Susan Williams (née Droney)

Female

File 1 0:00:00 – 0:05:46
FAMILY –

Susan was born 24th October 1916 in Slievenagry, Kilshanny. Her parents were both Droneys. Her father was Austin Droney from Slievenagry and her mother was Susan Droney from Monreel, Ennistymon. She had one brother Gus and three sisters- Margaret, Mary and Bridget. She was the youngest in her family. She barely remembers her paternal grandmother Mary Droney who was a low sized woman. She was very old. She doesn't remember her maternal grandparents.

0:05:46 – 0:06:58
HOME –

Susan recalls that her home was nice and comfortable. On the farm they kept cows, lots of fowl-turkeys, geese, hens and chickens. They had an open fire and saved their own turf. They saved the hay and sowed potatoes.

0:06:58 – 0:10:34
KILLING OF THE PIG –

When the pig was killed it was hung up in the kitchen. The next day it was put on the kitchen table and cut up and salted. Then it was put in a barrel in an outhouse for three weeks. The lid was put on the barrel so that no air could get in. After 3 weeks it was hung up on crooks on the kitchen ceiling. Their neighbour Austin Kerin was a butcher. When she came to live in Ballykeale it was done by her husband's uncle who was a butcher. Her mother made puddings. It was very important to clean the puddings before they were filled. They were tied at the ends with string and boiled in the oven. Then they were roasted in the pan. The

puddings were always divided with the neighbours. It was hard work.

0:10:34 – 0:12:53
OPEN FIRE –

They had a fine open fire. Turf was put at the back of fire and it was filled up with coals. They boiled water for the calves in the pot over the fire. The coals were pulled out and put under and over the oven when her mother was making bread. The fire was raked at night and covered with ashes. Then you would have a lovely fire in the morning.

0:12:53 – 0:14:29
THE HOUSE AND ANIMALS –

They had a 3 roomed single storey slated house with a kitchen and 2 bedrooms. Later a porch was added. They also had some outhouses for the cows. They kept 5 or 6 cows and a horse. Her brother Gus brought turf by horse and creel to the market in Ennistymon. It was only 7 or 8 bob for turf that time.

0:14:29 – 0:16:15
FARM WORK –

Susan did lots of jobs on the farm. She brought in the spring water from the well down the field. They had a tank outside for the rain water. Her mother cut the spuds and Susan helped spread them in the fields. That was done in April. They had a couple of cats and a pet dog that slept in the cow house.

0:16:15 – 0:18:30
RAGAIRNE (CUAIRD) HOUSE –

Susan recalls that neighbours came on 'Ragairne' (Cuaird) to her house. Cards were played and many Gambling Tournaments were held in the house. They played for a turkey or a goose. Her sister brought a gramophone when she came

home from America so their neighbours and boyfriends came in for dances. Some of the neighbours would sing. She said they were a very happy family who worked hard.

0:18:30 – 0:19:38
WAR OF INDEPENDENCE –

She has no memories of it but she often â€œheard tellâ€ of the Black and Tans and the Burning of Ennistymon. She said it was a terrible time.

0:19:39 – 0 24:00
EMIGRATION TO ENGLAND –

Susan left school at 16 and she went to England to join her sister who was working there. She spent 3 years working in a grocery shop. She wasn't too lonely as she had her sister with her. She didn't care much for England. They came home on holiday. WW2 broke out so they remained at home.

0:25:21 – 0:30:11
BUTTER MAKING –

Her mother shopped in Stephen's shop near the Sulphur Bridge in Lisdoonvarna and she also went to Ennistymon in the horse and car. She sold butter and eggs to her customers in Lisdoonvarna. Butter making was hard especially before they got the separator. The milk was put in pans and left overnight. The cream was then skimmed from the top of the pans. Susan says the separator was marvellous. It was then churned, salted and weighed. You would have buttermilk. Anyone who came into the house had to twist the handle of the churn or take a dreas of it. It was unlucky not to do that. Her family weren't superstitious. To meet a red haired woman if you were going anywhere was considered a bad sign.

When Susan got older she would go to the Sulphur Wells. There would be dancing there outside the Wells on Sunday. Later on she attended dances there. You could

come home at any hour of the night. It was very safe then. It's a different world now.

0:30:12 – 0:37:43
CHRISTMAS MEMORIES –

The family went to early Mass in Lisdoonvarna on Christmas Day. Her mother would have the turkey in the oven before they went to first Mass. She remembers hanging their stockings up over the fire. Ivy was nailed to the window shutters. Her mother made flowers from crepe paper and stuck them into the ivy. Mottos were put up on the walls saying
'A Happy Christmas' or 'A Merry Christmas.'

About a week before Christmas her parents would go to town to bring home The Christmas, – big Â½ lb (pound) candles for every window in the house, tea, sugar and currants to make the sweet loaves, porter for the men and lemonade for the women and a box of biscuits.

Her father would cut a turnip and put a hole in the centre for the candle. It would be decorated with ivy or tinsel. The man or father of the house would light the candle. Then the family would kneel down and say their prayers. That was the way it was in the olden times.

