Mary Dollard

Female

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:09:06
GRANDPARENTS (THE MURPHYS OF MAHERANTASKA) –

Mary speaks about her paternal grandfather (Johnny Murphy) and recalls the day he died in 1929. She recalls her uncle Paddy Leahy from Inagh. She speaks about various members of her father's family. She states that her father (Tom Murphy) was on his way to America as a young man but decided not to go at the last minute. His brother John went to America in his place. Speaks about her uncle John hearing the news that his father had died at home in Maherantaska.

Mary describes her grandfather's personality. States that he was great neighbour as was her father and her current brother is now. States that her grandfather's wife died at the age of 40 when he was 12. Later, Mary's mother died when she was 11.

Speaks about her uncle Michael Murphy and a story about one night when he and his wife were leaving the Murphy home. Michael was closing 'The Red Gate' leaving Murphy's road when his horse got spooked by something. Michael's wife was on the side car when this happened and Mary states that this woman was never the same after that night. As a result, a belief developed that this spot on the road was haunted. Mary also states that there was a fairy fort close to the road.
She says that the local people wouldn't touch it. An uncle of Mary's who had returned from America cleared part of the fort and had a lot of his trouble after.

States that her grandfather and father believed and adhered to these customs. An old saying that Mary recalls them saying was 'ná déan nÃ³s, ná bris nÃ³s'. (Don't make or break a custom).

Mary says that all of her father's siblings went to America.

0:09:07 – 0:13:44
FATHER (TOM MURPHY) AND MATERNAL LINE –

Mary speaks about the family farm. She says that the Harans were hired to help her father on the farm. She states that these people were treated like members of the family.

Mary says that her grandmother was Mary McMahon from DunÃ³gan. States that there were two McMahon families in DunÃ³gan. States that her father was asked to marry one of the McMahons after his wife had died but that he would not. She recalls hearing a rumour that her father was to marry again. She later received a letter from her father stating that 'he had one wife and that she was too good to be left with me and I won't marry another'.

Mary states that there was great respect for women and particularly widows. Speaks about the character of men of her father's generation.

Mary speaks about her commitment to her father that she wouldn't not take a job or settle down until all her siblings were settled in jobs.

0:13:45 – 0:15:25
HER GRANDFATHER'S GENERATION –

Mary speaks about the honesty and industriousness of her grandfather's generation. Mary mentioned about her grand uncle Michael Murphy who was known as a cow doctor.

0:15:25 – 0:18:54
FAMILY TRAGEDY –

Mary speaks about a number of deaths in her family. She recalls the death of her brother Joe who accidently fell into the open fire when he was 12 years old. He

was brain damaged as a result. He died three years later.

Mary speaks about Joe when he was a child. States that he wanted to be a priest. She recalls minding Joe when she would be home from Dublin where she worked in the Civil Service.

0:18:55 – 0:35:20
HER MOTHER'S DEATH –

Death of her mother (Mrs. Murphy nee Leahy)

Refers to the death of her mother (14 February 1933) and the effect this had on her father.

Mary speaks about the day her mother died. Her mother was 36 years old and was six months pregnant with Mary's youngest sister. Mary was 12 years old. She describes in great detail the morning her mother died. She describes the way in which the community worked in the immediate aftermath of her mother's death. Speaks about being sent to one neighbour (Miko McMahon) to call for the Doctor (Hillery), to another to call for the priest (Father Caher). She was then sent to alert two local midwifes.

Mary describes how the Priest and Doctor treated her mother and the immediate aftermath.

Speaks about Fr. Cather and describes his personality. States that he was very jovial and was interested in poetry and that the children really liked him. Mary recites part of 'A Chieftan to the Highlands bound' which Fr. Caher enjoyed. Fr. Caher was from East Clare and was reputed to have gifts of healing. She describes how upset Fr. Caher was when Mary's mother died.

She speaks about Maria Leary and Marge Brown (midwives) who later went into the room and how upset they were after finding Mrs Murphy dead. Mary

describes how her mother had given birth to her baby before passing away. The midwives only found the baby when moving her mother's corpse. The baby was thought to be dead but survived.

Speaks about her uncle cycling to Connolly to get a wire sent to her mother's parents in Inagh.

Mary speaks about 'going for the wake' to Miltown. She explains the way in which the local community worked when preparing the wake.

Mary remembers being sent to the local school in Doolough to tell the teacher (Tim Moloney) and to bring home her younger siblings (John, Michael, Jim and Tom). Speaks about Mrs. O'Doherty, the other teacher.

