# Nonie Devitt

Female

0:00:00 – 0:05:09
PERSONAL INFORMATION, MARRIAGE & FAMILY –

Nonie was born in nearby Knockagonnell, Cloonanaha also called Carrig (carraig/rock) and now lives in Gortalougha, Inagh; she does not remember her grandparents; her parents were O'Donoghues & their marriage was a match as was common then; her father came from Rath near Corofin & got the farm in Knockagonnell; her mother was Lafferty from Letterkelly, Cloonanaha; her 2 uncles lived with them; their home place was owned by Higgins, landlords; her parents passed away within a fortnight of one another in 1955; the Devitt name in the area for many generations, in Fahalunaghta/Derryharriff & in Liscannor, North Clare – more information from daughter Mary; Nonie had 3 sisters; her sister Anne, married a Hegarty man & they went to America; her sister Brid was a dressmaker in Ennis & her sister Mary died at young age of 21 after a short illness; Nonie was the youngest of her family & the only sibling alive now; she eventually bought the home place; she speaks about emigration from the area.
She met Paddy Devitt at a soiree & she married in 1952 at age 25 or 26 and moved to his home place; they had 4 in family – three daughters & a son; Paddy's mother lived 17 years to age 93 & his father 7 years with them; Nonie later bought her home place from her sister.

0:05:10 – 0:11:49
SCHOOL DAYS –
Nonie recalls her school days in nearby Cloonanaha – firstly at the old school then at the new school; she recalls the screen between the 2 classrooms in the old school & the 4 rooms in the new school, toilets & beatuiful conditions there; she & Mary mention the plaque to the old school which can be seen opposite

Crawford's house; she & her siblings walked 3-4 miles to school across the fields & some by road; they also mention the hedge school taught by MacCurtain; she names teachers, Master Cuddihy, Hegarty, Miss Dillon, Miss Hayes, Master McMahon; she recalls the cruelty of â€œbeltsâ€. She says they would have learned more if less hitting; she enjoyed school; she learned Irish but cannot recall any now; she says games were not played or allowed at school; she recalls enjoyable day trips to Mt. Callan with Master McMahon & the older classes; they brought sods of turf daily in the winter – she jokes â€œthe teachers had their backsides to the heatâ€ & says â€œthey would have been killed if they didn't have the sodâ€; she left school at age 15.
Nonie's children went to nearby Synge school & then to secondary in Spanish Point.

0:11:49 – 0:26:40
FARMING AT NONIE'S HOME PLACE & AT DEVITTS –

Nonie recalls the jobs in the house & farm – hay-making, picked stones, milked cows by hand, reared calves, made butter, grew their own crops & kept a garden, killed 3 pigs yearly, made puddings, kept fowl & sold turkeys at Ennis market, etc; she & her sisters worked hard as they had no brothers to help; her father had a serving boy or local farmhands to help in busy times; her 2 uncles lived with them; she milked the cows the morning after her wedding, forked hay & raked meadows even when pregnant; she describes spinning wool on the spinning-wheel & sugan-making for hay-trams; they used a hay-cart at Devitts before they had a tractor & other machinery.

Nonie's parent's house & the Devitts' house were both slated but the sheds were thatched until Paddy galvanised them; she remembers many people had thatched homes in the past; Nonie & Paddy improved the house.

She recalls a fieldname Cur Phairc but doesn't know the exact meaning of it.

Butter-making – she describes making the churns, taking firkins by horse and cart & selling them to Stephen Daly at Ennis market; main form of income was selling butter & cattle;
Nonie & family took the cans of milk by pony & cart to Crawford for collection by the travelling creamery; in later years the Devitts took milk to Glendine Creamery near Miltown; main income was from the monthly creamery cheque they overjoyed to get it; they milked cows daily in summer months & less when cows were going dry; she describes taking the cream from the top & making chomp; she tells a story of a rat in the milk; she recalls 10-15 ponies or asses & carts at Crawfords.

She recalls the fairs held in Miltown Malbay & Ennistymon before the marts started; she recalls helping to round up the cattle at 2am but did not go to or attend the fairs.

