

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	1 st Dec 2010
Location	Lily's home, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Lily Spence
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1924 Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: Star of the Sea, Co. Antrim; St. Vincent's, Co. Antrim Secondary: St. Dominic's, Belfast, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 1 sister
Club(s)	St. Teresa's GFC; O'Donovan Rossa
Occupation	Civil Servant
Parents' Occupation	Pawn Broker [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Nationalist
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Lisburn and Balmoral Golf Club, Legion of Mary

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Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mary Herald
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1937 Home County: Antrim
Education	Primary: St. Kevin's, Co. Antrim
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers & 2 sisters Current Family if Different: Married (husband deceased) with 1 son and 1 daughter
Club(s)	Sean Treacy's; St. John's
Occupation	Stitcher and Stockroom Worker; Carer for the Elderly
Parents' Occupation	(Roof) Slater [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Sinn Féin
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Darts

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Date of Report	13 th July 2012
Period Covered	1930s - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Antrim, Armagh, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, The Troubles, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Socialising, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Lily and Mary talk about their involvement in Cumann Camógaíochta over the years. Lily discusses her early involvement in the game and documents her administrative career from being on the committee of St Teresa's to being nominated president of the camogie association. She talks about the issues faced at central council level while she was involved. Lily recalls the different people she worked with down the years and highlights the important work done by them. Mary talks about her playing and administrative career within Camogie. They discuss the development of camogie in Antrim and Ulster and how the game was perceived. They discuss the issue of the Troubles in Northern Ireland and talks about the negative impact it had on clubs around Belfast, with many of them collapsing. Lily talks about her refereeing career and how she became involved in refereeing in the first place. They describe the relationship between camogie and the GAA and ladies' football. Towards the end of the interview they talk about the important role that camogie has played in their lives and the sense of community that the association has brought.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:55 (Lily) Talks about her earliest GAA memories. Attending school in St Dominic's and starting camogie there. Joining St Teresa's in Belfast and getting on the committee. Fundraising in the church. Mentions Maureen Smith and former president Mary McAleese.</p>

