

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	7 th April 2012
Location	Gerry's home, near Ballydaly, Co. Offaly.
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gerry Conway
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1930 Home County: Offaly
Education	Primary: St Bridget's NS, Tullamore, Co.Offaly. Secondary: Tullamore VEC, Co. Offaly.
Family	Siblings: 5 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Margaret); 1 son and 1 daughter
Club(s)	Durrow GAA Club [Offaly]; Tullamore GAA Club [Offaly]
Occupation	Hotel Proprietor
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fine Gael
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	24 th July 2012
Period Covered	1930s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Offaly, Kerry, Cork, Kilkenny, Clare, Wexford, Americas, USA
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Religion, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Alcohol, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Food and Drink, Socialising
Interview Summary	<p>Gerry talks about his involvement with the GAA, focusing on his role as a coach and selector. He describes the role the local GAA club had on his life growing up in Tullamore. He speaks about coaching underage Tullamore teams, and how many of those players progressed to county teams. He provides anecdotes re modes of transport to matches in the 1940s and 50s. Gerry discusses his role as an umpire with former GAA President, the late John Dowling. He discusses the Ban on foreign games and dances, and what his and other local GAA members' attitude was to it. He discusses pre All-Ireland Final preparations of the Kerry and Offaly football teams. Gerry describes fundraising for the social centre in Tullamore and the role that it played in the locality. He also discusses his ownership of a hotel in the town and its relationship with the GAA, highlighting social functions that were held there. He explains what role the GAA has played in his life, and what regrets he may have with the Association.</p> <p>00:40 Talks about growing up in Ballydaly. Mentions buying a site in 1955 in the area on which to build his house.</p> <p>01:20 Speaks about his parents' background, coming from Kilbeggan and Mount Bolus/Blueball.</p> <p>01:45 Discusses Gaelic games in Durrow and Tullamore when he was growing up.</p> <p>02:40 Discusses parent's families' involvement in Gaelic games.</p> <p>03:14 Mentions earliest memories of Gaelic games. In 1964 trained youngsters of 15/16 years of age. Mentions Paddy Fenning, Stephen Coughlan, Ray Allen, Hugh Cooney and their successes in football and hurling. In 1969 they won the</p>

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	<p>U21 championship, and in 1972 won the minor championship.</p> <p>04:50 Recalls Offaly winning the 1971 and 1972 All-Ireland Football Championships. Mentions beating Kerry in 1972.</p> <p>05:17 Describes childhood experiences of the GAA and the facilities that were available.</p> <p>05:35 Mentions a junior football final in Birr between Durrow and Cloghan. Travelled to game in boot of Tom Lee's hackney car. Had to walk from one side of Kilcormack to the other to avoid detection from Guards.</p> <p>06:25 Discusses Gaelic games in St Brigid's NS, Tullamore. Teacher Bill Ennis interested in Gaelic games. Mentions Paddy Fenning, Catherine Fenning and Molly Buckley. Mentions playing Edenderry. Discusses referees and how they were selected for schools matches. Compares country schools to town schools and the difference in the levels of support they got. Mentions Rhode and Daingean.</p> <p>10:06 Discusses transport for matches involving St Brigid's NS. Cars provided by Tullamore club – Tom Lee's hackney car (circa 1940 – 1944).</p> <p>10:54 Discusses playing gear.</p> <p>11:33 Talks about hurling and football being played at school, and discusses hurling being played in Tullamore during 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, and how circumstances changed in later years.</p> <p>13:02 Discusses his playing career. Played hurling and football.</p> <p>14:00 Talks about his role in Gaelic games after playing career ended. Umpire for referee John Dowling. Mentions Munster Football Final, Kerry v Cork in Killarney. Refers to Mick O'Connell of Kerry. Discusses Kerry and their pre All-Ireland Final ritual in the Imperial Hotel, Tralee (1968-72). Mentions Mick O'Connell and Mick O'Dwyer pre 1972 All-Ireland Football Final.</p> <p>19:24 Describes Offaly winning first ever All-Ireland title in 1971 Football Final, and beating Kerry in a replay in 1972 All-Ireland Football Final. Refers to Offaly v Kerry in 1982 All-Ireland Football Final.</p> <p>19:55 Explains involvement in training teams. Mentions Brother Bannon, Christian Brother from Tullamore (1964-72).</p> <p>21:15 Discusses working with underage teams. Refreshments</p>
