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“Bread for the Road”: Intersections of Food and Culture in Newfoundland and Labrador

DIANE TYE

BREAD IS A STAPLE worldwide,¹ but in Newfoundland and Labrador² it has special significance. In this article I argue that by the twentieth century bread pervaded Newfoundland culture more thoroughly than any other food. Although cod was once the backbone of the economy and remains the province’s most iconic food, bread touched all aspects of life. As anthropologist Carole Counihan discovered in Sardinia, bread is “the nexus of economic, political, aesthetic, social, symbolic, and health concerns” and “a particularly sensitive indicator of change” (Counihan 1999: 29). In the following pages I explore how bread in all its forms (homemade bread, hardtack, fried bread, bread pudding, etc.) was integral to Newfoundland food systems, sustained and shaped men’s and women’s labour, helped define gender, contributed to physical and psychological well-being, and now represents a marker of cultural loss.

Support for my assertion of bread’s primacy comes from a range of published and unpublished sources, but in particular from the collections of Memorial University’s Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA).³ Established in 1968, MUNFLA is Canada’s foremost repository for recorded and collected items of Newfoundland and Labrador folklore, folklife, language, oral history, and popular culture. The majority of the more than 11,000 contributors who have donated materials to MUNFLA did so as students enrolled in undergraduate folklore courses. The present research draws heavily on one aspect of the archive’s collection: folklore survey cards that students completed as part of folklore courses from the mid-1960s to the present day. These brief bits of folklore that students collected from family and friends, or remembered from their own past, now represent a wealth of information on everything from turns of phrase and remedies to children’s games and supernatural beliefs. Although survey cards are valuable in determining the pres-

ence, and often pervasiveness, of certain beliefs and practices, they frequently provide only minimal contextual information so that it can be difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact time period of a collected item. Most of the survey cards that inform this article date from a 10-year period, from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, and report on material remembered from the first half of the twentieth century.

“NO MEAL WAS COMPLETE WITHOUT BREAD”: BREAD AS THE KEYSTONE OF FAMILY FOOD SYSTEMS

By the twentieth century bread, which had been an important food in Newfoundland from earliest settlement, dominated family food systems.⁴ In her folklife study, *More Than 50%*, Hilda Chaulk Murray writes, “Since no meal was complete without bread, it deserves special treatment.... In some homes, bread and butter and tea might be eaten at every meal except dinner, and if vegetables were scarce, it might be eaten at that meal also” (Murray, 1979: 120). Murray begins with breakfast: “The men’s early morning snack during the fishing season was a light meal, usually bread and butter with tea. Perhaps they had a little jam or marmalade to ‘tow the bread down’” (ibid., 122). On weekends, “A favorite Sunday breakfast, winter and summer, was ‘fish and brewis.’ ... Brewis was made by soaking hardtack or hard bread (sea biscuit) overnight in cold water till the hard cakes were softened” (ibid., 126).⁵ Bill Casselman describes the making of another breakfast food, toutons⁶ (also toutans, toutens, toutons, or tow tents): “Bread dough is made and set to rise with yeast at night. The next morning the dough is cut into small pieces and fried in pork fat.” As he notes, toutons were often served with molasses and butter (Casseleman, 1998: 49).⁷

Toutons are related to other forms of fried bread that were most often made as treats for children: “Damper dogs are quick bread — wads of bread dough fried quickly on the lid (damper) of a hot woodstove, usually a treat for children, who were fed the damper dogs so they wouldn’t gobble up all the fresh-baked bread” (ibid., 34). Casselman traces the origins of “damper” to eighteenth-century British slang when it meant any snack that takes the edge off or dampens the appetite. He notes that the pieces of fried bread were also called damper boys, damper cakes, damper devils, or joanies.⁸ Casselman continues, “When the hunk of dough cut off to make damper dogs was flattened into a pancake shape, these little breads were sometimes called flacons”⁹ (ibid.) or gandies¹⁰ fried in pork fat (ibid., 41).

Bread was fashioned into buns for easy transport: “belly bangs,” very heavy molasses buns, so called “because they bang off your belly as they drop down.”¹¹ As well, it could be baked in miniature loaves about six inches long, known in at least one family as “happy buns.”¹² As a dessert, bread ended a meal. In earlier times, women often used stale bread to make bread pudding. Casselman writes that

“A common recipe involves moistening stale bread crumbs, squeezing the water out, then adding raisins, brown sugar, molasses, butter, flour, spices like ginger, cinnamon, and allspice, and a teaspoon of soda dissolved in hot water. Mix this well, put into a dampened pudding bag made of cloth, and steam for two hours” (ibid., 37). In some families steamed bread pudding was known as “slam-gut.”¹³ When nothing as elaborate was available, a slice of bread spread with a little canned milk and topped with a teaspoon of sugar satisfied a sweet craving. Bread could also be used in the making of adult indulgences such as homemade beet wine¹⁴ and lemon gin.¹⁵

Bread eaten on its own filled you up when there was little else. In many homes, freshly baked bread served with butter and/or molasses accompanied every meal. When there was nothing else to eat, it was the whole meal. Hilda Chaulk Murray describes families having a supper of only bread and tea, which some humorously dubbed “chaw and glutch” (Murray, 1979: 120). Casselman traces “chaw and glutch” to the old English dialect for chew and swallow; bread is the chaw and tea the glutch. “In the hard times of the Great Depression in the 1930s, chaw and glutch were often the entire bill of fare at many a poor meal. This gave rise to a rueful Newfoundland prayer of the era: ‘For this bit of chaw and glutch, we thank Thee, Lord, so very much’”¹⁶ (Casselman, 1998: 23-24).

Bread with tea was commonly offered to visitors. One documented example of this widespread custom dates from Heart’s Ease in the late 1960s. There the student collector notes that strangers or infrequent visitors were always offered a “cup of tea,” which consisted of a cup of brewed tea, some homemade bread, butter, homemade partridge berry jam, and perhaps some cookies and canned fruit.¹⁷ Raisin bread marked special occasions and in many homes it was served to Christmas visitors.¹⁸ Over the years students often reported eating raisin bread with boiled salt cod on Christmas Eve.¹⁹ One wrote, “We waited for Christmas to come all year, as Christmas Eve was the only time we could count on it being baked” (Healey, 1998). Raisin bread made with molasses, fresh hot-cross buns,²⁰ or plain (fresh) buns²¹ were also customary on Good Friday; in Catholic households, they might be eaten without butter²² or after 3:00 p.m.²³ Some thought that bread prepared on Good Friday had special healing powers²⁴ and one student depositor in MUNFLA shared a personal experience:

