

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	10 th Nov 2010
Location	Jimmy's home, near Clohass, Co. Wexford
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jimmy Nolan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1938 Home County: Wexford
Education	Primary: CBS Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford Secondary: CBS Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
Family	Siblings: 1 brother Current Family if Different: Wife (Margaret). 2 sons & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Davidstown GAA [Wexford]; Rathnure GAA [Wexford]
Occupation	Farmer
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Various Community Organisations

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/26

Date of Report	27 th June 2012
Period Covered	1930s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Wexford
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Emigration, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, All-Ireland, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Violence, Bribery, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Professionalism, Retirement, Socialising
Interview Summary	<p>Jimmy reflects on his lifelong involvement with the GAA. He discusses his time playing hurling for Davidstown GAA Club, Rathnure GAA Club, and for Wexford. He also describes how a knee injury forced him to retire from playing and get involved in the administration of the GAA. He recalls his roles as selector, referee, and chairman of discipline. He discusses the Wexford team of the 1950s and mentions his many hurling heroes. Finally, he ponders the uniqueness of the lack of professionalism in the GAA.</p> <p>00:00:32 Jimmy explains that his uncle, Peter Nolan from Rathnure, played for Wexford and Leinster. Unreliable but talented player.</p> <p>02:06 Jimmy discusses the lack of GAA success in Davidstown, its junior status. More of a football area. Ballyhogue GAA Club's strength in football in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Mentions Ballyhogue's John Doran and Eamon Doyle, who won All-Ireland medals. Several Ballyhogue players playing for Davidstown then. Also mentions the Rackards.</p> <p>03:04 Recalls his first visit to Croke Park in 1949 for the replay of a tournament match between Meath and Wexford. Travelling by train. Four shillings entrance fee. Mentions Rackard, Willie Goodison, Des Nails, Paddy Kehoe. His impressions of Croke Park. Paddy Kehoe breaking hip. Meath winning. Paddy's skill.</p> <p>04:42 Jimmy recalls his love of hurling, dating back to his schooldays in CBS Enniscorthy. Brother Long inspired him to play for Wexford. Jimmy's passion for hurling. Playing hurling on the way home from national school. One brother, who had no interest in hurling. His sister playing camogie, interested in</p>

	<p>hurling.</p> <p>06:33 Describes hurling as his only passion as a child. No interest in cinema. Giving up aged 43 or 44. Inspired by the Wexford greats of the 1950s.</p> <p>07:59 Explains what made the hurling team of the 1950s so memorable. Their love of the game, abiding by rules. Mentions Nickey Rackard. His pride in knowing Rackard personally. Also mentions Jim Morrissey, Nick O'Donnell, Padge Kehoe, and Tim Flood. His pride in being driven to school in a lorry by O'Donnell, who worked with his family.</p> <p>09:43 Recalls playing juvenile hurling for Davidstown GAA Club. Playing for Enniscorthy Starlights in the county final against the rules. Playing in Mulgannon Park aged 13 with Hopper McGrath, Dick Murphy, Bobby Carey, Martin Berrigan, Donal Sanders, Brendan Cullimore, Dick Murphy, who all went on to play for Wexford at senior level. Travelling by bus.</p> <p>10:48 Discusses playing with Davidstown GAA Club in the 1950s. Great talent but underperformed. Mentions Jim Dunne, Liam Kehoe, Seamus Barron, Tony Wiggins, Larry Guinan, Martin Óg Morrissey, Leo Dunne. Emigration of players to England. Players leaving to neighbouring clubs. His reasons for leaving the club and going to Rathnure aged 22.</p> <p>12:22 The joy of playing for Rathnure. Playing in the Dunhill Tournament against such players as Joe Salmon, Christy Ring, Mick Flanley, Frankie Walsh, Paddy Moran, Ollie Walsh, Larry Guinan, Martin Óg Morrissey, Philly Grimes.</p> <p>13:03 Describes the Dunhill Tournament. Good prizes for winners. Pipe bands. Huge crowds. No violence. Top-class clubs. Mentions Cork club Glen Rovers, The King Pincher, Christy Ring, Joe Salmon, the Twomeys and O'Riordans. Also St. Finbarr's GAA Club of Cork, Bennettsbridge GAA Club of Kilkenny, James Stephens; Ollie Walsh of Kilkenny club Thomastown, Paddy Moran. Conversations afterwards. Duration of tournament. Reasons for lack of tournaments nowadays. The tournament used as a fundraiser for various causes. Televised live. Dance afterwards. Mentions Billy Rackard.</p> <p>17:13 Discusses his move to Rathnure GAA Club. His ambition to play with major players. Dedication of players and their families in the club. The Rackards playing with the club a reason for this pride. Mentions Seamus Barron's dedication to</p>
--	--