They had a bog in their own land; she recalls she & her sisters worked hard as they had no brothers.

Animal Health – she says people had to rely on neighbours & cures as no vets; she doesn't remember any cures other than poitin & poultices for ringworm.

They used horses or ponies for mowing hay, ploughing, taking the milk cans to the creamery & carrying big creels of turf; Nonie tackled them herself.

They had their own well & neighbours often used it; Robert Tottenham piped the water to the Devitt home place from their own well.

0:26:40 – 0:28:49
LAND COMMISSION –

She recalls many families in the area moved to new farms in Eastern counties including Paddy's brother & Nonie's sister-in-law; she says people got good land when they gave up bad land which was then divided by neighbours; she was

â€œstone mad to goâ€ but Paddy wouldn't move; she tells a story about a goose in a family's packing.

0:28:49 – 0:39:04
SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT, MUSIC, DANCING & GOING ON 'CUAIRD' –

Nonie recalls enjoying house dances, wren dances & soirees held at various times & at Christmas; she says dances were not held at her father's house when she was growing up; she cycled â€œfar & wideâ€ to them, as far as Dysart (12-15 miles away); she names Paddy Crawford who played tin-whistle; her wedding was held in Devitt's house – Mass in Inagh followed by goose & a meal in the parlour & dancing in the house; people did not have money for weddings in hotels & honeymoons then; she describes her wedding clothes made by her dressmaker sister; she recalls the strawboys at her wedding; she milked the cows the morning after her wedding; she recalls crossroads dancing held at the 4 Crosses & near Synge School; she recalls bonfires with turf, hay & tyres on St. John's Night; she met Paddy Devitt at a soiree – says it was the only way to meet husbands then; she says mostly sets, waltzes & songs at house dances & the pot under the flag floor; she recalls the barrels of porter & wine on big nights; 1 shilling charge at them; house dances were not allowed during Lent but card-playing or drama was popular then; she didn't go to dances at Ennis; went to Bingo at Ennis in later years; Paddy loved card playing & gambles but she wasn't interested; gambles & 45s were not held at Devitts but not at her parents' home; she describes her father going on 'cuaird' & others coming to their house – tracing, telling fairy stories; she recalls being frightened & lonesome so her mother would have gone to bed with her; she wishes it was still there; doors were never locked in the past v now; times are different now & people are more nervous; people went on cuairt more in the winter as they were busier in the summer; Stoney Village/Baunslieve area had 12/13 houses in Famine times – none now.

0:39:04 – 0:44:53
SEASONAL OCCASIONS, CUSTOMS & FOLKLORE –

She recalls bonfires with turf, hay & tyres on St. John's Night; she recalls May Eve & pisreogs – unlucky to meet a red-haired person, cows' milk & butter being â€œbroughtâ€ from people; she mentions Chalk Sunday & the stigma attached to not being married; she recalls Christmas as a child, decorating the house, shaking Holy Water, lighting the candles 6 nights in the past v now, celebrating Nollaig na mBan, drinking & blessing with salt in cold water on New Year's Day to keep trouble & sickness away; she recalls the lights at Christmas in Stoney Village /Baunslieve; she tells a story of a fire in the Devitt house while Mrs Devitt was gone on cuairt.

0:44:53 – 0:45:03
SHOPS & SERVICES –

She describes shops locally & their contents – her aunt's in Knocknagonnell, Tuttles in Cloonanaha & Mrs Rynne's small shop in Cloonanaha.

0:45:03 – 0:45:44
WAR YEARS & RATIONING –

She recalls rationing during war years, using coupons, sieving brown flour through silk stockings to remove the bran; they were lucky to be self-sufficient.

0:45:45 – 0:48:00
SPORT, GAMES, SPORTS DAYS, FOWLING, HUNTING & FISHING –

She says games were not played or allowed at school; they played sport with neighbours but had little time for games at home with so much work to do; she recalls sports days at Inagh in the summer; she often cycled to Miltown Sports; she doesn't recall music or dancing at the sports days; she didn't get to the seaside much until they had a car; she says lads did fowling & hunting for their own use & people fished at Clonmacken Lake in Inagh.

