GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of	Regina Fitzpatrick	
Interviewer		
Date of Interview	26 th Nov 2009	
Location	Kilkenny	
Name of	Dan McEvoy	
Interviewee		
(Maiden name /		
Nickname)		
Biographical Summary of Interviewee		
Gender	Male	
Born	Year Born: 1928	
	Home County: Kilkenny	
Education	Primary: St John's De La Salle, Kilkenny	
	Secondary: St Kieran's College, Kilkenny	
Family	Siblings: Three brothers and four sisters	
	Current Family if Different: Betty (wife); 3 children – Enda, Mary and Elizabeth	
Club(s)	O'Loughlin Gaels, Kilkenny	
Occupation	Retired Farmer; Draper at the Monster House	
Parents' Occupation	Farmer and cattle dealer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]	
Religion	Roman Catholic	
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A	

Date of Report	27 th November 2009
Period Covered	1904-2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny, Tipperary, Americas, Great Britain, Cavan, Cork, Limerick
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training Refereeing Administration Celebrations, Commiserations, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Violence, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Professionalism
Interview Summary	Introduction
	0:15 Born in 1928, the same year Nowlan Park was opened. Lived across the road from Nowlan Park. Account of the opening of Nowlan Park, a semi-final between Cork and Dublin; Alderman Jack McGuinness, mayor at the time appealing to the locals to cater for the large crowds for the opening. Funny story about Barrett's Garage buying lots of hams for the occasion to make sandwiches, getting no business and how they got rid of the ham. The day christened 'Ham Sunday'.
	2:08 Attending John's Senior School, De La Salle – playing hurling there – friends with Joe Grace whose father was caretaker of Nowlan Park – spent a lot of their time there when they were growing up. Sammy Oakes (whose father was the first motorised ambulance driver in Kilkenny) lived in the house that had the first radio on their street. Whole parish gathering outside the window to listening to the radio.
	3:00 A pigeon man at a Leinster Final in Portlaoise (1935/36) – sending halftime scores home with the pigeon – few phones at the time, people isolated.
	3:51 Dan's wife comes in to offer us a drink
	4:04 Got to know the hurling team that won the Kilkenny's first All-Ireland in 1904 and won seven all-Ireland's between then and 1913 – Matt Carrigan (a stonemason on Friary Street); Jack Rochford; Dan Kennedy; Dr. J.J. Brennan.

4:22 1922 team – Got to know John Roberts (manager of the bottling store); Paddy Dunne (worked on the railway); Billy Kenny - one of the few times that Kilkenny beat Tipperary. A ten year break before they beat Clare in 1932.

5:00 One of his earliest memories was being at O'Gorman's pub by the railway station and seeing Lory Meagher come down on the back on a lorry with the McCarthy Cup – got to know Lory through Brett's barbers on Kieran's Street – all the talk would be about hurling.

5:29 Kilkenny v Tipperary All-Ireland Final in Killarney 1937 – Kilkenny heavily defeated - local builder Paddy Cantwell cycled to the match – got a lift back with the corporation workers in the lorry.

6:59 1939 – 'The Young Turks' came of age to win the All-Ireland – Jim Langton, Jack Mulcahy, Paddy Grace – minor team of 1935 on senior team who won in 1939.

7:20 1940 – Kilkenny beaten by Limerick. 1941 Foot and Mouth disease endemic in Kilkenny and Tipperary. Cork and Dublin nominated to play in the All-Ireland - no hurling that time, a depressing time.

7:52 Kilkenny v Antrim, Belfast 1943 All-Ireland semi-final – description of their journey to Belfast as told to him by Jimmy Heffernan who was on that team - welcome in Belfast – going to a céilí that night before the match – being unfit to play the following day – the shock of Antrim beating Kilkenny.

9:06 Depression during the war – queuing for Lemons pure sweets at Stellards shop. People staying in the cinema on Patrick's Street all evening as they had no fires at home.

9:57 His mother making 'banana' sandwiches, actually made from mashed parsnips and banana essence.

10:27 Getting a second hand bicycle – cycling to Carlow to the first round of the Leinster football championship between Wexford and Kildare with his brother and cousin, then to Athy to see Carlow and Laois the following Sunday – thing starting to look up – cycling to the Munster final to see Cork and limerick – draw match – story about Ger Doheny and Jim Forrester cycling to that Munster Final from Waterford and coming home via the dance board in Threecastles and getting back in time for work at Clover Meats on Monday morning at 8am.

12:02 1944 Starting his apprenticeship in the Drapery business in the Monster House – importance of the Monster

House – conditions when he was working there. Peter Keogh his friend from Enniscorthy also worked there.

