

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	11 th Jan 2011
Location	Seamus's home, near Clonmel ,Co. Tipperary
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Seamus Leahy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1934 Home County: Tipperary
Education	Primary: Nenagh NS, Co. Tipperary Secondary: Nenagh CBS, Co. Tipperary Third Level: University College Dublin
Family	Siblings: 4 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Kay), 3 sons & 2 daughters
Club(s)	Éire Óg GAA Nenagh [Tipperary]; Boherlahan Dualla GAA [Tipperary]; St Mary's GAA Clonmel [Tipperary]
Occupation	Retired Secondary School Teacher
Parents' Occupation	Clerk of Works, Tipperary County Council [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Cumann Gaelach; various mental health organisations

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

Date of Report	20 th Aug 2012
Period Covered	1900s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Tipperary, Limerick, Cork, Kilkenny, Clare, Dublin, Galway, Wexford
Key Themes Covered	Administration, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, All-Ireland, Irish History, Family Involvement, Politics, The Troubles, Relationships
Interview Summary (LOG)	<p>Seamus recalls his earliest memories in life, and recalls stories of the GAA from his younger days. He recalls early GAA heroes, and the effect that they had on him. He discusses various teams and matches, such as the 1941 “Foot and Mouth” Hurling championship that saw the All-Ireland Hurling Final played before the Munster Hurling Final that year. Seamus recalls his family's involvement in the GAA, most particularly his four uncles. He details their successes, recalling their immersion in the GAA. He also recalls the influence of cricket in the Boherlahan and wider Tipperary region, as well as Kilkenny. He compares the game with that of hurling. He also talks about Edward Carson coming to Boherlahan on his holidays, where he would play hurling with the locals. Seamus discusses the politics of Ireland in the early 20th century, discussing the War of Independence and Civil War. He outlines his family's role, and examines what role the GAA played during those turbulent times. He discusses the GAA in terms of culture and nationalism. He concludes by discussing Oireachtas hurling matches and the role they played, before discussing the relationship between successful counties and underdogs.</p> <p>00:30 Seamus recalls being born in 1934, mentioning political leaders of the time such as Eamon de Valera, William Cosgrave, Hitler and Mussolini. Mentions Edward abdicating the throne in England, but says the real king for him was Mick Mackey. Mentions Christy Ring also. Refers to description of Mackey by Carberry.</p> <p>02:40 Recalls meeting Mick Mackey at opening of McDonagh Park in Nenagh, match between Éire Óg Annacarty and Ahane. Mentions Bill O'Donnell of Éire Óg. Recalls meeting Mackey with his eldest brother Rory at a pub in Connolly Street, Nenagh. Mentions Jimmy Cooney and 1938 Munster Hurling Championship match between Clare and Tipperary. Mentions Jimmy attending a rugby match and Tipperary being</p>

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

	<p>suspended – Cooney later played with Limerick.</p> <p>05:27 Discusses the Cork team in 1945 going for four-in-a-row. Mentions Foot and Mouth disease in 1941 and its influence on championship – refers to Tipperary and Kilkenny not participating as Cork won the All-Ireland. Recalls Tipperary winning Munster Hurling Final after All-Ireland Final that year. Recalls 1944 Munster Hurling Final in Thurles - “The Bicycle Final”. Recalls old ancestral farm in Boherlahan, Mid-Tipperary. Mentions John Doyle's funeral, and recalls meeting Bernie and Pat Hartigan, two former Limerick hurlers. Recalls scene before Munster Hurling Final in 1944.</p> <p>09:51 Mentions Frank Burke from Galway and his comment regarding hurling men. Discusses the qualities of hurling men and the role of hurling in Irish culture.</p> <p>11:20 Discusses his family's involvement in the GAA. Mentions his grandfather Mike Leahy who played in an inter-county tournament between Tipperary and Cork in 1886.</p> <p>12:05 Mentions the growth of cricket around Boherlahan before the GAA was founded - his grandfather played cricket. Refers to cricket in Kilkenny also. Mentions foresight of Michael Cusack and Maurice Davin. Mentions Séamus Ó Riain's book. Recalls John Maher article in Boherlahan historical journal regarding cricket in the area. Refers to the “Cricket Field” near his farm when he was growing up. Discusses the similarities between cricket and hurling.</p> <p>15:50 Discusses hurling in the area before the founding of the GAA. Mentions book by AM Sullivan of Bantry - “The Story of Ireland”. Mentions TD Sullivan also. Speaks of lack of oral history regarding hurling in the area before the foundation of the GAA. Mentions first All-Ireland Hurling Final in 1887, won by Thurles. Recalls hurling club in Trinity College before the foundation of the GAA. Refers to Edward Carson playing hurling. Recalls in UCD in 1950 a Boherlahan man telling him that Carson hurled in Ardmayle, Boherlahan. Refers to Carson's uncle, the Reverend William Carson, rector in Ardmayle. Mentions Montgomery Hyde biography of Edward Carson. Recalls Edward Carson coming to the area on holidays and hurling with locals. Also mentions Carson's politics.</p> <p>23:10 Recalls stories he heard about his uncles when he was growing up. Four of them won All-Ireland hurling medals with Tipperary. Recalls medals being worn. Mentions his grandfather's medal from tournament match with Cork tournament in 1886. Explains why he pronounces his name</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

