

EXAMINING REPRESENTATIONS OF THE GREAT IRISH FAMINE;
THE CONTRIBUTION OF RURAL HOUSEHOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

by

Megan Elizabeth Lorence

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Megan Elizabeth Lorence, B.A.

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The Great Irish Famine, 1845-1852, has been the focus of significant historical research, but less archaeological investigations. This study examines the Famine through rural house sites occupied before, during, and after the Famine in comparison to historical images of the Famine. The images represent a barrenness that is not evidenced fully in the archaeological record. These images which are used to give an overall view of the Famine, give a biased interpretation of what was actually happening in Ireland during the Famine.

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INTRODUCTION

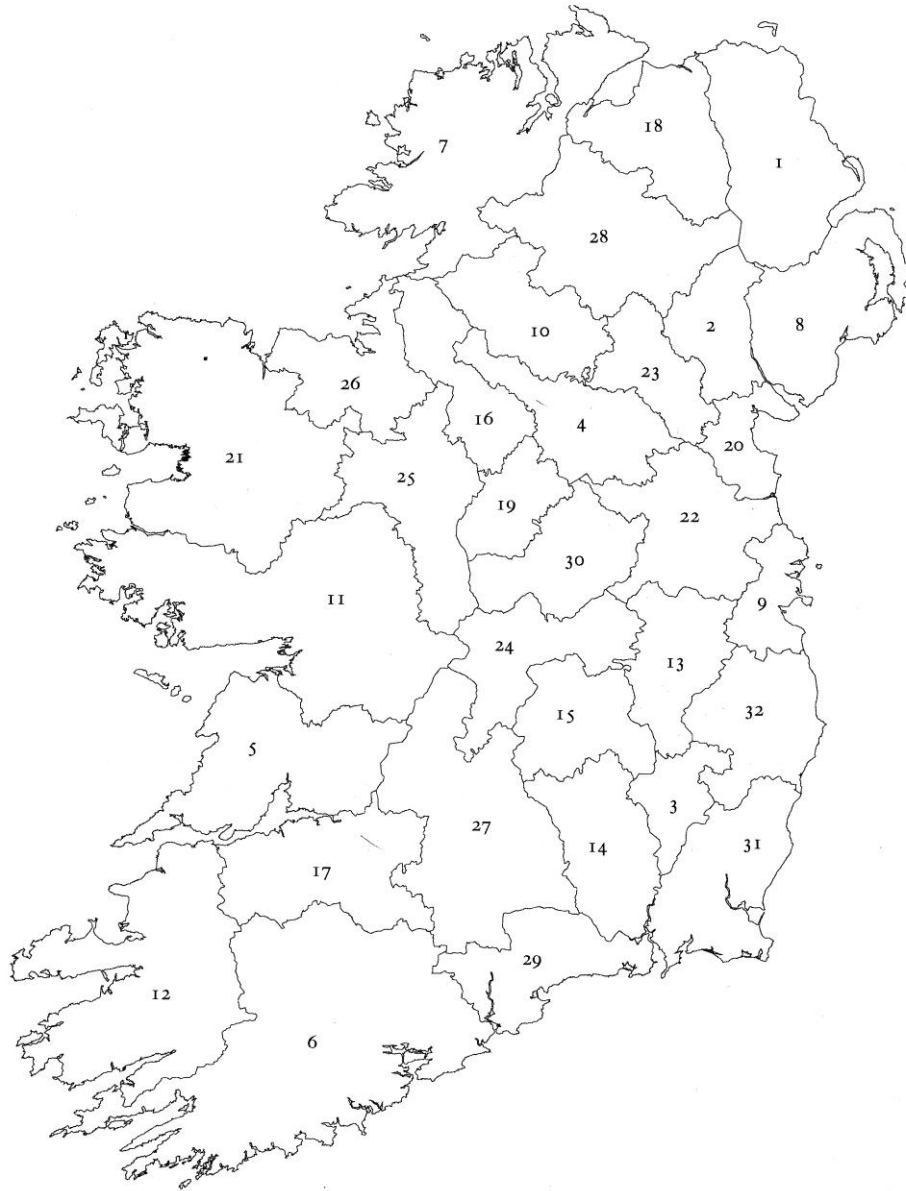
The first year of the European potato blight in 1845 was an indicator of the adverse times soon to befall Europe. Europe's poor and working classes survived on the potato and while one year of blight could have been managed, the successive years of the potato failure produced the stress of famine across Europe. The potato famine that began in 1845 has become synonymous with the Great Irish Famine.

The potato blight, subsequent crop failures, and ultimately the famine in parts of Europe, were most devastating to Ireland. The Great Irish Famine (the Famine) stretched from 1845 until around 1852 decimating Ireland's population through both death and emigration. Ireland before the Famine was nearing 8.5 million people and dropped to near 6 million due to death and emigration (Donnelly 2001). Ireland is not solely responsible for its misfortunes – some of the blame rests on the shoulders of the English, though the extent of that blame varies.

The Famine can be analyzed through a variety of lenses, from purely historical to more conceptual ideas. This analysis looks at the rural Irish population during Great Irish Famine through the idea of barrenness using archaeological and historical evidence. Does the concept of barrenness, defined in this context from Maggie Ronayne (Personal Communication 2012) as *an empty landscape* including the households and the lack of material possessions, explain Ireland during the Famine years? Barrenness finds expression in the ideology of people living in an empty landscape feeling desolate, having nothing, and the ruin of things necessary for survival. This way of thinking is a byproduct of famine, culturally and physically associated with the lack of food.

During the Famine the potato crops were decimated, some years more extensively than others, but that does not mean the Irish were not still producing food, such as oats, wheat and barley grain (more generally termed corn in Britain) as well as maize corn that was typically used to feed livestock. Food that was produced was understood to be shipped out of Ireland to England because the British refused to shut down the export of goods, wanting to interfere in the economics as little as possible. The majority of the Irish farmers, nearly two-thirds of the male farming population, did not own land (Ó Gráda 1999:25). They worked on lands rented out to them by lords, either Irish or absentee English living in England. It is easy to assume with little to no food for themselves, the Irish poor would likely resort to selling what possessions they had in exchange for food. But many of the poorest rented their homes, and likely some of their belongings from their landlords. Famines also do not produce buyers markets for material possessions. For those who emigrated, or were forcibly evicted, it would not make sense to leave their belongings behind, but they would not be able to take everything, even if it did belong to their family. Houses whose tenants were evicted were typically torn down to prevent tenants from staying. The vision of a barren Ireland persists.

Is this vision a reality? While the Famine is a sensitive topic for the devastation it caused in Irish lives, archaeology has recently been investigating this time period in Irish history. There have been excavations undertaken in the township of Ballykilcline in County Roscommon, looking specifically at the households of the Nary family. Few other excavations have been done on rural house sites in Ireland, and fewer still with a specific focus on the Famine. In Ireland (Figure 1) in the counties of Roscommon (county 25), Sligo (county 26), and Donegal (county 7) rural house sites have been excavated that were occupied before, during, and sometimes after the Famine.



Antrim	1	Dublin	9	Limerick	17	Roscommon	25
Armagh	2	Fermanagh	10	Londonderry	18	Sligo	26
Carlow	3	Galway	11	Longford	19	Tipperary	27
Cavan	4	Kerry	12	Louth	20	Tyrone	28
Clare	5	Kildare	13	Mayo	21	Waterford	29
Cork	6	Kilkenny	14	Meath	22	Westmeath	30
Donegal	7	Laois	15	Monaghan	23	Wexford	31
Down	8	Leitrim	16	Offaly	24	Wicklow	32

Figure 1. Counties of Ireland (Adapted from Kennedy et al. 1999:Map 1).

Images, letters, and documents from the Famine era also give insight into how people were reacting to the Famine and how they understood their landscape. These sources can also show how the British felt about the Irish during the time period, and how that influenced their decisions in regards to Famine relief. These images tend to strengthen the view of a barren Ireland.

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this paper is to examine portrayals of the Great Irish Famine, specifically rural households and daily life through archaeological excavations, primary sources, especially images, and historical documentation. Excavated houses examined were occupied before and during the Famine years, and in some cases after the Famine ended. Primary sources include images, as well as letters and documents. These primary sources were analyzed and compared along with historical data. Data gathered was investigated against the concept of *barrenness*. Barrenness in a landscape context means the land is no longer being productive, along with the idea of being desolate and empty (Maggie Ronayne Personal Communication 2012). This can be extrapolated to fit human habitation as well, with barren households and the feeling of overall emptiness.

The archaeological site reports were examined for artifacts and distinguishing house markers, such as structural material, coarse earthenware, and refined earthenware, to help establish social class, supported by the historical documentation. Those of a lower social class should exhibit more barrenness than higher ones. The sites studied include: Ballykilcline in County Roscommon (Hull 2004; Orser ed. 2006; Orser 2010), Gorttoose, also in County

Roscommon (Hull 2004; Orser 1996a), Brogan House in County Donegal (Orser 2007, 2010), Barlow's Field in County Sligo (Orser 2010), and Mulliviltrin in County Roscommon (Hull 2004, 2007; Orser ed. 2006). The artifact assemblages from each site were also compared against each other looking at vessel counts and for similarities and differences, particularly in coarse earthenware and refined earthenware ceramics.

Historical primary source information was used to gain a better understanding of how those living during the Famine felt and saw Ireland. Since many of the lower classes in rural Ireland were illiterate, examining where the reports originate was important. All depictions of the past are biased by the author's personal views and feelings. Accounts from pre-Famine and through the Famine years of 1845-1852 will show how the Irish (and the British) perceived the rural landscape. Much of this is evidenced through imagery prominently repeated in historical accounts of the Famine.

The main document analyzed was Alexander Somerville's (Snell 1994) *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*, along with input from John Mitchel's (1876) *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, and Brendan Ó Chathaoir's (1999) *Famine Diary*. They were looked at for clues on rural Irish life, though they made little direct connections with the material culture. Images from the Famine era were examined specifically for the change in material culture and landscape, compared to rural imagery before and after the Famine.

Comparing and contrasting the archaeological information with the primary documentation of the Irish Famine allows differing ideas to be brought into light and analyzed. Differences were highlighted to understand better the inconsistencies between the historical documentation and what the archaeology unearths. When people are starving and cannot afford food, they are likely to feel completely lacking in other aspects of their lives.

Lastly, historical reports on the Famine were looked at for current scholarly understanding of the Famine, how that perception has changed, and how that affects cultural memory. For if the archaeological data and the primary sources are consistent and do not support the idea of barrenness, how did that become associated with famines in general knowledge?

BACKGROUND

Reports of Ireland's population pre-Famine vary. Most accounts place the population in 1845 around 8.5 million (Smyth 2012a:13). In the years between 1750 and 1845 the population of Ireland increased rapidly, as did that of most of Europe. This was a time of industrialization, contributing to the rise in population. But while Ireland had one of the largest escalations in numbers, from 2.6 million to 8.5 they lacked the same speed of industrialization that took place in the rest of Europe (Donnelly 2001:4). Reasons for the population growth in Ireland are debated by historians, but most attribute the potato in some way (Donnelly 2001:4).

Rural Farming and Class Structure

A significant portion of the Irish lived in rural settings as opposed to cities. The smallest administrative division of land was the "townland" coming from the Irish word *baile* that has its origins dating around the early seventeenth century (Orser 1996b:91). The term townland was created by the English for taxation purposes building upon the already existing land divisions in Ireland (Scally 1995:12). These land divisions are still recognized in Ireland today. Ireland was comprised of 62,205 townlands in the early nineteenth century where an estimated three quarters of the population lived before the Famine (Orser 1996b:91). These townlands comprised the

majority of rural areas and consisted of mainly lower class individuals. While much of the population was of the lower classes, there were landlords living in manors dispersed across the landscape, not just farmer and cottier cabins.

The divisions of class standings vary. At the most basic there is the upper class and the lower class. Alexis de Tocqueville concluded in 1835 that the “middle class evidently does not exist;” (Orser 2006a:217-218) books like *The Hidden Ireland* by Daniel Corkery in 1925 support this. This was a generally accepted historical viewpoint before the Famine, though it is now deemed too simplistic.