13:13 1945 – Beaten by Tipperary

13:19 1946 – Beaten by Cork – Christy Ring's game that day – end of September London coming over to play the All-Ireland Junior Final and Kilkenny beat them – some of that team went on to beat Cork in 1947 – 1947 All-Ireland the first match he really enjoyed.

14:16 1950 Kilkenny beaten by Limerick and 1951 beaten by Tipperary again. The Wexford team of the 1950s. The Rackard brothers, popularity of that team around the country – 87,000 went to see them in Croke Park.

15:04 1957 – Kilkenny beat Waterford; 1959 – Waterford beat Kilkenny after a re-play; 1963 – Kilkenny won; 1964 - Tipperary beat Kilkenny – taunts from the Tipperary supporters– belief that Pa Dillon from Freshford was the first man 'to put steel' in the Kilkenny hurlers – League final in 1966 – a very wet day – Tipperary v Kilkenny.

16:22 1966 – Kilkenny beaten by Cork; 1967 Kilkenny won the All-Ireland – first All-Ireland he attended that they defeated Tipperary, the next time was 2009. Dan attended 35 All-Ireland's that Kilkenny played in between 1945-2009 – Kilkenny's three in a row would have meant nothing if Kilkenny hadn't have beaten Tipperary in 2009.

17:19 1972 – The best Kilkenny team he has ever seen. 1972 All-Ireland three All-Irelands played and so the last one extended to 80 minutes – Cork supporters sure of victory – the game changed when Eddie Kerr was brought out from the corner – Kilkenny won.

18:20 1973 – A lot of Kilkenny injuries may have stopped them from winning for in a row.

18:40 Kilkenny won in 1974 and 75. 1981 beaten by Tipperary again 'That's the story of my life'; Kilkenny won in 1982 and 83 and in 1992, 93. Kilkenny team of 1970s better than the current Kilkenny team. Henry Shefflin has taken over the mantle of Eddie Kerr. Kilkenny presence on the team of the century – Henry Shefflin recently rated the best hurler of all time by Irish Independent pole. 'It's a religion in Kilkenny, we have nothing else to talk about, we're so good at it.'

20:21 Importance of schools in the development of hurlers in Kilkenny- story about Joe Dunphy, principal of Ballyhale

school.

21:05 Why Kilkenny is so successful in hurling – eg Cork have a variety of sports. In Kilkenny, the tradition of hurling.

21:55 Uncle played with O'Loughlin's in the 1920s – James Stephen's and Dicksboro were the prominent teams in Kilkenny city at the time – huge rivalry between them – looking down on the dressing rooms in Nowlan Park and seeing the teams before they would go out on the field.

22:50 O'Loughlins had a light blue jersey. Didn't win much at that time Jacksie Jackman was the manager, used to try and get objections.

23:15 Women in the parish washing the jerseys – 'The windy blues'. Supporting St Johns. Won minor final in 1940.

23:51 Hurling in St John's De La Salle. Brothers' dedication to the GAA. St Johns De La Salle playing St Patricks' De La Salle. Paddy Fitzpatrick's son Petey was a great hurling – he gave him a tanner for every goal scored.

24:35 Going to St Kieran's – influence of Fr Tommy Meagher. He was the first person who introduced tactics. Dicky Lowry a dean in the 1940s brought thinking into the tactics and training of hurling in St Kieran's. Story about Kilkenny match that year and Fr Meagher's tactics when he as manager for Kilkenny in 1945. Jimmy Welsh, his neighbour, was in goals at the time (Dan points out Lory Meagher and Jimmy Walsh in GAA Oral History Project promotional postcard). Hurling more robust at that time.

26:52 Hurling in St Kieran's. Studying in the Ecclesiastics side. Clerical students hurling. Students from Kerry and Cavan in St Kieran's had good football team. Also had a great hurling team. The Ecclesiastics defeating Kilkenny team in the early days. Bishop Collier forbidding any of the ecclesiastics from playing on the Kilkenny team. Fr Meagher was the exception he was in Maynooth when he was on the Kilkenny team.

28:08 Priests playing for county teams under assumed names – Redmond Penderville who snuck out of All-Hallows the night before an All-Ireland to play for Kerry, became as Arch-Bishop of Perth – visited students in St Kieran's College. 'The stone that the builders had rejected has become the corner stone.'

30:00 Born and raised in St Johns parish, Kilkenny. Control the church had over the parish. Order that no matches be

played on the first Sunday of every month as there was a holy hour in every parish. Difficulty with that, championship on a knock out basis. Big teams in the county – Tullerone, Carrickshock, Éire Óg in town, Mick Loupman used to recruit young players for Éire Óg, managed the cinema, let the college students in for free to try and recruit them to Éire Óg. Would check the street for players after 10pm the night before a match.

