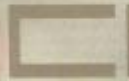




Through the Ages

*Stories of yesteryear as told
by the children of today*



Clár Éire Iddánach
*Creative Ireland
Programme*
2017-2021



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Western People

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Fighting bulls... and a tricky question from the Bishop

Reporter: PATRICK GARVEY (age 25),
 Scoll Raffair, Castlebar
 Interviewing: His grandfather
 George Garvey

MY Grandad was born on July 28, 1928. His home house was in Dillonbrook, also known as Corroelick North, Co. Galway. He lived in a shabby cottage with his five brothers, three sisters, Mum and Dad. The house had four rooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs. They got light from oil lamps, heat from fire and they cooked by putting a pot over the fire with the food inside. They mostly ate cabbage, turnip and potatoes, grown from their own garden, with bacon or beef from their own pigs and cows.

But it wasn't easy on the farm. Two of my grandad's uncles were killed by bulls, my grandad fought a bull at the age of 19 and his dad fought a bull at the age of 70!

He walked to school with his eldest brother PJ. His school was in Dalgan so it was a pretty long walk. He wore short pants, a shirt and a jumper knitted by his mum. His favourite subject was



The senior Gaelic football team from St Jarlath's College in Tuam pictured in 1959-60. The team, which included several students from Co Mayo, went on to win the Hogan Cup. Picture: Western People Archive

maths and he didn't have a least favourite subject. There was only one classroom in the school. Junior Infants to fourth class were on one side and third to seventh class were on the other. Each side of the classroom had a fire that burned turf.

The teachers were very strict. One time the teacher thought my grandad was talking. He got hit with a ruler on the hand as a punishment even though he didn't do any-

thing. Later on that day, the teacher heard my Grandad's dad was coming to pick up my Grandad that day. So the teacher gave my Grandad a penny to buy some sweets.

My Grandad made his Confirmation in third class. It was the bishop's first year so they held up paper flags and did a guard of honour when he arrived. Every class chooses a student to answer some questions from the bishop. My Grandad was called up and he

was asked: 'What is the difference between a sacrament and a sacrifice?'

My Grandad was the only child to go to St Jarlath's Boarding School from his school that year. There was an entrance exam at the start of the year and if you came in the top three you would get put through secondary school free. My Grandad came fourth, which was very good seeing as the top three students were prepared for the exam by their parents, who were teachers. He just missed out so he only had to pay £30 a year instead of £35.

My Grandad really enjoyed St Jarlath's and he was upset when it was time to go to college. His dad wanted him to become a vet because there weren't many vets back then so the pay was very good and he was practically a vet himself. But my Grandad wanted to be earning money as quickly as possible, and seeing as the course to become a vet took then was seven years, he decided to become a teacher instead. His dad was so mad he didn't talk to him for a week



but after a while his anger subsided.

After my Grandad finished his two years in college in Drumcondra he started looking for a job. In 1948, he acted as principal for the president of the IEO in Lisacul, Ballyshadereen, Co. Roscommon, until March 1949 when he got a job as the principal in Kilgerran National School, near Tuam. It was said in the local newspaper he was the youngest principal in Ireland but it wasn't confirmed. He was definitely one of the youngest though.

In 1967, he became the vice-principal in Milltown National School and stayed there until 1988. My Grandad now lives beside Milltown school at the age of 91! I could've told you hundreds of other stories because my grandad George Garvey has one of the best memories ever, which is one of the reasons why he's the best Grandad ever.



A woman brings in turf from a stack outside a cottage in the 1950s. Picture: Getty Images