

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	27 th Feb 2009
Location	Burke Rehabilitation Centre, White Plains, New York
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Tom Fahey
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1967 Home County: Waterford
Education	Primary: Windgap NS, Co. Waterford Secondary: Technical School, Carrick-On-Suir
Family	Siblings: 6 brothers & 4 sisters Current Family if Different: 4 sons
Club(s)	Galway Hurling Club [New York]; St Barnabas GFC [New York]; St Molleran's, Carrickbeg [Waterford]
Occupation	Director of Construction
Parents' Occupation	Forester [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A

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Date of Report	12 th June 2012
Period Covered	1950s – 2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Americas, USA, Waterford
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, 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, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Alcohol, Politics, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Tom grew up in Waterford and was very much involved with the GAA, supporting his brothers' teams and then playing himself for the local club in football and hurling. At 18 years of age he emigrated to New York and immersed himself in the local GAA scene, playing on the Waterford team and also representing other county teams. He joined the St Barnabas club in the Bronx and was soon coaching underage teams, guiding them to numerous trophies along the way. He took teams back to Ireland to take part in competitions there, while back in New York he became a referee. He did this for many years, travelling all over the United States to officiate at games. Tom also occupied various administrative positions and contributed a lot to New York GAA behind the scenes. He was heavily involved in the redevelopment of Gaelic Park, which is a source of great pride to him. Tom also talks about the differences between the GAA in New York and back home, and gives his opinions on the changes which the Association has undergone in the years since he first left Irish shores.</p> <p>00:25 Earliest memory was his club Windgap in Waterford at ten years old. He went to see all the games as his brother and brother-in-law were on the team. They went on to win the junior championship.</p> <p>01:15 He went on to play juvenile and his local club was St</p>

