

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	22 nd April 2010
Location	Michael's home, near Patrickswell, Co. Limerick
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Punch
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1931 Home County: Limerick
Education	Primary: Crecora NS, Co. Limerick Secondary: St Munchin's College, Limerick Third Level: UCC
Family	Siblings: 3 brothers Current Family if Different: Wife; 3 sons & 1 daughter
Club(s)	N/A
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	15 th June 2012
Period Covered	1904 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Limerick
Key Themes Covered	Playing, Education, Religion, Role of Women, Irish Language, Irish, History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement
Interview Summary	<p>Michael talks about Limerick and the passion that its people have for hurling. He did not play a lot, but as a spectator he loved the sport, and recalls going to games as a child. His uncle, the Reverend Edward Punch, was massively involved in the game and was Chairman of the Limerick County Board. Michael talks all about his uncle's enthusiasm for hurling and reflects on the kind of man he was and what drove him. They travelled to a lot of games together and Michael has many fond memories of that time. Rugby is also popular in Limerick and Michael discusses the implications that this can have. As an engineer Michael was involved in the development of the Gaelic Grounds and Thomond Park in Limerick, and he talks about working on these projects.</p> <p>00:20 Born in 1931 in Limerick to a family of farmers who had a lot of horses</p> <p>01:10 Hunting was popular at the time and they rode the horses to Ballingarry or Croom; they also had American clients</p> <p>02:45 They had been into horses for at least one generation</p> <p>03:05 Michael's father loved horses and his uncle Dick Canon was a skilled horseman who also liked hurling</p> <p>03:20 Earliest GAA memories are in 1940 when Limerick won an All-Ireland</p> <p>03:45 He went to the Munster final in Thurles in 1940</p> <p>04:00 In 1939 Kilkenny beat Cork but Limerick made the Munster final in 1940, beating Cork and eventually Kilkenny</p> <p>04:15 it was the year of the Mackeys - John, Mick, Timmy Ryan</p> <p>04:40 Mick Mackey was like Henry Shefflin and had great skills</p>

