Mary McDonagh

Female

FILE 1 0:00:00 – 0:06:34
CURES –

Mary speaks about medicine in her family. For a flu, her mother and grandmother used red lemonade and two 'aspros' (depending on age), which would be used to sweat the flu out.

A 'dockum' leaf was used for a cut.

Her grandmother and mother passed down a lot of these medicines. Mary speaks about the cure for warts, which involved finding a black snail, rub it on the wart three times, bless yourself, stick in on a blackthorn bush and when it decayed the wart would have decayed.
Mary tried this herself with her first grandchild and it worked.

Carrageen moss (boiled) or goat's milk was used for the whooping cough.

The ink from a biro was used as a cure for the wasp sting.

Mary states that cures of the travelling community were not passed on to the settled community as far as she knew.

Speaks generally about other ailments including a bad flu which was cured with a glass of brandy and sugar (boiled) and go to bed.

Mary did not ever hear about any tradition among the Travellers about witches or wise women like Biddy Early.

0:06:35 – 0:08:10
CAMPING ON THE ROAD –

Mary states that travellers had a hard time in the past when they were camped on the road. However, she stated that they never got a cough or a cold and that being out in the fresh air was good for them. She felt that the younger travellers were hardier in the old days.

0:08:11 – 0:10:44
HER FATHER –

Mary speaks about her father who was a tin smith. Her grandfather was also a tin smith. She does not know anything about her great grandparents.

She explained how her father would knock on farmers doors and look for work. The toolbox used by her father was called a 'budÃn' (by the settled people).

0:10:44 – 0:12:56
TRADITIONS –

Mary talks about the traditions of the travellers and that her parents or grandparents did not try to encourage them to keep their traditions as they always felt they would be on the road and that they would never settle down.

She feels that some people want to keep the traditions going but that a lot of travellers want to forget about the traditions of the travellers and settle down.

0:12:57 – 0:14:18
SOCIAL GATHERINGS –

When a group of travellers would camp, the women would sit around one fire to chat and the men would sit around another. The women would talk about children and the men about fairs or horses.

0:14:18 – 0:16:57
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0:16:57 – 0:17:53
TRAVELLER LANGUAGE –

Mary speaks about the traveller language 'Cant' and provides some examples that she learnt as an adult.

She states that the children would have no idea what these words.

0:16:57 – 0:17:53
OLDER PEOPLE –

She states that there were always some storytellers but doesn't remember them. The older people in the travelling communities were always well respected.

Speaks about Maine Hutchins in County Offaly (where Mary was from) who was 102 when Mary was a child.

0:17:53 – 0:20:11
SPEAKS ABOUT TRAVELLER FUNERALS –

The wagon, clothes and belongings of the deceased were always burnt. A wake would have been held sometimes out in the open with an open fire.

0:21:30 – 0:22:39
FAIRS –

Only the men went to the fairs. Mary went to the fair in Ballinasloe once.

0:22:40 – 0:24:31
RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN/MATCHMAKING –

She also speaks about matchmaking in the travelling community, where the man and woman were matched up by the parents even if they didn't like each other.

Mary states that there was no dowry involved in the matchmaking.

0:24:22 – 0:27:00
TRAVELLING DAYS –

Mary speaks about her travelling days around the country. She was born in Tullamore, Offaly and travelled around most of the country. She then married her husband in County Clare. Her husband was born in the County Home (Now St. Josephs).

She came to County Clare first when she was 13.

After marrying they travelled all of Clare and down around the south of the country.

Speaks about 'The old people' spoke about how the travellers came to be on the road.

0:27:01 – 0:27:34
HOLY WELLS –
Speaks about how the travellers always went to the Holy Wells in the places they stayed. They would conduct the rituals at the wells.
States that religion was very important to the Travellers