One division of nineteenth century rural agriculture structure uses the terms landlord, tenant, subtenant, and cottier categories based upon housing structure from best to worst (Ryder and Orser 2006:22). Three quarters of the population fell into the cottier and subtenant levels, characterized by one room cabins (fourth level housing) and two to four room cabins with windows (third level housing) built out of mud or sod (Ryder and Orser 2006:22-23). Third level houses could also be built of out stone, like is the case at Gorttoose, five to nine rooms of stone was second level housing, and anything larger was considered first class (Hull 2004:119). Laborers are even lower on the social scale than cottiers, for they have no lands of their own. An even more detailed rural hierarchy from Katherine L. Hull (2007:82) from highest to lowest follows as landlords, graziers, middlemen, strong farmers, middling farmers, small farmers, cottiers, and landless laborers. This can still be considered simplified. There is an extensive variety when it comes to the peasantry classes, but the middle class is very small and easily overlooked. Irish society did have merchants, doctors, and craftspeople; they were just not as populous or rurally located. This non-cohesive understanding of rural Irish social stratification complicates historical documentation as well as archaeological understandings.

For all the variety over social ranking systems, many typically rely on land acreage. Much of Ireland was divided into small holdings before the Famine, especially in the south and west. A common practice for land usage was “rundale” farming, a way of dividing up lands that consisted of farmers having scattered plots of land to tend across the landscape, instead of in one large or adjoining area (Sally 1995:13).

While landlords did not typically end up starving, they did face their share of problems. Landlords were to provide for their tenants, or be responsible for those who were destitute in their areas by giving money or employment. Many did not have extra money to spare with the lack of rent coming in due to the Famine. A number of landlords went bankrupt, leading to more extensive evictions and little help for their tenants (Donnelly 2001).

Numerous landlords did not rent directly out to small farmers or cottiers but went through intermediate landlords called middlemen. This divided the land holding into smaller parts and had less rent paid directly to the landowners. The Famine brought about a way to remove middlemen and unwanted tenants from the land scheme where it had not been possible before through evictions and the Gregory Clause (discussed later). When the small farmers and cottiers could not pay their rents for lack of crops, it was the middlemen who got evicted as well for being unable to pay their rents to the main landlords.

Reliance on the Potato

The potato was, and still is, a staple in the diet of the Irish people. In 1845 potatoes made up about sixty percent of Ireland’s national food supply (Donnelly 2001:171). In the years before the blight the potato was especially important for the lowest classes of society. Many had plots of land called “conacres” specifically for growing potatoes to feed the family. For the bottom third of the population the average adult male would consume between 10 to 14 pounds of

potatoes per day, occasionally along with some milk or buttermilk and fish (Donnelly 2001:1; Ó Gráda 1999:17-18). While this seems like an excessive amount of potatoes, it was necessary to support their hard farming lifestyle. For example, an adult male slave on a rice plantation in the United States would have burned 8,700 calories on hard labor day and around half that, 4,437 calories on an easy labor day (Blonigen 2004:Table 4). While the conditions of the work are not the exact same, it can be supposed that the Irish laborers would be in a similar range for calories burned. The average person per capita consumed about five pounds of potatoes per day, meaning not only the poorest made use of this crop (Ó Gráda 1999:17).

The potato was of greater importance in Ireland than any other European country at the time of the Famine. Out of all the land in use for crop growth, one third of that was kept for potatoes, each acre producing around six tons of potatoes (Ó Gráda 1999:19). The soils in Ireland are particularly good for the potato because they are acidic and the climate is damp and temperate (Ó Gráda 1999). Many varieties of potatoes were grown, with the Lumper being particularly utilized by the lowest classes because it could grow in the poorer soils to which the lower classes had access. In 1845 2.1 million acres of land were growing potatoes, while in 1847 less than 0.3 acres were planted for potato crops (Ó Gráda 1999:21). The potato famine was devastating to the Irish reliance on the potato. Not only were potatoes not planted in the same quantities, crop rotations that utilized the potato also collapsed.

The Potato Blight

Phytophthora infestans is the micro-organism that caused the potato blight, sometimes referred as the potato murrain. The disease did not strike Ireland first. The potato blight originated in the New World and traveled back to Europe from there. The blight was not present in Europe prior to 1842 and possibly not before 1844 (Donnelly 2001:41). The source of the blight to Europe is

not definitively known, but it likely came from potatoes shipped either from Peru or the United States which was known to have the blight in 1843 and 1844 (Donnelly 2001:41). In the late summer and early fall of 1845 the blight had traveled through a large area of Northern and Central Europe (Donnelly 2001:42). The strength of the blight, and the damage it did, depended on when it arrived. The earliest hit would suffer the worst, though outside factors also played a role, such as weather conditions (Donnelly 2001). The fungus matures on the potato plant then spreads via air and water travel. Though Ireland was not hit with the disease until mid-September, the adverse weather conditions quickened the spread of the blight (Donnelly 2001).

Ireland's climate is generally overcast and rainy with moderate temperatures, though sunshine is not unheard of, despite popular belief. These wet conditions were particularly bad in the fall of 1845, in benefit of the blight. Before *Phytophthora infestans* came to Ireland there had been few diseases to affect the potato crop. There were two main crop diseases, and they were periodic, 'curl' which is a virus and 'dry rot' also called 'taint' which is caused by a fungus (Donnelly 2001:41). Because of this the extensive and long lasting potato blight was particularly harsh on the Irish.

There was a good deal of concern about preventing the spread of the disease and protecting what potatoes had not been affected. Home remedies for saving the potatoes were numerous, but the most followed advice came from the British government since Ireland was under British control. The government created a scientific commission dedicated to the matter. The commission was made up of two Englishmen Dr. Lyon Playfair and Dr. John Lidnley, a chemist and a botanist respectively, who were in good standing with the government, as well as Professor Robert Kane from Queen's College, Cork who was already investigating the blight (Donnelly 2001:44). The commission was taxed with three problems: 1) how to preserve healthy

potatoes; 2) what to do with blighted potatoes; and 3) make sure there was enough seed for potatoes in 1846 (Donnelly 2001).

A cause of many issues the government and commission subsequently faced was having wrongly diagnosed the cause of the blight. The commission believed the blight was caused by the cold, wet, and cloudy weather instead of a fungus, which was argued by people like Reverend M.J. Berkeley (Donnelly 2001:44). This meant their remedies were unlikely to be effective. Potatoes were thought to be kept in good condition if they were quarantined from blighted potatoes, kept dry, and stored properly, though later the government officials claimed steeping the potatoes in bog water would keep them from being blighted (Donnelly 2001). The change from absolutely dry to bog soaking the spuds lost the commission credibility in the eyes of the Irish.

The commission's options for using the blighted potatoes depended on the extent of decay on the potato. For the least decayed of the affected potatoes, less than a quarter inch of decay present, the commission said they could still be eaten with no risk to people given the decay was cut off before boiling (Donnelly 2001:45). For potatoes farther along in discoloration and smell they could be broken down into starch and added to meal or flour to make bread, though the very far decayed potatoes were useless for food (Donnelly 2001). The decaying potatoes could also be used to feed livestock, but the commission wanted the most food available for human consumption, so this was not advertised (Donnelly 2001). There was a massive communications breakdown between the scientists and the poor of Ireland, who were distrustful of the British.

The incorrect diagnosis for the blight also affected the recommendations toward seed potato for the next year's crop. Good potatoes from the 1845 harvest could be used as seed for

1846, since the weather conditions were unlikely to be as poor as in 1845, they believed that the farmers would not have the same blight problem (Donnelly 2001). However this was not the case since the weather was equally bad in 1846. The commission believed any lack of seed in Ireland could be made up in imports from Southern Europe that were mainly blight free though they were through the use of private commercial accounts, not government funds (Donnelly 2001). The commission underestimated the lack of seed available in 1846 and their ability to keep diseased potatoes from being planted by ignorance or accident (Donnelly 2001).

Besides the lack of seed, 1846 also had bad weather that delayed the planting season and an early summer drought delayed the growth of the bulbs (Ó Gráda 1999). Unfortunately, the weather in 1847 was warm and dry, perfect for planting. This meant there was very little blight in the potatoes from 1847, but with such few planted, the yields were even fewer than in 1846 (Donnelly 2001:59). The good weather redoubled planting in 1848 though it was another wet year causing the blight to return.

Compared to the rest of Europe Ireland's famine was much more devastating in relation to human life. This is still the case proportionally in loss of life to the majority of famines since then (Donnelly 2001). The first starvation deaths in Ireland were recorded in 1846 (Ó Gráda 2006:9). It is estimated that around one million died of Famine related causes, starvation, and disease by 1851—deaths that could have been avoided (Smyth 2012b:4).

British Politics

Sir Robert Peel was in charge of the British Ministry at the beginning of the Famine until the middle of the summer in 1846, when Lord John Russell's Whig government took over. Peel's government arguably did a better job with the challenges it faced, and his efforts were looked well upon compared to Russell's choices. Both governments had their share of mistakes,

especially in the eyes of the Irish. Following Russell's government was Lord Aberdeen who took office at the tail end of the Famine. He is credited with ending all of Ireland's remaining Famine debts in 1853 (Donnelly 2001:118-119).

Peel's Government

Peel's government acted promptly to the news of the partial potato failure in 1845. However, the government acted quietly and there was a delay between purchasing supplies and their delivery. This caused distress to the Irish, especially because they believed that nothing was being done to help their situation. The oat crops were particularly good in 1845 which the government thought would help substitute for the potato failure. Public opinion was that the oats were being exported too heavily, and the government was refusing to stop it (Donnelly 2001). Irish government officials urged Peel to make some significant changes to provide relief. Peel's ministry was advised to repeal the Corn Laws allowing for duty-free imports on foreign grains; forbid the export of oats from Ireland; and raise a loan of £1.5 million to establish public granaries and provide employment for the destitute (Donnelly 2001:54).

In early November of 1845 the British government spent £100,000 on Indian corn from the United States, which would arrive between February and June of 1846 (Donnelly 2001:49). Another £46,000 was spent on maize and oatmeal to be shipped from Britain to Ireland, and by August 1846 the total used on food, water transportation, kiln-drying, and grinding reached £185,000 (Donnelly 2001:49). Calculating for inflation the total cost would equal £18,263,505.15 or \$27,618,072.49 today. Maize was, and still is, a livestock feed in most of Europe, and subsisting on maize alone is not practical from a dietary standard. So while Britain felt like it was spending a large sum on providing food for the Irish, the Irish were not as convinced.

The main burden of providing for the destitute was to fall on the local committees, because the government wanted to interfere as little as possible. The government would sell food to the committees at cost, and the committees would get subscriptions, mainly from landowners, to purchase the food and sell it to the poor in their area (Donnelly 2001). In areas where there were no local relief committees, central relief committees set up food stores for the sale of food at cost, mainly along the most effected west and south of Ireland. This happened more than the government anticipated with 76 sub-depots opening along the south and west coasts and another 29 in the interior of Connacht and Munster (Donnelly 2001:50). To preserve food stores, the depots were to be available during times of greatest need between mid-May and mid-August.

Indian corn meal first met with resistance to the general population, though it did not last long with the starving people. The resistance was partially due to the physical discomfort of such a dietary change. The daily change from ten pounds of potatoes to the allotted one pound of meal was not well received (Donnelly 2001:50). The other problem with the Indian corn meal was it was not ground enough by private millers, for they had no experience with it, leaving the meal lumpy and coarse. The government combated this issue with the release of cheap pamphlets on how to grind and cook the maize to make it more palatable (Donnelly 2001:50). Maize was not used extensively in Irish trade, so the government did not feel as though they were interfering with the market in any significant manner. These feelings were not shared by the Irish people, who felt that the government was still not doing enough to help them.

Public Works

Along with the import of Indian corn meal and other food stuffs, Peel's government set up public works projects to employ the destitute. Neither government's efforts with the public works

system functioned particularly well, but it was an effort against giving handouts to the poor. It was hoped that the public works would temporarily employ, and therefore feed, the destitute while providing permanent improvements to the Irish economy with the building of things like roads, piers, harbors, and drainage on landed estates (Donnelly 2001).

