

GAA Oral History Project

**Interview Report Form**

<b>Name of Interviewer</b>	Arlene Crampsie
<b>Date of Interview</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2011
<b>Location</b>	Peter's home, Navan, Co. Meath
<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Peter McDermott
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1918 <b>Home County:</b> Cork
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> Cushenstown NS
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 1 brother & 1 sister <b>Current Family if Different:</b> Married 2 sons and 1 daughter
<b>Club(s)</b>	Rathfeigh; Donaghmore; Young Irelands; Navan O'Mahonys
<b>Occupation</b>	Egg Merchant
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Dairy Delivery, Hayman [Father]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	N/A
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

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<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael O'Brien
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Gender</b>	Male
<b>Born</b>	<b>Year Born:</b> 1942 <b>Home County:</b> Meath
<b>Education</b>	<b>Primary:</b> De La Salle, Navan and Johnstown NS, Co. Meath <b>Secondary:</b> St. Finian's, Mullingar, Co. Meath <b>Third Level:</b> St. Pat's, Drumcondra, Dublin
<b>Family</b>	<b>Siblings:</b> 6 brothers & 2 sisters
<b>Club(s)</b>	Walterstown GFC
<b>Occupation</b>	Teacher
<b>Parents' Occupation</b>	Farm Labourer [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
<b>Religion</b>	Roman Catholic
<b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>	Labour
<b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>	N/A

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<b>Date of Report</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> August 2012
<b>Period Covered</b>	1911 – 2011
<b>Counties/Countries Covered</b>	Cork, Meath, Louth, Dublin, Americas, USA, Australasia, Australia, Down
<b>Key Themes Covered</b>	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Refereeing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Material Culture, Education, Religion, Media, Involvement in GAA Abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, GAA Abroad, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Challenges, Sacrifices, Alcohol, Violence, Politics, Northern Ireland, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy / Economics
<b>Interview Summary</b>	<p>Peter and Mick recall their GAA experiences in Meath and beyond over the years. A Johnstown native, Mick played with the Walterstown club and also with the De La Salle team in Navan and St Finian's in Mullingar. He regularly contested finals with those teams and shares his experiences on what things were like in his time. He also went on to coach teams at his local club, and in 2011 was still involved in management. Peter was originally from Cork but moved to Meath, where he became involved with the Ardcath team. He frequently attended games at Croke Park as a spectator and later represented his county at different levels. Eventually he made the Meath senior team and was involved in the side that won their first All-Ireland title and contested other finals in the early 1950s. That success allowed Peter and his teammates to travel to places like New York and later Australia as the modern-day International Rules came into existence. Both Mick and Peter lived through harsh economic times associated with the impact of World War II, but the GAA was a constant in their lives which brought them many happy memories that they continue to hold dear in 2011.</p> <p>00:00 Introduction</p> <p>00:50 (Peter) Interest in football. What he used to play with. Serving mass in Curragha. Duleek the local parish. Playing against Ashbourne often. Condons and McDermotts local families who were involved. Physical nature of games.</p> <p>03:15 (Peter) Playing with Ardcath. Mick Donegan's father a local teacher. Donegan later a Meath footballer. Dunboyne a</p>

