Rita Flaherty, Kevin Dunleavey

Male

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:06:37
EARLY LIFE –

Rita says she is from Dooglan and there were three in her family. Both her mother and father died young with TB. Her mother used to go around to peoples houses delivering babies. At the time of her parents' deaths, her grandparents were alive but they were old. Rita explains that there was a rule at that time stating that a young girl wouldn't be left with her father.

Rita's grandmother was from a Liddy from Tulla and was nearly in her nineties when she died. Rita goes on to talk about the older people while she was growing up and talks about going up to see Johnny Moloney.

Kevin talks about some of the older people he knew when he was younger.

0:06:38 – 0:09:14
THE GREAT FAMINE AND THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE –

The older generation would always tell stories about the Great Famine. Another topic that was popular for stories was the War of Independence and the stories generally revolved around people on the run.

Rita tells a story from the 'The Great Famine'

0:09:15 – 0:17:47
FOLKLORE –

Rita talks about the tradition of going on 'cuaird'. Rita talks about some of the people that would go to see Biddy Early. Her uncle, Charlie, used to go see her

frequently and he described her as a lovely women. When she was dying she told everyone that her medicines were not to be used anymore which meant her cures died along with her. Rita explains that she heard all good stories about her and it was only when the priests turned against her did the negative ones begin to appear.

Rita or Kevin said that they never heard of Biddy having a son. They say that she was originally O' Conner from Faha.

Rita says that she heard the cry of the Banshee before along with seeing the light. It happened down by Brody's. She tells the story about hearing the Banshee. She knew exactly what it was when she heard it but she wasn't frightened.

Kevin heard about the Banshee when he was growing up and it was said that she would follow certain families. Everyone believed in the Banshee while they were growing up.

0:17:48 – 0:21:54
SEASONAL CUSTOMS –

When asked about common 'pisreogs' on May Eve, Rita says a lot of people would go and see Biddy Early at this time of the year. When Kevin was younger it was traditional to sprinkle holy water on the land and the cattle on May Eve. Kevin says that he never saw the May Bush but he does remember hearing about it.

Rita and Kevin talk about a few more 'pisreogs' that would take place at this time of the year.

There was luck associated with the butter and Kevin refers to it as the 'taking of the butter'. There was certain people in each community that, if they called in during the churning of the butter, you would get alarmed. If anybody called into the house while the butter was been churned, they would then have to take a turn. They would never have to be asked but instead would volunteer.

0:21:55 – 0:28:52
Kevin remembers walking to school when he was young. He was born in 1945 which means was in school in the '50's. It wasn't until the 60's until major changes began to occur. The creamery started up in Dooglan. While growing up they both didn't always have a separator. Rita says that before the separator they used some pans and continues to explain this method of making butter. At the time they wouldn't get much for the butter, maybe a few shillings.
Shortly after the creamery was founded, the testing of cows became more frequent. The people at the time had to get used to the regulation as they didn't have any choice.

File 2 0:00:00 – 0:05:44
RUNNING WATER AND ELECTRICITY –

Kevin didn't have any running water until the 60's around the same time as electricity was introduced. Kevin explains that people were first afraid of electricity and were careful not to turn it on too frequently. Slievanore didn't get electricity for nearly another twenty years making it the last place in the area to get it. Today there are a few deserted villages in the area and Kevin mentions a few names of families from the north that lived in the area and goes on to talk about them a little.

0:05:45 – 0:11:23
HEDGE SCHOOLS –

There were two schools in the area and Kevin and Rita talk about them. One of them was a hedge school. There were certain subjects that weren't taught by the schools, such as Irish and Religion. This is because they were governed by the authorities of the day. People who wanted to learn these subjects went to Brian Merrimen. There were different opinions about him much like Biddy Early.

During these times people generally had strong Irish.

0:11:24 – 0:22:23
THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE –

Rita says that Loughnane's house was a look out during the War of Independence. Volunteers used to stay in the house and they were fed there as well. Rita talks about the two Loughnane brothers that were later killed. She says Harry was just a child and Pat was a bit older. Pat was more active in the War at the time and was partnered a lot with Sean Moroney. Kevin talks about the killing of Cpt. Blake which was in retaliation for the killing of the Loughnan brothers. It was mostly the south Galway lads in this ambush but Kevin mentions the few Clare lads that were involved.

