Tom Cahill

Male

0:00:00 – 0:00:43
INTRODUCTION –

Tom, aged 90, is in reasonable health though he has some arthritis & had hip replacement.

0:00:43 – 0:3:01
INFORMATION ABOUT THE HOUSE AND LAND –

Tom was born in present house & has always lived there; Cahills from Caherbolane area for many generations; Cahills owned the land but herdsman Kerin lived there; Kerin â€œsupposed to be a gangsterâ€; house built by Tom's first cousin, (former teacher in Willbrook; his first wife & 2 children drowned; he moved to teach in Dublin & had second family, one of whom is Des Cahill, RTE Sports presenter); the original Cahill farm was nearby Tom's present farm which has 64 hectares; he bought some land & added to it; less than 2 miles from Corofin & Â½ mile in from the main road; house had thatch roof until recently; it collapsed in then was replaced with slates; 1 storey house with upstairs loft.

0:03:01 – 0:4:59
FAMILY –

Tom eldest of family; 5 brothers and 3 sisters; some siblings married locally with families; 3 siblings alive at time of recording – his brother Jim in Carron; his sister in Ballynacally; his sister, a Salesian nun in Oxford, UK – joined at age 16 in Limerick.
His father passed away when Tom was 23 or 24 so Tom took on responsibilities; his mother (nee Doolin from Inchiquin) passed away aged 80 in Cahercalla; his

grandparents were from the area.

0:04:59 – 0:09:00
SCHOOL DAYS –

Tom went to the old school by the bridge in Corofin village (now a private house); walked to school across the fields; recalls names of teachers, Mr Cleary & Mrs Keane upstairs in the boys' school and Miss Fahy & Mrs O'Reilly downstairs in the girls' school; almalgamation 50 years ago when new school built on new site; good memories of school; says all classmates in boys' school have passed away except Mickey Griffey (also recorded by G. Greene); describes how the â€œstickâ€ was used ; says one teacher was â€œsarcastic & would throw one back 7 generationsâ€; says the teachers' own children were treated the same way; they were often kept at school until 5pm to learn geometry, algebra and Latin & Greek deriviations; he recalls a former pupil, Mr. Henchy who boarded at a secondary school in Galway & â€œclimbed the ladderâ€ and became a Supreme Court Judge; Tom recalls him being a great hurler and last met him at Croke Park at All-Ireland semi-final; Henchy died aged 90. Tom left school at age 13; secondary schooling was rare in Tom's time unless pupils cycled to Ennis or travelled on the West Clare Railway to the CBS in Ennistymon; Tom like writing English compositions as he had a â€œfantastic imaginationâ€; he didn't like Irish; didn't hear locals speaking Irish; the school building had bad chimneys & he says they could hardly see those beside them â€œwith the smokeâ€; they paid a contribution to the fuel for the school – he doesn't recall children or families bringing fuel then.

0:09:00 – 0:15:04
FARMING –

Tom's present farm has 64 hectares; mostly dairying until a few years ago.

Tillage: they grew crops; sold barley to Gort for Guinness & beet loaded on West

Clare Railway at Corofin, transported to Ennis & onto Tuam sugar factory.

Animals: kept sheep & pigs; pigs sold at the market in Corofin & bought by Quaid man & taken to Limerick (Mattersons); he tells story of 2 local men taking the pigs to West Clare Railway station outside Corofin village; kept fowl (turkeys & geese) in his mother's time; sold some; fox often raided them; they kept 2 horses for ploughing – horses shod at Daly's blacksmiths in Corofin.

Bogs & turf: Tom had some bog in his land when he was younger but now gets flooded.

Field names: Tom mentions â€œField of the Gateâ€ & â€œPairc na Cilleâ€.

Fairs: Tom gives the dates of the fairs held at Corofin – 18 February, 20 May, 20 July, 12 September, 2 November & 14 December.

Farm machinery: Tom & his brother got a tractor in the 1970s; he names some machinery they had before he traded them in.

Farm buildings & trades: Tom got his sheds build; he did a course in carpentry with the VEC in Corofin; his family did not have farm hands or labourers.

Threshing: done before the combine harvester in late 70s/early 80s; neighbours gathered to help.

Butter and creameries:
Milk taken by horse and cart to the travelling creamery; creamery built at Rath in early 1940s before the creamery at the Pound in Corofin; the creamery was a semi-state body managed by the Diary Disposal Board before Golden Vale took over.

Progress in Farming: Tom says the 2 best achievements were rural electrification & establishment of the marts.