31.48 Men's confraternity of four city parishes in St Johns every Sunday. Run by Fr Collier. Discussing the results of matches afterwards. Listening to Seán Ó Ceallacháin, knowing every club in the country because of that. From October spending Sunday nights picking out the Railway Cup team for the following Spring. Lads from the country coming in to go to the pictures on Sunday nights. Story about country lads coming into town with rabbits to sell to get the price of the pictures – poverty and hardship of life in the countryside.

34:14 Third Sunday of every month, Communion Sunday. Fasting from the night before mass.

34:50 Most walked into town, few had bicycles. Going out to the county in the summer evenings. Cycling with one of the brothers and students from the De La Salle. Going on a school trip to Tramore for the day. Having a meal at the De La Salle in Waterford.

36:03 Going to Dublin. Sale in Clery's in O'Connell street Dublin one day a week.

36:43 Other sports in Kilkenny – Cricket was big. Matt Garrigan who was on the 1904 Kilkenny hurling team was a very good cricket player. Cricket teams in Mount Juliet and Bennettsbridge, most of the landlords would have had teams. Michael O'Dwyer's book about cricket in Kilkenny – relationship between cricket and hurling.

37:37 1904 team, old men when he met them. Story about Jack Doheny from Threecastles bringing Jack Rochford to see Paddy Johnson (the DJ of the time) play. Rochford thinking he was too lean 'The jersey is too loose'.

38:40 Story about Sim Walton walking into town from Tullerone to get the 7:40am train to Dublin to play in an All-Ireland – Parents not always wanting their sons to be spending their time playing hurling, women would have to step in to do their work.

39:40 Hurling opened up after the trology all-Ireland in 1931,

it brought the crowds.

40:09 1945 his first All-Ireland in Croke Park. Sandwiches and lemonade on the train to Dublin. Story about Chu Leahy who used to work in Langtons and Scut Butler pretending to be students to get the schoolboy ticket into Croke Park.

41:37 Routine of All-Ireland day. Train excursions from Kilkenny, train route. Length of the trip, replenishing turf on the way. Carlow people supporting Kilkenny and joining the train at Bagnelstown. Atmosphere on the train. Walking up to Croke Park from Heuston Station. The Castle Hotel beside Barry's Hotel. Owned by people from Mooncoin. Story about two lads in the hotel having their dinner.

43:56 Story about Mattie Power starting to work for the Gardaí. Hurled for Kilkenny in 1922 and then for Dublin for a couple of years.

44:30 Faughs team in Dublin getting players from the country. Many Faughs players worked for Boland's Mills. Terry Leahy working in Bolands, used to frequent Tommy Moore's pub on Cathedral Street – everyone who went up for a match had to call in there for a pint, it was part of the ritual. Chu Leahy getting a lift with Noel Johnson in his Morris Minor to Leinster Final, missing his lift home with friends and eventually finding their way back to Kilkenny in time for work the following morning at the Mocason Boot factory.

47:50 Changes in the way people travel to matches. Bread being delivered from bakeries in town Molloys and Crottys. Billy Molloy and his two trotting ponies called Hitler and Mussolini – drove in his pony and trap to Thurles for a match with is family and a crowd of workers – road full of cyclists, 1944.

49:06 Rationing of petrol coupons during the war. Cars that were kept going with gas or coke – only travelled at about 20 miles per hour. Creamery manager drove his staff in the creamery lorry to a match – to obey the law filled turf on the way.

50:40 Rationing during the war, allowances and the black market. What people smoked in their pipes. Affect of war years on hurling in Kilkenny. No underage teams. No parish rule. Carrickshock had best players from the south of the county, Tullerone had the best from the North, town lads played Éire Óg. Fan Larkin's father playing for Tullerone. Jim Langton and Paddy Grace cycling from Kilkenny to Knockmoylan to train. Parish rule the best rule to come in.

Progression of small clubs. A lot of football before the 1940s especially in Glenmore, Tullaghor, Muckalee, The Railyard – always back in the year, near December. In Langtons footballers got tea and sandwiches but hurlers got a full meal.

54:07 Hurling took over through the schools and football died in these areas – Glenmore and Muckalee starting to come back with football now.

54:26 1941 – Foot and Mouth Disease. Couldn't go anywhere. Disinfecting your feet at farmer's gates, nothing happened at all at that time. Decision to exclude Kilkenny and Tipperary from the championship. Cork team that won the four in a row didn't have a good record. After Foot and Mouth Tipperary defeated Cork in the Munster Final.

