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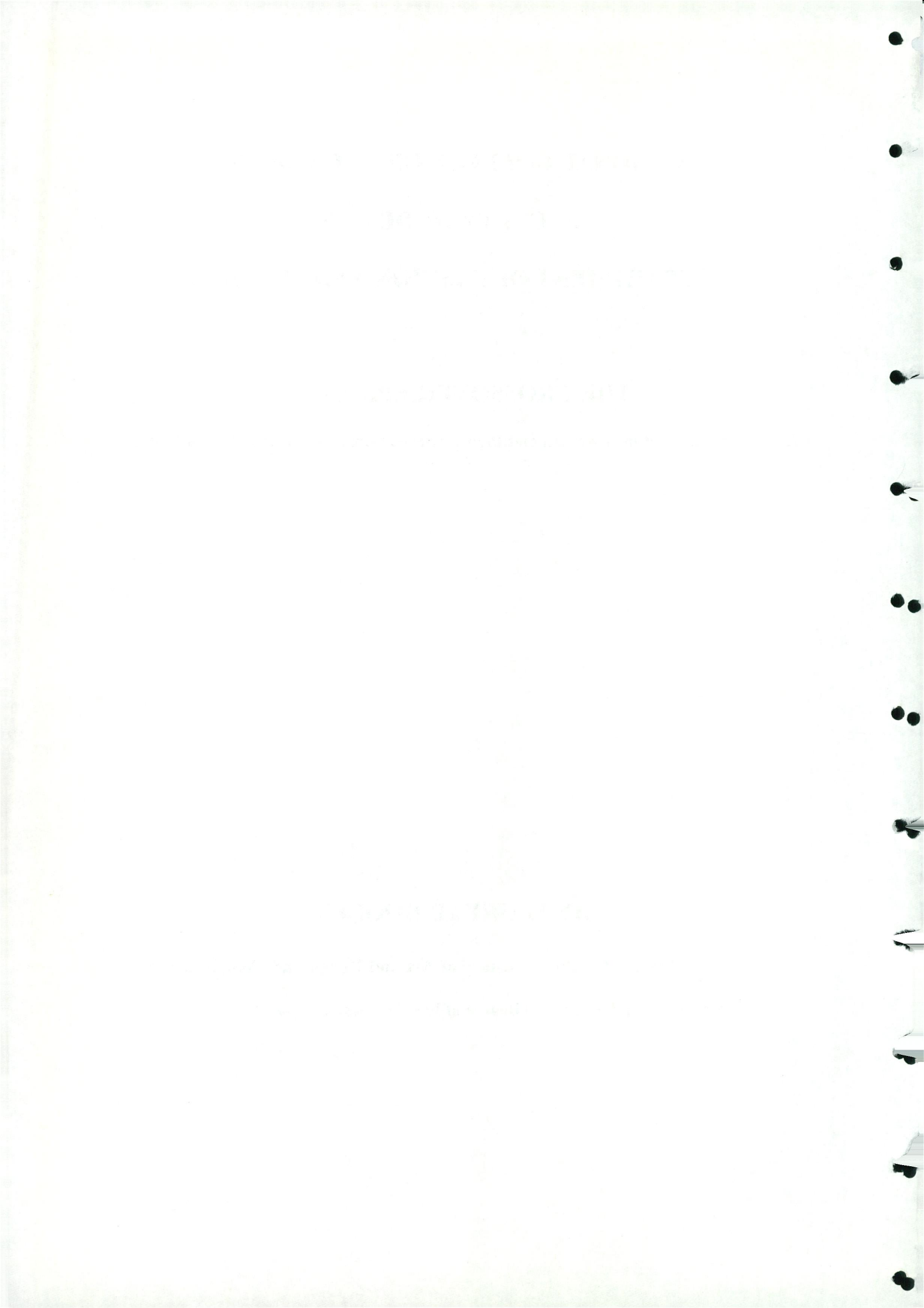
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN
FACULTY OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION AND TEXTILES

THE CROSSOVER APRON

(An examination of farmwomen and their protective dress in Ireland 1930 to 1990).

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Studies in Candidacy for the Degree of Fashion Design 1999**







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And with special thanks to the staff of the Folk Life Library in UCD.



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INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the relationship between women's dress and farmwork in twentieth century Ireland, concentrating mainly on the type of protective clothing these women wore, and particularly the crossover apron.

To me the crossover apron symbolizes my grandmother (fig1), who is a traditional maternal countrywoman, who also after her husband's death ran her own farm. The apron is very much a feminine piece of clothing and is associated with women's more traditional role in society. Obviously I am concentrating on the role the crossover apron played in Irish country women's lives, but this apron was worn certainly across Europe and America where its significance may have been different from its role in Ireland. As one lady who corresponded with me said:-

The crossover was worn all over the world, it was worn by cleaning women in hospitals, hotels and restaurants. I was in the "Hague" one time and I visited the "Bronavo" Hospital and I saw girls out working in the garden and they wore it. But in my locality it was the woman who kept house which was in most cases the mother of the family that wore it. (Joan Kerrick Co. Kerry 3rd December 1998)

The first chapter deals with aprons and their history again focusing on the crossover apron and the role it plays in Irish women's lives and what it symbolizes to them and others.

The changing role of farmwomen in twentieth century rural Ireland is the subject of my second chapter charting the social, political and economic changes effecting farmwomen and her role in rural society. In chapter three I deal with one woman, my Grandmother, Mrs. Mary Drea and her particular experience of farm life between 1930 and 1960. It also examines her experience of the crossover apron, and looks at the shared memories of other farmwomen at this time, gathered from my own correspondence

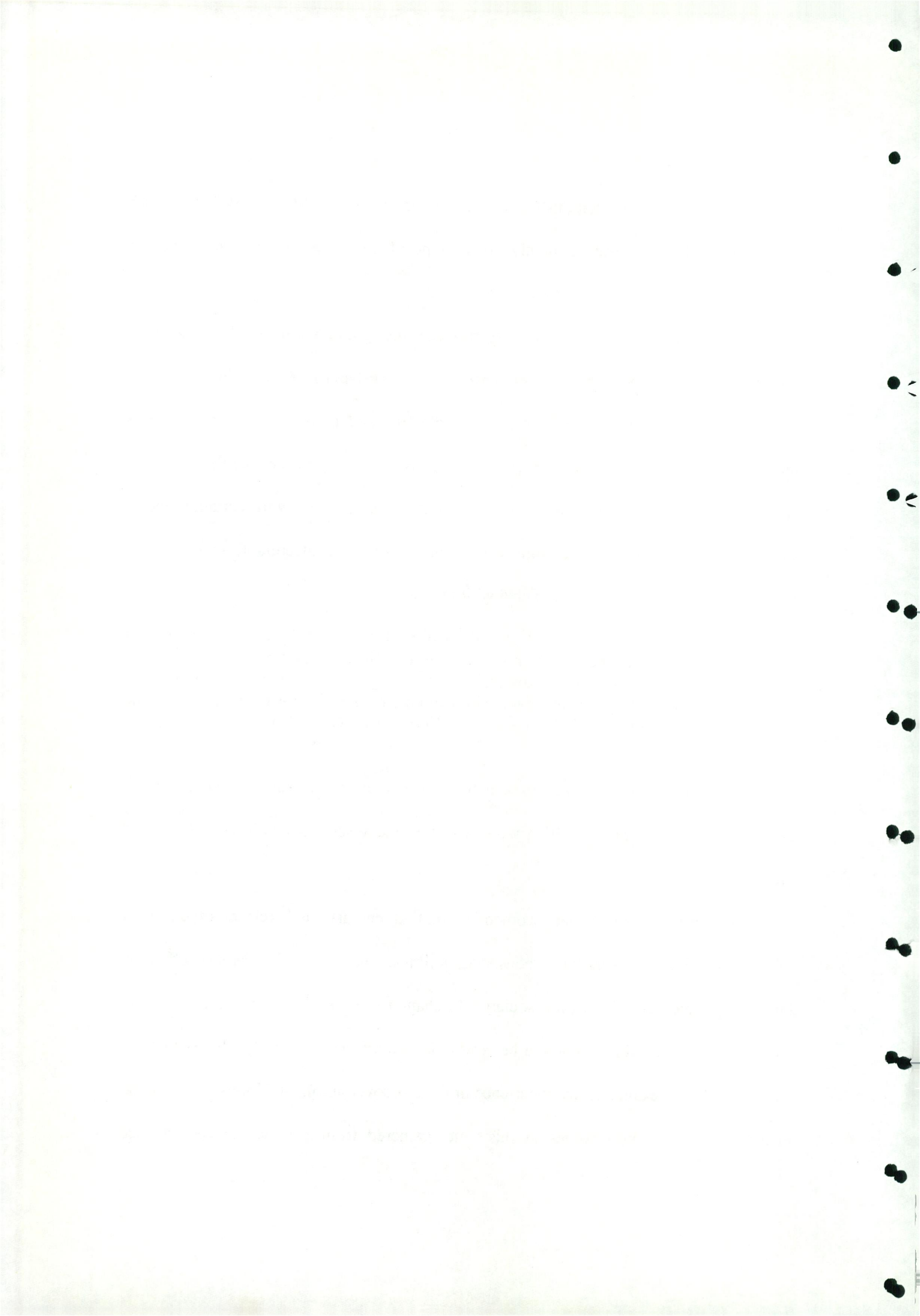




Fig 1-: Mrs Mary Drea Carlow March 1998.



through *The Irish Farmers Journal*. Which was first published in 1948, and it is a weekly newspaper, which is read by the majority of the Irish rural community. Through an examination of articles from this newspaper of the period I have tried to reflect societies attitude to women, their education and their role in rural life.

Chapter four deals with farmwomen from 1960 to 1990. It focuses specifically on the experience of my mother, Mrs. Mary Dooley (nee Drea) who is currently running her own farm. Again I have drawn on articles from *The Irish Farmers Journal* to chart the changing role and attitudes to women in agriculture.



CHAPTER 1

The Apron-: A brief history, and its role in the lives of Irish Rural Women since 1930.

While aprons have a history of many centuries' duration, they always had one of three main purposes-: as protection for the clothing beneath, as a decorative feature, or as part of a fashionable or traditional dress or to indicate a particular role in society.

Nowadays in Ireland we often associate aprons with country kitchens and a bygone era of our rural history. However in our actual day to day lives we encounter aprons mainly as part of the uniform worn by food and service industries. Aprons are seen more as functional garments and often relate to the occupation of the wearer i.e. the butcher is identified by his striped apron (fig 2). This apron is known as a "front apron", it comes over the head and ties at the waist, it keeps the wearer covered from neck to knee. Because being a butcher is a male dominated career, the striped apron is more associated with masculinity than femininity. Men's aprons throughout history tend to be practical and functional. In the case of women's aprons the aesthetic quality of the apron has been occasionally as important as its practical purpose.

Decorative aprons were highly fashionable for European ladies in the seventieth and eightieth centuries (fig 3). Some of their aprons were quite small, others were full lengths, and all were delicately embroidered often with lace edging. The peasants and servants of the same period wore plain cotton or wool aprons, which tied at the waist. Their aprons had a purely functional role of protecting their clothes underneath (fig 4).

