

Tessie Hill (née McDonagh) 2

Female

0:28:06 – 0:35:03

TRADES IN ENNISTYMON –

Dressmakers and bakers were two trades that existed in Ennistymon while Tessie was growing up. Tessie lists few bakers who operated in the town of Ennistymon in her younger years. Besides Tessie's home there was a blacksmith. There were also a few shoemakers operating in the Ennistymon area and Tessie goes on to list several.

0:35:03 – 0:38:27

WEST CLARE RAILWAY –

This was very important as it brought all the goods to Ennistymon. It would also bring pupils to the monastery. Holiday makers from Limerick would travel to Lahinch and the trains would always be very busy during the summer months. Tickets for the train would only be a few pence and would be collected by Harry Kenny. Tessie thinks the station master at that time was Kelly. All the locals felt terrible when the West Clare Railway was closed.

0:38:27 – 0:44:44

AEROPLANES, RADIO, TELEVISION

Tessie talks about the first time she saw an aeroplane which came down in Lahinch.

She says that the radio they had while growing up was powered by a battery. Lily Vaughan was the first to get one and people would go over to her house to listen to it. She remembers calling over to this house to listen to the Eucharistic Congress.

John Carroll was the first to have a television and Tessie remembers looking in the window to see it. She can't remember how much they paid for their first black and white television but she does remember thinking that TVs were getting more expensive over the years.

When asked about the greatest inventions in her time Tessie mentions a few. These include the fridge, washing machine, central heating, the cookers and the electricity that was needed for all these inventions to work. She says that cars are important and everyone either has one or has access to one.

Tessie believes that a long life is a by product of healthy eating. She was always happy with what she had and never got too depressed about anything. An example of this was when she got arthritis and she didn't allow her new illness inconvenience her too much. She never smoked either and the only drink she touched was wine or a drop of sherry.

Interview ends.

0:18:50 – 0:28:06

FAIRS –

Tessie talks about market day in Ennistymon and how the farmers would bring in pigs, 'Bonabh's' (baby pigs), young calves, vegetables, eggs, etc. Market day was a busy day and Ennistymon was noted for its fairs. There would be several fair days and horse fairs in the year. Whenever farmers reached a deal on price they would slap each others hands together. They would have great arguments if they couldn't settle on a price. There used to be a few fights on fair day and it was usually some old grievance and was fuelled by alcohol. Hawkers would be at the square selling different things but mainly clothes.

People from the Aran Islands would come to Liscannor for Fairs on the eve of Garland Sunday. Tessie says they were harmless people speaking half Irish. They were clothed different to people from the main land. Their clothes were home

made from harder material.

The animals that were bought they were brought to the station and loaded into a wagon for transport by the West Clare Railway.

0:09:54 – 0:18:50

ELECTRICITY AND RUNNING WATER –

Before the introduction of electricity the paraffin lamp, big table lamp and big candles were used for light. There were no lights in the streets.

Electricity was brought in during the 1930's and there would be a bulb in every room. At that time there was no such thing as sockets for plugging anything in.

There was a fire place in every room because in winter time you would light a fire in every room. You would use turf and coal to light the fire. Farmers came to town with their Creels of turf for sale. Tessie says the coal in those days was much better. It was bought in Griffins and at Dan Gallerys. The coal used to come into Liscannor in those days. Tessie remember this because would she would often go and see the boats coming into Liscannor.

Tessie talks about the electric kettle, the cooker, the fridge and the washing machine and how they made life easier. Wash boards were completely done away with it.

Tessie describes Peggy Mac's river and how it was flowing down to the Falls and on to Inagh River. She never saw people doing their washing there but she did hear about it alright. Tessie can't remember getting running water but says that they had it early when she was a child.

0:06:42 – 0:09:54

FOLKLORE –

Tessies mother always said that she heard the banshee the night her brother died.

She said it was like wailing in the distance.

When asked about any other omens she knew, she talks about one evening a short time before her mother died. When she went out to take some clothes in from the line she saw a bright light shining. At the same time her mother was dreaming of Frank (her dead son). She passed away the following week.

Tessie used to hear about a few haunted houses but as she got older she learned that it was all hearsay. Tessie also heard about the 'Cáiste Bodhar' (The Death Coach).

0:00:00 – 0:06:42 File 2

WAKES –

Tessie states there no such thing as funeral parlours when she was growing up. All the wakes would be held in the houses. Someone would call over to the house to get the body ready. The corpse was laid out in a habit on a bed dressed with white sheets and a white bed spread. Brass candle sticks and holy water would stand on a locker beside the bed. Neighbours and friends would call over to serve tea and sandwiches because people would be calling to the wake all day. There would also be a quarter cask of stout which was a big barrel of Guinness. Local pubs would give some pint glasses and Â½ pint glasses to the family for the wake. Women would be able to have a glass of wine.

The priest would arrive the following evening and bless the corpse. Then they would go to the church and the next day the coffin would arrive and the corpse was brought to the grave yard. As the funeral passed through the street, businesses would put up shutters and private houses would pull their blinds as a sign of respect for the funeral. In Ennistymon, funerals would take the longer route to the graveyard which was over the bridge, up Main Street and down Parliament Street.

