

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	9 th Feb 2012
Location	Armagh Observer Office, Armagh City.
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Joe McManus
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1945 Home County: Armagh
Education	Primary: Armagh CBS Secondary: CBS Grammar School Armagh
Family	Siblings: 1 sister Current Family if Different: Wife (Margaret), 1 son and 2 daughters.
Club(s)	Madden Rapparees GAA Club [Armagh]
Occupation	Journalist
Parents' Occupation	Weaver [Father]; Nurse [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Not politically motivated
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Various community groups

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Date of Report	20 th July 2012
Period Covered	1940s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Armagh, Down, Cavan, Tyrone, Dublin, Cork, Kerry
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Playing, Training, Refereeing, Celebrations, Commiserations, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsiders' Perspectives, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Ban on Security Forces, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Joe discusses his work as a GAA correspondent for the <i>Armagh Observer</i> and his passion for Gaelic games. He recalls his earliest memories of the GAA and his lifelong support of Armagh football. He describes the joy of watching his county win the 2002 All-Ireland Senior Football Final and explains why he isn't a member of a GAA club. In addition, Joe considers the various rule changes within the organisation and the strength of feeling about the GAA in Northern Ireland. He also reflects on the impact of The Troubles on the organisation and outsiders' perspectives of the GAA. Furthermore, he explains how media coverage of Gaelic games has changed since the mid-60s, when he started working for the <i>Armagh Observer</i>.</p> <p>00:17 Joe explains that he is the GAA correspondent for the <i>Armagh Observer</i>. Born 1945 in Milford, outside Armagh City. Recounts McManus family background: linked to Maguires from Fermanagh. Linen boom, Milford's development as a linen village. His mother's family, Haugheys, farmers. His mother a nurse.</p> <p>02:31 Recalls his father supporting Down. Mentions footballer Geordie Mussen, uncle of Kevin Mussen. His father a good handballer. Handball alley in Milford. No history of playing football. Recalls his father bringing him to his first match in 1958 to watch Down, end of Cavan era. His father's connection to the McCartan family. Joe's uncle Joe's support of Armagh football.</p>

	<p>04:38 Milford predominantly Protestant. No Gaelic pitch. Playing cricket, hurling, football, Protestants and Catholics together. His uncle Joe's cobbler shop the meeting place for match conversation. Rise of Down football, widespread support for Down across Ulster. Recounts his first trip to Croke Park in 1960 when Down won all the All-Ireland Senior Football Final. His club, Madden, changing their colours to Down's red and black. Still lots of support for Down in Armagh.</p> <p>06:32 Discusses intense rivalry between neighbouring counties. Bigotry. His dislike of this bitterness. Recounts an incident demonstrating this hatred. Northern view that Northern Ireland do not get fairly treated in Croke Park. Some individuals' belief on political reasons for the founding of the GAA. Mentions Cardinal Logue's condemnation of the organisation as an IRA training ground.</p> <p>12:11 Describes attitudes of Northern Irish players towards one another. Friendship and understanding. Recounts stories involving bitterness against Armagh from Tyrone and Down. Intensity of rivalry in border areas between counties.</p> <p>15:23 Reflects on sports played in Milford when he was growing up. Both faiths working together in factory, tension during Marching Season. Growing up before The Troubles. Playing soccer, cricket, Gaelic football.</p> <p>17:38 Recalls his earliest memory of Gaelic Games. Mentions RG McCrum Institute in Milford, recreational centre. Snooker and soccer played, his aunts refusing to allow him to go. Recalls cutting out football game from newspaper <i>Irish Press</i> and <i>Armagh Observer</i>.