Sean O'Halloran 2

Male

0:00:00 – 0:13:40
PHOSPHATE MINES IN NORTH CLARE –

The mines started around 1938/39. Judge Cummins was the man who owned the mineral rights of North Clare. He was the one that noticed the supply of Phosphate. Prior to the war Ireland got its supply of phosphate from North Africa which ceased during the War years. He explains where the mines where located in North Clare. There were approximately 240 men working in the mines in Noughaval.

Doolin had an open cast mine and a lot more men working there. Sean remembers all the lorries that operated in the area when he was in school and he mentions some of the drivers that worked in the area. He then continues to talk about some of the other local men that worked in the mines. Barry Ward was the man in charge of the mines who was from Galway and a great musician. Sean talks about the band that he set up and some of the musicians that played with him.

There was two local Blacksmiths working in the mines. The mines were a great boost to the local economy until their closure in 1946.

Sean says that the lorry drivers were great for giving kids a lift to school. Along with the lorry driver there was always a fireman present in the truck.

The standard wage in the mines was two pounds a week which was good when compared to a Farmers wage of ten shillings a week. Noughaval Church was being built while the mines were in operation. Due to the higher wages in the mines the Church found it hard to find workers which resulted in them having to raise the wages offered by ten shillings.

Judge Cummins was from just outside Kilfenora. The government took the mining rights off him after the mines were discovered. He would have been handsomely compensated unlike the farmers that would have owned the mines.

The mines closed after the war in 1946 which resulted in a rise in emmigration due to the workers been unable to discover other means of employment.

0:13;40 – 0:24:00
WAKES/FUNERALS –

Sean says that he wasn't present at many wakes in his younger years however he does remember hearing about the clay pipes and snuff. Stout was the main alcoholic beverage served at wakes. Wine and whiskey would also been present but not served as frequently. All of these memories come from one of the funerals Sean was helping with in his younger years.

When someone died it was generally a neighbour who would lay them out. People would then have a choice in undertakers. Sean says that politics was a very important factor in the decision making process with tradition being the only other influential component.

In some places the clocks would be stopped along with the pictures turned into the wall.

Neighbours and friends were always the ones who would dig the grave as it was a taboo for the family to do it. When it came to carrying the coffin, you would have four of the same last name. In some places, such as Poulacarron there was a tradition of carrying the coffin around a carn stone's instead of directly into the graveyard. Sean doesn't know the exact reason for this but believes there was a certain 'pisreog' attached to it.

Outside of Noughaval there was the tradition to never dig a grave on Monday. Pregnant women were never allowed to attend a funeral as it was considered bad

luck. The remains would always spend a night in the church and the night of the wake a relation would always stay with the body.

Whenever the head of a family died, a horse would always been sold. If the family had two horses then the better of the two was to be sold.

A headstone wouldn't be installed for two months after the burial.

0:24:00 – 0:36:33
MATCHMAKING –

Sean says that his parents match was made. There was never an official matchmaker. The process would start with the family of the bride to be, contacting the matchmaker. It was very rare for the two that were to be married to be consulted during the process. The next step involved the family of the bride inspecting the land of the other family. This would give them an insight to the value of the land. The man's farming ability would also be closely evaluated. The 'Picking Of The Gander' would occur after the two families had agreed to the marriage. This would celebrate the official engagement of the couple. It was the first time the groom and bride would meet and it would take place in the Brides home. These were frequently held around Shrove Tuesday as this was a popular time of the year for marriages to be contracted.

The wedding itself would take place at 9 in the morning after which they would go to the Brides home. There was more emphasis on the evening activities with more people attending this rather than the morning ceremony.

The couple would then go on a very short honeymoon (only a couple of days). When they returned the matter of the dowry was settled. Their return was another occasion known as 'Hauling Home' or 'Ã‰irÃ Amach'. In Galway there was a big tradition of having bone fires on the morning of the wedding.

The 'Strawboys' always came to the groom's home and one of them would have to

dance with the bride. They would always arrive in costume and at one time they would wear the straw hats, which is where the name came from. Traditionally, anyone that was taking part in the 'Strawboys' wouldn't have any drink on the night. There was always a certain person that would organise this event such as Johnny Moloney in Ennistymon.

After the wedding, the Bride wasn't allowed to go home for a full month.

0:36:33 – 0:38:36
CHILDBIRTH –

When the couple had children there were some naming traditions that were followed and Sean talks about them here. Baptisms always took place straight after the baby was released from hospital. The tradition of churching would take place a month after the baby's birth. This event was a simple blessing and has died out over the years. Sean says that the death of this tradition is a good thing because it insinuated that a woman was unclean after childbirth.

