

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	2 nd Feb 2011
Location	Gerry's home, near Waterford City
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Gerry Cullinan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1948 Home County: Waterford
Education	Primary: Touraneena NS, Co. Waterford Secondary: CBS Dungarvan, Co. Waterford; Salesian College, Pallakenry, Co. Limerick Third Level: UCD
Family	Siblings: 2 brothers & 3 sisters Current Family if Different: Wife (Marie) & 2 sons
Club(s)	Fourmilewater Hurling Club [Waterford]; The Nire Football Club [Waterford]; Sliabh gCua-St Mary's GAA [Waterford]; Ballygunner GAA [Waterford]
Occupation	Teacher
Parents' Occupation	Farmer [Father]; Primary School Teacher [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	None
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Tramore Golf Club

REFERENCE NO. WD/1/15

Date of Report	23 rd July 2012
Period Covered	1930s - 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Tipperary, Dublin, USA, Americas
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, Irish Language, Culture, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Alcohol, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Gerry discusses his involvement with both hurling and football in Waterford and Dublin. He outlines his playing career with various Waterford clubs, including Sliabh gCua St. Mary's, The Nire, Fourmilewater, and Colligan Emmets. He also recalls playing Gaelic games in Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Limerick, and subsequently in UCD. Gerry considers his role in restarting Sliabh gCua St. Mary's GAA Club and discusses the various administration roles he has had at club level. He mentions his administrative and coaching involvement with Ballygunner GAA Club, near where he now lives, and he ponders the role of Gaelic games in Mount Sion, where he has taught since the 70s. In addition, he discusses his participation on various committees to promote underage hurling and hurling in urban Waterford. Furthermore, Gerry reflects on the impact of the recession on clubs nationwide, the participation of non-nationals in the GAA, and the challenge of playing football in a county renowned for hurling.</p> <p>00:25 Gerry recalls his upbringing in Touraneena, Waterford. Rural area. Employment: farmers or working in county council, shops, local creamery.</p> <p>01:14 Describes family interest in GAA. His mother's family, Fitzgeralds, interested in GAA. Her brothers, Tommy and Patty, playing football. Tommy playing with Waterford in the 1930s, playing in 1938 All-Ireland final. Restrictions he faced as a priest. Gerry's aunt Mary driving local men to matches.</p>

	<p>03:44 Recalls his first GAA experience: in the kitchen, listening to Micheal O'Hehir commentating on match between Cork and Waterford on radio in 1950s. Aged 6. Mentions Christy Ring playing. Remembers reading a 1938 program featuring his uncle. Mentions song in the program. Recalls various matches in the 1950s between Waterford and Cork. Mentions Mick Mackey.</p> <p>08:04 Describes Waterford playing Galway in the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Semi-Final. Local ICA's fundraiser predicting match score, Gerry winning prize. Mentions Kathleen and Mary Barron. Waterford losing 1957 All-Ireland Senior Hurling Final by a point. His first match attendance: uncle Patty Fitzgerald bringing him to 1958 Munster Final in Thurles, standing on a butter box. Mentions Tipperary's John Doyle.</p> <p>10:30 Recalls going to Cork Athletic Grounds in 1959 for match between Waterford and Tipperary. Strong wind. Score at half-time: Waterford 8-2 : Tipperary 0. Remembers going with his two uncles. Mentions his mother's friends Aidan and Madge Ryan.</p> <p>12:15 Describes 1959 Munster Final between Waterford and Cork, winning by a goal. Mentions players Ned Power, Christy Ring, and Austin Flynn. Recalls being in the back of his uncle's Volkswagen, bus crashing into car, waking up in Cashel hospital. Article in <i>Dungarvan Observer</i> about his accident. Waterford winning All-Ireland final in replay. Listening to match on radio. Mentions John Grady cycling to O'Keeffe's shop for an ice cream to celebrate the win.</p> <p>14:59 Reflects on the Gaelic games played in national school in Touraneena. Attending football matches with other schools. No hurling. Recalls game featuring adult team Sliabh gCua. Mentions his cousin Pascal Power. Disbanding of team,</p> <p>16:29 Older boys in school playing hurling. Adult camogie team starting called Ballinamult, schoolboy hurling team playing against them. Recalls playing on football team in fifth class. Describes playing Grange, beaten by a point. No competitive hurling in school. Mentions teacher Sean Cronin's involvement in hurling.</p> <p>18:59 Discusses other sports played in school: handball in handball alley, competitions. Describes game called Sunday Monday. No soccer. His interest in listening to soccer programme on radio, strength of Waterford soccer team. Mentions radio presenter Tony Sheehan.</p> <p>21:13 Describes following Waterford football and hurling</p>
