

Ireland 1841

What was life like for the poor in Ireland in 1841?
Accessible evidence to encourage later questioning of more complex evidence:

Letters, diaries, accounts, tithe demands etc.

near Birmingham.
December 1841.

Dear Mother, Father, Granny, brothers
and Sisters,

My hands are so cold / can hardly write. They sent us out in the snow today to dig a cutting for a new railway line. They say the new locomotives can travel at 20 miles an hour!! I'm sure god did not mean for us to go so fast, but the money is good - 70p a week. I had to leave the fruit picking job in Cheshire when the work ended, but that was only 40p a week. Many of the men here are from our part of the world. John Donovan is here, and sends his regards to you all, especially Ann. We are having to live in a camp outside town as the fights with the locals were so bad last year. They say we are doing them out of work! I'm afraid I have not been to mass here yet, but a priest is coming out to the site next week. I enclose some money, £1, to help pay of the tithe and tax from last year. John says his family were evicted by that d— Nolan, and are having to squat. I will be back in March to help with the digging. Your fond son—

Dan
[Signature]

Ireland 1841

Looking at Evidence

This activity was developed in 1983 by Emma Thornton and Stuart Scott as part of pack on the history of Ireland for the Inner London Education Authority. The printed pack is no longer available, but there is now a lot of evidence available on the internet. This fiction or rather 'faction' was not designed to replace real evidence but designed to encourage pupils to develop their skills of questioning material by providing an easier prequel. Please let us know if anything is now either inaccurate or whether our evidence needs some rebalancing.

We have provided a question checklist but you may want to devise your own and you might also want groups to think of other questions that this evidence raises.

We are resurrecting these activities in interesting times. The history curriculum is being revised by the current government. They want to concentrate on British history, but I don't think that this is the kind of British history they mean.

Webaddress www.collaborativelearning.org/ireland1841.pdf
Last updated 31st March 2015

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening . They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

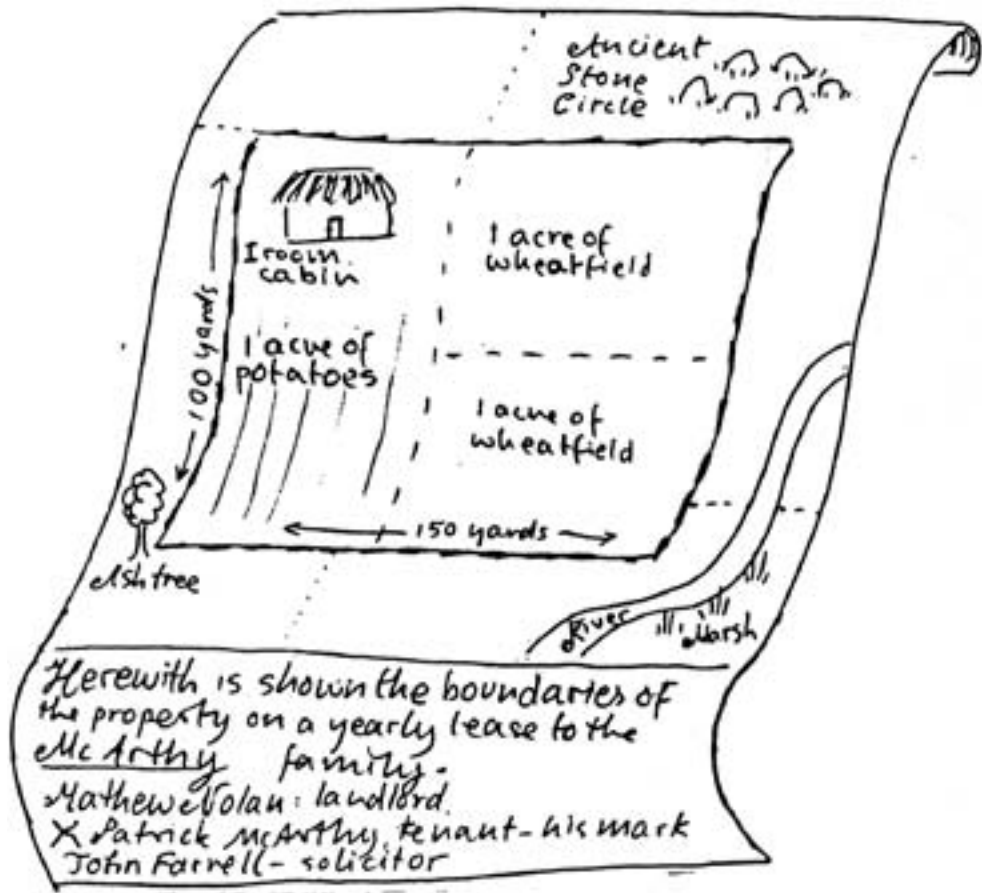
*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/ireland1841.pdf>

Ireland 1841: Evidence A

Sketch map attached to the lease of the McCarthy family's land.



