

Eileen Dinan

Female

0:00:00 – 0:16:22

YOUNGER DAYS –

Eileen was born into a family of six children, three boys and three girls. Eileen was second youngest but her mother died when she was about four years old. She was told about her parent's occupation, and they met in Ennis. Her parents were among the first married in Ennis Cathedral.

The Church prior to the Cathedral was in what today is called Chapel Lane where many would have been wed.

Her Grandparents in Crusheen were farmers, and her father's mother was O Grady from the Turnpike in Ennis and may have come from Old mill Street in Ennis.

Her Father was born in 4/6/1885.

When her mother died at age thirty seven, some of her brothers and sisters were sent to the USA when they were around seventeen. Tom, Mona went to America. and her brother Christopher joined the British army and never maintained contact.

Eileen had to take it on herself to rear her younger brother. Those that went to America didn't come back for more than twenty years, after the second world war.

Her family never spoke of their mother and Eileen regrets never asking; however she was reputed to be a very talented person and would make all their own clothes.

Her Father had been a soldier in WW1 in the British army and her mother reared them until she caught cancer and passed away around 1924,

Her father's pension was 5 shillings and ten pence but Eileen's earliest recollection was the cold house they lived in. It was built by the council and the rent at the time was 2 shillings and six pence and a choice was pay the rent or buy a bag of coal. Times were very hard for everyone and Eileen began to assist with the cooking after her communion.

0:16:23 - 0:19:38

ST FLANNAN'S TERRACE -

The family had a council house in St Flannan's Terrace and Eileen recalls there were forty six houses in the area. They were among the first to let these new houses and the neighbours were very good.

Eileen recalls a number of the families that were living around her in the area and some of them became business people such as the Shanahan's of Shanahan's paints. The road itself wasn't even tarred and there was no footpath either but they used to play games on the road.

Most of the houses were eventually purchased from the council.

0:19:39 - 0:24:08

SCHOOL DAYS -

Eileen went to school in the convent of mercy and completed at seventh standard at fourteen years old. She didn't want to leave school because she had to take the responsibility of an adult as often her father would be off working.

Eileen liked the training at school and the nuns but would often envy the freedom of the other girls as they went home to their mothers whereas she would have to light a fire and cook something for her brother who was at school in the Christian

Brothers. Her Brother was very dependent on her and relied on her.

Life was very difficult and it was an exceptionally poor time for everyone. Eileen speaks of receiving boots and clothes from the nuns and her brother received items from St Vincent de Paul. Eileen also speaks of parcels coming from America which would include clothes and toys.

0:24:10 – 0:27:30

FOOD AND DRINK –

The most staple food choice at the time for them would be Bacon and cabbage. There would also be mash potato and sausages and eggs.

Eileen recalls going to St Flannan's College to get buttermilk and says that there was a substantial farm surrounding it to cater for the boarders.

Most pubs sold groceries and many had a snug that the women would go into. Some in the cottages at St Flannan's sold basic items from their front room.

0:27:31 – 0:33:54

BRAID'S FACTORY AND WORKING LIFE –

On leaving school Eileen got a job in the newly opened Braids during the second world war and they would manufacture laces and all types of braids with machinery.

Wages were small but there were many girls working there and some men things were cheap. It kept the town going through the war. Her wages were six shillings a week.

Eileen went to London after about three years in braids and worked as a housekeeper for a doctor. They were well looked after and the people were lovely. Eileen left London due to the onset of the war and came home to braids again.

She got married to her boyfriend John Dinan when she was twenty one and he went into the Irish army for four years during the emergency stationed at Dromoland.

He got a job the council initially as a driver and then joined with the oil companies in Shannon and she says that there was plenty of work that time as there was a huge amount of aircraft coming through the airport at the time.

0:33:55 – 0:50:08

MICHAEL MORGAN AND EILEEN'S WEDDING –

Eileen's younger brother was taken out of school at sixteen and was sent to England by his father. He was sent into the boys brigade who trained them as musicians and then became a paratrooper at eighteen.

Michael was taken prisoner and was in prison in Germany for six months until the hostilities finished. He got back to England and qualified as a welder got married to an English girl and worked on the oil rigs but contracted emphysema in later life due to the gases.

Eileen got married in 1942 after meeting up with John again at a braids dance. There was an active social scene prior to the war but it was curtailed during the war.

Eileen recalls going to the Queens to see all the big bands and speaks of some of them.

She took over the family home and her father decided to go to England because there was plenty of work there at the time after the war.