	<p>talented team. Tommy Hand, Cha and Christo Hand good players. Asking to be put on the team.</p> <p>05:05 (Peter) Garretstown involved in North Dublin league.</p> <p>06:05 (Peter) Originally from Belgooly, Cork. Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern's family originally from there.</p> <p>06:45 (Peter) Being put on the roll in Ardcath. Playing handball. Going to national school in Cushinstown. Family poor when he was growing up. Moving to Mulhuddart and then Cushinstown. Going to school with former Taoiseach Charlie Haughey's family. Lack of GAA activity at school. Reason for that. Playing cricket.</p> <p>09:20 (Mick) Earliest memory. Going to All-Ireland junior final in Navan in 1948 between Meath and Navan with his uncle. Reason his father could not attend.</p> <p>09:55 (Mick) His local club Walterstown playing Navan O'Mahonys in 1949 in a junior football game in Páirc Tailteann with his uncle Don, whose son Brendan was playing. Argument on the pitch. Don disappearing.</p> <p>10:30 (Mick) Originally from Johnstown. No underage football in the area. Attending De La Salle Brothers school in Navan. GAA activity there. School leagues. Playing with De La Salle club. Winning a medal in 1955.</p> <p>11:45 (Mick) Feeling disappointed that Johnstown had no organised football. Under-16 team starting in 1955. Why that went wrong.</p> <p>12:30 (Mick) Going to school at St Finian's in Mullingar and St Patrick's in Drumcondra. Qualifying as a teacher in 1963. Organising a Walterstown juvenile team.</p> <p>12:50 (Mick) Winning titles with St Finian's. Losing an All-Ireland final to St Jarlath's of Tuam. John Morley, Johnnie Geraghty, Eddie Geraghty, Seamus Leyden, Pat Donnellan, Patsy Sheridan - father of Mayo player Seamus Sheridan - all on St. Jarlath's team. Jim Farrelly missing from Finian's team that day.</p> <p>13:55 (Mick) Role of GAA at St Finian's. Tough nature of life at the school. Fr Jim Deignan coaching them. Deignan a player on the Cavan squad that won the 1947 All-Ireland final in New York. Deignan unable to make the trip to New York. Reason for that.</p> <p>15:10 (Peter) Delivering milk in Dublin during the summer.</p>
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	<p>Attending Croke Park often. Caffreys neighbours of his who he met on Hill 16 one day. Bringing a ball to Croke Park. Watching the Dublin Metropolitan Police play the Army Metro team. St Joseph's team putting it up to police team.</p> <p>18:00 (Peter) Going to Croke Park with his father. Hawkers and what they sold. Issue with one of the hawkers who would not give him change. How the issue was resolved.</p> <p>19:40 (Peter) Meath winning a junior hurling All-Ireland in 1927. His father attending. Father a hurler with Dunshaughlin. Mother's opinion of the GAA. Dunshaughlin winning a Meath title in 1911. Father on the team. Micheál O'Brien's grandparents playing.</p> <p>21:00 (Peter) Kerry people at Croke Park. Dressing-rooms at Croke Park. Kerryman arriving with an umbrella.</p> <p>22:55 (Peter) Stories his father told him about the GAA. Hurleys his father's generation used to use and what they were like.</p> <p>24:25 (Mick) Family's GAA involvement. Mother from Ferns in Wexford. Mother's enthusiasm for GAA. Captain Till a local landlord. Alastair, his son, giving him and his brother football boots. What the boots were like. Playing with his brothers. Father working for a farmer named Ted Oakes, who was a big GAA fan. Ted interested to hear about Seán McDermotts team in Dublin. Reason for that. Ted going to Meath games in 1949. Father accompanying him. Waiting for his father to return to hear results of games. Meath playing three games against Louth in 1949. Meath winning the Leinster title that year and playing Mayo in an All-Ireland semi-final. Listening to the game in his grandmother's house. Grandmother praying for Meath. 1949 team very talented. What their success meant to him. Seven of the team still alive in 2011.</p> <p>28:30 (Peter) Playing with Meath minors in 1937 - team referred to as 'the hairy minors'. Reason for that.</p> <p>30:35 (Mick) Meath reaching a 1929 minor hurling final against Waterford after beating Kilkenny in a high-scoring Leinster final. Names in local paper in Irish. Vinny Griffin of Rathmolyon losing an eye in the final. Reason Vinny had not been named as a member of the team in the newspaper. Collections to help with Vinny's medical bills after injury. His brother Jimmy on 1927 Meath junior team that won the All-Ireland and later a Fianna Fáil TD. Noel Dempsey inheriting his seat.</p>
