

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Julian O'Donoghue
Date of Interview	5 th Dec 2011
Location	Blarney
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Dave Coleman
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1952 Home County: Cork
Education	N/A
Family	Siblings: 3 siblings
Club(s)	Blarney Hurling and Football Club [Cork]; Whitechurch GAA [Limerick] ; Cork GAA Boston [America]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	5 th Dec 2011
Period Covered	1956-2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Cork, Limerick, USA
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Opening of Croke Park, Professionalism, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Dave Coleman opens the interview with recollections of his underage experience of Gaelic games with his school and club in the Blarney of the 1960s. He charts his progression as a player – as well as that of the club – through the 1960s and 70s, highlighting along the way both his travels in supporting county teams and the numbers of local players who earned representation at that level. While an adult player in the 1970s, Coleman also became involved in administration, occupying various roles. He also took to refereeing and he sheds light on the structure of Cork competitions during this period. In 1980, Coleman emigrated to Boston and he talks about the composition and quality of the Cork club team in Boston in the late 1980s to mid 1990s – he names many of the well-known county players who lined out with the club. The fortunes of the GAA in America since the 1980s are also discussed, in particular the impact of the tightening of immigration rules post 9/11. The Blarney GAA scene to which Coleman eventually returned was very different to that of the 1970s and he highlights the improved organisation in the club. He concludes by assessing changes in media coverage of the GAA and the challenges that the Association will face into the future.</p> <p>00:00:20 Interviewee states that he was born in 1952</p> <p>00:00:38 Earliest memories: recalls Blarney winning an Under 14 county title in 1961 or 1962 and attending games with his father.</p> <p>00:01:50 Attending Blarney Boys National School (1956-1965) and informal games of football and hurling in the Square, Barry's Field, using sticks or coats for goalposts.</p>