Kevin says the Tans were constantly undertaking raids and Houlihan was a frequent receiver of them until they eventually burned his house down.

There was an ambush in Feakle with a few from Kevin's area been involved in it and they are each mentioned here. Tomas mentions a Father Hayes in Feakle who was strongly anti-republican and one time only six people turned up for mass. His house keeper was taken by the IRA to Tipperary and told never to come back. Rita and Kevin don't remember anything of this.

Fr. O Kennedy was taken by the IRA and Kevin says he wasn't killed but he was treated very roughly.

File 2 0:22:23 – 0:25:43
FARMING –

When Rita was younger she did a bit of work on the farm which was all done by hand. Instead of a tractor they used a horse and plough. Rita talks about when the chain saw was introduced and the changes it made. Before electricity, they used gas lights and everything was cooked on the open fire. Running water was the development that was most significant on daily life.

Both Rita and Kevin's family had a horse when they were growing up. They were very important because they did everything including ploughing, tillage, cutting the hay etc. There were always people in the area that were good at breaking in the horses. Jimmy Mac was one person that was always involved with horses.

0:11:08 – 0:19:47
CURES –

Kevin says that Pat Houlihan know some cures and gave great advice on how to treat an animal. Rita mentions Jamie Nuggent who was also very good for knowing cures. Andrew Mac was the local man for curing ringworm, and it came in the form of an ointment. Rita's mother had a cure for ringworm and she explains what was involved with it. Cobwebs were used in cases of bleeding.
Dr. Scanlon was the doctor in the area and there was also one in the dispensary. There was also a Dr. MacDonagh in Feakle. There was never a doctor present when a woman was giving birth and Kevin says that Sam's mother was a mid-wife.

0:19:47 – 0:26:35
WAKES –

When Kevin was younger all wakes would take place at home. There was always plenty of drink, clay pipes and snuff present. Before the introduction of hearses, people used horse and cart to transport the coffin and a woman used to sit on the coffin. It didn't necessarily have to be a family member. Rita and Kevin never heard of a priest going to a Wake.

File 4 0:00:00 – 0:06:13
CHRISTMAS –

Rita talks about walking to Church on Christmas Eve and the reflection of all the people's candles on the lake. She describes this sight as so beautiful you couldn't paint it. This was for midnight mass and Kevin says that every window had a candle in it during this time of the year.

Christmas was a day of big celebrations and cooking. At that time everyone had Goose instead of Turkey. The feathers were kept so they could be put into pillows or mattresses. Santa would come leaving a few bits and pieces in your stocking and with every passing year the presents got bigger and bigger. Kevin says it wasn't as commercialised in those days. Rita and Kevin talk about the Christmas box which would never contain the Christmas candle and would instead have to be bought. The youngest in the house would always light the Christmas candle. There was also the tradition of keeping your door unlocked on Christmas Eve.

0:06:13 – 0:15:10
CHANGES IN SOCIETY –

Rita says that when you were growing up everyone was one big happy family and everyone shared. She then talks about the tradition of going on 'cuaird' dying out.

Kevin says the biggest change in his lifetime was the introduction of electricity and all the things that came with it (e.g. television, phones). While Kevin was growing up whatever work was to be done was shared amongst the community.

0:15:10 – 0:25:29
DUBLIN, LIMERICK AND KILKEE –

Rita's father died on the 1st of March '47. At that time Rita was starting a job in Our Lady's in Ennis. Whilst working there she meant someone who offered her a job minding children in Dublin. Rita was only 16 when she accepted this job offer and went to Dublin via the train. She worked for a solicitor minding his two kids on the South Circular Road. During her free time she would listen to the radio because she had one in her room. At this time there was no running water or electricity and they used to do their washing in buckets. Rita says that she spend quite some time there before moving to Limerick and working there.

Rita also spent some time working in Kilkee and while she was living there it used to be full of Limerick people.

After this Rita tells the story of how she met her husband.