Aprons were essential and two at a time were commonplace. Working women felt undressed without an apron, indoors or out, and they were worn by field workers, street vendors and on canal boats as well as by indoor workers in all occupations. Some outdoor vendors wore them hitched up on one side (Landsell Page 8 1977)

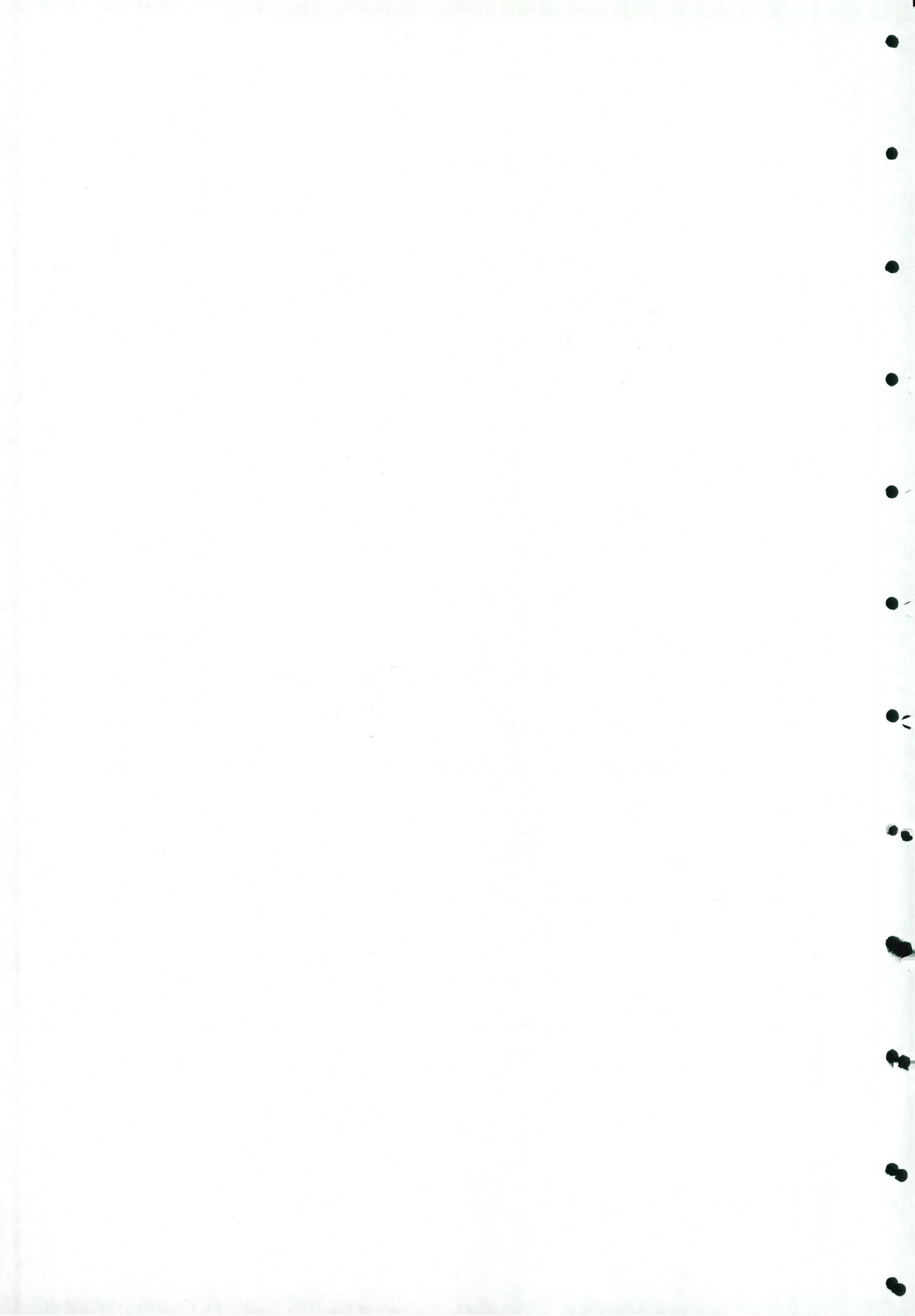




Fig 2-: Butcher Shop England Early 20th century.



Fig 3-: The Bateson Family Co. Down 1762.

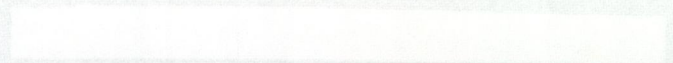
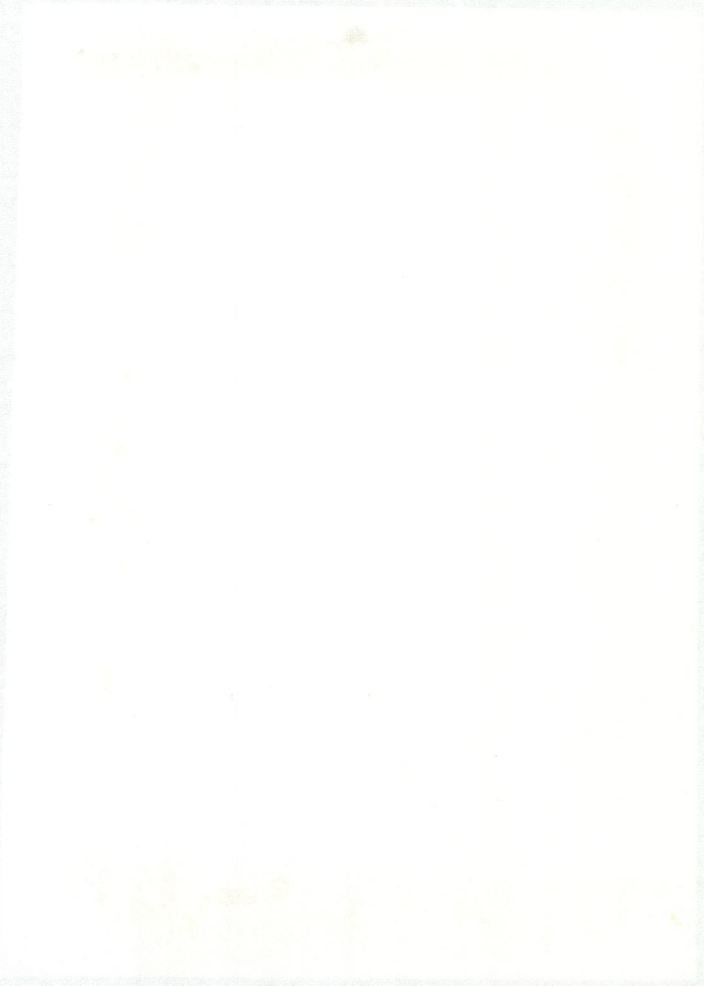




Fig 4-: Kerry 1905.





Fig 5-: Co. Limerick 1906.

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Plain aprons were a symbol of the working class, for women the purpose of the apron was not decoration but as workers, purely the functional uniform of the servant.

Late nineteenth-century aprons worn by serving women were white with a large skirt on the apron to cover the clothing underneath; it tied at the waist. Avril Landsell comments in her book "*A History of Occupational Dress*" that some aprons had a bib (fig 5), which covered the chest. These bibs had wide straps over the shoulders, indoor workers added frills to these straps, but many outdoor workers wore bibless waist aprons.

In the 1920's many factory workers wore a dropped waist style of apron which went over the head and tied at the sides (fig 6). It was made of printed cotton and offered a fashionable look to factory girls, this apron was worn both at home and in the factory. Functional aprons were considered a uniform or stamp of the working class.

After World War 1 society had changed dramatically, women were becoming more independent, working women were no longer frowned upon. Clothing began to become more comfortable and practical in the 1930's, and even aprons took on a much more functional modern design. Aprons were not just confined to servants and peasants, but shop girls, farm and factory workers also wore them. Wealthy women found it hard to get help at home and this "servant crises" meant many wealthy women had to do for themselves, and often needed to protect their good clothes, by wearing an apron. Working or not working was no longer a clear indication of ones class or background. Class lines were being blurred, and the apron was becoming more a universal piece of clothing. However the sort of apron one wore, and when it was worn did have class resonance.





Fig 6-: Coventry England in the 1920's.



1950

A middle class urban woman in the 1930's and the 1940's for example, would only wear the apron specifically when engaged in housework. And the apron would certainly aspire to a front apron that was fresh ironed and would indicate a momentary, or time-limited, engagement with domestic chores. In a city environment, a crossover apron that was generally worn all day, would be worn only by the working classes. In the country however, the crossover apron reflected a specific occupation and was worn by most farmwomen of any standing.

However, it was clearly beneath women of high social and fashion aspirations according to an anecdotal record from Co. Donegal. This particular woman went out in her Sunday best to milk her cow; she put on her crossover apron under the cover of the cow shed. When she finished her task, she removed her crossover apron and went back out into the world in her Sunday best. Obviously for this woman to be seen in public wearing a crossover apron for her would be a social no-no.

A worldwide depression began in the early thirties, the mood of the world had changed. Women's role in society took on a more practical element, glamour and extravagance was out, except for in the escapisms of Hollywood, and practical dress was the every day norm.

Decorative aprons became a thing of the past, women's clothing in general was to become less flamboyant and more simple, aprons reflected this change. The crossover apron became a working uniform for rural women in the thirties and forties.

"Countrywomen doing farmwork, wore dresses, or blouses with the addition of an apron or a sleeveless overall. The wrap-across patterned overall was typical working dress in the thirties "(Willams-Mitchell 1977 Page 60)

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2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the tools used for data collection.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, including a comparison of the different methods and techniques used. It discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each method and provides a summary of the findings.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the study and provides recommendations for future research. It highlights the need for further investigation into the effectiveness of the different methods and techniques used.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and a summary of the key findings. It reiterates the importance of maintaining accurate records and the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

6. The sixth part of the document provides a list of references and a bibliography. It includes a list of all the sources used in the study and provides a detailed description of each source.

7. The seventh part of the document provides a list of appendices and a bibliography. It includes a list of all the appendices used in the study and provides a detailed description of each appendix.

When the crossover apron was designed the thirties, farmworkers, housewives and factory workers primarily wore it. During World War 2 many factory workers and some farmworkers began to wear trousers, dungarees and boiler suits (Fig 7). Because of the depression and subsequent world war, women took the places of men in factories and on the land. The apron became part of this working uniform, it also became very popular with countrywomen and farmwives.

As a design it was successful, as it covered a person from neck to knee level, the apron was made of inexpensive patterned cotton (fig 8). Seams were overlapped together; one seam ran down the centre back, although some were cut on the fold. In addition there were two side seams and two shoulder seams. The front consists of two pieces, it crosses over the body right over left. The front pieces start two inches below the neck and end at the knee. Piping appears on the neck, down to where the right front crosses over the left front, it strengthens the neck and prevented fabric fraying. A tie on the left front goes through a slit in the right front side, it ties at the back, also there is piping on the armholes and on the pocket on the right front of the apron (fig 9). The left and right center fronts of the apron have a selvage edge, below where the apron crosses over.

According to my Grandmother, in the past fifty years the style of apron has not altered, these aprons are always manufactured in cotton; originally it was "Horrocks Cotton". The appeal is obvious, cotton is hardwearing, easily cared for, it dries quickly and is cheap to produce. As one woman remembered:-

"I called it "my crossover" and I had two, day in day out, I wore it, always had a fresh one for Sunday. It washed like a cup and saucer..... When the heat wave came it was amazing garment, it was so light and cool and being sleeveless, I

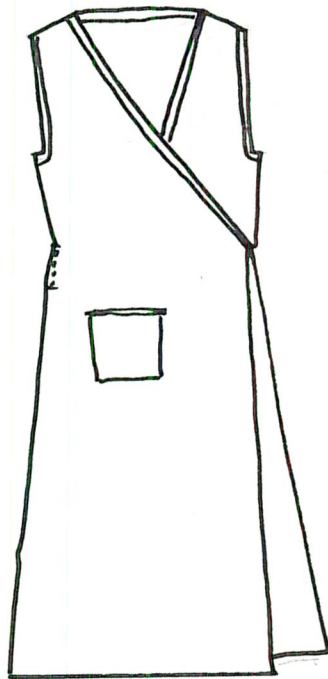




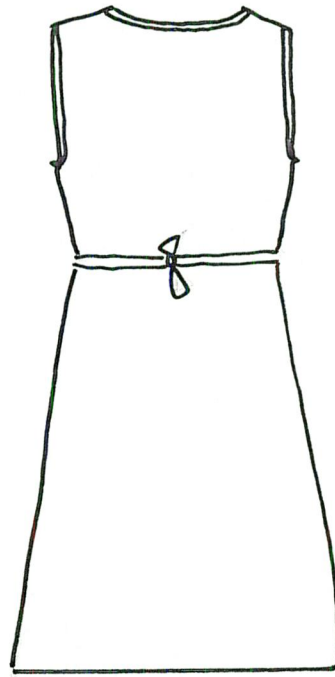
Fig 7-: England 1940.



1998



FRONT



BACK

Fig 8:- Diagram of a Crossover Apron.



Fig 9:- Close up of Crossover Apron March 1998.

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10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of being open to feedback and criticism. It emphasizes the need for researchers to listen to the input of others and to use it to improve their work.

11. The eleventh part of the document discusses the importance of being patient and persistent in the face of challenges and setbacks. It emphasizes the need for researchers to stay motivated and to continue to work hard towards their goals.

12. The twelfth part of the document discusses the importance of being flexible and adaptable in the face of changing circumstances. It emphasizes the need for researchers to be able to adjust their plans and methods as needed.

13. The thirteenth part of the document discusses the importance of being organized and efficient in the management of time and resources. It emphasizes the need for researchers to create a clear plan and to stick to it.

