

John O'Connell 2

Male

File 1 0:00:00 - 0:07:27

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CIVIL WAR -

John says he was the only child in his family and that he was born in 1919 which was during the War of Independence which he refers to as the Black and Tan War. He then talks about the time the tans came into his house looking for his uncle, Jamie Corbett, who was a volunteer at the time. It was John's father who told him this story and he also described the Tans as severely attached to alcohol.

John says that it was common for the British to take peoples horses and he tells one story which involved officials trying to take Keane's horse.

Jamie Corbett, who is mentioned above, was an active member of the IRA along with a lot of other people from the Parish. During the Civil War years he took the side of the Free State.

0:07:28 - 0:18:51

CULTURAL TRADITIONS -

John describes the open hearth fire that was used while he was growing up. People would always sit by it when they were on 'cuaird'.

John mentions a 'rambling house' that was located in the area which was known as O'Halloran's. He says that if you wanted to learn how to set dance, it would have been someone from this family that would have taught you. He continues to give a brief description of this house. Dances would have taken place before the advent of electricity where paraffin lamps were used for lighting. John remembers one other rambling house at that time which belonged to the Keane family.

John talks about some people that would call to his house on 'cuaird' while he was

growing up. Regular activities on these evenings included story telling and dancing.

John's grandmother, Susan Tuohy, used to play the concertina. She learned this from her family who were all musicians. John was four years of age when she passed away but despite this young age he's still able to remember her vaguely. He also remembers her wake.

0:18:52 - 0:25:08

FARM LIFE -

John would normally be given the task of going to the creamery, with an ass been his means of transport. The creamery was founded in 1932 but before this there was a committee created. They were the ones that went about the task of founding the creamery in the village.

Before the creamery was founded, people would have their own churn and separators. John says the creation of the creamery was welcomed. He talks about his earliest memories of going to the creamery and describes what it was like to visit.

Interview breaks here for a cup of tea.

File 2 0:00:00 - 0:07:28

THE ECONOMIC WAR AND IMMIGRATION -

John talks about the Economic War and the how value for cows dropping significantly. During these times people weren't able to sell their cattle so they held on to them instead. Immigration was always high during these times. John speak about the Battery (an area at the western side of Labasheeda), where up to forty young men had employment. He speaks about the changes in the populations as a result of emigration and refers to the building of Shannon Airport.

John talks about the people that worked on the construction of Shannon airport.

0:07:29 - 0:19:23

FARM LIFE -

The farm in which John grew up on predominantly focused on cattle and the production of dairy. All of the cattle on their farm were shorthorn.

While growing up John's family had an ordinary plough which was pulled by two horses. They used a double mower, raker, timber slide and a cart. John continues to describe the hay cart and how it functioned. After this he describes the process involved in making a stack of hay which is referred to as a 'rick of hay' in the interview. During the war years it was popular for people to make their own ropes. These ropes were known as 'sÁgáns' and Matt also refers to them as a spunny yarn which was made from a brown cord

John says that he can remember the threshing and the machine would be operated by different men in the area. John describes what work was involved and how many would be required when working with a thresher.

0:19:24 - 0:24:09

CHANGE IN SOCIETY -

John talks about the time he got his first tractor and some of its uses around the farm. He bought it in Joe Quinn's, which was located in Kilrush. John's son was the one who drove it back to the farm.

After this, John talks about the first time he saw a tractor.

John remembers when different breeds of cattle started to be introduced. People's reaction was neutral, with their main concern been the health of the livestock.

0:24:10 - 0:27:14

THE ROLE OF WOMEN -

John's mother wouldn't be overly involved with the work in the farm with her only chore being milking the cows. This would generally have to be done early in the morning as the milk would have to be brought to the creamery by 8:30am.

Johns talks about two boats that were used as transport to and from Limerick. He remembers the names of these boats which were the 'Vandeleur' and the 'Mermaid'.

File 3 0:00:00 - 0:06:22

CHILDHOOD -

John has always enjoyed working with wood, an enjoyment that can be traced back to his younger childhood years. He talks about a wheel barrow that he made himself for when he was working on the bog.

John remembers a time when everyone would have their names signed onto their carts. He always remembers four Garda's been stationed in Labasheeda at this time. John says that he would have heard stories about T. J Ryan in Cranny but didn't know him personally.

0:06:22 - 0:07:56

FARMING TRADITIONS -

People would sometimes leave a goat with the cattle as it was considered to be good luck.

John says that not a lot would happen in Labasheeda for May Eve. The nearest vet was located in Kilrush, John mentions their names and talks about them briefly.

0:12:20 - 0:15:53

ELECTRICITY -

The interview breaks here as someone calls to the house.

Before the induction of electricity, paraffin lamps were widely used as a source of lighting. During the war years a smaller lamp had to be used which was only a single burner. This wouldn't have given off as much light but candles were commonly used for support lighting.

Gas lamps superseded the use of paraffin lamps in the 1950's.

0:15:54 - 0:33:45

WORLD WAR II -

John remembers hearing about the outbreak of World War II. John talks about where the first wireless was located in the area which was used to get news updates on the War and then on Sundays it was used to listen to matches.

John remembers lord Haw-Haw who was William Joyce from Galway and he took part in the Nazi English language propaganda broadcast called 'Germany Calling'.

Rationing started not long before the war began. John talks about the ration book that everyone was supplied. The price of cattle increased in the closing stages of the war. John talks about northerners travelling to Kildysart for the fair.

File 4 0:00:00 - 0:09:32

FAIRS -

John says that the fairs would always attract a crowd while he was growing up. He talks about some of his experiences from the first time he went to the fair selling a cow. He talks about the process that was involved in buying and selling cattle at the fairs. Kilmihil was one destination frequently travelled to for its fairs. John talks about one German that would travel from Dublin for the fairs in County Clare.

John remembers when the marts started to come in. At that time Ennis was the nearest because Kilrush wasn't finished.

John talks about 'pig mouth' which was when an animal cant intake food correctly.

0:09:33 - 0:11:25

CHANGE IN SOCIETY -

John talks about some of the major changes in agriculture in his lifetime. While he was young 'saving the hay' was a big job however, today, with support of modern machinery, it can be completed in a day.

0:11:26 - 0:14:49

SEASONAL CUSTOMS -

John says that they didn't go to mass on Christmas Eve because the parish only had one priest. Christmas dinner would consist of either a goose or a turkey.

0:14:50 - 0:18:18

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE -

John tells a story about Tom Brown during the War of Independence. One day he wanted to travel to Ennis so he had to go to the Barracks to get a permit which he received. While in Ennis two Black and Tans brought to the Barracks in the town.

0:18:19 - 0:20:53

CHANGES IN SOCIETY AND RELIGION -

John talks about some of the major changes to Labasheeda village and the first one he highlights is the changing of shops over the years.

He then talks about the new chapel that was built in the village. This leads him to talking about his confirmation, briefly saying, that there wasn't anything remarkable about that day and it was Bishop Fogarty that confirmed him.

0:20:54 - 0:31:12

SCHOOL -

John says he would get a substantial amount of homework while he was a student from John Crowley, who was his teacher. His first teacher was James Potter however only a few weeks later he fell sick and passed away. The school went through three teachers prior to John Crowley receiving the permanent position.

John says that he enjoyed athletics and cycling while he was growing up. Every Parish would have their own cycling race with Labasheeda's been held in a field just outside the village. The big race was held on the 29th June. There were also pony races held in those days.

Once John finished National School he had no intention of continuing his studies.

John finishes up the interview talking about modern day emigration to Australia and then how the introduction of machinery resulted in people not been too dependent on the community.