

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	11 November 2009
Location	Loughboy, Kilkenny
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Jim Cantwell
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1920 Home County: Kilkenny
Education	Primary: Sheestown National School Secondary: De La Salle, Patrick's Street, Kilkenny; CBS Kilkenny.
Family	Siblings: 4 sisters (1 deceased); 2 brothers Current Family if Different: 2 sons and one daughter
Club(s)	St Fiachra's Sheestown; James Stephens.
Occupation	Smithwicks Brewery worker
Parents' Occupation	Smithwicks Brewery [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil

Date of Report	25 th November 2009
Period Covered	1920-2009
Counties/Countries Covered	Kilkenny, Tipperary, Cork, Clare, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Celebrations, Commiserations, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Role of Teachers, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Identity, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Career, Alcohol, Violence, Opening of Croke Park
Interview Summary	<p>0: 00 Introduction</p> <p>:20 From Abbey Street, Kilkenny – All those houses gone now – across from the Abbey church – moved to Warrington when he was very young, about two miles from the city.</p> <p>1:02 Born in 1920 – Kilkenny in the 1920s – gravel roads – not many motor cars – man that used to do a hackney service with a side-car from the Bank of Ireland in the parade to the train station – slow moving times.</p> <p>2:08 Father worked in Smithwick’s Brewery – Jim started working there when he was 16, 1936 – started as an office boy and was there for 48 years – first earned 10 shillings a week – would give most of pay to his mother and she would give him some money to go to the pictures every week – doesn’t remember people complaining about poverty.</p> <p>3:45 Had three sisters Kitty, Mary, Theresa and Ann and four brothers Tom and Frank – rationing during the war – clothes, food and tea were all rationed – stealing butter – making tea and drying tea-leaves for the following day – making carrot tea – barley and wheat bread- very brown bread, high in fibre – mother making bread out of Brewers yeast – Barm Bread – very sweet.</p> <p>7:03 Place of the Brewery in Kilkenny – big employer – everything done manually – transport by horse and cart – father used to deliver to Urlingford and Templemore – would stay the night in Urlingford at Katy Mirchell’s a famous pub – would feed the horses there and stay the night – tough in frosty weather – putting frost nails into the horses hooves for grip.</p>