14. The fourteenth part of the document discusses the importance of being a team player and a good communicator. It emphasizes the need for researchers to be able to work well with others and to communicate their ideas effectively.

never perspired making the bread after the milking and the feeding of the calves, the work was so hard one job after another”
(Joan Kerrick Co. Kerry 3rd December 1998)

The original fabric was quite plain and gradually became brighter. As one woman who corresponded with me remembers-:

“In the beginning they were always navy with a little red flower, later they were brighter (floral)” (Anne Sinnott Co. Laois November 1998)

It kept the wearer warm in the winter and cool in the summer, also it protected your clothes from the wear and tear of heavy farm and house work.

Necessity was the main motivation in the thirties and forties behind the production of the crossover apron, women had begun to work in manual jobs. A protective type of clothing, that was cheap, functional and practical was essential, because good clothes were hard to come by, expensive and needed to be minded.

Obviously at this time, other style of aprons existed, the crossover was probably one of the more popular styles. One other style was the front apron, a version is still worn today, the wearer put's it on over the head, it has a bib and ties at the back of the waist (fig 10). Mainly worn by house wives and a small number of farmworkers, made of floral or plain cotton, it covered the front of the wearer's clothes.

Another style of apron was a loose pinafore shape, with a Peter Pan collar (fig 11). It went on over the head, it was sleeveless and a relatively shapeless garment, there were ties at the side seam to adjust to the wearer's comfort. For my Grandmother she was not an admirer of this style of apron, because it was awkward to put on and more restrictive to move in, than the crossover.





Fig 10: Donegal 1954.





Fig II:- Alice Muhall Kerry 1981.

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“In the twentieth century, over short skirts, a wrapper-like sleeveless overall made of flowered cotton became common wear. They are now associated with women cleaners, though at one time they replaced aprons even for outdoor workers”
(Landsell 1977 Page 16)

In the 1950's the crossover apron was mainly replaced by the nylon housecoat, these are still worn today by many older ladies and cleaning staff.

The popular hey-day of women's aprons appears to be in post-war America, men returning from the war took back their jobs, and many women gave up employment and returned to the role of housewife. Aprons became decoration as well as functional, the 1950's apron spoke of wifely responsibilities being a mother and keeping your husband happy. In the thirties, aprons symbolized women's work and independence, fifties aprons were more aesthetically pleasing, re-establishing women's role as decoration (fig 12) They encouraged a taste for frivolity and centered on pleasing your husband. Aprons have come to symbolize the traditional image of motherhood and femininity, for my grandmother's generation, aprons were the normal uniform for farmwomen in the forties and fifties, and nobody seemed to deviate from this.

Aprons nowadays are primarily associated with function and occupation; they are worn by individuals who are independent people. Earlier this century the apron was associated with femininity and dependency. The apron signifies the maternal and embodied the image of the female as the wife and helper of the farmer or as the producer and caregiver of children





Fig 12.: Irish Farmers Journal 1966.

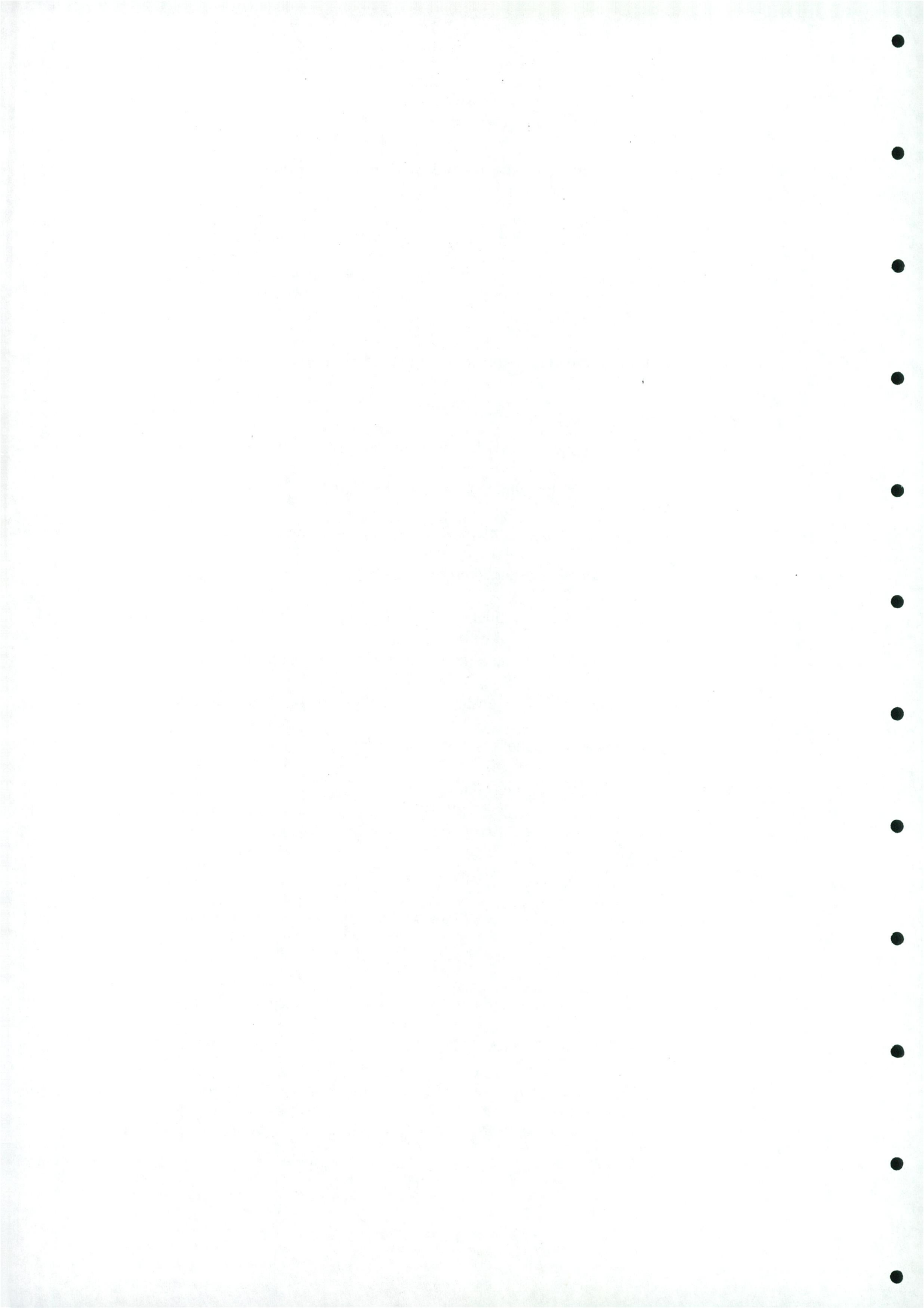


CHAPTER 2

The Role of Women in rural Ireland throughout the 20th Century

Women in rural Ireland throughout this century played a very active role in family farming, albeit unseen and for the most part undocumented. To understand the changes that have affected rural women's lives, we must start at the beginning of this century. Sufficient developments in female organisations in the early part of the twentieth century led to women being given more of a voice. Much of this had to do with the movement towards gaining Irish independence from Britain. In 1914 the Irish Female Volunteers were formed, which developed into the United Irish Women. This organisation was formed to improve the position of women in rural Ireland. Women's role in rural Ireland remained unchanged but they were becoming more aware of their rights. The 1916 rising and the subsequent War of Independence (1919-1921) and the Irish Civil War (1921-1922) led to the establishment of the Irish Free State. In 1922 the state constitution granted full citizenship to women, giving all citizens over the age of 21 the right to vote in national elections and guaranteeing to all citizens without distinction of sex, the privileges of citizenship.

In the twenties, 60% of the 329,000 female employees were working in domestic service or agriculture. These women working in agriculture would either be married to farmers or paid farm workers. Domestic service was mostly in urban areas. Women were engaged in tasks such as, chambermaiding, cooks and cleaners. No health or employment benefits were available at this time. The attitude to female education in the twenties was fairly lax. Lack of money meant most girls left school at twelve to help at home. Rural Ireland was quite an isolated society, electricity, running water or mechanisation on farms had not yet come. A substantial amount of



labour was needed to run a profitable farm, young girls were often sent to childless or unmarried relations to help them out until those relations got married.

Dress in twenties rural Ireland was very traditional – many women still wore long full skirts and white blouses, corsets were also worn. The style of the twenties, short hair and dropped waists did not make any impact in rural Ireland till the late twenties.

Fianna Fail was in power for the majority of the thirties. The Catholic Church reaffirmed itself in the shaping of Irish society. The Church had input into the drafting of the new constitution. In 1937 it guaranteed the right of every citizen over the age of twenty-one to become a member of the Dail and the right to vote was lowered to the age of eighteen.

The major place in the constitution allots to women in article 41.2;

In particular, the State recognises that by their life within the home, women give to the State a support without which, the common good cannot be achieved. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour, to the neglect of their duties in the home.

This re-inforced the views that women's work life was their homelife. The general view of men and women in rural Ireland was that a woman's place was at home with her children, however, being mentioned in the constitution did increase women's status.

The Catholic Church projected a very traditional view of women in society. Because economically, Ireland was not in a strong position, women were not encouraged to take jobs in industry as they were seen as taking men's jobs. In the thirties, the standard of living in farming declined. Forty percent of women still worked in farming, one third were employed in domestic service. High emigration



among women began to emerge in the thirties. To combat poverty, the government introduced old age and widow's pensions and unemployment benefit for men.

The United Irish Women changed its name to the Irish Countrywomen's Association in 1935. It began to develop social and educational programmes for women in rural Ireland. In conclusion, it can be said that the thirties saw the institutionalisation of the domestic role given to women since independence.

The forties were dominated by World War Two, although Ireland was neutral, it still suffered food and fuel shortages. High levels of emigration, especially among women in rural Ireland continued. Initially, rural women moved to big cities, and gradually took the emigration trail to Britain and America. Ireland had the lowest rate of marriage in Europe in the forties, in rural areas this was particularly evident.

Women had a tendency to marry later and to men much older than they did. At this time, the average marriage age for a woman was twenty-eight, for a man it was thirty-five to forty. General reasons for the low rate of marriage was, single young women leaving rural areas, strict Catholic conservative teaching, lack of social events such as dances, lack of encouragement for men to get married. A farmer's mother often wanted to hold on to the farm for as long as possible. If her son married, her position in the family was now dispensable. While domestic service remained the main out of home employment for women, teaching and nursing now became more of an option. In rural areas, if a family could afford it, a daughter often became a teacher or a nurse.

The Rural Electrification Scheme, embarked on by the Government in 1945 had a huge impact on rural Ireland. The scheme offered free connection of electricity, it connected 280,000 rural consumers in ten years. Electric light had a huge effect on the daily drudgery of farm life for rural women. In conservative rural Ireland, electricity was regarded with huge suspicion. As one woman (Mary Drea) I talked to



recalls, it took all her persuasive power to get her husband to allow electricity into the farmhouse. As many farmhouses were thatched at this time, people believed electricity would set fire to the roof. In fact, many people refused to allow electricity into their homes under the same scheme and thus, had to pay for it in the fifties.

Despite changes economically and socially in Ireland in the twenties, by the fifties, Ireland still remained pre-dominantly a rural economy. Forty percent of the active work force was involved in agriculture. Since the forties, there was a continuance of female employment moving away from the domestic service area, into clerical, teaching and nursing areas. Mechanisation on farms meant woman's work began to be centred more around home and family. Female agricultural workers were becoming a thing of the past.

The Irish Countrywomen's Association took on a greater urgency and importance in improving standards of living for rural women. They organised campaigns for piped water and electricity for farm homes. *An Grianan* was established to provide social and cultural outlets for rural women, it is a residential college running educational courses for the I.C.A. On paper, the lifestyle of rural women seemed to be dramatically changing, the reality was different. Female wages were half that of men and unemployment benefit became available for male agricultural workers, but not for their female counterparts.

The rights of women were starting to be protected in e.g. "The Married Women Status Act" of 1957, which legally entitled "a wife to acquire, hold, dispose of any property personally" (Kelly, 1991 Page157). This was replacing the previous Act, which stated "any property she held outside marriage, automatically rested with her husband upon marriage. High emigration among both men and women in rural Ireland was still the norm. although men had a tendency to return to the land.



The 1960's began with Ireland's bid to join the European Economic Community. It was apparent Ireland was becoming eager to open its doors to Europe. Only 15% of women were now actively engaged in agriculture while the other 85% were involved in industry such as teaching, nursing, clerical and the service industries. Women still had to give up their jobs when they got married. Increasing size of farms and mechanisation meant less labour on farms. The Succession Act of 1965 meant that if a man deserted his wife and children, he legally had to leave half his estate to his wife and one third to his children (Kelly, 1991 Page160). Prior to this act, in the event of separation, a farmer could legally disinherit both wife and children.

