

# Nora Canavan

Female

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:04:50

NORA'S HUSBAND –

Nora talks about her husband Stephen Canavan and how she met him at a neighbour's house where he stayed for some time with relations – Henry Canavan was his uncle. Nora often visited that house in the evenings. The woman of the house loved to get them up dancing. Stephen was friendly with Pat Morgan, a fiddle player. House dances were held in that house. His parents died within a week of each other when he was 14 years old. His father died suddenly of a burst appendix. It was the time of the Black and Tans. The doctor said he would operate if he had another doctor to assist him. But people were scared to go out at night. He died the following day. His mother had been ill with cancer for some time and she died the following week. He also spent time with another uncle in Sandfield. He attended school in the Monastery in Ennistymon

0:04:50 – 0:09:30

HER WEDDING –

Nora recalls her wedding to Stephen in Rath Church in 1928. Susan Barry was chief bridesmaid and his cousin Autie Canavan from Sandfield was best man. The breakfast was in her home house. They had a dance and a party there that night. She wore a coat and a frock of the same material made by her neighbour Katie Mee who was a dressmaker. Her mother insisted that she had a 'Hauling Home'. A bride couldn't return to her own home house for a month after the wedding. Nora thought it was nonsense.

0:09:30 – 0:12:20

SETTLING INTO HER NEW HOME IN DOOLIN –

She describes her new home as a fine big two storied country house. It had four bedrooms, a sitting room and a kitchen. It had a lovely veranda to the front which provided great shelter for the kitchen. It had an open fire which she was used to from her own home. Later she got a second hand range which was great for keeping the heat in the house. It was grand for cooking and baking.

0:12:20 - 0:16:36

WATER ON TAP -

Nora says that dragging water from the well in the field was the hardest work of all. Her son Micheál who had taken over the farm after his father died brought the water from the well into the house with the help of Michael Crawford. She remembers the evening she turned on the tap for the first time and saw the water coming from the tap. She says 'her heart rose to the heavens'. 'It was the most beautiful thing'. Soon afterwards everyone got the water from Lisdoonvarna. She helped with the milking and she fed the calves. She was happy when Micheál let the cows suck the calves. They no longer had to get up early in the morning to milk the cows and go to the creamery. She also made butter. Nora tells that visitors to the house while she was churning had to give a twist to the handle. If they didn't 'they could bring the butter'. She really didn't believe in that superstition. They had a kitchen garden with early potatoes and early cabbage. Paddy Shannon her neighbour helped her in the garden.

0:16:36 - 0:23:11

FAMILY -

Nora had seven children - four boys and three girls. Her eldest son Seán was killed in a car crash very close to home when he was a young man. Nora actually heard the crash. It was a sad time for Nora. Her other sons are Stephen, Noel and Micheál. Her daughters' names are Breedá, Noreen, and Maura. Noreen was deceased at the time of the interview.

0:23:11 - 0:31:38

## REARING HER FAMILY DURING THE ECONOMIC WAR AND THE EMERGENCY

-

Nora says that the Childrens' Allowance was a great help. They were hard times. Food was rationed but they had enough. She knit and made clothes for her children. She often stayed up late to finish off clothes for them. She bought a sewing machine with money she got as wedding presents. She bought it at the Singer shop in Ennis. It cost eight guineas. The man from the shop cycled up from Ennis with the machine on the back of the bike. She cried after it when it was burnt in the house fire. She got sewing patterns free with Woman's Weekly. She says it was a great book and that she was very fond of it. Her husband bought the newspaper on Sunday. Noreen Mooney who worked in Keane's would put the Woman's Weekly inside the paper for her. She bought material at Donie O'Loughlen's in Ennistymon. The Mees, her neighbours in Monreel, taught her how to crochet.

0:31:38 - 0:43:45

## LIFE IN DOOLIN -

Nora would have heard about Delargy and Johnny McMahon collecting folklore in the area but she didn't know them. Nora talks about the changes in Doolin over the years. There were no hotels when she came to live there. There are lots of new houses now. She relates that some of her children went to the old school in Doolin. It was a two storied building with stone steps outside. Her daughter Noreen fell down the steps one day. Nora says that the new school is lovely.

She talks about the Russell brothers who were musicians. She went to O'Connor's pub a few times with Mrs. Sullivan from Lahinch, Maria's grandmother, (Maria is her daughter-in-law).

She loved to bring the children to the sea on a fine Sunday. She visited the Arann Islands only once. She describes it as a nice place. She mentions the ferry

services available now. Her husband had friends there and when they came to the mainland they would stay at her home. They also came in to visit St. Brigid's Well. Nora recalls the Lisdoonvarna Festivals and the crowds of strangers who attended them. The music was heavenly but it was hard to sleep at night. She recalls when the MacNamara lands were divided by the Land Commission. It was beautiful land.

0:43:45 – 0:45:40

FOWL –

Nora always kept fowl but she didn't sell any. Her mother used to sell eggs. She would go off to town in the car (donkey) with a basket of eggs to sell there. Nora recalls her maternal grandmother who was confined to bed when Nora knew her.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:02:12

ST JOHN'S EVE & ST. JOHN'S DAY –

They always had a bonfire on that evening in her youth. Her father would get it going. Only the family were present. They also had a bonfire for the children on a little hill near the house in Doolin. Her husband and his neighbour would head off early the following day for the Fair in Spancill Hill. He was very interested in horses.