0:15:04 – 0:20:35
MACRA NA FEIRME AND IFA –

Tom was involved is establishing Macra na Feirme in Corofin in 1947 – they learned much at lectures & started the Corofin Show; Tom involved in NFA (IFA in later years); recalls farmers walk to Dublin and sleeping on the streets for 21 nights in 1966; people were good to them; Tom was the only single man; he gives information about the men; he also took part in tractor protest in Clare in 2008; he & his brother's photo was in the local paper; he has judged at IFA Farm competitions (asked to judge at Munster competition in Adare in April 2010). (His brother Jim also active in IFA in Clare & nationally).

Clare Marts: Tom says one of best achievements was establishment of the Marts; lists the benefits of the marts; farmers' subscriptions helped fund the first mart; Tom was chairman for 20 years until the new mart was built; he had no car & drove by tractor or got lifts to meetings; he was involved in the setting up of marts in Scariff, Ennistymon & Kilrush.

Farming & the Economic War:
Tom tells about the only markets were to Britain, de Valera's involvement, the fading out of the annuities paid by the Irish farmers to the British Government twice yearly in May & November & the sanctions on cattles and the 2 Land Acts.

0:20:35 – 0:20:59
LDF/FCA & OTHER CLUBS –

Tom was a member of the LDF & went to training camps around Munster; he was secretary of the local boxing club.

0:20:59 – 0:22:03
MUSIC, DANCING & SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENT –

Tom doesn't recall house dances at his family's house; says his family were not

musical & that he'd â€œhardly know a jig from a reelâ€.

Corofin Dance Hall: the former fever hospital, next to the workhouse became a dance hall before St. Patrick's Hall was built.

Going on Cuaird:
Tom says that less called to his house as it was further in from the main road.

0:22:03 – 0:22:50
SPORT & SPORTS DAYS –

Tom says â€œlittle time for devilmentâ€ as much work to be done in his youth; always held a great interest in sports; hurling & football played locally; recalls the annual Sports Days held at the Fair Green in Corofin; Tom credits Sonny Murphy, Kilnaboy with his interest in athletics; tells about Sonny who travelled by boat to the Los Angeles Olympics in 1932 with 3 others then collapsed in his race due to the heat.

Few had papers & no radio then to get sports reports; national papers – 1p; he recalls placard outside local shop with the score of Clare hurling's team loss by a goal in All-Ireland final in 1932; Tom abhorred the â€œbanâ€ & gives his reasons why.

0:29:05 – 0:29:43
BALLYPORTRY CASTLE –

Tom gives some information about the castle nearby; built in 1442; abandoned up to 20-30 years ago; goats lived in it; renovated by American Bob Browne some years ago; presently owned by Wallace man & available for renting.

0:29:43 – 0:30:05
WORLD EVENTS –

Tom lived through the Depression 1929-1930, Economic War, World War II & the

Emergency.

0:30:05 – 0:30:27
EMIGRATION –

His sister was the only family to leave Ireland (to England as a nun). Locals mostly went to England to work in the coalmines.

0:30:27 – 0:31:42
CHURCH, MISSIONS, STATIONS & HOLY WELLS –

Tom recalls house stations held twice a year probably up to 50s; a priest & 2 curates in Corofin in the past; recalls the missions held every few years; St. Winifred's Holy Well on main Corofin-Kilnaboy: cure for sore eyes; he received his Confirmation in Corofin; Tom attends church in Corofin (in Connolly/Kilnaboy/Rath parish); most of his people are buried in Coad graveyard;Tom attended the Famine memorial stone ceremony in 2010.

0:31:42 – 0:32:03
BUILDINGS IN COROFIN AREA –

Tom talks about Inchiquin house owned by Harbisons; he mentions the former workhouse near the present school.

Gardai & stations in the area:
Tom recalls a sergeant and 4 guards in the past in village & a station in nearby Maurice's Mills barracks; now there is no station in the area.

0:32:03 – 0:32:56
COMPARING LIFE NOW TO PAST & CHANGES –

Big changes; more houses; he comments on many new family names in the area; some public houses now closed down; less shops.

0:32:56 – 0:34:19
PRESENT DAY LIFE –

Tom does not go to pubs unless for social events;
he has been smoking since he was in national school though he has tried to give them up; he recalls buying 5 Woodbines for 2p;
he has some interest in politics though he is not a member of any party;
he enjoys living in rural Corofin (â€œthe savage loves its native shoreâ€);
he mentions the tourism value of the Burren; he can see Mullagh Mor from his land;
he still drives his tractor; he has some cattle and does some farming;
he has many nieces & nephews living nearby, some of whom called on the days of our recordings.