0:38:36 – 0:49:46
SEASONAL CUSTOMS –

CHALK SUNDAY –

Chalk Sunday was when all the eligible bachelors in the Parish were marked with chalk. After this was Lent, which was when people would abstain from eating meet. Sean describes Ash Wednesday and Good Friday as black days or 'black fasting' because the fast would be more severe. He says that his mother wouldn't have any milk or sugar with her tea on these days. People would rarely have eggs during Lent and then on Easter Sunday people would generally treat themselves to several eggs.

ST. PATRICKS DAY –

St. Patrick's day occurred during Lent but it was a day when people were allowed to break their fast. Men and women would wear shamrocks while children would wear badges. There was never a St. Patricks Day parade when Sean was younger. He says that it was only after the introduction of television, when people could see the parade in Dublin, they started to appear.

The Fast would officially end at midnight on Holy Saturday.

There was four weeks in year that would accommodate what were known as 'Rogation Days'. These include the week after the first Sunday in Lent, Whit Week, the week after the 14th September and the week after the 13th December. You would abstain from meat on the Wednesdays and Fridays of these weeks.

Everyone would be getting their gardens ready to sow on St. Patrick's Day. When this was done people would work on the bog.

The lamb's tails would be cut on Good Friday.

The traditions on May Bough only began to become important in Noughaval thirty years ago. The altar in the church was always decorated. People would never go near white thorn bushes as it was believed to be a part of the Fairies diet.

If anyone came to the house when the butter was been churned, they would have to help out as it was considered to be bad luck if they didn't.

0:49:46 – 0:52:03
RELIGION –

Sean talks about the church procession in Kilfenora. It would start at the church and people would start walking in the direction of Ennistymon. Several altars would be constructed on the procession's route. Sean talks about where some of these altars were erected. The choir would always be second last in the procession lead by children that were doing their Holy Communion. In between

was the women first and then the men with the Priest always been the person at the very back of the group. When the procession returned to the church they would always finish with a benediction.

0:52:03 – 0:56:16
SEASONAL CUSTOMS –

ST. JOHNS EVE –

It was a very strong tradition to have a bone fire on St. John's Eve.

GARLAND SUNDAY –

This took place on the last Sunday in July which was just before the Galway Races. Sean says that he would always travel to Lahinch on this day as there were very strong traditions for Garland Sunday here.

There was always a Fair on Garland Saturday where it was very popular to buy lambs. People from the Aran Islands would start to arrive on the Saturday and stayed over night for the Festivities on Garland Sunday. Sean describes the Aran men from memory as wearing grey homespun tweeds and pants with Pampooties. He also says that they were all very powerful men.

0:56:16 – 0:57:26
THE GALWAY RACES –

Sean's father always made him have the hay saved before the Galway Races because he wanted to attend them. Sean's father says when going to the races he would travel on the turf boats which went from Ballyvaughan to Connemara. Other people would use a bicycle as their means of transport.

0:57:26 – 0:58:35
SEASONAL CUSTOMS –

HALLOWEEN –

Sean remembers playing snap apple when he was younger. It was very popular to eat hazelnuts for Halloween.

ST. MARTINS DAY –

A cock was always killed on St. Martin's Day. Normally, people would keep the blood and make some sort of pudding out if it; however, on St. Martin's Day it would have to be spilt.

KILLING THE PIG –

November was a popular month for the pig to be killed. Pigs were killed other times in the year if a family every need meat. A pig was never killed if there was no r in the month. After this, he proceeds to talk about some of the food that was made out of the meat provided by killing the pig. Sean's father was the one who butchered the pig. He goes on to talk about the process that is involved.

Sean says that his family always had goats on the farm which they would milk. He says that goats milk was always considered to be healthy and a great cure for kids with eczema.

CHRISTMAS –
There was always days set aside during the build up to Christmas for travelling to town for 'buying the Christmas'. It was on these days people would shop for provisions and presents. Then the shopkeepers would give out a 'Christmas Box' which ranged from a bottle of whiskey to a cake. Houses weren't as elaborately decorated as they are today and the Christmas candles never came in any other colour than white. The big candle would go into big brass candle sticks. If you didn't have these brass candle sticks then the use of jars full of sand was common.

In Noughaval the tradition of 'hunting the wren' was known as the 'mummers'.

This was a very strong tradition before the GAA and other organisations took over. The mummers dance was a big event when Sean was younger. The mummers would always be in costume which was regularly involved the members wearing items of clothing from the opposite sex. Generally, they would go into the kitchen and dance a set. In later years the GAA took over the tradition as a means of raising funds.

NEW YEARS –

The first person to enter a house on New Year's Day would always have to be a man. There wouldn't be much activity on New Years Day.

ST. BRIGID'S DAY –

Nothing much happened on St. Brigid's Day but they did make timber crosses.

Note: Interview ends