0:04:25 – 0:08:45

ST. SWITHIN'S DAY –

SELLING HER BUTTER –

Nora then talks about a quiet horse they had. Nora often drove that horse to Roadford to sell her butter. She collected the neighbours along the way with their butter in pans. She recalls how the neighbours got together in her youth to fill the firkins. Nora's butter was sold to an agent who came up from Ennistymon to Considine's now McDermotts. He would test the butter. They were paid by the

weight. She recalls a saying the agent had 'There's nothing like the thing but the thing itself'. Nora talks about the butter money being a great help to the family. It kept the house going. It was used immediately to buy her messages in Considines.

0:08:45 - 0:09:12

ST. SWITHIN'S DAY -

Nora recalls the saying 'If it rains St. Swithins day 'twould be raining all the year. Nora didn't think that was very true.

0:09:12 - 0:13:40

GARLAND SUNDAY LAHINCH & CLIMBING CROAGH PATRICK -

On Garland Sunday all the family would go to half-eight Mass in Ennistymon. After Mass they would visit her uncle Pat Mullins for the tea. Then the family would head off to Lahinch on the West Clare Railway. She says Lahinch was crowded. Nora tells that she climbed Coagh Patrick once on the last Sunday in July with her husband and neighbour. They travelled there by bus. She says the climb was a tough climb and she was delighted to get to the top where they had Mass and Holy Communion. She describes the view from the top as heavenly. The coming down was worse than the going up.

0:13:40 - 0:15:21

HALLOWEEN/ALL SAINTS DAY/ ALL SOULS' DAY -

Nora recalls having nuts, apples and barm brack for Halloween. She says the barm brack was bought as they would have no value in it if it was home baked. The Snap Apple was the funniest part of Halloween. The family grave in Ennistymon was visited at that time.

0:15:21 - 0:16:20

ST. MARTIN'S DAY -

Nora's memories of the tradition associated with that day are very vague. According to Nora the tradition of killing the cock has died out.

0:16:20 - 0:28:45

CHRISTMAS -

Nora says that coming on Christmas was a great time. Her parents would go on their own to town to 'buy the Christmas'. You would always go to the shop you would deal in. In later years Nora would write out the list and her husband would give it to the shopkeeper. It would include fruit, port, sherry and minerals. The rich cake was always made for Christmas. The whiskey was included to keep it fresh. Before Nora gave up baking she included some Bailey's drink in her fruit cake.

In her youth the dusting, cleaning and polishing was done before the decorations were put up. These included holly and ivy around the windows and coloured chains. Flowers made from crepe paper were put through the holly. In her home it was traditional for her father to light the Christmas candles. It was an honour to light the candles. They were never allowed light them. Her father cut a turnip on one side so it would stand up and made a hole for the candle on top. It would be covered with crepe paper. They would have one red pound candle. In her Doolin home the candle was put in a jar stuffed with paper. As children they loved going into Ennistymon in the dark for the early Mass. As this was before electricity the church was lit up with candles. The crib was lovely.

Their door was never left unlocked as was traditional in some areas. They hung their stockings on the crane in the fireplace. Nora says they were very innocent. On Christmas morning they were very excited checking their stockings. Santy would be a great fella if you got a doll. You might get fruit or sweets in it and other silly things.

They had goose for dinner. It would get a bit of a boil first and then it would be

roasted. It would be stuffed with potatoes mixed with onions and sugar. They had jelly, fruit with custard and cream for dessert. The Christmas cake was usually cut on Christmas Eve.

0:28:45 - 0:30:02

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY -

Nora herself never went out on the Mummers but they always visited her home in Monreel. She describes them as being dressed up with old rags on their faces and old clothes and hats. They would dance in the house and collect money before they head away. She never attended a Mummers Dance.

0:30:02 - 0:31:38

THE 6TH JANUARY/ LITTLE CHRISTMAS -

Nora recalls it being referred to as The 12th Day and Little Christmas. They would have a goose for dinner.

0:31:38 - 0:33:18

ST. BRIGID'S / BRIDGET'S DAY -

Nora says that a lot of people visited St Brigid's Well on that day. Her father would have made timber crosses. She always has a St Brigid's Cross made by the school children. Nora and her family would visit the Well and say a prayer any time they were passing on the way to Lahinch.

0:33:18 - 0:33:58

ST. PATRICK'S DAY -

The boys loved to go to the pubs on St Patrick's Day. It was a great day for them. Nora used to collect the shamrock as the shamrock would have to be worn on that day.

0:33:58 - 0:35:38

## LENT AND EASTER -

Nora remembers fasting a lot during Lent. Everyone had to give up something for Lent. On Easter Sunday they would have lots of eggs and a few chocolate eggs. They decorated the hen eggs and she says the eggs were no good if they were not decorated.

0:35:38 - 0:38:30

## WAKES & FUNERALS -

There were no wakes or funerals in the house when Nora lived in Monreel. She was married when her father died. He was waked in the home house and brought to the church the following day. They had snuff and clay pipes. Nora says that this tradition has died out. Four people of the one name would take out the coffin and neighbours would dig the grave. She never heard the banshee herself but she remembers old people telling stories about death omens. She recalls an old lady telling her that she could hear a little boy crying after the child dying.