

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	31 st Aug 2010
Location	Michael's home, near Virginia, Co. Cavan
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Tynan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1949 Home County: Cavan
Education	Primary: Correagh NS, Co. Cavan
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 6 sisters Current Family if Different: 3 daughters & 4 sons
Club(s)	Ramor United
Occupation	Farmer, Lorry Driver, GAA Sports Commentator
Parents' Occupation	Cavan County Council; Barber [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

REFERENCE NO. CN/1/11

Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Paul Fitzsimons
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1929 Home County: Cavan
Education	Primary: Carrigbruisse NS, Co. Cavan Secondary: Kells CBS, Co. Meath
Family	Siblings: 1 sister
Club(s)	Maghera Mac Finns
Occupation	Council Lorry Driver, Farmer, ESB
Parents' Occupation	Cavan County Council [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Amateur Drama Club

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Date of Report	5 th July 2012
Period Covered	1888 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Cavan, Monaghan, Dublin, Roscommon, Kerry, Cork, Armagh, Down, Meath, Great Britain, England, Americas, USA
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Rivalries, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Food and Drink, Socialising, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Michael and Paul discuss their involvement with the GAA in Cavan. Paul recalls his playing career on the Cavan football team and his participation in several All-Ireland Senior Football Finals, including the 1952 All-Ireland, which Cavan won. He describes his involvement in the GAA at club and county level and recalls trips to London with the Cavan team to play in Wembley Stadium. Paul also reflects on his experiences as trainer, selector, and referee. Michael, on the other hand, discusses his work as GAA commentator for local radio. He outlines various experiences he had travelling to matches around the country, for example, to Northern Ireland before the peace process. He considers the importance of being prepared for matches and compares the experience of watching a match for enjoyment with watching for work purposes. Both Paul and Michael also discuss their earliest GAA memories, the history of Ramor United, the role of politics in Cavan GAA, and the importance of the GAA in their lives.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:36 Discussion of earliest GAA memories. Paul recalls his first trip to an All-Ireland final in 1935 between Cavan and Kildare. Attending Maghera school. Remembers playing football in school, also playing rag ball on at Whitegate Crossroads. Rivalry between Cavan and Meath. Also playing pitch and toss, skittles. Description of different balls, for example one stuffed with hay.</p>

	<p>02:17 Michael recalls playing Under-12 or Under-14 briefly. Playing football in schoolyard and at crossroads. His brother Frank playing for Cavan.</p> <p>03:15 Describes the build-up to matches, scarcity of matches in his youth. Excitement in getting ready to go to matches.</p> <p>04:20 Recalls his hopes to get a lift to matches in Breffni Park from Lisgrey Crossroads. Mentions Peter Reilly giving lifts in his Austin van in the 1960s. Packed with people. Describes travelling in boot of car to county final as a child.</p> <p>06:10 Recalls his first match at Breffni Park, Cavan vs. Fermanagh in early 60s, finding watch.</p> <p>09:44 Paul discusses playing football in Carrigbruisse national school. Mentions teacher Phil McEnroe, Cavan footballer. Recalls playing Under-14 match. Winning Under-14 championship with Kells secondary school. Later winning minor match with Kells against Kilmainhamwood, losing title because of objection: Paul was from Cavan. Mentions playing football in McNamees' field.