

# MEMORIES OF LAVALLYROE

BY ANNIE HUSSEY

I have good childhood memories of life in the village of Lavallyroe and of my school days in Cloonfad over 80 years ago. Times were very different then as we all walked to school which was a good mile and a half. In Summer, shoes were discarded and we went in our bare feet. Those were the days when we got Summers with plenty of sunshine. There were no school buses or cars then. I remember many years later when the first car arrived in the parish, it was owned by John Fleming of Derryhog.

My first teacher was Miss Mc Hale and then there was Miss Mc Auliff who hailed from Cork and when we annoyed her she would lose her temper and say, "The idea of I having to come up from Cork to teach the ignorant of Cloonfad." Nevertheless we got a good education. In the baby class we had slates and slate pencils, the pencils were made of a slate like material and we carried them in a small case. Those were handed out by the teacher and collected again at the end of the class. Apart from the usual subjects of English, History, Geography, and Arithmetic, we had cookery classes and we made scones, brown bread, potatoe cakes, and we cooked Porridge, Boiled Bacon and Cabbage, and Irish Stew. All plain and nutritious food very much in keeping with the war years. We all wore white aprons and cuffs made with our own hands and one of the teachers would stand by to see we did things properly. We had to do all this cooking again under the eye of a Domestic Economy Teacher; a special Day of Examination. It was very interesting. We also had singing classes, and we all sang in the choir. Delia Cosgrove, Lavallyroe was our organist in those days. Bina Mulkiene from Parke and later Kathleen O'Callaghan. (Mrs) O'Regan, Mount Delvin, Sean O'Regan's mother, she often threatened us she'd put the key ring into our mouths to make us open them. In my

early school days we had no Irish taught in the school. It was only introduced to the curriculum when I was in 6th. or 7th. standard which would have been early 1920's, Civil War time. We ate our lunches in the school yard. Brown bread and home-made butter and a bottle of milk. Each class room had its own big fireplace. We all had to bring sods of turf under our arms to school each day to keep warm. We were all called up in our turns to warm ourselves at the fire. I have memories of coming home from school and crossing into a field of turnips where we pulled one and banged it on the stonewall to clean and skin it and this tasted so sweet.

Religion played a big part in our lives. At lunch time we would go across the road to the old church and say the Rosary and sing a hymn. The old school then was on the opposite side of the present day school. In every home the Rosary was recited after tea and we often laughed when the young kitten would run across the floor and jump for the swinging Rosary beads. I remember an old man from Gurteen by the name of Tom Cassidy and he said the rosary every Sunday before last Mass. There were some seats on the side aisle but more often than not we knelt on the bare floor in the main aisle which had no seats. We never missed the October Devotions in Cloonfad. The rosary was said every evening for the whole month of October and young and old went to it. That was in Fr. Martin Loftus's time. The Sacred Heart Sodality started around 1900. The men wore a large medal of the Sacred Heart pinned onto the lapel of their coat, on their Sodality Sunday. The women wore the medals attached to a wide ribbon around their necks and one shilling was collected from each member, men and women, once a month. A procession in honour of St. Patrick was held every 17th. of March. The people carried banners and wore a green sash around their shoulders. The

Fife and Flute Band played the National Airs. My brother Paddy played in this band. The choir sang hymns in honour of St. Patrick. Apart from that there was the annual procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction at the Barracks and again after returning to the church. On one occasion Benediction was held in the flower garden at the gable of the priests' house. I still have the picture of Owen Mc Cormack and my brother Paddy, Peg and myself kneeling in the garden and singing the benediction. We had erected the altar at the gable of the priests house.

I went to school until I was 14. Miss Mc Auliffe had retired and we had Monica Fahey, (Mrs. Flood) Lavallyroe who became principal. She taught us Irish dancing and we competed in a feish held in the Convent ground in Ballyhaunis and we won a medal. My pals going to school were Nellie Fleming, Lavallyroe, Delia Waldron, Nonie Mulkeane, Parke, Mary Connaughton and Sally Walshe, Ballykilleen. Those girls emigrated to the U.S.A. and Sally entered the convent. My other pal Maggie Mc Walter married Cribben of Johnstown, Nora Glannon of Fidduane married in her own village, Nora Mulkeane married Murphy in Glenamaddy.

