Christy Cullinan

Male

0:00:00 – 0:05:39
PERSONAL & FAMILY INFORMATION & EMIGRATION –

Christy was born & always lived in Ennis; both his parents from Kilnamona, 6 miles from Ennis; his father Patrick Cullinan (known as Flurries) & mother Margaret Mescall (sister to James, cuairteoir/interviewer Geraldine Greene's grandfather); his parents' marriage was a double – another Cullinan man married Molly Mescall; Margaret & Molly were 2 of Mescall family, Lickaune & 10 brothers – 5 emigrated to Massachusetts, America, 1 to England & 1 to Wales; Mary also known as Molly went to America at age 12 (her aunt sponsored her) & their parents had passed away before she returned home; he recalls hearing how she went on the horse cart to the railway station to get the boat; she lived to be nearly 100 & the longest living in the family; he recalls his grandparents in Kilnamona – Honor O'Mahony married Mescall & Hannah from Connolly married Cullinan; the Mescall & Cullinan families lived on adjoining farms â€œonly a field apartâ€; the Cullinans lived in Gurteen townland (name not used in present times); all houses reared big families then; he names Mescalls, Cullinans, McTigues, Rynnes, Taltys & more with big families; many emigrated to America & England – this was hard on parents & grandparents; 12 in Cullinan family – 5 emigrated (4 to America & 1 to England); John returned & took over family farm & a sister returned after the war; 12 in Mescall family – 10 boys & 2 girls; Christy's mother was the youngest; James & Frank stayed at home on farms – James at Mescall home place & Frank at the O'Mahony home place; he says the marriages of his 2 aunts & uncles were matches but he hasn't any further information.

0:05:39 – 0:10:32

MEMORIES OF HOLIDAYS & LIFE IN KILNAMONA –

Christy loved & has great memories of his time spent in Kilnamona during school holidays from age 8 to early teens; he stayed at his uncle Jack Cullinans; he recalls busy summer work – turf, hay, use of horse & work by hand; they played pitch-and-toss on Sundays at O'Neills Cross; he recalls getting 6p from his grandmother; he recalls the lovely people in Kilnamona & names many neighbours & characters who had great stories; he tells a story about a McTigue man & his dog. He recalls the McTigue family & describes them cutting with the scythe.

0:10:32 – 0:11:37
HOUSES IN KILNAMONA –
He recalls most houses had thatch roofs when he was young; people either thatched them themselves or got men to do them; reeds, rushes or grass were used; he mentions mostly rushes at Inagh & Kilnamona; he says there were less houses in the townlands of his parents than nowadays.

0:11:38 – 0:16:23
LAND & FARMING IN KILNAMONA –

Lickaune means â€œwhite flagâ€ & he describes the sheet of natural flagstone near his Cullinan uncle's house; the house had a flag floor & the area outside the house was clean due to the flag V grass; there was a quarry nearby though there was an unused bog next to it; the stone was used for building houses & sheds & the leftover flags to build walls; (James Mescall built all the stone walls on the Mescall farm); he describes the natural bubbling spring between the house & Rushane Lake; the road between Ennis & Inagh once went through the land; he recalls cutting hay & making trams by hand in a small field; the Cullinan land was later divided between 3 neighbouring families; he doesn't recall farm-hands or labourers at his relations' farms as they had plenty of help; he recalls McTigue lads going to help on farms but is unsure if they were hired or working as friends

of the families.
Cullinans cut turf at their own bogs in Kilnamona until it ran out & had a big black garden in the field next to the quarry; 20 acres including meadow & bog; he also helped his uncle cut turf at Inagh.

0:16:24 – 0:19:42
FAIRS & MARKETS –
He recalls getting up at 2am & helping his uncle bring animals to fairs; he recalls the cattle being hard to settle on the open road & in the fairgreen; he recalls the buyers with their flashlights; he went to Clarecastle fair with his uncle Frank & Ballyea with his Carrig relations; he recalls the fairs in Clarecastle on 30 May & 11 November were held on the main street which had less traffic then & easier contain the cattle than at the open Fairgreen in Ennis. There were 3 pubs in Clarecastle he recalls the â€œtokenâ€ system for getting drinks in larger towns – caps/corks of bottles were used especially for strangers; he says publicans knew people better in Miltown & did not need token system.