</p> <p>12:30 Paul discusses playing with Maghera Mac Finn's GFC, oldest club in county. Winning first Cavan championship in 1888. Mentions song written about the win. Later playing on county team. Winning several Ulster championships, two All-Irelands, and a National League title.</p> <p>13:37 Paul outlines the history of the club. In early days: playing in Carroll's pitch across border in Meath, winning prize of barrel of porter against Kilmainhamwood. Mentions first Cavan championship and Ballyconnell First Ulsters. Describes Ulster championship success. Mentions Inniskeen Grattans GAA Club. Mentions Páidí O'Rourke and Paddy O'Rourke.</p> <p>15:17 Paul reflects on the lack of facilities in national school. Pitch for Kells secondary school in Carnaross. Mentions teacher Michael Kelly involved in football. Describes training: practice.</p> <p>16:23 Michael describes his schooldays in mid to late 60s. Rivalry between two parts of parish: Lurgan and Castlerahan. Ramor United. Outlines catchment area of club. Amalgamation of parish and subsequent separation. Camaraderie and team spirit in club.</p> <p>19:16 Michael discusses rivalry in parish between Maghera and Ramor Utd. Less nowadays.</p>
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	<p>20:44 Paul reflects on the three teams in his time in Lurgan parish: Virginia, Latoon, Maghera. Junior team manager of Ramor Utd in 1974. Explains origin of club name: the lake. Winning championship.</p> <p>23:13 Paul recalls travelling to matches by bicycle, later by car. Playing minor with Cavan in 1945, no money in club, players contributing money for transport to match.</p> <p>23:47 Paul explains how he started playing for his county. Mentions selector Paul Russell.</p> <p>24:20 Michael describes 1948 team of North Meath and South Cavan, which played garda team from Dublin at Millbrook. Explains how Russell (from Oldcastle) was impressed with Paul Fitzsimons' playing, informed Cavan county board about Paul Fitzsimons' skill. Mentions Lazarus Molloy.</p> <p>26:43 Paul reflects on the excitement of being called to play for his county. Collective training in Ballyjamesduff. Telegram. Mentions Johnny Cole driving him to training in Bedford lorry. Recalls Johnny's contribution to football then. Lack of transport.</p> <p>28:18 Describes training sessions. Arduous. Sprinting. Mentions Johnny McGeough and Hughie Reilly. Camaraderie of team. Mentions Mick Higgins, Tony Tighe, Seamus Morris, Simon Deignan, Paddy Smith, Owen Roe McGovern, Joe Stafford, Des Benson, Victor Sherlock, The Gunner Brady, Peter Donohoe.</p> <p>30:17 Michael discusses tournament match in Oldcastle North Meath South Cavan team. Paul mentions team members: Paddy Farrelly, Joe Smith, Ted Lynch, Connie Kelly, Pat Conaty, Victor Sherlock, Seamus Maguire, Tony Tighe, Mick Higgins, Paul Fitzsimons, Joe Stafford, Peter Donohue, Nicholas Cunningham.</p> <p>32:06 Mentions various players he played against: Brendan Lynch, Bill Carlos, Gerry McArdle.</p> <p>32:34 Describes lead-up to the 1948 All-Ireland Senior Football Final. Recalls his father dying the morning of the 1949 All-Ireland Senior Football Final, he was on panel.</p> <p>33:44 Reflects on travelling to Croke Park in 1943 and 1945 to watch Cavan play in the All-Ireland Senior Football Finals. Meeting people on train, men drinking on trains. Mentions publican Peter Smith.</p>
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	<p>34:45 Describes trip to Dublin in 1935 to watch Cavan play Kildare in the All-Ireland Senior Football Final. Travelling with his mother. Cavan winning. Excitement of being in Croke Park.</p> <p>35:53 Michael describes his first trip to Croke Park in 1962 when Cavan played Roscommon. Anticipation. Getting a lift to the match. Mentions Micheal O'Hehir. No televisions. First match to be televised live. Describes his position in Hogan Stand. Mentions Sean Óg Flood, Jim McDonnell, Dermot O'Brien, PJ Gorman.</p> <p>39:15 Recalls incident involving Roscommon getting a penalty. Paul describes being a selector on that team. Michael mentions Gabriel Kelly, PJ McCaffrey, Tony Morris, Seamus McMahon, Charlie Gallagher, Tom Lynch.