

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	13/10/08
Location	Belleek
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Joseph (Joe) O'Loughlin
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1932 Home County: Fermanagh
Education	Primary: Commons Primary School, Belleek, Co. Fermanagh Secondary: Technical College, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal
Family	Siblings: 3 sisters, 4 brothers Current Family if Different: Married with 9 children, 6 girls and 3 boys
Club	Erin Gaels, Young Emmets, Corlea
Occupation	Bicycle Shop, Garage and Petrol Station Owner
Parents' Occupation	Father owned business above, Mother was Housewife.
Religion	Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

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Date of Report	17/10/08
Period Covered	1930s – Present
Counties/Countries Covered	Fermanagh, Donegal, Tyrone, Leitrim, Kerry, Cork
Key Themes Covered	Refereeing, Northern Ireland, Food and Drink, Violence, Travel, Grounds, Fundraising, Socialising, Impact on Family Life
Interview Summary	<p>This interview covered a range of themes listed above, of particular interest is the fact that Joe played football for awhile with Corlea, a team with players from both Fermanagh and Donegal. The interview contains lots of anecdotes and stories about Joe's career as a referee, but also about his time as a player and club treasurer. Joe also talked about the GAA more generally, improvements in facilities and equipment through time and technological advances. The social side of the GAA features strongly in this interview.</p> <p>Start: Introduction to Interview, Name of Interviewee.</p> <p>0.25: No Nickname.</p> <p>0.35: Home County is Fermanagh and local club is Erin Gaels.</p> <p>1.00: GAA was only exciting thing happening when we were growing up. Cinema's weren't very popular during war years.</p> <p>1.15: Walking and Cycling to games.</p> <p>1.26: When bus was going to matches a chance of getting a lift.</p> <p>1.37: Corlea Team was dissolved.</p> <p>2.05: Became treasurer of club, in 1950s £140 was annual financial income of club, nowadays it would only buy a couple of footballs.</p> <p>2.25: Fundraising activities – Céilís, Irish Dancing, Bazaars, Raffles.</p> <p>2.40: Big part of everyone's life.</p> <p>2.45: Learned Irish Dancing.</p> <p>3.05: Rented hall in Corlea for events, musicians were paid £1 a piece, admission was half a crown (12 ½ p) and they would make about £20.</p> <p>3.30: There were a lot of different clubs in Belleek, 'some</p>