55:44 1946 – Bad flooding after the All-Ireland in 1946. Order from De Valera to go assist the farmers to save the harvest. Workers from the Monster House volunteering to help and being dropped to farms around the county on army lorries, Going out to his colleague, Jimmy O'Brien's farm every day and having meals and playing cards before getting the lorry back into town for a week. Other workers worked much harder, had to work at threshing.

58:35 Working in the Monster House in Kilkenny. Importance of the Monster House historically. Apprenticeships, how the postal service worked. Working in the parcel office, delivery service to all over the country, number of deliveries. Wholesale department, travelling salesmen doing orders and deliveries. Types of goods they sold; Tailoring department. Annual orders for Roman sutans for ordinations from colleges in the south east, hand tailored.

1:03:04 Woollen jerseys used to be worn, very warm. Erins Own a hurling team in Kilkenny city at the beginning of the twentieth century – Jimmy Hughes, a blacksmith in Irishtown was secretary to the club – the club folded and Jimmy Hughes gave the jerseys to James Stephens when they were starting up, c.1920s.

1:04:50 Rivalry with Tipperary – particularly in border areas.

1:05:26 1940s – no tournaments, not under 21 championship, very few matches. Bennettsbridge started a trend of having tournaments to raise money to build churches etc.

Tournament in Waterford where the prise was a set of gold watches. Arguments at matches, calling the referee.

1:06:25 Bennettsbridge – best club team of all time – 43/44

- senior hurling medals. Parish rule. Teams in town failed after the parish rule as Éire Óg were no longer able to bring teams in from outside. Newpark Sarsfields, St Finbars in Foulkstown also junior teams in town.
- 1:07:33 Relationship between the GAA and the Catholic church. Rows of seats reserved for the clergy of Cashel in Thurles, Archbishop would be there.
- 1:08:11 Always a 'spline' between Kilkenny and Tipperary.
- 1:08:17 Railway Cup important tournament; Oireachtas tournament. Oireachtas medal very beautiful. Story about the bishop kicking a curate out of a Christmas dinner for the clergy of the four parishes of the city because he was picking the railway cup team with a couple of other priests and not paying attention to him.
- 1:11:28 The Oireachtas tournament Oireachtas céile happened around the same time of year in the Autumn, a meeting of the Gaels. Not much of a connection between the GAA and the Irish language in Kilkenny. Gaelic League had a good following in Kilkenny. Miss Cronin from Cork ran the Gaelic league in Rothe House, used to run céilís.
- 1:12:35 The ban on 'foreign' dances vigilance committees at 'foreign' dances. 1941/2 Jim Langton and Jack Mulcahy brought before the county board for going to a soccer match. Soccer never took off in Kilkenny.
- 1:13:58 1947 All-Ireland Final the match he enjoyed most remembers crying in Croke Park in 1945 when Kilkenny lost. Only outlet they had. Going to local matches. Went to all the matches. Getting tickets for matches through Smithwick's Brewery.
- 1:15:15 1961 Tipperary defeated Dublin feels if Dublin had won it would have established hurling in Dublin.
- 1:15:44 Changes in hurling as a game.
- 1:16:45 Also enjoyed 1972 All-Ireland and a match at a tournament in Callan between Éire Óg and Thurles Sarsfields.
- 1:17:35 St Reaks team (The Rocks) in Kilkenny, playing Lisdowney in Jenkinstown, women in shawls going to the match and pulling lats off the wooden railing and joined in the fight on the pitch. Poem written about it 'The Battle of Jenkinstown'.

1:18:50 Women and the GAA. Popularity hurling in the last 30 years. Glamorous to be part of the scene. Daughter, Mary, played for Dicksboro camogie team and now plays camogie and Gaelic Football for New York. Part of a junior New York team who came over to play at two semi-finals one in Croke Park, whole family went up to see her.

1:20:17 Why she got involved in the GAA – first involved wit the Harriers in Kilkenny – the GAA abroad – going to matches in Gaelic Park in New York, broadcasting games from Ireland, selling all of the Irish papers.

1:22:01 Story about John Wilson (former Minister for Education) who was Cavan football team who went to New York in 1947 starting work as a teacher in St Kieran's College after coming back from New York – meeting him at the ladies football game his daughter was playing in with New York. Wilson used to referee football matches in St Kierans, later took up politics.

1:24:18 Emigration and Kilkenny, most of his schoolmates would have gone to England. Brother worked on the buildings over there. Irish community in Cricklewood, famous ballroom in Cricklewood with ballroom dancing and céilí dancing. Tops bands would go over there.