	<p>8:32 Solid tyre lorries came in then but were very slow.</p> <p>8:47 Earliest memories of the GAA – His uncles hurled in the 1930s – very involved in it because of that – matches were talked about for weeks – excitement of match days all through the 30s, 40s and 50s. Uncles played with Urlingford and then went to Dublin and played with Young Irelands and Faughs.</p> <p>10:00 Discussing matches with his uncles – Tommy Leahy (won all-Irelands in 1932 and 35) in and Terry Leahy (won all-Ireland in 1939 and 47) and a older brother, Jack (sub for the county in 1932) – all played for Kilkenny. Uncles' house – always hurls around the house – people coming to the house looking for hurls – Rivalry with Tipperary – they were heroes to him as a child.</p> <p>11:39 Father would bring him to the games – he was the oldest – going to a Munster Final in Thurles in 1932 – climbing up the bank, people at the top standing on boxes – getting lost at the match – went behind the goal where Dr Daly was playing in goal for Clare – being found by his uncle Jack who reunited him with his father – Clare beat Cork that day and in the 1932 All-Ireland Kilkenny beat them in the All-Ireland – went by bus that day – Tom Renehan would run the bus.</p> <p>13:55 Making sandwiches the night before a match was very important – how long it would take to get there – in later years four or five of them would set off on bicycles to Thurles – leave the bikes into a pub – have the sandwiches and a pint – collect the bikes after the match and cycle home- loved cycling down Finner Hill into Urlingford and meeting the crowd in Katy Mirchills – might have a pint in Freshford on the way home – would be late getting home. His father would go to Tom Semples pub.</p> <p>14:38 Childhood heroes – Martin White was a good hurler, a good looking man – saw Lory Meagher playing – Jimmy Welsh, Jimmy Kelly, saw Jack Lynch and Jim Hurley of Cork, another great hurler, Tom Consedine from Clare, Harry Gray from Rathdowney, Co. Laois – played with Dublin.</p> <p>16:47 Kilkenny team of the 1930s – went to America.</p> <p>17:04 Watching Lory Meagher play hurling – skill, finesse, great hands.</p> <p>17:24 No hurling in his national school – hurled on the road – they were too far away from the pitch in Sheestown – would go down to hurl there when St Fiachra's were training – Left</p>
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	<p>Abbey Street when he was 6,7 or 8 – then moved to Sheestown.</p> <p>18:23 Getting lift to school with Mrs Gray, the teacher – she had a ginnet and trap – Mrs Kennedy also taught there, she had a car – two teachers in the school – looking forward to going home from school to play hurling out in the road with his brother Tom – his sister Kitty played in the goals from them.</p> <p>19:30 Used to get hurls for 6p from Griffins in Rose Inn Street – used to break easily – didn't have a sliothar – used rubber or sponge or tennis balls – they weren't plentiful.</p> <p>20:01 Listening to matches on the radio – listening to the 1931 All-Ireland on Patricks Street – there was a house there at had a wireless – big crowd standing around the paths and the street gathered – listened to the two replays on Patricks Street too.</p> <p>21:10 Few people had a wireless or a gramophone – they got a gramophone – buying needles for it - reading about the matches in the Irish Press – Man called 'Green Flag' used to write about the hurling.</p> <p>22:00 Going to matches in Nowlan park with this father – people used to be outside selling cakes and lemonade and sweets, apples – used to have brown sugar stick that they used to make themselves.</p> <p>23:00 Description of Nowlan Park – dressing rooms were a tin shed – later there were dressing rooms under the old stand – going to see Kilkenny training sessions in the 1930s and 40s – Mick Dalton, the masseur, rubbing the men down with wintergreen - training mainly consisted of a couple of games of hurling and running around the park – crowds would come in to watch them but not as many as recently.</p> <p>24:25 Nowlan Park opened in 1928 – crowds around the town the days of matches – lots of musicians around the town – morning of an All-Ireland in Kilkenny – 6.30am mass at the Friary – John Street alive with excitement – fellas selling badges and flags our of tin boxes – selling rosettes – a pub that opened early by the station, Gormans – singing and music on the train</p> <p>25:56 Going to his first All-Ireland in 1932 – Kilkenny v Clare – in the Long stand beside the Hogan stand – his mother brought him – his father went with his friends.</p> <p>26:48 The 1935 All-Ireland – Kilkenny v Limerick – very rainy</p>
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	<p>day - die ran out of his hat and his coat – drying off before going to the station – Kilkenny won by one point- Mick Mackey playing that day – great player – his brother also a great player.</p> <p>28:08 The day of the All-Ireland – early train – station packed with people – rush to get onto the train and get a seat – the odd fight at the station – took hours to go home – stopping in the middle of the countryside – what the train was like. Arriving home late often at midnight – excitement when Kilkenny won – people missing the train home from Dublin.</p> <p>30:50 Homecoming celebrations – players would be loaded on to a lorry and driven over the bridge and across the town – in the 1940s – they would go to the Metropole Hotel – they would be out at the window and crowds would gather outside.</p> <p>31:40 1939 All-Ireland – rain was so bad, you couldn't pick out the players – couldn't make out who scored the winning point – floods around the pitch – war was declared – something sinister about the day.</p> <p>32:50 Rumour went around that war had been declared after the match – match started before the rain started that day.</p> <p>33:54 The war years – tough times – ration books – heavy snowfall in 1947, roads were even blocked – that was followed by an enormous flood – swept all the empty barrels out of the brewery yard – went down the river and bounced back from Johns Bridge – had to retrieve barrels back from Inistiogue and Wexford.</p> <p>35:37 Getting the job in the Brewery when he was 16 years old – tried to get work in Crotty's Bakery and in the Kilkenny Journal – eventually got work in the Brewery – there for 48 years – worked in every part of it – ended up being a Maltster.</p> <p>36:37 Description of the Brewery in the 1930s – working life in the Brewery – hard work – job description of the Maltster – description of how the ale was brewed – the malting process – conditions in the brewery – Malthouse was the toughest part – after the War business picked up – they re-opened the malthouse – it had been closed from 1914-1945 – Beer was rationed during the War also - the brewery had to regulate the amount of beer being brewed – tough work on the floors – working in very high temperatures – worked seven days a week – working hours – everyone in Kilkenny drank Smithwicks – they made ale and minerals – lemonade, orange crush, lemon crush.</p>