	<p>lasted awhile, some died out’.</p> <p>3.45: Corlea was an important club during war years, it had players from both Fermanagh and Donegal, they were very successful and won the junior championship, however, this brought the players to the notice of the respective county boards. They were taken for county team and team disbanded.</p> <p>4.25: Young Emmets became the local team and upset Lisnaskea who had been ‘ruling the roost in Fermanagh for years and years’.</p> <p>4.50: Emigration affected clubs, though one Donegal team had a player who was an American citizen and played in the St. Brendan’s Cup (All-Ireland winners vs New York).</p> <p>5.45: Discusses changes in Community, the club used to be the centre of everything, that’s all changed now.</p> <p>6.10: Each team was supposed to bring a ball with them. Now there are dozens of balls on the field.</p> <p>6.20: Used to cycle out to the field.</p> <p>6.25: Changes in grounds and equipment, balls used to get punctured in hedges, fields weren’t levelled or drained. Even the types of pitches have changed.</p> <p>7.30: Tells story of person getting free, setting ball on top of rush bush. When the player kicked the ball he scored a goal with the rush bush and a point with the ball.</p> <p>7.55: Talks about incident between Cork and Kerry in Munster Final. A free was given to a player called Young, Keohane pushed the ball into the soft ground without Young realising.</p> <p>8.40: Cost of renting a pitch was about £10/15 a year.</p> <p>8.50: No lines on pitches and hard to get goal posts, remembers people going into forest and cutting down trees for the posts, goals had no nets.</p> <p>9.20: In some cases used lime, cope sods or sally bushes to mark out lines.</p> <p>9.35: Referees have everything going for them now!</p> <p>10.00: Umpires used caps and handkerchiefs, they weren’t often reliable as one came from each club.</p> <p>10.35: Referees were never easy to get, each club had to appoint a referee and it was generally the one who could read and write.</p> <p>11.05: Talks about a match where a player tried to rile the person he was marking, after the match it turned out the player was deaf and dumb.</p>
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	<p>12.05: Refereed a 7-a-side tournament at Kinlough, Co. Leitrim where a grandfather and grandson were playing on same team.</p> <p>12.25: Junior Football was crude and difficult and they had bad pitches.</p> <p>13.05: Most important games he referred were Donegal County Finals, but most enjoyable games were ones he refereed at the Christian Brothers School in Ballyshannon.</p> <p>13.50: Describes oval, egg shaped pitch at the Ballyshannon School.</p> <p>13.55: Lots of family members showed up to school finals.</p> <p>14.20: Army Captains from Finner Camp used to come out to referee the school finals, but at one game a captain had a family member on the team and he allowed the game to run on until they won. After that Joe was asked to referee them.</p> <p>14.45: 'They were the best fun of the whole lot'</p> <p>14.54: Tell the story of the last game he refereed. The captain of the losing team was heartbroken and standing on his own, Joe gave him his jersey and whistle. Joe met his father a long time later and he told him that even now they were his sons most treasured possessions.</p> <p>15.55: He refereed a game between Lisnaskea and Teemore. A bit of fighting broke out, so Joe moved on his watch. He knew the way the two were fighting it was over something from the night before, years later he met the player at a function and asked him what happened at the dance.</p> <p>17.10: Most important skill of a referee is common sense. Paddy O'Keefe in Croke Park told a referee he found reading the rule book before an All-Ireland Final to forget it, get out there and use his common sense.</p> <p>17.45: Rules are best used as guidelines. Players respect referees who protect them.</p> <p>18.10: Tells story of Phonsie from Irvinestown who got his face 'burst' by a big savage on other team. He met him years later and he thanked him for protecting him that day, though he did tell him that at that time 'there wasn't too many referees who would put somebody off' for hitting Phonsie.</p> <p>19.15: Sean Slevin, County Footballer, Ballyshannon, gave him great advice. If he ever got attacked in a game, he was to lie down on the ground, roll himself into a ball and protect his head.</p> <p>19.35: Put this advice into practice at a junior game on the night before an Ulster final. Some people had a lot of drink taken and he was lucky to get out of the grounds safe.</p>
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	<p>20.00: There was a lot of drink taken in them days; the favourite drink in early days of the association was poteen.</p> <p>20.30: Tells story of his appeal against an Ulster Council decision. He was refereeing a tough match, a fight broke out, a fella came down the hill at the side of the pitch on his bike and into the row. Joe put off a prominent player who spat in face of umpire. Ulster council gave him one month's suspension instead of twelve months. Frank Maguire, MP, encouraged him to appeal and he did, without the blessing of the County Board.</p> <p>22.10: Set off in a Ford Car to Croke Park, presented his case and won it. He was never appointed to another inter county game.</p> <p>23.50: If he was Paddy Russell this year he would have appealed, the case of his note book being slapped out of his hand.</p> <p>24.15: Referees should have their own body, they shouldn't be above criticism and the rule against lifting the ball off the ground should be dispensed with.</p> <p>26.10: Discusses various misguided views of supporters, e.g. Tyrone and Kerry All-Ireland 2008.</p> <p>27.55: Told the banter in Hill 16 when Dublin is playing is fantastic.</p> <p>28.15: Thinks the GAA made a great mistake a few years ago segregating Croke Park for a game.</p> <p>28.40: Abuse players get from Referees – 'they'd knock spots off you in an argument with bad language'.</p> <p>29.10: Technological advances e.g. in Soccer they have a chip in the ball.</p> <p>30.10: Dislikes referees being dictated to about how to referee this is smothering their own talents.</p> <p>30.35: Story about the Umbrella Lady who gave all the referees a rough time.</p> <p>31.00: Story from Glenties, Co. Donegal, where he tried to put a man out of the field who was giving him abuse. The man replied 'I dare ye. I'm the man that owns this field and if you're good enough to put me out of my own field, you've another thing coming'.</p> <p>32.00: County games were easier to referee than club games, because they were more disciplined.</p> <p>32.45: A newspaper described one of the easiest games he ever refereed as his finest hour. He was disappointed because anybody could have refereed that particular game.</p>
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34.00: He was chairman or secretary of the referee's board for awhile and looked after appointments. On one occasion a team objected to him acting as referee for a game, and being in charge of appointments he appointed someone else, however, when the following year they asked for him to referee a game he also appointed someone else.

35.00: Story of attempt to bribe him in Inter-mediate final in Lisnaskea, between Ederney and Brookeborough. Chairman came past and said to him 'give us anything going, there's a fiver in it for you'.

36.25: Most people wouldn't tell you about it (bribery) anyhow!

36.45: Priest in Pettigo organised team.

36.50: Story about player from Irvinestown toggging out for Pettigo team. He recognised Joe and was afraid he would put him off and report him. Joe had to tell priest to tell player that he didn't recognise him and just play the game.

37.40: In bad weather the referees wore Wellingtons, they used cigarette packets instead of notebooks.