Road improvements were the main source of employment through the public works. These were headed by one of two entities: the county's grand jury and the Board of Works. When the county grand jury accepted a project it would be loaned the front money by the British Treasury but would have to be repaid in full by the county. During Peel's government the county grand juries spent £134,000 on projects (Donnelly 2001:54). The Board of Works only required half of the money to be repaid by the county, so they ended up giving out more money for projects than the grand juries. This was called the "half-grant" system, and it spent £453,000 on public works with half of that being recoverable (Donnelly 2001:54).

Both entities paid their workers by the day, rather than by the task. There were some claims that this work paid well enough to keep laborers from the farms or other means of private employ, though the pay was not always enough to keep families from starving (Donnelly 2001). Tickets were to be issued for the public works projects. These were meant to follow specific guidelines so the destitute were employed by the local committees. However, there were no strict checks on who was within the guidelines to receive a ticket for work, and they were handed out at higher quantities than the jobs could effectively support (Donnelly 2001). About 140,000 people were given work by Peel's governmental policies and estimating each worker had four beneficiaries around 700,000 people were being fed off the public works (Donnelly 2001:55). That was less than 10 percent (8.75) of the population, actually receiving aid.

When Russell's government took over after Peel's administration they did not put a halt to the public works programs right away. He wanted to improve upon the public works and not give food away for free. The new system for public works was introduced in August of 1846. The Board of Works was to be in charge of all projects and all costs were to be met by taxation instead of the Treasury paying half (Donnelly 2001). The saying "Irish property must support Irish poverty" (Donnelly 2001:70) was common following this decision.

The new works projects were scheduled to start in September but did not actually begin until October. Most of the projects were building and repairing bridges and roads. The biggest change in the public works was how those employed on them were paid. In an effort to reduce perceived idleness of the workers payments switched from set daily amounts to task wages (Donnelly 2001:73). This change was fought against, sometimes violently. This system was not good for those who were old, sick, malnourished, or otherwise not at full working capacity. However, the young healthy males could still survive with the rising food costs. Once the laborers found ways to turn the situation in their favor, for example by pressuring overseers to pay higher wages, the system was less contested (Donnelly 2001).

Many still did not earn enough to prevent starvation and disease. There were frequent delays in payments due to a number of reasons: dishonesty of the clerks, shortages of silver, breakdowns in the paperwork system, and the failure of the overseers to measure task work promptly meaning one to two week delays were common, sometimes up to five weeks late (Donnelly 2001). In the winter of 1846-1847 the weather was particularly harsh, but the government refused to pay normal wages for the poor conditions where they would not have been able to put in the normal amount of work regardless. Around this time the government realized that the public works were not effective. The public works ended in the spring of 1847,

after its peak employment numbers in March with as many as 714,390 daily utilizing the public works (Donnelly 2001:72).

Russell's Government

The new government faced even greater challenges than Peel's because 1846 brought about a complete potato crop failure instead of the partial failure the year before. The purchasing of supplies was more difficult because of the previous quantities purchased emptying shipping ports. Food depots were set up west of the River Shannon, which starts in County Cavan and runs south to County Limerick, and were to be used only as a last resort should food not be supplied from dealers or other private parties (Donnelly 2001).

Charles Trevelyan, the British Treasurer in London, refused to allow exports to be shut down, citing that it would cause harm to Ireland and the Irish economy (Donnelly 2001:69). This decision was one of the main springboards for the idea that the British wanted the Irish to starve. Exports caused higher prices in food stuffs, so there was an increase in malnourishment, starvation, and disease. Food was available to the Irish; however, many did not have the means to pay for or otherwise access the food. This caused the Irish to have a greater resentment towards the English for feeling as though their food was being exported away and purposefully kept from them.

After the ending of the public works projects, the government turned to soup kitchens as a means of providing relief. Food distribution was due to start on the 15th of March, 1847, but many of the nearly 2,000 soup kitchens that would dot Ireland were not functioning until May, and then only 1,250 (Donnelly 2001:82). This was to be a stopgap measure until the amendments to the poor law could be drafted and put into place.

There were debates for cost effectiveness of delivering rations to the populace via the soup kitchens in either cooked or uncooked form. While cooking the rations took more time it was better for health reasons –it reduced diarrhea, dysentery, and occasionally scurvy– and it lessened the number of people who would make use of the system (Donnelly 2001:87, 91). On the other hand, uncooked food was cheaper and less of a hassle. It did draw more people in who would not take the time to get cooked rations that could not be stored for any length of time.

Soup kitchens had a few rules to be followed, some more heavily enforced than others. All able-bodied members of the household were to be present before any in that house were given their soup rations (Donnelly 2001). A more meaningful rule archaeologically was that to receive rations, each person must bring their own vessel (Donnelly 2001). Receiving handouts was demoralizing to the Irish, but cost effective for the British.

This stopgap is historically seen as the most effective relief program that the British government put into place. Feeding the populace with soup kitchens was cheaper and more direct than the public works had been. While it was effective, the soup kitchens were not without problems. Only three categories of people were entitled to gratuitous relief: the non-able-bodied, the destitute unemployed laborers, and destitute landholders (Donnelly 2001:86). Because working laborers were not given supplements to their incomes, many quit their jobs to qualify for relief and to better feed their families.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of June 1847 put added pressure on an already pressured landlord class in Ireland. This amendment took the majority of costs for providing for the Irish poor off the British and placed it on the landlords and tenants. The poor law, which provided for workhouses, was adding outdoor relief for the overcrowding of the workhouses through the amendment (Donnelly 2001). The outdoor relief for the destitute would extend to nearly three

million people that the Irish landlords would be forced to support (Donnelly 2001:95).

Landlords would pay the rates of their tenants, all holdings valued under £4 would be covered completely and holdings valued higher would be covered by half (Donnelly 2001:96).

The Gregory Clause

The biggest change, and the worst for peasants, was the Gregory Clause added in the amendment. The Gregory Clause, also called the Quarter Acre Clause, stated that anyone who held more than a quarter acre of land was not entitled to relief from the poor rates (Donnelly 2001:102). This gave way to large scale clearances by landlords. They were able to consolidate their holdings, giving them less to pay in rates, especially if their tenants were behind on rents like most were due to the Famine.

Many smallholders refused to give up all but a quarter acre of their land were starving to death, and starving their families along with them (Donnelly 2001:110-111). The family members did not qualify for relief if they were dependents of someone who had more than a quarter acre of land. They feared, with good reason, that their houses would be demolished if they gave up their lands or they would lose any opportunity at landlord assisted emigration (Donnelly 2001:111). In late May of 1848 it was granted that those destitute dependents living on land a farmer refused to relinquish would be allowed in the workhouses, or outdoor relief if they were full (Donnelly 2001:111-112).

There was always a possibility for cottiers who maintained their houses to return from the workhouses and find their cabins had been unroofed by the landlords (Donnelly 2001:111). If tenants were cooperative with their evictions they were often times allowed to remove their own roof and take the timber and thatching to provide for them (Donnelly 2001:114). Many landlords refused to allow the tenants to keep any land if they surrendered it, rather than let them keep a

quarter acre (Donnelly 2001:112-114). This was why some tenants chose to starve rather than relinquish what holdings they had. However, if the tenants were far enough behind on rent, they could be evicted at any time.

Resistance Against Workhouses

Workhouses were a form of supporting the poverty-stricken Irish created by the British government through the Poor Laws in 1838 (Ó Tuathaigh 1972:108-114). Workhouses were designed as a way for the able-bodied poor get government help; the workers would get clothes, food, and shelter. They were not designed for Famine level of destitution, nor for the massive amounts of diseases that swept through the population.

With workhouses significantly overcrowded, outdoor relief was a boon for the peasants. Workhouses were seen as a last resort –somewhere to go to die so where they were guaranteed a burial and coffin (Donnelly 2001:104). The relief committees wanted to keep outdoor relief to a minimum, even though it was cheaper than the workhouses for it did not have costs for bedding, clothing, or medicine (Donnelly 2001:107).

Like the soup kitchens, there was debate within the committees about giving out cooked or uncooked rations. In 1848 the government urged cooked rations, using a similar system as the soup kitchens. However, this could not effectively be put into place without the same level of government funding and administration, so there were fewer stations located giving out food (Donnelly 2001:108). By May of 1849 twenty-three out of the thirty-one unions were giving out solely raw rations, six unions did both raw and cooked, and two unions gave out cooked food alone (Donnelly 2001:109). To qualify for destitution as an able-bodied male they were required to break stones as a labor test to earn their rations (Donnelly 2001:109-110). It was used as a

mechanism to keep away those who were not desperate, because it was hated, seemingly useless, work, though for most a workhouse was already a last resort.

Population Loss

The population between 1841 and 1851, the years of the national census, dropped in each of the 32 Irish counties, barring Dublin which experienced population growth likely due to migration into the city rather than an absence of Famine (Donnelly 2001:169-170). Eleven counties, mainly in Connaught in the west of Ireland had population drops of over 25 percent (Donnelly 2001:169-170). Specific numbers for the loss of population are contested for the Famine period, even more so the number of deaths. The extent of population loss through death and emigration lead to the promotion of barrenness with the association of the Famine.

Evictions and Emigration

Eviction numbers before 1849 can only be approximated for no detailed records were kept prior (Donnelly 2001:139). The constabulary began taking counts of evictions in 1849 of families evicted and which were readmitted, either after paying rents or as caretakers without payment (Donnelly 2001:139-140). Evictions recorded from 1849 to 1854 total 65,412 families or 341,503 persons with each family averaging around five people (Donnelly 2001:140). Estimates calculate evictions between 1845 and 1849 to be 37,286 with 16,400 houses leveled (Orser 1996b:99; Vaughan 1994:Appendix I). These house levelings would add to the barrenness of the Irish landscape.

This should show up on archaeological sites as walls or partial walls collapsed either into or outside of the houses. Some houses were not demolished completely, just unroofed. This will leave an actual house foundation and walls to crumble over time if they were not re-purposed for

other things. Roof beams made of timber may or may not have left traces in the archaeological record because some families were allowed to take roofing supplies with them. Other times landlords would burn the houses, which would leave less in the archaeological record. Even traveling through Ireland today there are many abandoned stone cabins where some of the walls are still standing. It is not immediately obvious if these buildings are Famine related, though that is what they are associated with on first glance. They leave an impression upon the landscape that is a reminder of the Famine, whether that specific house was occupied during the Famine or not.

Not every family that left was counted as an eviction. Landlords could pay their tenants a small sum to have them leave without the hassle of an eviction, though the end result was the same. Other times they would offer a family compensation for emigration if they left their lands. There were three types of evictions. Tenants could be served evictions and then have their houses leveled; their houses could be left standing; or they could be evicted but allowed to return to the house as caretakers (Donnelly 2001:146). With the last category of evictions, clearance numbers are less straight forward because not everyone who was evicted actually left the land. Houses were commonly leveled, or at least unroofed, otherwise the tenants would return to them.

While it was not difficult for landlords to evict tenants a first time, to get a second eviction notice for the same persons was costly, for they would have to take each individual family to court again rather than have a mass eviction notice (Donnelly 2001:152-154). The courts for evictions were in the landlord's favor. By going through the higher courts landlords could get eviction notices for their entire lands, instead of for each individual family (Donnelly 2001:152). Tenants had to be in enough debt, typically behind by a whole year's worth of rent or more to be evicted. However, it was typical, according to Alexander Somerville writing in 1847,

that tenants were allowed to fall into arrears by their landlords to the point where they could be evicted at any time (Snell 1994:115-116). This sort of system was in place before the Famine, making clearances during the Famine easier.

Much of the resentment stemming from evictions was not solely being thrown out of their homes, but having their homes torn down as well. When cabins were not leveled, even with locks put on them, families would break into them and reoccupy their homes (Ryder and Orser 2006:33).