[The healing power of bread baked on Good Friday was] proven by my mother in 1944 and later related to me. My father had a sore finger and would have had to have it amputated except for a poultice made of Good Friday bread and applied to it for several days before the doctor was to make a final examination of it. It was almost better when he examined it.²⁵

Those who believed that bread baked on Good Friday would keep indefinitely²⁶ broke it into small pieces, which they placed throughout their house to en-

sure good luck over the next year.²⁷ Not surprising given the belief in Good Friday bread's magical powers, cultural prescriptions encouraged women to bake on this day: "Blessed is the woman who bakes bread on Good Friday." A student writes, "The explanation my mother gave me was that Christ on his way to Calvary was passing a house when the smell of bread revived him as he was about to faint."²⁸ Accordingly, some families stipulated that when a woman baked on Good Friday, "The kitchen door should be left open so that the smell of the baking bread will refresh Christ on his way to the cross."²⁹

BREAD AND LABOUR

Bread sustained more than Christ. It was essential to both men's and women's labour so that its history is closely entwined with both work and economic realities. While the type of bread consumed over the twentieth century responded to the demands of male occupations, the making of homemade bread shaped women's lives. Documents from the 1500s show that Basques sailing across the Atlantic to the Labrador fishery loaded their boats with provisions that included hard bread as well as dried or salted meat, mustard seed, and enormous amounts of wine and cider (Miller Pitt, 1981: 241). After permanent settlement, Newfoundland imported large quantities of hard bread until the mid-1800s, although local manufacture, which began in 1836, eventually eliminated importation. Over time, bakeries produced more soft bread than hard (Dicks, 1995: 7), a shift John Joy (1977) credits to an economic depression between 1884 and 1891 that saw the exodus of fishermen and drastically shrunk the market for hard bread outside St John's. The growth of employment opportunities outside of the fisheries (particularly at the Reid railway, the Bell Island mines, and as part of the construction boom following the 1892 fire) generated both new kinds of work and a market for commercial baked goods, including soft bread (Joy, 1977, in Miller Pitt, 1981: 245), as more urban workers turned to it as the main staple of their diet.³⁰ From the 1930s on, only Purity Factories of St. John's, originally established in 1924 as a confectionary and soft drink manufacturer, produced hard bread to supply those who continued to rely on it when fishing,³¹ berry picking,³² and making fish and brewis.

Soft or home-baked bread was made by the first permanent settlers. Archaeological evidence dates a bake/brew house to Lord Calvert's initial occupation of Ferryland (1621-38) (Hodgetts, 2006: 130), and by the eighteenth century French fishermen based at fishing stations on the Northern Peninsula were building large bread ovens (Godbout, 2008: ii). Practically all soft bread in Newfoundland continued to be produced at home until 1850, and for those living outside St. John's this lasted until over a century later, when commercial bakeries were established in Grand Falls, Corner Brook, and other centres (Miller Pitt, 1981: 244).

By 1912 medical professionals linked Newfoundlanders' reliance on a diet of "bread and tea" to nutritional deficiencies and diseases, including beriberi (Overton, 1998: 7). J.M. Little, a physician working with the Grenfell Hospital in St. Anthony, first began supplementing the local diet with whole meal bread, fresh meat, and beans. In 1913 the Grenfell Association imported whole meal flour and had whole meal biscuits and buns made up in St John's (ibid.). Research and educational work conducted in 1929 and 1930 confirmed widespread nutritional deficiencies in Newfoundland that resulted from a heavy consumption of white bread (ibid., 10-11). Dr. Charles Parsons, Superintendent of the Notre Dame Bay Hospital, who had joined the campaign to eradicate beriberi by the early 1930s, wrote a strongly worded letter to business people near Twillingate:

It is an acknowledged medical fact the world over that people who are on a very limited diet deficient in certain chemical substances called "Vitamins," are bound to contract diseases and physical deficiencies.

People who live on bread and tea are certain to develop serious troubles if the bread is made from white flour. Why is this? The vitally important "Vitamin" which is necessary for health is present in the HUSK of the wheat. White flour in the milling process eliminates this HUSK and also eliminates the 'Vitamin.' As a consequence people who are dependent upon a meager diet largely of white bread and tea do not get the necessary vitamin and as a result become sick with beri-beri which may go from the extent of a simple weakness to extreme paralysis.

If people must live on only white bread and tea, which is the diet of most dole people, they are practically certain to develop beri-beri in greater or lesser extent with paralysis.

If the dole recipients were given a mixture of half brown (or whole wheat flour) and half white flour, even if they had no further addition to their diet, they could be absolutely insured against beri-beri.

Beri beri is a tremendous economic loss annually to Newfoundland.

WHITE FLOUR ALONE WITHOUT BROWN IS POISON. (Parsons, 1933, quoted ibid., 13-14)

In the 1930s, Britain's Dominions Office responded to Newfoundland's financial difficulties by replacing its elected government with an appointed one until such time that it would be feasible for Newfoundland to be self-governing again. When the Government of Commission was established in 1934, it responded to the lobbying of Grenfell, Parsons, and others by supplying public relief recipients with brown flour rather than white (ibid., 15). Despite their best efforts at education and promotion, however, the introduction of brown flour as part of the dole ration was met with huge resistance.³³ The press questioned evidence that brown flour was nutritionally superior to white and those who profited from the importation of white flour, such as merchants and the Fishermen's Protective Union, argued that the government's actions were an "interference with legitimate business" (ibid., 17).

Most vocal were the relief recipients. James Overton describes the 1930s as “a period of severe unemployment and acute poverty, of slow starvation and the loss of political control associated with Commission of Government in 1934. It was a period in which several riots took place and many raids on merchants’ stores occurred” (Overton, 1992: 200). He continues:

With the onset of the Great Depression conditions deteriorated very quickly in Newfoundland. While both layoffs and wage cuts were made in the mining and forest industries, it was in the fishing industry that the situation became most serious.... The winters of 1931, 1932 and 1933 were ones of unprecedented misery in Newfoundland as the number of people who were totally destitute and receiving public relief rose to a maximum of 90,000, approximately a third of the population (*ibid.*, 201-11).

