

### **School & Education – School Work, Poverty etc**

I was born in nineteen nineteen. You usually started school when you were five years old. That would have been nineteen twenty four them times the conditions in the school was poor very poor there was two classrooms there was what you called infants second class and when we passed into third class they move from the front doors into the principals room The teacher Mrs Fee was the teacher in infants and second class and she also took on all the girls for cookery class and she cooked in an old black cooker it was in aid of the cookery classes The masters room was just like an open fire a grate surrounded by a fireplace.

Conditions would have been bad I would have said the classrooms would have been rat infested and that is without a doubt There was a pal of mine that I went to school with of Paddy Joe Goodfellow of Tullyleek Seamus Goodfellow would be a relation of his, he and I were very close. I remember in the old classroom there was the maps of Ireland the maps of the world and all standing up different lengths and there was a rat came in there was a rat hole under the back door at the back of the school and there was a rat that came in scurrying in behind these maps and Paddy Joe Goodfellow he took like a shaft rolled up and he just banged up, the rat went into the corner he just banged in and killed the rat he raced in and lifted the rat by the tail he said "look master, look master he said "you dirty boy, get that outside" children them times were badly clad no vests badly clad.

There was the rare family I'm not going to mention no names who were privileged some of their fathers would be cattle dealers, some of their fathers were publicans and so on, but the people from the poor houses in the village and especially the people from small poor farms like ourselves the people them people was very very badly done. No money coming in children was going to school maybe had the backside out of their trousers Fr Peter would say to them I never saw the good old days he could talk about the good old days people was happier people had to because they knew no difference because even to get

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flour to bake bread I was in that old school which is going to be demolished. There was a family reared in the gate lodge up beside the back entrance, we took it down at a time before the convent me and my two brothers. There was family that lived in that there were seven maybe eight of them one of them came to me. The father was out of a job, he was in the horse trade, he was a great man for getting the horses ready for the fairs in them days he would have worked in Garvagh the horse would have been going good at that time he was a big man a manager of a football team getting the team ready was like getting a horse ready we would have played a bit of football on the road that was our playground that the girls might of played there was no traffic on the roads there might have been the odd lorry they were that slow on the road you had plenty of time to get up on the footpath we used to play up and down the roads. This chap come to the gates and wagged me over and there wasn't much there he said to me could you ask your mother could my mother get a few pints of butter milk their father would have been out of a job as the horse trade began to slip so I went home and said to my mother there was very little to give away but she says to tell the woman to come up and I'll divide with her they had no money but my mother gave her the butter milk threw her a bit of bread for to rear the family then the husband got a job again with Lavery's in the Moy horse trade lavery's and he got money coming in again but this lady when she came up to my mother she had nothing for the milk he got his job again she landed and gave a packet of biscuits to my mother that the way do you understand lots of families if I had it say if you we never seen each other stuck when we left school my brother left school about thirteen years of age you were out to a job the job you had was a farm laborer the brother was the same it was only twenty five pence a week it was money the bread was cheap loaves were cheap plus the fact on the horizon was the rumors of war and the fee started to lift they started to give farmers for putting in an acre of corn they gave him fifty pence an acre ten shillings an acre he thought that was great especially the poor farmer that was a wee bit of a lift from that there that's as far as I can go to that point now I was in nineteen and thirty nine my wages was seventy five pence a week.

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