	<p>the GAA.</p> <p>19:27 Outlines his development as a hurler. His love of skill. Dislike of violent play. The importance of entertainment. Mentions Tim Flood's skill.</p> <p>20:29 Recalls his time playing for Wexford. Mentions the skill of Jim English, John Nolan, Billy Rackard. Playing well for Wexford until a knee injury in a Welsh Cup final against Carlow in Kilkenny forced him to give up. Also mentions Phil Wilson. On minor team in 1955 and 1956, mentions fellow players Tom Neville, Jimmy O'Brien, Hopper, Dick Murphy, Bobby Leary, Martin Bergin.</p> <p>21:59 Describes lack of coaching in the 1950s. Emphasis on pulling, which he disliked.</p> <p>23:09 More violence then, not as fast. Players well-protected then. Heavier players favoured. Violence at junior matches in particular. His role in starting fights.</p> <p>25:07 Reflects on the success of Rathnure in his time. Mentions Billy and Bobby Rackard. The club's victories. Playing one match against Nickey Rackard in 1957, Nickey's last match.</p> <p>27:01 Recalls a county final against Shelmaliers in 1961. Playing against Jack Harding. Also Waterford's Mick Flannelly, Jimmy Doyle, Frankie Walsh, Tom Walsh, Paddy Moran. Pride in playing well against top players. Importance of friends he made in hurling.</p> <p>29:10 Discusses the bonds with players he played with in the past. Visiting hurlers around Ireland.</p> <p>30:08 Outlines his involvement in the administration side of the GAA. His disappointment in having to retire. Efforts of members canvassing for votes. His time as a selector with Wexford. Negative reactions for some selection decisions. Mentions Paddy Moran. His own lack of personal ambition for advancement. Mentions Ned Wheeler, Jim Morrissey. Mentions local employers of GAA players: Esso, the banks, county councils, marts. Recalls farewells at Enniscorthy train station with fellow hurlers who were emigrating in the 1950s. Playing minor with Wexford in the 1950s, most of that team emigrating to England, including Bill Furlong, Dan O'Sullivan, John Kennedy.</p> <p>38:56 Ponders the impact of emigration on GAA. Mentions Kiltimagh, Co. Mayo, unable to make an Under-21 team,</p>
--	---

	<p>merging teams due to emigration today.</p> <p>39:39 Explains that the emigrated players worked long hours in England, seven days a week, no home life. Socialising in pubs. Scarcity of hurling fields in London. Mentions Phil Wilson who went to England and played for Fr. Murphy's, also Billy Duffy.</p> <p>41:14 Recalls visiting Middlesex in the 1960s when he was injured, didn't work. His fondness for home.</p> <p>41:56 Discusses his time as chairman of discipline in the GAA. Reasons for his appointment in this position. Unpopularity of the position. Attempts to influence him. His emphasis on common sense rather than rules. Recounts some of the excuses given for breaking rules.</p> <p>46:08 Recalls his time as referee. Challenge of making the right decisions instantaneously. Even greater challenges of refereeing nowadays, more complicated. His dislike of quotas for games for referees. No training to be a referee. Importance of experience playing in refereeing.</p> <p>49:58 Outlines a tough decision he made. Giving a player a life ban. His decision being overturned. His hurt over this. Recounts one match when he sent off five players, unwarranted fears of confrontation.</p> <p>53:04 Discusses the importance of character in players.</p> <p>53:44 Describes refereeing for a decade. Specific incident in a county final when a player attempted to bribe him.</p> <p>55:30 Compares the respect a referee gets today with that of the past. Stricter today. Better behaved players. Amount of effort players put in today far greater than that of the past. Difficulty for players to accept bad decisions.</p> <p>58:17 Discusses his favourite role as playing hurling. Giving county medals away.</p> <p>59:34 Mentions the county junior title in 1961 as his proudest GAA moment. Captaining Rathnure. Winning Deco Shield.</p> <p>01:00:48 Recalls his worst memory: the Walsh Cup, when he seriously injured his knee. Staying in the Cappagh Hospital in Finglas. Lack of recovery from that injury.</p> <p>01:03:11 Recounts several trips to Northern Ireland in 1969 with Rathnure to Dunloy Cú Chulainn GAA Club, County Antrim. Dunloy's hospitality: loan of car, food, dancing. Another trip visiting Stormont Castle to play Portaferry GAA</p>
--	---

	<p>Club, B-Specials smashing their hurls. His fear of travelling to Northern Ireland after that.</p> <p>01:06:04 Connection between Rathnure and Dunloy. His enjoyment of the social life.</p> <p>01:06:52 Recalls his transgressions: playing under different names. Importance of enjoying the game.</p> <p>01:09:05 Recalls the contribution of Art Bennett and Syl Barnes to the GAA. Bennett starting the Senior Citizens Sean Gael, to honour older members. Importance of volunteers.</p> <p>01:11:06 Discusses the necessity of volunteers to the structure of the GAA. The need for parents to play a more active role. The role of schools in promoting hurling.</p> <p>01:13:47 Reflects on the role of the GAA in parishes. Fostering community spirit. Uniqueness of amateur and voluntary nature of the GAA. Pride in being part of the organisation. Friendships made through the GAA.</p> <p>01:16:08 Discusses his dislike of certain elements within the GAA. A specific incidence of the organisation's weakness, inability to make decision.</p> <p>01:17:37 Mentions leaders he has admired in the GAA: Wicklow president Jack Boothman. Also Paddy Buggy. Pat Fanning.</p> <p>01:19:47 Discusses his heroes on the pitch: Billy Rackard for his team spirit and mentoring of younger players. For entertainment, Tim Flood.</p> <p>01:21:18 Mentions the Wexford team of the 1950s as his greatest team. Also a Kilkenny team. Mentions Ned Wheeler.</p> <p>01:22:56 Discusses his son Paul's involvement in hurling, also winning several national titles in athletics. His injury. Importance of where a player is brought up for fostering hurling. Paul's success as a horse trainer now. Mentions Theo English.</p> <p>01:26:16 Reflects on his optimism for the future of the organisation. The need to encourage love of hurling among young people. Need for coaching by former players</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. WX/1/26

<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 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 1952 – 82 with Davidstown GAA; played minor hurling and football for Wexford, 1955-56. Played Junior Hurling for Wexford, 1957; Senior with Wexford, 1962-3; 65-66. Won Wexford Senior Hurling Championship 1967, 70-73 playing with Rathnure.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Chairman of Wexford Disciplinary Committee, 1985-87; member of various finance and fixtures committees within Wexford County Board; Selector of Wexford U21 hurling team for 3-4 years.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:28:12</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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: 27th June 2012