

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Elizabeth McDonald
Date of Interview	14 th Jan 2010
Location	Telephone interview. Interviewer in Boston College, Interviewee at home in Mitchelstown, Co.Cork.
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Una Toomey
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1927 Home County: Monaghan
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: N/A Current Family if Different: Married to Denis, they have 3boys and 5 girls
Club(s)	Mitchelstown Camogie Club [Cork]; Celtic Camogie Club [Dublin]
Occupation	Legal / Law Clerk
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

REFERENCE NO. MN/1/5

Date of Report	24 th July 2012
Period Covered	1945 – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Cork, Dublin, Monaghan, Cavan, Tipperary
Key Themes Covered	Playing, Training, Supporting, Family Involvement, Travel, Education, Media, Club History, All-Ireland, Impact on Life, Culture, GAA Abroad
Interview Summary	<p>Una Toomey who is originally from Monaghan founded the Mitchelstown Camogie Club in Co. Cork. She's been involved in Cork Camogie for over 50 years. Her interview focuses on the founding and growth of the camogie club, her own camogie career as a player and manager. She only retired from training at the age of 70 in 1995.</p> <p>0.00 Introduction</p> <p>00.40 Una explains she was very interested in Camogie and although from Monaghan, aged almost 20 joined the Cavan team in 1945 and practice 3 miles from Cavan town every night after work. Her parents were football supporters and her sister previously played for Monaghan on an older team.</p> <p>03.12 Micheal O'Hehir was a great commentator and she enjoyed listening to his commentary on the radio. She played with the Cavan County Camogie team, although Camogie was not very popular all around Ireland at that time. Not long on the team, Una was chosen to play in the Ulster Final against Antrim because the Goalie broke her ankle, she recalls blocking the balls and ended up winning, Annie Fitzpatrick was captain of that team.</p> <p>05.12 Una was being trained as a law clerk at the time, she was transferred from head office to branches elsewhere, subsequently she joined and played on several teams. Camogie was the love of her life and knew she wanted to play Camogie when she was just 15.</p> <p>06.24 In February 1947 she came to Cork to another firm and ended up meeting her now husband of many years. She met him "on the playing field first", he was secretary and treasurer</p>

	<p>of the local club, Mitchelstown, and was very interested in Hurling and Football. She used to cycle to training every night.</p> <p>07.45 Una recalls the lack of sponsoring and the various modes of transport used to attend matches; cycling, hackney cars and buses.</p> <p>08.15 Una played with Mitchelstown at a North Cork Division final against Charleville. She was put on again as a substitute because of a bereavement, she scored a goal from the forward line and became a permanent member of the club. She continued on in that club until spring 1950 when she was transferred to Dublin for work.</p> <p>09.10 On her arrival in Dublin she joined Celtic Camogie club, not to be confused with Celtic F.C. She used to cycle from Phibsborough to Coolock every evening to train. She got onto that senior team right away, playing centre-field. She played at Parnell park and other locations in the city, playing 12-a-side.</p> <p>10.53 At the League match Una had her tongue split, a result of not wearing helmets, however they did win. She and her team mates, then pioneers, went to a local ice-cream parlour to celebrate and sooth her tongue.</p> <p>11.55 Her worst injury was an ankle fracture. This did not stop her from founding the Mitchelstown Camogie Club in 1968, she continued to train until 1995 when she was 70 years of age.</p> <p>12.30 Una returned to Fermoy from Dublin as her "interest" in Mitchelstown became "fairly serious".</p> <p>13.10 She recalls the origins of the club, playing in an Old Lady's back yard. Mr. Cotter, who founded the club with her arranged matches. She never had any formal training over the years, all of the teams they were on trained themselves.</p>
--	---

	<p>14.50 She recalls commuting from Dublin to Mitchelstown and Monaghan to see her now husband of many years, Denis.</p> <p>15.43 Her children were very involved with the club. Her sons would go training with the Camogie girls from a young age and her younger children would go with her to the pitch.</p> <p>16.20 Her children all had other interests also, especially music. They played on the television in 1972. A daughter, Mary played with the Junior team at 10 years of age, the other players were in their twenties. She herself was still playing in her forties.</p> <p>18.43 She talks about the Mitchelstown GAA club. It was very successful.</p> <p>19.25 Una talks about how the team colours and jerseys have changed along with sponsoring by O'Neills in recent years.</p> <p>20.48 Una talks about the advantages of being a member of the GAA for such a long time, including social and cultural experiences. She also highlights some disadvantages of being a female team in her community at times, along with not getting as much time with her children as she wanted at other times.</p> <p>25.00 Una recalls the transport to and from the matches.</p> <p>27.20 She speaks about volunteers associated with the club over the years.</p> <p>28.25 She has noticed a change in the interest of fathers in relation to volunteering in the Camogie club.</p> <p>29.40 Una talks about the atmosphere at GAA matches, both positive and negative.</p> <p>31.24 Una is still a true Monaghan woman, very interested in their outings and even has a grand niece on the team. She also talks about the difference in recent years in relation to the media coverage of Camogie and football.</p>
--	--

	<p>34.35 Christy Ring was one of her idols in her teens, also the Rackard brothers from Wexford.</p> <p>36.00 Some of her family was involved in GAA also. Especially her grandsons, O'Tuamas who have been on county teams.</p> <p>37.15 Una shares her memories about seeing All-Irelands in Croke Park through the years. Her daughter joined a camogie team in San Francisco but they had not got much competition.</p> <p>39.20 Una's decision to retire at 70 after 40 years of playing and training in Mitchelstown gave her a much needed break.</p> <p>40.35 She talks about the Presentation School's kindness in allowing them facilities to train on.</p> <p>41.45 Una discloses her training methods that led to Mitchelstown winning the county final several times during her training time. The girls were very dear to Una and she was proud of them all. She says it was worth the hassle to see them happy.</p> <p>46.10 She gave the advice that as long as they played fair it didn't matter if they won or lost.</p> <p>47.28 Facilities and health concerns were lacking severely during the time at the pitches.</p> <p>50.20 Una's greatest memories include Celtic's big League win.</p> <p>51.23 Although she has great memories she only has one low point during a match when she thought she had hurt an opponent badly.</p> <p>52.49 "It gets into your bones", Una says of the GAA. Her husband used to referee matches and still enjoys watching the matches. She agrees that it is a very big part of Irish culture. She and her family are very much supporters of the</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. MN/1/5

	<p>Irish language.</p> <p>56.26 Una loves to see young people given the opportunity to play from a young age.</p> <p>57.30 She speaks more about her time at the Celtic team and the songs they sung.</p> <p>58.38 Born in Ballybay, a farmer's daughter, she has made some big contrast between country and town teams.</p> <p>59.55 The changing of so many rules could be detrimental especially the square rule. This is just one of the things she wouldn't agree with. She thinks that ground hurling should be re-introduced also.</p>
Involvement in GAA	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): Founder of Mitchelstown Camogie Club</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played and trained from the age of 20 until 70; North Cork Division Champions; Ulster Champions; Dublin League Champions</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Founder and Trainer of Mitchelstown, Co. Cork from 1968 until 1995.</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 1:01:20</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. MN/1/5

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: Liz McDonald

Date: 20-01-2010