Recipients equated the replacement of white flour with brown, which they considered fit for dog food or cattle feed (Overton, 1998: 18), with the lack of control they had over their lives.³⁴ Eventually the unemployed in St. John’s gained a degree of choice in their dole rations (*ibid.*) and evidence suggests that when people went off the dole, they returned to a diet of white bread (*ibid.*, 21). In 1947 American standard enriched white flour with vitamin B, riboflavin, nicotinic acid, and iron was introduced to Newfoundland and by 1950 all flour sold had to be enriched (Miller Pitt, 1981: 248). The legacy of the 1930s stigma of “dole bread” remains, however, and even today homemade bread in Newfoundland is white.³⁵

If bread fuelled men’s work, it structured women’s. For those who worked as cooks for fishing crews on the Labrador, bread-making was truly arduous. Nearly every day they produced large quantities, sometimes baked over open fires (Rutherford, 2009: 99) or in ovens large enough to hold only two loaves at a time (Hussey, 1995: 66). However, even at home bread-making was relentless, as Mrs. Amanda (Hoven) Cole from Fogo remembers: “My dear, you had to make bread. What else did you have! I would mix up a hundred pound sack of flour every two weeks! And sure that didn’t last very long” (Foley, 2001: 165). Murray (1979: 120) also emphasizes the daily repetitiveness of bread-making: “Baking, that is bread baking, was done every day, sometimes twice a day for large families.” Murray refers to Orpah Crew, a mother of 10 who made up one and a half barrels of flour during one month in the spring when they ran out of potatoes early in the season. She would make bread at night and bake it the next morning. Often she would do two mixings a day. She noted, “Then she might pinch off a small bit of dough and use this ‘leaven’ for the second batch but you had to be careful because bread could easily go sour when you used ‘leaven’.”

In earlier generations, the demands of bread-making filled women’s days. John Omohundro reports women he interviewed complaining of staying up to midnight making bread (Omohundro, 1994: 120). Murray (1979: 121) describes how it shaped the day: “Women used to bread making could mix up a batch in ten to fifteen

minutes. But of course the finished product was not ready for eating till hours later. It took several hours to rise, then the dough was kneaded down and let rise again. Finally it was 'put in the pans' and let rise again before it was put in the oven for baking, which took about one hour." Murray indicates how women would often multi-task: "Many housewives did their ironing while they were baking bread, which could be any day of the week except Sunday. Then the stove was extremely hot and the irons heated up quickly. In summertime this was like ironing in an inferno, but both baking and ironing went on all through the year" (*ibid.*, 117). Additional co-ordination was required if bread pans were shared by more than one household. In 2009 Annette Hurley interviewed a 60-year-old woman on Bell Island who remembered neighbourhood women borrowing her mother's tin pans: "My mother was the only one [in the neighbourhood] that had bread pans. Everybody mixed bread but nobody had bread pans. And every time someone mixed bread they had to call Mom to see if she was mixing bread because if she was they had to wait for the pans until she was finished with them" (Hurley, 2009: 6). While she did not reveal how often the 14 or 15 pans circulated, she did note that they produced beautiful bread (*ibid.*).

Both Murray and Sonya Foley devote considerable space in their women's histories to the work that went into bread-making. Although the steps they outline may be familiar, the detail they offer is a reminder of how labour-intensive the process of bread-making was before time-saving conveniences such as fast-rising yeast, specially formulated bread flour, and electric bread-making machines.

Murray identifies the first step as making the barm and allowing it to rise.³⁶ She indicates that from the early 1900s store-bought yeast was used and popular brands in the 1940s in Elliston, a small community on the Bonavista Peninsula, were Lallemands and Royal. Lallemands was sold in round, one-ounce slices and Royal in square, one-ounce blocks. Both came in containers of five to six yeast cakes. These were kept covered in their container in the pantry and soaked apart in lukewarm water with sugar. A small amount of flour was then added and mixed to a pastry consistency. Murray writes:

This 'barm' or sponge, was left to rise in some container in a warm place. Often a tin, a three-quart, 'boat's kettle' (a high, narrow pot with a tightly fitting cover and a hanger so the mixture might be suspended from a hook over the warm stove), was used. When this barm had risen sufficiently, it was added to about half a gallon of water and sufficient flour in the 'mixing pan.' Few women used shortening, or butter, in the old days, and the salt added was often the coarse fishery salt. During the depression days of the thirties, women, if they had lots of potatoes, would boil some of these, mash them up and add this to the flour mixture to 'make the flour go farther.' I was told potato 'grounds' were also used for leavening when the housewife was short of regular yeast. (Murray, 1979: 121)

Hops grown in some backyards could be used to make bread (*ibid.*, 120-21) or to stretch the yeast. Mrs. Diana (Nippard) Lye of Fogo explains:

We made bread every day, six or seven loaves each time. We only had yeast cake if someone went to Fogo. Most times we used hops. We had a hops plant growing by our cellar. We'd take the buds off the plant and steep it in water on the stove. We'd steep it in a bag, similar to a pudding bag. We used about two cups of hops water, saving the rest in a jar. After it cooled a bit we soaked a half a yeast cake in it. The hops water would help the yeast to rise. Then we'd sift about two cups of flour in with it. This would be our barm. We put that to one side, overnight to let it rise. The hops water that we put in a jar was used as a starter to make the next lot of barm. The next morning when we were going to make our bread we added a little water from boiled potatoes to the starter jar. This helped to keep the hops 'working' or fermenting. The boiled potatoes were mashed good and kneaded into the bread dough. It gave good consistency to the dough, making it smooth. (Foley, 2001: 165-66)

Allowing the covered barm to rise overnight in a warm place presented a problem in unheated homes during the colder months, as Lucy Newman recalled: "I remember my mother always worrying about her bread" (*ibid.*, 168). Mrs. Kathleen (Penton) Decker describes mixing flour into the barm as "the hardest kind of work" (*ibid.*, 167).

The second step was making the bread dough and allowing it to rise. At this point it was the widespread practice among Catholic women to bless their bread with the sign of the cross.³⁷ In her oral history of the women of Fogo, Sonya Foley writes:

In the morning after the barm had risen to the top of the bowl it was added to approximately eight to ten pounds of flour. Five cups of water and a couple of spoonfuls of salt were also added. The measurements of flour and water varied, depending on the texture of the dough. Enough was added of each so that kneading was easy and the texture was medium soft, not tough. After kneading, it was covered with a blanket and put near the stove to keep warm, usually three to four hours. If a woman made her barm early in the day the dough would be left overnight to rise. (*Ibid.*, 168-69)

This was referred to as "putting the bread to bed" (Laberge, 2009: 2). Sometimes it was meant literally because, as with the barm, keeping the dough from getting cold after the fire went out was a worry. Mrs. Margaret (McKenna) Butt explains: "I knew of women who brought their bread to bed with them. When the fire went out at night the houses would get really cold. The only bit of heat was in the beds" (Foley, 2001: 169).³⁸ Timing also mattered; too little or too long rising produced dense "close" bread rather than light, airy loaves.