</p> <p>19:36 Recounts listening to the 1953 All-Ireland Senior Football Final between Armagh and Kerry. No radio, listening to his grandmother's radio. His uncle's wife from Clare, cheering for Kerry. Mentions Michael O'Hehir commentating. Armagh missing a penalty. Mentions player Art O'Hagan living nearby, Joe's idol. Art playing for Madden and Keady. Also mentions Jack Bratton, Pat Hamill, Joe Cunningham. Dominance of Harps and Keady in the 50s. Also mentions footballer Jim McCullough. Mentions Paddy Buggy.</p> <p>23:20 Describes success of Down in the 1960s. Playing juvenile football, minor football, and street league football. Working as a photographer for the <i>Armagh Observer</i> in mid-60s. Taking photos at GAA matches. Mentions Frank McGuigan. Travelling to Galway and Tyrone for matches. Returning to Armagh in late 70s, resurgence of Armagh</p>
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	<p>football. Chief correspondent for newspaper. Reaching All-Ireland final in 1977. Ulster success and National League successes and failures in 80s and 90s. All-Ireland win in 2002.</p> <p>25:40 Emergence of Crossmaglen in club football. No affiliation to any club, not biased. His admiration for Crossmaglen Rangers GAC. Unpopularity of the club. His views on the impact of The Troubles on Crossmaglen: no soccer, just Gaelic. Pride in wearing club jersey. Reasons for their success.</p> <p>29:37 Recalls his early playing career. Attending Christian Brothers school, football and hurling played. Style of football in those days, mentions Peter Canavan. Playing on Cor na nÓg team. Mentions playing with Joe Jordan. Playing football in free time. Involvement in football at primary school and grammar school.</p> <p>32:16 Reflects on the part played by Gaelic games in school. Armagh CBS having a soccer team at one time. In early 50s, more focus on academics than sport. Mentions Brother Willie Rehill's encouragement of GAA. Also P.E. teacher Jimmy McKeown. Success of Armagh CBS at Colleges All-Ireland level. Mentions Johnny Corvan. Also mentions Master Garvey's promotion of hurling in CBS. Importance of promoting Gaelic games in schools. Winning school All-Irelands in the 70s. Amalgamation between Armagh College and CBS. Class differences between two schools. Mentions Tyrone's Iggy Jones.</p> <p>37:15 Describes playing with Madden Raparees as a juvenile. Mentions contribution of families: Hugheses and Grimleys. Lack of local employment, effect of emigration on club. Mentions contribution of Jim Dodds McVeigh to formation of juvenile team. Current state of club. Mentions Art O'Hagan and Jimmy Whan playing for Madden. Also Jim McCullough, Kevin McIlvaney.</p> <p>40:09 Recalls playing with Armagh Harps. Mentions Maurice McAnally. Harps one of the first teams affiliated in the county. Success of Harps in Armagh, representing Armagh in inter-provincials. Change of name to Armagh Young Irelands, St. Malachy's, Armagh City. Formation of Pearse Ógs in 1950. Playing minor for Harps as a teenager. His dwindling desire for playing.</p> <p>43:19 Starting at newspaper in mid-1960s. Describes how he got the job. Clerk of works. Doing supplements when Ulster counties win All-Ireland finals. Mentions Kevin Mussen.,</p>
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	<p>Paddy Doherty, Tony Haddon, James McCartan. His love of the job. His like of the amateur nature of the organisation. Reflects on rule changes in the GAA. Development of grounds. Mentions grief for death of Michaela Harte. Camaraderie in the GAA.</p> <p>48:45 Considers the GAA as a political organisation. Differences between the GAA and the Orange Order. Importance of getting young people involved. The need to attract Protestants to the GAA. Reasons for Protestant disinterest. Progress of the GAA, moderate viewpoint, mutual respect. Recent opening of GAA grounds, attendance of Protestant clergy. Ponders political links of the GAA.</p> <p>56:40 Reflects on impact of The Troubles on the GAA. His understanding of the Protestant viewpoint. Recounts story of a friend's anxiety about Union Jacks in Milford. Mentions violent incidents targeting GAA members and clubhouses. Positive and negative impacts of The Troubles on the GAA.</p> <p>01:02:16 Discusses covering news stories about the occupation of Crossmaglen. Helicopters at matches. Harassment of GAA clubs by the UDR. Checkpoints. Reaction of spectators in Crossmaglen to helicopters: ignoring them.