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	<p>for teams in Egan's Hotel, Birr. Mentions Ray Allen, Paddy Fenning, Joe Heffernan, Hugh Cooney, Paul Rouse.</p> <p>23:30 Discusses a 1967 county final v Clara. Mentions Hugh Cooney, Ray Allen, Fr Nicholas Clavin (from Rahan). Morning of game headed to Mullingar with Tom Cooney to collect Hugh Cooney and Ray Allen from college. Mentions Fr Duignan. Mentions Pad Joe Fennelly, Eddie Caulfield, Martin Hughes, Dermot Fox, Jimmy Hughes.</p> <p>26:17 Discusses underage rivalry between Tullamore and Clara in hurling and football.</p> <p>26:47 Discusses group of underage players that he trained in the 1960s. Describes transport used to get to matches.</p> <p>27:29 Mentions a final in 1972 against Ferbane in Birr. Some players took detour to pub before match. Mentions Michael Davis coming on as sub. Mentions John Dowling, County Secretary. Mentions Jimmy Lowry.</p> <p>30:10 Discusses training methods used in the 1960s/70s at underage club level.</p> <p>31:00 Compares difference between motivating young players in the 1960s/70s and modern times (2006).</p> <p>32:20 Discusses players in 1960s/70s playing other sports besides Gaelic games. Mentions the Ban, dance halls and vigilantes. Mentions Fr Vaughan, the then Chairman. Mentions Pat Fanning (Waterford).</p> <p>36:45 Discusses his attitude to non Gaelic sports when growing up.</p> <p>37:25 Discusses competition for players in Tullamore between GAA, soccer and rugby. Mentions Stephen Coughlan. Mentions 1964 juvenile county final. Mentions Paddy Fenning.</p> <p>38:23 Describes relationship between GAA, soccer and rugby clubs in Tullamore. Mentions Martin Furlong and Tullamore Golf Club.</p> <p>43:07 Discusses Tullamore players who played inter-county for Offaly. Mentions Paddy Fenning, Ray Allen, Hugh Cooney, Joe Heffernan. Mentions 1968 All-Ireland Under 21 Football Final.</p> <p>44:30 Discusses relationship between inter-county players and their clubs.</p>
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	<p>45:27 Describes the build-up to All-Ireland Football Finals in 1969 (Kerry), 1971 and 1972. Mentions Fr Gillooly, Alan Kelly. Discusses 1981 and 1982 All-Ireland Football Finals and 1981 All-Ireland Hurling Final. Mentions Kerry in 1982 and Five In A Row t-shirts on sale outside Croke Park. Talks about 1998 All-Ireland Hurling Final victory against Kilkenny. Mentions 1998 All-Ireland Hurling semi-final victory against Clare in Thurles. Mentions Babs Keating, “James” Bond.</p> <p>48:47 Discusses the effect All-Ireland wins have on underage teams. Mentions Tullamore winning Offaly senior hurling title 2009.</p> <p>49:40 Discusses the “Primary Game” for school children at half-time on pitch.</p> <p>51:08 Mentions John Dowling.</p> <p>51:58 Discusses his involvement in the social centre in Tullamore. Mentions Fire Safety Officer. Mentions company in Mountrath that fixed ceiling. Mentions Roger Neville from the local bank in Tullamore. Mentions county teams who played in Tullamore – Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Meath. Mentions Mullingar and Navan. Visiting teams and supporters would visit the social centre for refreshments after matches. Discusses events that were held at the centre.</p> <p>58:30 Discusses the role of the GAA in the local community in Tullamore. Mentions Paddy Fenning. Gerry Conway went to America in 1982 with the All Stars. Mentions Noel Dempsey's brother in Edenderry. Discusses fundraising for Tullamore's trip to America. Mentions Miriam O'Callaghan winning a house in the raffle. Trip included New York, Washington, Clearwater Bay, Boston. Mentions Ted Kennedy, Senator Molloy, The White House, Barry Goldwater, Capitol Hill. Used funds from fundraising to build stand at O'Connor Park and upgrade facilities. Mentions Kerry teams coming to Tullamore for matches.</p> <p>1:04:50 Discusses attitude of local Tullamore publicans to the GAA social centre.</p> <p>1:06:45 Describes owning Bolger's Hotel and its relationship with the GAA. Mentions Louis O'Dwyer, Tony O'Halloran, Val Smith, Tom Madden, “Hopper” Farrell, Frankie Thomas. Mentions Jackie Daly, Frankie Gavin, Dé Danann, “Ringo” McDonagh and a music festival that was held in the bar. Mentions Paul Brady, Andy Irvine, Maura O'Connell. Visiting teams would stay in the hotel. Owned hotel from 1976 – 1984. Mentions Ploughing Championship that was held in</p>
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	<p>Edenderry. Football teams would eat in hotel after training. Offaly teams of 1981, 1982 and 1985 would eat there after training. Mentions Dermot Healy.</p> <p>Redacted.</p> <p>1:14:45 Discusses his highlights from the GAA. Mentions being Chairman of Tullamore. Mentions an open weekend when people came from all around Ireland to Tullamore to see the social centre and how it worked. Mentions Dublin, Jimmy Gray (Leinster Council).</p> <p>Redacted</p> <p>1:19:49 Discusses the change in circumstances of the social centre in Tullamore. Mentions Fergal McKeown.</p> <p>1:20:40 Describes what role the GAA has played in his life.</p> <p>1:21:22 Discusses his regrets in the GAA. Mentions the social centre in Tullamore.</p>
<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 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 minor football for Tullamore for 3 years; Played hurling and football for 5 years</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Managed Tullamore teams (1964 -72); Member of Tullamore GAA committee (1966 - Current); Chairman of Tullamore GAA Club (1985-94)</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 1:19:14</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: 24th July 2012