

Elizabeth (Lily) Conroy, (née O'Bryen)

Female

FILE 1 0:00:00 - 0:01:48

BACKGROUND -

Introduction and chat about her health.

Her name is Elizabeth but she's called Lily. Maiden name O'Bryen, (probably descended from the Thomond O'Briens), from nearby Glencolmcille, the last house in the Carron parish and about 2 miles from her present home and farm.

0:01:49 - 0:02:38

FARMING & FAMILY -

Her family has always lived in the area and involved in farming. Her parents were farmers: mixed farming -tillage, grazing, milked cows, kept two pigs and sheep. She had one younger sister who is still alive.

0:02:39 - 0:07:25

SCHOOL DAYS - GLENCOLMCILLE SCHOOL -

Lily went to Glencolmcille school. She walked the half mile to it. She liked school but didn't like history & geography. There was one classroom, divided by a partition for the two teachers. She remembers her female teacher, Mrs Waters from near the school. They did both English & Irish. Families did not bring fuel to the school but had to pay money. School built in 1852, closed in 70s and the OPW took over the school and re-roofed it for bats. Lily left school at 14 or 15. Some pupils continued on to Seamount Secondary in Kinvara. Locals mostly go to Kinvara, Co. Galway 10/11 miles away for shopping, etc. Lily's house is in the

parish of Carron but not far from the Clare-Galway border. Lily received her confirmation in Carron.

0:07:26 - 0:08:29

FARM-WORK AND CHORES -

Her parents were farmers: mixed farming-tillage, grazing, milked cows, kept two pigs and sheep. She worked both in the house and the farm but preferred the outside work. The main chores after school were getting water from the well, milking cows, helping with butter-making and hay. Work was done the hard way but they got on with it. She didn't play sports or have hobbies in her youth.

0:08:30 - 0:09:32

THE BURREN -

The farm is in the Burren, across Knockanes. No talk of the Burren in her youth unlike today. Local roads in poor condition and poorly surfaced.

0:09:33 - 0:11:13

HOUSE DANCES -

She remembers the house dances on Sunday nights. Her house often hosted dances and card-playing. Gramophones were used or occasionally a neighbour with a fiddle (John Joe Howard). They danced the Caledonian 'round the house', learned from their parents and others at the house dances. She went to them from teenage years. None held now, not for many years. Little singing done. Some humming by the men.

More about house dances. Nearest pub was in Carron

More about house dances, fiddle most common instrument, men humming tunes.

0:11:14 - 0:12:13

CARD-PLAYING

Mostly men though Lily did play a little. People played for enjoyment or maybe some money, 6p. Games played-25 or 45.

0:12:14 - 0:12:57

TRIPS/SPORTS/ GAMES/ACTIVITIES FOR PEOPLE

Lily says football and athletics not common in her area. Games she played- guessing and rings. Different era then to now. o. Day trips to beach or coast- mostly Flaggy Shore & New Quay on Sundays- by horse & side-car

No Macra na Feirme, clubs, drama or much GAA outlets locally

Sports days held in Carron in past but died away

Tug-of-war was played years ago

0:12:58 - 0:14:58

CONROY'S FARM & MACHINERY -

Tillage-spuds, turnips, cabbage, oats, corn, wheat to 30 years ago. No milking now-dry stock. No creamery in the area. Their milk collected and taken to Ballinacaragh Creamery, Kilfenora. Horses & ploughs used up to 30/40 years ago. First car-old ford.

Fieldnames- the Long Field & an Irish name. Dogs mostly for farm work not pets.

Farm-hands/workers not common then- people had own family help.

Discussion re: Knockanes in the Burren- privately owned not commonage.

Shooting & fowling common- her father & neighbours shot woodcock.

Farm buildings slated; stone walls common maintained by farmers themselves.

Kept fowl (turkeys & ducks, not geese)-for own use, not sold.

