

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                                | Regina Fitzpatrick  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                                  | 20 November<br>2008   |
| <b>Location</b>   | Glasnevin, Dublin   |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b><br>(Maiden name /<br>Nickname) | Martin White  |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>         |   |
| <b>Gender</b>   | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1909<br><b>Home County:</b> Kilkenny  |
| <b>Education</b>  | <b>Primary:</b> Bonnettstown National School<br><b>Secondary:</b> CBS Kilkenny, St Kieran's College<br><b>Third Level:</b> N/A            |
| <b>Family</b>   | <b>Siblings:</b> Six sisters; seven brothers<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> Wife (Peg); seven children (two girls and five boys). |
| <b>Club(s)</b>  | Tullarone GAA (Kilkenny), Blackrock GAA (Cork), Kilmacud Crokes (Dublin)  |
| <b>Occupation</b>   | Clover Meats (in youth); Proprietor of confectionary business.  |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                                | Farmer and Housewife.   |
| <b>Religion</b>   | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>                 | N/A   |

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 16 September 2009   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1909-2008   |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Kilkenny, Cork, Dublin  |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | County history, Travel, Club history, GAA Abroad, Croke Park, Role of Clergy, Playing, Volunteers, Family involvement, Education, Training, Celebrations, Commiserations, Impact on Life  |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>.26 1916/17 going to national school in Bonnettstown - earliest memory of the local hurling field.</p> <p>1.08 Going to Christian Brothers School in Kilkenny in 1922- Professor Seán Cullen, a great GAA man who trained the teams.</p> <p>1.56 His first team, under 16 team in the CBS, made up of lots of James Stephen's players including Paddy Larkin – winning the Under 16 league in 1922, first league of its kind in Kilkenny.</p> <p>2.41 Bonnettstown National School - teacher's house on his father's farm.</p> <p>3.42 Fourteen in family – father died in 1922 - he was very interested in sport and gave land and facilities for sport</p> <p>4.29 Father gave land on his farm for a hurling field and Handball Alley which he built himself.</p> <p>5.29 Father involved in the co-operative movement and hugely interested in the locality.</p> <p>6.30 Built seats for people to watch the hurling matches and handball games at the same time in his field.</p> <p>7.09 Bonnettstown school now closed but there used to be fifty-two students and two teachers – in a townland called Lacken</p> <p>8.40 Martin eighth child in family.</p> <p>8.56 Hurling came automatically – there was nothing else only hurling</p> <p>10.28 Four brothers played on the team in Bonnettstown – three Whites, three Kellys, an uncle and nephew – they were</p> |