</p> <p>41:06 Discussion about televised matches. Watching highlights on <i>Sunday Sport</i>. Michael mentions neighbour Tommy Lynch. Recalls watching matches on television.</p> <p>43:03 Paul describes listening to matches on radio in Protestant neighbour's house. Mentions commentator Eamonn de Barra. Mentions Sean Óg Flood winning All-Ireland medal. Recalls winning an ESB All-Ireland title alongside Flood in 1958.</p> <p>44:51 Paul reflects on Ulster junior final in Irvinestown in 1957. Being captain and beating Donegal. Paul getting football and cup and selling the football on the way home.</p> <p>46:06 Playing with Cavan team until 1958. Outlines his playing career. Winning five Ulster finals. Enjoyment. Describes winning 1952 All-Ireland Senior Football Final, beating Meath. Mentions chairman of Meath County Board, Fr. Tony from Moynalty. Also Paul Russell, Maguires. Crossover of players between Meath and Cavan teams. Mentions Liam Maguire and his brothers playing on opposing teams, Meath and Cavan. Michael mentions record attendance at Croke Park in 1961 All-Ireland Senior Football Final.</p> <p>48:34 Paul recalls celebrations after winning final. Returning by Kingscourt. Mentions teammate Terry Keogan. Threshing mill at Castlerahan.</p> <p>49:19 Describes ESB competitions. Cavan, Louth, Monaghan, Meath in one district. Mentions teammates John Boyers, Sean Óg Flood, Jim McDonnell, Jean Quigley, Val Gallagher. No collective training. Playing matches in</p>
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	<p>Drogheda, Dundalk, Breffni Park.</p> <p>51:07 Discussion about history of Breffni Park. Official opening in 1923 by Ulster Council secretary Eoin O'Duffy. Paul mentions Cavan's first All-Ireland in 1928 against Kildare. Mentions teammate Harry Mulvaney. Also mentions Johnny Cole.</p> <p>52:38 Paul considers the impact of the Second World War on the GAA. Recalls being outside Barry's Hotel in 1945 after the All-Ireland final, mentions Paddy Reilly. Cycling to Dublin for matches, staying in O'Brien's Hotel.</p> <p>54:24 Michael mentions characters in Ramor United: Miles and Sean Duffy, publicans. Recounts stories involve the Duffys drinking bottles of Guinness at matches. The Long Stand in Croke Park.</p> <p>58:00 Paul describes cycling to Clones in 1946 with Philly McCathal. Going to mass in Cootehill on the way.</p> <p>58:47 Michael recounts story involving match in 1892 in Clonturk, Dublin. Cavan playing Dublin Young Ireland, Dublin winning. 21-a-side. Dispute about which team won second match, Cork vs. Kerry. Mentions Mick McGurk from Virginia, captain of 1892 Cavan team.</p> <p>01:02:50 Recounts story from McGurk about travelling to Bailieborough for match in wagonette, horse dying, describes how they got home.</p> <p>01:04:14 Michael recalls story from the 40s about Benny McDonnell from Bailieborough. Also mentions George Delaney, workman in Croke Park. McDonnell getting into Croke Park free.</p> <p>01:06:36 Paul describes the disappointment of the 1937 All-Ireland Senior Football final between Cavan and Kerry. Mentions Packie Boylan. Dispute about which team won, final decision: a draw.</p> <p>01:07:32 Discussion about the role of politics in the GAA. Cavan county board anti-Fianna Fáil, roles in Fine Gael politics. Mentions Seamus Gilheaney and Andy O'Brien. Michael describes other politics in the organisation.</p> <p>01:08:35 Class distinction. Snobbery. Lack of class distinction in Kerry football. Paul mentions Kerry politicians Sean Óg Sheehy, Austin Stacks. Also Cavan politicians John Walsh, TP O'Reilly. Less significance of politics and class nowadays.</p>