	<p>differently to his uncles.</p> <p>25:19 Discusses rivalry between Boherlahan and Toomevara. Recalls article about his uncle Paddy. Recalls 1913 All-Ireland Hurling Final that Toomevara reached and lost to Kilkenny. Mentions Dan Breen waving off Toomevara team at Kingsbridge (Heuston) Station. Mentions friendships that ensued as a result of the rivalry – names Wedger Maher, his uncle Johnny Leahy and Frank McGrath, his uncle Paddy Leahy, Jim Hurley of Cork, his uncle Tommy Leahy. Mentions Martin Kennedy of Toomevara and Tipperary, Nicky Rackard of Wexford. Mentions Sim Walton, the Black and Tans and breakout of prisoners from Kilkenny Jail. Recalls that his uncle's house was a safe house. Mentions 1930 All-Ireland Hurling Final between Tipperary and Dublin.</p> <p>35:55 Discusses the War of Independence and its influence on friendships. Mentions uncle's house that was a safe house. Recalls the Civil War and searches conducted by Free State troops. Mentions Clonoulty. Recalls 1922 All-Ireland Hurling Final between Tipperary and Kilkenny - his uncle Johnny Leahy was captain. Recalls Tipperary fans leaving early to get train home before hearing roar when on Mountjoy Square. Mentions Paddy Leahy, Joe Nagle and Paddy Dwyer who were on the run, and also mentions General Prout. Discusses his uncle Johnny's involvement in administration.</p> <p>40:56 Discusses politics and the GAA. Recalls when Luke O'Toole of Wicklow retired as GAA General Secretary – contest between Paddy O'Keeffe of Cork and Frank Burke, pupil of Pádraig Pearse's in St Endas. Burke played in 1917 All-Ireland Hurling Final and was a 1916 veteran. Mentions Dr John Ryan and the Collegians. Recalls the political nuances of that election campaign. Mentions John Joe Callinan (Tipperary captain in 1930). He also mentions the death of Frank Burke and contacting his son Éanna.</p> <p>47:19 Discusses the Civil War and the GAA in Boherlahan. Discusses how people chose which side they were on. Recalls his father's role in the Civil War. Mentions Liam Deasy of the Old IRA, Colonel Gerry Ryan. Mentions his uncles Johnny and Paddy Leahy. Mentions Mickey Joe Costello and his comment re the role of the GAA in the Civil War. Mentions an uncle, Mick, who was a sub on the Tipperary panel in 1916. Also won an All-Ireland with Cork and was manager of Reynolds Hotel in Cork. Refers to the night that Cork city was burned by the Black and Tans and his uncle was shot.</p> <p>54:29 Discusses his family's immersion in the GAA. Mentions</p>
--	--

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

	<p>his uncles Paddy, Johnny and Tommy. Mentions that his four uncles may be unique in winning All-Ireland medals. Refers to Coughlans in Blackrock, Cork. Mentions Kilkenny's Brian Cody. Recalls his uncle Paddy's role as chairman of selection committees for eight All-Ireland hurling victories. Mentions John Doyle's eight All-Ireland wins. Recalls his uncle Johnny's funeral. Mentions Lory Meagher, Sim Walton, Jim Hurley, Tom Barry and Mick Mackey being in attendance. Describes the effect of their commitment to the GAA on his uncles' lives. Mentions John Doyle.</p> <p>1:00:56 Discusses the issue of the GAA and nationalism/culture. Mentions the Irish language, watching matches on TG4 in Irish. Recalls his father's career in the GAA. Mentions Tom Semple's comment regarding his father's hurling ability. Recalls when his uncle Johnny died – mentions Dan Breen and Sean Treacy.</p> <p>1:05:23 Recalls his uncle Johnny being on the Munster Council for 30 years.</p> <p>1:05:57 Recalls the influence of the GAA on him growing up in Boherlahan.</p> <p>1:07:08 Recalls Oireachtas hurling matches. Describes match between Clare and Wexford and the effect it had on him. Mentions Clare's Jimmy Smyth and Wexford's Nick O'Donnell. Describes meeting Jimmy Smyth years later in Nenagh. Mentions Bobby Rackard. Discusses the issue of the uniqueness of memories. Explains the role that Oireachtas competitions played. Mentions Wexford's attributes. Recalls the year that Wexford defeated Cork in All-Ireland Hurling Final and chaired Christy Ring off the pitch. Recalls his friendship with Christy Ring. Mentions John Doyle's funeral, Christy Ring Jnr. Mentions Wexford and 1798. Recalls Clare's relationship with Tipperary, how successful teams relate to underdogs. Mentions his son Kevin and coming back from championship match in 1971 in Limerick. Mentions young people from counties such as Carlow, Laois and Fermanagh missing out on the joy of successful days for their counties.</p>
--	---

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

<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 type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" 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): _____</p>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played hurling and football from underage upwards with Éire Ógs; played hurling with UCD</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>PRO and chairman of juvenile club at St Mary's GAA; member of various committees on Tipperary County Board.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 01:18:24</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. TP/1/11 (1)

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: 22nd August 2012