

Micheál O'Connell

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:04:32

EARLY LIFE –

Micheál talks about his father (Tim O Connell) and grandfather who were both born in Lackamore. Speaks about his own family and his mother whose surname was White.

Speaks about life on the farm which he describes as slavery. Milking the cows every morning and evening.

Speaks about going to national school in Moy where he was taught by Richard Dixon who was an Inagh man living in Lahinch. After finishing in Moy he went to Ennistymon secondary school for a few years. He and his siblings cycled to school each day. There were six locals who went to Ennistymon together.

0:04:32 – 0:08:46

ELDERLY NEIGHBOR/ PEOPLE CALLING –

Recalls the oldest man he knew when he was a child, Tull O Brien.

During the winter, two or three would call every night. He spoke about Joe Dick who was good local storyteller.

There was also a gramophone which Micheál's grandfather bought which meant there were a lot of people calling. This was followed by a radio which attracted more people to come and listen every night. This would finish at around 9.00pm.

Speaks about the open hearth fire.

Speaks about his grandfather (Micheál) who was good storyteller. He died when

he was 100.

0:08:44 – 0:13:29

THE FAMINE/WAKES –

Speaks about his grandparents memories of the Famine locally around Ennistymon. They went to Ennistymon for some flour twice a week.

Talks about his teacher, (Richard Dixon), who told them about the landlords and the Land War.

Speaks about his grandfather's wake. A half barrel of stout was brought to the wake. The priest never came to the wake.

His grandfather always smoked a clay pipe (d'ÁidÁn). Micheál often stole a 'd'ÁidÁn' from his grandfather's pocket.

Mary speaks about snuff at wakes and how addictive it was. There were local women, who would be very agitated if they did not have snuff.

Mentions how there was always an old grandfather in every house.

0:13:59 – 0:15:51

KILLING THE PIG –

Talks about killing the pig at home. There was a certain man who killed the pig in the area for the winter. Micheál himself often killed a pig with a spear and a hammer. He describes the process including the 'keef' (half barrel) where the pig was thrown after being killed

0:15:51 – 0:17:30

THE FAIR –

Speaks about going to the fair in Ennistymon. Going to the fair 'was tough'. Talks

about bringing the cattle to the fair and haggling with cattle dealers.

0:17:30 – 0:18:35

HAYMAKING –

Speaks about making and bringing in the hay. Talks about a Meitheal coming together to bring in the hay. Micheál describes making the hay as child's play if you got the weather for it.

0:18:35 – 0:19:40

CUTTING THE TURF –

Describes cutting the turf at Tom Marrinan's. Micheál hated footing turf as did his own father Tom.

0:19:40 – 0:20:27

WORKING IN THE GARDEN –

Micheál's father kept the garden and Micheál kept it afterwards as long as he was able.

0:20:27 – 0:21:28

FISHING/ PASTIMES –

Talks about fishing when he was younger and describes making his own rod. He fished a few hours on a Sunday evening.

0:22:27 – 0:24:12

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS –

Speaks about how men told stories about the banshee etc. to try and frighten young lads.

Speaks about May Eve and his grandmother bringing in the May Bush every year.

It was always brought in.

Micheál felt that his people did not believe strongly in the tradition but that they kept it going.

0:24:12 – 0:27:00

CHRISTMAS AND STEPHEN'S DAY (THE WREN) –

Speaks about Christmas and how it has changed over the years.

Speaks about going on the Wren and the soirée which followed. A lot of concertina players in the area at the time. Michael mentions that his grandmother played the concertina until she was nearly 100. The soirée was held in a house that was given to them for the night.

0:27:00 – 0:48:15

WAR OF INDEPENDENCE/ BLACK AND TANS –

Michael speaks about what he heard about the Rineen Ambush including a story about Ignatius O'Neill being carried to Moloney's House close by in a creel.

Speaks about other injured men who were taken to safe houses in the area. These men were looked after by Dr. Michael Hillery. Talks about the aftermath of the Rineen Ambush.

Michael speaks about a British soldier who was shot and buried locally. The soldier was sent out to summons a man called Tuttle. When returning to Ennistymon he went to see a girl in Lahinch. He was spotted by local IRA men and was later court-martialed, shot and buried locally. It was said locally that the man who shot him (Steed Gallagher or Pat Lynch) died next to the spot that the soldier was shot.

Speaks about men who later opened the grave in later years to establish if it was true or not.

Speaks about his father's memories of the War of Independence. He states that in years afterwards, people didn't want to speak about the events in the locality.

Speaks about the shooting at Canada Cross (Miltown Malbay) when Patrick Hennessy was killed.

Speaks about how tough it was for a man with a wife or family when the British soldiers could have shot your child on any day.

States that there were not a lot of commemorations for the men who died in the years after.

Micheál was at the opening of the Rineen Monument. He drove Jim Hennessy. (Mary produces a photo of the unveiling of the monument at Rineen). Michael lists a lot of the men in the picture and discusses some of them.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:06:50

COMMEMORATIONS/ LDF –

Speaks about being in the firing squad at many of the military funerals for local IRA men. Micheál was a member of the Local Defence Force at the time (during WWII)

Speaks about joining the LDF and got 'a good overcoat and a pair of boots. These were good for going 'on Ragarne'.

Speaks about training they received at the local school two nights a week.

0:06:50 – 0:08:28

WWII RATIONING –

Speaks about rationing during World War II. The blackmarket in Ennistymon (Gus Linnannes).

0:08:30 - 0:13:03

ELECTRICITY -

Speaks about the arrival of electricity and Donie White who worked on putting in electricity in the area. States that his father and the other people were delighted.

Mary speaks about the change for women when electricity came in.

Speaks about how the electrification resulted in a lot of work for people from Lahinch and Miltown.

0:13:03 - 0:15:40

EMIGRATION -

Speaks about emigration to England and America.

Speaks about his brother Seán who emigrated to England and who came back and died in Ireland.

0:15:40 - 0:18:07

CHANGES -

Speaks about his own age and the major changes he has seen. States that people today don't work hard and that machinery has replaced tough work.

0:18:07 - 0:22:03

CURES -

Talks about local people who had cures in the locality including for horse bleeding and ringworm. He did not give information on who had the cure for horse bleeding.

Thomas Mee cured a lot of people of ringworm.

States that people looked after their own ailments and that they did not go to the

doctor often.

Mary states that Micheál's grandfather used to use a cobweb to heal bad cuts.

0:22:03 - 0:24:45

WEST CLARE RAILWAY -

Mary and Micheál speak about the West Clare Railway. They could hear it every morning and evening from their house.

They speak about the closing of the West Clare Railway and how the sleepers and other parts were sold to make haysheds and roof cabins locally.

0:24:45 - 0:26:18

STRAWBOYS -

They speak about Strawboys and how it is still maintained locally. Micheál would often walk five miles to go on strawboys.

Mary states that you would know the boys from their dancing style.

0:26:16 - 0:33:18

RAGAIRNE / CUAIRD -

Speaks about going on 'ragairne'. Mary states that it is the same as going on 'cuaird'.

Mary and Micheál talk about the Irish that was spoken in the local area. Micheál's parents and grandparents both spoke Irish and Irish was strong in the locality.

Talks about old Irish words that could be used. 'Gabháil an Domhan Thiar'

Talks about the names for local field (Páirc Garbh, GarraÃ CruchÃºir etc.)

Mary states that something happened in her father's generation that affected the

Irish language badly. Her grandparents spoke Irish fluently but her parents didn't.