0:19:42 – 0:25:13
SPORTS, GAMES & SPORTS DAYS IN KILNAMONA-

Christy recalls some local sportsmen, athlete Tom Hynes, hurlers/athletes/boxers McTigues, Josie & Den Rynne, Gerdie Commane, hurlers/cross-country runners Taltys & cyclist May Hegarty; Mike McTigue the world champion boxer was in school with Christy's father & McTigue's brother helped his uncle Jack with the hay; he recalls the famous tug-of-war & hurling teams; he saw tug-of-war at sports – â€œoften more war than tug!â€ he recounts an incident between Kilnamona & Dysart teams; he says Kilnamona had exceptional teams for a small rural area; they won county hurling titles in early 1900s – his uncle was in one team. Christy played hurling with lads in Kilnamona but was not in a team there; he didn't fish but recalls people fishing at Rushane Lake & recalls someone having a boat.

0:25:13 – 0:27:58
HOUSE DANCES & SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT IN KILNAMONA –

Christy was too young to attend house dances in Kilnamona but recalls his aunts & uncles going; he recalls his uncle Jack's wedding to Nonie Barry at the Cullinan house – his first time to see strawboys; he was fascinated by the music & dance which lasted to dawn; Caledonian & Plain set most popular; he names some musicians – McTigues brothers & Pakie Barrett; he recalls hearing of people at the platform dancing in Kilnamona at McTigue's stage; he says James & Frank Mescall were good dancers.

0:27:58 – 0:28:42
SHOPS & SERVICES IN KILNAMONA –

Christy names some small shops in the area – Cullinans (not related), O'Loughlins, O'Connors at Corney's Cross & descibes their contents; people were mostly self-sufficent then but bought tea & sugar in town.

0:28:43 – 0:28:52
HEALTH & CURES –

He refers to people with â€œcharmsâ€ & recalls a Griffey man in Cloonanaha who had a cure for thrush; he thinks Michael Tierney, O'Connell St, Ennis (RIP) also had the â€œcharmâ€.

0:30:41 – 0:37:02
SACRAMENTS, PROCESSIONS, STATIONS, WAKES & MISSIONS –

Christy received his Holy Communion in Ennis & describes the big occasion of the processions on Corpus Christi; he says stations were not held in Ennis houses but maybe in rural areas in his youth; he recalls the wakes in houses; he recalls missions annually for 2 weeks in March at Ennis Cathedral – 1 week for women & 1 for men; he recalls sermons from the pulpit; Lent was strictly observed; he says

dioceses had different rules then; he recalls his confession in Clare to having meat on a Friday at a Galway fair; he recalls night-duty staff in Our Lady's not being allowed to eat meat; people were not allowed polish shoes, wash/shave themselves or sew on Sundays.

0:37:02 – 0:42:37
ENNIS – HOUSES, SHOPS, SERVICES, TRANSPORT –

They lived by the Showgrounds, then on the rural side of Ennis; population of town about 5-6000 then; Turnpike, Marian Ave & Steels Terrace had thatched houses then; he recalls the County Hospital being built in 1939-1940; houses on the Clare Road extended to the present Bob Lyne's garage; estates were built from 1960s; 4 adjoining houses in the Buttermarket were slated; nearby Simm's Lane houses were thatched; he recalls Moloneys, coopers making firkins & barrels; he recalls neighbours – some were natives of Ennis & some moved in from the country; he names some shops in the area & their contents; few had cars then – used bus/train if needed to travel outside town; he recalls his uncle Dinny had hackney cars & provided an untertaking service; petrol was scarce during war years; he recalls rationing & getting goods on the black market.

0:42:37 – 0:46:09
LIFE & WORK DAYS IN ENNIS –

Christy's parents moved to Ennis after their marriage; his father worked for Considines in Cahercalla, a local dairy farmer – he milked 30 cows & delivered milk around Ennis; he also rented land & grew potatoes & vegetables at home & sold potatoes to local customers; they kept hens, ducks, a few pigs – 1 for themselves & 2 to factory in Limerick; Christy recalls pigs being sold at Carmody Street & taken by lorry to Crusheen; he helped him after school, weekends & holidays for many years except when he was in Kilnamona; he recalls the big tanks & quart tin cans then V bottles of milk; he describes the specially designed milk-cart.

Christy's family moved to the Buttermarket in Ennis when his father retired in 1951 & bought a house; Christy bought the one next door. He describes butter & monthly pig markets held – firkins, etc; he recalls coming to them as a youth with his uncle; he recalls O'Keeffe man in Kilnamona who brought the butter to Ennis & he recalls his aunt & uncle taking butter to Kennedys.

