

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Tommy McCann
Date of Interview	4 th Nov 2011
Location	N/A
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Bernard Culligan
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1951 Home County: Louth
Education	Primary: Kilsaran National School, Co. Louth Secondary: St Mary's, Dundalk, Co. Louth
Family	Siblings: 1 brother; 1 sister
Club(s)	O'Connell's GFC [Louth]
Occupation	Unemployed
Parents' Occupation	Factory worker [Father]; Housewife [Mother]
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Parish Charity

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Date of Report	13 th July 2012
Period Covered	1930s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Louth, Kerry, Dublin
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Emigration, Media, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Rivalries, Irish Language, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Challenges, Outsider's Perspectives, Relationship with the Association, Socialising, Purchase of Grounds, Relationships, Economy/ Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Bernard Culligan describes his introduction to Gaelic football as a child at school and the deep history of his family's involvement with the O'Connell's club. He discusses changes in the game, the highlights of his own playing career and the players he has admired most over the years. He discusses, too, the changes that have taken place within the club and local area, most notably the influx of population during the 'Celtic Tiger' economic boom and difficulty in linking these new inhabitants to the club. Fears about impact of the post-boom recession on emigration are articulated and there are observations on the place of women within the life of the club.</p> <p>00:00:05 Interviewee introduces himself as a member of O'Connell's GFC. Also known by the nickname 'Cull'.</p> <p>00:00:25 Earliest memories attending club and county matches as a 9-10 year old with his father. Would receive money from Jim Murtagh ('half a crown') to retrieve the ball when it was kicked behind the 'river goal'.</p> <p>00:01:35 Discusses family involvement in the GAA. Uncle Jim played for Louth in the 1930s and his uncle played club football. His father played with O'Connell's as did his Uncle Danny - a member of the club's first championship winning team in 1949. Says the Culligans were involved in all club championship winning teams.</p> <p>00:02:27 Football as a topic of household conversation.</p> <p>00:02:43 Beginnings of playing career with the club at 12 years of age in 1964. The youngest team available was the Under 14.</p> <p>00:03:10 Recalls family circumstances and the purchase of</p>

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	<p>his first pair of football boots – a cheap pair made from plastic.</p> <p>00:03:27 Mentions that football was only played in the yard at school, but many of his school friends played with club.</p> <p>00:03:50 Refers to ongoing family involvement in the GAA – involvement of son with Calgary Chieftans in Canada who had been forced to emigrate the year before.</p> <p>00:04:20 Discusses emigration and the role of the GAA overseas. Talks about the more exposure the GAA receives through its overseas networks and modern communications.</p> <p>00:05:25 Recalls attending county games to support Louth with his father and mentions some of the leading lights of the county team towards the late 1960s and early 1970s.</p> <p>00:06:10 Contrasts the players of the past and present and remarks upon the changing style of football, most notably the move away from ‘man to man’. Comments on the overuse of the handpass in the modern game.</p> <p>00:07:30 Discusses his involvement with the club as a player, manager and administrator. Served as player/manager throughout the 1980s. Entered management when playing career ended and served also as youth officer.</p> <p>00:08:20 Discusses issues of continuity and change around the club. Refers to the ongoing dedication of people in the area to the club and the improvements in facilities that have taken place since the 1960s.</p> <p>00:09:30 Influx of population to the area as a result of ‘Celtic Tiger’ economy. Comments on the family and working circumstances of these new inhabitants and their lack of involvement with club. Membership linked to traditional families.</p> <p>00:10:20 Refers to efforts to get new children involved and to the general lack of GAA allegiance or background among those who have moved into the area.</p> <p>00:10:45 Remarks on the importance of the club attracting new blood and the contribution new community centre might make to this.</p> <p>00:11:06 Discusses the role of women in the club – as supporters, in fundraising, as caterers. Says they are ‘there in the background’.</p> <p>00:11:44 Comments on club fundraising initiatives, lotteries</p>
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	<p>and draws etc. Mentions the need to find novel ways of raising funds including plaques commemorating contribution of former members, players, mentors etc.</p> <p>00:13:12 Refers to local sponsors of the club.</p> <p>00:13:36 Voices concern about the potential increase in emigration among younger players, many with third level qualifications. Comments on the absence of work opportunities locally.</p> <p>00:14:22 Reflects on the role of the Irish language and the GAA contribution to its development and use.</p> <p>00:15:00 Comments on his admiration of Kerry football, in particular the 4 in a row team of the late 1970s, early 1980s. Mentions some of the great players who played for Kerry – from Mick O’Connell to Jack O’Shea to Colm Cooper.</p> <p>00:16:40 Opines on what is required of Louth to improve standards of football, with a stress on the importance of coaching at club level.</p> <p>00:17:25 Reflects on the highlight of his GAA involvement – he was player/manager when club county championship in 1983 and he sets the context for that victory.</p> <p>00:18:30 Expresses a disappointment at never playing in Croke Park – mentions missing out when playing inter-firms for Carroll’s.</p> <p>00:19:18 Discusses club disappointments – losing Intermediate final in 2006 and two semi-finals subsequently.</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" 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>Played for 25 years</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Manager for 10 years</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 00:20:00
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Tommy McCann

Date: 4th Nov 2010