Next the dough was put into bread pans and allowed to rise again. Foley writes:

After uncovering the dough it was kneaded again, covered, then kept in a warm place to rise once more. After an hour or so, it was ready to be divided into loaves and put into bread pans. Usually, there were three buns or mounds of dough forming each loaf. Depending on the amount used, the result would be six to eight loaves of bread. To prevent the dough from sticking to the pans, women greased them with a little butter. The dough was shaped into buns and arranged in the pans. The loaves were then laid in a warm place, covered, and allowed to rise for the final time. (Ibid., 170)

Mrs. Olga (Keats) Cull remembers her grandmother telling how they would use herring grease to grease their bread pans and before stoves would make bread on an open fire. “The bread would be put in an iron pot over the fire. When the lid was put on, a couple of coals from the fire would be laid on the lid to help the bread brown on top” (ibid., 171)

As Foley recounts, “After a couple of hours, when the dough had risen high above the pans, it was put in the oven to bake” (ibid.) for approximately an hour, most often in a wood stove that required considerable skill to effectively and consistently regulate the temperature. Murray (1979: 121) describes how many women preferred to make their bread at night so that the baking could be done before the “heat of the day”: “In the summer the kitchen at bread-baking time was extremely hot, with every bit of furniture nearly as hot as the stove itself.” Finally, “the loaves were then tipped out onto a clean cloth to cool. If butter could be spared, it was smeared lightly over the loaves” (Foley, 2001: 171). Murray (1979: 121-22) notes that women used to like to bake ahead — they did not want to cut fresh bread because it resulted in too much waste. Sometimes they would make buns from the bread and bake them on a cooking sheet so that waiting family members would eat them and save the bread to cool.

Commercially produced bread freed women from the necessity of making their own³⁹ but it was slow to be adopted in rural Newfoundland. Although the demand for baked goods rose dramatically during World War II and in the post-Confederation era when store-bought bread became available through bakeries and grocery chains in St. John’s (see Miller Pitt, 1981: 246), a survey conducted in the mid-1970s reported that 60 per cent of respondents still ate home-baked bread at least part of the time (Gray, 1977: 131, in Omohundro, 1994: 220). John Omohundro echoed this finding in 1994 when he found that the majority of women in Main Brook and Conche on the Northern Peninsula baked most of their bread; they said it tasted better and was fresher than commercial loaves, which they referred to as “baker’s bread” or, more derisively, as “baker’s fog.” Perhaps not surprisingly, then, Omohundro (1994: 220) discovered that while almost always available in the shops, commercially produced bread was not a big seller.⁴⁰ The valuing of home-made bread over purchased continues today, as reflected in John Warren’s 2009

study of moose hunting. Among the men Warren interviewed, homemade white bread was considered the “most desired” food on their trips and it was much preferred over the store-bought kind (Warren, 2009: 38).

PERFORMING FEMININITY

While the taste and texture of homemade bread was undoubtedly the primary reason for its preference, it was also closely tied to memories of mothers and grandmothers. In her classic study, *Feeding the Family*, Marjorie DeVault (1991) identifies foodwork as key to how women “do gender” and perform femininity (see Butler, 1999). In Newfoundland, bread-making was central to this performativity. As Foley (2001: 172) writes, “In the old days making bread was the mark of becoming a woman. As definite achievement for any girl. While some women still make their own bread it does not hold the same significance today.”⁴¹ Omohundro’s research on the Northern Peninsula echoes this viewpoint: “When a young wife moves to Main Brook to be with her husband’s crowd, if she is from some urban or distant place where she did not learn to bake bread, then she is under great pressure to learn, even if she finds it difficult and unpleasant at first” (Omohundro 1994: 220-21), and Murray (1979: 122) comments, “the knowledge of bread making was one skill which all marriageable girls were expected to possess, and this was emphasized again and again by my women informants.” Stella Ryan, who recalled her life in an outport *circa* 1920-35, began making bread when she was about 11: “Our bread was made in the night, right after supper after the dishes was washed up. We weren’t allowed out if it was our turn to make bread” (Ryan, 1992: 26). Older women in Newfoundland frequently tell of being taught to make bread at such a young age they had to stand on a crate or chair to reach the kitchen counter (see Foley, 2001: 165).

Anthropologist David E. Sutton (2001: 21) writes of how “The daily handling of food is an opportunity to show one’s intelligence and skill,” and in Newfoundland women were judged by their ability to make bread. In his blog, “Rock Recipes,” Barry Parsons, who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s, recalls that “Debates within the family were common on the topic of who made the best bread and a good deal of pride was taken in the ability to turn out a good batch.” Exactly what determines a good loaf of bread is partly a matter of personal taste but a contest held in the 1930s reflected the importance of several interrelated qualities, including appearance, flavor, lightness and texture (*Daily News*, 1933). Women who tried to cut corners by resorting to quick bread or frying bread on the stove top instead of baking it in the oven were criticized.⁴² If their husbands took on the bread-making, it was considered “highly unusual” and worthy of gossip (Genge, 2008: 6-7). Although to make bread well was a measure of successful womanhood, some women resisted the burden of making bread if they had any alternative, as in the case of one student’s mother who was widowed in the 1960s. She writes: “My mother was a

widow at thirty-seven with ten children thirteen years and under. She made bread twice a day and when my father died she stopped. She refused to make bread after that and never did for the rest of her life” (Hurley, 2009: 5).

BREAD AND THE LIFE CYCLE

Although some women opted out of bread-making, the vast majority could not. For at least the first half of the twentieth century, most homemakers always had home-baked bread on hand and its ever-present nature made it a convenient protector of both physical and psychological health. Bread was present at every point in the life cycle. Its protective powers were thought to shield individuals from danger, most often personified in fairies. Bread was a talisman for vulnerable unbaptized newborns, as illustrated by this folklore student writing in 1964: “Around St. Mary’s Bay and Placentia Bay, there is a superstition that a baby brought to the church to be baptized would be protected from the fairies if a piece of bread was put some place in the clothing of the child. By doing so, the fairies would take the bread and not the child. The bread was known as ‘company bread.’”⁴³ Even after baptism, some parents hung a bag around their baby’s neck that contained bread.⁴⁴ Others simply tucked a piece of bread into their child’s pocket⁴⁵ or bed.⁴⁶

Although some children were threatened with the crust man, who would take them off in his bag if they left crusts of bread on their plates,⁴⁷ they were also taught that bread gave strength. As one student in 1967 recalled of his childhood in English Harbour West, “My mother always told us that we should eat bread crust because it would make us strong.”⁴⁸ A student in 1968 from Carbonear reported that when growing up there in the 1950s, she was told that eating bread crusts would make her cheeks rosy.⁴⁹ Others were enticed with the promise of a “sweet voice”⁵⁰ or curly hair.⁵¹

