

## **Village Life Part One**

I grew up in a farm in nineteen fourteen and I've lived in the village ever since. When I first remember the village every body in the village was employed in the village. There was the soap works, the farm yard, the Brewery was on the way out as I remember. You had the railway station and all the big houses employed servants and men gardeners and all this type of thing. Now it has all changed from that, the Post Office was were Sinnamons carry out is and you had five houses between Sinnamons and the way into Ivy Bank and the new school was built on the street in the nineteen thirties. It demolished ten houses to make room for the entrance to the school.

In those houses all the old characters in the village, you had a barber shop, you had a cobbler, you had a butcher shop Larry Conlon the grave digger, you had Henry Cassidy. Most of the characters of the village lived there. They knocked down those ten houses, most of them people all scattered away. You had the forge, the two Johnson brothers, Jimmy Johnston and Tommy Johnston. You heard them in Malachis song 'does anvil still ring in the forge' and then on top of the street from Grimes up is much as it always was. There wasn't as much leisure time as there is now. The wages weren't big but you survived. When school was over I would go down and work in Ivy Bank which belonged to Mr David Brown and Mrs Brown.

I weeded the garden and brought in coal and sticks to do for the next morning, kiffled at things like that for a good while, spent a long time at that and went to school and left and more or less full time. My father worked in the farm yard and my brothers worked in the Soap works. All the people in the village was employed in the village. There was no movement of labourers until Clontoe started and then the lorries came in, from that time and all the workers went out onto different places that's in the distance. Now everybody's going in cars, buses to Belfast, nobody working in the village now at all. It's like everything else, you stayed in bed as long as you could and you got up. In your working days you

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went to work. My father, he got up very early, he worked in the farm yard, my brothers worked in the Soap Works.

I think farming at that time was a wonderful job. There was about fifteen men worked in the farm yard in the village on the right hand side as you come in. Fifteen men worked there and they had twelve horses. Two of them horses worked from the Soap Works to the train station, taking soap and candles down to the railway, dispatching away and another drawing back coal to the Soap Works.

Ladies were dressed in you see the photographs in the Coleen cloaks, green and red cloaks and the men were some of the men had nice jobs some of them hadn't as nice. The boiler man firing the boiler he was different, I think they were covered in shelter and they had more or less the chemists and experts for to guide them through I think the farm yard was in my estimation, it was the most important. Old men there that couldn't maybe write their name, they would tell you by feeling in their bones or what the stars was like what the weather was going to be like next week and they could operate like that. They cut the hay and all that ideas just with pure knowledge of the atmosphere.

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