

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	20 th April 2010
Location	Leo's home, near Ballysimon, Co. Limerick
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Leo Morrison
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1937 Home County: Limerick
Education	Primary: Moneleen NS, Co. Limerick Secondary: St Munchin's College, Limerick
Family	Siblings: 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife, 2 sons & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Ahane GAA [Limerick]; Moneleen GAA [Limerick]
Occupation	Publican
Parents' Occupation	Publicans
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	15 th June 2012
Period Covered	1937 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Limerick
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Education, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Leo describes his experiences with Limerick GAA. When he was young he played with the Ahane club at a traumatic time in their history after Michael Herbert sustained a serious injury on the pitch. He describes what it was like at the club then and how the Monaleen club - which he joined - was established in his immediate locality. His new club was eager to establish itself and they soon got in Jack Behan O'Brien, who had previously trained the Cork senior team, in to conduct training sessions. He worked the players very hard but it yielded results and the club enjoyed some success on the pitch. Monaleen was a small parish but over time more people moved into the area and the club expanded rapidly. Leo played a central role as he was treasurer of the club as they raised funds to buy more land and developed the club's facilities. He also discusses subjects such as the ban on foreign games, local competition from other sports such as rugby, and the crisis that engulfed Limerick hurling in 2010 over the position of senior hurling manager Justin McCarthy.</p> <p>00:20 Born in 1937</p> <p>00:25 Earliest memory is matches in the mid-1940s and the Mackeys, Jackie Power and Dick Stokes the heroes of the time and were from Ahane which was nearby</p> <p>01:15 In 1959 there was a serious injury to one of the Herberts and it set Limerick hurling back a lot</p> <p>01:30 His father was treasurer of a junior club started in the 1940s</p>

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	<p>01:40 His uncle played Harty Cup with CBS but joined the civil service and went off to Dublin</p> <p>02:05 He had a brother who died shortly after birth and his father and uncle died in their fifties.</p> <p>02:30 His father was treasurer of Ballysimon hurling club and that disbanded in 1950.</p> <p>02:40 He was too young to play for that club and there were no underage teams in that time.</p> <p>03:15 He played junior hurling with Ahane as there was no club in Monaleen.</p> <p>03:30 Ahane was after the trauma of the Herbert incident when he joined.</p> <p>03:55 There had been a melee in 1949 and Michael Herbert was struck with a hurley in the head and sustained serious injuries.</p> <p>04:25 The Mackeys packed it in after that.</p> <p>05:10 Monaleen club was set up by a small group.</p> <p>05:35 Fr Eamon Casey had originally started underage teams and Fr Kennedy started the junior team in 1957.</p> <p>06:20 Willie McKenna, Dickie Birmingham, Ned McDonnell and William Laffan were the main people who started the club.</p> <p>07:00 Leo was thrilled to be able to play for his own parish.</p> <p>07:15 In 1960 they were in a junior football and hurling semi-final and made both finals.</p> <p>07:45 At the games was a man named Jack Behan O'Brien - who had trained the Cork senior team - and he offered to train Monaleen.</p> <p>08:10 There had been a fall-out in Cork over the decision to take Jim Barry instead of Behan O'Brien on a trip to the United States.</p> <p>08:30 He gave them very physical training and it stiffened them up.</p> <p>09:10 They won the city football competition and lost the county final.</p> <p>09:25 They went on to win the junior hurling.</p>