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	<p>01:11:08 Paul reflects on his time as a selector. How he chose players. Mentions Fr. Bennie Maguire, Mick Higgins. Their approach to selecting.</p> <p>01:12:10 Explains how he got involved in selecting: proposed by Thomas McGibney's father. Paul's enjoyment of it, getting driven around to matches.</p> <p>01:13:39 Recalls story about refereeing match in Meath in 1967. Mentions Sean McCormack. Paul declining to send off McCormack. Explains how he got involved in refereeing.</p> <p>01:15:42 Michael ponders his interest in the GAA. His parents' interest in listening to matches. Wet and dry batteries. His brothers playing. Recalls imitating Michael O'Hehir as a child.</p> <p>01:18:09 Mentions winning recitation competition in The Silver Tankard in Meath and the Lakeside Manor in the 70s. Mentions publican Pat Fay getting him involved in commentating in 1981 in Meath, Monaghan, and Cavan. Asked to commentate on video by Ulster Council in 1983. Working on local radio until 1990. Mentions Peter Brady.</p> <p>01:22:09 Recalls presenting This Is Your Life programme in the Slieve Russell hotel in 1993. Mentions producer Martin Shannon, GAA president Peter Quinn. Describes stint with Radio Ulster in Belfast.</p> <p>01:23:24 Recounts story involving Derry playing Monaghan in Celtic Park. Mentions Seamus McCloskey. Getting lost, ending up in cul de sac with armed British Army soldiers. Also recalls covering Railway Cup final in Newry in mid-90s, his car going on fire.</p> <p>01:27:00 Also describes Cavan playing Wexford in league match in 2005 in Wexford Park, finding wallet.</p> <p>01:31:22 Discusses his night radio show called "Round the Roads." Recounts stories told to him by old people on show. Meath playing Galway in 1967 All-Ireland Senior Football Semi-Final. Mentions Mary and Frank Griffin at match, Frank setting his wife's hat alight with his cigarette.</p> <p>01:34:43 Paul mentions Michael O'Hehir. Praises Michael Tynan's commentating skills.</p> <p>01:35:27 Paul describes playing for club and county. Enjoyment of club life: concerts, dances. Discusses club facilities today: quality of pitch, facilities, clubhouse for meetings. No hurling in area, but Paul recalls playing minor</p>
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	<p>hurling with Kells club. Objection to Paul being from Cavan.</p> <p>01:37:25 Discussion of illegal playing.</p> <p>01:37:56 The ban on foreign games: no effect in Cavan, no soccer or rugby teams. Mentions Brother O'Shea. Insignificant role of priests in the GAA in the locality. Paul mentions Fr Tony from Moynalty and also Fr. McManus.</p> <p>01:39:30 Paul also mentions Matt Gilsenan, Meath captain in 1939. Michael mentions Jim Kearney, Oldcastle, retiring after Meath lost All-Ireland final, returning a decade later to beat Cavan in 1949 All-Ireland Senior Football Final. Mentions Meath's Paddy Connell, also Brian Smith.</p> <p>01:41:39 Michael recalls going to a Railway Cup final in the early 70s. Hitchhiking, getting lift to match. Only money for bus to Carnaross, walking the rest of the way home.</p> <p>01:43:49 Paul recalls winning a minor final with Paddy Connell in Kells and playing against him later. Also mentions Meath's Mattie McDonagh.</p> <p>01:44:36 Paul recalls training teams in club. Michael describes significance of match results in local papers when he was growing up, comparison with nowadays.</p> <p>01:46:00 Recollects his involvement in a project recording interviews with former footballers in neighbouring club. Mentions former footballers Eamonn Mongey, Sean Flanagan, Joe Keohane, Johnny Wilson, Tom Reilly, brother of John Joe. Also mentions Bat Garvey, Larry Stanley.</p> <p>01:48:35 Discussion about different religions playing football locally. Paul mentions playing with Tommy White, a Protestant. Also Louis McQuaid. Protestant interest in rugby.</p> <p>01:51:15 Discussion about impact of emigration on the area.</p> <p>01:51:39 Paul recalls travelling to London with the Cavan team. Several times. Regrets missing the 1947 game in New York. Describes playing in Wembley, relatives living there giving him money. Mentions Brian Gallagher.</p> <p>01:54:01 Michael considers the issue of remaining neutral as a commentator. Importance of being fair and balanced. Recalls Ramor Utd. taking part in the 1992 county final, his son playing, his ability to be impartial. Recalls Cavan winning last Ulster title in 1997, his coverage winning a McNamee award.</p> <p>01:56:00 His dislike of silence in commentating, filling them</p>