In 1973, Ireland became a member of the E.E.C. Women's position in society was strengthened by European law. The first Commission on the Status of Women in 1974 proposed to bring attention to women's issues. By the end of the seventies, thirty-six of the forty-nine recommendations made by the Commission had been implemented. For example, women no longer had to give up employment when they got married. Employment Equality Acts of 1977, ended discrimination based on sex; various Family Law Acts were passed protecting the maintenance of spouses and children, more women began to appear in politics. The general view in rural Ireland, that the best role for a woman was that of housewife and mother still persisted. For many young farmwives in the 1970's, because of the increased mechanisation of the farm, they found themselves taking on a more domestic and passive role in farmwork.

The 1980s and 1990s have seen increasing expansion of female organisations. Today there is no area of employment that a woman cannot pursue. Staying at home and raising children is nearly considered a luxury.



Women today in rural Ireland, specifically those engaged in agriculture, are considered a central part of the farm family. Farming is still predominantly a male occupation. Many farms in Ireland are family run farms. It has a definite structure; a woman usually enters farming through marriage, although small percentages have farms in their own right. She enters a traditional, often patriarchal environment. Many women who marry farmers are from similar backgrounds so this environment is not unfamiliar. A woman's main role is to produce a potential heir, son or daughter, to keep the farm in the family. Succession and transfer of land is a large part of farming life; traditionally it is the first born son. Yet, the lack of interest from the younger generation means that any relative, male or female with a keen interest in farming may be considered.

Farm-wives often call themselves housewives who are considered non-labour, the actual contribution they make to the farm is largely undocumented. Recent studies suggest that farmers and their wives see it as a partnership. The woman is centrally involved in keeping the house, rearing the children and doing the farm accounts. The modernisation of agriculture and the economic situation means that the majority of young farmwomen would engage in work off the farm. They still would be involved in farm life, doing such tasks as milking cows, feeding hens and looking after livestock. Previous generations of farmwomen would be materially dependent on their husbands, but today, many would have some form of independent incomes.

Only in the event of a landowners death, is the farm wife entitled to the farm regardless of input. Generally, it is a care-taking role until a son or a daughter takes over the running of the farm. From my own personal experience, having been brought up on a farm and through my research, farmwives are generally unconcerned with



their aspect of inheritance. Once they marry, they accept the situation; this is the way it is. There is a strong desire to keep the farm in the family.

The majority of farmer's would certainly claim to see their wives as equal partners in the farm, regardless of input. About 15% of farms in Ireland are in joint ownership, this was where the husband consciously added his spouses name to the farm holding (O'Hara, 1998 Page 117). A small percentage of farmers are female, either unmarried or widowed. I think the fact that these women exist and are accepted, show that gradually rural Ireland is changing. Before this, the household traditionally would revolve around the father, now it revolves around the family. Young farmwives, would today, preach modern values; her husband would be expected to take a more active role in the household and the rearing of the children. These women would be employed outside the home and for those who are not, they are often involved in some form of agri-tourism – farmhouse hotel and bed and breakfasts.

Today, farming is regarded as a business, although traditional values still exist, economics has changed a lot of them. Farmwomen's position has grown stronger; they are becoming more visible and more out-spoken and finding their own unique voice.



CHAPTER THREE

Women's Dress and Farm Work and the changing role of women in rural Ireland 1930 to 1960.

Farm work in the 1930's and in 1940 was extremely labour intensive, for the majority of farm's electricity and running water was still a long way off. In addition to their housework, women played a substantial part in the work done on farms. This was considered "woman's work" an extension of their housework, their farmwork included feeding calves, hens, and milking cows. A lack of money at this time, meant that rural women got their clothes made. They had one "good" outfit, which was worn at Sunday mass or other special occasions. For the rest of the week ordinary or older clothes were worn. The crossover apron became an integral part of a rural woman's wardrobe. Because it protected you're less than perfect clothes while doing farm and housework.

My own grandmother was born in 1916, she is now eighty- three, she got married in 1946 at the age of twenty- eight, then she became a farmers wife. Having previously worked on a relation's farm, this was an environment she was accustomed to. On her relation's farm she wore a 'front apron' doing out door farmwork, when she got married she adapted a crossover apron. Although from my research, it seems that women generally started wearing these aprons in their teens.

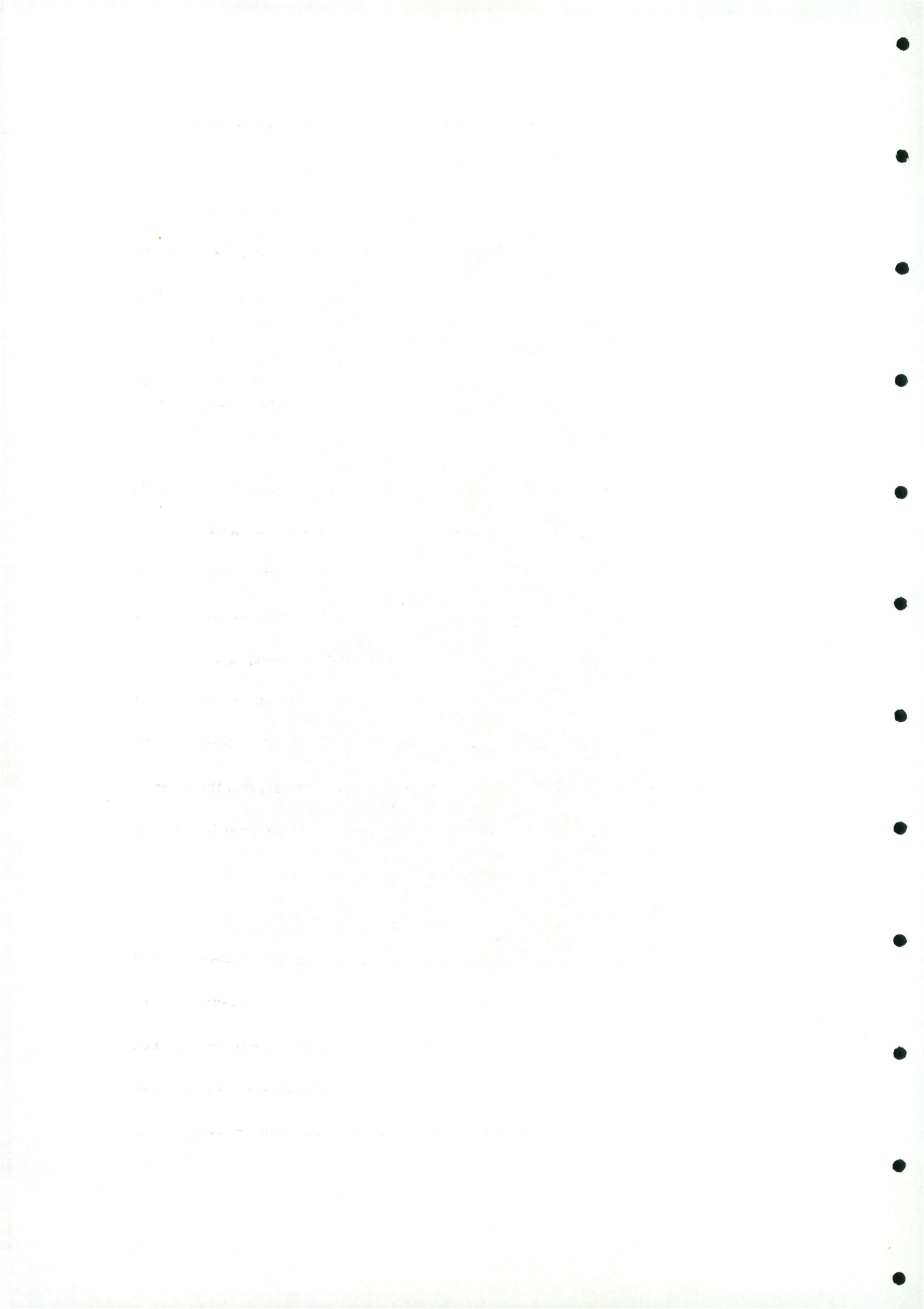
Well my mother now aged seventy-nine years still wears one Sunday and Mondays always. She has worn one from the age of sixteen years to keep clean while working inside and outside on the farm...The apron was something you got back in the 1930's, to wear to save the few clothes you had. (Mrs Mary Warren, Co. Wexford 20th November 1998)

Unfortunalty for my grandmother married life was short-lived, her husband died in 1952. Gran was now effectively left in sole charge of the farm and home, she had two





Fig 13: Kerry Summer 1983.



young daughters to take care of. Mrs Mary Ryan and Mrs Margaret Rourke were two local women employed by my grandmother to help with the farmwork. For this work, these women adopted the crossover apron (fig 13). This apron was dark navy with a small blue flower; it was made of heavy drill cotton. My grandmother recalls that the colour and pattern of this apron was considered "the apron" at this time. Women in my grandmother's vicinity only wore brighter coloured aprons in the summertime.

I remember my mother God rest her wearing the crossover. In the beginning, they were always navy with a little red flower, later they were brighter (floral). (Anne Sinnott Co. Laois November 1998)

Farmwork being the mucky work it is, darker colours would be more suitable, as they would not show up the dirt as quickly as lighter colours. In the wintertime the main duties on the farm for Mary Ryan and Margaret Rourke were feeding calves, hens and milking cows. They were not involved in the housework on my Grandmothers farm. They both adopted brighter coloured crossover aprons in the summertime, probably because their farmwork was less wet and mucky. Most livestock were out in the fields, cows generally did not need milking in the summertime, and the main work would be with the harvest. The fact that the summer jobs were dryer and cleaner, aswell as the weather in the summer time being a lot warmer both influenced the wearing of brighter aprons in the summer.

My research suggests that the general trend at this time was that the cross-over apron was worn doing farmwork because: (a) It covered up your clothes underneath thus either saving good clothes or hiding old clothes, and (b) A woman still looked respectable and retained her femininity and modesty. Eventhough some of the tasks she performed were quite unglamorous, her appearance was still important. The



crossover apron although a good protector of clothing also seems to have had a companionable role in many women's lives, it was greatly regarded with affection.

“My mother [fig 14] who always wore a crossover apron and with a blouse inside she always looked lovely and crisp” (Mrs Mary Brophy Co. Kilkenny 20th November 1998).

Pride in appearance and respectability seem to go hand in hand with the wearing of the crossover apron.

Anne Buggy was employed as my grandmother's housekeeper from 1950 to 1971, she lived with my gran, and her duties were solely the housework. Anne always wore a navy crossover apron, while doing the housework; she had three aprons, which she wore. Her tasks included washing clothes, cooking, cleaning, and the mending of clothes.

Previous to the crossover apron some rural women wore a “shopcoat” while working on the farm (fig 15). It was a knee-length coat made of heavy cotton, usually it was beige or green, and shop girls also wore it. This was a very masculine garment and didn't reflect a woman's femininity. The crossover apron however had an essential role in both rural women's domestic and agricultural life. It is an obviously feminine garment with its floral patterning, whether in navy or brighter colours. It crosses over at the waist, and gives the wearer quite a slim silhouette. It was quite a flattering garment; it was knee length, which was very fashionable in the 1930's and 1940's (fig 16). Therefore, although its primary function has always been regarded as its protective role, it also gives the wearer a very feminine appearance. As one woman correspondent says of the crossover apron:





Fig 14-: Mrs Mary Brophy Kilkenny 1964.



Fig 14-: Mrs Mary Brophy Kilkenny 1964.





Fig 15: Mrs Gertude McCleary in "shopcoat" with her son Stephen McCleary 1930.



Fig 16: Woman milking a cow 1966.

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They are lovely with bias binding, worn over a nice jumper or top, I didn't mind who dropped in unexpectedly. I think they look best on a tall woman. I often thought if they flared a bit more at the back. I think low stout women would not wear them. I am lucky, in the fact that I am blessed with a good figure (Name and address on request)

I think it is obvious from this lady that the crossover is much more than a functional garment, but to her an essential part of her wardrobe.

