Severe Weather

It was the year of the big snow 1947. My grandad James Martin O’Malley was twelve years old and this is what he remembers.

He had a lovely pair of brown shoes. He went outside and got them all wet because the snow was up to his knees. He went back in to dry them in front of the fire and left them there and forgot about them. When he went back to check on them, one was half burned!

The snow was six feet deep in the fields. It was the 28th of February and it didn’t melt away fully until June. My great grandad Patrick O’Malley discovered that he had only three sheep left out of one hundred and fifty in the mountain. In some houses, when they opened their doors, a load of snow would fall in.

People in the parish died at that time, they found it very difficult trying to get them to the graveyard to bury them. They would usually bring them in a horse and cart.

People who had their potatoes in pits in their gardens found it very tough to get to them. All their turf was wet and they tried to find timber where they could. My other great grandad William Ferrins married my great grandmother Eileen Mone (Armagh) in February 1947 in England and came home to Furnoyle. My great granny had never been in Mayo before and when the snow finally melted, she thought the rocks were something the snow had left behind. It was the first time she had ever seen fields with rocks in them.

Writer: Shauna Navin, Fennon
Teller: James M. O’Malley