

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	20 th Jan 2011
Location	Seamus's home, near Clonmel ,Co. Tipperary
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seamus Leahy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1934 Home County: Tipperary
Education	Primary: Nenagh NS, Co. Tipperary Secondary: Nenagh CBS, Co. Tipperary Third Level: University College Dublin
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Kay), 3 sons & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Éire Óg GAA Nenagh [Tipperary]; Boherlahan Dualla GAA [Tipperary]; St Mary's GAA Clonmel [Tipperary]
Occupation	Secondary School Teacher [Retired]
Parents' Occupation	Clerk of Works, Tipperary County Council (Fa); Housewife (Mo)
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Cumann Gaelach; various mental health organisations

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Date of Report	22 nd August 2012
Period Covered	1900s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Tipperary, Cork, Great Britain, England, Kerry, Americas, USA, Carlow, Africa, The Congo, Nigeria
Key Themes Covered	Coaching, Administration, Education, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, GAA Abroad, Culture, All-Ireland, Irish History, Family Involvement, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Seamus discusses the Tubberadora hurling team. He recalls local lore regarding the team and its style of play. He talks about the influence that sports writers had in his younger days, referencing a number of writers. Seamus analyses the intermingling of the GAA and the world of Irish politics in the 1920s, referencing the War of Independence and the Civil War. He recalls tales he heard of hurlers from the past, and the role of folklore in Irish culture. Seamus recalls the years of the Second World War, and also discusses his own school days. He describes hurling matches that were organised during his childhood. He discusses the attitude to Gaelic football in the Nenagh area, providing an historical oversight of the game in the area. He also recalls other, non Gaelic, sports that were played in the area. Seamus provides a summary of the history of the GAA clubs in Nenagh, detailing how the present Éire Óg club came into being. He discusses the differences between town and rural clubs, before talking about his time in UCD, where he played hurling. Seamus describes his time in the Republican movement, analysing the ideologies of the time. He proceeds to discuss his time teaching in Africa. He details events which occurred there, and describes listening to All-Ireland finals on the radio. He concludes by discussing his time teaching in Rockwell College, describing the relationship between rugby and GAA in the college during his time there.</p> <p>00:01 Seamus discusses the Tubberadora team. Mentions summer of 1942 and World War Two. Recalls the local lore regarding Tubberadora. Mentions location between Thurles and Cashel. Recalls history of the club. Recalls knowing players from every Tipperary All-Ireland winning hurling team, bar one. Describes challenges faced by team off the pitch. Mentions 1798 and the role that Tubberadora played – The Battle of Tubberadora. Mentions Professor Ruan O'Donnell, Wolfe Tones' diaries. Mentions his grand-uncle Tom Leahy, founder and president of the Tubberadora club. Recalls All-</p>