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	<p>09:45 Outlines their training methods.</p> <p>11:20 From then on the team had great confidence in their fitness during their games.</p> <p>11:40 Other teams started copying their training methods, including Patrickswell.</p> <p>12:05 Diet was not examined as part of the training and some were encouraged to have a pint after training.</p> <p>12:50 On Mondays they cycled to the Redemptorist's in Limerick and Tuesday to Friday they trained.</p> <p>13:05 A farmer gave them a field to train.</p> <p>13:45 There were big celebrations when they won. They came back from Kilmallock to his mother's pub and his mother compared the volume of people to a Munster final.</p> <p>14:40 It was the junior hurling county final in 1961 and they beat St Mary's Rathkeale.</p> <p>16:00 Ballybrown and New Irelands were the other big teams at the time and they all met in the semi-finals of the city championship.</p> <p>17:05 They had a panel of 22 players the year they won the county championship.</p> <p>18:00 It was a small parish and they had a great spirit with a population of up to 700 people.</p> <p>18:25 It has been a parish of its own since 1971 when it was separated from St Patricks and now it has been split again into Milford and Monaleen.</p> <p>18:55 In the 1960s they went senior for a few years.</p> <p>19:15 They were winning in junior football.</p> <p>19:25 Lots of new people moved to the area in the 1970s and an underage structure was started.</p> <p>19:55 In 1973 the Féile na Gael was in Limerick and they had a very good Under-14 team.</p> <p>20:45 In 1975 they won a minor, Under-21 and senior football championship and four of the minors also played on the senior team, with one of them captaining the seniors.</p> <p>21:45 One player, Brian Spillane, went on to win a Triple Crown with Ireland and others were lost to third level</p>
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	<p>education in other areas.</p> <p>22:15 In 1968 they bought a field for 4,500 pounds.</p> <p>22:35 In the 1970s houses were built around the field and those people became involved with the club.</p> <p>23:20 They did fundraising to buy the field - raffles, proceeds from match programmes.</p> <p>23:50 In 1975 they got the proceeds from the Munster final match programmes for the Cork and Limerick game.</p> <p>25:00 There were 20 people in charge with 800 programmes each.</p> <p>25:35 There were 14,000 programmes in all and they were to get 50 per cent commission.</p> <p>27:25 In the end they got 1,000 pounds.</p> <p>27:40 He became a treasurer like his father and did it for 29 years in-a-row before taking a break and doing it for three more years.</p> <p>29:00 After they got the field there was more accounting and dealing with money to be done.</p> <p>30:20 The parish expanded and they had more underage teams and in 1995 they heard of land for sale.</p> <p>32:10 Leo approached the treasurer at the time and they went to examine the field.</p> <p>33:40 They went to the chairman and told him about the field.</p> <p>35:10 Leo wanted to act fast to buy the field before someone else got in their first and the decision was soon made to buy the field at 10,000 pounds an acre.</p> <p>37:35 There has been a lot of development in the local area and they are trying to buy some more land.</p> <p>39:50 They GAA has a business aspect to it now because there is a lot of money involved.</p> <p>41:40 He felt that he was regarded as an honest treasurer.</p> <p>42:10 Noel Minor is also an ex-treasurer and he and Leo still look after lodging the club lotto money.</p> <p>43:30 Outlines how their club lotto system works.</p>
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	<p>45:50 They get great support from the community.</p> <p>46:05 They are planning to build a tennis court on their club grounds.</p> <p>46:20 They host fundraisers and coffee mornings for non-GAA causes that are of interest/benefit to the community.</p> <p>47:15 They have had immigration of people from other countries.</p> <p>48:10 Their club has a membership of close to 300 people.</p> <p>48:35 They have lost some players to rugby, like Sean Cronin and two O'Boyles.</p> <p>48:55 It is a challenge to try and get the footballers playing hurling.</p> <p>49:10 They have a good crop of underage players who won Féile na bPeil in Limerick and lost the All-Ireland final to St Joseph's of Portlaoise.</p> <p>49:50 In 1975 they won a Féile and represented the county in Cork and in 1978 they represented the county in Kilkenny.</p> <p>50:10 In 1991 they won it in Limerick - played 25, won 23, lost 1 and drew 1. They lost to Toomevara of Tipperary.</p> <p>50:55 A lot of the 1991 team went to intermediate level and won the championship and went on to the senior championship.</p> <p>51:25 One player, Daniel Murphy, went to Cork and won five All-Ireland medals with Cork.</p> <p>52:25 Leo's last match was in August 1994. He had heart surgery later that year.</p> <p>52:50 Limerick lost the All-Ireland to Offaly that year.</p> <p>53:20 He also trained teams and enjoyed it.</p> <p>53:30 In 1992 he trained a team to the junior championship.</p> <p>53:35 Nicky Creedon was working with him, as was Noel Crowe.</p> <p>54:10 If a player was good enough he picked him and had a policy of not having vindictiveness towards any player.</p> <p>54:40 Hurling was not very good in the area at the time.</p> <p>55:10 They put in a junior B team and made the county semi-</p>
