Billy Roycroft, Ballydehob, Co. Cork. School: Béal Átha an Dá Chab (2), Ballydehob, Co. Cork. Teacher: J.W. Pollard.

91 NFCS 0994:036-7 Informant: Mr John Mc Cabe (86), Latnadronagh, Co. Cavan. Informant: Mr Philip Lynch (80), Rockfield, Co. Cavan. Collector: Shaun Briody, Rockfield, Co. Cavan.

92 NFCS 0993:160 Informant: unknown. Collector: May Mc Clelland, Kiffagh, Co. Cavan. School: Kiffa, Kiffagh, Co. Cavan. Teacher: Helen Dinneen.

Appendix 5

Transcript examples mentioning occasions when Boxty was enjoyed.

*Boxty was eaten in certain days.*⁹⁴

*In olden times people made a feast on boxty on certain occasions such as Easter, Halloween and Christmas.*⁹⁵

*When the harvest was gathered into the haggards,⁹⁶ people used to have a great feast on Michaelmas Night the 29th September. Before tea was introduced they killed a goose and sometimes a sheep for this night. With the boiled goose, they had a fine pot of boiled potatoes. Then they had some "boxty" bread and new milk after that.*⁹⁷

*St. Patrick's Day. As at the present day, this feast was celebrated with great feasting and rejoicing in this country. Special meals were also prepared for this day, hot potato-cakes for breakfast, and usually pan-boxty or boxty-loaf for tea.*⁹⁸

*Boxty bread was used on special occasions such as weddings, christenings and at Christmas.*⁹⁹

*The bread called boxty was made from rasped potatoes mixed with milk and baked on a grid-iron. It was the custom long ago for people to bring this bread to eat it at wakes. Boxty is still used in the West of Ireland.*¹⁰⁰

The children of long ago took a pencil, slate and ruler with them to school and potatoe cake, and boxty bread for their lunch.

*"Have you ever taken potatoes cake,
Or boxty bread to school,
Down under-neath your auxter
with your pencil slate and rule.*¹⁰¹

*Boxty bread or Rasp is not often made now but formerly it supplied Fridays dinner in most farm houses.*¹⁰²

93 NFCS 1025:023 Informant: Mary K. Tighe (15), Rahultan, Co. Cavan. Collector: Annie Mc Inerney, Leggykelly, Co. Cavan. School: Drumlaney, Castlesaunderson Demesne, Co. Cavan. Teacher: Mrs Fahey.

94 NFCS 0013:115 Informant: Mrs John Moylan (58), Meelickroe, Co. Roscommon. Collector: Delia Moylan, Meelickroe, Co. Roscommon. School: Liatra, Lettera, Co. Galway. Teacher: Seán Mac Sheoin.

95 NFCS 0214:130 Informant: Bernard Toole, Carrick, Co. Leitrim. Collector: unknown. School: Eanach Dubh (B.), Annaduff, Co. Leitrim Teacher: Thomas Morahan

96 Farmyard/enclosure where harvested crops were stored.

97 NFCS 0141:550 Informant: John Mc Nulty, Foghill, Co. Mayo . Collector: Michael Mc Nulty, Foghill, Co. Mayo. School: Beann-chorr, Banagher, Co. Mayo. Teacher: Tadhg Ó Hairt.

98 NFCS 0222:192 Informant: John Keegan, (75), Curraun, Co. Leitrim. Collector: Kathleen Keegan, Curraun, Co. Leitrim. School: Cluain (C.), Cloone, Co. Leitrim. Teacher: Bean Uí Sholamháin

99 NFCS 0054:0304 Informant: Mrs Flanagan, Collector: Kitty Flanagan. School: Cill Cúlach, Kilcooly, Co. Galway Teacher: Séamus Mac Lochlainn

100 NFCS 0733:258 Informant: James Finnerty (74), Creeve, Co. Westmeath. Collector: Peter Stokes, Creeve, Co Westmeath. School: Streamstown, Streamstown, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: S. Garland

101 NFCS 0937:350 Informant: Felix Duffy, Sheetrim, Co. Monaghan. Benny Conlon. School: Áth na gClaidheamh Annagleve, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: S. Mac Domhnaill

102 NFCS 0736:107 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Ballinea, Ballina, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: Mrs Farrell.