</p> <p>01:04:32 Recalls the Hunger Strike, The Blanketmen, awkward position for the GAA. Parade of blanketmen at half-time during matches. His views that the GAA is not sectarian. Refutes the nickname the Grab All Association. Success of county breeding support. Importance of making All-Ireland tickets available to genuine supporters. His views on holding matches on Sundays, drinking alcohol. His dislike of Celtic and Rangers jerseys, political connotations.</p> <p>01:11:41 Ponders his love of tradition. Genuine supporters. His preference for old football rules: catch and kick. Gaelic football's loss of identity.</p> <p>01:13:06 Considers the expression of political or religious identity through jerseys. His own Irish identity. The link between membership of the GAA and politics. Issue of burning GAA jerseys and tricolours on bonfires on the Twelfth Night.</p> <p>01:17:04 Discusses the problem of the sectarian element within the GAA. Small percentage of extremists on both sides. His understanding of the Protestant situation. Siege mentality since 1922 partition. His views on the sectarian nature of the doctrine in the Orange Order.</p>
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	<p>01:20:41 Reflects on the impact of the peace process on the GAA. Progress of the organisation. His views on the reasons for Protestant fears of the South. Protestant view of Michael Collins. Joe's own support of Collins. Views on Éamon De Valera, Treaty politics. Negative attitude of some towards the GAA.</p> <p>01:25:39 Discusses the various rule changes in the GAA. Mentions Milford's William McCrum inventing the penalty rule kick in 1890. Soccer. Security forces viewed as spies in the past. Reasons people play Gaelic games.</p> <p>01:29:16 Ponders the lifting of the ban on foreign games and the opening of Croke Park. Difficulty of those decisions. Displaying leadership. Mentions Dinny Allen and Kevin Warren who played both soccer and Gaelic football. Challenge of playing both well. Dominance of soccer in Lurgan. His belief that the two sports don't mix.</p> <p>01:34:00 Describes lack of GAA correspondents when he started. Armagh's lack of success in the early days. Influences by Micheal O'Hehir. Importance of respecting others' opinions.</p> <p>01:38:29 Recalls getting into trouble for his writing. Recounts various incidents.</p> <p>01:40:30 Explains the process of writing up matches. Mentions <i>Irish News</i>. Disadvantages of over-analysing games. His views on being critical.</p> <p>01:42:27 Ponders the key changes in coverage of the GAA. More coverage now, even in Protestant newspapers. Mentions <i>Ulster Gazette</i>. Marketing skill of GAA. GAA's response to criticism: sensitive.</p> <p>01:44:46 Discusses his coverage of camogie and ladies football in Croke Park. Comments on negative views of women playing sport. Start of ladies handball. Positive developments. Popularity of Gaelic games on television.</p> <p>01:48:16 Describes his GAA highlight: watching Armagh winning the 2002 All-Ireland Senior Football Final in Croke Park. Mentions Kieran McGeeney. People shaking Joe's hand.</p> <p>01:50:25 Considers the appeal of the GAA. Explains why he isn't a member of a club. Importance of focussing on the games and ignoring politics. Excitement of watching games. Friendships formed. Sense of belonging. Mentions James McCartan playing in Clones against Cavan. Sense of</p>
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	<p>community, particularly in the South.</p> <p>01:56:09 Discusses his involvement in the GAA beyond retirement age. Excitement of getting press card to visit Croke Park. Mentions Paddy O'Rourke's contribution to Armagh GAA. Joe's pride in his 60-year involvement in the organisation. Interviewing such legends as Jack Bratton, Jim McCullough, Art O'Hagan.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<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 type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input 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>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played underage football with Madden Rapparees; played football at juvenile and minor with Armagh Harps. Also played street league football (Irish Street)</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>N/A</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 02:01:28</p>
Language	<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: 20th July 2012