Michael Kelly

Male

File 1 00:00 – 4:19
EARLY LIFE ON LOW ISLAND –

Michael was born on Low Island in 1938. He describes the house he was brought up in. He says his family employed workers to cut seaweed etc – they mainly worked for their food. He recalls that all the baking was done over the fire. His mother died when he was seven. His father and uncle looked after him then. He says that there were five families on the island and he names the surnames.

04:20 – 8:30
SCHOOL ON LOW ISLAND –

He says the teacher, Ms Stack, had two nephews (Connellys) from Ballylongford that stayed on the island to make the numbers up in the school. She stayed with his aunt.
He thinks that the teacher stayed in part of the school at one time. He remembers that Ms Freeman from Newmarket came for 12 months. John Stack came after Ms Stack (possibly a nephew). He mentions Pat Cahillane, retired principal of Caherdavin school in Limerick. He says it was the first school he taught at. He was there for six months and then went to Kildysart school. He says that three Ginnane and two Garry children came to the school from Horse Island.

08:31 – 10:50
FOOTBALL –

Michael recalls that they were going to play against Kildysart at football one day but there was a storm. He says it was very hard to get a football but the chairman of Kildysart football club managed to get them a football on account of them being

on an island. He says it was a great novelty for them. He speaks about the changing times and how footballs are so easy to get now.

10:50 – 16:31
ENTERTAINMENT –

Michael says his mother Sarah Garry was from Horse Island. His father was John Joe Kelly from Low island. He thinks they may have met at a house dance. He recalls a party one night on Canon Island for a nun professed (McMahons). He says they were very musical on the island. His aunt Mrs Lillis played the melodeon. His father played the mouth organ. Michael says he played the accordion himself. He was self -taught. He recalls travelling to Carrigaholt for a Wren dance.

He says they formed a céilÃ band called the Abbeyview. Some of the Dangan Castle céilÃ band were in it. He mentions Michael Costello, George Chambers & Jack Murrihy. They would practice at Chamber's in Kildysart. He says Councillor Seán Keating from Kilbaha brought them back to Carrigaholt in an old car. They didn't leave the house in Cross until 10am.

16:32 – 24:15
O'GRADY'S ISLAND –

Michael speaks of his father doing the post. He did it for forty years.
He says he thinks the Larkins lived on O'Grady's Island at one time and then he thinks Kavanaghs lived there after that. He says that Michael O'Grady's grandfather bought it but that it was a Michael Tuohy from Low Island that had it before that. He says he thinks it was a relative of his maybe an uncle, John Tuohy, who saved Sellafield (Windscale) from being blown up in 1956. He says he was related to the Callaghans. He saw him on the Discovery Channel.
He speaks of the Tuohy's of Low Island.

24:16 – 25.25

ENTERTAINMENT –

Michael says they would visit each other houses on the island. He says there would often be a gamble. They would often say there was more life on the island than on the mainland.

25:26 – 29.22
RIVER PILOTS –

Michael speaks of his grandfather Michael Kelly who was a river pilot. He would meet the boats at Carrigaholt. He says Downey's in Carrigaholt would bring the pilots out to the ships. He said the boats would bring coal to Kildysart. He says his father would sometimes take the ships to Clarecastle with another man, Michael Tuohy. He says Michael then got a pilot's licence.

29.23 – 34.40
THE LAND –

Michael says they tilled the land for potatoes and corn. He says they brought quarried stone from canon Island to Kilrush on lighters. He says they brought seaweed to Kilrush for manure for gardens. They would often bring back turf in return. Most of the land was tilled. He recalls the butter that his family made. He remembers the killing of the pig. He speaks of eating geese.

34.41 – 36.41
EASTER –

Michael recalls getting an Easter egg and dropping it on Canon Island.

01.52 – 09.29
DANCES –

Michael says they would travel to Kildysart to dances in the Parochial Hall. He remembers one night travelling by bicycle with a friend in search of a dance and

ending up in Cooraclare. He recalls hearing of dances at Micko Kanes at Lachnashannagh Cross. He says the hall in Kildysart was one of the first halls in the county. He recalls John Donnellan in Kilrush saying that he would come to Kildysart every St Stephen's night (early 1900s) and there would be cars in the village from five counties but no locals as you had to have a special pair of expensive shoes to go to the dance.
He says one man from Low Island (Martin Tuohy) and one man from Canon Island (Michael Hastings) had the shoes.

09.30 – 14.29
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ESTUARY (LIMERICK) –

Michael speaks of travelling with John Donnellan on the Kilimer ferry to Foynes to a Volkswagen agent (Paddy Kinnane). He says the people of Low Island would go across to Ballystein and Askeaton. He says they had relations there. He speaks of them coming to school on Low Island from Beeves Rock. He describes the lighthouse.

14.30 – 21.41
LEGENDS / FIELDNAMES –

Michael says he thinks there was a causeway between Canon Island and Low Island. He says ghost stories were told by people on the cuaird. He speaks of the blessed tree on Low Island and the legend associated with it. He says the field is called 'Pol na gCailÃnÃ' He mentions other fieldnames including 'Bun na Sceilpe'; 'Rinn Hastings'; 'The Millean'; 'Carraig na hAirgead'; 'ClÃ³n na Drusc'; 'Uisce Bheál'. He also mentions the islands off Low Island – Burgers, Blackthorn North and South. His family had a small island (Tine Island) and had to pay rates on it. He says the foreshore licence for seaweed was more valuable than the land.

21.42 – 35.56
THE KELLYS / GARRYS –

Michael thinks the Kelly's might have originated in Ballingarry in Limerick. He recalls hearing a faction fight across the water in Limerick. He thinks the Garrys from Horse Island might have originated from around Crovraghan on the mainland. He speaks of the Garry family in Ennis. They had a hardware shop where the Derrynane use to be. He says they owned Fort Fergus as well. He speaks of meeting distant relations from America at a funeral. He recalls taking a Michael Kelly from Chicago University to visit Low Island. He doesn't think they were related. He describes the house of the other Kelly family on the island. He speaks of others trying to trace their roots on Low Island. He remembers an old man, Miko McMahon from Canon Island.

File 3 00.00 – 5.58
POLITICS / MEDIA –

Michael says they didn't bother much with politics on the island. He says Mickey Nash on the Kerry Rd would charge the radio batteries. He recalls listening to 'Dinjo' on the radio. He says in the 1960s they had small televisions run by a generators on the island. He says they had oil lamps followed by bottled gas.

05.59 – 6.55
BIGGEST CHANGE –

Michael thinks people had more time for themselves in the past.

06.56 – 9.47
MOVING FROM ISLANDS –

Michael mentions a few names form Coney Island. He says people started to move to the mainland in the early 1970s. He says when he started as postman he did the islands first.