Bread not only brought good health, it helped maintain it. For example, some families relied on bread to cure “a sick stomach”⁵² and to treat whooping cough.⁵³ Most often, people made it into a poultice. In his study of home medicine in Newfoundland, John Crellin concludes that “The bread poultice was probably the most popular treatment for boils and carbuncles” (Crellin, 1994: 202). Hilda Chaulk Murray (1979: 132) explains, “Bread was used in several cures. For boils, bread poultices made by soaking stale bread in boiling water, were applied to the affected area, and held in place by gauze or a clean rag. Splinters that had caused an infection were ‘drawn out’ with bread poultices.”⁵⁴ Over the years students in folklore classes have collected many different “recipes” for bread poultices. Some families added molasses,⁵⁵ sugar,⁵⁶ salt,⁵⁷ and/or soap⁵⁸ to the mixture of bread and hot water. One collector from Colliers indicates that cream from fresh milk was sometimes used instead of water.⁵⁹ Bread poultices were also relied on to remove corns,⁶⁰ cure an infected eye,⁶¹ fix a skinned knee,⁶² or sooth burns.⁶³ Murray recalls pneumonia being

treated with linseed meal poultices; she describes how “hot linseed meal was placed between two layers of bread, so that the flesh would not be burned” (*ibid.*). Crellin also lists many uses for bread poultices that include abscesses, boils and carbuncles; infections arising from splinters; colds and coughs, pneumonia, and sore throats.⁶⁴ He suggests that the lay use of innumerable poultices to apply local heat was in line with past professional medical usage, but by the 1930s doctors had begun to see poultices as a possible breeding ground for bacteria that could cause infection and were no longer routinely using them (Crellin, 1994: 201).

Other cures called for the direct application of soft or hard bread. For example, warmed hard bread was placed on the side of the face over an aching tooth to ease the pain. It was also mixed with pepper, gunpowder, or tobacco and put on the problem tooth. Another remedy consisted of applying washing soda mixed with soft bread.⁶⁵ Some people treated ringworm “by putting a fresh loaf of bread that has been cut in half next to the ringworm” because it was believed that the “worm” would crawl out of the skin into the loaf of bread.⁶⁶ (It isn’t noted whether these people realized that ringworm is a fungous infection, so-called because of the circular pattern on the skin, and that there is no worm *per se.*) Warts, too, were sometimes cured with bread. The remedies could be as simple as rubbing the wart with bread dipped in kerosene⁶⁷ or butter.⁶⁸ Or they could be very elaborate, as when the sufferer was directed to rub the wart with a piece of hard bread, tie the bread to a string and throw it over the left shoulder so hard that the bread dangled. Then they were to call a dog and have him eat it.⁶⁹ A more common magico-religious treatment in Newfoundland that involved bread was for whooping cough: to be cured, one needed to eat bread made by a woman whose maiden name was the same as her married name.⁷⁰

Some people believed that bread helped predict marriage. Eating the last piece of bread on a plate was a sign you would never marry,⁷¹ as was leaving freshly baked bread upside down on the counter.⁷² Conversely, when at sea, taking the last slice of bread without saying a word foretold a more positive future: a handsome wife/husband and 10,000 shillings a year!⁷³ Related to this, bread was a common wedding and/or housewarming gift. In some communities it was practice for the best man to give the groom a lump of coal for warmth, a piece of hard tack for food, and a bright cent for prosperity.⁷⁴

Bread was also used to foresee death. A large hole in a loaf of bread signified a grave or a coffin⁷⁵ or was interpreted as a general sign of impending death,⁷⁶ as was the act of turning a freshly made loaf of bread upside down on the counter.⁷⁷ In parts of Newfoundland it was believed that bread could help locate a body after a drowning. For example, in 1966 a student collected this belief from his grandfather, a 91-year-old fisherman from Salvage who in turn had learned it from his father years earlier: “To find a body of a drowned person place a lighted candle in a loaf of bread and pull it after the boat, when the candle goes out, the body will be found underneath.”⁷⁸ Some thought that after death a person’s spirit returned to his or her

home on the night of burial. In welcome, relations would leave bread and water on the kitchen table. One example in MUNFLA from the 1970s indicates how deeply this belief could be held. A student recorded a time in Colliers when bread and water left for a spirit was thrown out as a prank. The dead man's son was terrified when he discovered the bread gone and was convinced that his father had consumed it.⁷⁹

BREAD AS PROTECTION ALONG THE ROAD

Bread not only guarded over the body and soul at vulnerable times, it protected those venturing out into liminal spaces. In many rural communities, bread helped guard against fairies when one was in the woods,⁸⁰ picking berries,⁸¹ in fog,⁸² at night,⁸³ or when passing a graveyard.⁸⁴ Visitors, particularly children, were thought to be vulnerable so that a host often provided them with "bread for the road" or "company bread"⁸⁵ to ensure their safe return home. While some believed hard bread offered this protection,⁸⁶ more often it was homemade and travellers were warned not to eat their charm. "You won't get back. You're eating your path" would be the admonition to someone eating as they walked.⁸⁷ When conducting her study of fairylore in Newfoundland, Barbara Rieti found that people seldom stated how or why they believed that bread offered protection against fairies. When pressed, some suggested that it was a sop or substitute that the fairies would take instead of the person (Rieti, 1991: 75); others looked to bread's religious symbolism, i.e., the sacramental body of Christ, for the explanation (ibid., 76). Perhaps part of the reason that homemade bread took on such deep emotional significance was its close association with maternal nurturing. Bread-making took up much of women's time and was central to their providing for families.⁸⁸ Rieti concludes that "even without religious associations, bread provides a talisman of domesticity (and culture) against the perils of the wilderness" (ibid.). Similarly, Omohundro (1994: 220) observes that "bread is a symbolic foodstuff to Newfoundlanders, as it has been historically in European cultures, and breadmaking remains a declaration of self-sufficiency and of an outport woman's responsibility for producing food." Emblematic of home and nurturing, a crust in a pocket offered protection from unknown dangers, like fairies, that lurked in the outside world.

When entering spaces beyond the borders of known safety for activities such as berry picking, bread was a physical reminder of where you came from, and by extension who you were. While women and children most often picked berries for household uses like making jam, they sometimes sold berries to generate income. Peter Narváez (1991: 342) observed that this "material inducement during hard times often drove berry pickers into realms of danger." Narváez and other scholars link fairy belief with more than spatial dangers, however. It could embody physical and psychological risks: "fairy explanations could be used by participants to mask

actual deviant behaviors such as extreme tardiness, premarital sexual relations, infidelity, incest, child molestation, wife battering, and sexual assault” (ibid., 357). A crust of bread, a taste of home, offered psychological assurance that allowed people to go out into the world or face the unknown; its everyday familiarity and deep association with family protected individuals against community and social pressures and offered them strength to advance their own interests.

