

Flan Garvey

Male

File 1 0:00:00 - 0:16:12

FAMILY BACKGROUND -

Flans mother was from Ennistymon and was born into a family of 17 out of which only 13 survived. They lived on a 34 acre farm which was run by Johnny Murphy. He managed to beat the local landlord, Mac Conmara in the election for the Board of Guardians in Ennistymon. During the Famine years they would have been in charge of the Ennistymon Workhouse.

Flan then talks about his uncle who was a priest and since his brother was involved with the Volunteers he had to immigrate to Tasmania as he wasn't allowed to be a priest in Ireland. This all happened around 1930.

Flan's mother was a teacher and he talks about some of the schools she worked in. This leads to him talking about the bishop at the time, who was Bishop Fogarty. He was a very strong Republican up to the Anglo-Irish Treaty which was when he fell out with de Valera. He invited the local parish priest to visit him. It was during this meeting that they talked about Flan's mother because Bishop Fogarty had heard of her family's strong Republican background. The following year, 1927, confirmation was taken place and it was the normal routine the Bishop and the clergy would adjourn for dinner.

His father came from Firhill, Parteen, over in East Clare. He was the son of a postman who died young from cancer. There were nine children and only one immigrated, his sister who was a nurse and went to America. Another sister of Flan's was a teacher and ended up working in Northern Ireland as it was the only place she could get work. He continues to talk about some more of his fathers siblings. He talks about the time that some of his uncles were meant to play

Flan's uncle Ág on the 1st April 1917 however the game was cancelled due to heavy snow fall. He talks about their return visit which was made difficult by the snow. This leads to them to talk about the winter of 1917 which was a very severe one and even resulted in several people dying.

One of Flan's uncles Frank died at the very young age of 16 due to meningitis. Another uncle, on his mother side of the family, died at 16 too when was shot with the bullet coming through his home window. This event led to the Black and Tans that were involved being convicted. A solicitor named Tommy Lynch took on role of the prosecution and Flan believes that this case was the first of it kinds in the country which resulted in a Black and Tan been convicted.

0:16:12 - 0:23:40

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE -

He goes on to talk about his mother's brother, Francie Murphy, who was shot by the Black and Tans and the two brothers that were active Republicans. Flan says that there was no motivation for his uncle's murder. He believes that the Black and Tans were travelling down the road and when they saw lights they shoot not knowing who was there. His mother would mention this event only twice a year when she would say the rosary for her brother. He recalls his mother saying Francie's name as she was dying.

He talks about other times that he would hear about his uncle's shooting. One place would be at fairs when people would say you're the nephew of Andrew Murphy whose brother was shot.

A man got shot on the day the Black and Tans where leaving Morris' Mills Barracks. There were two men on the hill who were Mikey McCarthy and Thomas Russell. The Tans put a bet on to see which one of them could shoot one of them which resulted in the death of Thomas Russell.

0:23:41 - 0:35:38

THE TROUBLES -

Thanks to his parents' Republican background, Flan was raised to hate the British. This hatred faded away as he grew older. In 1985, Flan was elected into the Clare County Council which was during the height of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He proposed to make a connection with a Council in Northern Ireland in 1988. This resulted in friendships and mutual understandings being created. At first republicans in the North didn't support the creation of this link as they believed that this recognised the current government in the North which they didn't.

In 1956, Flan was only 13 years of age. These were very active times for Republicans but it slowly died away but returned with the creation of the Civil Right Movements.

Flan goes back to the great Republicans that fought during the War of Independence. He says that the British Empire at the time was one of the strongest nations in the world and the main reason they managed to beat them was because of the songs they learned while they were young. When sung they would result in a strong pride in one's nation. Flan says that he has great admiration for any man that's willing to give his life for a cause.

0:35:39 - 0:40:32

THE 1981 HUNGER STRIKES -

This leads to them talking about the 1981 Hunger Strikes in Long Kesh. He talks about Margaret Thatcher, describing her to be cold hearted, not caring about the deaths of the hunger strikers. She didn't have much support amongst the British population either but the only reason she got elected for a second term was because of the Falklands War which returned pride in the British Empire. Meanwhile, Charles Haughey was Taoiseach in the Republic and according to Flan didn't do much to help the hunger strikers either.

Cardinal Tomas O' Fiaich visited Long Kesh during the Dirty Protest. Flan describes the Cardinal as a great man. He started off as a Priest who went on to become the President of Maynooth, then progressing on to the position of Archbishop of Armagh and Cardinal of Ireland.

0:40:33 - 0:43:19

RELIGION -

It was a very strong custom for students getting confirmed would have to be examined first by the clergy. What would generally happen on the day was that the weaker students were brought to the back of the church and examined by the priest. Whereas, the brighter students were brought up to the altar and examined by the Bishop. He tells one story about this occurring.

0:43:20 - 0:45:57

REPUBLICANISM -

Flan's mother appointment to the school was questioned as a result of her Republican background. It wasn't until later on in 1932 did this prejudice start to die away. Flan then talks about another woman who was in a fairly similar situation as his mother. Maynooth was a British built institution and the reason for its creation was because Irish were getting ordained abroad and then returning home. They built this school so they were able to monitor the clergy and excommunicate any Republican members.

0:45:58 - 0:54:13

SCHOOL -

The school that Flan attended was located very near to his home. There were around 70 to 80 students, both boys and girls, in the school with three teachers. Flan then talks about how the students used to have stone fights and he tells a story about them.

0:54:14 - 0:55:21

GAA -

Both Flan and his father were big fans of hurling with football been a very rare following in their parish. It was however very popular in the neighbouring parish of Ennistymon.

When his father was in his final year in St Pats in Drumcondra, he was the captain of the hurling team and they won the intermediate title. He had also won an intermediate title in Clare bringing his total to two.

0:55:22 - 0:58:36

LOCAL TRADITIONS -

Flan says that the great custom of 'killing the pig' is dying out, which also included sharing some meat with your neighbours after you have the pig killed. His father never killed the pig; instead a man named Skerritt would kill the pig. Flan heard the pig screaming once and after that he always left the house when the pig was been killed.

Whenever a cow fell sick, Flan says you would always call for Danny Looney. The vet was only ever called when an animal was fiercely sick. The same was applied if a doctor was called for a person.

1:01:27 - 1:09:23

CHANGES IN SOCIETY -

Flan's father had a car before the war making him the first in the parish to have one. That meant if anyone needed doctor Hillary urgently he would have to go and get him in Miltown Malbay.

In Flan's youth they had the radio which used a wet battery and a dry battery. Other changes included television, phones, electricity and running water.

When he was younger, people would never lock their doors. There is also changes in farming, he says that it will go back to the olden days with people having a small gardens growing potatoes

There are also changes in the social scene. Flan says he didn't have an alcoholic drink till he was 23. This was because it wasn't done when he was younger and they also didn't have the money for it.

Christmas has changed completely because it has become much more commercial. Trick or treating on Halloween is also a very new creation.