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	<p>03:30 Recalls the success of the club. Travelling to the south to play other camogie teams. Learning Irish.</p> <p>05:15 Discusses the club changing its name to O'Donovan Rossa. Being captain of the team in St Dominic's. Mentions Maeve Gilroy.</p> <p>06:30 Talks about becoming treasurer and later chairperson of the county board. Also delegate to the Ulster county board. Nominated president of the Camogie Association, Cumann Camógaíochta. Holding the All-Ireland treasury position. Mentions Sheila McAnulty, Sean O'Duffy and Agnes Purcell.</p> <p>09:40 Discusses Rosina McManus and her death at a camogie match.</p> <p>10:30 Discusses the training courses they did. Talks about the All-Ireland medals she has. Mentions Alf Murray and serving as president of the camogie association while Seamus McFerran was president of the GAA.</p> <p>11:55 Talks about the work she did with college's hurling. Being Ulster College's secretary and the first president of the All-Ireland Colleges. The impact of the Troubles on the games.</p> <p>13:30 Recalls being arrested outside Newry while travelling to a camogie match. Hurls being confiscated at the border. The incident making it into the newspaper.</p> <p>17:15 (Mary) Talks about her early GAA memories. Starting camogie at 14 for Sean Treacy's. Outbreak of the Troubles and members of the club having to go on the run. Leaving camogie then for a few years.</p> <p>19:30 Discusses her husband getting involved with St. John's. Becoming secretary of the Antrim camogie county board in 1999. Getting an award for Administrator of the Year. Mentions Sheila McAnulty.</p> <p>22:25 Recalls a story about travelling to Louth with Rosina and Sheila for a match. Talks about Rosina. Mentions Captain Nairac, Catherine O'Hara.</p> <p>27:15 Talks about trying to encourage young people to get involved in administration.</p> <p>28:08 (Lily) Discusses her first attempts at playing camogie. Notes how there are now around 40 clubs in Ulster. Talks about the type of training when she was playing. Refereeing in four All-Irelands. Recalls a story about a photo and a</p>
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	<p>woman.</p> <p>32:45 Talks about the place where they played their games. Playing in Falls Park. Going to a county game in Cushendun.</p> <p>35:00 Describes the pitch in Falls Park. Recalls a story about girls going to Paisley's.</p> <p>36:44 Talks about her parent's involvement in the GAA. Father and brothers played football. Going to school in St. Vincent's.</p> <p>40:00 Recalls playing on a mixed team of boys and girls.</p> <p>40:55 Talks about a Mother Philomena who came to St. Dominic's from Portstewart. Mainly hockey in the school, camogie wasn't promoted. Marking pitches.</p> <p>41:00 (Mary) Notes how there was no real support for camogie in her area. Playing in shoes before getting hockey boots. The equipment they had. Mentions Annie Cahill, Ned McKee, Mary McMahon.</p> <p>45:00 Recalls going to Galway for a week and the bus crashing. Staying in a hen house because they had no money. Mentions Liam McGee.</p> <p>47:20 Talks about an Irish class in O'Dwyers being raided.</p> <p>48:45 (Lily) Discusses her family's political interests. Being nationalists. Father being a pawnbroker on Dock Street.</p> <p>50:15 (Both) They talk about a lady involved with the St. Malachy's club who sold outfits for camogie. O'Donovan Rossa's colours were black and white. Lily talks about her father trying to improve her hurl.</p> <p>53:00 They tell a story about Sheila McAnulty and Lily's sister Margaret.</p> <p>54:15 (Mary) Talks about playing for Antrim and recalls a match against Down.</p> <p>54:45 They talk about Antrim's All-Ireland wins in 1945, 1946 and 1947. Mentions Brendan Barry.</p> <p>55:50 (Lily) Recalls when she realised winning an All-Ireland was a big thing while going to organise camogie in Donegal. Mentions Maureen Smith, Teresa Davis, Jimmy McKee.</p> <p>57:30 Explains why the camogie final wasn't played in Croke Park in the early days. Mentions Alf Murray.</p>
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	<p>59:00 (All) They talk about the changes in camogie since she played. Give their opinion on the issue of payments and volunteerism. Changes in how the GAA is perceived. Talks about the role of the media. Mentions Benny Coulter and Mairéad McAtamney.</p> <p>01:03:20 (Lily) Talks about taking players from St. Louis, Kilkeel. Mentions the O'Haras, Moya Gibson, the McGarrys, Rosina McManus, Maeve Gilroy, Sue Ward, Mairéad McAtamney, Mairead McGill, Moya Ford, Lilly Scullion.</p> <p>01:05:10 Recalls going to a match in Antrim against Dublin. Her coat going missing in mass beforehand.</p> <p>01:06:30 Talk about the players at county level and at club level. Mentions Chris Hughes, Marion McFetridge, Mairéad McAtamney, Sue Ward.</p> <p>01:07:53 Discusses her first administrative position. Treasurer of St Teresa's. Going in to college's administration. Mentions Maureen Harbison, Mary Moran.</p> <p>01:09:45 Talks about splits in the camogie association in the past. Highlights the work of Jean McHugh. Mentions Sean McKeown.</p> <p>01:12:00 Discusses the main issues at central council level when she was involved. Issues with the Ashbourne Cup.