A major social event in the farming calendar would have been the '*harvest*' or the '*threshing*', this happened once a year normally in late August or early September. Even my own Grandmother used to hire a threshing machine from Carlow Co. Council. Each farm around the area got the machine for a day to do the harvest. My grandmother's area took about a week to harvest, all neighbouring farmers from the surrounding areas would arrive at one farm to help with the harvest and then go on to the neighbouring farm. At harvest time, a woman's role was to feed the men working in the fields. For women, often living isolated lives on farms, this was a huge social event. As one lady recalls of her mother:

That generation of farmwomen, made sure they had a "clean apron" on days that neighbouring farmers were helping "drawing in the corn", "threshing", "drawing in the hay (Mrs Mary O'Neill Co. Cork November 1998)

The crossover apron was the choice garment to look clean and respectable, to a certain extent taking over ^{from} the functional and domestic role of the apron. Every woman wore this apron at the threshing, it was the acceptable piece of clothing, at that particular time of year, and it became a fashionable and attractive garment (fig 17). The harvest also took on a romantic role; the emphasis was on a woman to look as attractive as possible. Dances in town halls and farmhouses and other social events





Fig 17: Joe Daly and relatives Dun Chaoín Kerry 1947.



were often held at harvest time. Although there was a low rate of marriage at this time, many farmers and farmwomen would be actively seeking partners.

In the 1930's and 40's women's involvement in farmwork was through relatives or marriage, they were a farmer's wife, mother or daughter. Being married or born into this particular lifestyle, their attitude to farmwork for the most part was that of acceptance. From an early age, a farmer's daughter was expected to help her mother. Initially with the housework, then gradually on the farm. My grandmother herself was born in a small village in Co. Tipperary in March 1916. She was the eldest of four, and her parents ran a public house. Her mother did not consider a pub a suitable environment for a child to grow up in. At the age of twelve gran went to work on her aunt's farm in Co. Carlow. She left school at seventeen having achieved the equivalent of today's Junior certificate.

In the early 1930's, secondary education was rare and children left school at the age of twelve. There was a world-wide depression and not much money was available. Career options for young rural women were limited, most, like my grandmother worked on their family farms until they got married.

For example Nora Ryan who was herself a farmer's daughter, wrote in *The Irish Farmer's Journal* 21st September 1953 that "... as I resume my work helping mother with the housework, milking cows, feeding fowl and performing many other tasks which a farmer's daughter has to cope with. "

To help observe and understand the role and attitude towards women in Ireland, during the forties and fifties, I looked at one significant publication at this time. *The Irish Farmers Journal* which was first published in 1948, and provides a good reflection of

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life in rural Ireland. In the Journal of the forties and fifties there were few articles dealing specifically with rural woman's lives.

Agricultural and technical education of a farmer's son was a primary concern; education of a daughter was often neglected. In the early 1950's, *The Irish Farmers Journal* emphasises the education of the son (heir) in modern farming methods.

A farmer's daughter was sent on domestic science courses to pursue a "career" as a farmer's wife. As one article in the Journal of 1950 points out:

"The boy who would succeed to the home farm needed considerable education if he has to become a successful farmer"

(Mr J.G. O'Shea Educate the Heir *The Irish Farmers Journal* 23rd April 1950)

Women were not considered competent in tackling farm machinery, their sphere was considered the more female pursuits of poultry keeping and milking cows. The crossover apron, which was worn by many rural farmwomen at this time, gave them a distinctly feminine appearance. I think it emphasised their role in farming life, a woman in a pretty floral apron would not be deemed respectable driving a tractor. Therefore, in a way the crossover apron contributed to the embodying of the role women had in farming life of the forties and fifties.

There were rare articles written solely on farmwomen in *The Irish Farmers Journal* of the 1950's. One such article was concerned with a farmer's daughter, single-handedly running her father's farm and tackling modern machinery competently;

...this pretty twenty-five year old girl is also doing a man-sized job on the farm at home...she returned to the fifty acre farm to do what she describes "as the work any farmer's daughter does". But fate had more to impose on her than that when her father tragically died two years ago and she had to undertake the responsibility for running of the farm for her mother was a town's woman.

(Landsman "Doing the whole a man-sized job" *The Irish Farmers Journal* 14th November 1957)

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The “man-sized job” refers to farm work such as operating machinery, feeding livestock, and generally being involved in all aspects of farm life. If there had been a son in this family, this girls farming pursuits wouldn’t be possible. Her adaptation to all aspects of farming life is portrayed as a positive thing by *The Irish Farmers Journal*, as it was praised as modern Irish farming.

Careers for farmer’s daughters were not really considered in rural Ireland of the fifties. Although an article did appear in *The Irish Farmers Journal* of 16 September 1950 entitled “A Business of your own in the country”; it was concerned with respectable careers for farmer’s daughters. Such as a country dressmaker, many people at this time did not have money for shop bought clothes, often they got a dressmaker or tailor to make their clothes. Other career’s included a typist, starting a cake shop, market garden, or country café. The article praised the initiative of starting your own business:

No one can any longer accuse country girls of being backward. There is a new outlook on the farms today, the young people are showing initiative and are using new modern methods in their work when dealing with old and new problems.

All these careers mentioned above have a distinctly feminine appeal and how successful they would be in conservative 1950’s rural Ireland is questionable. One acceptable career for rural women at this time was that of either poultry keeper or poultry instructor or poultry mistress. The latter-i.e. The poultry keeper was the rearing of fowl for commercial gain. Although this work was less valued than that of men’s work, this sort of women’s work helped increase the farm income. My Grandmother, who always has worn a crossover apron while feeding her hens, uses the pocket in the apron to store eggs.

During the fifties poultry enterprises became an acceptable “career” or way of earning extra “pin money” for farm wives and their daughter’s. It was a commercial enterprise as hens and eggs were sold to local shops. A “Poultry Page” was developed in *The Irish Farmers Journal* of 1953; this page was dedicated to the health and maintenance of hens. Although there were some male poultry keepers, it seems to have been a distinctly female occupation (fig 18). Many women had up to two hundred birds; it was a profit-orientated enterprise. As one article from the Poultry Page of 1953 points out:

Poultry products account annually for a large proportion of the total agricultural output of this country and were in 1952 our third most important product. (Our Poultry Correspondent “The Farm Flock” *The Irish Farmers Journal* Saturday October 31st 1953)

A “Poultry Instructor” was a common career choice for single farmer’s daughter; they had to give this or any other job up once they married. Poultry instructor was employed by the local Co. Council, to go to farms, give advice and check for the health and well being of the birds. This job was more about teaching new methods and giving advice rather than hands on work with poultry. For this job, an instructor wore a suit, consisting of a skirt jacket and blouse. Although many poultry keepers adopted a crossover apron while caring for the birds, a poultry instructor did not, her role was that of a teacher. The crossover apron, itself could not be worn by the poultry instructor, as she was an official, associated with the State and in receipt of a wage, the apron would make her seem to be domestic and lacking in authority. So in a way the apron itself helped keep rural women in their domestic sphere.

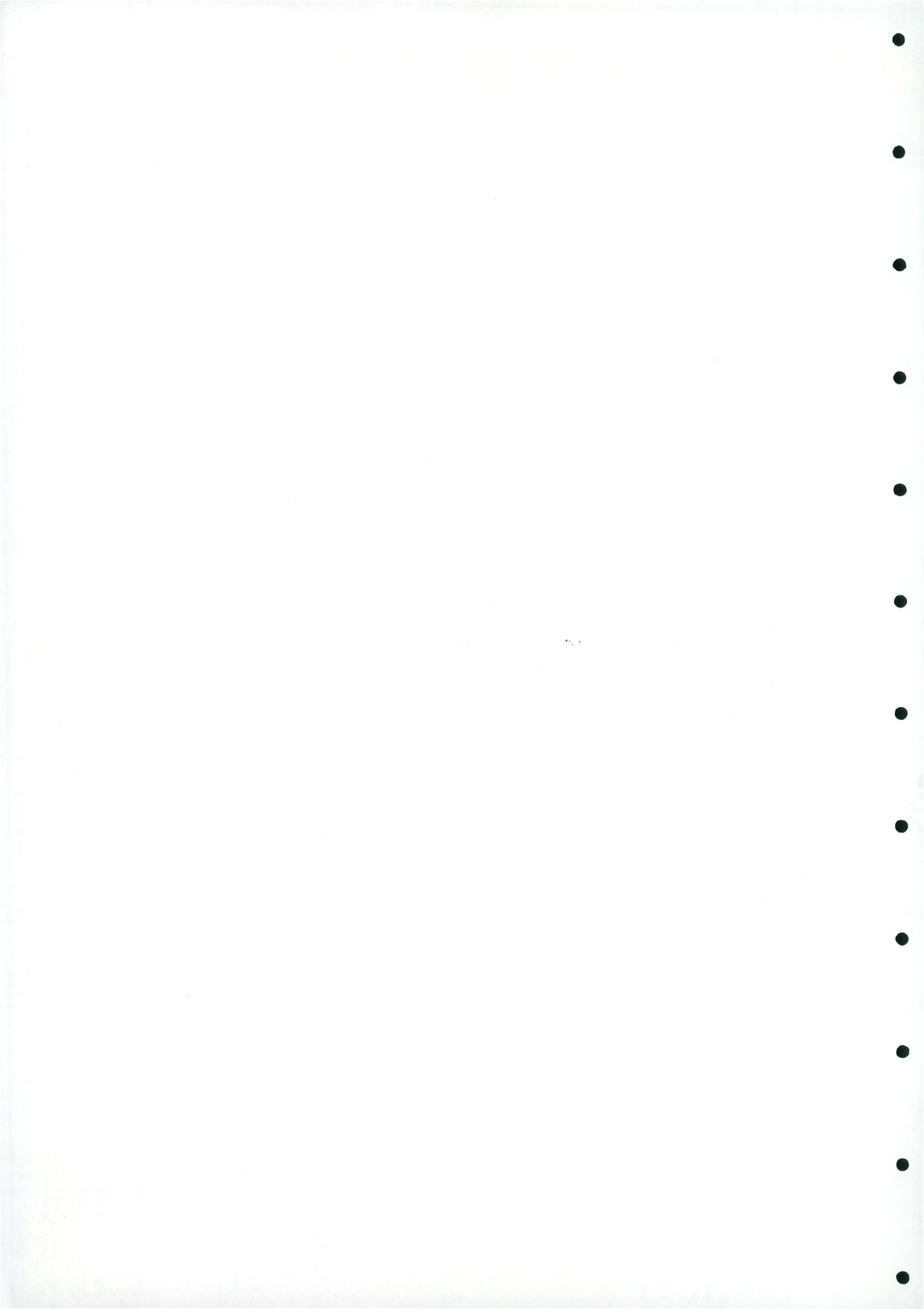




Fig 16 : Woman feeding hens 1939.

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Because of the low rate of marriage in the forties and fifties, one in every four men remained a bachelor. To find a respectable career for a woman, without being a burden to her family became a reality.

A huge concern in *The Irish Farmers Journal* of the fifties was the low rate of marriage and the high emigration in rural Ireland; people saw this as the end to rural life. Many letters written to the journal in the fifties openly criticises men for marrying late. One letter to the journal 12th January 1957 entitled “Leaving to Live” written by a woman referring to herself as “Bean a Tighe” from Co. Cork makes the following points:

Why do girls leave the land? To live of course and not moulder in the stagnation of country life. Who would drudge and toil in drab surroundings, doing anything and everything from scrubbing floors and churns to footing turf and picking potatoes, when by a short sea or air trip a young maiden may be transported from buckets and byres to the skyscrapers of Manhattan, perhaps a “Prince Charming” round the corner whose ideas of matrimony do not centre around fortunes and figures, bargains and bindings?

This particular letter does not paint a very attractive picture of rural Ireland in the fifties, in reality living conditions were very poor, many farmers were reluctant to spend money on modernising the farm home i.e. putting in running water and electricity. This letter writer goes on to point out:

The wonder is not that so many girls leave the land, but that so many stay.....It is appalling to see young girls dragging heavy buckets one in each hand, as they go feeding all and sundry...but housekeeping is only a sideline with a lot of country women – that and perhaps rearing six or seven children at odd intervals of the day and night. Truly it may be said of our women folk on the land: The mass of people lead lives of quiet desperation

A farm wife was expected to cope with heavy outside farmwork, her own domestic work, and looking after children. Men were often actively encouraged not to get

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involved in the rearing of their children. The “Bean an Tighe” from Co. Cork did not solely blame the young farmers; - she goes on to say

Parents too are not altogether free from blame in perpetuating the antiquated idea that the superior male is monarch of all he surveys and must be waited on hand and foot. Parents also cling to their power and their purses and almost carry their farms to the grave with them, while their gosoons of forty and over grow more mellow and more mercenary day by day

As the “Bean an Tighe” points out many farmers at this time waited to marry until their father died, so that they could marry and bring a wife on to their inherited land, however many women were not prepared to wait. Many women did not leave rural Ireland by choice but only because they had to. Because of men marrying late (fig 19), there was often a disparity of ages between parents and their children, which lead to a lack of understanding between them.