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	<p>Ireland hurling win in 1898. Recalls later successes of Moycarkey, Two-Mile-Borris, Thurles Blues with Tom Semple as captain.</p> <p>09:35 Talks about Mikey Maher, captain of Tubberadora. Mentions Moycarkey, Two-Mile-Borris, Thurles Blues and Tom Semple. Recalls the folklore surrounding Mikey Maher.</p> <p>11:46 Mentions the Walsh family - Johnny, Dick and Denis. Mentions the River Tray and the River Suir – discusses the tradition that surrounds it. Mentions his grand-uncle Tom Lee's mill. Also mentions Walsh's Gleann and St Brigid. Mentions Johnny Connolly hurling with the Walsh brothers. Recalls hurling at the cross of Tubberadora. Also mentions Ned Maher, goalkeeper for Tubberadora and his son Jimmy Maher who played in 1945 All-Ireland Hurling Final.</p> <p>17:58 Recalls the style of the Tubberadora teams and its effect on future Boherlahan teams. Mentions Tom Lee, Mikey Maher. Recalls meeting in Dwyer's barn. Refers to Ballytarsna Suirview. Meeting led to unification of Tubberadora with these two teams, forming Boherlahan club. Johnny Leahy was captain.</p> <p>20:22 Discusses the influence of sports writers in his younger days. Mentions Green Flag in the Irish Press, Carberry's Annual. Also mentions "Sliabh Rua" Phil O'Neill. Discusses Carberry's Annual – mentions Paddy Mehigan who wrote under the name "Pato". Also had weekly column for Cork Examiner and was also a broadcaster. Recalls story of Carberry broadcasting a Munster Championship match. Moved to Dartmouth Square. Mentions Gussy Mehigan. Recalls piece written before 1949 All-Ireland Hurling Final. Compares Carberry to Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh. Mentions Cluan Anna and Irish coursing. Tells of inheriting Carberry's Annuals from his uncle Johnny. Recalls Carberry covering the deaths of five All-Ireland winning captains in one year. Mentions Jim Kelleher of Dungourney, Cork, Steve O Riordan of Cork, Jack Finlay of Laois, Tom Semple of Tipperary and Dr John Ryan of Dublin.</p> <p>27:36 Discusses ballads printed by Carberry. Discusses memory, mentions being able to recite "Horatius on the Bridge" in full.</p> <p>28:30 Mentions the influence of the GAA on his life. Describes intermingling of GAA memories and the War of Independence. Discusses folk memory in relation to the 1798 Rising and the Battle of Tubberadora, as well as the Civil War. Mentions his grandfather Mikey Leahy. Mentions pride</p>
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	<p>in men such as Dan Breen and Seán Treacy. Recalls Dan Breen's book "My Fight for Irish Freedom".</p> <p>32:40 Discusses hurling folklore. Mentions the old meitheal. Refers to the phrase "The hay saved and Cork bet". Mentions his uncle Johnny regaling them with a story regarding Sailor Gray, former Cork goalkeeper who he had played against in 1918. Mentions Paddy Dwyer, former Tipperary player and Mick Leahy. Refers to controversial incident in 1918 Munster Championship match between Tipperary and Cork. Refers to respect that existed in the GAA for opponents.</p> <p>41:07 Mentions Ga Ahern, former Cork forward, and the respect there was for him. Refers to book regarding Anglo-Irish War – Allegiance, by Bob Brennan from Wexford.</p> <p>43:59 Speaks of the hurlers of old, and the attributes that made them special. Mentions his uncle Johnny and Ga Ahern. Discusses that generation of players in the context of Ireland's fight for independence.</p> <p>45:43 Discusses Michael Collins and his role in the GAA. Mentions his role as treasurer of the London County Board. Mentions Harry Boland and his roles.</p> <p>47:28 Mentions Paddy O'Keeffe, former General Secretary, who fought in the War of Independence. Recalls getting job reference from him in Croke Park.</p> <p>49:47 Mentions Sean O Síocháin, General Secretary. Mentions song "Barr na Sráide". Recalls going to holidays in Ballyferriter and Ballinskellig. Mentions Christy Ring's family.</p> <p>51:40 Discusses the hardship of the war years. Mentions Sean Moylan, Government Minister.</p> <p>53:10 Recalls his school days. Went to national school in Nenagh. Recalls teacher who had a temper. Mentions friend Murty O'Faolain attending 1945 All-Ireland Hurling Final. Recalls Army being demobbed. Mentions the Military Tattoo in Croke Park. Describes replica of the Battle of Benburb. Recalls the discipline in school.</p> <p>58:05 Discusses attending the Christian Brothers school in Nenagh.</p> <p>59:03 Recalls organising matches in his childhood. Mentions the Dublin Road and Islandbawn. Mentions local man Murty Barrett providing apples to the players. Recalls matches with players from the Turnpike, mentions Mick Byrne.</p>