They went to early Mass in Lisdoonvarna on Christmas Day. Lisdoonvarna was nearer to them than Kilshanny. There was a crib in the church. There were no cribs at home. They always looked forward to Christmas. Her mother would buy something nice – like a nice jumper in town and stick it in the stocking. They would be delighted with their presents. All the family would stay at home on Christmas Day. There would be no visiting on Christmas Day.

0:37:44 – 0:40:01
ST STEPHEN'S DAY/ MUMMERS –

Only the boys went on Mummers. The young mummers would come to the door. They'd sing and dance. The big (adult) mummers would come in later. Her mother would give them tea and sweet loaf. You could have 9 to 12 in a group. Then the Mummers' Dance would be held in some country house. Her family would be invited. The money collected would buy the food and the drink. There would be a big crowd there. It would be a great night.

0:40:02 – 0:42:42
NEW YEAR'S DAY AND EPIPHANY –
If the first visitor to a house on New Year's Day was a woman it was a sign of very bad luck. A neighbouring man would always be invited to come and wish you a Happy New Year. It was very unlucky for a red-haired woman to wish you a Happy New Year.
They would have a goose or a turkey Christmas Day, New Year's Day and the 12th Day. (Epiphany or Small Christmas).
Susan says Christmas is too posh now.

0:42:43- 0:45:14
ST AUSTIN'S HOLY WELL, KILSHANNY

Susan visited St Austin's Well in Kilshanny every St. Austin's Day. They have a Mass at the Well nowadays on the 28th August. When she was young the Mass was in the church. After Mass they would perform the rounds and bring home water from the Well. She often cycled with a friend to St. Brigid's Well in Liscannor on the 1st February. St Austin's Day was a great holiday in the parish. It was like a holy day. Her brother was called Gus after St. Austin.

0:45:15 – 0:47:30
RETURN FROM ENGLAND & WWII –

After school Susan went to England. 3 years later she returned home for a holiday with her sister Margaret. The war broke out so they remained on at home.

Margaret met her husband Bernie Howley, a neighbour, and they got married. Susan stayed on to help her mother and brother.

Susan then talks about the rationing during the war. Tea, sugar and flour were rationed. People had everything of their own. They killed a pig and they had their own meat and fowl.

0:47:31 – 0:49:12
PARCELS FROM AMERICA –

Her eldest sister Bridget sent lovely parcels from America. Susan was fat so her two sisters got all the clothes as they wouldn't fit Susan. She lost weight when she was 16 or 17. Bridget went to America to an uncle when she was only 16 or 17 years old. She got married there. She was the eldest of the girls.

0:49:13 – 0:52:21
MARRIAGE 1951 & CHILDREN –
Susan met her husband Williams who was from Doolin.
They lived in Dublin for a few years. Her eldest child Marie was born in Dublin. They lived in the South Circular Road. Later they moved to Ballykeale, Kilfenora, a place they bought from his uncle. Later they got a land divide of a lovely field. She had 2 boys Thomas (deceased) and Francis with whom Susan lives and two girls, Marie (deceased) and Dympna.
Susan loves living in Ballykeale since the day she came there. It was near Susan's home.

0:52:22 – 0:55:30
FARM WORK –

Susan recalls working hard on the farm. She reared ducks and geese. She worked in the bog, garden and in the meadows where she helped save the hay. She milked cows and fed calves. She worked hard inside and out. When she put the children to bed she often cycled up home to help her mother. Susan was fine and

healthy and never had to see the doctor until the children arrived. 3 of her children were born in Ennistymon Hospital. Dr O'Brien was a great Maternity doctor.

0:55:31 – 1:00:57
LIGHTING & WASHING –

At home they had a lamp up on the wall, a double burner they called it. She had a tilly lamp in Ballykeale. Susan talks about the box iron and describes how they used it for ironing the clothes long ago. Every Monday morning the bath was put on two chairs in the kitchen and water was boiled for the washing. The washboard was used with the bath. When electricity came the new electrical appliances made women's work very easy. They have a fine time now.

She brought the child in the pram up to the bog to work. She was very healthy. Susan says she was very happy and she thanks God.

1:00:58 – 1:03:00
CYCLING –

Susan loved cycling. She would cycle into town before the dinner and would be home to milk the cows. Once she cycled down to Ennis one Sunday after Mass to visit her sister-in-law in hospital and she was back at home at 6 o'clock in the evening. She cycled up until a few years ago. She loved cycling. She never had an accident. She continued cycling even after they got a car.

1:03:01 – 1:04:42
LONG LIFE –

She attributes her long life to hard work. She had a happy life. She had a lovely husband. He was a good man. He died at 55. She had a happy life. Her father died at 77 and her mother died at 88

1:04:43 – 1:06:17
ADVICE –

Her advice is to work hard, sleep enough and eat enough. They have a fine time now with cars, electricity, cookers and washing machines.

Susan says that faith is good. It has helped her through life.