

GAA Oral History Project
Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Brian Becker
Date of Interview	12 th Oct 2010
Location	Gonzaga College High School, Washington DC, USA
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Mary Beth Ginder
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Female
Born	Year Born: 1984 Home County: Americas
Education	Primary: St Pius X, Reynoldsburg, OH, USA Secondary: Reynoldsburg High School, OH, USA Third Level: Ohio University, Athens, OH, USA
Family	Siblings: 1 sister
Club(s)	Washington DC Gaels [Americas]
Occupation	Research Assistant Arena Inc
Parents' Occupation	Consultant [Father]; Counsellor [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Democrat
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

Date of Report	16 th July 2012
Period Covered	1980s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	USA, Americas, Great Britain
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Coaching, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Women, GAA Abroad, Identity, Culture, Challenges, Food and Drink, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds
Interview Summary	<p>Mary Beth Ginder discusses her introduction to Gaelic football while living in London and her re-engagement with the game on her return to America. She refers to her initiation into the Washington DC Gaels and learning the skills of Gaelic football. Ginder contrasts the game in America with that in Ireland, where she spent four months playing for the Dungiven club in Derry. She also offers insights into the practical difficulties faced by the GAA in Washington and efforts her club makes to raise finance and recruit players. In addition, she sets out the links she has made with the Irish community, to the GAA's 'identity crisis' in America and to her hopes for the future of the D.C. Gaels club.</p> <p>00:00:23 Beginning of involvement in Gaelic sport – attending university in London and going to watch a game played by Irish friends. 'Fell in love with sport'.</p> <p>00:01:10 Mentions attending several games of the Harlesdon Harps, who won the All-London and All-England championships, held in Manchester. Mentions travelling on bus singing songs and later travelling to Monaghan to follow team play a game against Monaghan Harps.</p> <p>00:01:50 Beginning of playing career. Moving to Washington DC and learning about a local Gaelic football team. Attending an open field day.</p> <p>00:02:40 Background in American sports – softball and volleyball – and value to Gaelic sports.</p> <p>00:03:00 Initial efforts to play Gaelic sports. Refers to difficulty of solo-run and the encouragement received. Enjoyment of game and people.</p> <p>00:04:12 Mentions that she has been playing for four years – refers to playing for four months (on a sports-persons visa) in Dungiven, Co. Derry and the rest of the time in Washington</p>

	<p>with the D.C Gaels.</p> <p>00:04:58 Contrasts playing the game in Ireland and in America – describes the problems with the poor weather in Derry and the heat in Washington. Mentions that skills are less developed in the United States and are therefore more ‘aggressive’.</p> <p>00:06:27 Refers to playing in Derry in 2008 and the improvement it brought to her game. Watching and learning skills and movements. Mentions that the majority of DC Gaels team is American born.</p> <p>00:07:36 Discusses the American attitude to sport and the impact this has on the American-dominated DC Gaels. Recalls winning Junior A Championship in 2008 without any Irish girls.</p> <p>00:09:05 Discusses the atmosphere at North American finals, the competition, the friendships and the social life.</p> <p>00:10:25 Discusses the dispersed nature of the Irish community in DC, the absence of a Gaelic field or cultural centre. Mentions the practical difficulties in organising games – renting fields, permits, goalposts.</p> <p>00:12:17 Speculates on the level of support, financial and coaching, from the GAA authorities in America and Ireland. Efforts of D.C. Gaels to make themselves more financially independent.</p> <p>00:13:55 Mentions the fundraising of other GAA clubs in America and what they spend their money – including the importation of Irish players.</p> <p>00:14:27 Recruitment initiatives of DC Gaels – refers to social sports nights, to participation in a health and fitness expo, participation in parades, festivals, involvement with other Irish groups, including the Irish embassy etc.</p> <p>00:16:25 Discussion of recruitment of Irish and non-Irish players.</p> <p>00:17:10 Mentions absence of Irish heritage or contact with Irish culture when growing up in Ohio. Exposure to Ireland through travel and perception of her Irishness through involvement in GAA. Connectedness to Ireland through the GAA.</p> <p>00:18:24 Discusses other sporting involvement – softball and soccer – and compares these games with Gaelic football.</p>
--	--

	<p>Refers to the level of commitment involved, the seriousness of the competition, to the training etc. Mentions also the health and social benefits that accrue.</p> <p>00:19:55 Discusses hopes for the future of D.C. Gaels – mentions that club is the only in North America that caters for four sports (camogie, women’s football, men’s football and hurling) and refers to the need to cater for more grades. Discusses also the importance of acquiring permanent fields and a centre.</p> <p>00:22:15 Proudest moment in GAA – winning 2008 North American championship without any Irish player.</p> <p>00:23:00 Discusses the ‘identity crisis’ with the GAA in America - the debate around the growing the game with Americans and bringing players over from Ireland and how this might be resolved.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input 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>NACB Junior A Championship football, 2008; NACB Junior Camogie, 2009 and 2010</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Development Officer [2 years]</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 00:24:33</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

REFERENCE NO. AM/1/12

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: Brian Becker

Date: 12th Oct 2010