Dympna Bonfield

Female

0:00:00 – 0:07:53
EARLY LIFE AND SCHOOL DAYS –

Dympna was born in CÃºl Minga, Kilimer parish where her mother was born about five miles from Kilrush. Her father immigrated to the USA and was there for seventeen years as a dockworker and street car driver.

Her father had come home to Kilrush when a friend Jack lillis mentioned an auction in CÃºl Minga and he married the woman in the house named Kathleen Mahony who was very much involved in Cumann na mBán as her family too had been involved with the old IRA.

The family was having trouble with having hay burned etc. so had to sell up. Her father the 'Yankee bought the place and a place beside it and lived on there without going back to the USA.

There were five children with Dympna being the youngest and they were raised on stories of the old IRA.

Dympna recalls reading material sent home from the US and they used to discuss the topics in the papers.
The original house was a thatched cottage and her father built a new one.

0:07:54 – 0:14:31
FARM WORK –

Dympna goes on to speak of the methods of making different types of bread and she was able to do this at a very young age,
She recalls a little of the farm work and she would milk the cows.

Dympna speaks about other work within the house including tending the turf hearth.

Her brothers handled all the farm work and she would do the house work with her mother. She talks about some of the work that her brothers carried out including saving the hay. The men's work was much more physical then, than it is now.

Dympna speaks of her brother contriving a game of treasure hunt and who ever found the treasure could keep it. She recalls playing a lot on her own and speaks of it.

Her mother's brother Jack was a big influence on them and taught them singing particular her brother.
Dympna.

0:14:32 – 0:22:36
SCHOOL LIFE –

Dympna describes school life as 'desperate' and she hated it. She describes how they would cross the fields to get there. She found it uninteresting and difficult. She felt that she was a creative type and her mind did not work that way.

She always had a natural talent for painting and recalls having an art shop at one stage. There was no art taught at school but she recalls getting plasticine at school one day and making a pair of glasses.

Dympna recalls her communion and confirmation day and her friendship with a neighbour, Kathleen Griffin, both of their families were very friendly and she would have to cross the bog to meet her. They have remained friendly down through the years.

Most children attended primary but not all would go further.
Dympna went to the Convent in Kilrush but they didn't do art there either. She

had to repeat her leaving cert in the Coláiste and progressed her art from there.

0:22:37 – 0:32:31
RELIGION –

Dympna speaks of Christmas and some of the household traditions carried out. Her father would light the first candle in the window and then all were lit, there would be a candle in every window and there would be holly decorating it.She speaks of the excitement of going to mass at eight o clock on Christmas morning, with the tackling up of the horse and putting a blanket across your knees and the clip clop of the horse's hooves. They came home and had fried spicy sausages and later a Goose dinner.

Dympna speaks of going on the Wren on Christmas night with about thirty neighbours and thee proceeds from this would go toward a Wren dance and food would be brought from Kilrush to have at the do.

Santa would come and memories were good. When they got older there was a dance in Kilrush that they would cycle to.
It was not a great feeling for Dympna to go back to school after Christmas.Dympna discusses lent next and recalls having to give up sweets and the competition to see who could eat the most eggs; which were real ones.

The rosary would be said every night at home but the stations were not particularly done. The mission was very important or the Bishop coming for the confirmation. Dympna tells a funny story on how her uncle's got around the parish priests barring of having drink at the wake. She mentions how they got a key of the church from mick Ryan and brought the corpse in during the night.

0:32:32 – 0:35:25
STORY TELLING –

A man named Patrick Devanney would come into the house for storytelling and

singing but Dympna recalls her father had no interest in this 'country scene' and would be abrupt about getting them to go home.

She speaks of her father's interests lying more in his American adventure.

0:35:26 – 0:38:22 –
POLITICS AND A DIFFERENT IRELAND –

Dympna, on being asked speaks of the change of Fíanna Fáil government and feels that the 'Carry on' of the way the party was acting would go against the grain of the older and founding members. She feels that Clare was at the heart of Fianna Fáil.

She makes a reference to an Edna O Brien comment â€œIreland was not Christian in past times and was all rules regulations and fear, hell and damnation. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was not understoodâ€. Dympna thinks the spirit of God is coming about and may not be good for all.

She believes Clare has changed and feels that children today are treated with much more respect and that the change in the economy will bring about a greater sense of community.

Dympna's friend Rita was asked about her thoughts on the interview.

She replied as a Galway person it held a lot of resonance for her as she could relate to a lot of it from her own childhood. She found it very interesting.