

Hugh O'Donnell

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:01:21

HOMEPLACE –

Hugh was born in Ennis. He lived in 28 Steele's Terrace. Before that his parents lived over Foley's Undertakers in the lower end of Parnell Street. Steele's terrace was a row of houses built for artisans. Hugh's father, Art O'Donnell, worked for the council. He was a trained national school teacher but didn't succeed in going back into teaching after the War of Independence and the Civil War. The family affiliation in the Civil War was with the Republicans. Art was in the fever hospital in Ennis, where St Joseph's is now, with typhoid. Hugh thinks he was there during the Civil War

0:01:22 – 0:02:23

ART O'DONNELL –

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0:02:24 – 0:06:30

SIMON O'DONNELL/ANCESTORS –

Hugh says Art's homeplace in Tullycrine was regarded as a headquarters for Republicans. His grandfather was living there at the time. He was Simon O'Donnell. He thinks he was an IRB man in his youth. He had been born a Protestant. Simon's father married a Brew girl who was a Protestant. She is

buried in the Protestant Church in Kilrush and he is buried with the rest of the family in Kilmihil. Hugh mentions that there was a nurse with the surname Brew, from Tullycrine, who worked in Ennis and who was a Catholic. He mentions some of the farms given to his grandfather's siblings.

0:06:31 - 0:11:55

Con Colbert/Conor McDermott/Art O'Donnell -

Hugh's grandfather married Mary McDermott. Her sister was the mother of Con Colbert. They were daughters of Conor McDermott, who was regarded as one of the great teachers of his time. He taught in Cooraclare NS. He was appointed principal of Cooraclare in 1847, at the age of around 20 and he taught there until c.1890s. He is buried in Kilmacduane in a vault and beside the vault there is a Celtic cross, erected by the people of Cooraclare. He was Con Colbert's grandfather.

Art O'Donnell trained as a national school teacher in Cooraclare and then at St Patrick's in Dublin. He sat beside a Donegal man, Patrick O'Donnell, as seats were arranged alphabetically.

Conor McDermott died in the 1890s and Art was born in 1890.

Conor attracted a lot of older pupils to Cooraclare and Hugh says at one time there were over 600 pupils there. There was a leaflet published about Conor in Cooraclare. People enrolled after they had finished in the national school. He prepared them for state exams in the public service. Hugh thinks he got an award called the Blake Carlisle, (Carlisle and Blake) for best teacher in the country.

0:11:56 - 0:17:46

FAMILY -

Art's father Simon had a farm in Tullycrine. There were 15 or 16 in Art's family. Hugh speaks of his aunts and uncles marrying. His uncle Con was in Chicago.

Some of his aunts became nuns. One of his aunts married a man from Ballinruan and they got land from the Land Commission in Braymount in Meath. Pappy Loughrey was his name. The marriage was arranged in the front parlour of Hugh's house in Steele's Terrace.

0:17:47 - 0:18:35

ART AND HURLING MATCHES -

Hugh says that Art attended all the All-Ireland hurling football matches. He would cycle to his sister's in Meath. The only years he didn't go were the War of Independence years. He would write to Croke Park for tickets with a blank cheque for two tickets and he always got them. He stayed in the Royal Exchange in Exchequer Street. He died in 1972. He was on the Cusack Park Committee in the 1940s/50s.

0:18:36 - 0:29:20

ART O'DONNELL -

Hugh says Art was inducted into the IRB by Con Colbert in Dublin. He never spoke much about those years - he was disillusioned by how things turned out. His brothers were also involved. His brother Simon was in Dublin before 1916 at a business college. He was involved with Thomas McDonagh in selling a republican publication. Simon went to America before 1916. He came home as an old man. Frank and Tom, (other brothers) were also involved. Frank was in the Volunteers in Clare in 1916. Art was in Limerick on the Saturday and he brought word back that there was nothing happening. He was arrested and interred in Frongoch. Hugh thinks he was in Ballykinlar Camp at the end of the War of Independence and that the water there might have caused his illness. He was involved in the hunger strikes in Mountjoy. Hugh says Art spent a large proportion of the War of Independence in jail. He thinks he was involved in disarming an RIC constable in Killimer. Hugh speaks of Art teaching on Low Island in the Fergus estuary. He gave up teaching to become a full time organiser for the volunteers. He got a job

as a tax/rates collector for Clare Co Council.

Hugh says Art was a disciple of de Valera, although he voted for Clann na Poblachta once in the 1940s.

Hugh's uncle Willie O'Donnell was a Fianna Fáil councillor in Clare. He remembers going with his father to a function organised for 'Dev' in the 1960s. De Valera would have been in the house in Tullycrine a number of times, probably during the Civil War.

0:29:31 - 0:35:10

FAMILY -

Hugh's grandmother died in 1938. Art became religious in later life. He was a Pioneer and was secretary of the Ennis branch. He would buy and distribute the Pioneer magazine. Hugh's mother was from Sallybank, Truagh, Clonlara. Her maiden name was O'Keeffe. The family would travel to matches in Croke Park from Braymount. They would travel by pony and trap to Maynooth and get a bus to Dublin.

Hugh speaks of his aunt's husband Pappy O'Loughrey, who was related to a Fianna Fáil parliamentary secretary called Seán O'Grady. He speaks of another match made with his aunt Susan and Mick O'Dea from Tullabrack.

0:35:11 - 0:37:03

CON COLBERT -

The night before he died Con Colbert wrote to his grandmother and his aunt Mary, (who was a nun), asking them to pray for him. Hugh has a postcard, (that has to be authenticated), that he thinks was sent by Con to Con's home address in Athea, addressed to his aunt. On the postcard is written, "would you tell Art to get up and do something." Hugh thinks his aunt was visiting the family at the time. Hugh speaks again of his grandmother's influence on Con.

0:04:27 - 0:05:29

SON OF CONOR McDERMOTT

Hugh thinks a son of Conor McDermott was a doctor in Dublin at the time of the Rising and that he was also a member of the IRB. He believes he later practised in Ennistymon

0:05:30 - 0:07:48

CON COLBERT'S FAMILY -

Hugh mentions the surnames Holly and Wolfe that were associated with the Colbert family. He says three of the Holly family became priests and nuns. These would be nephews and nieces of Con. He speaks of Fr Risteard Wolfe, Fr Con Holly and Fr Paddy Holly. Hugh remembers these relations visiting them in Ennis.

0:07:49 - 0:10:47

HUGH'S FAMILY & WORK BACKGROUND -

Hugh went to the Christian Brothers School in Ennis. He then taught there himself. He mentions Guard Brennan and his son Cyril, the Lynchs and the Carrolls in Steele's Terrace. He says Art died at Hugh's house in Shannon. Hugh was born in 1934.

0:10:48 - 0:12:01

ART O'DONNELL - IRA PENSION -

Hugh says Art never applied for an IRA pension. Art's sisters Lizzie & Alice, (Matron at the Mental Hospital in Ennis), applied for medals in his name. Hugh speaks of Art's notebook from Frongoch, which he has donated to Clare Co Council.