Ned Keane

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:12:31
FAMILY BACKGROUND –

Ned was born in Cahermurphy and his grandfather was the one who bought the house. There was a change of landlords in the area, Roderic O'Connor and Old Knox Moloney were both fighting for the land. Moloney was the one who got it and Ned's grandfather backed O' Connor. This led to his eviction resulting in all the children scattering all over the world. Ned's father, James, went to England and his brother went to America. Old Knox wasn't very much liked after these evictions so the RIC would be stationed there to protect him. James Keane approached the landlord and after saying who he was he asked for his families land back which added up to 260 acres. When Old Knox died he gave the land to Richard's law firm in Dublin but he suggested that James gets it and he did.

James met Ned's mother in England and she was Hogan from Ballymalone. She was the youngest in a family of 13. She went to Secondary School in Leeds. After this she was called to Southampton Training College to learn how to be a teacher. At that time Solly Street was a very poor part of Sheffield and that's where she taught with a priest.

Ned was the eldest of five children (3 girls and 2 boys). Ned's father died very suddenly before Ned had been confirmed. Ned's mother couldn't get a job teaching because she didn't have Irish.

Ned's father was over in England working in steel works. He died in October 1931 and the years after this were very harsh.

When Ned was growing up they shared their house with Pat Moloney's family

0:12:31 – 0:16:45
FIANNA FAIL, DEV AND THE ECONOMIC WAR –

Ned explains the background to the Economic War. When Dev (de Valera) came in first there was no dole, widows pensions or any other allowances.

Ned says the greatest improvement in the parish is the school.

James Keane was first cousin to Pat Houlihan who was a Fianna Fail TD 1927- 37. He fell out with Dev because he didn't like Houlihan's lifestyle.

0:16:45 – 0:26:5735
THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CIVIL WAR –

There was plenty of bitter talk occurring then. Ned goes on to talk about the ambush in Ballyturn in Gort. He talks about Pat Houlihan's involvement in it.

Sean Moroney was Ned's cousin and he tells a war story that involves him. Harry O' Meara was an active IRA member in the area and he ended up joining the Guards and reached the rand of Superintendent. James Keane didn't fight during the war and would have taken the anti-treaty side with Houlihan during the Civil War.

Other active IRA members included Mat Moloney from Kilmaley and Jack Moloney from Scariff. Tom O'Touhy was active very early, starting in the IRB. During the Civil War he took the side of Pro-Treaty.

Ned says he knew the families of the Scariff martyrs.

There were three British soldiers that deserted the army and they were caught. They were put to trial and eventually shot on a bridge on Lough Atorick. Later on it was revealed that they were intelligence officers.

0:26:58 – 0:32:34

EAMONN DE VALERA –

Ned says he was very young when he joined Fianna Fail. He was secretary for a year and then he was appointed delegate to the Dáil. Dev was always present at these meetings. He would be very interested in knowing what Ned knew and what Irish he knew. He would ask if he knew Frost's book, 'The History and Topography of County Clare'. He would also ask about the evictions from the north. De Valera was so interested in these evictions he set up schemes to send them back up to Sligo or whatever northern counties they came from.

Ned was 21 when he first met de Valera and describes him as very intelligent and friendly.

0:32:34 – 0:50:08
POLITICS –

Ned was involved in campaigning for elections at a young age but he never tough about running himself. His father ran for the Farmers Union but he didn't get elected. At that time they were looked on anti-government since it was the Free State government then.

There use to be friction when Ned was out canvassing. He talks about one Sunday that was especially rough. When the election was going on 1937 people would talk about how good the new constitution was.

Pat Houlihan had lost his seat by the time of the 1937 election and never got back into politics. Sean O' Grady was the man that took his place.

Ned talks about Dr. Patrick J. Hillery and PJ Hogan in Miltown. Dr. Hillery got into politics instantly and he had a deep hatred for St. Joseph's and he ended up building a proper hospital there which was built by the McCarthy's. Dr. Hillery was the politician that impressed Ned the most over the years.

Ned briefly talks about going to Dublin for Eamon de Valera's funeral

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:03:52
WORLD WAR II –

Ned talks about the rationing during WWII and how everyone would have a ration book. You would get an ounce of tea a week for the family. All there shopping was done at O' Mara's during this time.

Ned mentions that the Hillery's were more republican than the O' Mara's

Ned use to listen to the wireless and remembers listening to the Lord Haw-Haw who was a West Galway man. He would always be saying that the Germans were winning the war.

Ned says that De Valera's speech in response to Churchill was one of the better things he done in his career.

0:03:52 – 0:16:31
THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE CIVIL WAR –

The Black and Tans never raided Ned's house but it was raided by the Free Staters. The reason they were searching the house was to find Pat Houlihan.

Sean Moroney was in America and when he came back in 1932 he was in the bodyguard of de Valera. Ned remembers walking with de Valera at Moroney's funeral.

Ned says that information about safe houses would leak out late a night in Pubs.

Dennis Moroney, Sean's brother, use to mention several West Clare ambushes he was involved in. There was one at the Feakle Post Office. They ambushed a barracks with 13 RIC men inside. Dennis threw petrol inside but all of the Barracks residents managed to escape.

Ned talks about the ambush at Ballyturn. The IRA took position in the tree line. Captain Blake used his pregnant wife as cover and he was going to shoot Paddy Cahill. Houlihan saw this and he shot the wife and then the Captain.

Ned knew one of the Loughnane brothers. He worked in Pierce's in Wexford. They used to make bicycles for the British Army. Ned says it was Harry Ferguson invented a small tractor that could be sold to the farmers. When the war was over he made the tractors down in Cork. When he fell out with the Cork crowd, he moved to England and starting building tractors there. He joined up with Massey Harris and when they teamed up they became known as Massey Ferguson.

0:16:31 – 0:20:48
CHANGES IN SOCIETY AND SCHOOL –

The introduction of tractors was a massive change for farmers especially when they had 4WD which meant they could go into a field.

The biggest change that Ned has seen in his time was the new school along with the Free Education Act 1967. Ned finished school at the age of 13 and started at 31/2 years old. One of the subjects done at that time was Irish. Ned says he enjoyed learning it but you couldn't use it outside of the classroom because it wasn't a spoken language.

0:20:48 – 0:31:12
PASTIMES –

People use to come to Ned's house on 'cuairt'. His neighbours would call over to his house to play cards. They use to play 45 for a few pence. Another thing that would happen was 'pitching money'. You would put down a stone and throw a penny at it from a few feet away. The person who got their penny closest to the stone, which was called the 'muty', got to toss for heads or tails. If they got this right they would get the pennies.

Ned never played hurling when he was younger but his grandchildren do play hurling and he goes on to talk about the ones that played. Ned says he use to referee games and he says the games would be rough. He would do this every Sunday after mass. He said you wouldn't send someone off, instead you would have a word with them and then leave them off hurling again.

Ned got into politics with his cousin, Houlihan.

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RELIGION –

Ned says the older you get the more into religion you get. When Ned was growing up the Catholic Church had a great amount of influence. Everyone had a great respect for the Priests and the Bishops. Ned talks about Bishop Willie Walsh and Bishop Nugent.

When Ned's grandfather was evicted he went over to Feenagh in Sixmilebridge. His name was also Ned Keane. He got a small farm there and had a daughter who married Pat Nugent. She died during the birth of their first child, Mary Nugent. Pat remarried and one of those girls was Archbishop Nugent's mother.

Ned goes on to talk about his house in Cahermurphy. Dick Cronin is the local conversation officer and he helped Ned restore the roof on the house.