

Some Cloonfad History

by Local Historian in conversation with JACK RONANE AND ANNE REGAN

The nearest village to Dunmore just over two hundred years ago was Lavallyroe. There were lots of villages with names, which were known in olden times e. g. Ballinamurca, Sliabh, Oileann. There were three villages in West Cloonfad known as Kiltobar, Pollinalty East, Pollinalty West. Sliabh Garabh was known at one end of Pollinalty, and Sliabh Aireann at the other end. Collisker, although not on the map was a village name know from years gone by. It means "The water on the wood".

The first church in Cloonfad was built in approximately 1832, and at the same time a school was built at the back of the Priests house. John Kirwan gave the land for the church and the school. There is a piece of the existing wall still remaining near the community centre. There were a few little churches around the parish before 1832, there was one in Teampalainn Mhuire in Pollinalty, there was also a small church in Kiltobar, and a church in Cloonfad where the Priests house is built at present. In 1902 when the next school was built, the old school was turned into a Priest house. The present church was built in 1932. Before the Priest's house was built, the Priest lived in a house, which was at the back of William Melias house up the back road by the Church. Later on the Priest lived in Dwyer's house in Lavallyroe.

The first business house i. e. Pub, shop etc. in Cloonfad was owned by a Stephen Ronane. The old folks told that a few families named Quinn owned the general area in Cloonfad at one time. The Quinn man was supposed to have divided his property in three between his three sons, and it is believed that Stephen Ronane married Quinn's daughter and took over the business. This was situated where Keane's pub is presently. Stephen Ronane came from Ballykilleen and is a relative of Jack Ronane, Ballykilleen, Stephen had three daughters and three sons. This premises was sold to Pat Burke in approximately 1918, his son died with the Black Flu in 1918. Then it was sold to Birmingham's in the late 1930's, and was finally taken over by Mick and Peter Keane in 1952.

Mike McCormack from Derryhog and his brother John McCormack owned a pub in Cloonfad at one time. There was a family of McCormacks who were shoemakers in Cloonfad where Egan's pub is now. It was mostly hand made shoes at that time. One of

the McCormack brothers bought land from Wynne who was married to Heneghan on the Claremorris Road. He had a garden and house on the Claremorris Road, the house got burned down and he was advised to build beside where the old house of

Derryhog tried to take over the business. He had also at that time bought land from John Kirwan who was a Landlord, where Melia's is now. A settlement was made for either the land or the pub, but he said no and it went to law and the lot was lost. The pub was sold to Fitzmaurices in the early 1900's.

Lavin the schoolteacher who taught in Cloonfad approximately 120 years ago was from Frenchpark and lived where Kilraines lived, now owned by Straters. James Flood came to Cloonfad in the early 1920's from Cavan. Floods ran a thriving business where Glennon's live now. They were in the grocery, hardware, farm supplies, cattle feeds etc. and had large storage sheds at the back.

Peter Glennon came from Cloonarkin, and lived where Straters are now. He built a two-storey house there, not as big as it is now. He had a shop there too. There were a lot of shops in Cloonfad at that time and it was hard for them all to do business. There was also a shop owned by Pat Burke over the Williamstown Road, where Jennings house is now. It was a two-storey house, which has since been knocked.

William Hebron lived up the road by Church, he was a Grand Uncle to Mickey Higgins. He went to England in his youth and sometime later a policeman was shot in Manchester, and it was said that William had an argument with him some time before that. A man called Peace that shot the policeman, he was believed to have been one of the biggest criminals since the 18th Century. Peace was assisting the police with the crime, and he was the culprit himself. Hebron was charged with the crime and was given a life sentence. After five years Peace was caught and confessed that Hebron was an innocent man and to let him go. There was a conflict of interest between Hebron and the Policeman over a lady friend, which pointed the finger at Hebron in the wrong. However, Hebron was released and he got £800 compensation, which was an awful lot of money in the late 1800's or very early in 1900. He did not receive an education, as was the norm in those days, he started running pubs in Manchester, but unfortunately his money ran out. He and his brother decided to go to America. There was a lot of disease and fever on the ships to America in those days.

Approx 1918, black cholera was rampant, and alas they both caught the disease and died on their way to America.



Bill Head from James Flood, Grocer, Tea and Provision Merchant, General Hardware and Fancy Goods - August 1946

Heneghans was. Heneghan then sold a garden to John McCormack and he built a pub on it about fifty years ago. The pub built across the road was owned by Jim Loftus from Hollymount (where Egan's is now). This building was burnt down in 1922 during the troubled times. This is how those houses came to be on the cross-roads. Jack Fitzmaurice built the house where John O'Malley's is now. McDonnell was also a pub owner in Cloonfad, he built a new pub.

Pat Diffley came down from Sliabh and built the house where O'Malley's home is today. They opened a shop there and after a time they got involved in politics and went to Galway and opened an eating house. When that was sold Falty the schoolteacher came to live there.

John McCormack had no family and unfortunately got into bad health and the ship went to deck, his brother Mike in