

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	12 th May 2011
Location	Eithne's home, near Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Eithne Neville
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1935 Home County: Limerick
Education	Primary: Kilfinny NS, Co. Limerick. Secondary: Sisters of Mercy, Adare, Co. Limerick; Ursuline Convent, Thurles, Co. Tipperary Third Level: University College Dublin.
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers Current Family if Different:
Club(s)	Kilfinny GAA [Limerick]; Croagh-Kilfinny Camogie Club [Limerick]; UCD Camogie Club [Dublin]
Occupation	Teacher
Parents' Occupation	Publicans
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Golf Club membership

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Date of Report	9 th July 2012
Period Covered	1880s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Limerick, Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Antrim, Galway
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Eithne discusses her lifelong involvement in camogie in Limerick and Dublin. She recounts the playing career of her father, Mick Neville, who won All-Ireland hurling medals with Dublin. She describes her own playing career with UCD in the 50s and her participation in the Ashbourne Cup, and she explains her role in reforming a camogie club in Kilfinny and in starting a county board in Limerick. Eithne also reflects on her various administrative roles at club, county, provincial, and national level, as well as her refereeing and training roles. She considers the obstacles she faced in making a team at a time when girls were not encouraged to play camogie. Finally, Eithne describes her pride in having a cup named after her and a pitch named after her father.</p> <p>00:27 Eithne recalls her upbringing in Kilfinny, Limerick. Attending Kilfinny National School, then the Sisters of Mercy secondary school in Adare, then the Ursulines in Thurles.</p> <p>01:00 Describes Kilfinny. Her family's pub near Adare. Outlines parish boundaries.</p> <p>01:43 Discusses the hurling career of her father, Mick Neville, who played with Faughs GAA Club in Dublin. Winning county championship and league medals with senior team in Faughs, also playing on Dublin team. Reasons for playing for Dublin: bad transport. Winning two All-Ireland hurling medals with Dublin in 1917 and 1920.</p> <p>02:59 Her father returning home in 1924. Playing with Limerick, then administrative roles. Mentions Canon Punch.</p>

	<p>Her father's involvement in reviving club in Kilfinny, which had existed in 1880s. Also his involvement in restarting a West Limerick Board. Treasurer of board. Also selector on county team and involved in establishment of Páirc na nGael.</p> <p>04:59 Describes existence of club in Kilfinny. No major wins. Her brothers playing in summers. Amalgamation with Croagh due to emigration, shortage of players. Named Croagh Kilfinny GAA Club. Winning tournament, prize of set of jerseys. Describes design, copied from Faugh's jerseys.</p> <p>07:22 Her father's death in 1973, soon after Limerick last won an All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final. Mentions Tommy Moore and Bob Mockler. Her father being made president of Faughs.</p> <p>08:16 Recounts stories from her parents' time in Dublin during The Troubles. Mentions trouble with Jim Larkin, the Lockout. Also recalls working in pub after winning All-Ireland finals. Explains reasons for bagman. Her mother living in Dublin in 1916, impact of Rising on her. Shot fired at her. Her mother at a dance with Dick Mulcahy of the IRA. Her mother also acquainted with Harry Boland. Recounts her mother and uncles' meeting with a British soldier, originally from their town.</p> <p>14:14 Also mentions her father's brothers on the run with the IRA.</p> <p>14:41 Recalls conversations about hurling in her parents' pub in Kilfinny. Her mother's disinterest in the game. Describes pub life: storytelling, no women drinking in pubs, men drinking Guinness or whiskey. Grocery attached. Women drinking port wine in snug after funeral.</p> <p>20:39 Description of her father. Passionate about politics, racing, hurling. His attendance at GAA meetings and matches. Arthritis.</p> <p>23:49 Recalls her earliest GAA memories. Her father and brothers involved. Playing hurling herself with neighbour Bunty Shire and her brothers. Going to local matches with her father as a young girl. Players togging out in pub, getting a drink after match, Eithne getting lemonade and a bun.</p> <p>26:32 Discusses her position as youngest in family. Practising by herself with tennis ball and hurley.</p> <p>27:50 No camogie club in parish in her childhood. No camogie played in school. Only running in school, also hockey in the Ursulines in Thurles. Playing hockey, preferred camogie. Few matches or teams, no encouragement for girls</p>