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	<p>32:55 (Peter) Scoring a goal with his first kick for the minors. Weeshie Lynn of Monaghan in goals. Peter Corr - who later played soccer for Everton - on the Louth team they were playing. McEntees, Kevin Devin playing.</p> <p>33:50 (Mick) Kevin Brady winning medals with two different county teams. He attended the Marist College in Dundalk. Playing with Louth and Cavan. His daughter married to journalist Paul McCabe.</p> <p>34:40 (Peter) Club pitches in Meath and what they were like. Cow dung on the fields. Removing that. What they did for goalposts. Farmers facilitating clubs. Hill in Ardcath making it difficult to play football. Playing Donaghmore in finals. Argument during the game.</p> <p>37:55 (Peter) Shed McGrath spying on Oldcastle players.</p> <p>38:20 (Mick) Walterstown playing Oldcastle in 1944 in a junior final. A Brown man from Seán McDermotts in Dublin involved. Kevin Devin a former Oldcastle player who joined Seán McDermotts. Shed McGrath suspended.</p> <p>39:20 (Peter) The Ra Doyle importing players from Dublin. Dublin players asking a question when they arrived.</p> <p>40:00 (Mick) Shed bringing imported payers to Mrs Lanney. What he used to say to her.</p> <p>40:25 (Peter) Not possible to use illegal players so often in modern-day GAA.</p> <p>40:45 (Mick) Facilities when he was playing with Walterstown. Using grounds of farmer Con O'Sullivan. What the pitch was like. Utilising nearby river. Where they togged out. Cattle grazing in field. Walterstown winning senior titles in that field.</p> <p>42:00 (Peter) John Newman a chairman for many years. Fr McManus arriving and implementing changes. Clergy heavily involved in GAA. Priest in Ardcath, Fr Gilmartin. Joe Moss injuring the priest during a game. Consequences of that. Fr McManus a talented player. Originally from Westmeath. Meath appealing to Bishop Mulvany over Fr McManus' availability.</p> <p>45:00 (Mick) Priests playing under assumed names. Hurling team in Johnstown featuring Fr Tom Finn.</p> <p>47:05 (Peter) Joining Meath minors in 1937. Playing for Donaghmore and Meath juniors in 1938. John Finlay making an error during extra time in a game. Consequences of that.</p>
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	<p>Donaghmore winning the intermediate championship in 1938 after beating Oldcastle in the final. Jackie May a talented player at the time who was unable to play.</p> <p>49:05 (Peter) First game for Meath against Wexford in Páirc Tailteann in 1940. How he fared. Management favouring certain players. Frank Nulty a well-connected player. What they did in training. Training camp in Slane. How that went. Training in Randalstown.</p> <p>52:15 (Peter) Three-county league in Leinster during World War Two. Dublin and Louth also involved. Fr McManus' belief in his abilities. Playing in Páirc Tailteann and Fr McManus telling them to kick the ball with their left foot. Not hearing that instruction. Reason for that. Fr McManus criticising him.</p> <p>55:45 (Peter) Fr McManus' car during World War Two. Petrol coupons. Buying petrol cans. Fr McManus weighing the car down with his weight. Walking Fr McManus' greyhound. Dog racing in Mcalinden Cup at Shelbourne Park. Fr Tully's greyhound.</p> <p>58:30 (Peter) Going to collective training in Gibbstown after World War Two had ended. What he thought of it. Mike Nolan a comedian he was friendly with. Shane Redmond.</p> <p>01:00:00 (Peter) Playing a hurling game in Ratoath. Hurling team in Drogheda at the time who took part in Meath junior championship. Playing against them and then driving to Dublin to play against Louth. Marking Jack Bell in that game. Playing with an injured ankle. Playing against a team from Finglas in Cushinstown. Aggravating his injury.</p> <p>01:03:30 (Peter) Meath losing an All-Ireland final in 1939. Lull during World War Two. 1949 All-Ireland final. Training in Gibbstown. Gaelic League hostel. Fr Tully's jumper. Des Taaffe going around with a golf club. Damage he did with that. Women visiting.</p> <p>01:07:00 (Peter) Travelling to the final in 1949. Visiting Austin Murray in Balrath for tea on the way to Dublin. Stray dog. Walking in bog of Curragha. Going to Barry's Hotel in Dublin. Man named Fred there. How he fared in the final. Halpenny scoring a winning goal. Celebrations. Young Irelands making a presentation to him. Going to Rome on a pilgrimage with money he received. Seamus Heery getting a bicycle. Going on a plane ride. Dargan man head of Aer Lingus at the time. How the plane ride came about. Some reluctant to get on the plane.</p>