David Sutton (2001: 7) declares that “if ‘we are what we eat,’ then ‘we are what we ate’ as well,” and for many present-day Newfoundlanders that includes home-made bread. In his blog, Barry Parsons writes:

When I think of Newfoundland baking, the first thing that comes to mind is home-made bread rising high above large breadpans in 2 or 3 bun loaves.... it was still the rule rather than the exception to find homemade bread in many homes. The women in my extended family all still made homemade bread during my childhood but with freezers in most homes by that point, daily bread baking was no longer necessary but many still bake once or twice a week. (Parsons, 2007)

When folklore students remember the homemade bread of their childhoods, they also emphasize nurturing figures: mothers and grandmothers. They speak of their maternal genealogy and of how bread connects them to their family and their past.

Smell and taste often stand out most in Newfoundlanders’ memories of home-made bread. In writing of his mother’s bread, Randolph Healey captures both dimensions:

I treasure a time when we savored food because we did not want the taste to end. That food was my mother’s homemade bread and it brought people together like a miracle. My mother’s bread is sun-kissed brown, has a tanned light crust, and has an airy, mouth-watering taste that is a little moist, a little dry, and a little like your first serious kiss. The taste is just right; you would never think that it is made out of flour. The fragrance is heaven — if there is a smell to heaven. (Healey, 1998)

A 79-year-old St John’s native similarly recalled the smell of her mother’s bread baking: “you could smell the bread. Everybody in the neighbourhood could smell the bread. Somebody passing up the Wesleyan church could smell the bread baking at our place” (States, 2009: 2). These sensory memories support Sutton’s argument that “food’s memory power derives in part from synesthesia, which I take to mean the synthesis or crossing of experiences from different sensory registers (i.e., taste, smell, hearing)” (Sutton, 2001: 17). He suggests that synesthesia provides the experience of “returning to the whole” and that this helps us to understand the significance of food in the maintenance of the identity of those who have left their homeland behind (ibid.).

For Healey and Parsons, as well as for many other Newfoundlanders, recollections of homemade bread powerfully evoke the past and childhood.⁸⁹ For those living away from the province, homemade bread is a vehicle for imaginary travel across space as well as time. Folklore students tell of their mothers being asked by homesick relatives living outside the province to send bread. One young woman described her mother mailing bread to her brother, aunt, and uncle as well as baking it for them to take back as a souvenir whenever they visit. She also occasionally supplies her in-laws in Ontario with bread: “My mother told me about one of my father’s relatives who took jam tarts and bread in his suitcase with him. When he got back to his apartment in Ontario he hid the bread and the tarts so no one knew that he had brought them back with him. When he was alone in the apartment he would eat the goods, so he wouldn’t have to share them” (Smith, 2007: 4-5). These examples suggest that contemporary Newfoundlanders sometimes turn to bread to remember, or, as with the Kalymnians who Sutton interviewed, they “eat in order to remember” (Sutton, 2001: 12). Given the high value placed on this nostalgic remembering, it is not surprising that the Martin Family’s song, “The Old Sunday Dinner,” with the line “Bread as white as the first snow,” remains one of the most requested on St. John’s K-Rock FM’s popular local music show, *Home Brew*.⁹⁰

Remembering home-baked bread is part of individual and cultural reactions to loss (Kelly and Yeoman, 2010: 7). Homemade bread and its memories allows Newfoundlanders to momentarily return to a rural way of life that no longer exists.⁹¹ As Sutton argues, such experiences “become more intensified in the migrant context, where cooking is not simply an everyday practice, but an attempt to reconstruct and remember synesthetically, to return to that whole world of home, which is subjectively experienced both locally and nationally, if not at other levels as well.” (ibid., 86). These memories do not evoke painful hardship when there was little or nothing else to eat; instead, they affirm an imagined time and place that no longer exists and that depended on male and female complementarity, the integrity of the family unit (see Counihan, 1999: 42), a subsistence economy, and a close-knit community. They speak of a time when food was prepared at home and those who shared it were connected by deep ties. Through their resourcefulness and resilience, earlier generations of rural people not only “got by,” they nurtured children and shared pleasure in even the hardest of times. As Healey writes of his mother’s bread, “The slices were thick and filling. No one starved in our house — or in other houses, and some could have, if it was not for Mom’s bread” (Healey, 2008).

BREAD AS A SOCIAL FACT

From the key food in family foodways to a marker of passing time and protection against evils in the outside world, bread in twentieth-century Newfoundland constituted what Marcel Mauss (1967) describes as a “total social fact” that touched all

facets of life. Today, Healey's recollection of the centrality of bread to Newfoundland life speaks to bread's lasting importance. Although no longer common as a talisman against fairies, it still holds deep significance. By providing counter memories of what it was to grow up poor, bread continues to offer protection for contemporary Newfoundlanders on adult journeys far away from rural home places.

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Notes

¹For example, see Carole Counihan's work on bread in Sardinia (Counihan, 1999) and Steven Kaplan's analysis of bread in France (Kaplan, 1977). In her study of regional food in the United States, Lucy Long states that "Bread is traditionally a basic staple at almost every meal across the United States" (Long, 2009: 50).

²It is important to note that all the sources I draw on in this article refer exclusively to the island portion of the province. In a reflection of cultural differences that separate Newfoundland from Labrador and define each portion of the province as its own cultural region, I have opted to use the term "Newfoundland" despite the province's official name change to Newfoundland and Labrador in 2003.

³Several people helped me with the preparation of this article: Patricia Fulton and Pauline Cox of the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive; research assistants Anne Lafferty, Annie McEwen, and Leone Nippard; Philip Hiscock; Peter Latta; and Mary Ellen Wright. In 2008 an earlier version was presented to the Folklore Studies Association of Canada and I benefited from the questions and comments of audience members. Finally, I would like to thank the three anonymous reviewers of this article for their helpful suggestions.

⁴Mary Douglas describes the anthropological concept of a family food system in her study, "Sociology of Bread." She explains that within given budgetary constraints and within widely agreed cultural standards of hygiene and nourishment, "each family works out a regular pattern of food, mealtimes, children's food and drink, men's food and drink, women's, celebratory and ordinary food" (Douglas, 1975: 13).

⁵See also MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 63-1/159.

⁶MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 66-4E/122, 67-13/112, 67-206/108, 67-20E/109, 66-13/143, 71-87/27, 71-88/23, 71-93/19, 71-96/33, 71-97/15, 71-97/16, 71-121/34, 71-132/33, 72-247/14, 73-54/14, 73-9/34.

