

Mai McNamara

Female

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:10:14

MEMORIES OF HER PARENTS –

Mai speaks about her own mother (Agnes McNamara). Her mother served her times as a dress maker with Miss Guerin on High Street, Ennis. Mai speaks about her mothers training and how they made clothes for ‘quality’. She speaks about her mother family.

She speaks about her father (PJ McNamara) who ‘was always mixed up in politics’. He was a member of the National Volunteers and the Labour Party. She mentions her grandfather who fought in the Boer War. Mai speaks about the social and economic conditions in her father’s time and states that people were paid very little in Ennis and that Protestants owned most of the main businesses.

Her father had two small businesses in Ennis, a butchers and coal business. She heard that they had been opened to fundraise for the Labour Party. She recalls visting one of the businesses as a very young girl.

Her father contested the First Dáil election as a member of the Labour Party. He finished second to Eamon de Valera. He was then declared bankrupt and so could not run for election again. Her father then became a Labour organiser. She states that her father spent most of his time looking after other people rather than them. In the early 1930s, her parent and children had to move in with their grandparents, because her father could not provide enough to keep them there.

0:10:15 – 0:13:24

TUBERCULOSIS TB –

Mai speaks about Tuberculosis epidemic in Ennis. She lost two sisters to TB who

were both in their early twenties. She recalls visiting her sister Eileen in Dublin when she was dying with TB. She (Eileen) was brought home to Ennis. When she was coming home, she asked to be taken to Edenvale as opposed to been taken home to her family. She then died in Edenvale at the age of twenty-one.

0:13:24 - 0:22:46

STEELE'S TERRACE, ENNIS -

Mai speaks about her memories of Steele Terrace, Ennis. She describes Steele's Terrace in the 1930s. She states that you could see the Broadford Hills from Steele's terrace. She speaks about the arrival of electricity into their home at Turnpike, Ennis. She states that her grandfather was progressive and made changes as things developed. Her grandfather worked in health insurance across the country. She describes her grandfather's house and the various things that he built over the years. She recalls a picture of a constable that was in her grandfather's house. She speaks about auctions that were held in the wake of the British leaving Ireland and the landlord houses that were vacated. Her father used to go to these auctions and buy some items.

0:22:47 - 0:25:38

THE TURNPIKE -

Mai recalls a Mrs. McNamara in the Turnpike, who was married to Joe McNamara from Dublin who was a tailor. She speaks about some of her neighbours in Turnpike that she recalls. She also recalls her memories of Ennis National School, which was then known as 'the new school'.

0:25:39 - 0:31:26

THE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY -

Mai speaks about the household economy at the Turnpike. Her grandfather had a garden, so they had their own vegetables. She recalls people coming in from the country to sell butter and eggs and names some of the people who came in to sell.

She speaks about the various markets and items for sale including material for thatching. Some of the sedge was gotten from the riverside at Doora. She mentions the Maher family, who were the thatchers in Ennis. All the houses in Turnpike beside her grandfathers were thatched.

0:31:27 – 0:35:43

IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE –

She speaks about what she heard about the Irish War of Independence. She speaks about an incident when Paddy Hogan, who was on the run in Limerick. Her father went to Limerick to pick up Hogan in his car. He was then brought back to their house on the Turnpike, where her mother was told to go and borrow a pump for a bike. Out of thirty houses in the Turnpike, she went to the Sheehans, where the man of the house was an RIC Constable. She states that Hogan then went to the Ailwee caves. The following morning the Black and Tans took her father out at 6.00am to Shaughnessys (close to the Asylum). Her father was beaten and stripped in order to get information on Paddy Hogan, which he did not offer.

0:35:43 – 0:37:09

FIANNA FÁIL ELECTION VICTORY OF 1932 –

Mai recalls the election victory of Fianna Fáil in 1932. She remembers seeing Eamon de Valera being brought into Ennis down the 'New Line' (Kilrush Road). She recalls White horses and men with turf on fire on sticks.

0:37:10 – 0:41:21

EXECUTION AT ENNIS –

May speaks about the execution of Shaughnessy, O'Mahony and Quinn. Mai used to go on trips with Katie Quinn who was the aunt of Christy Quinn. She speaks about an incident when Christy Quinn went through Dr. Considine's house to get to say goodbye to his aunt, who lived across the road from them. The Quinn's

mother died when the boys were young. Some of them were raised by Katie Quinn and two others were sent to an orphanage in BÃ³thar BuÃ³ in Limerick.

She speaks about the Morrissey's in Ennis (Gretta used to teach dancing), who may have been a sister of the young Morrissey boy who was accidentally shot by Black and Tans in Ennis.

0:41:22 – 0:48:09

ERNEST DE REGGE –

May speak about the arrival of Ernest de Regge into Ennis. Mai speaks about Mrs Nono, who played the organ. However, Bishop Fogarty brought in Ernest de Regge from Belgium. The old organ was taken out and sold it to the Star of the Sea church in Sandymount. Fogarty then gave the old bishop's palace (Ashline) on the Kilrush road. De Regge was known as 'buzzier'.

May speaks about the Carmody Hotel disaster in which Ernest de Regge died. Mrs de Regge went back to Belgium with a large family.

0:52:49 – 0:55:38

SCHOOL IN CLIFDEN –

Mai speaks about going to school for six months in Clifden. There was a strong focus on domestic science at the school. Her father had sent her there to learn Irish but after six months, she returned home

0:55:39 – 1:09:37

SEASONAL CUSTOMS –

Mai speaks about the May bonfire held in Turnpike in Ennis. She states that all the old customs were observed in the Turnpike. There were a number of bonfires in different areas. When the fire was ready, the children would take embers to local houses and receive a small payment in return.

Mai states that the Wren in the town was different to that in the country. She remembers men dressing up from Steele's Terrace and going out around the country. She states that when she was young, it was just the boys in town.

She speaks about celebrating Christmas in Turnpike and recalls decorating the house. She recalls finding a frill of beads in the convent in Spanish Point which she used to decorate during Christmas.

She recalls receiving a Christmas box from the shops that you dealt with during the year, which would have a red candle for Christmas. She speaks about going to midnight mass and that there was a big fry cooked when they came home from midnight mass.

Mai speaks about Easter. She said that there as a belief that if you got up before 6.00am you would see the sun dancing. They would then have competition to see how many eggs you could eat. She recalls going to mass at Ennis cathedral with her grandfather for holy week. Her grandfather used to bring her to the 'pictures' after mass. The pictures changed three times a week. Her grandfather brought her to the 'Seven House'. She speaks about going to see 'The Invisible Man'.

She speaks about going to see the silent pictures (Cinema). She states that the first 'talky' was Sunny Boy, which was the first 'Talky' in Ennis at the rink, which is the entrance to Dunnes Stores today. She recalls the smell of 'An evening in Paris' a popular perfume at the time.