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	<p>to play camogie. Compares ease of playing hurling for boys with lack of organised sports for girls. Lack of parental involvement. Also lack of transport.</p> <p>30:40 Mentions hurling played in Culhanes' field.</p> <p>31:17 Recalls her experiences in UCD in the 50s. Challenge of mixing with other girls, her reluctance to join camogie team. Playing camogie in Belfield. Her first match. Intense competition. Matches in Phoenix Park on Sundays. Playing win the Ashbourne Cup against UCG, UCC, and Queens University, Belfast. No camogie team in Trinity College Dublin. Mentions Mrs Purcell's contribution to camogie club in UCD.</p> <p>35:11 Mentions Ashbourne teammates Doreen Brennan. Recalls refereeing a match in which Doreen was playing in late 50s. Also mentions Annette Corrigan, Annie Donnelly, Eileen Burke. Winning championships and league. Strength of team.</p> <p>36:27 Mentions strong camogie clubs at the time: Celtic. Mentions Eileen Duffy-O'Mahoney. Also mentions camogie clubs Owen Roe, Naoimh Aoife, CIE. Mentions Sophie Brack and Úna O'Connor.</p> <p>37:29 Describes training in UCD. Saturdays. Indoor training before competition in Newman House. Mentions Mr Twomey, caretaker of Belfield, doing physical training with them. Wearing gym frocks. Blue UCD colours. Tied at waste with sash, black tights, white ankle socks. Describes her first hurley: heavy, no hoops, fixing it with black tape. Comparison with modern hurls. Mentions camogie player Nell McCarthy. Describes her various positions. Mentions contribution of Doctor Stuart and his wife to the camogie club.</p> <p>42:50 Recalls playing for Dublin camogie team for one year. Declaring for Limerick, not picked, her decision to play for Dublin instead. Sub for Una O'Connor. Playing for Limerick after that.</p> <p>44:37 Reflects on the excitement of travelling to matches for Ashbourne Cup. By train. Camaraderie. Formal dress for dinner and speeches. Playing game, tea and sandwiches. Staying in hotel. Clubs got grant from college. Fierce rivalry. Dominance of UCD in the 50s, followed by UCC. Strength of Dublin and Antrim camogie teams.</p> <p>48:40 Discusses amount of women in UCD in the 50s, less women than men. Earlsfort Terrace. Hostels: Dominican Hall, Loreto Hall. Also staying in digs. Studying commerce. Male</p>
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	<p>lecturers.</p> <p>50:34 Describes running of camogie club at hands of Dr. Stuart and his wife and Mrs Purcell.</p> <p>51:30 Recalls returning to Limerick, starting teaching. No camogie club. Forming club with Bridie Gilsenan. Challenge of fielding a team, difficulty of getting girls to play. Her role in starting a county board. Mentions Chris O'Connell. Organising matches. Few clubs. Describes fundraising activities: raffle. Becoming secretary of county board. Mentions Carrie Clancy (née Gillane). Also organising club. Recalls making posters to advertise matches, sending them in post to clubs as reminder of fixtures. Difficulty of notifying players of fixtures: few training meetings. Mentions Eileen O'Keeffe.</p> <p>58:14 Describes how she sent messages to players with no phones or transport. Driving entire team to matches in two cars. Recalls playing first inter-county match in Waterford. Challenge of organising uniforms, hurleys, transport, notifying players, and playing herself.</p> <p>59:42 Discusses attendance at matches. No collecting gates, lack of personnel. Fundraising with raffles or céilís, no dances permitted. Congress's decision to remove ban on foreign dances. Opposition from Northern Ireland to removal of ban. Recalls involvement in training county team, Munster Council, and club in 70s. Borrowing car from her parents.</p> <p>01:04:38 Reflects on lack of support from Central Council in formation of county board. Representative attending AGM. Poor communication.</p> <p>01:06:47 Ponders the biggest changes she's witnessed during her time as secretary of Munster Council for 27 years and her involvement in club and county board administration. More parental involvement at club level. Difficulty of getting girls to play then: hurleys given to boys in families, not to girls, also boys brought to matches, girls weren't. Discouragement of physical games for girls. More interest among parents and grandparents now. More teams now. No juvenile teams in her day. Also more clubs now, more competitions. Sponsorship available nowadays. Also more professional now: coaches, trainers. More expense now: cost of travel.</p> <p>01:12:14 Considers major decisions made during her time in administrative roles. Rule change about length and width of pitch. Double bar in camogie in Dublin. Use of hoops. Replacing of gym frock and tights with skirt. Change to 15-a-</p>
