

Mae Touhy

Female

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:06:53

Early Life

Mae speaks about her early life in Kilbarron. She explains how the house she was in was built for her father and mother by Clare County Council around the year 1910. Her parents John Powell and Margaret Moroney moved into the house with their two year old son before Mae was born. She states that as far as she knew, theirs was the only county council cottage in Kilbarron although there were others in Feakle parish. It was a slate covered house.

Mae describes the inside of the house including the parlour and the Open Hearth Fire. The fire was kept going all day and would still be still going in the morning.

Mae explains about the Greesach (Little coals that you would put on the top and at the bottom of the oven to heat food you would be cooking. Mae explains how everything centred around the open hearth fire.

0:06:54 – 0:12:28

Mae speaks about her grandmother (Mary Powell) who came to live with them when she was an old woman. She had another house which was knocked by the farmer who owned the land so she lived out her life in Kilbarron. Mae states that when people went past the age of seventy, they were considered very old. Old women would wear a 'little black shawl' and sat in the corner. She states that it was expected that you would behave this way.

0:12:29 – 0:13:38

Mae speaks about her father (John Powell). He worked on the roads with Clare County Council. He also had a big garden and kept a few cows on a small bit land.

0:13:38 – 0:24:39

Schooldays

Mae speaks about her time in Annaghneal national school. She speaks fondly about her teacher Mrs. Connellan who later married Dr. MacDonagh in Feakle. She speaks about the different things that Ms Connellan taught the children. Mae explains how in a two teacher school, the second teacher (Mrs. Kelly) was often sick. On those days, Ms Connellan would have to take care of one hundred school children.

Mae states that she loved Irish in school and could write a composition easily. May states that she did not know many older people who could speak Irish. She did recall older people in Feakle using expression like ‘Turam an talu’ – (Give me the thongs). When May left national school, she spent some time in Feakle learning ‘English-Irish’ for a few weeks.

When Mae was leaving on her last summer holidays, the teacher (Ms Connellan) asked her to come back the following year. As a result of being too busy at home she didn’t go back.

Mae recalls how Ms. Connellan taught her how to write letters to different people and how to address them.

Mae recalls herself and three other students (Peggy Dinan, Jim McGrath, Paddy Minogue) in Annaghneal winning an international hand-writing competition. They all got Watermans fountain pens with their names on them.

Mae also recalled how Ms. Connellan took extra care of slow learners in the school before any other teachers were doing it.

0:24:40 – 0:32:39

Biddy Early

Mae recalls what she had heard about Biddy Early and states that they were terrified when they were younger. However, she states that when people came

around the fire, they would mention Biddy Early but that she was not the only topic of conversation. She always heard she was a “small red haired good looking woman”. Mae states that she would have played near the cottage and she had no fear of it.

Mae recalls doing B&B at her cottage in later life. She speaks about various people coming to see Biddy Early’s cottage over the years. She also states that there are still stores going around about music and noise coming from Biddy Early’s cottage in the last two months (Summer 2010). Mae states that Biddy Early is buried in Feakle graveyard.

0:32:40 – 0:33:21

Mae speaks about Brian Merriman and that he is buried near Biddy Early in Feakle graveyard.

0:33:22 – 0:34:31

Mae speaks about the tradition of going on Cuairt.

0:34:32 – 0:38:54

May speaks about traditional music in the area and mentions various people who learnt traditional music from Johnny Allen from Rossanure.

Mae recalled dancing when she was a young girl. She learned how to dance from Mary Daly’s father when she was nine or ten. She states that only very few didn’t know how to dance a set.

Mae speaks about Shrove Tuesday. If someone didn’t get married during Shrove, they would put chalk on their clothes the following Sunday. This became known as ‘Chalk Sunday’.

0:38:54 – 0:40:27