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	<p>44:40 Workers had an interest in hurling – factory league started in the 1970s or 1980s and Brewery had their own hurling team.</p> <p>45:31 Hurling during the War – club matches continued – talking about matches for weeks afterwards – few motor cars on the road – most people cycled.</p> <p>46:18 Cycled to Birr for a match – set out on a Saturday – spend the night in Borris-in-Ossory – went to Birr the following morning – Kilkenny v Galway – cycled the whole way home afterwards.</p> <p>47:22 Never fond of dances – went a couple of times to dances – couldn't dance – most people were good dancers – more interested in hurling, greyhounds and coursing.</p> <p>48:30 Kilkenny's fortunes in the 1950s – he supported James Stephens – a good club – Amby Murphy, Jimmy Morrissey played with them – Murphy's son is the secretary of Cork Co Board.</p> <p>49:41 Changes in the way hurling is played – faster game now – the ball is faster and lighter – different shaped hurl today – difficult to control the ball now – was a rougher game then.</p> <p>50:32 Changes in the GAA as an organisation – administration was always good – Liam Mullvahill was a great man in Croke Park – changes in Croke Park – remembers there just being grass banks – then the Cusack stand came – no tickets at that time – people queueing to go in – men selling ballad sheets 'The Bog Road', 'The Rose of Mooncoin' – atmosphere arriving in Dublin – hats flying into the air when there was a score – great characters</p> <p>50:47 Bobby Mahony was a great character in Kilkenny – saw him in Croke Park one day on the sideline – he walked out onto the pitch to shake hands with the referee before the match – Also a man called Rock who would also shake hands with the referee – bands marching around the field.</p> <p>53:55 Band would lead the team when there was a homecoming too.</p> <p>54:04 Other sports in Kilkenny – 'The Garda Sports' at James Park – championship sports – a great day – athletics, weight-throwing, cycling races on a cinder track – watching Bertie Donnelly from Dublin – a great cyclist at the time – great runners there too – Dan O'Mahony and Ned Tobin threw weights there – high jumping as well – big crowds of people –</p>
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	<p>people from different counties – the GAA would have been involved. Boxing clubs in Kilkenny – great boxing tournaments in the Military Barracks – men than won European championships boxed there – Paddy Dowdall and Charlie Aventun – his father would take him to boxing matches.</p> <p>57:51 Doesn't remember cricket being played in Kilkenny.</p> <p>58:08 Connection between the GAA and politics – elections used to be a big night in the town – a platform would be set up outside the Bank of Ireland – De Valera coming into town electioneering – he would be marched into town with a band – a torch light procession one night – heard Seán Lemass there too and Tom Derek, Frank Aiken and Seán McEntee – used to be a big night. Memories of De Valera – remembers him talking about growing wheat – development of lime quarries.</p> <p>1:00:45 Support for De Valera in Kilkenny – can't remember any heckles from the crowd at him,</p> <p>1:01:18 Connection between following the GAA and being Irish - it's the backbone of our county and our culture – what would little communities do without it –great to keep families together – great to see little villages following their team.</p> <p>1:02:45 Changes in way people support their teams – listening to Micheál Ó hÉithir – remembers listening to the broadcast from New York – sub on the Cavan team – John Joe Cassidy played that day was married to his aunt.</p> <p>1:03:57 Hurling as a game today – very fast and skillful - will continue to be popular – seeing Kilkenny's four in a row victory – went to the match.</p> <p>1:05:45 Best team he has seen – teams winning great matches – outstanding players – Paddy Phelan, Donny Maher, Jim Hurley, Eudie Coughlin, Fox Collins etc. – Johnny Dunne a great hurler from Bennettsbridge - was in America and came across to play for America for the Tailteann Games and stayed – the Cleeres were great hurlers.</p> <p>1:09:05 The GAA – a great interest to follow – great excitements – could forget your problems for an hours – tied in with anything Gaelic – can't remember many Irish speakers around it in Kilkenny.</p> <p>1:09:20 Opening of Croke Park – big challenges that the GAA face – how will immigration change the population.</p> <p>1:10:35 An exciting league match against Tipperary – Charlie</p>
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	<p>Carter was captain – great finished – goals scored form both sides – sitting beside Tipperary men who thought they had it run – scores in injury time – Shefflin kicked the ball over the bar to win the game.</p> <p>1:12:15 Current Kilkenny team – very dedicated and determined – Brian Cody – trying for the five in a row – all good teams now – counties out to beat Kilkenny.</p> <p>1:14:04 Reefing his jaw and leg when he fell from a cherry tree during his summer holidays from school – being taken in to the Doctors in Kilkenny on a horse and cart – spent six weeks of his school holidays in hospital – hurling in the Christian Brother School – they trained in James Park – it was too far away from where he lived to train.</p> <p>1:16:53 Re-start recording – story about going to the cinema in Kilkenny – watching Johnny Weismuller in Tarzan – going to a show in the Savoy – Jack Doyle and Movita – two film stars – played in Kilkenny for the week – following them up the street to the Clubhouse Hotel – setting up of the Savoy Cinema – Stellars on Patrick’s Street was the cinema before that – Jimmy O’Dea and Maureen Potty played there; Arty Potter also played there and Jack Doyle sang there.</p> <p>1:20:00 Playing handball at Talbots Inch – playing with John Joe Gilmartin – played top players from Dublin and all over – got injured on the building of the Savoy- a great ball players and Jasper Dunne – Handball Alley at the Ring as well, down from the Watergate Theatre – was a Racket Court first and then a handball alley – Brewery club across from there. Danny Brennan was a great player – Handball a popular game – down in Irishtown – Paddy Dalton, Mick Dalton’s son was a great ball-player as well the Delaneys – Joe and Christy Delaney. Boxing popular in Kilkenny too – best boxer in Kilkenny was Jim ? on the number two Irish team – controversy when he didn’t win a championship one year.</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 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>

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Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)	N/A
Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 1:18:20
Language	English

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: 25th November 2009