

Seanchas Ìle

HERITAGE ARCHIVE

Gathering moss

LM: Lena McKeurtan

EE: Emily Edwards

LM: Well, we gathered moss, sphagnum moss, that's the best sort because it's soft and it's good. It takes a lot of water, it hold a lot of water.

EE: Right.

LM: And we gathered it at the time of the last war. It was Mrs S-----, it was her that gathered it, up at Dunlossit castle.

EE: Uh-huh.

LM: ...She gave us a place up at Dunlossit...one of the outhouses, I can't remember what they did with it there but we had it and there was a table and...there were clean sheets over it and we would take cars up to the moor at *Caoineag Airidh* , that's about four miles from Ballygrant.

EE: Oh right.

LM: Up there collecting the moss and putting it in, well, anything, bags or baskets or something and then taking them home and going up to Dunlossit here and putting them out on these tables and we picked out the hard pieces that would be in them.

EE: Uh-huh.

LM: And drying it, you know, it was nice and soft...There were cotton or linen bags or something and I would fill these bags with the moss and they would be used as bandages.

EE: Right.

LM: Bandages for, I think, stopping blood, it was porous...

EE: I see, yes.

LM: They weren't for small fine bandages, small things but pads, they were...similar to pads...That's they job that we done, we didn't have anything to do with sending them away it was her that sent them away or wherever they went. I don't know where they went.

EE: And how many people were involved?

LM: What was that?

EE: Who was involved in it? And how many?

LM: Och well, there would be perhaps ten women gathering here. It was anyone who was willing to help, they would go. And this place he had, outhouses...I think it was the place where the...a long time ago they had cars and chauffeurs and everything and it was always the drivers that stayed up in the outhouses...And in those places, it was only big rooms similar to sheds...It would have tables, I would take a table...just the big wooden tables for Mrs S-----, you know, because the moss was lying out on them until it dried and you would get the wee bits. Other [types] of moss are hard, when it becomes dry it's hard with lots of stumps but sphagnum moss, it's good and soft. That's it...the one thing that we kept, everything else we threw away.

EE: Yes, I've heard that it worked very well, that it was good for wound and things.

LM: Yes. It was good for...just porous pad, you know. It left water, it didn't come out of it. It was spongy, you know, and it would hold the water. Och that was it, it was years, as long as the war was on. I think they did it other places as well, she was, Mrs S-----, she was involved with the Red Cross.

EE: Oh right.

LM: There you have it, that's the work she did.