Mary recalls meeting one of the schoolchildren who was in the school that day and later became a priest. In a conversation Mary had many years later, Fr. John Doohan recalled the teacher bringing the children together to pray for her mother. While they were saying the rosary, McMahon's cock crew three times which, was an extraordinary thing for the daytime!

0:35:21 – 0:40:31
STORY OF A GHOST NEAR THE HAND CROSS –

Mary recalls a story about her father going to Ennis on horseback. It would take four hours to go to Ennis. He would usually travel with Gerry McMahon, his neighbour.

She describes how her father was coming back by Kilmaley near to 'The Hand' near dusk with a lantern. He saw a man standing on the roadside in the distance. The man asked for a lift which her father obliged. The man's name was Dan but while he was giving him a lift he disappeared. When her father arrived home he was told that the man he had seen was dead! The man's surname may have been Greene.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:04:42
YOUNGEST SISTER NORA –

Mary speaks further about the death of her mother. She mentions the child her mother had prematurely given birth to at the time. The baby's maternal grandmother came down from Inagh and took the baby back to Inagh. The baby, (Nora), survived and was raised in Inagh. Mary says that Nora was born with weak lungs. It was a bad flu her mother had which accelerated the birth. The remedy at the time for flu was boiling water cooled with milk. Nora lived to the age of 67.

0:04:43 – 0:26:37
MOTHER'S WAKE –

Mary explains the process of the wake and recalls her own mother's wake. Usually two men and one woman would be sent to 'go for the wake'. Tobacco, drinks, whiskey, ginger ale and port. A barrel of stout was also very important. Mary states that it was expected to have a full barrel and if you didn't the comment might be 'all they had over him (the deceased) was a half cask'. Mary states that cakes would be also bought as the family were too busy to bake. Garryowen plug, cigarettes, clay pipes, snuff, jam and marmalade would also be bought.

Mary describes how the house was arranged for the wake.

Mary describes how the children were put into the smallest room in the house and told to keep quiet. Mary describes how the wake went on all night and that the coffin was only brought in before the funeral as there wasn't enough room.

Mary refers to her father's ability to understand Latin. Speaks about the Latin mass. Her father was a mass server (alter boy). He would later be sent for as he was the only man locally who could serve the Latin mass.

Mary speaks about some customs associated with the funeral. She states that no member of the person's immediate family could carry the coffin. Speaks about a local woman Mary Cotter who had her funeral arranged before she died.

Mary states that the tradition of keening had died out in her area when her mother died. The habit (or shroud) was still used when her mother died. She states that two local women were called on to do this.

Mary tells a short story about a man between 'The Hand' and Miltown involving her brother Paddy. At a wake they played a trick by propping up the corpse and putting the Clare Champion in his hands. When one of the men came in to the house he got a fright when he saw the corpse.

0:26:38 – 0:35:05
THE FAIR –

She recalls her father going to the fair with Palkie Murphy and Tommy Greene. They'd leave at 2.00am to go the fair in Ennis which was fifteen miles away.

The children would have to stay up to wake the men at 1.00am. They'd have a big breakfast and then head off to Ennis.

Mary speaks about how people survived from farming. She describes the garden and how her father would sow and sell seed potatoes.

She also states that her father would cut, save and sell creels of turf. He would get 30 bob (Â£1 and 10 shillings) for one creel of turf. He would then buy whatever messages he needed for the family with the money from the turf.

Describes the self sufficiency of the home.

0:45:56 – 1:00:26
FARM LIFE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CHILD –

Mary speaks about the responsibility that she took on at the age of 10 when her mother died. States that her aunts would come to help in the years after her mother's death.
Mary speaks about her grandfather Jim Leahy from Inagh. She describes how he died at the age of 73 (July 1933) just months after his daughter's death. He had refused to go to bed and Mary believes that he died of shock and a broken heart.

She speaks about learning to do all the chores at home. She milked ten cows every day as her father was too busy with other jobs. She also did the cooking for all the family.

Mary states that in 1933 there was an epidemic of appendicitis in the country. She states that a girl who was working with them (Tessie Leary) got appendicitis. States that the local teacher's son got it also. He had been rushed to all the local hospitals but they were all full and the boy died on the way to Dublin.

Mary had permission not to be at school until 9.30am due to her responsibilities at home. She outlines the jobs she would have to do before going to school in the morning. They had a lot of chickens and would sell some of the eggs to generate money for the house. Recalls a man called Joe Sexton who would come in a van and would have all sorts to sell to local families. You could pay for these items with eggs.

Mary states that the only things you would have to buy were tea, bread soda, flower, salt and sugar. Everything else was grown at home. Recalls making sugán chairs and washing clothes.