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	<p>teams. Watching football games, less interest because of lack of success.</p> <p>21:54 Mentions his childhood GAA heroes: 1959 Waterford team, especially Tom Cheasty. Mentions Mrs Condon. No hurling team in Touraneena. Mentions Tom Cunningham, John Kiely, Austin Flynn. Mentions meeting Mount Sion hurlers later when he taught there. Also mentions Austin Barron, Tommy and Sean Hickey.</p> <p>25:37 Explains the progression of his playing career. Playing with siblings at home, in Gradys' field on Sundays, organising their own games. No underage hurling in locality in the 50s. Attending Dungarvan CBS for a year, then to boarding school in Salesian College, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick. Playing hurling and football there.</p> <p>27:38 Aged 15, asked to play for Fourmilewater GAA Club in Under-16 championship. Also playing on minor team. Knockout system, only A-grade. Playing for club during summer holidays. School leagues in boarding school. Playing in three Munster finals with school, football and hurling. Also playing senior team in Munster Colleges. Playing minor with Fourmilewater. No championship wins, shortage of players of the right age group.</p> <p>30:54 Considers the role of Gaelic games in school life in boarding school. Junior and senior leagues. Happy memories. Also did athletics: sprinting and cross country. Priests and brothers interested in GAA. Mentions Fr. Donnellan, related to Galway footballers the Donnellans. Also mentions Fr. Ryan and The Duke.</p> <p>33:05 Recalls captaining senior team in Munster Hurling Final at school. Players from different counties: Limerick, Kerry, Tipperary, Waterford, Clare.</p> <p>33:54 Playing hurling in summers with Fourmilewater as a teenager, not playing with The Nire in 60s. Mentions playing minor football with Colligan Emmets GAA Club for two years. Strong team. Outlines formation of adult team in The Nire, playing on their first team. Illegal playing. Also playing junior hurling with Colligan. Mentions Liam Ryan. Also mentions Johnny Coffey. Choosing to play solely with Fourmilewater. Also mentions John Kiely. Decision to play with Fourmilewater and The Nire. Playing in 1957 junior football championship. Touraneena players on opposing teams: Valley Rovers and The Nire. Mentions John Fraher, John Fitzpatrick. The Nire losing the county final.</p>
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	<p>39:14 The Nire promoted to intermediate, also playing adult hurling with Fourmilewater. Outlines moves to start club in Touraneena in late 60s. Gerry's views on this. Decision to start football team. Mentions being in Dublin with Ned Power and Tom Power, training together. Writing letter to Fr. Brendan Crowley in Touraneena asking him to convene meeting about starting team. Meeting in 1970: decision to start hurling and football teams.</p> <p>43:03 Reflects on the difficulty of leaving Fourmilewater and The Nire. Mentions Austin Barron and Tom, Jim, and John Hearn. Also Paddy Walsh. Describes first match of football team against Colligan, winning. Explains movement of players around clubs. Sliabh gCua St. Mary's GAA Club. Gerry's knee injuries, retiring aged 27.</p> <p>48:09 Explains return of players to Sliabh gCua St. Mary's. Rivalry among Touraneena players on opposing teams. Mentions Fr. Jim Kiely, Fr. Nugent. Recalls playing hurling match in Drogheda, the only scorer, other players hungover.</p> <p>51:51 Considers the impact of the formation of the club on the parish. Mentions Fr. Griffin. Boosting morale. Bringing people together. Positive effect on other sports: thriving badminton and volleyball teams. Negative impact: drink culture, emphasis on drinking after matches.</p> <p>54:27 Describes playing football in a county more famed for its hurling successes. No preferential treatment for either sport in club. Dual players.</p> <p>55:50 Discusses training in club. Mentions trainers Ned Burke, Piery Butler. Also experienced trainers organising sessions. Less sophisticated training methods.