0:46:09 – 0:49:00
SCHOOL DAYS, TEACHERS, DISCIPLINE, SUBJECTS, GAMES –

Christy's went to school at the Ennis convent until his Communion at age 7 in 1938 & then to Ennis CBS primary & secondary school; he walked with siblings & neighbours; students outside town cycled; he wore a jumper & short pants until 13/14; not all had shoes; he & his siblings were lucky to have shoes which he credits to their parents' industry; he played hurling & football at school; he describes the annual sports day at Cusack Park – the clothes they wore & the marching drill display; they had a few lay teachers & some religious brothers then; Hegarty from Kilnamona taught him; he enjoyed school; he says they were beaten but may have â€œdeserved itâ€ though it was savage; they were also beaten at home; all subjects through Irish except English & Latin in primary & secondary school

0:49:00 – 0:51:25
STORIES & MEDIA –

He recalls ghost stories being told by an ex-soldier from the World War 1 & local farmers – they were scary but entertaining; he recalls his mother knitting in winter time unless visitors came; no radios then; he recalls the Clare Champion being bought weekly in his parents' home & the Irish Press was a daily paper, often borrowed among neighbours for local & big news stories; he recalls papers being in demand the time of a murder case.

0:51:25 – 0:53:17

TRANSPORT & WEST CLARE RAILWAY –

Christy's mother took him to the bus & driver knew where to let him out in Kilnamona or he got lifts with the mail car driver going to Inagh & Kilnamona; he recalls Kilnamona people travelling by horse & cart to Ennis on Saturdays; cars were rarely seen in Kilnamona when he was young; people walked, cycled & used horse and side car; he recalls his mother sending them for day trips to Lahinch on the West Clare Railway steam train; he later went with Margaret in 1960, the year before it closed.

0:53:17 – 0:56:07
SPORT & RACES AT MILTOWN –
Christy played hurling & won a juvenile U14 championship with Ennis Dalcassians in 1945; he later played hurling with an Our Lady's team; he recalls going to the races in Miltown which were held to the 1940s; the day trip was his father's only holiday & he hired a car; the dinner out was a novelty; he recalls the locals catering in Miltown; he recalls his aunt's pub in Miltown.

0:56:07 – 0:58:29
MARRIAGE –

Christy met Margaret Queally from Mount Callan at Paddy Con's dance hall in Ennis; they married when he was aged 31; their reception was held at the Queens Hotel, Ennis; he recalls Willie Clancy, Miltown piper, played and sang with John Reid & John Joe Cullinan, fiddler & MC Martin Talty at the session afterwards; he recalls with laughter of times when Margaret meeting Martin Talty on the streets of Miltown.

His family had moved to the Buttermarket in Ennis when his father retired in 1951 & bought a house; Christy bought the one next door – he, Margaret & family lived there for 46 years until they moved to Clonroad in 2007 – (already told in previous section).

0:58:29 – 1:03:27
SOCIALISATION IN ENNIS & CLARE –

Christy & Margaret went to dances in Paddy Con's dance hall in Ennis; they danced ballroom & sets; he recalls popular bands at Paddy Cons & the Queens; he recalls the music changing in early 1960s; Caledonian set most popular & Plain, Mezerks & Lancers danced too with ceili dances & waltzes; he recalls little music in pubs in town in 1960s; he says Irish traditional music was not popular until Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann formed in late 1950s & people carrying instruments were often laughed at; single women did not go not pubs in late 1950s/1960s unless to the Queens for dances; he recalls the Saturday/Sunday pub opening hours; he enjoys the annual Willie Clancy week of music & never misses it; he recalls sessions at Tom Queally's (Margaret's brother) pub; he recalls Willie Clancy's funeral was like a Fleadh; some of his siblings did step-dancing.

1:03:27 – 1:05:20
LIFE & WORK DAYS IN ENNIS CONTINUED –

Christy worked in the Queens Hotel for 2.5 years until he was 19 then trained & worked for 38 years as a psychiatric nurse in our Lady's Hospital in Ennis; he retired at age 57 in 1988; he then drove the Clare Care bus for 12 years until he was 80; he enjoyed meeting & chatting to the senior citizens who were Ennis natives, returned emigrants or immigrants.