



# **Famine Echoes - Folk Memories of the Great Irish Famine: An Oral History of Ireland's Greatest Tragedy**

*Cathal Poirteir*

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***Famine Echoes* is a groundbreaking oral account of the Great Irish Potato Famine of 1845–52, telling the stories of its victims for the first time ever in their own words and those of their descendants.**

*'When the potato crop failed no other food was available and the people perished by the hundreds of thousands, along the roadside, in the ditches, in the fields from hunger and cold, and what was even worse – the famine fever. The strongest men were reduced to mere skeletons and they could be met daily with the clothes hanging on them like ghosts.'*

The Great Irish Famine is the greatest tragedy in Irish history. Over one million people died and nearly two million emigrated as a result. *Famine Echoes* gives a voice to its victims, offering a unique perspective on the Great Hunger, the defining event of modern Irish history.

In *Famine Echoes*, descendants of Famine survivors recall the community memories of the great hunger in their own words, conveying like never before the heartbreak and horrors their relatives experienced. This remarkable book, a seminal record of the oral transmission of folk memory, is a record of the last living link with the survivors of Ireland's most devastating historical event.

In the 1940s, the Folklore Commission conducted interviews with thousands of elderly people around Ireland who remembered what they themselves had heard from ancestors who had survived the Famine. Cathal Póirtéir has edited a selection of these recollections, arranging the material in an order which follows the rough chronology of the Famine itself.

*Famine Echoes* is published to coincide with the RTÉ Radio series of the same name.

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