1:25:50 Going to dances in Desert Hall and the Mayfair Ballroom. Also boxing tournaments there – Boxing club in St Patricks, Fr Andy Walsh would bring top boxers to Kilkenny. Boxing very popular.

1:27:20 The GAA and Irishness. Kilkenny not very Gaelic because of the influence of Kilkenny Castle, not a republican place. A lot of people from Kilkenny joined the British Army for the first World War. Buying cattle and bringing ex soldiers with them to walk the cattle. Hearing stories from them about World War I. Story about Doby Canavan – fought in India, the Boer War in Africa and World War I in France. Armistice Day Parade in Kilkenny, officers going to service at St Canice's Cathedral and troops going to mass to St Mary's Cathedral. Getting shilling to enlist. Story about a recruitment officer going into Trick Ryan's pub in John's Street to try and get people to sign up.

1:32:47 British army officers mainly cricket players – would send platoons from Kilkenny. Neighbouring family who lost three sons in the war. Soldiers who came home got a pension. Remembers in Ossory Park they only had fried bread and fried potatoes. Remembers nuns in the hospital rendering fat from meat in order to make dripping to sell, no

- white bread during the war. In school students got bread and jam for lunch which was a big deal.
- 1:35:05 TB rife. His sister dying of TB in 1947. Sanatorium on the Kells road. The cure for TB coming in.
- 1:36:02 Jim Langtons mother's family, Longs from Tipperary used to own Longs Pub in Kilkenny. Match being made with the Langtons.
- 1:36:53 Jim Langton, a beautiful hurler. Jack Mulcahy was a tough hurler. Both worked in the boot factory during the war used to go cutting timber in Jenkinstown to sell as firewood in town. Paddy Grace good hurler too.
- 1:38:45 Paddy Grace being appointed County Secretary in 1947. Far seeing man. The bank of Nowlan park made from cinders. Old Gaol being knocked and the stone was brought to Nowlan Park to build the bank. Tommy Walsh his grandson other Tommy Walsh from Thomastown who got his eye knocked out in the 1967 All-Ireland.
- 1:40:43 Outstanding non-Kilkenny hurlers Jimmy Finn from Borrisoleigh, Nicky Rackard of Wexford. Sings a bar of a song about Nicky Rackard.
- 1:41: Story about Nicky Rackard and a bet on a horse in St Kieran's College.
- 1:45:40 Not very impressed by Mick Mackey first person to do the solo run Limerick team of the 1930s. Christy Ring, a bit of a 'mé féiner' not a team player but could do anything. Game against Galway in 1953 supposed to have knocked out a player called Burke, lots of rows about it at the time. Film made by Louis Marcus.
- 1:47:44 Disappointment and the GAA not in favour of the GPA. Feels its very divisive. Cork team protest at League final in 2002 Donal Óg Cusack deciding that they should pull down their socks in protest split the team. Professionalism gone too far. Cork county board now split over the ratification of the agreement between the GAA and the GPA. Does not agree with pay for play.
- 1:49:42 Has to be voluntary. Article about Galmoy and Windgap amalgamation in the Kilkenny People.
- 1:50:35 Changes in the GAA the end of the ban. That the game is less physical.
- 1:51:01 Proud about the GAA because its part of his heritage,

	brought up with it, like a family.
	1:51:30 The importance of the GAA club in the community – St John Parish and O'Loughlin Gaels. East of the River Nore in Kilkenny called 'The Continent'.
	1:52:02 Children have inherited his love of the GAA. Daughter keeps in touch with the games on the internet. Enda writing for the Sunday Tribune.
	1;52:45 Kilkenny People, The Kilkenny Journal, The post were the Kilkenny newspapers, they would give an account of all of the matches.
	1:53:24 Life without the GAA – doesn't know what Kilkenny would do without it. Very fortunate in Kilkenny to win a lot compared to other counties.
	1:53:55 Thoughts on current Kilkenny team. Tipperary coming up strong but Kilkenny have a strong panel off the field. Kilkenny hated by other counties now.
	1:54:43 Accounts current success of Kilkenny to the schools. Parish involved at that stage, very skilled at a young age.
	1:55:24 The GAA 'a second religion' to him, doesn't know what they would do without it. Hurling the greatest game on earth.
Involvement in GAA	✓ Supporter ✓ Player □ Manager □ Coach □ Steward
	☐ Chairperson ☐ Committee Member ☐ Grounds-person
	☐ Caterer ☐ Jersey Washer ☐ Referee ☐ None
	☐ Other (please specify):
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played a little at school
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A

Format	✓ Audio □ Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:56:20
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 27th November 2009