



Name: Mrs Margaret O'Connell

From: Claregalway

Age: 84

Interviewers: Tara Forde & Martina Hughes

Date: 14th June 1991

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- Tara** **What type of farming did you practice?**
- Margaret Dairy, now we are at Dairy.
- Tara** **Are you long here?**
- Margaret I'm here now since 1937.
- Tara** **Is there much of a difference between farming since 1937?**
- Margaret Oh, there is... there was no dairy around the place at that time ... there was tillage, potatoes, oats, beet.
- Tara** **Did you use the Harrow Plough?**
- Margaret The plough, the horses ... before that, the scythe they had ... they had them a year or two when I came here ... they had no plough. When I got married, the war started in 1939 and everything was so scarce.
- Tara** **How did you feel?**
- Margaret T'was very hard, alright. There was no price for potatoes, or anything or hay.
- Tara** **Did you have any rationing cards?**
- Margaret Oh, we had the rationing cards, that's right ... for the butter, clothes ... and for the tea, I suppose and sugar.
- Tara** **Tell me about the clothes?**
- Margaret We had rations on them.
- Tara** **Do you know anything about the FCA?**

Margaret My husband was in that ... I used to go out with him in the night time on duty.

Tara Did he keep watch on the roads?

Margaret That time.... about the Carnmore area.

Tara Do you know anything about the Carnmore Ambush?

Margaret No, I don't know anything about that.

Tara What opinions did the people have during the war?

Margaret The war in Ireland? I wasn't here at all that time.

Tara Did your husband say anything about it?

Margaret He did, he said something about someone was killed or something...

Tara How about World War II?

Margaret Things were scarce.

Tara Did you have electricity when you came here?

Margaret No.

Tara What townland is this?

Margaret Claregalway.

Tara What did your husband think (about the war)?

Margaret Things were bad Trying to be managing.

Tara Did you find electricity an advantage? Did you find it great?

Margaret It was great, electric iron and kettle we hadn't.

Tara How about the water?

Margaret The water was very scarce go as far as the bridge go down and bring two buckets

Tara **How did you manage for washing then?**

Margaret We'd get the tub and wash them.

Tara **So, how did you manage for transport?**

Margaret We had the bus down there at Claregalway, do you know ... while the war was on, I don't think there was no bus at all going.

Tara **Do you know the name of the bus?**

Margaret No, I don't.

Tara **Was it supplied by the government?**

Margaret I don't know someone that started it in Galway.

Tara **Did you go to the markets in Galway?**

Margaret I used to go when the bus ... an odd time.

Tara **Would your husband go at all?**

Margaret He used to go with hay and potatoes ... bad price... potatoes were only about a shilling at that time.

Tara **Did you have sheep?**

Margaret No.

Tara **Did you have cows?**

Margaret We had a few.

Tara **Did you bring the milk to the dairy after 1960?**

Margaret Yes.

Tara **Did your husband ever fish on the River Clare?**

Margaret No.

Tara **During the war, did many people go fishing?**

Margaret They could be poaching, and I wouldn't know anything about it ... enough to mind the children.

Tara Did you know anything about the occupants of the castle?

Margaret They were gone out of it that time .. I heard something.

Tara Do you know anything about the friary?

Margaret No, I heard things about that too.

Tara Do you know anything about the Black and Tans?

Margaret No... they were in Spiddal.... I was very young.

Tara Were you frightened?

Margaret Yes, we were frightened.

Tara Traders, when you came to Claregalway ... who was the local carpenter?

Margaret Michael Skerritt.

Tara Were they good at their jobs?

Margaret Yeah, they were very good at their jobs ... shoeing the horses and all that...

Tara Do you know anything about the flat-bottomed boats?

Margaret Oh, I don't know.

Tara Did the carpenter make anything for you?

Margaret Oh... he made the carts wheels...

Tara Did he do a good job?

Margaret Yeah.

Tara How much did he charge?

Margaret We'd pay him... sure we'd pay him out.

Tara **Was Tom Forde a good thatcher?**

Margaret My husband was a thatcher.... he's from Kiniska.

Tara **Do you know anything about Canon Moran?**

Margaret Fr. Coen would tell you Canon Moran was contrary. We were at his funeral. Sean T. O'Kelly came out there... he'd (Canon Moran) go mad if he was alive today with the kids.

Tara **Was he very religious?**

Margaret He was a good priest. (Parish records) - some priest went out to collect money to finish church.... parish priest got killed, housekeeper burned them.

Tara **Was that in the Connacht Tribune?**

Margaret It was ... Fr. Coen is writing a book... page in Connacht Tribune... few years ago.

Tara **Were there any quacks?**

Margaret No.

Tara **Would you go to the doctor or use home cure first?**

Margaret I'd try the doctor.

Tara **What was Doctor Joyce like?**

Margaret He was good.

Tara **Did you have your children in the house?**

Margaret I had them all in the house except the oldest... he was born in Galway.

Tara **Nurse Keane was the midwife?**

Margaret She's dead a long time. She was a widow, she had two sons. She was a good nurse... 10 shillings she charged for medicine, you know.

Tara **Were there many complicated births?**

Margaret The doctor would come then...

Tara **Where'd you meet your husband?**

Margaret He came back to Spiddal.... somebody introduced me to him...went for a walk...there was no dance at that time.

Tara **Did you go to the pictures?**

Margaret I think once, that's all.... we had no televisions... nothing...only playing ball around the field, that's all, sliding on ice...

Tara **Would you make your own 'skate' for sliding on the ice?**

Margaret You'd make your own.

Tara **Do you have names on the fields here?**

Margaret The "Gabhrans" ..." The Field" ..." Beet Garden" ...sow beet in it the first year, called that ever since.... riosca...crosan back to the field (passage for going across), stile then...people would come up from mass and go out the stile near bridge.

Tara **Would many people have cars going to mass?**

Margaret They used to cycle and go in carts, traps.

Tara **Do you know anything about the old school?**

Margaret No, I don't know anything about it all.

Tara **What age was Canon Moran when he died?**

Margaret Over 70.

Tara **Did you hear of Fr. Caulfield?**

Margaret He went to Wexford...he's in America...Florida.