Some of the tenants forced to leave emigrated to the United States, Canada, or Australia. If they did not use landlord assisted emigration when offered, the tenants would be evicted later with no help (Donnelly 2001:144). Landlord assisted emigration was most popular between 1846 and 1848 (Donnelly 2001:143). In the years of the Famine and immediately following, 1845-1855, 2.1 million Irish emigrated, 1.2 million of that population leaving before 1851 (Donnelly 2001:178).

Famine Deaths

Deaths during the Famine were not caused by starvation alone, but other Famine related causes. Many more died of diseases rather than starvation, mostly because the diseases would kill them first (Donnelly 2001:171). Excess mortality is a term used to describe Famine deaths that were outside the scope of normal living and could have been prevented. S.H. Cousens, a geographer, was one of the first to calculate excess mortality for the Famine based off 1851 census data. Cousens' calculations had 800,645 people between 1846 and 1850, with adding the first quarter of 1851, 860,000 people lost because of the Famine (Donnelly 2001:169). Joel Mokyr, an economic historian, contested these numbers on the basis that the census counts were too low, for when entire families were wiped out there was no one to report such to the census takers

(Donnelly 2001:169). His calculations put excess mortality between 1846 and 1851 at 1,082,000 people not counting averted births (with averted births 1,498,000) (Mokyr 1985:Table 9.1).

Mokyr's calculations by province have Connacht with the highest excess mortality at 40.4 percent of the total, followed by Munster with 30.4 percent, Ulster with 20.7 percent, and last Leinster with 8.6 percent when the lower bound of total excess deaths per province is divided by Ireland's total lower bound excess deaths, 100.1 percent is due to rounding (Mokyr 1985:Table 9.1). The counties with the highest yearly averages of excess mortality were Mayo, Sligo, Galway, and Roscommon (Mokyr 1985:Table 9.2). Mokyr created a regression analysis to see what variables best correlated with the pattern of excess mortality. His results showed that it was not pre-Famine acreage of potatoes, not rent per capita, but income per capita and literacy rates that matched patterns of excess mortality (Mokyr 1985:269-274).

Disease was a prominent killer of the Irish during the Famine. 'Famine fever' was common, though it was really two different kinds of fevers, typhus and relapsing fever (Donnelly 2001:173). Dysentery and diarrhea were two other major killers along with the Famine fevers (Donnelly 2001:172). Along with the lack of food smaller infections and diseases turned deadly as well. Measles, scarlet fever, consumption (most commonly tuberculosis of the lungs), smallpox, and 'Asiatic' cholera were the most prevalent (Donnelly 2001:174). Diseases caused by the poor weather conditions during the Famine were also a factor.

FAMINE IMAGERY

The Famine was a cultural shifting point and a large scale calamity. While some classes of society were affected more than others, few were left untouched. The way Ireland and its

population are visually depicted during the Famine years of 1845 and 1852 stress the overwhelmingly negative effects of the Famine.

A pattern common in Famine imagery is the depiction of barrenness (Maggie Ronayne Personal Communication 2012). Spaces are either empty or deteriorating, and the people are following suit. As discussed in the next section, the archaeological evidence does not necessarily lend support to the idea that the rural populations had nothing.

Many of the images of the Famine come from the *Illustrated London News* created by either Irish illustrators or visitors to Ireland. One such artist who is well remembered is James Mahony from Cork (Donnelly 2001:98). He was employed by the *Illustrated London News* from 1846 to 1852 and spent much of that time sketching the Famine and its aftermath (Campbell 2012:473-474). These iconic scenes are reprinted in countless places and are used to not only represent the Famine in Cork but Ireland as a whole.

One such scene (Figure 2) was sketched in 1847 at the height of the Famine. It shows a doctor attending a dying man in Schull, a small village in Cork (Donnelly 2001:98). The doctor depicted is Robert Traill who died of ‘famine fever’ in April of 1847 (Geary 2012:211). While the doctor is in the foreground, the more interesting aspects for this study encompass the rest of the sketch. The cabin is bare of furniture, besides the single chair that Traill occupies. There does not appear to be any windows in the cabin, and the doorway stands empty of a door, but not of a beggar child. The dying man lies alone on the right while his family huddles in the back left corner, presumably around a turf fire (Donnelly 2001:98). There is a loft near the roof, likely used to store potatoes in good harvest years (Donnelly 2001:2). In the front left corner of the image there is a pile of rubble, which could be rotting potatoes or possibly bricks. This all depicts a stark emptiness common of Famine imagery. The distinct lack of personal items, what

archaeologists view as material culture, is clear. It draws attention to the open space, that there is nothing to fill it with. This gives the viewer an overall feeling of barrenness.



Figure 2. Famine Doctor (Donnelly 2001:99; see also Geary 2012:Figure 3; Carty ed. 1965a:171).

Another sketch from Mahony is of a few small cabins that depicts a barren landscape in the district of Skibbereen in County Cork (Figure 3). This sketch was also done in 1847 for the *Illustrated London News*. In the right of the frame a man huddles down with a girl standing next to him. He leans on a walking stick and she has a woven basket on her back; no other possessions are visible either around them or in the rest of the image. The cabin in the

foreground draws the viewer's eye because it is lighter than the rest of the sketch. There is no door and the roof appears to be collapsing. The cabin is small, likely only one room, putting it in the lowest class, level four, of housing. There are a few other cabins in the background, and what are possibly two figures standing between them. Even the trees are lifeless and without leaves, adding to the image of emptiness. The terrain is scraggly grass and rocks, no crops are visible. The background, with low lying mountains and an oncoming rainstorm, are shadowy and bleak. The birds flying in the distance add to the ambiance of the sketch. This picture gives a dirty feeling to associate with the Famine.



Figure 3. Skibbereen (Donnelly 2001:99; see also Hickey 2012:Figure 5; Carty ed. 1965a:163).

The third, and likely most reproduced, of Mahony's illustrations from 1847 is of a starving girl and boy looking for potatoes at Caheragh, Cork (Figure 4) (Donnelly 2001:98). There is nothing in the image besides three people, the two main children in the foreground and a woman in the background. The children are wrapped in tattered clothing and lacking proper footwear. The ground looks empty, and it is unsure if the girl has found anything edible or just rocks. Their faces are gaunt, and it is clear that they are hungry. The woman in the background adds depth to the illustration, showing that these two children were not alone in their desperate search for food.



Figure 4. Starving Children (Hickney 2012:Figure 2; see also Donnelly 2001:89; Woodham-Smith 1962:154; Carty ed. 1965a:169).

These three Mahony works leave viewers shocked and depressed, as is their intention. As mentioned previously, Mahony is a Cork native writing for an English newspaper the *Illustrated London News*. As explained by Donnelly (2001:98) Mahony's work "uniquely brought home the grim reality of the famine to middle-class doorsteps in Britain" looking to boost private donations to Ireland's Famine relief. Like Mahony's illustrations, the majority of the Famine imagery is meant to astound viewers. While observing Famine images, it is important to understand why they were produced, for whom, and by whom. Not all of the images are as well documented as to who the artists were as Mahony's works have been.

George Frederic Watts painted *The Irish Famine* in 1850 with oil on canvas (Figure 5) (Donnelly 2001:Plate between 84-85). The painting is dark and devastating with muted browns and blues to accentuate the pale faces, especially of the mother and child. The infant appears to be dying in its mother's arms. Two men sit to the right of the mother, one sitting tall, and the other hiding his face. A knapsack tied to a stick lies by the mother's knee, but other than that the painting is void of objects. They are sitting on stones, with no grass to be seen and no foliage in the background. Interestingly the clothes of the depicted are not in tatters like Mahony's illustrations, nor are they overly dirty. The expressions are those of hopelessness, anguish, and sadness. While this painting is not specified as a rural family, the lack of anything in the background, especially a city-scape, lends itself more towards a rural depiction. Watts had never been to Ireland when he painted this which means his depiction of Ireland is not firsthand knowledge (Cummings et al. 1968:288). This may be why the people do not look emaciated though they are being depicted as starving.



Figure 5. *The Irish Famine* (Donnelly 2001:Plate between 84-85; see also Smyth 2012c:Figure 17; Cummings et al. 1968:289).

Another common illustration of the Famine was eviction and post-eviction scenes. They highlight the plight of the rural Irish of being homeless as well as starving. One such image comes from the *Illustrated London News* entitled “The Day After The Ejectment” from December 16, 1848 (Figure 6) (Morash 2012:Figure 2). A man is seen leaning outside his ramshackle dwelling after being evicted from his home. A woman is huddled under the lean-to with a child in her arms, and another child points off into the distance. The foliage is scraggly, but present, while the tree looks to be dropping what few leaves it had left. A wheel, likely part of a cart, hold up the dwelling made of thatch and timber (possibly from the evicted family's original home).

In a place of prominence near the man’s foot is a dark jug, likely coarse earthenware. The ground around it is bare to draw the viewer’s attention. This appears to be the sole functioning material good in the illustration. This makes a statement about having just the bare minimum to survive. To receive food from soup kitchens the destitute were required to bring their own vessels. To be completely without a vessel is tantamount to starvation. It could be that this single vessel represents what is left of the family’s hope for survival, even though coarse earthenware was common and mainly utilized by the rural Irish for kitchen use and food preparation. When turned out, many would result to stealing, begging, or outdoor relief, or the workhouses as a last resort (Donnelly 2001:113).



Figure 6. The Day after the Ejection (Donnelly 2001:113; see also Morash 2012:Figure 2; Woodham-Smith 1962: Plate between 288-289).

A second post-eviction scene also appears in the *Illustrated London News* in 1849. This depicts a man in front of his “scapleen” based off the Irish word for shelter, that was built in the ruins of his house in County Clare (Figure 7) (Donnelly 2001:113). The roof and walls were torn down purposefully during an eviction to attempt to keep the tenants from returning. The man is alone: no family, other people, or even an animal nearby. He wears tattered clothes and has no shoes. There is nothing in the way of possessions visible besides the hat he is clutching. It is possible that what possessions he does still have are hidden from view; intentional of the artist or

not is unclear. There is a house in the background, with its roof intact implying that this man's eviction was not necessarily district wide. He is at the center of the image with everything else taking secondary priority. He is a man who has lost everything, yet is still trying to manage.



Figure 7. Scapleen (Donnelly 2001:113).

A common portrayal of evictions during the Famine is families being roughly escorted out of their homes and then having their homes torn down around them. This was not a universal quality of landlords and their bailiffs, but it remains firmly fixed in folk memory (Butler 2012:265). One such image is entitled “The Ejectment” published in the *Illustrated London News* on December 16, 1848 (Figure 8) (Butler 2012:Figure 1). The scene is chaotic and filled

with action, something not often seen in Famine imagery. A man on a horse, likely the landlord or his agent is holding an eviction notice while the family begs to be allowed to stay in their home. While they plead the thatch roof is being dismantled and their possessions are piled outside. There are armed police (commonly called “Peelers” after Sir Robert Peel) with rifles and bayonets to keep the tenants in line and to prevent violence. The house itself does not appear overly large, though it does have windows putting it a step above the lowest level of housing. Two men are dragging a bundle out of the doorway of what could be sleeping material or roof thatch. It is impossible to see inside the house for what might have been remaining, or what the tenants were not allowed to remove before their house was demolished.

What possessions had been removed include a table, a single chair, an iron pot, a coarse earthenware jug, and a cylindrical object under the table. No one is moving towards the material items, nor does anyone appear to be adding to the small pile. This focuses the viewer more on the house and family than what meager items they might have possessed. It still displays the types of possessions that the rural Irish had at the time of the Famine. On the left hand side of the illustration an agent is leading away a donkey and goats, likely to pay for some of the debt owed by the family being evicted. This was common practice during the Famine. No one moves to interfere with the eviction besides the family begging. This is likely due to the Peelers and that there is little another peasant could say to make the landlord change his mind. The landscape is scraggly but growing, with people running around. That combined with the multitude of people present at the eviction give a lifelike and alive quality that the majority of Famine illustrations lack.



Figure 8. An Ejection (Donnelly 2001:26, see also Butler 2012:Figure 1; Woodham-Smith 1962:Plate between 288-289).