</p> <p>56:49 Playing in farmers' fields. Recalls match in 1969 between old and young players. Mentions Eddie Kirwan's field, given to club, called Kirwan Park. Toggling out in curate's garage before dressing rooms built. Describes jersey colours: maroon and gold. Later green jerseys sponsored by John Fraher. Football and hurling teams separate colours and names. Mentions well-known song by local man Pádraig Ó Míléadha called "Sliabh Geal gCua na Féile," recorded by Liam Clancy. Gerry recalls singing song on RTE. Explains why different names given to different clubs.</p> <p>01:02:16 Reflects on GAA scene in UCD in late 60s. Playing in Under-21 team in Dublin championship. Little involvement. Not skilled enough for Fitzgibbon team. Mentions friend</p>
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	<p>playing illegally with Eoghan Rua club.</p> <p>01:04:49 Ponders the ban on foreign games. Mentions suspension of Tom Cheasty for attending soccer dance, Gerry's opposition to the ban. Attending soccer and rugby matches. Mentions GAA president Pdraig O Fannin. Lifting of the ban. Playing friendly soccer games in college.</p> <p>01:06:21 Describes teaching in Ringsend school. Soccer played in school, no GAA. Gerry playing soccer with students. Mentions soccer player Davy Langan nicknaming him Pete after Peter Bonetti.</p> <p>01:07:45 Doing his H-Dip, deciding to marry his wife and move to Waterford, going to teach in Mount Sion in 1973. Interviewed by Brother Collins on day of county final. Also mentions Brother Brereton. Still teaching in Mount Sion.</p> <p>01:11:15 Describes GAA scene in Mount Sion. Success of hurling team. His involvement in training first and second year students with John Walsh, selector with Brian Cody in Kilkenny. Rice Cup. Outlines successes of teams in 70s. Issue of students leaving school after Inter Cert, losing talented hurlers. Mentions student hurlers Pat Ryan, Kevin Ryan. Anthony Cooney, Damien Byrne. Also mentions fellow trainers Pat O'Hanlon and Bill Doherty. Also mentions contribution of Brother Gill, Brother O'Donoghue, and Brother Davitt to hurling in the school.</p> <p>01:16:11 Reflects on his involvement in administration of Schools GAA. Currently chairman of Waterford Post-Primary Schools body. Organising matches. Mentions involvement of Vincent O'Meara and Aidan Maher. Decline of hurling in the county. Mentions Mount Sion students who hurled for county: Ken McGrath, Eoin McGrath, Roy McGrath, Eoin Kelly, Tony Browne. Mentions Liam Fardy in St. Paul's School, Waterford. Also mentions James Connors and Raymond Barry. Mentions Damien Byrne.</p> <p>01:19:00 Considers the benefits of his involvement in schools GAA to his relationship with the students. Respect.</p> <p>01:20:10 Ponders the changes he has witnessed since the 70s in approaches to PE and games in schools. Lack of facilities in Mount Sion. Major improvement in coaching and development of Gaelic games, voluntary commitment of teachers. Coaching and development committee in Waterford.</p> <p>01:22:19 Discusses the biggest challenges faced by committee: difficulty for teachers to leave classes for</p>
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	<p>matches, build-up of fixtures. Mentions county servicing officers Paddy Dunphy and Ann Hogan. Also mentions secretary Pat Collins. Also issue of bad weather, matches cancelled.</p> <p>01:26:04 Considers the input of the schools to improving players. Issue of talented players not given the opportunity to play in big schools.</p> <p>01:28:30 Discusses involvement of non-national students in Gaelic games. Playing football, not hurling. His hopes for more intergration.</p> <p>01:29:35 Describes his involvement in Ballygunner GAA Club. Living in Ballygunner parish, hurling stronghold. Dominance of club in 50s and 60s. His sons playing hurling with school and club. Mentions his son Gary Cullinan. Tony Cummins asking him to get involved with his son's team. Also mentions Pat O'Sullivan asking him to become chairman of juvenile section of club in 1994. Gerry's aim to improve standard of underage hurling in club. Recalls chasing unwilling players onto pitch. Reasons why he was asked to get involved.</p> <p>01:34:46 Explains how he boosted club, recruiting players from school. Mentions Gordon Ryan, Christy Power, Michael Kearney. Gerry's involvement with urban development committee, running indoor leagues for underage teams. Mentions Áine Lyng, daughter of Wexford's Paul Lyng. Success of 1998 Waterford hurling team, start of club's revival. Gerry's contribution to the rise of the juvenile club: their dominance in the county. Expectations of success. Mentions talented Ballygunner players Paul Flynn, Fergal Hartley, Stephen Frampton, Billy O'Sullivan, Shane O'Sullivan. Former players coaching juveniles.