⁷Casselman writes that "Toutin can also refer to a pork/cake, a bun made by mixing diced pork with flour, water, baking powder, and molasses" (Casselman, 1998: 50).

⁸See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 66-13D/98, 70-21/133.

⁹Casselman writes, "I suggest flacon may stem from the fact that the dough was rolled flat by using a bottle, in Old French *flacon*, which gives a more familiar English bottle word, *flagon*" (1998: 34). See also MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-20E/100.

¹⁰Casselman (1998: 41) describes gandy as "a pancake made of bread dough fried in pork fat and topped with coady (molasses sauce)."

¹¹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-13/92; 71-110/37, 71-112/10, 71-116/37, 71-116/38.

¹²MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-2C/89.

¹³MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 66-3E/87.

¹⁴MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 64-3/024.

¹⁵MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 64-3/025.

¹⁶Casselmann (1998: 23-24) notes: "Glutch does double duty in Newfoundland as a noun meaning a gulping, an act of difficult swallowing, or the throat or gullet itself, and also as a verb meaning to swallow with difficulty."

¹⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 68-4H/145. In her entry, "Bread and Bread Manufacturers," in the *The Encyclopedia of Newfoundland*, Janet Elizabeth Miller Pitt quotes Bishop Edward Field, who described the hardships of his visitation in the 1850s: "The usual Newfoundland fare of tea and biscuit is frequently mentioned as the ordinary hospitality extended to visitors" (Miller Pitt, 1981: 244).

¹⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-15F/40, 74-99/13.

¹⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 83-045, 66-12/64, 66-17/03, 68-24/45. Raisin bread was sometimes called Methodist bread (73-137/28, 66-4E/126) or Wesleyan bread (71-86/31).

²⁰MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-12/14, 63-1/154.

²¹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-15F/42.

²²MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-21G/66, 66-9C/63, 73-96/26, 73-19/10.

²³MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-15F/43.

²⁴MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-15F/44, 67-3C/57, 73-10/19, 73-25/17, 73-4/01, 73-132/07, 74-135/30, 74-102/35.

²⁵MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 63-1/37.

²⁶MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 68-3K/88, 67-10G/91, 73-100/23.

²⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-10G/91.

²⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 65-1/ 82.

²⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-14F/106.

³⁰One student depositor noted the preference for fresh bread among rural workers as well; molasses bread was the favourite lunch for fishermen. See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-10G/107.

³¹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-10/108.

³²MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-10/137.

³³One of the early critics of "dole" flour was Joey Smallwood. Later Smallwood, in his persona as the Barreلمان, reversed his position and advocated the benefits of enriched flour (Hiscock, 1994: 72).

³⁴Overton (1998: 18) details the state control over people's lives: "The system of public relief provided the state with almost complete control of many aspects of people's lives. Relief was provided not in cash, but in the form of a standard ration valued at just under \$2.00 per month per adult. To be granted relief, the applicant had to be totally destitute. Every cent of previous income had to be accounted for. All aspects of a person's life were subject to detailed investigation by the police or relieving officers. Once on relief, every meal had to be carefully rationed." Protest took the form of street demonstrations and song (ibid., 18-19). For a song text, see Cobb (1984).

³⁵Of course, this is in contrast to many other regions and countries where traditional home-baked bread is made from a variety of bread grains and/or takes other forms. For example, in her overview of regional American food culture, Lucy Long (2009: 51) describes a

number of breads associated with particular regions or cities, from San Francisco sourdough to Boston brown bread. Similarly, in his review of bread in Ireland, Caomhín Ó Danachair (1981) includes several traditional breads made from a variety of grains, including wheat, oats, barley, bere, and rye, as well as peas and beans.

³⁶For references to making barm, see MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-13/91, 67-14F/108, 84-308B, 67-2C/77, 67-2C/108, 67-2C/109.

³⁷See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 64-5/186, 65-1/009, 66-2F /140, 66-6E/87, 67-11D/95, 67-12/ 23, 67-15/58, 81-474/33, 66-11/82, 66-14E/106, 66-16D/98, 66-18D/123, 57-3C/56, 67-3C/57, 71-91/14, 68-17/25, 68-20/21, 68-22/21, 71-16/29, 71-87/13, 71-110/18, 71-116/33, 73-21/23, 73-76/39, 73-187/24, 74-6/44, 74-99/41, 74-107/66, 74-107/47, 74-109/67, 74-116/73, 74-120/65, 74-126/45, 74-127/74, 73-96/28, 73-98/11, 73-99/28.

³⁸See also MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 68-7/226.

³⁹This reliance on homemade bread went against trends elsewhere. For example, Susan Williams (2006: 18) indicates that “By the 1880s, many women, especially those who lived in cities, purchased their bread,” and Katherine Turner (2006) writes that although Americans in rural areas continued to bake their own bread well into the twentieth century, in towns and cities families increasingly bought their bread from the bakery. She also notes that the availability of baker’s bread was a crucial factor in British women deciding to enter the paid labour market.

⁴⁰Women sometimes exchanged their homemade bread for needed goods and services for their families. For example, if the family did not have a cow, butter, milk, and cream supplied by a neighbour would be repaid by jar of jam or loaf of fresh bread. See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 78-376.

⁴¹The expectation that a woman should know how to make bread well reflects the views promoted by nineteenth-century prescriptive literature. For example, in his 1821 *Cottage Economy*, William Cobbett connected a woman’s worth to her bread-making when he proclaimed, “Every woman, high or low, ought to know how to make bread. If she do not, she is unworthy of trust and confidence; and indeed, a mere burthen upon the community” (Cobbett, 1821: 60).

⁴²Murray (1979: 122) reports, “Some families that were very badly off, perhaps with no mother to look after them, or one who was a poor cook, might even have to make do with ‘nochers’ or ‘damper devils.’ This was chiefly flour and water mixed to a dough consistency, formed into a flat cake, and cooked on the top of a hot stove without the benefits of a cooking utensil. Most women considered this poor fare indeed. Fortunately, those who had to go without proper bread were few.”

⁴³See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 64-5/221.

⁴⁴See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-9/108.

⁴⁵See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 64-4/57, 67-15F/98, 74-108/69.

⁴⁶Bread was also put in the carriage to protect a baby from fairies. See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 64-5/219, 64-5 /221, 71-86/23, 73-119/55, 73-127/22, 73-142/54, 73-153/26, 73-200/1, 73-201/16.

⁴⁷See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-106/106, 67-15F/2, 68-3K/2, 74-120/29, 74-122/9, 74-126/25.