Tessie says they had two wakes in her house, one for her father and the other was

for her mother. When her parents passed, so did the tradition of the pipes and snuff. The graves were dug by somebody friendly to you and if you didn't have anyone the undertaker would do it.

0:36:24 - 0:39:10

HALLOWEEN -

Tessie remembers playing snap apple this time of the year. The apple would be hanging from the ceiling and everyone would then try to bite it. When asked about any other games that they would play she couldn't think of any. They had a barnbrack and there would be great excitement to see who got the ring because that meant they would be getting married.

ST. MARTINS' DAY -

Traditionally, a cock would be killed on this day and the blood would be poured on each corner of the house.

0:30:42 - 0:36:24

CHRISTMAS -

Tessie's earliest Christmas memories include posting Christmas cards and receiving them from friends or relatives in America. She also remembers hanging up stockings for Santa Claus. Some traditions include lighting a big candle in the kitchen and candles in all the windows and one on the altar. The big candle was put in an earthenware pot as it was too big for a candle stick. It was very common for people to decorate this pot with red berry and ivy. The house would be decorated as well with streamers hanging up. The mirrors and pictures were decorated with holly and ivy collected in their back garden. You were able to go down to the Glen to collect red berry. The man or woman of the house would light the candle at midnight.

At that time a big loaf was made with raisins in it. It was common for people to

have a goose instead of a turkey.

They used to go to midnight mass on Christmas Eve and when this stopped, they started going on Christmas Day. When Tessie was younger she would get up early on Christmas Day to find out what was in her stocking. Tessie says she was like a only child since her siblings were quite a bit older than her. Her brother would get her a doll along with the other toys she would get from Santa which could include a new dress or a new coat which was to be worn over the Christmas.

There was great excitement at mass on Christmas Day. All the Christmas Carols would be sung. The choir would sing the songs accompanied by the organs.

Christmas dinner centred around a goose and a bit of bacon which was added for taste. It also included cabbage, peas, parsnip, potatoes and some roast potatoes. Tessie says that there was once a great turkey market in Ennistymon and before that there was a goose market.

The Christmas Candles would remain lit until small Christmas.

0:10:48 - 0:13:54

ST. STEPHENS DAY -

Tessie says St. Stephens Day was great because all the mummers were out. As kids they would be following them around the street. They would be all done up with make up, they would have hats and caps on them and some of them would have their faces painted. They would go from house to house playing music.

Tessie talks about the 'Wren Boys' and says the verse that they would sing when they were going around on St. Stephens Day. The Wren dance or the Mummers dance would take place out in the country houses.

0:13:54 - 0:15:57

NEW YEARS' EVE -

A few neighbours would call over to the house to wish you a new year. Tessie says that you never wanted to see a red head coming to the house because they had 'Pisreogs'. It was also considered bad luck for a woman to wish you Happy New Year. A present of lilies also meant bad luck.

0:15:57 - 0:17:16

LITTLE CHRISTMAS -

This would happen on the 6th January which was known as Little Christmas in Ireland but as Epiphany everywhere else. Women would have their own little party in someone's house.

HANSEL MONDAY -

Tessie has heard of handsel Monday and thinks it was a day that you would get a bit of money and it was mainly for the younger people.

0:17:16 - 0:19:25

ST. BRIGID'S DAY -

Tessie remembers going to St. Brigid's Well on this day when she was younger. People would leave different things behind them at the well. When they were there they would say some prayers. They would rarely take some water but when they did it was because it was lucky for 'shakin' the garden' and for the plants that were growing there. She would never make St. Brigid's Crosses when she was younger.

0:19:25 - 0:21:38

CHALK SUNDAY -

Tessie remembers been afraid of someone following them with chalk and chalking their dresses or their coats.

LENT

You always fasted for lent and you never ate meat on the Wednesday or the Friday. People also did their best to get to mass every morning. On Friday the Stations of the Cross would take place. Smokers would try there best not to smoke and drinkers would try not drink. No dances would take place during Lent.

0:21:38 - 0:25:12

ST. PATRICKS DAY -

This was a big event when Tessie was younger. Everyone would buy badges and people would go around looking for the Shamrock. The Brass Band would be out on St. Patrick's Day parading up the main street. Lots of people would send the Shamrock abroad to England and America. St. Patrick's day cards would be sent to relations abroad.

HOLY WEEK -

Church Ceremonies were very important this week and very long. The stations of the cross were done on Good Friday and there would be a special fast on this day. Tessie says people were afraid to eat anything on this day because of the fast. At that time there was no vigil mass on the Saturday and everyone went on Easter Sunday. They used to get chocolate eggs and when Tessie was growing up the eggs would get bigger and bigger.

0:25:12 - 0:30:42

MAY EVE

There was always someone that would go around on May Eve and put what was called the May Bough on the door. Tom Moran and later Voucher Connors would do this on May Eve. It was another Piserogs [sic] (Pisreogs) to bring good luck for the year.

ST.JOHNS' EVE -

Tessie says that this was a great night and in the build up to it all the younger lads would go around collecting turf and timber. There were a few good Bonfires happening around Ennistymon on the night and Tessie mentions several and says exactly where in the town they were. When people went to these bonfires they would sit around singing and chatting. There was music and in some rare occasions there would be food. Tessie uses Murty's bonfire as an example. A senior person would light the bonfire.