

Agnes Rynne

Female

0:00:00 – 0:01:32

INTRODUCTION –

Agnes is originally from Kilnamona and now lives in England in Middlesex near Heathrow – she’s home in Clare for 2 weeks. She has visited her children and cousins in Boston, America. She says it was difficult to travel when her children were young but now it is easier to travel.

0:01:33 – 0:02:42

FAMILY –

She grew up in Lickaune, Kilnamona in the nearby house (no longer lived in). She was the youngest of eight, “œthe baby” but wasn’t spoiled. She helped at home on the farm & also had the responsibility of looking after her mother who was sick and needed someone with her constantly. She recalls trips to Lahinch on the bus on lovely summer days. She recalls jobs she did at home.

0:02:43 – 0:07:25

FAMILY AND EMIGRATION –

Her mother was a native of Inch. Her father, Joe “œBarry” Rynne was born in the family home place and farm. His father and his 12 siblings emigrated to America (Lowell, Boston area) because there “œwas nothing for them” at home. His siblings didn’t return except for one aunt at the age of 90. There were 3 Rynne families in the parish.

Her father travelled to visit Agnes in England. She says he was well liked, jolly, enjoyed his pint and dancing and was a “œgreat man”. She talks about emigration and say that the sad part was that people didn’t come home again.

She says she will never forget her sister emigrating to America at age 19 (Agnes age 3) & her father crying for weeks and listening to the song ‘Far Away in Australia’ on a record – he was broken-hearted.

She had 3 brothers Michael, Josie and Paddy. Josie stayed on the home place and farm; Paddy married and lived in Ennis; Michael went to England, was working demolishing a building, fell down a ladder and was killed (first week of WWII).

0:07:26 – 0:09:32

SCHOOL DAYS –

Agnes went to nearby Kilnamona School; she says her family was not ‘popular’ as her father couldn’t afford to send over a creel of turf. There was a girls’ and boys’ room in her days. The teachers were Mrs Hegarty and Julia Keating. Agnes stayed at school to age 14 but was often at home with her mother; some of her classmates are still alive; mentions Mai Hegarty (cycle champion) and Peggy Barrett. She refers to ‘big and upper classes’ then & that people who didn’t have much money were ‘not class’. She was in the choir. She recalls pupils playing on stones & getting punished with slaps from a ruler (like a cricket bat). She says they didn’t do Irish.

0:09:33 – 0:11:26

SPORT/HURLING/ATHLETICS/GAMES/ GAA/ SPORTS DAYS –

She recalls her father played pitch-and-toss in the hollow of the road near Neylon’s during the summer. He played for money. Tells story about neighbour Sean Barrett. Her brother Josie was a good hurler and cross-country runner. She recalls they loved the sports held at nearby Talty’s hill and says they had great fun at sports days held at O’Loughlin’s land in Rushane. She mentions the stage for dancing to live music & tug-of-war; held in the summer.

0:11:27 – 0:23:28

CULTURE/MUSIC/DANCING /ENTERTAINMENT –

Agnes recalls platform/crossroads dancing held near McTigues on Sunday afternoons/evenings; recalls names of musicians, McTigues, Barretts and McTigues who played at them; a few sets on the platform; not much cars then; they walked to them & would have travelled to dancing at sports day to Inagh but not to other places.

Agnes talks about going to the house-dances; she tells story of local man, Carl McTigue telling them "get up" to attend the dances; the girls' hair was in curlers on Saturday nights before Sunday mass.

The Rynne house was always a house for dancing, more fun & life there, probably due to her father being a lively man; she recalls "Steam" McTigue crossing up to her house playing his flute; house dances were held when her sister Helen or others came home from England; they often met neighbours at the Show in Ennis & arranged the dances; she recalls Guinness for the musicians (got in Inagh) & bread and jam for people; she loved the house dances; says they were gone by the time she left for England; she recalls getting the milk from Neylons & the seats being put by the walls of the kitchen; she recalls her brother, Josie asking the girls to the house dances while the men "came themselves"; she recalls members of the Kilfenora Ceili Band (mentions Tom Hegarty who worked in Kilnamona) & other neighbours playing in their house, often hearing the music as they crossed the fields; she mentions her sisters and their boyfriends/husbands.

Agnes recalls the "wren money" was counted at their house & "wren dances" held at night; her father agreeable to having these "porter dances" & often the "scrap dance" if there was some money left over; she recalls Karl McTigue blowing the flute to gather the group; says the Kilnamona group were great & better than neighbouring groups.

She recalls Josie and herself visiting Mrs Greene, (Geraldine's great grandmother). She mentions her clothes. Recalls Lil Greene (Geraldine's great-aunt).

Josie and Agnes picked up the dancing at home; her mother often sat in the hob, humming tunes for them to dance to; mentions they danced the Caledonian set; times “œmore innocent” than now!

Agnes and friends danced at Paddy Con’s dance-hall; Agnes preferred ceili music bands to showbands & jives.

Agnes recalls gambles held at their house often for money or a goose; she tells a story about her father’s “œred eyes”; no gambles or house dances were held during Lent; (she mentioned her nieces getting geese from Geraldine’s mother); Agnes enjoyed gambles though many women didn’t attend them then.

0:23:28 - 0:23:47

TRANSPORT & TRIPS TO LAHINCH -

Agnes occasionally travelled by bus with her mother to Lahinch; it was a great treat to travel on the West Clare Railway.

0:23:48 - 0:24:36

HELPING ON THE FARM /FAIRS -

Agnes recalls helping & enjoying her father gather the cattle early in the morning for the fairs held in Ennis at the Fair Green; they weren’t afraid of the dark; she recalls the jobs they did; butter-making; killing the pig & making puddings; distributing meat to neighbours; life was hard but great; families self-sufficient & people neighbourly.

0:24:35 - 0:27:53

BONFIRE NIGHT -

Agnes recalls bonfires held on St. John’s Night; neighbours attended; she recalls her brother being taken to the bonesetter as a result of a fall.

0:28:32 - 0:29:42

RATIONING DURING WORLD WAR II -

Agnes said they were fortunate that her sisters sent them boxes of tea, flour & clothes by ship from America; a great treat; they 'œcouldn't get to the post office fast enough to collect them' (Kilnamona P.O.); her parents often got extra supplies at shops in Ennis; she says her father could 'œtwist his finger around people'.

0:29:43 - 0:30:46

SEASONAL EVENTS: CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR -

Agnes recalls having candles before getting electricity; she & her sister Catherine made their own crepe-paper decorations at Christmas; collecting holly. Easter. She recalls bets to eat boiled eggs.

0:30:47 - 0:31:27

HANDCRAFTS/ CLOTHES

She recalls doing sewing & teaching themselves to knit; she & her father attended First Aid classes in the school; they often got parcels of clothes from America; she doesn't think her mother made their clothes; her father bought his clothes at Armstrongs in Ennis.

0:31:27 - 0:32:39

TRANSPORT

Agnes recalls her brother Josie buying a car when he was working with the Council; before that, he had a bicycle; she recalls him repairing it on a Saturday night & passing then out on the road on their way to Mass on a Sunday morning; she recalls her sister buying a bike on her return from America & learning to cycle.

0:32:39 - 0:32:52

RADIO & GRAMOPHONES

Agnes says they didn't have a radio when her sister came home from America but they had the gramophone & Irish music records.