Tessie Hill (née McDonagh)

Female

0:00:00 – 0:09:12
Family Background and her House –

Tessie was born in Ennistymon at home on the 9th February 1920. Her parents were Edward Mc Donagh and Elizabeth Cooney. Her father was from Ennistymon while her mother was from Kilshanny. Her grandparents never lived with her because they had passed away. Tessie talks about her grandparents and where they are from.

The house that Tessie lives in today belonged to her Mc Donagh ancestors who came down from Galway. The moved down to Clare to open the Post Office which they based in their house. Her house was also known the Coach Inn or 'the change'. The coach passengers had overnight stays in the Inn. The coach and horse were kept in the stables at the back of the house.

There are six rooms upstairs which included four good sized rooms and two smaller attic rooms. There were also two rooms downstairs which are very large. The house itself is very old and the pitch pine windows were only changed recently.

Tessie says she had one brother, Frank, and one sister, Mary Bridget. Tessie's proper name was Alice Teresa. This is because she had an aunt who wanted her to be named after her. She would cut off Alice and calling her Teresa which is where her nickname Tessie comes from.

0:09:12 – 0:29:02
Ennistymon Main St. Community –

Tessie remembers some of the older people in the community she knew when she

was growing up. She goes into a considerable amount of detail when talking about her Main Street neighbours and their genealogy. She also relates the business or trade which was carried on in each house.

Tessie has a memory of the Guards been where the Falls Hotel is located today. This was when it was Ennistymon House with nobody living in it and Tommy O' Halloran was the caretaker.

Tessie continues on talking about the Ennistymon Community mentioning the towns Doctor, Shoemaker, Blacksmith, Chemist and Undertaker. She mentions all the businesses that operated on Ennistymon's main street and who would have owned them.

Tessie mentions a house belonging to the Devitt's which was burned down by the Black and Tans during the War of Independence.

In her youth there were a lot of pubs, bakeries and shoe factories on the main street Ennistymon

0:29:02 – 0:30:59
The War of Independence –

Tessie says a Linnane boy was killed by the Tans the night Devitt's house was burnt. She also heard about the different houses that were burned down. Tom Callinan's house was burned and she talks about who he was related to. Other homes that were burned down belonged to Mikey Clair, Ã‰oinÃn Nestor and Tom Connole.

0:30:59 – 0:34:27
WWII and Work –

Tessie's father was a postman and before this he was in the army which was during the war years. He was conscripted and was sent to the Dardanelles. When

he returned he took the exam that was required to be a postman and passed. He worked away as a postman until he nearly reached retirement which was when his son took over.

When Tessie's father was working he would walk around and deliver the post whereas Frank had a bicycle. People wouldn't get post every day but every now and then someone would get a parcel from America and there would be great excitement.

Tessie's mother didn't work instead she stayed at home as a housewife. Since they had a big house they rented out a room.

0:34:27 – 0:39:25
School –

Her father tilled whatever garden space they had and would sell off the vegetables. They also kept chickens.

Tessie started school when she was 4 or 5. Her sister would walk her to school. At that time there was no danger because there was a lot less cars on the road.

She went to the Convent School and her first class was known as 'the baby class' because it was very easy and the nun that did this class was elderly and very easy going. Tessie says that everyone was scared of the nuns. She says that if you ever misbehaved you would get a slap across the hand or the legs.

During the winter the nuns would have a fire lit and none of the students would dare go near her.

Tessie enjoyed composition, English and singing but didn't like Irish at all.

0:39:25 – 0:47:44
Pass Times –

When Tessie was younger she would go playing on the street with a skipping rope. Kids would always play on the street because it was safe due to the lack of cars on the road. At this time all that would be on the roads was horse and cart.

Tessie talks about playing down by the Falls Hotel near the Big Rock and the Eel Hole. During the summer, when the river was lower, they would cross the river and people would be always throwing stepping stones in. Tessie also played in the Pleasure Ground and in the Mill Field. When she was older her cousin, Nano and herself would take a boat that was left in the water and go down the river. John Blake put a swing up on a big tree that was located in the Mill Field.

Francis McNamara (of Ennistymon House) came back in the late '30's. He was a nice man. He used to come up to Lily Vaughan's for his drink with Cuckoo O' Brien from Doolin. Tessie goes on the talk about his children. CaitlÃn (who later married the poet Dylan Thomás) was a lovely girl. She used ride on horseback up through the town. Bridget was very quiet. Nicolette didn't come up the town very much. John was a very good looking man and he stayed around for a while. He married a French girl who was Enriette. She would wear a watch around her ankle. Tessie had never seen anyone do that before. CaitlÃn was very friendly and she used to visit Blakes. When Nano was 13, Kathleen and her father brought her to Aran in a canoe.

Tessie's said she had great freedom when she was younger. Not only was it safer but when all the businesses would close people would go for a walk and they would be keeping an eye on the kids.

When Tessie got older she would go to the Lahinch with a packed lunch and spend the day there. They would go into the water and learn to swim. They would stay there until six in the evening which was when there were floats going with hay so they would get a lift back.

0:47:44 – 0:49:29

Pets –

Tessie didn't have to do many jobs around the house. Her mother would do most of them. When she was growing up her father had a pet dog and they had had it until it bit Tessie. When this happened they had to get rid of the dog.

0:49:29 – 0:52:44
School and Dances –

After primary school Tessie went to the Convent Secondary school. She says primary school was worse. She had several new subjects and ended up leaving school when she was 16. Nano Blake, Tessie's cousin, then headed up to Moloney's to work. Meanwhile, Tessie went to work at Comber's and later at G Conways.

She used to go to the dances in Lahinch. There were great dances in the Sluagh Hall Lahinch in those days because the army used to be stationed there. Dances in the Ennistymon town hall stopped and Madigans band would play for these when they were going.

0:52:44 – 1:02:41
Reading and Death –

Tessie always loved to read and she used to read mostly in bed. She used to love mysteries but recently she got into light reading and she would like a bit of romance as well.

Her husband is dead 33 years. He got very bad arthritis when he was 51 which meant he was always on very strong tablets. He got some treatments done in Croom but he still wasn't able to go back to work. Later he was diagnosed as a diabetic. One morning he said he thought he had the flu so he was going to stay in bed for the day. When the doctor saw him he sent him to Ennis for a few days because his diabetes. When he passed away the priest went out to tell her that he

had died.

Interview Ends