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	<p>final.</p> <p>53:25 They then entered a city competition and gave the subs a chance to play and they came up against Crecora in the final and they won it.</p> <p>57:15 He is more involved in hurling and was only ever a football selector for a six-month period.</p> <p>57:55 When the ban on foreign games was in force, many players were going to St Munchin's College which was a rugby school.</p> <p>59:00 The rugby wasn't as serious back then and their season ended in April.</p> <p>59:30 They stayed away from the rugby players when the ban was in force because they didn't want the club to be suspended.</p> <p>01:00:00 He doesn't like some of the GAA rules, like yellow and red cards.</p> <p>01:01:10 The fact that the goalkeeper gets more protection is a good thing.</p> <p>01:01:45 The fist-pass should have been retained.</p> <p>01:02:00 He had no problem with Croke Park being opened up to foreign sports; it would have been a PR disaster otherwise.</p> <p>01:03:20 They should have charged the FAI and the IRFU more to rent Croke Park.</p> <p>01:04:20 Secondary schools in Limerick are big into rugby and Leo feels that if they had charged more for Croke Park they could have pumped more money into secondary schools.</p> <p>01:05:20 Mentions the success of Castletroy College, a relatively new school.</p> <p>01:06:00 The Justin McCarthy crisis in Limerick worries him.</p> <p>01:06:35 His son grew up with heroes like the Hartigans, Eamon Grimes, the Bennices, Eamon Cregan,</p> <p>01:06:40 Mentions the Limerick hurlers that made the 2007 All-Ireland final with Brian Geary, Mark Foley and Ollie Moran.</p> <p>01:07:05 He feels the 2009/2010 players should have agreed</p>
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	<p>to meet the management.</p> <p>01:07:40 It will be hard to fix the problem.</p> <p>01:07:50 Mentions Brian Geary, who he feels would love to return.</p> <p>01:08:10 Outlines the reasons for the dispute within the Limerick senior hurling camp.</p> <p>01:08:30 Mentions a meeting he attended between Justin McCarthy and Brian Geary.</p> <p>01:09:10 Mentions Stephen Lucey and Brian Murray.</p> <p>01:09:35 He feels that, at the top level, people were too slow to react to the situation.</p> <p>01:10:10 Players make big sacrifices and should be looked after, but it's up to selectors to pick them.</p> <p>01:10:40 The GPA could have intervened in Limerick.</p> <p>01:11:35 The GAA was always talked about in the pub he was brought up in.</p> <p>01:12:05 The pub has been in the family since 1896.</p> <p>01:12:45 Drink driving laws have had a big impact on business.</p> <p>01:15:10 The Limerick footballers train on their pitch and sometimes call into the pub for lunch.</p> <p>01:16:00 Mentions an All-Ireland final between Ballyhale Shamrocks of Kilkenny and Sarsfields of Galway in Limerick and feeding the teams in the pub before the final.</p> <p>01:17:15 His wife knew he was involved in the GAA so she didn't mind it taking up his time.</p> <p>01:17:40 His GAA connections have been good for business.</p> <p>01:18:05 He has made great friends in the GAA.</p> <p>01:18:35 It is good for the youth and helps to develop them.</p> <p>01:19:10 His son is very involved in the GAA.</p> <p>01:20:20 He has been to 58 All-Ireland hurling finals and over 60 football finals.</p>
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<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): <hr/> </p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played hurling for 1 year with Ahane; Moved to Moneleen when it was founded in 1957. Won Limerick Junior Hurling Championship in 1961; Won Limerick divisional football final in 1960; won Limerick city junior football championships 1960-63; 1965, 1967, 1969. Won Limerick Junior Football Championship in 1969. Played until the mid-1970s finishing playing with Moneleen Junior B team.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Treasurer of Moneleen GAA for 30 years.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:20:57</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 15th June 2012