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	<p>01:12:55 (Peter) Being captain on 1954 team. Acrimony.</p> <p>01:14:15 (Peter) Trip to New York in 1951. Playing Mayo in the home final. How he played. Involved in crucial move. Pressure. How they travelled to New York. Cavan team having to take a detour en route to 1947 final. How long their flight took. Tony Tighe late for a flight. Announcement made. What the game in New York was like. Playing poorly. Paddy Meegan playing. Polo Grounds in New York. Frankie Byrne. Mike Andrew a tall Mayo man who was targeting Byrne. How that worked out. Mattie McDonnell scoring a goal.</p> <p>01:21:00 (Peter) Involvement as a referee. Refereeing a game between Screen and North Meath. Big crowd in attendance. Appointed to referee an All-Ireland final between Kerry and Armagh in 1953. Disputed goal and his thoughts on that. O'Mahony man in goals for Kerry. Bill McCurry kicking a ball wide. Peter O'Reilly of Dublin and Bill Delaney umpires. Communicating with them. Inter-county refereeing he had done before that day. Sending two players off during his first game in Ashbourne. County board chairman's reaction to that. How he liked to referee a game. Level of training he got.</p> <p>01:27:00 (Peter) Team coming from Australia to play. Being asked to compete at Croke Park. His reaction. O'Mahonys due to play Kilbride in Dunshaughlin at the same time. Helicopter solution. Seeing the Australians play at the Phoenix Park and what he thought of them. Galway invited to play them. Their response. Johnny Mulvey and Fr Morahan playing. Hasselman a star player who was injured.</p> <p>01:32:30 (Mick) Joe Lennon refereeing the game at the Phoenix Park. Australians playing Meath at Croke Park. Peter talking to the players. Playing in that game. Tony Brennan and Terry Kearns also playing. Trailing at half-time. Outcome of game. Dinner held for both teams. Invitation to play in New York the following year. Trip to Australia. Fundraising. Hasselman of Melbourne injured. Top clubs withdrawing players. How Meath fared in Australia. His opinion of International Rules.</p> <p>01:35:45 (Peter) Matt Gilsenan. Playing Wexford in Páirc Tailteann in his first game. Matt praising his performance. What that meant to him. Friendship with Matt and his wife Eileen.</p> <p>01:37:10 (Peter) Best GAA memory. Other highlights.</p> <p>01:37:45 (Mick) Best GAA memory. Winning Meath Under-14 championship. Walterstown winning the senior championship</p>
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	<p>in 1978. Enjoying coaching. Training Walterstown juniors in 1961. Managing in 2011.</p> <p>01:39:50 (Peter) GAA heroes – Jack Bell. Talented players throughout Meath and Fr Morahan.</p> <p>01:41:15 (Mick) Paddy O’Brien a hero of his. His life story appearing in the Irish Press. Dublin’s Kevin Heffernan giving O’Brien a hard time during games. O’Brien on 1984 Team of the Century.</p> <p>01:42:45 (Peter) Disappointments.</p> <p>01:43:15 (Peter) Frankie Byrne writing down occupations of players for newspapers ahead of an All-Ireland final. What Byrne put down for his occupation.</p> <p>01:44:45 (Peter) Friendship with Jack Bell.</p> <p>01:45:10 (Mick) Biggest disappointment. Need for more focus on clubs’ needs. ‘A’ league system in Meath.</p> <p>01:46:45 (Peter) Enjoying games against Down. Mentions George Tinnelly, former GAA President Pádraig McNamee from Belfast, Maurice Hayes, Fr Esler, Alfie Matthews.</p>
<p><b>Involvement in GAA</b></p>	<p><b>Peter:</b></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> <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><b>Michael:</b></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> <p><input checked="" 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><b>Record as a Player</b> (Titles won; Length of time played)</p>	<p><b>Peter:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Michael:</b> Played from 1962 – 1968. Won 2 club junior championships, 1961 and 1978. At county level won 2 Leinster juniors and</p>

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	seniors and an All-Ireland medal in 1967.
<b>Record as an Administrator</b> (Positions held; how long for)	<b>Peter:</b> N/A  <b>Michael:</b> Was involved in administration from 1963 - 2001. Club: Juvenile Founder, Secretary, Delegate to County Board County: Secretary of Meath Juvenile Board, Leinster Council Delegate
<b>Format</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
<b>Duration</b>	Length of Interview: 01:47:49
<b>Language</b>	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: \_\_\_\_\_Arlene Crampsie\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_06/08/12\_\_\_\_\_