

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	16 th Feb 2011
Location	Cathal's home, near Killinure, Co. Carlow
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Cathal Friel
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1939 Home County: Donegal
Education	Primary: Mountcharles NS, Co. Donegal Secondary: Technical School, Donegal Town Third Level: Brooklyn College, New York
Family	Siblings: 2 sisters & 4 brothers Current Family if Different: Wife (Sally); 2 daughters
Club(s)	St Naul's GAA [Donegal]; Brooklyn Shamrocks GAA [Americas]; Donegal GAA, New York [Americas]; Coolkenno GFC [Wicklow]
Occupation	Roadman for Wicklow County Council
Parents' Occupation	Farmers
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Civil Defence; Active Retirement Club

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Date of Report	23 rd July 2012
Period Covered	1930s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Donegal, Wicklow, Americas, USA, Carlow
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Cathal talks about the role of the GAA in his life over the years. He describes growing up in Mountcharles in Donegal and the state of the GAA during his youth. He discusses his family's involvement in the GAA and how his uncle played on the St Naul's team during the 1950s, the same club that Cathal played for. Cathal talks about emigrating to New York when he was seventeen and his involvement in the GAA there. He describes what life was like in New York and the importance of the GAA to the Irish community living there. Cathal talks about moving back to Wicklow in the early 1970s and setting up the Coolkenno club. He discusses his role in ladies football in Wicklow and his part in the establishment in the ladies county board. He talks about involvement in administration in ladies football and becoming chairman of the board and later Leinster secretary. Towards the end of the interview, Cathal discusses the role of the GAA in his life and also highlights the importance of the Association remaining amateur.</p> <p>00:22 Cathal talks about his early life growing up in Mountcharles in Donegal. Playing football with a pig's bladder and having no real organised tournaments.</p> <p>01:46 Talks about his family's involvement in the GAA. Uncle who played on the St Naul's team in the 1950s.</p> <p>02:28 Discusses his brother's involvement in rugby in Donegal town.</p> <p>02:55 Recalls his earliest memories of the GAA. Listening to Michael O'Hehir and the 1951 hurling All-Ireland final</p>

	<p>between Wexford and Tipperary on the wet and dry battery radio. Neighbours sharing newspapers. Mentions Paddy Bonn, Brady, John Joe Reilly, Mick Higgins, Paddy Prendergast, Eamon Mongey, Paddy Hands O'Brien, Peter McDermott.</p> <p>04:44 Discusses his interest in the GAA and his family's interest in football.</p> <p>05:24 Recalls his first county game, Donegal v Sligo in Glenties. Donegal beaten in Croke Park in the final. Mentions Patsy Brogan, Wickham, Dawson, Kenny, Nash, Jim Gallagher.</p> <p>07:05 Describes how he travelled matches in Peter Griffin's hackney car.</p> <p>07:39 Discusses playing football in school.</p> <p>08:09 Talks about emigrating to America when he was seventeen and starting to play for Brooklyn Shamrocks in New York. Playing Sligo in Gaelic Park. The Irish community there and the work he did.</p> <p>10:50 Discusses the Donegal community in St Theresa's in New York. Describes living in America and the American sports. Playing American football, soccer and softball. Different nationalities in New York. Mentions Sean O'Meara.</p> <p>14:20 Talks about playing football in New York. Going to Gaelic Park and the dances after. Describes what Gaelic Park was like.</p> <p>17:55 Recalls the teams and matches he saw play in New York like Galway, Kerry, Dublin, Offaly and Limerick. Mentions Mick Mackey, Christy Ring.</p> <p>19:20 Describes how GAA was a part of their lives.</p> <p>19:54 Talks about the Brooklyn Shamrocks and different tournaments.</p> <p>21:14 Discusses the organisation of the GAA in New York. Mentions John Kerry O'Donnell, Matt Higgins.</p> <p>22:00 Talks about getting married in New York and returning to Ireland in 1974. Starting the Coolkenno club.</p> <p>24:08 Discusses the setting up of the club. Getting a field for the club. Having ladies' football in the club.</p> <p>26:44 Talks about ladies football in Carlow. Setting up a</p>
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	<p>ladies county board in Wicklow. Three clubs in the county, Coolkenno, Coolboy and Kiltegan. Mentions Mary Ann Dunne, Jack Bowe, Mick Carthy, Cathleen O'Neill, Mick O'Neill, Rosie Carney, Peadar Daly, Peter Rice. Becoming Chairman of the board.</p> <p>29:22 Recalls the county's first match. Against Longford in Longford. Talks about the county's early matches. Playing Carlow in Eire Óg. Playing Dublin in Parnell Park.</p> <p>30:55 Describes how more ladies' clubs formed in 1990, Roundwood, Baltinglass. How they got on that year. Winning the junior All-Ireland. Mention Pat Quill, Anne Tougher, Paddy Murphy, Eithne Kavanagh, Anne Byrne, Bernie Brogan, Jack Bowe, Paddy Kenny, Pádraig Corbett, Andy Byrne, Molly Green, Mick Carthy.</p> <p>34:54 Recalls the first meeting of the ladies county board.</p> <p>36:38 Talks about how ladies teams were set up. The work of Mick Carthy.</p> <p>37:37 Discusses camogie in the county. Mentions Cathleen O'Neill, Bernie Byrne, Anne Fitzpatrick.</p> <p>38:45 Talks about trying to find good players for the team. The make-up of the parish.</p> <p>40:37 Discusses the development of the club and the impact on the parish.</p> <p>41:38 Describes how the ladies club is separate from the main club. The social side of the club.</p> <p>42:45 Talks about the drop in female players after around 16. Differences between working with male and female players.</p> <p>44:30 Discusses the development of the ladies county board. Three clubs at the beginning, nineteen now. Changes over the years.</p> <p>47:13 Talks about working with squad players.</p> <p>48:15 Discusses the relationship between the media and ladies football. Mentions the Wicklow People newspaper.</p> <p>49:50 Talks about the involvement of TG4 in ladies football. Compares it to the past.</p> <p>51:20 Discusses the success of ladies football and the growth of the sport.</p> <p>52:35 Describes the high level of organisation in ladies</p>
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	<p>football.</p> <p>53:30 Talks about his role as Leinster secretary. What motivates him to stay involved in the GAA.</p> <p>55:50 Discusses the different people within the Association that he has worked with. The large workload.</p> <p>57:33 Highlights his future ambition for ladies football.</p> <p>58:10 Talks about the proudest moment in the GAA. Winning the junior All-Ireland in 1990. Describes the day.</p> <p>59:43 Describes the enjoyment he gets out of being in the GAA. Talks about his legacy.</p> <p>01:00:15 Talks about what the GAA means to him and the role in his life. Friendships made.</p> <p>01:01:05 Discusses the issue of professionalism and pay for play.</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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____</p>
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	<p>Played football for St Naul's in the 1950s and for Brooklyn Shamrocks and New York's Donegal team in the late 1950s and 1960s.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Founding member of Coolkenno GFC; Founding member of Coolkenno LGFC; managed and coached various ladies Gaelic football teams; Member of the Ladies Gaelic Football Nationla Fixtures Committee (20 years); Secretary of Leinster Ladies Gaelic Football (20 years)</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 01:02:19</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

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To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 23rd July 2012