*Sometimes in the long winter nights a crowd of children gathers together in some house and makes boxty.*¹⁰³

*When the months of June and July came the oatmeal and potatoes were nearly gone and the people used to make a food called boxty.*¹⁰⁴

*The Boxty bread or rasp was made from new potatoes grated, mixed with flour, salt and water. When the dough was made it was rolled by a potato or a bottle and cut in quarters.*¹⁰⁵

*They also made boxty for "Little Christmas" night.*¹⁰⁶ *For this night a boxty loaf was made and currants were put in it.*¹⁰⁷

*Stampy. This was a special treat and was made when the potatoes were dug; and the finishing up of the harvest - called the "clousure". The potatoes were well washed, peeled and put into a basin of cold water. (The men and boys helped with the peeling of the potatoes).*¹⁰⁸

*About fifty years ago when the people had the potatoes dug they had a great feast called the clabsúr and in this feast they had a food called steaimpi and this food was made of potatoes.*¹⁰⁹

*If they had visitors they would make boxty of potatoes scraped into a very fine pulp and mixed with wheaten flour and baked between two cabbage leaved beside the fire.*¹¹⁰

*The farmer who was getting the work done usually provided a good supper for the scutchers consisting of "Boxty Dumplings" and sweet milk. Very often the boys of the district used to assemble bringing with them a fiddler and an enjoyable dance was held when the scutching was finished.*¹¹¹

*About the end of September when all the crops are gathered in the farmer invites his friends and neighbours to a "harvest festival". For this supper a large quantity of boxty is needed and some of the neighbouring girls come and help to prepare it. When supper is over an enjoyable time is spent telling stories and singing songs. Boxty is again made on November's night, and Christmas night.*¹¹²

103 NFCS 0147:521 Informant: unknown Collector: Maggie Garrett, Colladussaun, Co. Mayo. School: An Cheathrú Gharbh, Carrowgarve, Co. Mayo. Teacher: Tomás Ó Fiachra

104 NFCS 0108:020 Informant: unknown. Collector: Maggie M. Bowens. School: Cúige, Coogue Middle, Co. Mayo Teacher: Mícheál Ó Briain

105 NFCS 0937:273 Informant: Mrs P. Loughran, (48), Cavanaguillagh, Co. Monaghan. Collector: Marcella Loughran, Cavanaguillagh, Co. Monaghan. School: Áth na gClaidheamh, Annagleve, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: S. Mac Domhnaill

106 The Feast of the Epiphany, January 6th. Also called Old Christmas, Small Christmas and Women's Christmas (Nollaig na mBan).

107 NFCS 0220:043 Informant: unknown. Collector: Eileen Mc Garry, Lear, Co. Leitrim. School: Gortlitreach, Gortletteragh, Co. Leitrim Teacher: Seosamh Mac Cionnaith

108 NFCS 0408:164 Informant: Michael Costello, (&*), Ballyhorgan East, Co. Kerry. Collector: Mrs Norah Costello. School: An Drom Clochach (B.), Dromclogh, Co. Kerry. Teacher: Pátholán Ó Ruadhacháin

109 NFCS 0431:097 Informant: Seamus Ó Dúbhda, (60), Kilmore, Co. Kerry. Collector: Michael Down. School: Baile Dubh, Caisleán Ghriaire, Ballyduff, Co. Kerry. Teacher: Pádraig Ó Séaghdha

110 NFCS 0096:666 Informant: Michael Costello, (circa 65), Esker South, Co. Mayo. School: Baile an Daingin (C.), Ballindine, Co. Mayo. Teacher: Máire de Staic.

111 NFCS 0994:315 Informant: John Sheridan (45), Kill, Co. Cavan. Collector: Mary A. O'Reilly. School: Kilnaleck (C.), Kilnaleck, Co. Cavan. Teacher: Mrs. Reilly

112 NFCS 0123:243-4 Informant: Michael Howley (26), Gorteen, Co. Mayo. School: Culleens, Cullin, Co. Mayo Teacher: Js. P. Rowley

Appendix 6

A Selection of Boxty rhymes and poems.

*Boxty on the pan, Eat it if you can
You can boil it in a pot, You can eat it cold or hot*¹¹³

My grand-mother used to sing this song about Boxty.

*"Great pans of Boxty baking every day,
There's no use in any without a cup of tay."*

When it was cooked it was well spread with butter.

