



The Irish Protestant Folk Memory Project



What is this research about?

This study sets out to document the different ways in which Protestants have historically engaged with and contributed to Irish public life, in the social, cultural and economic spheres, with a view to adding significantly to our understanding of the depth and breadth of Irish folklore.

Why are you doing this research?

There is, in some senses, a vacuum in the work of the Irish Folklore Commission in the 1930s, insofar as Protestant cultural history is inadequately represented. We wish to add to the National Folklore Collection and gather in as much of that history as we conceivably can.

Why have they been invited to take part?

In light of the many centenaries that we are currently celebrating, the recording and preservation of as many traditions of these historic events as possible is particularly worthwhile at this moment in time. Because of the events of those turbulent years leading to the creation of the Irish Free State, the conflict of a civil war, and uneasy truce, the future for many Protestants within the new State was uncertain. The social and political upheavals of this period profoundly affected the lives of many families, presenting challenges with respect to their sense of national identity and historic allegiance, and impacting on the lives of Irish Protestant families and communities subsequently. Today, we still have the opportunity to collect traditions about this and earlier periods of Irish history. We are also strongly interested in material culture – folklife, how people farmed,

about dominant trades and occupations, education, religious practice, popular belief and custom, participation in sport, socialising, the celebrations of festivals such as Easter and Harvest. We would like to engage with Protestants from all walks of life.

How will the data be used?

The data will become part of the National Folklore Collection and will be made available to researchers and the general public after an initial holding period of five years, during which time it will be analysed exclusively by the researchers on this project. It is anticipated that it will be used as background information for publications exploring the various subjects explored in the questionnaire.

What will happen if they decide to take part in this research study?

Persons who agree to participate will be provided with a questionnaire, information about the project, and details of how to take part. Questionnaires can be submitted by post or electronically. Respondents are also invited to have their reminiscences recorded at a later date by staff of the National Folklore Collection.

How will you protect their privacy?

The researchers and the National Folklore Collection have a duty of care to those who respond, and participants are assured that their responses can be anonymised should they request so, or public access to it restricted for an agreed period of time. In cases where respondents do not request anonymity but material is noted as being sensitive in nature, we will also take steps to prevent public access to it.

What are the benefits of taking part in this research study?

Becoming part of an important project recording the memories, narratives and ethnography of a poorly documented part of Irish society. Creating a documentary legacy for the future.

What are the risks of taking part in this research study?

The risks associated with taking part in this study are small on account of the historic character of the questions posed in the questionnaire. Nevertheless, for some respondents, revisiting memories of difficult periods in their past may be upsetting. With respect to rural respondents in particular, historical controversies relating to land and property rights, might revive memories of the period.

Can they change their mind at any stage and withdraw from the study?

Respondents are assured that they can withdraw from the study at any time if they are uncomfortable with any aspect of it. Should you have any doubts about any of the questions posed, or your participation in the project generally, please feel free to contact the National Folklore Collection at the number (or address) below to discuss your concerns.

How will they find out what happens with this project?

Respondents will be invited to visit the National Folklore Collection to view their contribution and to conduct family or local history research of their own. They will also be invited to join a mailing list informing them of future National Folklore Collection events and projects.

Contact details for submission of questionnaire replies (hard copy and/or electronic) and further information:

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