Unroofed houses left standing empty contribute to the association of desolation with rural Ireland, and Ireland in general, throughout the Famine. These houses lend strength to the concept of barrenness by giving a clear sign that the land can no longer support the population. One such illustration is of the Village of Moveen, in Kiltrush in County Clare, from the *Illustrated London News* from the 22nd of December, 1849 (Figure 9) (Ó Gráda 2012:Figure 9). This sketch portrays a community of eighteen houses, all but three of which have been unroofed. None of the houses were leveled completely. It is likely that the houses that remain roofed are still occupied, as smoke rises from the chimney of the one closest to the foreground. A figure

appears to be standing near one of the houses on the right side of the illustration. But even with the smoke and the figure the village radiates emptiness. As the associated caption claims “there is nothing but devastation, while the soil is of the finest description, capable of yielding as much as any land in the empire” (Ó Gráda 2012:Figure 9). The soil could be growing crops if they farmers had anything to plant, or if they could afford to buy seeds. But instead, the tenants had been evicted and the ground was not being used to grow food. This makes the landscape seem barren, even when it could be producing and does not fall into the distinction of being unable to be productive.



Figure 9. Village of Moveen (Donnelly 2001:153; see also Ó Gráda 2012:Figure 9).

Another image of Kilrush distract in County Clare is from Tullig Village in the *Illustrated London News* (Figure 10) (Donnelly 2001:115). The majority of the houses have the thatch removed, though some still maintain the support beams of the roofs. There is a lone figure dressed in tatters in front of the village. Besides for the person there are no other living

souls. This illustration depicts a large scale clearance, which were popular during the Famine. These large scale clearances left sections of Ireland uninhabited and looking ruined. This adds to the attribution that Ireland during the Famine was barren.



Figure 10. Tullig Village (Donnelly 2001:115; see also Scally 1995:Plate between 118-119).

When Ireland is discussed the West of Ireland is what is typically understood to be “traditional.” It is more idealized, more rural, and portrayed as what an outsider sees as stereotypically “Irish.” Sheep, little farm cottages made of stone, green grass, and a place that has not changed significantly. Many of the depictions of Ireland during the Famine come from the West, as well as the South, which were the most devastated areas.

It is important to keep in mind when viewing historical data, images or text, that there are biases included that are not always obvious. The author cannot help their own cultural bias, particularly when they are not in a situation where they need to be. This bias is even truer when authors and places depicted are not well recorded. While these images set an overall tone for the

Famine, they are not the way every person in Ireland was living. It is easy to forget that not everyone was absolutely devastated by the Famine, and that the majority of people lived through it. It is impossible to claim that any one of these images is a universal for everyone in Ireland, even all the rural Irish.

Why does bias matter? Images and text cannot be taken at face value, for they are representations. But the key is to understand what they are representing and why. Many images produced for the *Illustrated London News* were used to garner monetary support for the Irish in the form of private donations. This means it would be more beneficial to show the absolute worst possible scenarios to gain sympathy.

Images created before and after the Famine have much more in the way of visible material culture than Famine imagery. Images of rural houses, such as Figure 11 and Figure 12, show the material culture of pre-Famine Ireland for strong and middle class farmers (Smyth 2012a:Figure 3; Donnelly 2001:Plate between 84-85). Even post-Famine eviction scenes such as Figure 13 from the *Illustrated London News* in 1886 has more in the way of physical possessions (Carty ed. 1965b:3). There is a whole basket full of pots and pans as well as other possessions on and around the table the woman is sitting on. The practice of evictions did not start nor end with the Famine, though they were less common. Evictions are highly associated with the Famine, however, which is why this scene could be mistaken for one.



Figure 11. A pre-Famine strong farmer house (Smyth 2012a:Figure 3).



Figure 12. A middling farmer's house pre-Famine (Donnelly 2001:Plate between 84-85).



Figure 13. An Eviction Scene in 1886 (Carty ed. 1965b:3).

Both the pre-Famine and post-Famine scenes have an abundance of material goods compared to any of the imagery created during the Famine. Both pre-Famine paintings are from peasants higher up on the social level than those likely depicted during the Famine. However, the social divisions were not so great in rural Ireland's farmers to make the comparison null. The pre-Famine scenes have a fair amount of refined earthenwares displayed, but little in the way of coarse earthenware, likely due to where such items were used. Since coarse earthenware was mainly a kitchen item they would not be prominently on display. The eviction scene has more metal items and likely coarse earthenware which gives a feeling of lower social rank and poverty.

FAMINE SITES

The sites focused on in this study include the two Nary cabins in Ballykilcline, Gorttoose, and the Brogan House, as well as Mulliviltrin, and Barlow's Field (Figure 14 and Figure 15). The Ballykilcline sites were excavated more extensively than any of the other sites over a five year period; the rest were excavated for a single season. The main categories of artifacts recovered from the sites include ceramics (mainly coarse earthenware and fine earthenware), glass, metal, and "other." The category of other is composed of objects that do not fit the other three or made from a combination of materials of the other categories (Orser 2007:23).



Figure 14. Map of Ireland showing Ballykilcline, Brogan, and Barlow's Field (Orser 2010:Figure 1).

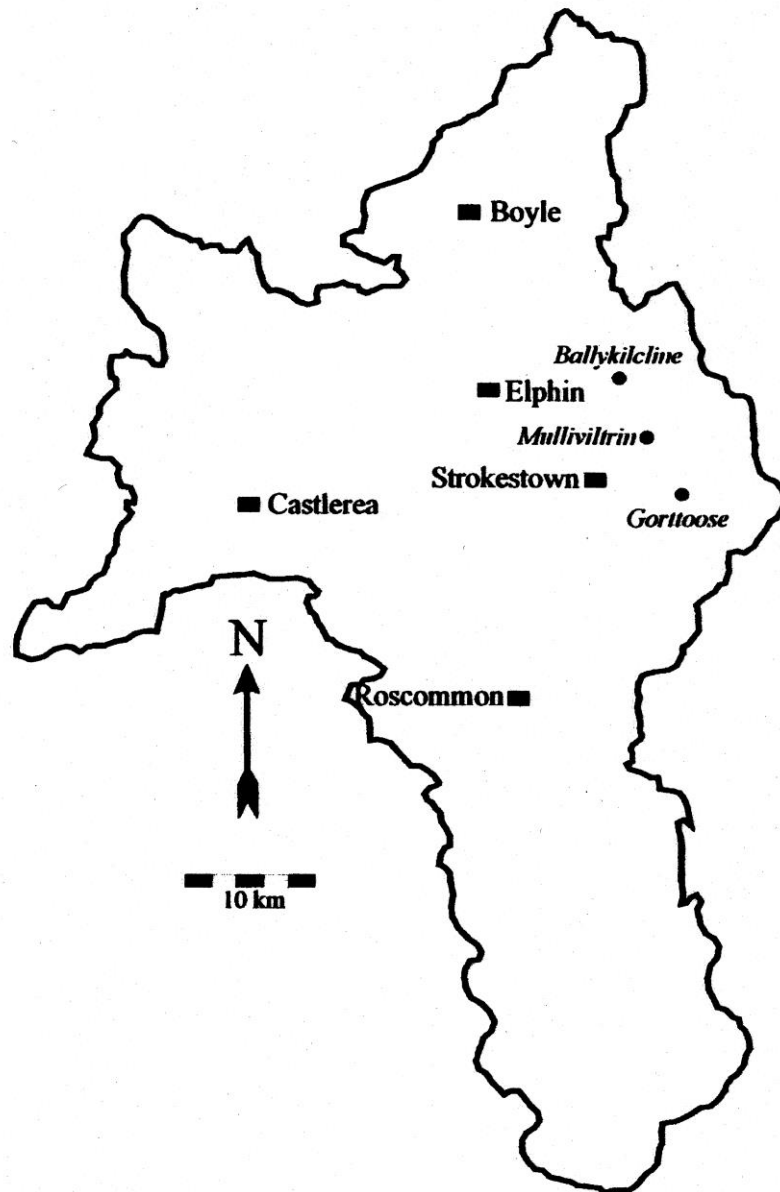


Figure 15. Map of County Roscommon showing sites of Ballykilcline, Mulliviltrin, and Gorttoose (Hull 2004:Figure 1.2).

Much of historical archaeological analysis focuses on fine earthenwares (also termed refined earthenwares) because their distinct patterns have reliable dates associated with them. The uses, prices, and distribution are better documented historically than that of coarse

earthenware, and fine earthenware is more often considered more elitist than coarse earthenware, though it was purchased by more than just elites. There are many variations of fine earthenware, in pattern, color, and ware types. Fine earthenware ceramics were typically produced in England and shipped to Ireland's ports of Dublin, Sligo, Galway, and Belfast (Brighton and Levon White 2006:134). The main types produced were 'creamware', 'pearlware', and 'whiteware'.

Different decoration techniques were hand painted, transfer printed, and molded patterns.

Common transfer print patterns in the nineteenth century include romantic, British, American, Gothic, oriental, and scenic, with the Willow pattern in particular being very popular because of its English origins (Brighton and Levon White 2006:114-119).

Fine earthenware ceramics have been seen historically as more elitist goods. They are used as symbols of status. Finewares are typically table settings and teawares. Families would have more than one set of tableware, one for more daily use and one for display or special occasions. This seems strange in a rural Irish household, but it did happen, as depicted at the Nary households, and it was not terribly uncommon (Brighton and Levon White 2006:132-133).

One of the most commonly used items for the rural Irish is also one of the least studied and understood: coarse earthenware ceramics. Coarse earthenware is known by a variety of names such as "blackware", "brownware", "redware", "country pottery", simply "earthenware", and "lead-glazed earthenware" (Hull 2006a:100; Orser 2006b:73). This pottery is known for its reddish body color (glazed it can have a brown to black finish) and for being durable and not overly expensive. Coarse earthenware was used in the kitchen and dairy as opposed to on the table, they were more utilitarian pieces making them more standardized with limited decorations, colors, and forms (Hull 2006a:99-100). Coarse earthenware can be used to look at social

stratification in rural Irish populations, and may be a more accurate indicator of rank than looking at fine earthenware ceramics.

Coarse earthenware is generally associated with agricultural usage and kitchen preparation, as well as drainage tiles. The most common forms are utilitarian pieces including large bowls (known as ‘pancheons’ or pans), cream pans, milk pans, bread crocks, straight-sided ham pans, and pitchers or jugs (Orser 2006b:83). Coarse earthenware can be divided into two categories: glazed and unglazed, which can be further divided by color. Potters would not always glaze an entire vessel that makes divisions between glazed and unglazed sometimes challenging. Mainly the rims or the top portion would be glazed and the rest left unglazed, drainage tiles were also left unglazed (Orser 2006b:86-87). Drainage tiles are found in association with field systems as evidence of land improvements.

The coarse earthenware comparative method (CECM) can be used as a way to analyze social position in rural Ireland. This method is “based on the idea that a focus on the basic, utilitarian features of ceramic items will reveal the most accurate information about the relative social position of a historic-era site” (Hull 2006a:99). For the application of CECM the minimum number of vessels (MNV) is required from each site. The MNV is divided by the total area of excavation to get the density of vessels on each site that can then be compared. The higher the density of coarse earthenware vessels, the higher agri-social position they occupy in the rural Irish landscape. The central concept behind CECM is the “one-to-one relationship between production and consumption” and that the “relative quantity of coarse earthenware present in an archaeological assemblage reflects the agri-social position of the household unit, based on the relationship between coarse earthenware and agricultural output and land access” (Hull 2006a:102).

Like any way to analyze archaeological data there are drawbacks associated. The use of minimum number of vessels can under represent common vessels and put more weight on vessels that were uncommon. Another issue, specifically with the sites associated with this study, is time of occupation is unknown, as well as the specific number of people living at each household.

Katherine Hull's (2006c) CECM focused specifically on the Nary sites and Mulliviltrin. Gorttoose was analyzed in an earlier work by Hull (2004), with stipulations for using Gorttoose by dividing the site's ceramics into pre-famine and post-famine according to glazing colors (Hull 2004:167-168). She looked solely at redware within the coarse earthenware as it was specifically manufactured in Ireland, while other coarse earthenware and stoneware had other variables to take into account (Hull 2004:177).