*"There was butter in the middle,
And butter running through,
And faith with all respects to you,
My face was butter too." ¹¹⁴*

*Three pans of boxty baking every day.
What good is boxty without a cup of tay (tea)*¹¹⁵

Boxty was another favourite with the old people. It was nearly like potato-bread. There is a poem written about the making of boxty:-

*"There's some people making boxty and it's very dirty bread,
They neither wash their hands or face, nor do they comb their head,
The right way to make boxty is to wash the potatoes clean,
To keep the bag awringing till the water it is drained
Get a little flour and some sweet-milk if you can.
Put some boiled potatoes through it and roll butter on the pan."*¹¹⁶

*When the Boxty mill began to still They thought it was the devil o
They lifted it up in handfuls and they threw it on the griddle o*¹¹⁷

113 NFCS 0638:212 Informant: Mr J Lynch (50), Tallow, Co. Waterford. Collector: Eileen Lynch, Tallow, Co. Waterford. School: Tulach an Iarainn, Tallow, Co. Waterford, Teacher: Eibhlín Ní Dhubhshláinge

114 NFCS 0720:004 Informant: Mrs S. Bruton, Ringstown, Co. Westmeath. Collector: Peter Bruton School: Faughalstown, Faughalstown, Co. Westmeath, Teacher: Bean Mhic Gabhann

115 NFCS 0719:207 Informant: William Mac Dermott, Foyran, Co. Westmeath. Collector: Julia Mac Dermott, Foyran, Co. Westmeath. School: Tullistown, Tullystown, Co. Westmeath. Teacher: Mrs. Sheridan

116 NFCS 0949:246 Informant: Willie Dunne (70), Knockcor, Co. Monaghan, Informant: Mrs Mc Gorman (50), Drumary, Co. Monaghan. Collector: unknown. School: Cnapach (Crappagh), Crappagh, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: Mrs Horan

117 NFCS 0936:008 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown. School: Moys, Moy Oira, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: P. Dawson, C. Mac an Ghirr.

*The boxty mill began to shill, I thought it was a fiddle, O.
She wrapped it up on her old coat tail, And put it on the griddle, O.*¹¹⁸

*"Poor little Johnnie his eyes are red blowing up the fire to the boxty bread.*¹¹⁹

*The Curryane scrub their eyes are red, Blowing the fire for boxty bread,
High Cockade and a bonny feather, The Derryronane lads are the lads for ever.*¹²⁰

*The only plan is to grease the pan, To make it turn easy
I go bail without much meal, I'll make a cake that will please you*¹²¹

Words from a song of the period dealing with the above mentioned boxty mill.
*The taties they were rotten
In the bottom they did grow
They grated all both great and small
Til the tubs did overflow
Says Alie where's the boxty bag
Says Peggy none at all
Except Larry's woollen stocking
Thats hanging on the wall*¹²²

*There's some people making boxty and it's very dirty bread,
They neither wash their hands or face, nor do they comb their head,
The right way to make boxty is to wash the potatoes clean,
To keep the bag awringing till the water it is drained
Get a little flour and some sweet-milk if you can.
Put some boiled potatoes through it and roll butter on the pan.*¹²³

118 NFCS 0958:304 Informant: Mrs Singleton, Elvey, Co. Monaghan. Collector: Lydia Singleton, Elvey, Co. Monaghan. School: Errigal Trough, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan, Teacher: Saragh Gillanders

119 NFCS 0711:406 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown School: Castletown, Castletown, Co. Meath. Teacher: Owen Maguire.

120 NFCS 0122:165 Informant: Mrs Salmon, Derryronan, Co. Mayo. Collector: Julia Byrne, Derryronan, Co. Mayo. School: Caiseal, Cashel, Co. Mayo. Teacher: Pádraig Mac Mághnuis

121 NFCS 0726:296 Informant: Bernadette Lynch, Lisclogher Great, Co. Westmeath. Collector: unknown School: Killough, Killulagh, Co. Westmeath, Teacher: Mary Lynch

122 NFCS 1013:247 Informant: unknown. Collector: unknown School: Dhuish, Dooish, Co. Cavan. Teacher: P. Ó Murchadha

123 NFCS 0949:246 Informants: Willie Dunne, Age 70, Knockcor, Co. Monaghan, Collector: Mrs Mc Gorman, Age 50, Drumary, Co. Monaghan. School: Cnapach (Crappagh), Crappagh, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: Mrs Horan

*"The boxty mill began to shill
I thought it was a fiddle o
I rolled it up in an old shirt tail
And clapped it on the griddle o.*

*And now the country farmer's daughters
They are got so very wise
That they grate the rotten praties
For to feed their servant boys.*

*But now its got so common
That its no disgrace at all
For to grate the rotten praties
To feed their servant boys.*

*Oh the right way to make boxty
Is to wash the praties clean
For to grate them and to squeeze them
Till you find red water drain
Put a trifle of flour through them
And some new milk if you can*

But dont forget to grease your pan. ¹²⁴

124 NFCS 0959:355/6 Informants: Miss Matson, Aged 70, Miss Matson, Aged 63, Cornacreeve, Monaghan, Collector: Agnes Wilkinsen, Emyvale, Co. Monaghan. School: Corlatallon, Corlattallan, Co. Monaghan. Teacher: Mrs Atkinson.