⁴⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-5F/24.

⁴⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 69-22/78.

⁵⁰MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 71-21/14, 71-123/06.

⁵¹See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 74-97/27. See 68-11/154 for a related example of being told that eating burnt toast would make one's hair curly.

⁵²See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 72-64/1.

⁵³See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 70-10/75, 72-64/10.

⁵⁴See also MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 70-25/58 (Bishop's Cove) and 71-98/57 (Winterton). Bread poultices were used extensively across the province to draw infection or treat a boil. For a sampling of MUNFLA examples, see 67-16B/39, 68-11/70, 68-3K/33, 68-10/2, 65-67/11D, 67-5F/67, 67-13C/1, 68-19/03 (St. John's), 68-11/11, 68-15/01, 68-15/02, 68-22/03 (Buchans), 68-23/04 (Elliston), 68-24/05, 69-9/06 (Bay D'Espoir), 69-9/02 (Kilbride), 70-10/63 (Georgetown), 70-10/53 (Cat Cove, Trinity Bay), 70-17/84 (St. John's), 70-23/96 (Bonavista), 70-24/87 (Trinity), 72-257/03 (Kingston, Conception Bay), 71-13/36 (Branch), 71-87/07 Codroy Valley), 71-126/28 (Newman's Cove), 71-129/11 (Fogo), 73-23/07 (Port Union), 73-25/09 (St. Mary's), 73-7/04 (St. Joseph's), 73-9/10 (St. John's), 73-12/19 (Gander), 73-15/09 (St. John's), 73-35/13 (Gander), 73-66/12 (Dunville), 73-111/16 (Gillams), 73-116/09 (Fogo), 73-118/21 (St. John's), 73-120/20 (Colliers), 73-12/19, 73-15/09, 73-66/12, 73-7/04, 73-25/09, 73-23/07, 71-126/28, 70-23/46, 70-10/53, 68-24/05, 68-23/07, 68-19/03, 68-22/03, 69-6/06, 69-11/07, 70-24/87, 72-257/03, 68-11/11, 68-15/01, 68-15/0271-129/11, 73-9/10, 73-35/13, 73-115/03, 73-116/09, 73-116/10, 73-118/21, 73-120/13, 73-120/20, 73-136/04, 73-138/04, 73-138/45, 73-153/15, 73-174/19, 73-177/13, 74-2/34, 74-95/27, 70-104/62, 73-111/16.

⁵⁵MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 73-136/04.

⁵⁶MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 73-138/04, 73-153/15.

⁵⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 74-95/27.

⁵⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 73-138/45.

⁵⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 73-120/20 (Colliers).

⁶⁰MUNFLA Survey Card, 67-1/20.

⁶¹MUNFLA Survey Card, 66-2F/70.

⁶²MUNFLA Survey Card, 66-7D/23.

⁶³MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 70-34/59; 70-10/71.

⁶⁴See also MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 69-11/07.

⁶⁵MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-176/04, 73-42/32.

⁶⁶MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 63-1/50.

⁶⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-5F/88.

⁶⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 70-34/71, 71-19/18.

⁶⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-6E/38. Also 65-11/34.

⁷⁰MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 71-92/09, 66-10G/30, 67-2C/46, 68-19/27, 73-153/14, 73-131/15, 72-64/10, 73-120/10, 73-1555/18, 73-173/13.

⁷¹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 65-1/022, 67-8D/74, 67-15F/78, 66-10G/114, 66-3E/32, 68-12/11C-5, 66-18D/52, 73-200/24, 68-19/27, 71-92/09, 73-69/33, 68-10/40, 68-15/20, 73-69/33.heel, 73-102/24, 73-101/40, 73-110/38.

⁷²MUNFLA Questionnaire, Q65-11/123.

⁷³MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 66-14E/108.

⁷⁴MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 66-146/86.

⁷⁵MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-8D/88, 67-2C/150.

⁷⁶MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards 68-10/23, 67-176/05.

⁷⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 67-15c/157 and 65-2/119 provide examples of the belief that an upside loaf brings bad luck.

⁷⁸MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 67-148/62. Also 73-21/21.

⁷⁹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 73-101/20.

⁸⁰MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 64-1/78, 65-1/078, 67-14F/99, 68-8/62, 67-3C/34, 73-179/23, 73-201/15, 73-202/19, 74-104/69.

⁸¹MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 66-6E/10, 73-132/17, 73-155/23, 74-114/36.

⁸²MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 68-3K/144.

⁸³MUNFLA Folklore Survey Cards, 66-15G/39, 66-6E/103, 67-8D/9, 74-114/36.

⁸⁴A folklore student in 1966 noted that it was customary when passing a churchyard to carry bread to feed fairies. The bread was thrown on the ground anywhere there was a sign of fairies, such as a sound or moving shadow. The student also suggested that the bread represented a way for a host to give a departing guest something to take home. See MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 66-1D/16.

⁸⁵Casselman (1998: 36) writes that “If the trip was by land, one took ‘bread for the road’ or ‘company bread,’ company being a euphemism for spooks.”

⁸⁶In the 1920s in Bay Roberts, the belief was “Have a cake of hard bread in your pocket and fairies will never catch you.” According to one student collector, the rationale was that fairies are allergic to hard bread: MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 63-1/201. See also 67-22C/112. There are many examples of warding off fairies: 64-5/220, 73-101/24, 73-107/16, 73-118/22, 73-120/29, 73-123/4, 73-157/03, 73-162/13, 73-163/02, 73-164/14, 73-176/37, 74-7/21, 74-112/57, 74-113/33, 68-16/59, 71-92/13.

⁸⁷MUNFLA Folklore Survey Card, 68-3K/20.

⁸⁸Of course, Newfoundland is not alone in investing bread with symbolic meanings. See Farb and Armelagos (1980) for a cross-cultural exploration of some of bread’s symbolism.

⁸⁹Sutton (2001: 28) writes that “it is not simply at ‘loud’ ritual occasions that food and memory come together, but in the pragmatic and the ritualized aspects of everyday life.”

⁹⁰*Home Brew*, 97.5 FM, St. John’s. Aired 20 Feb. 2010.

⁹¹Mary Douglas writes of food’s powerful ties to the past. According to David Sutton, “She sees the message of meals to be in their power to represent experiences of time, development or evolution: ‘To treat food in its ritual aspect is to take account of its long spun out temporal processes. It is an evolving system that can be a metaphor for any other evolution. Great or small, the evolution off just one marriage, or even of the whole human species’ (Douglas, 1982: 115, quoted in Sutton, 2001: 8). This is particularly important for Newfoundland as a society shaped by loss, for example, as noted in the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada (2003: vi).

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