Ireland 1841: Evidence B

Mathew Bolan hereby requests Patrick McCarthy to make prompt payment, in cash or in wheat, of the sum of £9 for his 3 acres of land. You are reminded that failure to pay will result in immediate eviction.

Mathew Bolan.

East Ross.
August 1841.

Ireland 1841: Evidence C

Pages from the holiday notebook of Miss Vera Harington who visited Ireland for six weeks.

Tuesday August 17th, 1841



A delightful day. After a good breakfast at the hotel I climbed up into the hills. As I was sitting sketching the little house on the left, the woman came out and invited me, in English, to come inside for some water. Her name was Moira McCarthy.

It was very dark but I managed to make this sketch of the interior.

While I was there, her mother-in-law, Julia McCarthy came in with a bundle of twigs, peat and dry manure. She was very bad tempered and muttered aloud in Gaelic which I do not understand. She lit a fire so smoky and smelly that I was forced to go outside.



One of her daughters - Ann - came back from market as I sat on the bench outside. She had two pails of milk. I made this sketch of her before she went off to weed their wheatfield. Apparently the rest of the family are working on Sir Edmund's estate. One is in England.

From where I sat I could also see their youngest son. He was called Thomas. He looked like a scarecrow as he worked clearing stones from the potato patch.



Home grown potatoes



Buttermilk bought in village



Mushrooms picked by Mr. McCarthy on way to work.

Blackberries picked by Moira from hedge.

Inside the house I had caught a glimpse of these provisions. I asked Moira what meals she made.

She replied - boiled potatoes, potato pancakes, baked potatoes, potato and mushroom soup, mashed potatoes, potato cakes and blackberries, fried potatoes.....! I stopped her there and returned to my hotel and dined on roast fowl but refused any potatoes!

Ireland 1841: Evidence E

Tithe demand sent on behalf of the local bishop of the Church of Ireland.

The very Reverend Horace Plunkett
begs to remind you that, as God
granted a good harvest last year,
you owe: 10 sacks of potatoes
3 sacks of wheat
or payment in cash for the same.
We are sure you will contribute
willingly to support the Church of
Ireland.
God be with you and your family -
Rev. H. Plunkett

Ireland 1841: Evidence D

Part of an accounts book written by Edwin Mullins,
manager of Sir Edmund Ross' estate.

August 10th 1841.

to Edmund Mulligan, for repairing walls -	5p	o day
to Patrick McArthur, for reaping	- 6p	" "
" John Donovan, " "	- 6p	" "
" Peter Collins, " "	- 6p	" "
" Collette McArthur, for tying sheaves -	3p	" "
" Siobahn Collins, " "	- 3p	" "
" Peter McArthur, for loading carts -	4p	" "
" James Donovan, " "	- 4p	" "
" " bringing milk -	3p	" "

Ireland 1841: Evidence F

A letter sent by Daniel McCarthy to his family in Castleross.

near Birmingham:
December 1841.

Dear Mother, Father, Granny, brothers
and Sisters,

My hands are so cold I can hardly write. They sent us out in the snow today to dig a cutting for a new railway line. They say the new locomotive can travel at 20 miles an hour!! I'm sure God did not mean for us to go so fast, but the money is good - 70p a week. I had to leave the fruit picking job in Cheshire when the work ended, but that was only 40p a week. Many of the men here are from our part of the world. John Donovan is here, and sends his regards to you all, especially Ann. We are having to live in a camp outside town as the fights with the locals were so bad last year. They say we are doing them out of work! I'm afraid I have not been to mass here yet, but a priest is coming out to the site next week. I enclose some money, £1, to help pay of the tithe and tax from last year. John says his family were evicted by that d--- Nolan, and are having to squat. I will be back in March to help with the digging. Your fond son -

Dan

Ireland 1841 - Questioning Evidence Checklist

Mark here which evidence A? B? etc provided the information.

1. How many members of the McCarthy family are mentioned?
2. What names can you find?
Write them down here.
3. Are the McCarthys rich or poor?
4. How much land do they have?
5. Do they own or rent their land?
6. What do they grow on their land?
7. What do they eat?
8. How do they cook their food?
9. Who do they have to pay money or crops to?
10. Who do they work for?
11. Where do they get their money from?