0:49:39 – 0:57:04

SACRAMENTS, CHURCH, MISSIONS, STATIONS & WAKES –

She went to Mass at Cloonanaha & Inagh; she recalls going by horse & trap before they had a car; She received her Holy Communion & Confirmation with Bishop Fogarty at Inagh; she recalls learning hymns & songs by heart; she mentions the strictness then V now; she recalls house stations held every few years & in Synge school in her daughter's time; marriages were not allowed during Lent until the 1960s/70s; she recalls the missions at Inagh & Cloonanaha, the preachers being wicked with sermons about ruination & stalls with rosary beads, holy medals etc being sold; she mentions Chalk Sunday & the stigma attached to not being married; she recalls saying the Rosary nightly at her home house, trying to curb laughing & being â€œclitteredâ€ for laughing; she liked the Latin Mass & recalls the priest with his back to the congregration; Lent was stricter in the past v now; no meat on Fridays V now – only 2 fast days; Nonie, Brid & Mary recall wakes at houses; her parents & husband were waked at home; people wore habits v own clothes now; people stayed with corpses all night; Nonie attends Mass locally & prays daily.

0:57:04 – 1:00:50
HANDCRAFTS, HOUSE-KEEPING, CLOTHES & MORE –

Nonie learned the skills growing up at home; she made & knitted clothes for her family; she still enjoys knitting; she used a sewing machine; she describes her wedding clothes made by her dressmaker sister & making sheets with flour bags; she says they were not allowed to knit or sew on Sundays; Mrs Devitt darned Robert Tottenham's clothes with wool; she spun wool & taught Nonie how to also; she refer to pictures in Dorothea Lange's book of photos; she describes spinning wool on the spinning-wheel & sugan-making for hay-trams; she recalls making making treacle & griddle cakes over the open fire; there are 3 fireplaces in the Devitt house; fires always lit in the past for heat, cooking & boiling water; Mrs Devitt darned Tottenhams clothes

1:00:50 – 1:03:12
HEALTH & WOMEN –

There was a dispensary in Knocknagonnell up to about 30 years ago; Mrs Devitt was also a mid-wife for neighbours; Nonie recalls people knocking at their door for help when a neighbouring woman was in childbirth; no money was paid for Mrs Devitt's service; Nonie's 2 eldest daughters were born in Ennis hospital but her son was born at home.

1:03:12 – 1:03:57
ELECTRIFICATION –

Nonie recalls tilly-lamps, oil lamps, Sacred Heart Lamp & candles in the past and electricity coming to the area.

1:03:57 – 1:05:26
TOTTENHAMS –

Nonie & Mary speak about Tottenham's â€œbigâ€ house & farm; family farmed cows & cattle previously but lots of forestry there now; mother lives there now & 4 sons are abroad; she mentions Woods & Sullanes who worked there; she says Tottenhams were well liked; Nonie was never in the house & regrets missing Robert Tottenham's funeral 4 years ago.

1:05:26 – 1:06:58
CLOONANAHA & INAGH IN PHOTOGRAPHS & FILM –

Nonie & Mary recall Dorothea Lange's book with photos of people in the area in the 50s & the subsequent documentary film Photos To Send; her mother-in-law, Mary Devitt, herself & her baby Mary featured in one photo; they recall the exhibitions & film held at Ennis & Galway; it was probably people's first time seeing a camera; Nonie says they were not dressed for the photo as it was unexpected.

1:06:58 – 1:07:29
COMPARING LIFE NOW TO PAST & CHANGES –

Nonie says many changes now V in the past; people better off; improvements to homes, farms & land everything is â€œpress buttonâ€ now; more trees planted & forestry; doors were never locked in the past v now; times are different.

1:07:29 – 1:08:57
PRESENT DAY LIFE –

Her health is good & has rarely been in hospital; she walks, knits, goes on the quad & would cycle if she had a bike; she attends Mass locally & prays daily especially when alone; she has travelled on pilgrimages to Lourdes a few times.