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|  | <p>a team in everyway.</p> <p>12.08 Played for Tullarone and not Bonnettstown</p> <p>12.30 Going to St Kieran's College, 1922 - winning the Leinster Championship that year - Roscrea played as a Leinster team at that time.</p> <p>13.04 The prominence of hurling at St Kieran's College. Being on the senior team in St. Kieran's in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year. One of the teams captained by his brother. Tough competition for a place on those teams.</p> <p>14.10 Many of the students went on to study for the priesthood and could only play with the college after that.</p> <p>15.06 Tom Scriven (they called him 'Gaillimh') great hurler who became a priest.</p> <p>16.55 Tradition that the county team played the ecclesiastics team every year, in 1923 the ecclesiastics' team defeated the county team after they had won the All-Ireland.</p> <p>18.14 Handball was very popular; betting on handball.</p> <p>19.06 Playing for the Tullaroan team after St Kieran's and started playing for the senior team in 1929 (when he was 20 years old).</p> <p>20.34 Selected for the Kilkenny Senior team in 1931 – great honour, a lot of competition for the team. First game he played with seniors against Wexford in New Ross. Kilkenny won. Matty Power was on the Kilkenny team and he had won an All-Ireland with Dublin in 1927.</p> <p>22.05 After the declaration rule in 1931, Matty Power, Dan Dunne and Martin Power all returned to play for Kilkenny.</p> <p>23.50 Trained mostly on their own. Hurled every night and at the weekends. Played hurling and handball all the time. Team managed by the County Board - Jogging around the field in the winter time. Used to travel from Waterford to Kilkenny for training – collected people along the way - the difficulty of working and training. Only trained before the All-Ireland final. Worked for Clover meats in Waterford.</p> <p>28.50 Hurling much faster today. Lory Meagher, Jim Hurley and Jimmy Ryan – great overhead hurlers.</p> <p>30.02 Story about a point scored during a match, it never touched the ground – pucked out by goal-keeper Richard Bergin and it was hit in the sky by Lory Meagher and scored a</p> |
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|  | <p>point. Great over head hurling.</p> <p>31.30 Jim Hurley had played for Cork in the 1920s. Limerick team very strong after that Mick Mackey, Timmy Ryan.</p> <p>32.14 Timmy Ryan and Lory Meagher were great centre field players. McGill from the Galway team also good, he had played for Dublin but later declared for Galway.</p> <p>34.00 Lory Meagher captained Kilkenny in 1935, the team made a special effort to win for him. He was a good, quiet man who was very well liked on the team.</p> <p>36.15 His brother Witty also played for Kilkenny. He was older than Lory, a great corner back. Henny his other brother was 'top' in Kilkenny at the time.</p> <p>37.20 Very little hurling in Kilkenny in 1922/23 because of the Troubles. From 1926 a strong team started to come up along. The best of the team of the early 1920s had gone to America, Kilkenny was very poor at the time.</p> <p>38.54 Good county associations in America at the time – they had money and 'poached' players from Ireland, got them jobs in America.</p> <p>40.00 Man from Ballyhale had a transport business in America at the time and he took a lot of people over.</p> <p>41.03 Being showed around and going to pig farms when they visited America in 1934.</p> <p>42.13 Description of the boat trip to America in 1934. Four or five days at sea. Rough seas, sea sickness. Five members of the team stayed an extra week. Met his uncle in America. Johnny Dunne found him. Martin's mother hadn't heard from him in 36 years. Lory Meagher, Jimmy Walsh, John Farrell and Paddy Larkin also stayed on.</p> <p>47.00 Description of life on the boat. Dancing in first class, singing with the Germans in steerage.</p> <p>53.00 Description of matches played on the trip. Very close matches, but they were only a sideline because there was so much else going on. Callers to the hotel every evening to take them out. Taken to the sea side; description of banquets held for the team.</p> <p>1:01:40 Playing at the Polo Grounds in New York. Going to a baseball game. Description of playing at Celtic Park now called Inisfail Park.</p> |
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|  | <p>1:05:31 Description of the bar in Celtic Park – even prohibition they had a bar full of moonshine – centre for Irishmen and policemen of Irish extraction. Poitín made by men over from Connemara.</p> <p>1:08:30 Story about meeting his uncle, Dr. O’Shea who had tested him over the phone in advance of the trip to verify that he was who he said he was. Story of how Dr O’Shea ended up in America and how Martin met him there.</p> <p>1:19:14 Meeting Tipperary in the 1937 All-Ireland Final – Jimmy Butler Coffey played on Paddy Phelan.</p> <p>1:19:56 Playing in Croke Park for the first time in 1924 at a schools final against Newbridge College. Memory of Dr Billy Dunne from Cuffsgrange, a great hurler himself, who was in charge of the team, he was a professor in St Kieran’s. Martin was marking Fr Pat Bollard who played full back for Newbridge. St Kieran’s won and returned to a great reception. Remembers children out at all the stations on the way back to Kilkenny waiting to see the cup. Travelled to Dublin by train for the match but for local matches a bus would be hired. Hurling kept him going in college.</p> <p>1:25:32 A semi-final against Galway was the first time he played a match as a senior Kilkenny player in Croke Park. Going to Dublin on the Saturday and staying in the Castle Hotel in Great Dominic Street as it was run by a man called Doheny from Castlecomer. Most of the players went to the dog races the night before the match. Martin took some of the younger brothers of the players to the pictures.</p> <p>1:30 Walking up to Croke Park from the hotel the morning of the match. Being taken to a pub beside their hotel for a ‘hooley’ by the Faughs lads after the match.</p> <p>1:31:18 Sitting beside Mick Mackey at his first county dinner. Description of Mick and John Mackey.</p> <p>1:34:59 enjoyed marking Paddy Clohessy – a great centre back. Believed that they were equally matched. Couldn’t mark Mick Tyrell of Kilkenny. Podge Byrne – always in good humour, gave everything to his hurling.</p> <p>1:39:43 Limerick and Clare were the teams of the era. Beating Limerick in 1933. How Dublin were defeated by Limerick in 1932.</p> <p>1:42:24 Played his first All Ireland in 1931. Reactions of the different players to the pressure in the dressing room – some</p> |
