

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Arlene Crampsie
Date of Interview	22 nd Jan 2011
Location	Interviewee's home, near Ballybofey, Co. Donegal
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Dessie Griffin
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1936 Home County: Donegal
Education	Primary: Stranorlar NS, Co. Donegal Secondary: St. Eunan's College, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal Third Level: UCD
Family	Siblings: 1 sister Current Family if Different: Married to Anne with 3 sons and 1 daughter
Club(s)	MacCumhalls
Occupation	Teacher
Parents' Occupation	Donegal County Council, Health Board [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	St. Vincent de Paul; Butt Hall Committee

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Date of Report	1 st August 2012
Period Covered	1920s – 2011
Counties/Countries Covered	Donegal, Derry, Down, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Commiserations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Material Culture, Education, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Challenges, Sacrifices, Northern Ireland, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Opening of Croke Park, Relationship with the Association, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Dessie talks about his involvement in the GAA over the years. He discusses his father's role as a selector in the Donegal county team and his involvement in buying the county ground with Seán MacCumhaill (Sean McCool). He discusses the development of the Erin Hope club and the renaming of the club to MacCumhaill's after Seán MacCumhaill. Dessie talks about his involvement in teaching and working on the Vocational Schools' Board. He describes the school's competition and talks about his school winning it in 1984. He highlights the important role teachers' play in the GAA and the relationship between the schools' board and the county board. He gives his opinion on the various rule changes in the GAA over the years and talks about the need for sport in schools. Towards the end of the interview Dessie talks about the role of the GAA in his life and what the Association has meant to him.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:22 Dessie talks about his earliest memories of the GAA. His father Ben Griffin being a selector with the county team and going with him to matches. Playing in school. Becoming secretary of his club</p> <p>01:25 Discusses his father's career in the GAA. Working with Sean MacCumhaill and his involvement in buying the county grounds. Bought the field from Mark Byrne. Describes the fundraisers they held. Mentions Paddy Murphy, Jack Hannigan and Jim Hannigan.</p>

