

Joe Kenneally 2

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:14:45

HOUSE DANCES –

Joe recalls the house dances in his young days. They couldn't afford to go to hall dances so they went to the house dances. They were held in rural houses. He goes on to describe how the house was organised for the dance. Boys and girls would sit on planks by the wall. Others would be up dancing. The musicians often sat on top of the table. They would keep playing until four, five or six in the morning.

There was a time then when the priests were against the house dances. If there was a dance on you'd have to have scouts on watch out for the priest. If he was seen approaching all the lights in the house would be put out and everyone would run off, boys and girls, through the land. There were certain houses where the dances would be held. He mentions dances in Killoughreys in Ballyfaudeen. The Killoughreys were musicians.

You could have a pay dance or you could have a free dance. The pay dance would be a shilling or one and six. They were usually benefit dances. It was a way of collecting money for people who weren't well off. The men would pay and the women wouldn't. There would be food and minerals at the dances.

Soirees were often held before Christmas. There could be a quarter cask or maybe two half quarters casks in the house and they'd have great nights of music and dancing. It would go on until nearly morning. The sun would be up when they'd be coming home.

Joe talks about the Mummers Dance. People would go out in the Mummers and collect money. The money would be used to buy the provisions for the dance. A

collection was made for the soiree then, so much on every person. The drink and minerals and jam and anything that was needed would be bought with the money. Joe says they would hear about the house dances when they would be visiting other houses on ragairne. They often went on to the house dance without going back home to put on a collar and tie. They often went with strong boots with nails and tips on them. They attended dances in Moher, Luogh and Doolin. He mentions Jimmy Leyden's, Paddy Hillery's, Gout Leyden's Doherty's in Toomullin and several houses in Luogh, Peadar Pheata's Flanagan's and Thomas Tom's.

House dances would also be held when emigrants came home from America or from England. Dances were held in their homes and the neighbours would also organise dances for them.

Joe tells how the room was prepared for the dance. Most of the furniture would be cleared out with the exception of the table which would be used for the musicians. If there was a settle bed in the house the musicians would sit on chairs on top of the bed. The people would stand up around the room but there would be space for dancing. Another room would be tidied up where the girls would get the tea.

DANCING/ MUSIC / SINGING

The Caledonian set was the only set that was danced in the area. It was always traditional music that was played at the dances. Early in the night they might have puss music before the musicians arrived. They would hum for a set. There would be a big crowd at the dance. There was only room for six to dance in any set. They would take it in turns to dance. When they got tired of dancing the singing would start. Anyone who was able to sing would be asked to sing. Joe often sang and hummed for sets at the dances.

Joe recalls the names of many of the musicians, John and Paddy and Thady Killoughrey, Thady played the pipes, Paddy played the violin and John played the timber flute. He remembers Martin Walsh, Dydle Russell in Doonagore, who was

a cousin of Micho's and Pakie and Micho up then in Luogh. There were a lot of concertina players that time.

Mary's mother played the concertina. Micho Joe remembers a dance held at Mary's house for her sister who had come home.

Pakie Russell played there that night. It was the 4th June.

Joe was going to the fair in Kilfenora the next day.

Every house had a flag floor was that time. A pot would be put standing under the fireplace flag. There would be a great sound out of it if there was a good dancer trebling on top of it. Some floors were better than other floors, some floors wouldn't be level and they wouldn't be nice for dancing.

There were dances in Joe's house when Yanks, his sisters, came home from America. The house dances continued after the Dance Hall Act. He mentions the Creamery Dance. It started at a half a crown and then it went up to twelve and six. Everyone in Ennistymon would go there. The people around the town were mighty dancers.

Joe talks about Cross Road Dances in Newtown. The concrete is still there. The locals organised the dances. There would be a collection held for the musicians. Dancers came there from far and near.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:05:47

HOUSE DANCES CONTINUED -

Everyone was welcome to attend the house dances.

There was no stopping anyone. The women would have to be invited. But men would come from anywhere. Joe used to go up to Luogh and over to Moher. There was a welcome for them anywhere they ever went. There was never any 'searbhas' on them. If it was a pay dance you would pay at the door. He relates a funny story about a gamble held at a house dance in Kilshanny. He mentions Driscoll's and Reidy's houses as good houses for dances. An old woman in Reidy's

house taught Mary how to smoke. They often danced a set when they went on 'ragairne'. Someone might hum for a set. Joe says there used to be plenty of dances. They were usually held in Summertime. They were great dances with good music and good dancers. They always enjoyed themselves. Joe recalls that they were great times, they might have been tough in one way but they were happy too.