Something to be noted about the ceramics category is the presence of smoking pipe fragments. These pipes were made from white clay and generally fall into the subdivision of refined earthenware. However, since they do not function the same as the rest of the ceramics in that category (for leisure instead of food stuffs), they tend to be left out of calculations involving refined earthenware as to not skew the data when looking at kitchen and dining wares.

The categories of glass, metal, and other have had much less done in the way of analysis. Glass was typically from bottles or windows, curved glass being from bottles, containers, glass tableware, and possible lighting implements, flat glass was typically from windows (Hull 2006a:52). Glass artifacts were also subdivided by color. Metal artifacts were divided based on composition, mainly iron, brass, lead, and gilding (Hull 2006a:51). Metal artifacts include kettle fragments, eating implements, buttons, and nails and wire, though many of the finds are rusted past the point of identifying what the implement may have been. The category of "other" fits

everything else found that does not belong to any of the other categories, or is a combination of materials from the previous categories. Some artifacts that fall into this category include animal bones, charcoal samples, chert, and quartz.

Ballykilcline

Ballykilcline townland is one of the best documented areas on which this study focuses. Not only is there a published book on its archaeology by Charles E. Orser, Jr. *Unearthing Hidden Ireland* (Orser ed. 2006), there are historical books as well such as Robert Scally's (1995) *The End of Hidden Ireland*, and Mary Lee Dunn's (2008) *Ballykilcline Rising*. Ballykilcline was under the jurisdiction of Major Denis Mahon, who had many estates in Roscommon around Strokestown. It is most famous for its rent strike before the Famine (Ryder and Orser 2006:30-35) and more generally within Ireland because of Major Mahon's murder and its nearness to Strokestown.

The murder of Major Mahon became an iconic Famine incident. He was murdered on November 2, 1847 in his carriage on his way back to Strokestown from Four Mile House (Duffy 2007:151). It is not fully clear as to what exactly happened, or why, but there are many speculations. Some suggest Mahon was an evil tyrant landlord evicting his helpless tenants, while others interpret Mahon as a blameless landlord who was doing the best he could by his people and got murdered for his efforts. He did create opportunities for work on his lands, creating drainage and other improvements to benefit both himself and his tenants (Duffy 2007:86-87). But either way, he was more than just a murdered landlord; he was a symbolic figure of the Famine representative of every landlord. It could have happened to any landlord, by any of his tenants. This extrapolation is also seen in the Famine imagery shown above. These sketches are used to explain the whole of the Famine instead of a single aspect.

Nary Sites Overview

The Nary holding at Ballykilcline was excavated over five seasons from 1998 to 2002. The lease to the land was held under the name Mark Nary and his three sons. They were likely middling farmer class (Hull 2006b:49). Excavated units measure 1 x 2m, and a total of 121 units were excavated over the five seasons (Hull 2006b:49; Brighton 2009:59). Nine thousand and ninety-nine artifacts were collected from the Nary sites, and were divided into four main categories 5,787 ceramics (63.3%), 1,980 glass (21.8%), 1,001 metal (11.0%), and 331 other (3.6%) (Hull 2004:152-153).

As noted above, the Nary households had two sets of tableware. One was of a shell-edged design, the other a Willow pattern plate that had fewer ware marks that denote less use than the shell-edged ceramics (Brighton and Levon White 2006:132). This seems odd, especially in a time of Famine and for a rural household. However, it was unlikely that they were purchasing these items during the Famine. During a famine it is harder to sell miscellaneous household goods because people are less likely to buy non-food items. The Nary sites had a total of 100 refined earthenware vessels and 45 coarse earthenware vessels recovered (Brighton and Levon White 2006:Table 6.5, Table 6.7; Orser 2006b:Table 4.5). The coarse earthenware was divided into five types: milk pans, pitchers, storage jars/crocks, and bowls, large and small (Orser 2006b:Table 4.5). Milk pans were the most common while bowls were the least.

There are aspects of the archaeological record at this site that serve as correlates to evictions. The general removal of the house and material so it could not be built back up again is one such trait. Belongings were removed from the houses, as seen in images of eviction where

tables and chairs are seen outside of the house (see Figure 8). However, these items could not be carried with the tenants, especially if they were emigrating. What possessions show up in the archaeological record depends on what the inhabitants were doing next. What they took varied depending on where they were going and what they could carry, as well as how much time they had to prepare. It is also unknown where the materials removed from the house, but too large for the family to take such as the table, would have ended up.

At the Ballykilcline sites, the Nary's were likely removed in the third or final set of evictions which would have given them between five months and a year to prepare from the time of the first evictions in their townland (Orser 2005:54). Even with the general knowledge they could, and likely would, be evicted that does not mean the Nary's were prepared for it. Many evictions were rushed events not giving the tenants time to collect everything they would want to save. This means that fully functional artifacts could enter the archaeological record during such events. Artifactual remains such as this is termed "de facto refuse" when fully functional items were abandoned, and many examples occur at the Nary sites (Orser 2005:47, 55).

There are a number of interesting finds from the Nary sites that do not follow the idea of barrenness. Besides the gaming pieces, the majority of these artifacts are not from the ceramics category. Glass, metal, and other artifacts were not divided up by cabin site in the list of artifacts. There were multiple types of glass found at the Nary sites, more so than any other. Besides curved and flat glass, a stemware fragment was found along with the beads mentioned earlier (Hull 2004:Table 6.4). Metal artifacts included many nails or wires, along with kettle fragments, utensils, buttons, bullets and shot, as well as the Forget-Me-Not thimble (Hull 2004:Table 6.4). The majority of artifacts in the last category are faunal remains and building material samples, such as stone, mortar, and whitewash (Hull 2004:Table 6.4).

It is understood that the residents of Ballykilcline left in a hurry, though they knew eviction was a real possibility (Hull 2006a:61). This means that some of the artifacts left behind were possibly forgotten or left by accident, not all the product of extensive occupation, though there is no stratified “Famine” section in the excavations.

Nary’s North Cabin

The Nary cabin on the north end of the site, termed the North Cabin, was more extensively excavated than the other cabin. There were a total of 7,833 artifacts recovered among the stone remains of the cabin (Orser 2005:54). There was no foundation remaining from the site to determine its exact place but a large concentration of stones and artifacts established its presence (Figure 16) (Orser 2005:54). It is unlikely that the Nary cabin was burned after being leveled based off the lack of dense soot, ash, and black soil at the site (Orser 2005:54). The ground where the excavations took place had no noticeable house boundaries, because the house had been leveled and the ground smoothed out for pasture.



Figure 16. Nary House Excavation (Orser 2010:Figure 5).

Part of understanding the destruction of the cabin comes with cross-mending the ceramic and glass artifacts. This involves putting sherds together to come up with more complete artifacts and distinguishing where the parts of each vessel came from on the site. This was done at the North Cabin, and sherds found several meters apart could be pieced back into vessels (Orser 2005:55). This can be explained in different ways: pre-eviction scatter for the general refuse pattern, or it could be movement of artifacts after eviction, or a combination of the two

(Orser 2006c:187). Based off the history of the site, it is likely the scatter is from the eviction process of tearing down the cabin.

Coarse and fine earthenware vessel fragments were common at the site, as well as pieces of white clay smoking pipes. One pipe bowl was marked with “PEAL” for the Repeal movement (Orser 2005:55). Other items include a brass alloy thimble with “Forget Me Not” written on it, a pair of sewing scissors, a bone lice comb, and a 1813 Bank of Ireland token, and the gaming pieces mentioned above (Orser 2005:55).

The North Cabin has a minimum of 66 fine earthenware vessels (66 percent of all refined earthenware at Ballykilcline) the majority of which date between 1810 and 1836 (Brighton and Levon White 2006:125-126). These were divided by categories by use into tableware and serving, teaware, and food preparation and storage. The majority of the fine earthenware ceramics fell into the categories of tableware (31 vessels) and teaware (29 vessels) (Brighton and Levon White 2006:126-127). The plates, teacups, and saucers did not have a lot of matching designs, signifying they did not purchase them all at once in sets. Seven jugs were recovered from the North Cabin for the remainder of the fine earthenware.

Coarse earthenware recovered from the North Cabin totaled 2,798 sherds (90.8% of the coarse earthenware from Ballykilcline) (Orser 2006b:Table 4.1). The minimum number of redware vessels used in Hull’s CECM analysis was 36 vessels for the North Cabin (Hull 2004:Table7.3). From the North Cabin milk pans were most common, followed by storage jars and pitchers, bowls were the least common (Orser 2006b:90). Glass, metal, and other artifacts were not divided up by type.

Nary's South Cabin

The South Cabin had a minimum of 34 fine earthenware vessels (34 percent of the refined earthenware vessels from Ballykilcline) the majority dating between 1820 and 1836 (Brighton and Levon White 2006:128). The lower number of vessels is likely due to the less extensive excavations done at the South Cabin opposed to the North Cabin. The majority of vessels at the South Cabin were teaware (17 vessels) and tableware (12 vessels) with one serving vessel and four pitchers (Brighton and Levon White 2006:129-131). The only partial teapot from the Nary excavations came from the South Cabin. Based off the date ranges for the fine earthenware at the cabins the South Cabin was likely occupied by one of the sons and the North Cabin was home to the father (Brighton and Levon White 2006:132).

As with refined earthenware, the number of course earthenware sherds and vessels is lower than at the North Cabin. Two hundred eighty-two sherds of coarse earthenware were recovered from the site. The minimum number of redware vessels used in Hull's CECM analysis for the South Cabin was eight vessels (Hull 2004:Table 7.3).

At the South Cabin an area of cobbling was found in two of the excavation units (5000N 1030E and 5000N 1031E) which, with the associated artifacts, is likely the result of conscious destruction of the cabin (Hull 2006a:57). This zone was not disturbed post-eviction, and the cobbles were sparse to suggest that it was not a section of the flooring. The artifacts found in the two units and nearby contexts support the idea of purposeful removal of the house.

Gorttoose

Gorttoose, like the Nary estates, was under the control of Major Denis Mahon (Orser 1996b). Mahon was responsible for the evictions at Gorttoose of 185 people in 33 families that show up on record (Orser 1996b:98).

Gorttoose was excavated in 1996 under the direction of Charles Orser, Jr. The site is named the Murray Site, referencing the family that once lived there (Orser 1996a:3). There is a second site on top of the Murray Site, designated the McGuire Site that produced artifacts from a surface collection that will not be discussed in detail for this research (Orser 1996a:3). A total of 6,640 artifacts were recovered from the Murray Site, which shall be generally termed Gorttoose in subsequent discussion. The site was occupied pre- and post-Famine, and the artifacts were not separated out stratigraphically because of site disturbances post-Famine (Hull 2004:127; Orser 1996a:37).

Thirty-four excavation units were dug at Gorttoose, thirty-three 2 x 2m meter units and one 2 x 1m unit (Orser 1996a:16). For this site slate, brick, mortar, and plaster were not collected and counted in the artifact counts. Artifacts were divided into the four main categories, with glass being the most common at the site. There were also four primary activity areas for the site, house, dairy, south cobbled yard, and east cobbled yard (Hull 2004:127). There is what is termed a post-Famine house in the site report, however the contexts that it is located in are dated *c.* 1849-1850 which would make it Famine in nature though it was occupied post-Famine as well (since the site report only classifies things by pre- and post-Famine) (Orser 1996a:18, 21).

Very little of the artifacts could be divided based on pre- or post-Famine occupation except for some of the ceramics and metal pieces. Some of the refined earthenwares such as

creamware and pearlware were manufactured before the Famine, while the majority of the nails recovered at the site were manufactured post-1855 making them fall on the line between Famine and post-Famine (Orser 1996a:43,45,49). Some of the items clearly pre-Famine in make include pearlware, some transfer-printed whitewares, and non-machined bottles (Hull 2004:127).