By the late fifties, life was gradually changing in rural Ireland, people were marrying younger and money was not only being invested in the farm itself but also in modernising the farm home. In 1957 an article in *The Irish Farmers Journal* praised a young farmer for marrying at twenty-four, his wife was twenty-three (fig 20). This couple represented modern rural Ireland, having just built a bungalow with electricity and running water.

If one were to choose the ideal type of young Irish farmer Ned Phelan of Dungarven, Co. Waterford, should be very near to the mark...he has set a headline also in getting married in his middle twenties. He took over management at 19 years, when his father died. Ned and Helen his wife will move into a new bungalow soon. As far as a modern house goes it has all that, anyone could wish. Youth, ambition to go ahead, a home of their own – they have got the whole lot
(J.F. Keane “Waterford farmer sets headline in many ways” *The Irish Farmers Journal* Saturday June 29 1957 Page 14)



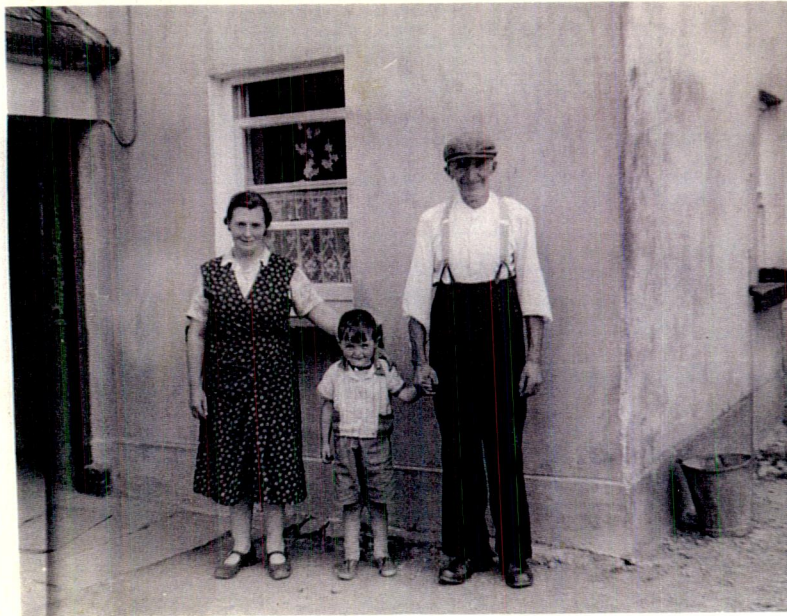


Fig 19-: Stephen McCleary with wife Peig and son Stephen 1965.

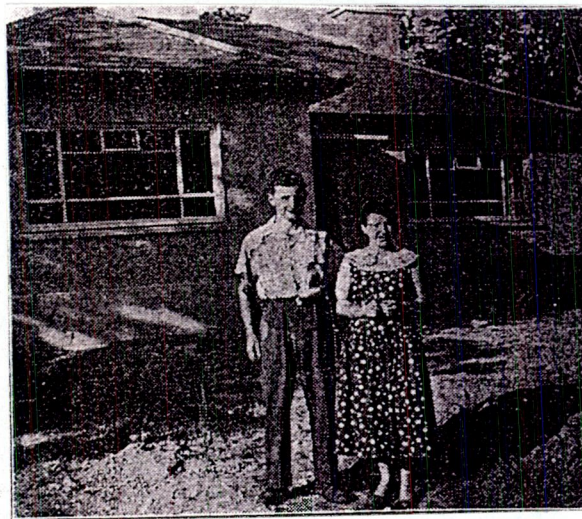


Fig 20-: Ned and Helen Phelan Co. Waterford 1957.



What is singularly praiseworthy is the fact that this young farmer was willing to spend money on modern domestic appliances. In the late fifties many farm women seem to be no longer accepting the drudgery of farm life, but demanding change, especially in their domestic lives. I think this article reflects this change however gradual.

Although this couple is praised for, being modern and the farm is seen as a partnership. A woman's role was seen a housewife and mother, the idea of a man washing up or minding children was unheard of in rural Ireland of the 1950's. As one article in *The Irish Farmers Journal* pointed out:

Only last week I was speaking to a bishop. He does not belong to this country at all, but he belongs to our family, and he visits us once in a few years. I mentioned the difficulty of getting domestic help and how husbands are now used as substitutes. He said smiling "It is considered bad psychology for a wife to expect her husband to wash up". Up to this I did not know I was a good psychologist I only guessed it.

(Anne Redmond "New Feminine Spirit" *The Irish Farmers Journal* Saturday October 19 1957 Page 23)

By the end of the fifties a woman's role in the farm was lessening, with the advent of domestic appliances, a woman's domain was seen in the farm home and the rearing of her children.

As said previously there were very few general articles appearing in *The Irish Farmers Journal* of the forties and fifties dealing specifically with women. However, there was a special page dedicated to "women's interest." Initially in 1948, it was called "Woman's World" but 1953 developed it into the "Farm Home Pages." It dealt with woman's issues, but it had a very rural out look. Primarily dealing with fashion, recipes, housekeeping and also vegetable growing, and poultry. Anne Redmond writes in the *The Irish Farmers Journal* Farm Home Pages 15 October 1953:

We had a lively discussion that night during which one young woman, and a highly efficient housewife to boot, declared that she found a discussion or lecture on stock judging, just as absorbing as a cookery demonstration or a talk on home making matters...while men are gathered together to hear a lecture

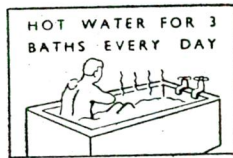
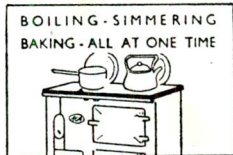
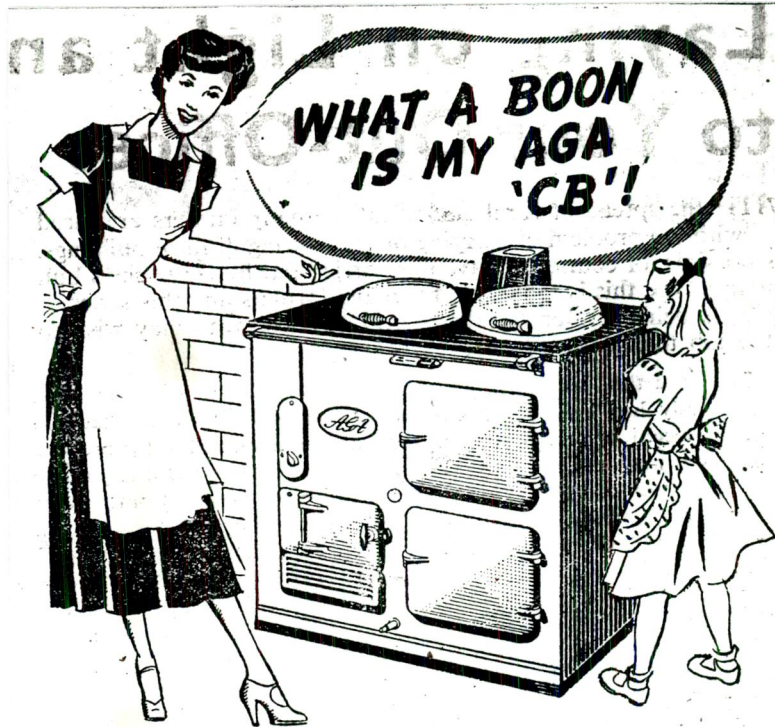


on some purely farming topic, the women could be having a lecture on meal planning or infant care or even on such frivolous topics as hair-do's and make-up

This page saw the women as homemakers whose sole concern was the welfare of her husband and children (fig 21). There were endless articles on "being the perfect housewife" and on skincare and grooming.

Eventhough the majority of farmwomen at this time wore the crossover apron; it was never referred to or illustrated on these women in the "Farm Home Pages". It is as if the apron is beneath consideration and not a subject worth discussing.





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Fig 21:- Irish Farmers Journal 1957.



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CHAPTER FOUR

Women's Dress and Farm Work and the changing role of women in rural Ireland 1960 to 1990.

The 1960's in Ireland was a time of optimism and social and economic change. Industry and modernisation of farming became a reality. My mother Mary Drea (maiden name) was born in 1948. She was a teenager in the 1960's and to her the crossover was something old people wore, part of a bygone era. As one woman I corresponded with referred to it;

My mother always wore a crossover. When her family grew up, they tried to get her out of the crossover habit – they progressed they thought, but she never pretended to hear them.
(Mary Rochford Co. Tipperary, November 1998)

My mother wore a version of the crossover when she was a child around the house. It was put on over her head and tied on the sides (fig 22). This apron was popular for children and was made in a floral cotton fabric, her mother (my Grandmother) made it for her. She started school in 1953 at the age of five. When she was seven she began to take an active role in farmwork on my grandmother's farm. Her duties included, milking cows, feeding calves, pigs, sheep and taking care of poultry. For these jobs she usually wore skirts, blouses and jumpers or cardigans. Over these she wore an apron with a bib which came over her head and tied at the front. This style of apron was generally referred to by mother as a "front apron" which was made of cotton, either plain navy or a floral pattern

Like many farmers' daughters at this time, mother left school at sixteen after completing her Inter Certificate in 1964. Education of a farmer's daughter was a common topic in the Irish Farmers Journal of this time. "Farm Home Pages" had regular features on the future of farmer's daughters. Domestic Science Colleges





Fig 22:- Dublin 1962.



Fig 23:- Two children 1939.



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(schools for Homemakers) which my mother attended was the most popular choice. They were seen as an appropriate finishing school for girls from rural backgrounds. My mother sat an entrance exam and was awarded a scholarship from Carlow Co. Council. From 1964 to 1965, she spent a year at St. Michael's College of Domestic Science in Tipperary. These schools were all boarding and privately run by nuns. All the girls attending were from farming backgrounds. They were taught general domestic practice; housework, needlework, cookery and hygiene. Farm practice was also emphasised such as dairying, poultry, horticulture. My mother saw it as a forerunner to today's agricultural colleges, Domestic Colleges had a distinctly feminine slant. Their aim was to produce good farmer's wives, but some girls chose to pursue careers in clerical and hotel work. One teacher from St. Joseph's School of Domestic Economy, told the Irish Farmer's Journal of 1961 speaking of the students:

The majority of them go home again to the family farm. With their training in dairying and poultry keeping, they will be a bigger asset than before around the farmyard and their knowledge of housekeeping, needlework, laundry and so on will make them all the more tempting to local manhood.

(Sheedy Larry, "School for Homemakers," Irish Farmer's Journal Page 23, Saturday, June 17, 1961)

Vocational Schools that taught general housekeeping plus typing, bookkeeping and cooking were seen as an option. Both the Domestic and Vocational Schools aimed to equip these girls with all the knowledge they needed to become a successful farmer's wife. Although a percentage of these girls went back to the family farm, a lot went on to careers in hotelwork, secretarial, poultry instruction and nursing.

Mr. Brickley says, Every girl who has done this course conscientiously is fitted out for a good post here in Ireland and, if she so desires, for eventual marriage to a farmer. (Sheedy Larry, "The Farmer's Daughter - Her Education and Future..... Irish Farmer's Journal, p.24, Saturday, October 21st. 1961).

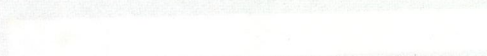




Fig 24: Irish Farmers Journal 1961.



Fig 25: Irish Farmers Journal 1961.