	<p>Molleran's.</p> <p>01:25 He emigrated from his parish to the United States in 1967.</p> <p>01:45 He got involved with the Waterford football and hurling club in New York and played football, winning a junior hurling and football championship in 1971.</p> <p>02:15 He won a championship with Connemara Gaels in 1975 and he played with Laois, Tyrone and Westmeath.</p> <p>02:30 In 1976 he got involved with the New York minor board and in 1979 started coaching an Under-10 team, St Barnabas. They won seven championships in ten years.</p> <p>03:15 In 1985 he was coach of the New York minors and they travelled to Croke Park. They beat Warwickshire and lost to Meath.</p> <p>03:45 In 1988 they lost to Dublin in Parnell Park.</p> <p>04:05 He also got involved in refereeing and was still doing it 32 years later in 2010.</p> <p>04:30 He has travelled to Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Pittsburgh to referee games.</p> <p>05:00 He has refereed many county finals in New York. He came across great players like Frank McGuigan, Kevin Moran, Jack O'Shea, Tommy Doyle, Seanie Walsh, Páidí Ó Sé and the Spillanes of Kerry.</p> <p>05:50 He was project manager for redeveloping Gaelic Park in New York and refereed the first game played there in front of GAA President Nickey Brennan in 2008.</p> <p>07:05 He has six brothers and five played football growing up.</p> <p>07:25 His part of the county was football but hurling was dominant in Waterford.</p> <p>07:40 He played against the great Tom Cheasty in football.</p> <p>08:10 He won a minor hurling title the year he emigrated.</p> <p>08:30 Two of his brothers were involved in the GAA in New York.</p> <p>09:20 The GAA has been a huge part of his life in New York. It helped people get work. There were a lot of marriages made in Gaelic Park.</p>
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	<p>10:20 There were big dances for the Irish in New York.</p> <p>11:50 He got involved with St. Barnabas as a coach in the Bronx and he was still playing at the time.</p> <p>11:35 County identities are different in the United States as not every county has a team. Waterford had no hurling team so he played with Galway. Counties like Kerry and Cork had too many players.</p> <p>12:20 He tried to teach the kids about respect. Discipline was important to him as a coach.</p> <p>13:05 A good player must be dedicated and have a desire to improve.</p> <p>13:35 Many parents helped out but he didn't want them to be coaches as well as there would be too many voices giving direction to the kids.</p> <p>14:30 In 1986 they took a successful Under-16 team to Ireland. They went from Fossa in Kerry to Kinvara in Galway to Castletown in Westmeath to Carbery in Kildare to Dublin, where they played St. Vincent's (thanks to his friend Brian Mullins), to Carrick-on-Suir in Waterford. They won seven out of nine games.</p> <p>15:40 He coached the GAA players basketball and coached basketball at school also.</p> <p>16:00 When the group that went to Ireland turned 18 he lost them all and that hurt.</p> <p>17:00 The locals in Ireland were amazed at the group who had come from New York.</p> <p>17:40 Some of the kids playing were Italians, Albanians, Puerto Rican.</p> <p>18:40 Many of the GAA clubs are based in Queens and Long Island. There are more in Yonkers and into Westchester. There is a club in Rockland County.</p> <p>19:40 Not all clubs have an underage structure.</p> <p>20:20 The New York Celtics, New York Rangers and Rockland are the only clubs with kids in the underage that are in the minor board club.</p> <p>20:45 The minor board have a lot of players and clubs, but it comes in waves. If one parent is Irish the children will play harder.</p>
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	<p>21:50 When he started refereeing he was still playing, so he tried to referee games that were not in his division. He enjoyed it as much as playing.</p> <p>22:55 He likes being in a position to make things happen and gaining the respect of players.</p> <p>24:10 Referees need to know when to let the game flow and get players to understand decisions.</p> <p>25:20 He always liked the fast rule that allowed play to move on.</p> <p>26:30 Clubs in New York don't have the facilities to train as hard or become as fit as the players in Ireland.</p> <p>26:55 He has not made a bad call that cost any team a championship, but he has regretted some calls.</p> <p>27:35 He has had some verbal abuse but not physical abuse.</p> <p>28:30 Referees are not monitored that well in the United States and they are lacking new referees.</p> <p>29:25 In 2008 Tony Jordan went over from Ireland to assess referees.</p> <p>30:10 Referees do not get training.</p> <p>30:50 They have an annual banquet and they have a guest of honour every year. They use the money for insurance for the clubs. They sometimes have politicians and someone from Croke Park, and from Connacht - because New York play in the Connacht championship.</p> <p>32:30 The people involved in the redevelopment of Gaelic Park did so on a voluntary basis. The Park is leased by Manhattan College. They had to take up the surface of the park, do drainage and resurface the field. There was a lot of co-ordination and fundraising involved.</p> <p>32:00 Nickey Brennan and Liam Mulvihill put up US\$1million. The GAA in New York put up money too, as did Manhattan College.</p> <p>34:45 He was an officer in the minor board for many years and held different positions.</p> <p>35:25 Officers do a lot of work on committees and have to be there to oversee events taking place on Sundays.</p> <p>36:20 He has made a lot of sacrifices and has been away from the family a lot over the years. But his family travelled</p>
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	<p>back to Ireland with him every second year.</p> <p>37:50 Women are very much involved in the minor board because there are kids playing. Some are officers on the minor board. The Gaelic Park nurse is Theresa Crowe from Tipperary.</p> <p>37:40 Women are well accepted and have been elected to the senior board. If a person works hard they are accepted. Joan Henchy from Kerry is a registrar. Geraldine O'Brien, an Irish-American, is a delegate for a club and an officer.</p> <p>38:30 Politics is not a big part of New York GAA.</p> <p>39:20 Players may feel that they should be compensated but Tom would not like to see the GAA go professional; it must remain an amateur sport.</p> <p>40:10 He doesn't mind players coming over from Irish counties to play in the Championship if they have been involved all year. In the 1970s they had 10-15 players over at a time, but the rules on that are more controlled now. It is costly to do it.</p> <p>41:40 The immigration question in America is vital to the survival of the GAA over there. They have a lack of young people to take over the reins from the older people.</p> <p>42:45 Changes he has seen in the GAA in Ireland include clubs having better facilities and the Association moving with the times. When Tom was young they had to get changed in the back of the car.</p> <p>43:30 The lifting of the Ban and the opening of Croke Park was a good thing.</p> <p>43:50 Irish culture is important in the United States GAA circles but not the language as that is more difficult.</p> <p>44:20 Teachers and clergy have less of a role to play in the U.S. as it is more diverse over there.</p> <p>45:00 It was strange to go to games in Cleveland. There was a Gaelic football field in the middle of a big public park.</p> <p>45:50 It hurts the people in the U.S. when fans watch games in bars because it would be better for them to watch them in Gaelic Park.</p> <p>46:50 A great memory is when the Gael Linn Cup was played in New York around 1980 and New York won it.</p>
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	<p>47:15 New York playing Cork in 1989 was a great event, as was the visit of the 2006 / 2007 All Stars to play in the revamped Gaelic Park.</p> <p>48:15 Tom Cheasty was a hero of his. He was an inspirational hurler for Waterford.</p> <p>48:40 Disappointments include not being able to go and watch your native county play.</p> <p>49:00 Waterford's loss to Kilkenny in the 2008 All-Ireland hurling final was another bad moment.</p> <p>49:20 The GAA has meant a lot to him, without it he probably would not have stayed in the United States.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<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 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>
<p>Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p>Played from c. 1961 – 1994. He won junior hurling and football titles in Waterford and an Under 18 Minor Hurling County Championship in 1967. In 1975 he won a junior title with Connemara Gaels.</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Coached and managed St Barnabas from 1978 – 1996; Refereed from 1977 – to date of interview; Member of the Minor Board and Senior Board (1997 – to date of interview).</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:50:16</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: ___Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____12/06/12_____