38.05: Discussing referees expenses: 'If gate was bad they cut your fees, said we didn't make much today'

38.20: Treatment of referees today

38.55: Retired at forty. He watched many folks sacrifice family for sake of sport. He wasn't going to do that.

39.20: Talks about other way of spending Sunday, going to forest on a Sunday afternoon, being stopped by British Army with fourteen or fifteen kids in the car.

39.38: Says some people stay too long. 'Time to get out is when you're winning'.

40.30: People in North believe that GAA is same as IRA or republicanism. Talks about the McAnespey killing in Aughnacloy and the shooting dead of Dr. Jim Devlin the Tyrone footballers by an Army patrol / B-Specials.

41.00: 'They were difficult times for teams in Ulster; to survive those troubles took great courage'. He'd include Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal in that as they had to play most of their games on the Northern side of the border.

41.32: Ulster would have suffered together and stood together.

41.50: He didn't have much involvement with the GAA during the Troubles because he stopped at 40.

42.20: Malicious propaganda against GAA

42.48: Donegal is Joe and his family's second home. 'When

they're winning we're happy'. Talked about a penalty taken by Neilly Gallagher, a Donegal player. Penalty was awarded by Eamonn Moyles, Wicklow Referee, the wind blew the ball, Neilly went to bring the ball back, picked it up and a free was given to the other team.

43.40: Believes that bad refereeing decisions cost Donegal a lot of honours before they finally did it.

44.00: Drove players to County Final.

44.10: Talks about reasons for Fermanagh's lack of All-Ireland success. Stature of Fermanagh people mean that they're not big enough or tall enough, compared to other counties. Gives example of wedding congregation in Trim.

45.00: One third of Fermanagh under water, population low anyway and a lot of the population don't address the game.

45.30: First memories are of local matches, where you were always guaranteed a good row.

45.50: Things were curtailed during war years.

46.20: Players kit. They had no football boots, just hobnail boots; the jerseys for the team weren't all same colour. The county supplied jerseys for the county team, but gathered them up after the game.

46.55: For sport 'to develop from crude antiquated club football to what it did like was quite an achievement'.

47.00: 'It was the only thing to be involved in'. Got to go to Céilís and be involved in social life.

47.40: His brother was a great footballer and a great reader of the game. He won a Junior Title with Fermanagh in 1959.

49.20: Doesn't regret that he set a time limit to his involvement, 'there's more important things'.

49.45: Really likes women's football. Generally women just washed jerseys and ironed them for little credit. Few even got the chance of an All-Ireland ticket.

50.20: Feels Ladies Football is excellent, flowing free, but wonders why they have men refereeing games. If they can do a lot of football better than men, why do they not do their own refereeing.

51.22: Best memory was most enjoyable game, the day he gave the young lad his jersey. It's the simple things.

52.05: GAA taught people how to be organisers and experience a whole lot of things, taught people how to say their names in Irish and write it into the referee's report. It gave people discipline, and showed them how to meet people and get along with them. It was the people you had rows with

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	<p>that when you met 20/30 years later that the real friendship began to surface.</p> <p>53.00: Irish very important to people who are fluent. It's bound to be very important. Joe criticises the fact that the 2008 All-Ireland Minor replay was broadcast on TV in Irish, without subtitles, especially when 'a six county' team was involved.</p> <p>54.20: GAA is such an important part of social life and identity.</p> <p>54.40: Large minority of narrow-minded people in the GAA, you need to be open minded.</p> <p>54.55: There's no other amateur organisations that's achieved what they've achieved.</p> <p>55.10: It kept people together. Mentions Fermanagh locals who have become important in organisation – Malachy Mahon, Ulster Council; Peter Cummins, President of GAA and Tom Daly, Ulster Council.</p> <p>55.30: Other three Ulster Counties had to come through same tough times as six counties.</p> <p>55.55: Bus Hire for games became more common in 1930s, otherwise you had to cycle long distances. Players cycled long distances and then played in a match. 'Roads weren't good, bicycles not dependable'.</p> <p>56.30: Bought bottles of whiskey and filled the cup.</p> <p>56.50: In Fermanagh the medals were never presented on the day of the County Final. The medals were made in Dublin. The County Secretary ordered them when he went to the All-Ireland. They held a victory céilí and the chairman presented the medals. 'Was a good fundraiser and guaranteed a big crowd.'</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</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 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): __Drove players to matches__</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Won senior league title with Young Emmets. Played for ten years.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator</p>	<p>Treasurer, until he got married. Referee for ten years until he was 40. He was also Secretary of the Referees Appointments</p>

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(Positions held; how long for)	Committee.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 57 27 mins
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: 17/10/08_____