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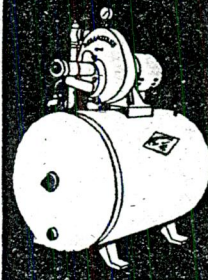
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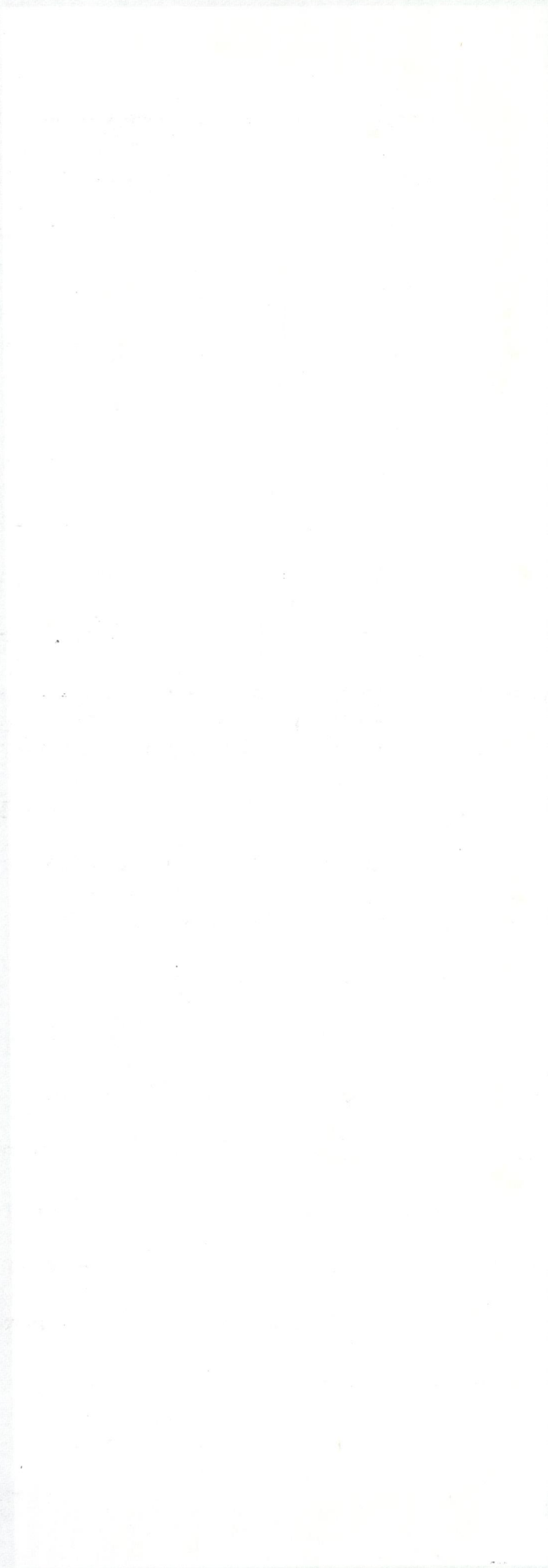


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Fig 26:- Irish Farmers Journal 1966.



In the 1960's, it was altogether approved and generally accepted that, the majority of women would have some type of career or work before they got married. Many girls wanted to get away from the drudgery of country life. Modernisation was happening on the farm, but the farm home was being neglected. While my mother attended Domestic College in 1964-1965, she adopted a nylon coat (fig 24), for outdoor work. It was seen as a replacement to the crossover apron. This coat fell to the knee and was tied at the waist with a belt. It had a reverse collar, six buttons down the front and two large pockets. Some coats had elastic at the cuffs. Nylon fabric was seen as modern, new efficient, easy wash and quick drying. Navy and light blue were the most popular colours. There was a variety of styles, short sleeve with a shawl collar was also popular, a floral housecoat was also worn (fig 25). It was at the height of its popularity in the sixties but this was short-lived. Because of the nature of the fabric, nylon has a tendency to make you uncomfortably hot, a lot of people gave up wearing it. Nowadays many old ladies still wear "housecoats" they are associated with domestic cleaners and dinner ladies. By the late sixties, trousers and jeans were becoming the norm for farmwork for women.

The "Farm Home Pages" of the sixties kept the standard articles on fashion, recipes, but there was emphasis on the modernisation of the farm home. American fifties style advertisements for cookers and fitted kitchens and electric water pumps began to appear (fig 26). The Irish farm wife was encouraged to be the perfect American style apple pie wife who spent all day preparing for her man to come home. By the seventies, increased mechanisation on the farm meant the farm wife's role became centred around the home and children.

In 1969 my mother got married, my father was a farmer, so having grown up on a farm, and she had married into a lifestyle she knew well. In the early seventies,



my mother adopted jeans for farm work. For the majority of the seventies, she was preoccupied with running the home and rearing four young children. Her role on the farm was more sporadic. In 1974, she moved into a newly built house, it had all the modern domestic appliances. It was my mothers first experience of running water. This was the norm in rural Ireland. The frilly apple pie advertising of the sixties was becoming a reality for many farmwives of the seventies. Women's role was becoming more domestic with more labour saving devices. Mary only ever wore an apron when she was doing housework (fig 27). One style went over the head and tied at the sides. It was made of cotton and had a floral pattern and was worn as much for it's aesthetic qualities as practical purpose. These aprons were not for doing farmwork in, more for fulfilling the role of pretty young housewife, as well, certainly as protecting her clothes. Articles on maintenance of the new modern farm home were regular features in the late sixties Farmers Journal;

Arduous tasks of Springcleaning are to be done with the absence of unnecessary fuss and worry.
(Farm Home Page "Making Springcleaning a Pleasure", Irish Farmer's Journal, October 1961).

Although there was coverage of female ploughing competitions and sheep shearing competitions ordinary women engaged in farmwork were not publicised or mentioned in the Irish Farmer's Journal of the sixties. The ideal role for a farmwife was that of homemaker, modernising the farmhouse and being content with domestic duties. Although, in the sixties, the situation for women is changing for the better and more options are becoming available, traditional values still persisted.

The 1960's in Ireland was a time of optimism. New industries in towns and cities encouraged the flow of young people from the countryside. By 1966, the proportion of people employed in working the land had fallen to 31%. The numbers emigrating were falling, the standard of living rose, people suddenly had money in



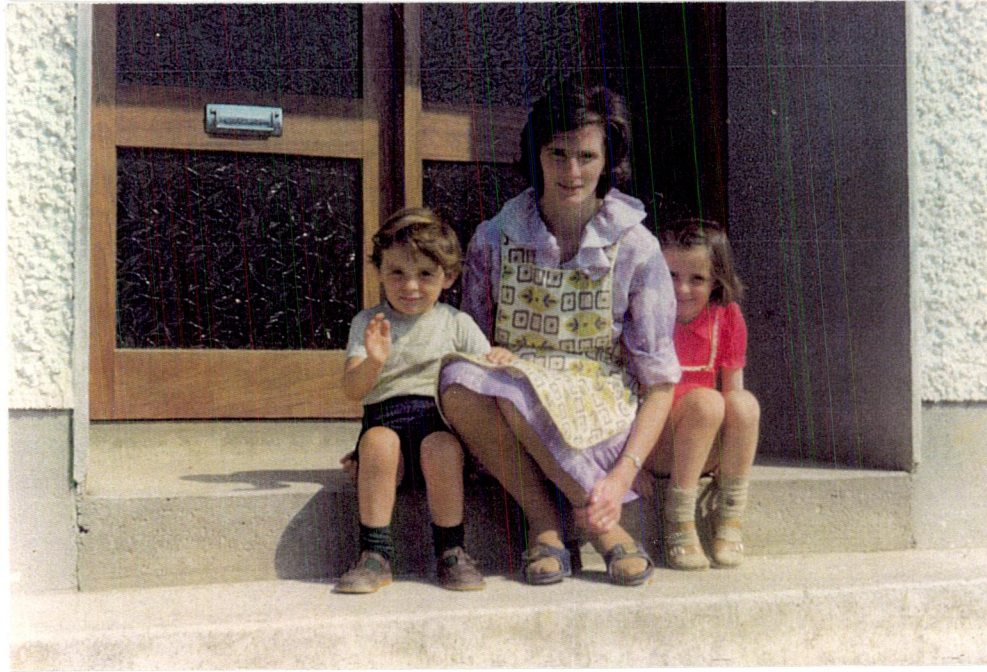


Fig 27:- Mrs Mary Dooley and her children, Micheal and Betty Dooley Carlow 1976.



Fig 28:- Irish Farmers Journal Dublin 1966.

Faint, illegible text on a rectangular piece of paper pasted onto the page.

A thin, horizontal white strip of paper or tape located between the two main pieces of text.

Second rectangular piece of paper with faint, illegible text, positioned below the first one.

A thin, horizontal white strip of paper or tape located at the bottom of the page.

their pockets and were willing to spend it. Couples marrying younger (fig 28), which had started in the fifties continued. The marriage rate rose by 40% between 1958 and 1970. In the sixties, the rural population began to steadily rise again.

Television had a huge impact, young people were exposed to other cultures. It had a powerful influence in broadening the minds of the population.

For the majority of the seventies, my parent's farm was largely tillage and highly mechanised. My mother had little input in the day to day running of the farm. Dairying became the main enterprise on the farm in 1983. A modern milking parlour was built and an electric milking machine was installed. My mother took a very active role. She did and still does the majority of the milking. Hygiene is a huge part of running a successful milking enterprise. Washing machinery, cows themselves, the parlour, you are constantly using water.

This essentially wet and mucky job has necessitated a particular type style of apron. It is a full length "Dairy Apron" (fig 29), it covers the front of the body. It goes over the head and ties at the back. Made of heavyweight plastic, backed with canvas. It covers the full length of the body from neck to foot, it lasts about eight to twelve months, depending on wear and tear. Worn underneath this apron would be a lightweight waterproof tunic. Made of rainwear fabric, it is waist length, long sleeved with elasticised cuffs and a high neck with a Velcro fastening at the neck to adjust to the wearer, it is put on over the head. Worn under the dairy apron, it keeps back and shoulders and arms dry. The dairy apron has a purely practical purpose, to keep the wearer's clothes dry and clean. It is adopted by both men and women, worn primarily for it's practical purpose rather than it's aesthetic quality. In wintertime, a pair of rain proof trousers or pull-ups are worn underneath the dairy apron. Waterproof jackets, tunics, trousers and aprons are essential clothing when engaged in milking. These





Fig 28 -: Mrs Mary Dooley wearing a "Dairy Apron" Carlow January 1999.

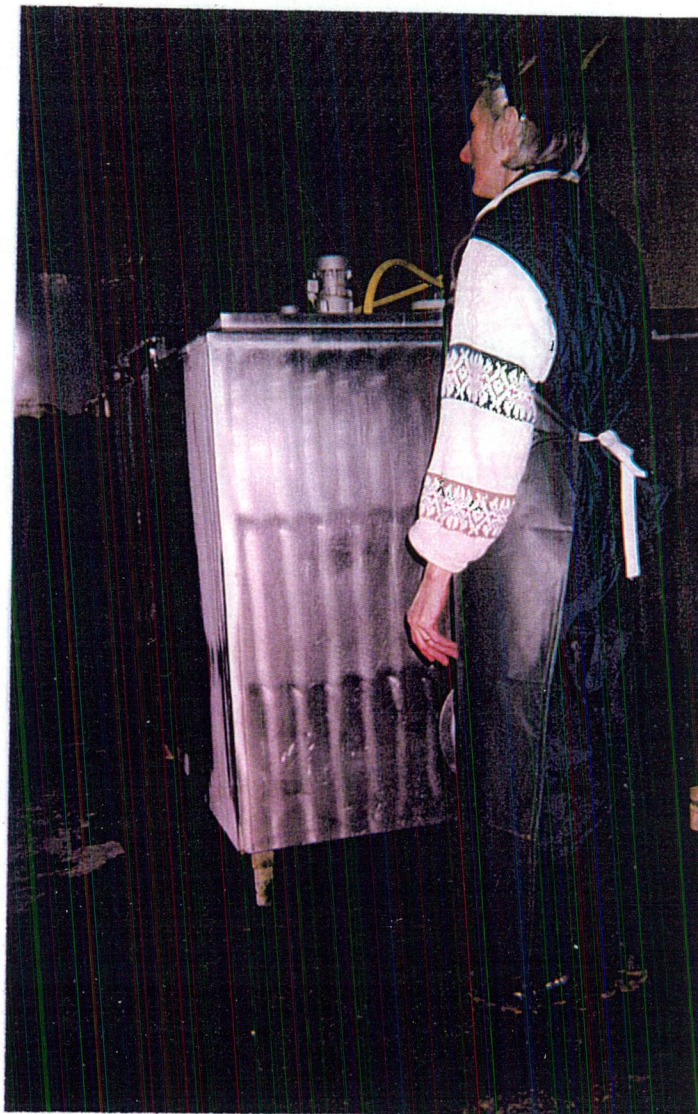


Fig 29 -: Mrs Mary Dooley, back of "Dairy Apron" Carlow January 1999.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions.