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	<p>side teams.</p> <p>01:16:07 Playing on GAA grounds, no camogie pitches in her day. No money to purchase separate grounds. Recalls washing uniforms, reusing them for years.</p> <p>01:17:10 Discusses tradition of women stopping playing camogie when they got married.</p> <p>01:18:11 Reflects on her progression to Munster Council and Central Council. On both councils simultaneously. Dedication of people on Central Council. Impartiality.</p> <p>01:21:00 Mentions her admiration of Sheila McNulty in Central Council. Also Lily Spence, Mrs Purcell. Northern Irish players' nationalist interests. Also mentions Rosaleen McManus.</p> <p>01:23:10 Considers her own views on Gaelic sports, nationalism. Explains the intensity of Northern Irish nationalism. Little Irish language spoken at meetings.</p> <p>01:25:00 Reflects on the relationship between camogie and the GAA. Help and support from the GAA. No help with transport. Women running clubs and refereeing. More men involved now. Financial assistance from Munster Council GAA. Local GAA clubs allowing use of their grounds. Few women involved in the GAA in her time.</p> <p>01:27:42 Outlines her refereeing career. No rule book. First intercounty match between Tipperary and Cork. Refereeing All-Ireland match, nerves. Mentions Una O'Connor. Recounts difficulty of deciding where 14-yard line was for free. Also recalls refereeing county match, umpire not knowing rules. Recounts story of match in Waterford, forgetting sashes, borrowing ties from men.</p> <p>01:34:29 Describes her approach to coaching. Running, sprints, pucking, marking, running backwards, turning. Teaching tactics. Training in monastery field in Adare, edge of field lit by streetlights, practising ground play.</p> <p>01:37:07 Recalls club winning All-Ireland final. Three busloads travelling to match in Athenry. Losing in first half, comeback. Mentions player Helen Mulherne. Celebrations after win in Nevilles' pub in Kilfinny. <i>Cork Examiner</i> photographing the team. Presentation in GAA club.</p> <p>01:40:47 Considers general media coverage of camogie at the time. Mentions <i>Limerick Leader</i> sportswriter Sean Murphy,</p>
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	<p>Eithne giving him notes on their matches.</p> <p>01:42:43 Describes training county team that won All-Ireland camogie final. Celebrations in Ahane Camogie Club, near Castleconnell. Team on a float. Also county council function.</p> <p>01:43:46 Reflects on her favourite role: secretary of Munster Council. Her enjoyment of organising. Preference for playing.</p> <p>01:44:29 Recalls favourite moments: Ashbourne Cup matches. Her skill at turning quickly. Describes her turning method. Strength of her left side. Recounts tactical successes.</p> <p>01:48:06 Describes her love of ground play. Aerial play nowadays. Benefits of ground play: less time wasting, more goals.</p> <p>01:50:09 Mentions the best camogie players she's seen: Annie Donnelly, Annette Corrigan, Angela Downey. Describes robust style of Angela Downey's time. Comparison with style nowadays. More hand-passing now, less spontaneity.</p> <p>01:52:34 Ponders how much she misses playing. Her love of taking touches, doubling overhead, pulling with the ball.</p> <p>01:54:20 Discusses her current involvement: attending occasional meetings, matches. Describes honours: president of Limerick camogie, a cup named after her.</p> <p>01:58:01 Reflects on her satisfaction at starting a county board, in spite of all the obstacles they faced. Challenge of clubs dwindling as players married. Thriving clubs today.</p> <p>01:59:40 Discusses the pitch named after her father, Mick Neville Park Rathkeale. Her brothers' playing careers with Rathkeale. Mentions Jackie Power of Ahane.</p> <p>02:02:21 Considers what Gaelic games means to her. Hurling and camogie part of national identity. Part of Gaelic tradition. Structure of camogie in parish. Her views on pay for play.</p>
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<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played camogie from childhood until she was in her 40s.</p> <p>UCD Camogie: Played in the 1950s, won 3 Ashbourne Cups</p> <p>Dublin Camogie Team: Won 1 Leinster Camogie Championship and 1 All-Ireland, 1957.</p> <p>Croagh-Kilfinny: Won county championships and leagues</p> <p>Limerick Camogie team: Played on Limerick team in the 1970s.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Croagh-Kilfinny Camogie Club: Served on various committees</p> <p>Limerick Camogie County Board: Served in many positions including secretary and as chairperson and also on various committees. Currently President of Limerick Camogie</p> <p>Munster Camogie Council: Served on this for 27 years.</p> <p>Refereed 2 camogie All-Irelands</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 02:05:42</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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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: 9th July 2012