Brogan House Site

The Brogan House site is located in Derrylahan townland in County Donegal and was excavated in 2007 headed by Charles Orser, Jr. (2007:1). The Brogan House is nothing out of the ordinary and for that reason no significant amount of information is known about it in way of historical context (Orser 2007). The house excavated is associated with a Brogan family according to local residents and is linked historically with the McGinley family that is documented as one of the head households in Derrylahan (Orser 2007:4). The house shows up on the Ordnance Survey map that was first created in 1834-1835, it also appears on the second edition in 1903, but it could have been in ruins at the time (Orser 2007:4). The dating for the Brogan House site is a complicated mix with the lack of specific historical documentation.

The artifacts do not lend significant clarity either. Many of the ceramics were manufactured steadily in the 1830s, though some began earlier, and were made continuously for an extended period of time (Orser 2007:32). The artifacts date to *c.* 1810-1865 (Orser 2010:86). Orser (2007:32) sets possible dates for the site at *c.* 1835 to before 1903. It is nearly impossible to tell which artifacts would date to before the Famine and which were purchased after. There was no stratification found on the site to indicate such a split. Since the site was occupied for many years, as evidenced through artifacts dating later in the nineteenth century such as smoking pipes (Orser 2007:32).

The house is long and rectangular with dimensions of 19.9m (65.3ft) by 4.9m (16.1ft) with three rooms, which may not have been all built at the same time (Orser 2007:8-11). The focus of the 2007 survey was on the yard in front of the ruined house structure. This was done based off the likelihood that more artifacts discarded during habitation would end up here than inside the house itself (Orser 2007:11). The ruins were overgrown, but the house is clearly visible (Figure 17). Nineteen 1 x 1m units were excavated (Figure 18).



Figure 17. Brogan House Ruins (Orser 2010:Figure 8).

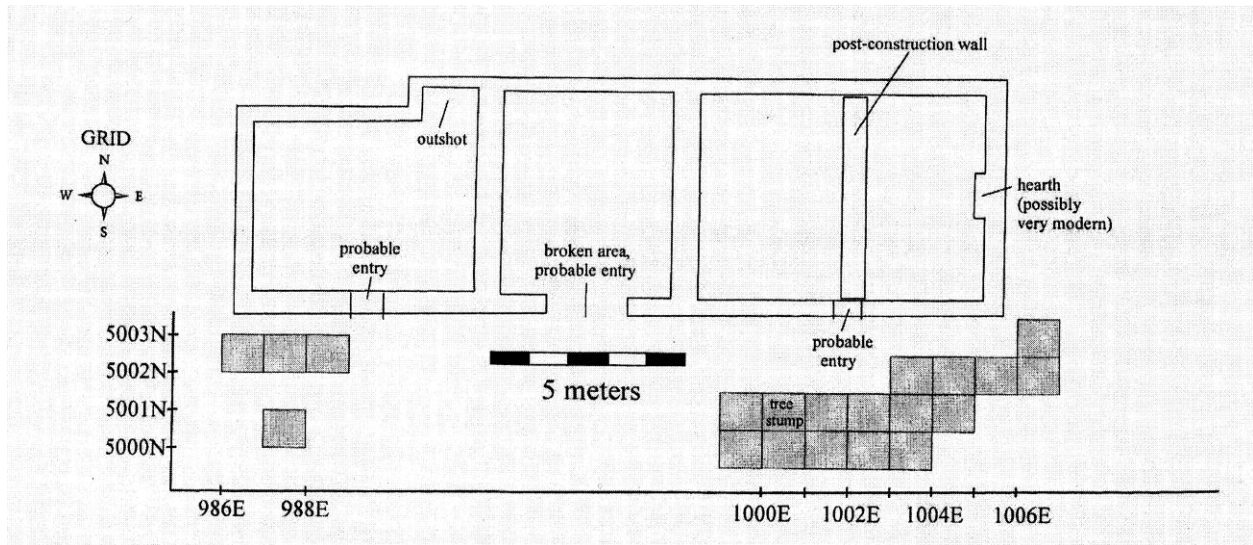


Figure 18. Brogan House Site Excavation Units (Orser 2007:Figure 8).

The excavation recovered 1,134 artifacts all dating to the nineteenth century and fall into the four categories explained above of ceramics, glass, metal, and other (Orser 2007:22-23). The highest frequency of artifacts was ceramics, being 75.3 percent of the assemblage (Orser 2007:Table 5). Within the category of ceramics red-bodied coarse earthenware makes up only 0.9 percent, only slightly higher than the lowest subcategory of porcelain with 0.5 percent of the assemblage (Orser 2007:Table 5). The largest part of the ceramic assemblage is made of white-bodied fine earthenware at 83.6 percent. The category of “white clay” contains clay pipe fragments is removed, so they do not skew the ceramic assemblage for utilitarian usage when added to the fine earthenware categories. Very few sherds of coarse earthenware were recovered from the Brogan House site making the minimum vessel count just one vessel (Orser 2010:92).

Refined earthenwares at the Brogan House Site were grouped into three main types: pearlware, whiteware, both of which are white-bodied, and buff-bodied ceramics. Porcelain and

stoneware were also found (Orser 2007:Table 6). It is important to note that Rockingham ware is classified under the fine earthenware in this report. Although it had been seen as coarse earthenware previously, it is now grouped for its believed functionality as tableware (Orser 2007:25). This would make more vessels to fall in the refined earthenware count than at other sites that have this same type of ceramic that were excavated previously. A minimum of 51 refined earthenware vessels were recovered from the site, which is 93 percent of the ceramic vessels recovered from the site but only 22.6 percent of refined ceramics from all the sites analyzed (Orser 2010:Table 3).

Glass, like at the other sites, was divided into two categories, curved and flat. Of the 166 pieces, 73 (44%) were curved while 93 (56%) were flat (Orser 2007 Table 7). The glass was split again by color, with flat clear glass being the most abundant, likely from windows. Metal objects were obscured by rust at the site, but were divided by metal and then function for what could be identified. The majority of the objects were made of iron, but unable to be identified. Other items were made from brass, lead, and tin (Orser 2007:Table 8). Three lead shots were found, as well as a brass harmonica reed (Orser 2007:Table 8). In the “other” category seven pieces of bone, only one modified, were found, along with a gunflint, a flint flake, and a piece of quartz (Orser 2007:30).

Mulliviltrin

Mulliviltrin is located near the two Nary sites at Ballykilcline and was excavated in 1997 (Hull 2006b:37). The site itself was found because of local resident folk memory and a farmer that recovered ceramics and pipe sherds when working the land (Hull 2006b:45). The same folk memory gave a likely terminal date for the site in 1847 due to the Famine, making the artifacts recovered pre-Famine in date (Hull 2006b:45). The site was small, not visible on the surface,

and thought to be relatively undisturbed though there was some post-Famine subsurface drains recovered (Hull 2004:133, 137). Excavation units were 2 x2m and 23 were excavated (Hull 2006b:46).

This site had the least number of artifacts recovered totaling only 66 (Hull 2006b:46). The cabin at Mulliviltrin could have been made of mud or sod, and this would likely cause the small mounds on the sites from where the material weathered (Hull 2004:137-139). There was no window glass found at the site, indicating a lack of windows. This is consistent with fourth class housing, one room cabins built of mud or sod. No pipe pieces were found at the site. This is highly unusual given the usage of tobacco products in all levels of society (Hull 2004:137).

Glass was found, but all of it was curved, indicating they were from bottles. Metal recovered included wire and nail, an iron bolt, a brass button, two shotgun shells, and some miscellaneous metal (Hull 2004:Table 6.3). Based off Hull's (2004:Table 7.4) calculations Mulliviltrin had a minimum of five refined earthenware vessels and four coarse earthenware (redware) vessels.

Barlow's Field

Barlow's Field is located in county Sligo, and there is little in the way of historical documentation for the site and it does not appear on the Ordnance Survey maps (Orser 2010:83-84). There were standing remains left on site, so when the house was abandoned it was not immediately torn down. The artifact collection from the site dates from about 1795 to 1865 (Orser 2010:84).

Barlow's Field was excavated in 1 x1m units, 31 units south of the wall remains and 50 units to the north of it where house remains were discovered (Orser 2010:86). The house remains measured 4 x8m, and the house could have been up to 16 meters long and likely no more than

two or three rooms in a linear fashion made of stone (Orser 2010:87). Nine coarse earthenware vessels were recovered from the site (Orser 2010:92). There were 60 refined earthenware vessels at Barlow's Field consisting of tableware, teaware, and storage vessels (Orser 2010:Table 3). There were also hearth and stone floor remains recovered at the site.

Site comparisons

Comparisons between these rural Irish sites can be difficult. Dates of site occupation are not easy to pin down because the excavations did not reveal highly stratified sections. While some sites, like the Nary cabins and Mulliviltrin, have definite end dates at the times of their evictions during the Famine, the other sites are more variable for both start and end dates of occupation. Gorttoose is especially tricky due to the disturbed nature of the site and lack of items that are understood well enough to be diagnostic to pre- or post-Famine. Many of the artifacts have not been significantly studied for such dating to be attained.

The raw artifact percentages by class for each site can be informative on a basic level (Table 1). Artifact counts and their percentages were compiled from various reports, and it is important to note that the counts for Barlow's Field and Brogan listed in Orser's 2010 article *Three 19th-century house sites in rural Ireland* are switched in his Table 1. The artifact totals and percentages from Ballykilcline include both Nary Cabins, and are from Hull's 2004 dissertation *Material Correlates of the Pre-Famine Agri-Social Hierarchy: Archaeological Evidence from County Roscommon, Republic of Ireland* because it had a full list of artifacts recovered, and it includes samples of building materials. That is not the case at every other site. It is also important to remember that Ballykilcline was excavated for five seasons, while the other sites were excavated for one, which gives it a higher number of total artifacts. Strangely

though not as much as one might expect when compared to Gorttoose. On the other hand, the artifact counts for Gorttoose do not separate out pre- and post-Famine artifacts.

Table 1. Artifact Counts by Class (Modified from Orser 2010:Table 1; Hull 2004: Table 6.2, Table 6.3, Table 6.4).

<i>Artifact Class</i>	<u>Ballykilcline</u>		<u>Gorttoose</u>	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Ceramics	5,787	63.3	1,894	28.6
Glass	1,980	21.8	3,568	53.7
Metal	1,001	11.0	1,032	15.5
Other	331	3.6	146	2.1
Total	9,099	100	6,640	100

<i>Artifact Class</i>	<u>Barlow</u>		<u>Brogan</u>	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Ceramics	1,071	42.2	854	75.3
Glass	676	29.1	166	14.6
Metal	434	18.7	102	9.0
Other	139	6.0	12	1.1
Total	2,320	100	1,134	100

<i>Artifact Class</i>	<u>Mulliviltrin</u>	
	Count	Percent
Ceramics	36	54.5
Glass	10	15.2
Metal	17	25.8
Other	3	4.5
Total	66	100

Mulliviltrin had the least number of minimum ceramic vessels in both totals and percentages compared to the other sites (Table 2). While Gorttoose had a large artifact count, the minimum number of ceramic vessels shown in the table only includes those dating to pre-Famine occupation (Hull 2004:167-168). Gorttoose still has the second lowest percent of vessels, despite the high artifact count. White clay pipes are excluded from the vessel count as well. Coarse earthenware vessels are less abundant than refined earthenware vessels. Part of this may be due to the ease of distinguishing vessels for refined earthenwares as opposed to coarse earthenwares. There are more patterns that can be identified for refined earthenwares which leads to more obvious detection of different vessels. Coarse earthenware is distinguished by color as well, but there is less variability, especially with the sherds that lack glaze, so it is harder to tell which sherds are from different pots.

White smoking pipe sherds show up at every site except for Mulliviltrin. This is curious because pipe smoking was common even for the lowest classes (Hull 2004:137). It is possible that the family at Mulliviltrin did not smoke, or that they could not afford it. The majority of the exceptional objects that can be associated with the Famine were found at Ballykilcline. While Gorttoose has glass bottles and beads, including rosary beads, it is next to impossible to say when they dated (Orser 1996a:48). Mulliviltrin is also different from the rest of the sites by building materials. There was no evidence of stone building material and the remains of the houses indicate either mud or sod construction (Hull 2004:139). None of the sites were outstandingly different in composition of artifact types, though Mulliviltrin did have a larger percentage of metal objects than the rest of the sites; it is likely due to the small numbers of artifacts recovered.