2. It is essential to ensure that all entries are supported by proper documentation and receipts.

3. Regular audits should be conducted to verify the accuracy of the records and identify any discrepancies.

4. The second part of the document outlines the procedures for handling cash and credit transactions.

5. All cash receipts should be recorded immediately and deposited in a secure bank account.

6. Credit sales should be recorded on an accrual basis, and accounts receivable should be monitored closely.

7. The third part of the document provides guidelines for managing inventory and stock levels.

8. Inventory should be counted regularly to ensure that the recorded quantities match the actual stock on hand.

9. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate financial statements.

10. These statements should be prepared on a regular basis and reviewed by management to assess the company's financial health.

11. The fifth part of the document outlines the procedures for handling payroll and employee benefits.

12. Payroll records should be maintained accurately, and all payments should be made on time.

13. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate tax records.

14. All tax-related transactions should be recorded, and the company should comply with all applicable tax laws and regulations.

clothes are specifically designed for farm work. Cost and efficiency take precedence over the “look” of the garments.

In the summer time, my mother would wear jeans and t-shirts underneath the dairy apron. She would wear the same type of clothing as her male counterpart, her femininity is not reflected in her farm clothing.

Farmer's circumstances improved as the sixties progressed helped by the opening of Ireland to free trade. Joining the EEC in 1973 changed the face of farming forever and ushered in a new era of prosperity for the Irish farmer. The change in the countryside altered the role of farmwomen. In the 1970's, intense mechanisation and electrification and increased prosperity relieved the farmwomen of much of the physical work on the farm. The majority of farms switched to tillage, which demanded less labour. As a result, there was a new trend of women's withdrawal into the home. For a lot of women like my mother, they became housewives with little physical input into farmwork

Commercialisation of the poultry industry had a profound effect on farmwomen. The income they had earned from rearing hens and other fowl was absorbed by an intensive poultry industry. Washing machines, electric irons and cookers minimised the physical grind of housework. Gradually, from the 1970's, the farm has become a business. Farmwives found themselves in the role of bookkeeper, because many were not taking an active role in farmwork, they felt their role as housewife was being devalued.

The Irish Farmer's Journal of the 1970's continued to reflect women's role in society in rural Ireland. Seen as a housewife and child rarer, articles began to appear about “The Role of Women in Farming in the 1970's”. Women were criticised



for not being vocal and seemingly content to be “passive observers”. Women’s rights and the education of women in the politics of the EEC were becoming an issue.

Throughout the sixties, the Irish education system had been overhauled. In 1970, the Leaving Cert. became the standard level of education when free education and transport to schools was available to all children. This had a huge effect on education for farming children. Free buses to school meant less of a burden on their parents. In the “ Farm Home Pages” of the seventies, education was still a preoccupation, but now articles were concerned with choosing suitable accommodation for a young son or daughter whilst they attended University in Dublin. Options were opening for farmer’s daughters, most were expected to go on to further education. An article appeared in the Journal of 1974 asking the students their opinion of the education system.

Cora’s main complaint about her schooling was lack of career guidance given to pupils. She might nurse but is not sure. She thought of applying to become a poultry instructor but learns “job opportunities are limited.

(Keane Maureen, “Storm McName went to Cork Farm Home Pages, Irish Farmer’ Journal 21st May 1974, Page 32)

From Cora’s comments, the ideal career choice for a farmer’s daughter of the 1950’s and 1960’s of poultry instructor, is no longer an option in the seventies.

Women’s liberation, although gradual, did effect farming life. An article entitled “Competing in a Man’s World” appeared in the Farm Home Pages of 1974, it concerned 21 year old Christine Jeffers, the first girl to complete a Farm Management Course. This course takes three years and involves a lot of heavy practical work. Although, the reason she is being written about is, because she is a woman.

Few students participating in the Farm Apprenticeship Scheme are blonde, vivacious, 5’1” females. (Nugent Angela, “Competing in a Man’s World”, Farm Home Pages, Irish Farmer’s Journal 16 July 1977).



The article is very positive. Christine, herself, admits she comes across prejudice. She concedes it is to be expected.

As Angela Nugent, the article's author puts it;

Over the years, women in rural Ireland often worked hard on the farms but
To employ a girl in a management capacity may grate on some male egos.

Also, it is only in the late seventies onwards, that women began to pursue careers outside the farm in significant numbers. Before this, it was most uncommon for a farmwoman to continue her career outside the farm.

Although the "Farm Home Pages" of the seventies continued to deal with fashion and recipes, it also began to deal with more social issues. Articles of illiteracy, the tyrannical mother-in-law and adoption appeared. A problem page also appeared on issues that were taboo before and were now openly discussed.

Throughout the 1980's, to the present day, farmwomen's role has progressed. Farms are now seen as a business, one or both partners have a career outside the home. Woman's role has become more equal to her husband's.

While women today may be involved on the farm on some level, the work they do is a functional contribution. Their work does not represent their social or cultural position in the farm, family or society as it once did. This is reflected perhaps in the fact that today's farmwomen appear to just wear what comes to hand, what is old and serviceable. They don't expect their clothes to reflect anything about them, except that they are working on a farm. In the 1990s farmwomen don't have an emotional response to these clothes, they don't expect to be judged on their appearance wearing these clothes. To them, they represent function and part of working farm life.



CONCLUSION

Farming in the 1930's was a family occupation with particular roles for mother and father and even children. The clothes they wore during their farming day, reflects the jobs they were involved in aswell as assisting in doing these jobs.

By the 1990's farming has become a business focusing on production and profit rather than on creating the lifestyle and life system of one family. The clothing of farmwork today reflects that focus on production. The clothes are functional and without reference to the sex or family status of the wearer (fig 30) and (fig31).

The clothes worn doing farmwork today serve one purpose only and that is protection. They are regarded as tools of the trade, rather than as their clothes. In 1930's the crossover apron served as protective clothing but also as part of a woman's daily wardrobe. Clothes were scarce and expensive in rural Ireland of the 1930's and 40's and women were pleased to have a garment that served so many purposes while being clean and pretty at the same time.

While we in the 1990's look at the crossover apron in terms of function, the rural women who wore it, day in, day out over several decades of their lives see it quite differently.

It has been my special friend over all my years. I am now 80, many of these women although now retired from farmwork, have been wearing a crossover apron for at least fifty years (fig 32).
(Mrs Hannah Cullory Co. Cork November 1998)

The crossover apron constituted the primary garment in the daily wardrobe of thousands of rural Irish women, certainly over there decades from the 1930's to the 1960's. It is clear that to many of the women who once wore this apron it was irreplaceable. There is





Fig 30: Mrs. Mary Drea wearing a crossover apron Carlow March 1998



Fig 31 -: Mrs Mary Dooley wearing a "Dairy Apron" Carlow January 1999.





Fig 32.: Mrs Mary Culloty Cork August 1998.



no problem getting an apron, nowadays you can get them easily made in a similar fabric from similar suppliers and they will keep you clean. But clearly this is not the function primarily being sought by these women who almost all commented on how difficult it is to find the crossover nowadays.



APPENDICES
(In alphabetical order)



J. P. Kilkenny
20 11 98

Dear Maizead

Enclosed find two photographs of my Mother who always wore a cross over apron and with a blouse inside she always looked lovely and crisp. These were taken back in the sixties. There was so many pretty patterns of them and the cotton was so good then it washed and washed. They are very scarce now if there is any I never see them. We ran the Local Postoffice and small farm and Mother always looked nice and clean in her cross over.
Please send the photos back as I would not like to loose them

Yours Sincerely

Mary Brophy



Cc Cook

Dear Maureen

In response to your
~~article~~ in the Farmers Journal of .15 has
in regard to the wearing of the
"Crossover Overall". It has been my
special friend over all my years &
I am now 80. I have been wearing
it ever all my years having worked on
a farm until I retired. It was a very
comfortable garment I had great room
with my arms. & if my skirt was worn
or not too clean It was ideal. I am
enclosing a photograph of myself & my
husband taken last August & I am wearing
my cross overs.

Thanking you.

Sincerely

Mrs Hannah Culloty



"The Crassover was worn all over the world, it was worn by all cleaning women in hospital hotels & restaurants. I was in the "Hague" one time & I visited the "Bronavo" Hospital & I saw girls out working in the garden & they wore it.

But in my locality it was the woman who kept house which was in most cases the mother of the family that wore it.

One thing more I wore ^{it} when the heat got the better of me over my underclothes.

"I'll wear it again please"
Kindly acknowledge.
I like a writing friend.



11
one job after another. I still ^{wear} wore
it, came from town just put
on "my crossover" I rinsed
it in the dish at 12 in the
night, dry in the morning &
a rub of the iron then. It was
fantastical. I am 43 now still wear
the cotton overall with the sleeves.

My sister Margaret was the
sister that stayed home to do the
work with my Mother & she wore the
crossover all the time too, but I
had 4 other sisters that didn't wear it
as they were in jobs. But I think too
that it was the girl that stayed home
that really wore it. I didn't wear it
till I married. I lived in my "crossover".
I hope this is O.K. - Please acknowledge
I'd love a writing friend Joan Kerrish



The Cross over Apron.

The Cross over apron brought me back to the old days. It was a very useful apron and cheap to buy & easy to wash. ~~One~~ ^{One} was always kept for any ^{thin} special. It was easy to slip on over old clothes ~~and~~ ^{or} good clothes. A new apron was always got for the 1st of Threshing. And every woman looked good that day.

Mary O'Neill



Jo
bo. T. Rose
W. I.

Dear Maimed,

In answer
to your letter in the Journal
about the cross-over apron
or how it was called overall.
My mother now 91 soon wore
her overall until a few years
ago. We were James all our
lives. She could do no work
until she had her overall on.
This was Pat-witome,
as children she made us
wear a apron + overall, to
save our clothes. She had
a clean one or new one for
Sunday or other special days.

I still have one that
belongs to her. I will see
if there is any photographs of
her wearing it.

Yours sincerely

Terese in Veig (MRS)

P.S. I like all the letters each
week.



Co. Tipperary.
4th week. 1998.

Dear Maizead.

You were requesting facts about the Cross-over. My mother always wore a Cross-over and there was a special one for visitors. When her family grew up they tried to get her out of the Cross over habit - they had progressed. They thought - but she never pretended to have them & always had her ^{CROSS OVER} cap on. I have a photograph of her in one but I cannot find it - if I do I



Will send it to you. When
President Kennedy came to
Ireland - his cousin in Wexford
met him with a Cross-over
R.T.E. might help you. Before
the Cross-over housewives
wore a "bib" - it was a
straight cut garment - no
waist - short sleeves and
a round neck.

Maybe someone is of
no use but it is what I
know and I will search
for the photographs of the
Cross over. There is an old
shop I know and they may
have a Cross-over - I will
try. I have a photo of the "Bib"

God bless
Yours sincerely,
Mary Rochford.



Dear Mairead,

In reply to your request, the "cross-over apron," I remember my Mother God rest her wearing the cross-over. In the beginning, they were always navy with a little red flower, later they were bright (floral) I have one, its floral & old, with one tie missing, you are welcome to it, if you think its of any help to you. That generation of farm women, made sure they had a "clean apron" on days that neighbouring farmers were helping, drawing in the corn, thrashing, draw in the hay. In recent years, Drama groups borrow them for wearing performing some Plays. A cross-over was a lovely gift to bring to a

Mother, God rest them all. I hope this note is of a little help to you.

I remain,

Yours Sincerely,

Anne Sinnott.



Co. Mansfield
20th Nov 98

Dear Mairead

While looking in the *Farmer Journal* ^{21/11/98}
I saw your letter about the Cross over apron
Well my mother now aged 79 years
Still wears one Sunday and Mondays always
She has worn one from the age of 16 yrs
to keep clean while working inside and out
on the farm. When we are away for a
day and return home the first thing that
is done my mother puts back on her
Cross over apron it like a second skin
She has worn ~~in~~ them for so many years
Also my aunt (mamma) sister also wears →

the CROSS-OVER APRON TOO:

The apron was something you got
back in the 1930, to wear to save the
few clothes you had:

I hope this letter will
help you with your work:

Yours hopefully,

Caroline (Wacren) Steacy

P.S my mother says the price has
changed a lot in 63 yrs.

If you want to write back we dont mind:



Dear Mairad, (Mrs or Miss)

By accident I have come across your letter in the Farmers Journal about the cross-over bibs; I wore one for years and would love to know if they are made or to be bought any place, yes they were very serviceable as you pointed out - to cover an old frock worn inside or to protect a good one. As an aged woman still doing a bit of house-work I think I am not dressed unless ~~unless~~ I have some sort of apron on, I am wearing those nylon coats but would love to ~~come~~ across a "Cross over".
I am sorry I have no information regarding its origin.

Yrs Sincerely
Leresa Ward (Mrs)



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