0:19:33 - 0:21:27

STATIONS IN HOUSES & CHURCH -

Stations one up to 20+ years ago. Carron in diocese of Galway/Kilmacduagh. Lily received her Confirmation in Carron. Lent strictly observed-no butter & sugar but potatoes & salt! Latin Mass to 30+ years ago. People listened but didn't respond.

Took a long time to get used to the change from it.

0:21:28 – 0:22:36

TRIPS/SPORTS & GAMES AND ACTIVITIES FOR PEOPLE –

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0:22:37 – 0:23:31

FAIRS & MARKETS –

Attended in Gort or Ennis. No transport – had to walk stock to them. Lily didn't go. Mostly sheep fairs in Kinvara.

0:23:32 – 0:26:28

TRANSPORT –

People used horse & side-car then traps. Her father drove them but the females never drove. She was on the West Clare Railway once from Ennis to Corofin. She was often on trains in recent years to Dublin, etc

Day trips to beach or coast- mostly Flaggy Shore & New Quay on Sundays-by horse & side-car

Remembers first car-Ford owned by local hackney man. Her father didn't have a car. Lily didn't learn to drive. Lily had a bicycle since teenage years. Area now had ECAT bus service-2 routes X1 weekly to Gort & Kinvara.

0:26:29 – 0:27.58

TRAVEL –

She was often on trains in recent years to Dublin. She travelled to England during wartime-by ferry but home by plane. She went to USA once for three weeks (her

daughter spent some years in New York).

0:27:59 – 0:29:00

ST. JOHN'S NIGHT –

Lily Recalls the recalls bonfires.

0:29:01 – 0:29:56

HOLY WELLS –

Well at Glencolmcille-St. Colmcille. Rounds done on 9th June. Unsure if still done now. Lily's also been to St. Colman's well in Kinalla years ago.

0:29:57 – 0:31:31

EMIGRATION –

Common from 1930s to England, America and Australia. Many not return except holidays. Lily considered England but didn't go, not encouraged by her family though she had an uncle in England who encouraged her to go. She has no regrets.

0:31:32 – 0:32:20

CLOTHES –

Lily's aunt made their dresses- she had a sewing machine. Lily did not learn to sewing skills or use the sewing machine from her mother or aunt.

0:32:21 – 0:34:15

MARRIAGE –

Lily married a man, Michael Conroy, Boston/Killeedy area in the 40s and in her 20s. He got the present house & farm from his uncle. Matches were rare in her day but done in earlier times. Their wedding was in the morning at Carron church & followed by a reception in Ennis. Honeymoons were often to Kilkee then and

the custom was to have a hooley with strawboys after the honeymoon which was done for them at her house.

Lily & farming Lily worked on farm & in house, never had a paid job. They did tillage and kept cattle and sheep. They bought a 2nd farm of better land.

0:34:16 - 0:40:13

LIGHT & RADIO -

She recalls getting electricity maybe 50 years ago. Before that, they had cylinder gas light and paraffin lamps.

0:40:12 - 0:41:42

INFORMATION ABOUT HER BIRTH HOUSE

0:41:42 - 0:44:35

HUNTING THE WREN -

Was popular in past but not as much now though done by Michael Cusack's GAA club (by car).

0:44:35 - 0:45:45

STORYTELLING & FOLKLORE -

Mostly by older people about fairies & pisreogs. Lily didn't believe them (doesn't recall any). Her parents didn't tell them but older neighbouring men did.

0:45:45 - 0:46:55

WAR YEARS -

She recalls some effects of the war-rationing, ration books. She says no locals fought in armies. She heard of Black & Tans but had no more information. Lily didn't take much interest in her parents talking about wars or politics. She says no locals went to fight in the WWII.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:02:01

SOCIALISATION/LISDOONVARNA/DANCING –

Lily & husband often went to Lisdoonvarna on day trips & sometimes stayed. She remembers dances waltzes, but not jiving. She danced sets in her younger days. Reference to the open hearth and fireplace in Lily's house.

File 3 0:00:00 – 0:00:48

CUSTOMS –

May Eve-sprinkled Easter water on house, farm & cattle.

Christmas- candles, fowl (kept turkeys & ducks, not geese)