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|  | <p>ill, some cracking jokes. Very tense.</p> <p>1:44:30 Description of the homecoming celebrations when they won in 1932, it was the first All-Ireland they had won in ten years.</p> <p>1:47:06 Dr Day who played in goal for Clare, played for Dublin for years and declared from Clare after 1931. The difference the declaration of 1931 made to the game, Dublin had had a very strong team but most players declared for their home counties after 1931.</p> <p>1:49:53 Effect of Civil War on the GAA. By 1926, Kilkenny returning to good form. Cork had a good team in 1928.</p> <p>1:54:26 Got his All-Ireland, county championship and Leinster championship medals at the train station in Kilkenny in 1934 on the way to America. Liam Cody and Liam Street on County Board.</p> <p>1:56:52 On Kilkenny senior team until 1938. Beaten in the Leinster Final that year. Moved to Cork on 1 June 1939. Had a family and a lot of responsibility and so hurling had to take second place.</p> <p>2:02:00 Clover meats reunion in centenary year of the GAA – six inter-county players from different counties had played there and they were presented with special medals.</p> <p>2:04:27 Getting involved in hurling in the Blackrock club in Cork. Being in a final and beaten by Glen Rovers – club of Christy Ring and Jack Lynch.</p> <p>2:05:44 Administration of teams – on committee in Blackrock – helped to build up the club by developing underage system. Kept the young players together and brought them up together to Minor and some of them ended up on the Cork senior hurling team.</p> <p>2:08:05 1939 All Ireland Kilkenny v Cork betting on Kilkenny in Cork. Lots of betting stories about Cork and the banter with the Cork men.</p> <p>2:13:40 Moving to Dublin in 1948.</p> <p>2:14:00 Story about his leg injury and treatment.</p> <p>2:17:29 Getting involved with the Crokes club in Dublin. Jimmy Walsh (Red Jimmy) was Chairman of the club at the time. Jimmy Roach (Black Jimmy) succeeded him and then Martin succeeded him.</p> |
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|  | <p>2:19:30 Commitment to the club – collecting players from Navan and taking them home again. Meetings every Tuesday, matches every Sunday. John Maher from Freshford also played on the team. Intended leaving the chair in 1966, asked by John to remain on for one more year, he did and the club won the championship that year. He retired after that.</p> <p>2:22:35 Strong underage team in Crokes. Jimmy Walsh ended up working for the police force in South Africa. His daughter married Pat Kenny.</p> <p>2:24:50 How the club moved from pitch No. 13 in the Phoenix Park to Kilmacud. They were not very popular in Kilmacud at first but winning the championship in their first year there in 1966 helped. Retired in 1970 having been involved since 1922.</p> <p>2:28:18 Differences between hurling today and when he played. Reflections on current Kilkenny hurling team. Went to matches himself until he was 97.</p> <p>2:32:29 Tommy Walsh (Kilkenny Senior hurler) visiting him with all of the cups won in 2008 – Minor, Under 21, Intermediate, Senior championships and Railway Cup. Comments on individual members of the Kilkenny Hurling team.</p> <p>2:45:04 Differences between the GAA now and when he was playing. Differences in how the players are treated. Cork hurlers strike.</p> <p>2:50:29 No regrets, would love to be playing still. Met great friends. Being involved is an education, meeting people from all walks of life, learn the difference between right and wrong, hear all views on all things. Met intelligent men, still stays in touch with many of them. The bond between players on a team and players on opposing teams that you would mark. Great friendships. No they mainly meet at funerals. Jimmy Butler Coffey the only one left from his time.</p> |
| <p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>                         | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player   <input type="checkbox"/> Manager   <input 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><b>Record as a Player</b><br/>(Titles won; Length</p> | <p>Inter-county Senior Hurling All-Ireland Championships 1932,1933,1935. Senior Hurling Leinster Championships</p>   |

**REFERENCE NO. KK/01/3**

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| of time played)   | 1931,32,33,34,35,36,37. Kilkenny Junior Football County Championship 1935. Kilkenny Senior Hurling County Championships 1930, 31, 34. |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | Committee member at Blackrock GAA Club Cork, Chairperson for Kilmacud Crokes.   |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual   |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 2:55:32  |
| <b>Language</b>   | English   |

**To be filled in by Interviewer:**

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Signed:      Regina Fitzpatrick

Date:          16 September 2009