As time went on we all helped on the farm, haymaking, harvesting, picking potatoes, and saving turf. We had our social side of life too. Our house was a great house for visitors at night. My two brothers Tom and Paddy were great musicians. The dances were called the half set, the Shot Tisha, Stack of Barley, the High Called Cap, the Fairy Reel and one called Paddy Murphy and the Bridge of Athlone. All those dances were very popular in those days. There were other good musicians in the village too, Joe Waldron, Austin Godfrey, Rose Joyce, Luke Joyce, Mary Kate Fleming, my brother Mick Glynn did a bit on the accordian and my mother

played the Concertina. Many good sessions of music and dance were held in those peoples houses too. Card playing was another pass time, there was no going to pubs in those days. Later on in life Gannons Hall was opened in Cloonfad and we had good innocent fun a whole bunch of us walking to and from the Hall. Apart from anything we worked hard, twice a day water had to be brought from the well and we often walked on top of the fence or ditch as we couldn't trample on meadows. Water for domestic use was brought in a barrel. Big pots of potatoes were boiled on the open fire maybe two and three in the day for pigs and bonhams (some slavery) and the hens, about 60, every housekeeper kept around that. The basket of eggs was taken out to the eggler, a Mr. Byrne from Ballyhaunis. The money from the eggs would pay for all the groceries for the week and sometimes we had change back. Two or three milking cows were kept in nearly every farm and some dry stock. The milk supplied the family and some of it was set in basins to churn after a few days and we would have our own Butter for the week. Sheep were kept on the farm too. Lambs were sold out in the Summer. Sheep were shorn and some of the wool was sold. The woman of the house carded and spun what was left and knitted socks for her husband and sons in the house. A pig or two was killed within the year and cured and packed in Bacon boxes. Good solid Bacon but a bit salty. Fresh meat was only bought on Tuesday, market day in Ballyhaunis as was bags

of stuff for feeding such as Indian Meal, bag Bran, Linseed, Clarindo, and a bag of Flour. When the bags were finished they were washed to take the brands out. It was hard, they were first soaked in Washing Soda, scrubbed on the wash board and bath and finally boiled. Those bags made lovely sheets and pillow cases. I remember the Lime kiln my brother Mick had. He had to break the Lime stones with a sledge hammer into small pieces and a layer of those were put into the Kiln and a layer of turf. That was repeated until the Kiln was filled up. He would have to stay up all night while it was burning to keep adding turf so it wouldn't go out. We would have that lovely lime to white wash the kitchen, the house outside and walls of the building. That Kiln of lime lasted for a long time. There was no time wasted in those days everybody worked hard and it didn't do anything on them. In my fathers younger days they kept a priest in the house, Fr. John Mc Greal, I heard his name mentioned so often I could never forget. He kept a horse and my Aunt Mary would feed the horse and brush him down before Fr. John set out to say Mass in Cloonfad and visit the sick. He was 8 years in our house and the next priest that replaced him stayed in Pat Dwyers, as there was no priests house in Cloonfad in those years.

There was an odd Traveller on the road sometimes referred to as tramps, but they were harmless. Whatever house they called on, they always got something to eat. People were

generous even though poor they always had something to give. A very tall man came fairly regularly to the village, we called him Jim. He always picked every bit of paper along the road and carried it in his bag on his back. (Hence he got his name)

I think of those days and years with fond memories. I loved my village, we were a happy lot, we played many games and enjoyed ourselves. Many clergy came from the families in Lavallyroe; Bishop O'Regan, Fr. Hosty, Cannon O'Dwyer, Dean Dalton, and Cardinal Dalton's father was born in Lavallyroe and all the Fr. Loftus's, they tell me seven in all. My cousin in Dublin has a picture of one of them and then in later years Fr. Des Fahey, Fr. Frank Fahey, Fr. Brendan Fahey, and Fr. Kieran and Fr. Flood and Mother Monica Fahey.

I go back home as often as I can. Things have changed, so many have gone away and so many gone to their rest. While I have links there I'll always have nature for the village I was born and reared in ■



Thomas Moore Lavallyroe with Peg Glynn (left) and Mary Glynn.



All the Cousins gathered at Glynn's. The Morans, The Moran (Billy's), Katie Dwyers daughter and Nora McManus.



Michael Molloy, Guranne (Bobby Molloy's father).