Table 2. Minimum Number of Ceramic Vessels: Coarse, Refined, and Totals (Modified from Brighton and Levon White 2006:Table 6.6, Table 6.8; Hull 2004:Table 7.4, 2006c:102; Orser 2010:Table 3).

Site	Coarse MNV	Percent Coarse at Site	Percent of Coarse Total
Ballykilcline	44	30.6	68.7
Barlow's Field	9	13.0	14.0
Brogan	1	2.0	1.6
Gorttoose	6	37.5	9.4
Mulliviltrin	4	44.4	6.3
Total	64	22.1	100

Site	Refined MNV	Percent Refined at Site	Percent of Refined Total
Ballykilcline	100	69.4	44.2
Barlow's Field	60	87.0	26.6
Brogan	51	93.0	22.6
Gorttoose	10	62.5	4.4
Mulliviltrin	5	55.6	2.2
Total	226	77.9	100

Site	Total MNV	Percent of Ceramics
Ballykilcline	144	49.7
Barlow's Field	69	23.8
Brogan	52	17.9
Gorttoose	16	5.5
Mulliviltrin	9	3.1
Total	290	100

While Alexander Somerville's letters made little mention of material possessions, he did comment on the rise in guns being purchased by all levels of society (Snell 1994:51-52). Part of this was those who still had food wanted to be able to protect it against thieves and riots. While many of the metal artifacts were rusted Gorttoose, Mulliviltrin, and Ballykilcline had shotgun shells or lead bullets from the excavations (Hull 2004:Table 6.2, Table 6.3, Table 6.4). It is unclear when these items were first brought to the sites, but it reinforces Somerville's letters of the rural Irish having means to protect themselves if necessary. There is a large variation between the sites for levels of poverty, and it would be understandable if Mulliviltrin did not have evidence of arms, being the least well off.

The refined ceramic types have a variety of patterns that show up at the sites. Mulliviltrin had whiteware sherds, but the decoration patterns were not described, the same problem occurred with the Gorttoose assemblage. This makes comparisons difficult; however the decoration types that show up at Ballykilcline, Brogan House, and Barlow's Field are identified in Table 3.

Table 3. Presence of Refined Ceramic Decoration (Adapted from Orser 2010:Table 2).

Decoration	Ballykilcline	Barlow	Brogan
Shell-edged	x	x	x
Hand-painted, monochrome	x	x	x
Hand-painted, polychrome	x	x	x
Transfer-printed, blue	x	x	x
Transfer-printed, other colors	x	x	x
Plain, molded	x	x	x
Factory-made slipware	x	x	x
Splatter	x	x	x
Cut sponge		x	x
Luster		x	x
Flow blue			x

DISCUSSION

Comparisons between the primary imagery of the Famine and excavated rural house sites are not an obvious one to one relationship. Rarely does one find a detailed sketch of a particular family's home and the corresponding data that is an accurate depiction, and then have that particular house excavated. Even when there is such correlation, it is nearly impossible to narrow down the archaeological evidence to a single instance, such as when the image was created. Dating sites to a narrow time frame using archaeological methods, such as the Famine years, is immensely difficult. A problem encountered with examining minimum number of vessels at each site was inconsistency in the materials discussed at each site. The minimum number of vessel counts, and how the ceramics were divided by category was not uniform, because it is not an easy arbitrary designation to make.

Even with these complications it is clear that the imagery of the Famine and the archaeological excavations do not give the same impressions. The majority of Famine imagery shows barren houses, empty of artifacts, besides the few eviction scenes where the tenant is surrounded by what could be removed from the cabin. Material culture is generally left out of the imagery but it appears in all the excavations. This does not necessarily mean that there would be no artifacts in the houses during the Famine, since they appear in images pre-Famine in date.

In the pre-Famine imagery there is an abundance of material goods. Refined earthenwares are prominently on display in both Figure 11 and 12. There are metal cooking wares, such as kettles, which are well documented. There is also a large amount of wooden furniture, which does not preserve well in the archaeological record. The pre-Famine images are of what are thought to be higher end rural homes of middling and strong farmers. They would have more goods than the cottiers and laborers. Figure 12 shows a family that participates in textile production, which would bring in more income than just farming alone. Rural textile production was decreasing at the time of the Famine due to the rise in industrialization.

Coarse earthenware does not make much of a presence in the pre-Famine imagery. It was generally overlooked as not as well-made as the English imported refined earthenwares. It was also used mainly in the kitchens and for serving food, neither of which are part of the pre-Famine paintings. In Figure 12 the bowl on the table may be made of coarse earthenware.

Only one of the Famine images, Figure 2, depicts the inside of a house where the family is still occupying it. It is one of the sparest images, having the doctor on a solitary chair and no other visible possessions in sight. There could be more to the house from where the view is standing in perspective, but the overall quality of the depiction does not imply as such. The

family is huddled in the corner around what is likely a hearth, which is typically seen as the central aspect of home life. Despite being occupied, the house is still barren.

It is hard to tell what the house may have been made out of in Figure 2. It is possible that it was constructed out of mud or sod, consistent with some of the lowest classes of housing, and it is also lacking in windows and likely more rooms. This would match closest to what was recovered at Mulliviltrin in building style. However, in the illustration, there are no material goods, and while there was not an excessive amount of artifacts recovered from Mulliviltrin, they were there. Ceramics and glass in particular from utilitarian vessels were recovered from all the sites, but are not evident in the majority of the imagery. There could be a number of reasons for this lack of recovered material. The first being there was not a significant amount of material goods in the house to begin with, so fewer still remain in the archaeological record. A second could be that they took their possessions with them when they were evicted. It is possible that during the Famine the populations who were struggling to find food would sell what they could for food or money to buy food. However, in such situations it is not a buyers' market, for what use do people have of goods when they are starving?

The two sketches that have material goods from the Famine are an eviction scene and a post-eviction scene, Figure 6 and Figure 8. What is shown in these images is coarse earthenware jugs, one in each scene. Coarse earthenware is associated with the rural and lower class Irish because it was produced in Ireland, unlike the refined earthenwares from England. The upper classes looked down upon the use of coarse earthenware; they thought that it was beneath their notice and did not have any important meaning (Orser 2001:87). It is odd, then, that such pottery shows up in these images. It could be symbolic; a way of showing that these people are low class Irish, or it could be just added for a detail to draw the viewer's eye (Orser 2001).

Coarse earthenware shows up at each site, not just Mulliviltrin, which is the lowest class standing of all the sites. It is obvious that the Irish were utilizing this pottery type and it would carry meaning to them. Ballykilcline had a minimum of 44 coarse earthenware vessels (68.7 percent of all coarse earthenware recovered) whereas the next highest, Barlow's Field, only had nine (14.0%). Part of this is due to excavation extent and that Ballykilcline was two house sites and excavated for five seasons. However, when looking at the percentage of minimum number of vessels at each site, Mulliviltrin has the highest percent of coarse earthenware (44.4%), which is more expected of the lowest classes. Gorttoose had the next highest percent (37.5%) and then Ballykilcline (30.6%). Barlow's Field is fourth, rather than second, in site percentage of coarse earthenware (13.0%), while Brogan had only a single coarse earthenware vessel, which was a mere two percent of vessels recovered from the site.

The same vessel disparity does not extend to the refined earthenware percentages recovered, where Ballykilcline had 100 vessels or 44.2 percent of the total, Barlow's Field had 60 which is 26.6 percent. This could be due to occupation time, since Barlow's Field was occupied later than Ballykilcline and English refined ceramics gained popularity over time, as well as became more affordable to the lower classes. Since there are only two divisions of ceramics, the order of refined earthenware is the opposite of coarse earthenware above.

While ceramics were most often seen in the images, in Figure 8 there is a metal kettle or pot. These types of pieces were utilitarian and found in almost every home used for cooking over the hearth. Much of the metal fragments recovered from the excavations were rusted past the point of distinguishing their function. Kettle fragments were present at Gorttoose and the Ballykilcline sites.

The majority of the scenes, however, do not have any material goods in them. There are ruined houses, shanties for the evicted, and starving people. But these people did not have things, based off these images. Then why are there archaeological remains for researchers to uncover, and not in small quantities? One could argue that the artifacts are pre- or post-famine in nature. That is the general understanding classification when discussing rural Irish goods. But the Famine spread over a five to seven year span, and the material goods could not have just vanished for those years. The post-eviction scene (Figure 13) from the 1880s shows plenty of material goods in the similar sized cabin. Cabin sizes are difficult to judge in the images because of the perspective of the artist, and what the artist wants to emphasize.

The time gap of the Famine is an interesting phenomenon. The Famine has been looked at through the movement of people from Ireland to America and other places. Evictions, such as the ones at Ballykilcline can be used to understand the time frame as well. In Irish historical archaeology things are divided pre- and post-Famine, and the Famine itself gets glossed over.

Looking at the structures of the images gives another indication of barrenness being depicted in association with the Famine. The majority of the houses are unroofed if not being torn down entirely. This was the case at Ballykilcline and possibly Mulliviltrin. However, the cabins at Gorttoose, Barlow's Field, and Brogan House, were occupied prior to the Famine and do not follow those same patterns. Brogan House does have ruins left standing, but it was not abandoned during the Famine. Houses being leveled during the Famine was a massive undertaking, 27,192 houses were recorded as being destroyed (Vaughan 1994:Appendix A). This would make the remembrance of the Famine more apt to being called barren due to this demolition.

Part of the barrenness can also be associated with poverty in general. It is difficult to understand what is barren because of the Famine and what were just the poorest class's standards of living. These people went undocumented, even more so than the rest of rural Ireland. The landless, cottiers, and laborers, are not outstanding in any way, which makes them easy to overlook. A more in depth study over the concept of barrenness and poverty, in more than just Ireland, could help identify the differences between Famine barrenness and general poverty.

The images give a biased view of what was occurring during the Famine for they focus on the worst case scenarios and even then, stylistically edit out material items. There were likely houses that were bare of goods, but it is unlikely that they would have had absolutely nothing. Part of this discrepancy is due to the reasons the artists had of making such images. Gaining money and support for the Irish was a key motivator of the newspaper sketches. Sympathy motivates monetary donations.

The fact that there are not a significant number of images that are popularly associated with the Famine could also be due to cultural memory. What is passed on from remembrances is the death and starvation and the empty feeling people had. The most extreme cases stand out in memory, for everything that is average tends to blur together. People also do not want to remember. At least, not in any absolute sense of what happened directly to their ancestors, so to make one standard fit for the entirety of Ireland could be a coping mechanism.

CONCLUSIONS

The archaeology tells a different story than the imagery. The sketches and paintings of the Famine are barren, depressing, and devastating. There is no doubt that the Famine was disastrous to the population and that it was the most depressing time in recorded Irish history. The failure of the potato crop could evoke the image of barrenness, but it is not necessarily the case. Crops were still being grown, and until the evictions and purposeful destruction of houses, there were no more houses being torn down than the average.

The image of barrenness is culturally developed, based more on how people were feeling than on the facts of the material culture record. The archaeology of Famine era houses depict a richness of culture and material possessions that the images leave out. This is partially the case due to how the lower classes were perceived, as having nothing of worth even before the Famine. Art is a discipline that evokes emotion in the artist and the viewers. The emotions that come with the Famine are reflected in the artwork. It shows how people felt, that they had nothing, that there was nothing, and that living was extremely hard. But this is not how everyone was living. While the level of death was horrifically high, the majority of the Irish did survive the Famine. Even those who were evicted were not suffering to the extent when they had nothing left, such as the Nary's.

There is still much more future archaeology of Famine sites can add to the knowledge of what was really going on during the Famine. How the rural populations were living, and how that contradicts or supports the imagery and documentation of the Famine in Ireland.

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