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	<p>00:03:17 Beginning to play with Blarney GAA club in the early to mid 1960s, winning a double at Under 14 grade for the mid-Cork region.</p> <p>00:04:15 Comments on organised training prior to mid Cork finals. Recalls also where they trained and who trained them.</p> <p>00:05:30 Recalls some he players he watched playing adult games in the 1960s, including his uncle David O'Connor and Pajo Sheehan, who also, it is suggested, cycled and ran with Blarney athletic club.</p> <p>00:07:30 Talks about the organised training that preceded mid Cork finals and in county championships.</p> <p>00:07:55 Refers to the involvement of his father, his brothers and his mother's family in Gaelic games. Refers to father winning mid Cork medals in football and hurling in the 1940s and 50s.</p> <p>00:08:40 Discusses progression as a player after Under 14 in the mid to late 1960s. Contesting Under 16 finals in 1967, with Blarney in hurling and Whitechurch in football. Talks about the shared membership between Blarney and Whitechurch clubs.</p> <p>00:10:40 Discusses playing Minor from 1968 to 1970, the breakaway from Whitechurch and the establishment of a football in Blarney. Refers to the composition of those teams.</p> <p>00:13:20 Talks about playing on Under 21 and junior teams and appearing in numerous mid Cork finals in the late 1960s, early 1970s.</p> <p>00:15:04 Discusses playing junior teams 'on and off' up to 1980, losing finals and winning 1978-1980. Mentions the organisation of training, including under Eamon Young in the year of doing his Leaving Cert.</p> <p>00:16:55 Reflects on the club's record in football and hurling.</p> <p>00:17:20 Recollections of travelling with father by train and car to Cork-Tipperary games in the early 1960s.</p> <p>00:18:40 Talks about bringing food and drink to games.</p> <p>00:19:30 Reflects on the excitement of seeing Christy Ring play towards the end of his career; mentions that Ring would deliver oil to Blarney Mills and local kids coming out to see him.</p> <p>00:21:10 Mentions the Blarney players who played for Cork:</p>
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	<p>Davey Brien, playing Minor in 1970; John Mitchel, Jim Coakley and Denis Hurley on the county Minor hurling team of the 1960s; Liam McAuliffe, played Minor; Frank Kelleher played Intermediate; Neil Creedon played 'a few senior games'; Denis Harrington, who later emigrated, played Minor county football in 1973, when they were defeated by Tyrone.</p> <p>00:22:47 Talks about defeating Inniscarra to win a mid Cork title in 1969, aged 17, as a standout moment and being too young to fully enjoy the celebrations.</p> <p>00:24:15 Recalls Cork' hurling success in the 1970s and mentions not missing a championship game during this period.</p> <p>00:25:10 Speaks of his admiration for various inter-county players in the past - Jimmy Barry Murphy and Ray Cummins – and contrasts the subsequent changes in the game.</p> <p>00:26:15 Talks about notable Blarney players in the 1970s.</p> <p>00:27:15 Reflects on the administrative roles he has occupied in the Blarney club: secretary for 3 years in early 1970s; chairman in 1980; also Vice Chairman and Registrar.</p> <p>00:27:45 Discusses going as a delegate to board meetings in a pub in Coachford.</p> <p>00:29:15 Refers to other club officers in the 1970s: Denis Lyons, Ger Twomey, Charlie Conway, Davey Brien, Ciaran O'Connor, Stevie Rockett, Paddy Cremin, Billy Goode, Seamus Gabriel, Neil Creedon, Derry McSweeney, John Hyde.</p> <p>00:30:00 Contrasts the running of the club in the 1970s to 2011, with reference to better structure, greater success and interest. Remarks on 'phenomenal' commitment of current underage mentors and players.</p> <p>00:32:23 Attending secondary school in Blarney and says school was site of GAA field in the 1930s, where Mallow beat Blackrock in a county final.</p> <p>00:33:33 Talks about the development of 'The Groves', a county council built estate.</p> <p>00:34:00 Finishing the Leaving Cert and the numbers in his class and in the classes below. Refers to the sense of Blarney as a small village.</p> <p>00:35:12 Comments on hurling – or the lack of it – in secondary school and playing inside the Blarney Castle</p>
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	<p>grounds in the late 1960s – mentions that Blarney United also played there.</p> <p>00:36:42 Says that hurling and football were the principal sports played in secondary school.</p> <p>00:37:15 Talks about his admiration for Seán Kelly, the former GAA President, and Jim Forbes, former Cork county chairman. Mentions also Bantry clubmen Gerry Twomey, Paddy Cremin and Michael Mahony.</p> <p>00:38:37 Discusses the major changes in the GAA over the decades: observes the improvement in facilities in club, the organisation of underage teams etc.</p> <p>00:40:15 Comments being ‘a fairly sore loser’ when ever Blarney or Cork were beaten and recalls missed opportunities in the past.</p> <p>00:42:10 Talks about the organisation of Cork competitions on a city and county basis in the 1970s. ‘If you won the mid Cork you play county. And the winners of the overall county would play the winners of the city.’</p> <p>00:42:50 Discusses club rivalries, especially that with Inniscarra. Refers playing against a work colleague in the Blarney mill in the 1971 mid Cork final.</p> <p>00:44:50 Discusses his involvement with underage teams in Blarney, as well as a referee, throughout the 1970s. Explains the reasons why he took up refereeing.</p> <p>00:46:00 Reference to emigrating to the United States in 1980 and mentions those who travelled before him – Derry O’Connell from the Muskerry Arms and Noel Twohig – and who were involved with the Cork club.</p> <p>00:47:43 Discusses the nature of his involvement with the Cork club in Boston and refers to the players from Blarney who played with the club. Talks also about the rivalry with Tipperary in Boston.</p> <p>00:49:20 Mentions the decline of the Cork club in Boston in the 1990s and considers the loss of Cork hurling teams across the the U.S.</p> <p>00:49:50 Discusses the visa programmes for Irish emigrants in the U.S.in the 1980s and the tightening of immigration laws country post 2001.</p> <p>00:52:11 Talks about the composition and quality of Cork team in Boston in the late 1980s to mid 1990s. Mentions high</p>
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	<p>profile members such as John Fitzgibbon, Denis Walsh, Mick Holohan (Limerick), Alan Browne, John Grainger, Pearse O'Neill, Anthony Lynch and others.</p> <p>00:54:55 Discusses fundraising initiatives and the attraction of players from Ireland. Mentions the importance of providing jobs in the 1980s. Refers also to an exile from Clonakilty who helped the club financially and the centrality of money to the destination of championships. 'Whoever had the most money would get the best players'.</p> <p>00:57:00 Talks about playing Gaelic games himself in Boston in the early 1980s and how they fared.</p> <p>00:58:25 Comments on students and school teachers travelling to the United States for the summer and the shortage of a 'home base' players. Refers also to effort bolster Gaelic games among American children.</p> <p>01:00:25 Considers the big challenges facing the GAA into the future: talks about demands on inter-county players, the types of training they do, their sporting lifespan.</p> <p>01:02:55 Mentions competition for players with professional soccer and rugby. Refers the loss of other sports of Tomás O'Leary and Setanta O hAilpín.</p> <p>01:04:00 Says that inter-county players 'should not be out of pocket'.</p> <p>01:05:05 Discusses changes in media coverage of Gaelic games: comments on the situation in the United States where Setanta were being challenged by satellite TV into the home.</p> <p>01:06:11 Comments on the affordability of modern communications. Refers to cost of phone calls to the United States in the 1980s.</p> <p>01:07:00 Final comments: remarks on the pleasure of being home with local club. 'Home is home...'</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p>✓ Supporter ✓ Player ✓ Manager ✓ Coach ✓ Steward</p> <p>✓ Chairperson ✓ Committee Member ✓ Grounds-person</p> <p>✓ Caterer ✓ Jersey Washer ✓ 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>North American x 2; Mid-Cork U14, U21, Junior, Senior New England</p>

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Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Chairman, Secretary
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:07:00
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: Julian O'Donoghue

Date: 5th December 2011