</p> <p>01:41:40 Outlines development of coaching. Participation in coaching courses, parental support. Larger population of juvenile players with spread of city to Ballygunner.</p> <p>01:43:13 Considers differences in area since he moved to Ballygunner. Development of housing estates. Growth of city. Benefits to club.</p> <p>01:44:35 Discusses his move from juvenile administration to senior administration. Mentions chairmen Pat O'Sullivan and Frank King. Gerry taking responsibility for grants. Vice chairman of club. Describes purchase of grounds, development of facilities: dressing rooms, all-weather area, alley, second pitch, hurling arena. Ongoing development of sports hall. Fewer grants nowadays. His involvement in</p>
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	<p>application for loan from AIB.</p> <p>01:50:14 Considers the impact of the recession on clubs around the country. Financial impact. Discusses fundraising scheme asking for donations. Rise of female players in club: up to Under-14 level. Girls' positive influence on boys' teams. Mentions Una Jackman winning Skills in Long Puck competition. Also problem of losing players to emigration: describes flying player back from Boston for county final.</p> <p>01:53:11 Discusses his involvement in the urban development committee in Waterford. Aim to improve standard of underage hurlers in mid-90s. Ballygunner's representative on committee. Attempts to persuade Munster Council to get an urban development officer in Waterford to promote hurling in city area. Mentions appointment of Joey Cartan. Gerry becoming treasurer. Also mentions Brendan McKeown, Fergus Ryan, Eoin Breathnach. Success of committee. Also involvement in drug and alcohol awareness. Competitions among urban Waterford, Limerick, Cork, South Tipperary.</p> <p>01:58:40 Ponders the GAA's contribution to inner city areas. Mentions Hurling on the Greens: invitation to local children to play hurling on green areas in estates. Challenge of developing a hurling talent, major time commitment required. Mentions efforts of city manager Michael Walsh to boost standard of hurling in Waterford. Obstacles faced by other clubs in the city.</p> <p>02:02:30 Reflects on the role of the GAA in the community. Committee tackling the issues of drugs and alcohol. Printing booklet. Mentions drugs education officer Andy Hargreaves. Talks for parents and team managers. Development of policies in club: underage team celebrations in clubhouse rather than pub. Issue of local pub financially assisting club.</p> <p>02:07:20 Considers the GAA as a cultural movement. Little interest in Scór nowadays. Attempts to promote Scór in Ballygunner. His involvement in quiz teams. Mentions Monie Hanlon. Sliabh gCua winning All-Ireland set dancing competition.</p> <p>02:10:28 Discusses his favourite roles in the GAA: playing, chairman of Ballygunner juvenile team and witnessing their dramatic improvement, coaching Mount Sion team that won the 1976 Rice Cup.</p> <p>02:11:35 Describes his sons' involvement in the GAA. Playing and supporting. Gary's captaining of Fitzgibbon team in DCU, playing with Ballygunner, then St. Vincent's GAA Club in</p>
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REFERENCE NO. WD/1/15

	<p>Dublin. Reaching county finals.</p> <p>02:14:22 Reflects on the significance of the GAA in his life. His main passion. Interest in hurling and football.</p> <p>02:16:31 Sings “Sliabh Geal gCua na Féile.”</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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 from childhood until he was 27 yrs. Won West Waterford Junior Football Championship in 1967 and 1972.</p>
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	<p>Ballygunner GAA: chairman of the juvenile club, 1994 – 2004; vice-chairman of Ballygunner GAA, 2003 – 2009.</p> <p>Waterford: Chairman of Waterford Post Primary Schools Board, 1994 – 2012; Treasurer of Waterford GAA Urban Development Committee, 1996 – 2005; participated on various Waterford GAA committees including fundraising, grand applications, drugs and alcohol awareness committee.</p>
Format	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
Duration	<p>Length of Interview: 02:18:43</p>
Language	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. WD/1/15

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: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 23rd July 2012