</p> <p>01:14:14 Mary notes the difference between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. They discuss the issue.</p> <p>01:15:20 (Lily) Recalls an incident at a match between Tipperary and Dublin and the meeting after. Mentions Bernie Byrne, Lil O'Grady, Nancy Murray.</p> <p>01:18:20 Talks about the people on central council when she was involved. Highlights the work of Sheila McNulty from Warrenpoint. Mentions Eileen Leonard, Maureen Murphy, Agnes Purcell, Paddy Purcell, Mary Moran.</p> <p>01:21:53 Talks about the work of Sean O'Duffy.</p> <p>01:22:36 Discusses Joe Golden taking over from Sheila McNulty as secretary. Recalls taking over from Mrs O'Byrne.</p> <p>01:23:56 Talks about Ellen 'Nell' McCarthy. Mentions Lil O'Grady.</p> <p>01:25:55 (Mary) Recalls previous presidents of the association. Mentions Joan O'Flynn, Liz Howard, Phyllis</p>
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	<p>Breslin.</p> <p>01:26:22 (Lily) Discusses her refereeing career. Being chairman of the referees committee. Talks about her reputation. Recalls the type of games she refereed and her experiences, losing her confidence.</p> <p>01:31:35 (Mary) Talks about refereeing. Mentions Pierce Graham. Recalls a game in the Falls Park.</p> <p>01:34:13 (All) They describe how people felt an umpire called Mick McGinn was on their side. The state of the pitch in the park.</p> <p>01:34:45 (Mary) Talks about playing in the Winter Cup in Macrory Park. Mentions an issue with St. Agnes's. Hugh McPoland wouldn't give them the cup because they weren't a senior team.</p> <p>01:36:10 (Lily) Discusses the issue of men playing camogie. Recalls a dispute about time keeping at a match in Greencastle. Mentions Dominic Byrne.</p> <p>01:38:21 (Mary) Recalls an incident with the O'Duffy Cup. Bringing it in the car and it being damaged before the All-Ireland final. Mentions Sheila Wallace, Liz Howard.</p> <p>01:42:08 (All) They talk about the loss of the O'Duffy Cup.</p> <p>01:43:00 (Mary) Discusses the issue of the Troubles. The impact on camogie clubs in Belfast and the Sean Treacy's club.</p> <p>01:44:36 Recalls her best memories in the GAA. The friends she has made and the sense of community. Falls Park being packed with people.</p> <p>01:46:25 Talks about her GAA heroes Lily, Rosina McManus and Nancy Murray.</p> <p>01:48:00 Describes her biggest disappointment as not winning an All-Ireland. Talks about what the camogie community means to her.</p> <p>01:49:50 (Lily) Talks about the issue of the marriage ban.</p> <p>01:50:30 Compares women in sport during her youth to today.</p> <p>01:51:03 Discusses the impact of the Troubles on her club St Teresa's and on the area. Lists the clubs that have collapsed in Antrim and Belfast. The work done by Margaret Armstrong</p>
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	<p>and Margaret Flynn.</p> <p>01:56:10 Talks about the introduction of ladies football and the reaction of the camogie association. The relationship between the two codes and the GAA.</p> <p>01:58:15 Discusses the relationship between camogie and the GAA. Recalls an issue with a match. Mentions Mary Herald. Her work in Casement Park. Talks about the allocation of pitches.</p> <p>02:02:10 Talks about her best memories in the GAA. Being elected president. Being president when Antrim won the All-Ireland.</p> <p>02:03:38 Describes her GAA heroes. Mentions Kevin Armstrong and Paddy O'Hara.</p> <p>02:04:24 Talks about her biggest disappointments in the GAA. Not winning an Ulster title when she was playing.</p> <p>02:05:10 Discusses coaching and training in camogie and the GAA. Gives her opinion on modern training and refereeing.</p> <p>02:07:20 Describes what camogie has meant to her. Playing golf, table tennis, handball and squash. Playing handball with Bridgeen Dominic and Kevin Armstrong.</p> <p>02:09:43 Talks about the support she received from her family.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>Lily: <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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p> <p>Mary: <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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
<p>Record as a Player</p>	<p>Lily:</p>

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<p>(Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played from age of 13 for 40 years. At club level she won a senior county championship and leagues. At county she won an Ulster Title and All-Ireland in 1947.</p> <p>Mary: Played for 10 years. Won a minor and junior county championship.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Lily: Got involved in administration at the age of 13/14 as a club member.</p> <p>Club: Treasurer with St. Teresa's; President of O'Donovan Rossa Camogie Club</p> <p>County: Treasurer, Chairperson (3 years)</p> <p>Colleges: Secretary, Treasurer, 1st All-Ireland President of Colleges</p> <p>Central: Treasurer, President of Association.</p> <p>Mary: Got involved in administration in the 1950s.</p> <p>Club: Every position with Sean Treacy's and St. John's</p> <p>County: Secretary (1999 for 10 years), Assistant Secretary, Liaison Officer</p> <p>Ulster: Assistant Secretary.</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 02:11:05</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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: _____13/07/12_____