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	<p>1:01:17 Discusses the organisation of Gaelic games in secondary school. Mentions the Croke Cup, Dean Ryan and Harty Cup competitions.</p> <p>1:02:19 Recalls the war years. Mentions article he wrote about those times living on the Dublin Road in Nenagh. Mentions Mick McGrath on Sarsfield Steet in Nenagh who made sliotars. Recalls hurling with tin cans on the Dublin Road, using coats as goals. Recalls using gable ends as handball alleys. Refers to the quarter solid, a small little ball. Recalls handball All-Ireland championships that were held in Croke Park. Recalls history of handball in Nenagh, mentions Joe Bergin, the Hassetts, Jackie Sweeney, who was born in America. Jackie was at the Battle of Normandy, received military decoration from Harry Truman. Recalls story in Irish Press when stand collapsed at Ballina handball centre.</p> <p>1:10:34 Describes playing games on the roads.</p> <p>1:12:02 Discusses the attitude to Gaelic football in Nenagh. Mentions Baile na dTeach Gaelic football team. Meeting in Tubberadora and decided to form a Gaelic football team – weren't allowed to use the name Boherlahan. Mentions Templemore and Loughmore-Castleiney. Mentions Noel McGrath. Recalls man from Carlow, Johnny Dalton, who lived in Nenagh. Also recalls Inane Rovers football team in Roscrea.</p> <p>1:16:55 Recalls other sports in Nenagh. Mentions cricket being played on the road. Refers to rounders also. Recalls shop in Nenagh that sold second-hand balls. Talks about Christy Ring being fond of playing rounders. Remembers rounders becoming popular in Tipperary Town. Mentions tennis, rugby and soccer also.</p> <p>1:22:38 Discusses his involvement with Éire Óg Nenagh. Recalls the hurling in the area. Mentions two clubs – Nenagh Sarsfields and Éire Óg. Mentions Fr Joe Hayes. Describes the Dublin Road as “neutral territory”. Recalls Minor North Tipperary Final against Roscrea. Mentions Dinny Rohan's pub. Also mentions Billy Brien. Mentions St Mary's club. Recalls team getting to semi-final of Dean Ryan Cup. Match was in Cashel against Dungarvan, who beat Sullivan's Quay from Cork in final.</p> <p>1:27:47 Recalls suit lengths tournaments. Mentions tournament in Birr and match against Loughrea. Recalls marking Jim Killeen, brother of John Killeen. Recalls wearing beret during match. Discusses Dan Breen and his attitude to berets. Mentions his brother Sean going to his uncle Paddy's</p>
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	<p>house when Dan Bren was there. Believes that beret may have saved his life. Recalls the confidence engendered by participation in the GAA.</p> <p>1:31:56 Discusses the difference between rural clubs and town clubs. Mentions Tubberadora rivalry with Thurles Sarsfields. Also discusses attitude of country clubs to Nenagh.</p> <p>1:32:56 Recalls hurling in UCD. Describes training sessions there. Mentions Mick Darcy from Tipperary, also mentions Belfield.</p> <p>1:35:30 Recalls Tipperary tour to the United States in 1926, went to San Francisco. Mentions Jack Darcy. Recalls that Free State government would not release the Darcy's from their civil service duties to attend tour. Recalls JJ Walsh, Chairman of Cork County Board and Government Minister. Mentions WT Cosgrave and Joe Stewart.</p> <p>1:38:32 Recalls involvement in republican movement. Mentions attack on barracks in Omagh, describes enlisting in the cause after this. Reflects on his participation in the republican movement. Mentions Joe Christle. Discusses splits in the IRA. Mentions Christle creating the Rás Tailteann and School of Commerce in Rathmines.</p> <p>1:41:30 Recalls involvement in social issues. Mentions Jack Murphy and the unemployed.</p> <p>1:42:56 Discusses his time in UCD.</p> <p>1:44:13 Discusses his time in Africa. Mentions Dwyers pub in Leeson Street. Also mentions Dan Breen. Went teaching in Nigeria. Mentions the Congo and Brazzaville. Recalls listening to All-Ireland Hurling Final on Radio Brazzaville. Mentions Mícheál Ó hÉithir. Married in Nigeria in 1963. Recalls listening to 1963 All-Ireland Hurling Final, Waterford v Kilkenny. Mentions province of Ondo. Recalls playing rugby there at European club in Ibadan. Mentions John Anderson, captain of rugby team. Recalls Gaelic football match played there. Mentions Peter Solan, won All-Ireland with Mayo. Also mentions Pat Rafferty from Belfast and Jack O'Byrne. Recalls priest from Carlow, Fr Tom Gorman, as well as Fr Mick Igoe. Mentions Igbo and Yoruba. Recalls tennis being played.</p> <p>2:01:06 Recalls returning to Ireland, taught in Rockwell College. Discusses relationship between hurling and rugby in the college. Discusses the attitude of the Holy Ghost order to the GAA. Recalls coaching teams in Rockwell. Mentions John</p>
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	Coleman of Millstreet and his brother Billy. Discusses The Ban. Mentions Denis Leamy.
Involvement in GAA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played hurling and football from underage upwards with Éire Ógs; played hurling with UCD
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	PRO and chairman of juvenile club at St Mary's GAA; member of various committees on Tipperary County Board.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:07:49
Language	English

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To be filled in by Interviewer:

I hereby assign the copyright of the content of the above to the GAA Oral History Project on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner. I understand that I am giving the GAA Oral History Project the right to use and make available to the public the content of this interview.

Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 22nd August 2012