	<p>03:30 Talks about his family's involvement in the GAA and her mother playing camogie.</p> <p>04:05 Describes the type of facilities they had when he was growing up. Using a pitch given to them by the Land Commission.</p> <p>04:50 Talks about the naming of the ground in Ballybofey after Sean MacCumhaill.</p> <p>05:45 Describes the type of places he travelled to with his father and the county team. Going to Celtic Park in Derry.</p> <p>07:40 Talks about old teams that used to play around the Ballybofey area. Discusses the formation of the Erin's Hope club and the renaming of it to Sean MacCumhaill's.</p> <p>09:30 Discusses being secretary of the club and holding meetings in the Butt Hall.</p> <p>11:15 Talks about the role of the GAA in St. Eunan's. Playing soccer out of sight of the Priests. Winning an Ulster Junior Schools Championship and the school getting to a MacRory Cup final. Mentions Fr Willie McMenamin and John Wilson.</p> <p>15:40 Discusses going to UCD. Playing with the Green Flags club in Chapelizod. Mentions Brendan McFeely and Andy Gallen. Playing in the Phoenix Park.</p> <p>17:20 Describes having to travel home from Dublin for club matches with MacCumhaill's. Cash prizes for tournaments.</p> <p>18:44 Recalls playing tournaments in the North during the summer and a fight during one match in Rasharkin. Winning tournaments increasing the invitations they got. Travelling to the matches in cars.</p> <p>21:10 Talks about a controversial suspension after a match against Letterkenny. Having to go in front of the Ulster Council. Discusses the rivalry with Letterkenny. Mentions Joe Carroll.</p> <p>24:00 Discusses the club rivalries across the county like Dungloe and Gweedore, MacCumhaills and St. Eunan's, and Ballyshannon and Donegal town.</p> <p>24:20 Describes the type of celebrations if the club won. Tar Barrels. Recalls winning their first championship in 1959. Winning a three-in-a-row in 1962, 1963 and 1964.</p> <p>25:20 Talks about hurling in the area when he was growing up. People moving into the area who brought hurling with</p>
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	<p>them. Mentions Guilfoyle.</p> <p>25:50 Discusses the make-up of the parish and club.</p> <p>26:09 Talks about his playing career over the years.</p> <p>27:00 Recalls playing soccer during the ban on foreign games.</p> <p>27:55 Talks about his father being chairman of the East Division in Donegal.</p> <p>28:48 Discusses his involvement in administration with the club. Describes the development of the club's facilities. Raising money and getting grants from the GAA. Talks about the types of fundraising they did.</p> <p>31:00 Talks about his involvement in the Vocational Schools Board. Teaching in Carrick and training football there. Mentions Eddie McDevitt, Fr Dan McDyer and Brendan Campbell.</p> <p>34:00 Discusses his first year getting a team together in Carrick. His players being in the FCA and missing a match against Glenties. Talks about the GAA in the school.</p> <p>36:05 Describes the type of training he did with the school. Collective training with the county and the strength of Ulster at the time. Talks about the make-up of school's competitions when he was teaching. Mentions PJ McGowan.</p> <p>42:20 Notes how 16 of the Donegal All-Ireland winning team in 1992 played in the vocational schools' competitions. Talks about training with the school and the county. Representing the vocational school's board at Donegal county board meetings.</p> <p>45:50 Talks about the highlights of his involvement in the schools, winning an All-Ireland in Croke Park in 1984. Describes the match that day.</p> <p>48:30 Recalls the celebrations in Donegal after they won. A piper and lorry. Talks about scouting the opposition before the match and fundraising and getting sponsorship. Mentions Luke Gavigan and Danny O'Brien.</p> <p>52:00 Discusses the role of teachers in the GAA. Mentions CP O'Donnell, Packie McGinley, Manus Brennan. Trouble of getting games played in bad weather. Mentions the McDevitt Cup, Markey Cup. Going to Raphoe and setting up a team there. Mentions Paddy Flood, Alma O'Gorman.</p>
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	<p>54:20 Talks about ladies' football in the schools. Mentions St. Columba's. Trying to buy a set of jerseys in Carrick and Raphoe. Mentions Eddie Gibson.</p> <p>57:25 Discusses the issue of insurance. Gives his opinion on the GAA's role in helping injured players.</p> <p>58:12 Recalls an incident during a trip to a match in Fermanagh. Being stopped by farmers in the North.</p> <p>59:09 Discusses the issue of emigration in the area.</p> <p>59:30 Talks about being a teacher and his work on the vocational schools' board.</p> <p>01:00:50 Describes the difference in the style of football in Carrick and Raphoe. Talks about the setting up of football in the school in Raphoe. Discusses the changes in the vocational schools' board.</p> <p>01:02:50 Highlights the impact of rugby on the GAA in the area.</p> <p>01:03:37 Discusses the role of women in the GAA.</p> <p>01:04:50 Talks about the various rule changes over the years. Highlights the opening of Croke Park.</p> <p>01:06:10 Gives his opinion on the county board. Talks about the relationship between MacCumhaill's and the county board.</p> <p>01:07:23 Talks about his best memories in the GAA, winning the All-Ireland in 1984 with the school and Donegal winning the All-Ireland in 1992. Recalls trips to Croke Park.</p> <p>01:09:29 Chooses Jim McKeever as his GAA hero.</p> <p>01:09:38 Describes his biggest disappointments in the GAA and the ban on foreign games.</p> <p>01:11:40 Highlights the need for there to be an emphasis of sport in schools.</p> <p>01:12:29 Talks about what the GAA has meant to him during his life.</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person</p>

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	<input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____
Record as a Player (Titles won; Length of time played)	Played from 1948 – 1966. Won 1 junior championship, 4 senior championships (1959, 1962, 1963, 1964); couple of leagues and several 7-A-Side tournaments.
Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	Has been involved in administration since the early 1960s. Club: Secretary, Committee Member Vocational Schools: Secretary, Treasurer, Representative to County Board, President of School's Vocational Board.
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:13:46
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: _____Arlene Crampsie_____

Date: _____01/08/12_____