Eileen had her first daughter in 1945 and finished working. Her father came back and began to live with them then.

Her husband John was working in Shell and got a good pension from it.

There were only three rooms in the house and she had six children there plus her father in the house.

Eileen speaks at length of her children's careers and school times. She talks about her own children spending time around the area playing in the crags and fields near St Flannan's

There were very little houses around and Eileen speaks of picking blackberries around Tobertascain and that area.

0:50:10 - 0:55:57

POVERTY IN ENNIS -

Eileen speaks of the small little hovel type houses on the turnpike road and wonders how many of those people got on. She says that there were many a local shop she called them 'Hooksters' run from the front room of a house gave goods to people knowing that they would probably never get paid for them.

Eileen says that there is no poverty now compared to back then. TB was rife but she never heard of it in those old houses in these area's and she recall going to a fountain on old mill road to get water.

She mentions that people had no money and many would collect cinders from the furnaces of Engines and reuse them and also coke would be used.

People were on a waiting list to get the houses on St Flannan's Terrace. Eileen's parents got one because they had a family and would have been prioritised but says each of her siblings were born in different laneways in Ennis Town and it was all laneways at the time where there were very poor sanitary conditions. People were on the move all of the time.

Eileen made a few moves after St Flannan's terrace but she never missed it because she had poor memories of it.

0:55:58 – 1:02:39

HOSPITALS AND THE SICK –

The old infirmary was sited where the present day clinic is now, Eileen's only recollection of her mother was being taken to see her there.

The County home St Joseph's hospital had a fever section attached to it and it was sited over at Lifford on the Gort road. Eileen's brother Michael spent time there with diphtheria.

There was a sanatorium Edenvale on the Kilrush road for TB patients etc.

Eileen speaks warmly of Dr Bugler who ran a dispensary from the County Home site also.

There was another dispensary on the turnpike (knocked down now) and it specialised in chest ailments.

Eileen had four of her children at home but two of them were born healthy in the County Hospital.

There was also a home assistance officer based at the county home and Eileen speaks of the lack of assistance he provided.

1:02:30 – 1:10:14

COMMUNICATIONS, SERVICES, AND CRAFTS –

It was always practice to write letters and send by post. Eileen speaks also of a family photograph and speaks of having it restored. It was a large photograph and it had originally been a postcard sized but a man would call to the doors offering an enlarging and framing service and many people had this done.

Eileen's mother was gifted at crochet and making clothes to the extent that she entered a competition and had to go to Cork to the finals.

After the war things improved economically and Eileen speaks of doing her shopping in a number of premises up in the town and the shopping would be delivered to your house for you.

She speaks also that there was a shop for everything and talks about the number of bakeries with some doing things slightly different to others.

Eileen also identifies the premises that these bakeries were sited around the town.

Many premises would provide a drink of Cocoa to people.

There were many butchers' shops also in the town. Eileen speaks of the market always being there and the country people coming in to town to sell their wares. Some would sell up around the O'Connell monument, mainly women, and they would sell eggs.

Eileen speaks also of the pubs and hotels and other premises around Ennis.

The geography of the town was very different in the 1800s with all the lanes and houses back to back and close together.

Many from here got councils houses in the turnpike and areas like this later.

Eileen recalls an Italian chip shop opening, and says they thought it was wonderful to have it.

The cinema or dancing at the Queens was very popular and she says the entry was expensive five to six shillings approximately.

The cinema was called the Gaiety run by a Mrs Boland who would get very cross with the misbehaving younger boys. She recalls some incidents and movies there. There were a very diverse set of movies on show on time.

1:30:57 - 1:39:54

SOCIAL LIFE -

Eileen recalls the need for ID going to dances and how strict it was, she speaks of the 'Band Hall' in Carmody street but it didn't last long.

She also recalls some work related dinner dances for Shell attended by many employees. She doesn't recall much about a library but thinks there may have been one beside the Technical School (Ennis Community College)

Eileen speaks of Binden Street also being almost fully residential.

She recalls going to Lahinch on day trips with her children and also Kilkee. They would often use the West Clare Railway.

Eileen recalls a trip to the USA with Aer Lingus in the Sixties and travelling with a group from Shannon and Limerick for three weeks

.
The Flight took six hours and she recalls the excitement of meeting her relatives and the World fair was on in New York at the time. She recalls also when her relatives visited Ireland they would love to reminisce but could not stay here anymore because America was now their home.