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	<p>05:20 Michael's uncle had a car which was convenient for transport</p> <p>05:45 There would only be one radio in a parish</p> <p>06:05 Mickey Cross was a great Limerick hurler</p> <p>06:40 The ball and the hurley was heavier then</p> <p>06:55 Rugby was not so popular, but his neighbours Fitzgerald and a Reddin man play rugby now</p> <p>07:30 His father was not involved in hurling in a big way but his uncle had a great interest</p> <p>08:00 Micheal's neighbour Moloney was 'the greatest all-round jockey of all time' and once lost his teeth whilst racing</p> <p>08:50 The people who were into horses did not hurl when Michael was young</p> <p>09:40 Michael went to national school in Crecora and then to St Munchins, which was seven miles away on a bicycle</p> <p>10:00 After school he rode horses to exercise them</p> <p>10:50 Before in Limerick you played hurling with the Christian Brothers, who produced hurlers like Eamon Grimes and Eamon Creegan</p> <p>11:55 There was no competitive hurling at the national school while Munchins had 40 pupils and a rugby team</p> <p>12:30 Michael is from Crecora and when he was young many went to Patrickswell to play hurling or to Fedamore as the Cloughesseys once did</p> <p>13:00 Michael did not play a lot of hurling, and never officially</p> <p>13:15 His uncle, the Reverend Edward Punch, was 'completely gaga' about hurling, and also played soccer and football</p> <p>13:55 There was a fire in Dromcollogher in 1926 and he moved to Michael's area as parish priest</p> <p>14:35 His uncle established a team in west Limerick and</p>
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	<p>became chairman of the county board</p> <p>15:05 His uncle was a very honest man and hated drink. He died at 96</p> <p>15:45 His uncle and hurlers Jackie O'Connell and Mickey Fitzgibbon were involved in the initial development of the Gaelic Grounds</p> <p>16:20 Selling a plot of land to the ESB was a mistake they made</p> <p>16:35 The seating along the sidelines was poor</p> <p>17:05 The three had no money</p> <p>17:35 Jim Hickey and Noel Drumgould came along and things got done</p> <p>18:55 Michael wanted to put a roof in but there were objections</p> <p>18:20 A Hickey man takes care of fundraising and JP McManus contributes a lot</p> <p>19:00 His uncle and Pat Fanning were totally in favour of the ban</p> <p>19:20 Tells a story of the Munster final in Killarney in 1971. His uncle and IRFU President Dominic Dineen were there, as was Pat Fanning</p> <p>20:25 In 1904 his uncle won a Munster Senior Cup medal with Munchins</p> <p>21:00 The ban was dropped not long after that 1971 final</p> <p>21:30 His uncle and a Fr Wall were Sinn Féin court judges</p> <p>22:00 At the All-Ireland in 1973 Tom O'Donnell asked his uncle to meet President DeValera</p> <p>22:25 His uncle believed the GAA to be a little too nationalist</p> <p>23:15 His uncle would have felt the GAA contaminated Irish sports</p> <p>23:40 His uncle was chairman of the Limerick county board</p>
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	<p>for years</p> <p>24:10 Tells a story about nuns in a car suggesting to his uncle to say the Rosary</p> <p>25:00 He took his father to a Munster Junior final in 1957</p> <p>25:45 His father wasn't allowed attend a wedding in Newry by his uncle</p> <p>26:10 Recalls taking his father to a Protestant funeral</p> <p>27:00 An O'Shaughnessy from Adare ran close to a world record in New York for the indoor mile</p> <p>27:35 His uncle's housekeeper was killed on the road and he had to give evidence at the inquest and his uncle asked him many questions about it all. A Mrs Widger from Waterford was responsible for the killing and her people trained a famous horse ridden by Lester Piggott's grandfather</p> <p>29:10 Recalls coming down from Dublin in the car with his brother and Jackie Conway after losing a National League final; his uncle was depressed</p> <p>30:25 His uncle really liked Jack Lynch and Mick Mackey</p> <p>30:35 Timmy Ryan's hurley from when Limerick won in 1940 was under his uncle's bed until he died; then his uncle gave it to a David Punch</p> <p>30:55 The day after the All-Ireland Timmy Ryan was out milking cows and saving hay and his uncle loved this fact</p> <p>31:10 Tells a story of the bishop sending for his uncle when he retired</p> <p>32:10 His uncle would have been 'notorious' in Ahane and Michael explains why</p> <p>33:25 Michael feels there are good people involved in the GAA on the administrative side</p> <p>33:40 Talks about the fallout in Limerick hurley in 2010 over hurling boss Justin McCarthy</p> <p>34:35 When he was at UCC he did not hurl a lot</p>
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	<p>35:15 The ban was strictly enforced in the area and Mick Mackey was appointed a supervisor</p> <p>35:45 Rugby has 'taken over in Castletroy'; mentions a school in Castletroy</p> <p>36:15 Says rugby is a democratic game</p> <p>37:35 Mentions bacon factories in Limerick and says that many rugby players may have come from there, like Tommy Clifford</p> <p>37:55 Says the class element is gone from rugby now and points to Connaught's success</p> <p>39:20 As an engineer Michael was involved in the development of the Gaelic Grounds in Limerick and Thomond Park</p> <p>39:40 He doesn't like Croke Park or Thomond Park - they are both too steep</p> <p>40:13 They did the racecourse in Patrickswell</p> <p>40:25 When working on the Gaelic Grounds, there was trouble with local residents initially</p> <p>41:35 Says the new stadium at Lansdowne Road is too small</p> <p>42:00 The best days in Limerick were before Thomond Park</p> <p>42:35 He had a broad brief when going to work on the Gaelic Grounds</p> <p>44:00 He didn't work with a committee but with Drumgould in his day, and he meets with county board chairman Paddy Quilligan</p> <p>44:45 He would like to see the Gaelic Grounds being made available for big rugby matches</p> <p>45:20 The cost of getting into a stadium is too high</p> <p>46:05 He brought in an architect for the Gaelic Grounds and they communicated with Tom Hickey</p> <p>46:45 Health and Safety regulations were quite strict</p>
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	<p>47:25 The Mackey stand in Limerick shouldn't be there; his uncle bought the old Hogan Stand in Croke Park</p> <p>48:55 JP McManus has done a lot and is married to Michael's next door neighbour</p> <p>51:20 He would prefer a good hurling match to anything</p> <p>51:45 He is hopeful about the game in Limerick</p> <p>52:00 Favourite memory is an Under-21 final in Thurles and Eoin Foley scored a great point</p> <p>52:25 Alcohol can be a problem for GAA players</p> <p>54:20 His son Jeffery had good hands for hurling but his father decided that he wasn't going to be strong enough and took him to see Pat Hartigan</p> <p>57:30 Sport is a very important thing</p> <p>58:30 Henry Shefflin is the best hurler he has ever seen</p> <p>58:50 Tells a story of Kilkenny losing an All-Ireland and a man named 'Ruth' who was a teacher and introduced Michael to a five-year-old, telling him he would become a great hurler.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input type="checkbox"/> Manager <input 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 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>N/A</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:00:16
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Regina Fitzpatrick

Date: 15th June 2012