# John O’Connell

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:
FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EVICTIONS –

John's great grandfather, Tomas Corbett, was from Newcastle, County Galway. Then, his grandfather on the O' Connell side was evicted from Kilmurrin and moved to Ballyea. The landlord was Stackpoole. When he got there it was all rocks and bushes and it took three generations to clear. They made big walls out of the stones. All this work was done by hand.

Dan was John's father, Pat was his grandfather and his great grandfather was Dan.

John's grandparents never talk about any evictions in any detail. He goes on to talk about an eviction in Vandeleur's where the walled gardens exist today. He speaks of several landlords that operated in Co Clare

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EVICTIONS –

When asked about the Bodyke eviction, John says he doesn't know anything about them. He returns back to the Vandeleur evictions. John recalls the eviction of the Gallery family. There was five children in the family and the mother was an O' Neill. Her families house was only a couple yards away and if they went in there the O' Neill family would have been evicted the following day.

John talks about his grandfather going to the workhouse in Clifden.

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EARLY LIFE –

John was the only child in his family and he was born in 1918. He doesn't remember anything about the Black and Tans but he remembers been told that the Black and Tans searched his house a number of time and threatened to be burned. His uncle James Corbett was an active IRA and they were looking for him. Anyone between the age of 18 and 25 would get a letter telling them to volunteer.

John briefly talks about the raids the Black and Tans did on his house. He then goes on to give a list of the other active IRA men that served with his uncle. Corbett used to hide in a dairy not far from John's home.

The headmaster in Labasheeda was Crowley and his wife died during the War of Independence. Three Black and Tans waited in the ditch for the funeral to walk by. Tomas says that there was an account of an RIC man in Ruan who helped the IRA when the decided to attack the Barracks. After the ambush he went into hiding and later on three Black and Tans were sent to Kildysart to shoot him but they never did.

John says that there wasn't too much support for the IRA in County Clare. This meant that his uncle Corbett didn't have that many safe houses to go to. He use to say in John O' Neill's barn for a while and then when it got too dangerous to stay there they moved to a dugout. Frank Barrett was the CO of Corbett and he spent some time in Belfast prison with Mick Barrett. He went on hunger strike for 12 to 30 days and overall he only spent a few months in jail. He had to go to hospital after the hunger strike.

There was in big division in County Clare during the Civil War.

There was very little talk about the Black and Tans in the houses during the War of Independence.

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SCHOOL –

John went to school in Labasheeda and since he was an only child he would go with neighbours. They would have to walk a mile to get to the school. John goes on to talk about some of the teachers he had while he was at school.

When asked about his subjects in school, John says he didn't like Irish. There wasn't too much emphasis on Irish. John goes on to talk about the people that he knows that were Irish speakers.

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FAIRS –

John says that he didn't miss many days of school. You wouldn't have a day off when the fair was on. John rarely went to the fairs but his father did. There used to be a big fair in Labasheeda on the 10th June.

The first fair that John went to was at the time of the economic war. Tommy Killeen and himself went to Kildysart with two cows but made no sale on that day. John says that tweed jackets were the main fashion at that time and he talks about buying a top coat. He bought it in Kildysart. The MacNamara's had a big drapery in Labasheeda.

Before the war a lot of business's closed down and anyone that worked with cattle were broke. At the time all you were going to get for a cow was a pound. When the World War II broke out England started to buy the cows again. In the 50's and 60's most people would be returning home with their own cows after a fair. The local creamery made it possible for these farmers to get a little bit of funds. It was located in Labasheeda. The big problem was that there was only one priest in the parish and the creamery would be done at 9:30 in the morning. This meant that farmers would have to go out after the cows early, which was especially hard in the dark winter mornings. It was very popular to use a paraffin lamp for light.

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AN GARDA SIOCHANA –

John tells a story about the Garda calling to his school. He talks about going into the barracks and getting soup. He remembers three Garda, a sergeant and two detectives been stationed there. He goes on to talk about the two detectives.

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FOLKLORE/ CUAIRD –

John says that when he was 12 or 13 years of age the tradition of going on 'cuaird' was dying. He said the reason was because people were just doing it anymore. John himself rarely went on 'cuaird' but people did call to his house in his younger years. Danny Crowley used to call to the house often and was very good at telling stories.

John tells a story about Biddy Early.

He often heard about the banshee and he says that the older people had a strong belief in the banshee.

John talks about very briefly about May Night and the May Bush.

It was believed that the Ballyguiry road used to be haunted. It was because that was all lights and the reason for it was the sulphur in the bog. People use to say that the used to see funerals going out the road. People could hear the horses and the men. After this a story is told about a women been murdered for half a crown. Leatherlip, (Finnucane), was brought to court and hung for the murder.

Speaks of cutting the bushes in a fairy fort.

John says that wakes when he was younger lasted all night. About twenty people would stay the night and the following morning the priest would come to the house to say the mass. There would be a few barrels brought to the house. John remembers the snuff that was handed out to the women. Poteen wasn't available all year around and John never heard of it been made in the area. A lot of it was

made in Connemara. Paddy Fitz used to work up there and he would bring it down.

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WORLD WAR II AND SPORTS –

There were a few cars around before the war and then during the war you weren't able to get the petrol. There was a black market in Kilrush during the war. It operated out of an ordinary shop.

When the war broke out it was all over the newspapers. There was always a constant fear of the war coming to Ireland. Everyone use to have a ration book and you would have a certain amount of coupons of everything. Paddy Blake was the first man to get the wireless.

John always had an interest in sport but there was no football team in the area when he was growing up. He talks about the forming of a camogie team in the parish. They talk about a few matches played at Mac's field. After the game there would be a dance at the store. You would have to pay a certain amount to dance a set.

John talks about the first and only time he was on a boat which was for Frank Touhy's funeral in the 70's.

Speaks of boats in the quay.

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