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	<p>with GAA and historical factoids. Relates several such facts.</p> <p>02:00:29 Paul recalls Killan band and Artane Boys Band.</p> <p>02:01:09 Michael ponders the importance of the Scór competition. Describes negative experience at Railway Cup match, meeting a rat.</p> <p>02:03:15 Mentions Páraic Duffy. Also mentions John McAviney, Mick Burrows and Mick Duffy, Páraic's father. Also mentions referees Patsy Devlin and Fintan Tierney. Recounts story featuring Mick Duffy.</p> <p>02:08:13 Description of best memories and worst memories of the GAA. Paul recalls getting selected to play for Cavan in 1948. Disappointment of cycling to Clones and seeing Cavan beaten in Ulster final. Recalls playing on soccer pitch in Wembley, different goalposts. Crowds watching.</p> <p>02:10:26 Mentions GAA heroes: Mick Higgins, Paddy O'Brien, Sean Purcell. Recalls best match he ever watched: 1937 draw between Cavan and Kerry.</p> <p>02:12:03 Michael reflects on his best GAA memories: Ulster finals in Clones. Mentions Down's Sean O'Neill. Describes effect of O'Neill's skill on crowd. Also mentions Mick Higgins and Terry Keogan.</p> <p>02:14:30 His views on decline in football standards, excessive rules nowadays. Mentions free kicks taken by Charlie Gallagher, Cyril Dunne, Brian Stafford, Paddy Doherty. Describes their skill. Compares watching match for enjoyment with watching for commentating purposes. Mentions Mickey Harte.</p> <p>02:17:00 Recounts stories of people he met at matches. Recalls requesting water at a match.</p> <p>02:20:13 Describes his favourite game: the 1997 All-Ireland Club Semi-Final in Portlaoise. His biggest GAA disappointment: not playing for local club. Disappointment in Cavan's lack of success.</p> <p>02:22:20 His views on excessive focus on county team to the detriment of the clubs. Recalls working on 1997 game to mark the 1947 Cavan vs. Kerry game in New York. Mentions James Maguire. Recording several programmes to mark the occasion. Mentions Tommy Daly.</p> <p>02:25:47 Michael reflects on what the GAA has meant to him. Pastime. Recalls being chairman of juvenile club in parish,</p>
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	<p>Lurgan. Mentions 1928 Ulster Final between Cavan and Armagh in Breffni Park. Two brothers playing, Charlie and John, goalkeepers for opposing teams. Also mentions John and Paddy Tavey who played for Monaghan and Cavan in the late 50s.</p> <p>02:28:58 Paul recounts story about Mick Higgins and Terry Keogan on 1952 panel. Recalls night before All-Ireland final in 1988, involved in car crash that killed his friend Patsy Mulvaney.</p> <p>02:30:32 Paul reflects on the significance of the GAA in his life.</p> <p>02:31:04 Michael recalls the 2002 All-Ireland Final, covering match on local radio. Describes doing a match report in the car, stuck in traffic on the North Circular Road.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>Michael:</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 checked="" 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>Paul:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p> <p><input checked="" 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>Michael: Played at U-14 level.</p> <p>Paul: Played from the age of 12 until he was in his mid-30s at club and county level. Won a range of titles:</p> <p>Club: Underage Club; Under 14 with Kells; Pattern Tournament with Kells.</p> <p>County: 5 / 6 McKenna Cups; 1 National League; 4 Ulster titles; 2 All-Irelands.</p>

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Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Michael: Was involved in administration from c. 1985 to the early 1990s. He was juvenile chairman in the late 1980s. Paul: Was involved in administration from 1946. He was club secretary, chairman and is currently President of the club.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 02:33:14
Language	English

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: Arlene Crampsie

Date: 05/07/10