

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Regina Fitzpatrick
Date of Interview	23 rd Mar 2010
Location	Mulligan's Pub, Poolbeg St, Dublin
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Michael Cronin
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1939 Home County: Waterford
Education	Primary: Modeligo NS, Co. Waterford Secondary: Mount Mellery Seminary; Dungarvan CBS, Co. Waterford
Family	Siblings: 1 brother Current Family if Different: 1 daughter & 2 sons
Club(s)	Raheny GAA [Dublin]
Occupation	Retired Journalist
Parents' Occupation	Lorry Driver and Mechanic [Father]; Priest's Housekeeper [Mother]
Religion	Roman Catholic
Political Affiliation / Membership	Fianna Fáil
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	Macra na Tuaithe; Macra na Feirme; FCA; Conradh na Gaeilge; various trade unions.

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Date of Report	20 th June 2012
Period Covered	1939 - 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Waterford, Dublin, England, Great Britain
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Celebrations, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Teachers, GAA Abroad, Rivalries, All-Ireland, Earliest Memories, Childhood, Career, Alcohol, Ban on Foreign Games and Dances, Socialising, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Michael recalls his GAA experiences as a boy in Waterford, where he grew up during World War II. Resources were scarce but hurling was popular and Michael and his friends liked to play. When he was older he went to a Christian Brothers school in Dungarvan and played hurling there. He played on a Harty Cup team and recalls some of the games they played, as well as some memorable Waterford games and GAA figure. He later emigrated to London and whilst there saw Kilkenny play at Wembley Stadium. After a few years he moved to Dublin, becoming involved with the Raheny club and other organisations.</p> <p>00:25 Born in Waterford in 1939. Childhood memories. Living in the shadow of World War II.</p> <p>01:55 Playing Gaelic games in the summer. People wearing wellingtons as they played. Days when it was acceptable to be seen playing.</p> <p>04:15 Time it took to get to school. What they did on the way back from school. Going to town with his parents.</p> <p>07:00 Prominence of GAA at school in Modeligo in Waterford. Absence of GAA clubs in surrounding parishes. Principals organising competitions. Work to be done outside of school.</p> <p>09:35 Being expelled from Mount Melleray Seminary. Going to Dungarvan Christian Brothers. Hurling involvement there. How he found life at the school. Benefits of being good at hurling. Playing Harty Cup games. Usefulness of being an Irish speaker.</p> <p>12:35 Beating Mount Sion of Waterford in the Harty Cup in</p>

	<p>1957. Dungarvan's Brother Tommy Keane a former Mount Sion man. Playing Ennis CBS in Thurles and what happened that day. Mick Mackey and Christy Ring having played there. Drinking after the game. Needing to go to the bathroom whilst on bus.</p> <p>19:50 Fraher field in Dungarvan and his awareness of it. All-Ireland finals played there, including Cork against Kilkenny. Tooreen team challenging Mount Sion. Member of the Fives and McGrath families playing for that team. Their approach to the game. Match being abandoned. Five of the Fives family on Waterford National League team of 1951/1952. Compares Fives family to Rackard family in Wexford. Jim Fives and what he did. Mossy Fives playing with Kilmacud Crokes in Dublin. Jack Fives and Paddy Fives.</p> <p>25:20 Discussing All-Ireland draw at the crossroads and expecting to lose at the first round stage. John Keane on the 1958 All-Ireland winning Waterford team that beat Dublin. Christy Moylan.</p> <p>27:50 Doing his Leaving Certificate in 1957. Employment prospects at the time. Going to the 1957 Waterford-Kilkenny hurling final in Dublin and meeting his brother in Lythes of North Earl Street. Planning to go to England. Feelings on All-Ireland final that day.</p> <p>31:00 Going to London. Not being allowed to play hurling in James' Park or Hyde Park. Going to Wormwood Scrubs to play. The GAA renting Wembley Stadium in June 1958. Kilkenny playing there. Unemployment problems in Ireland leading to emigration. Booring the police at Wembley.</p> <p>35:20 Irish people in London socialising together. Opportunities to play GAA there. Sights he saw in London. Loneliness.</p> <p>38:10 Returning to Ireland in 1959 to work for the Irish Press. Weather that summer. Guinness celebrating their 200th anniversary. Waterford beating Kilkenny that year and the teams meeting again in 1963. 7-a-side factory leagues and the Irish Press winning the 1963 league. Golfing societies and his opinion of that.</p> <p>42:20 Ban on foreign games. Implementation in Waterford. Vincent O'Donoghue, a teacher at CBS Lismore, a big supporter of the Ban. Waterford winning the National League in 1963 and Tom Cheasty of Ballydurran caught at a foreign</p>
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	<p>dance by the vigilance committee. Consequences of that. Admiration for Paddy Fanning, chairman of Mount Sion club and later GAA President, who supported the Ban. Eventual removal of Ban.</p> <p>46:30 Getting into the press box at games. Pádraig Ó Cuiv seeking coverage in Dublin newspapers before the Irish Press started in 1932. GAA coverage in the Irish Press.</p> <p>47:50 Involvement in Raheny GAA club, Scoil Neasán and the National Union of Journalists. Dublin winning the All-Ireland football final in 1983. Relationship between Dublin and Cork footballers. Dublin supporters going to Cork for a game and staying in a pub owned by Larry Tompkins on the Glanmire Road. Gardaí raiding the pub.</p> <p>52:20 Experiences of travelling to different venues for games when drink-driving laws were not strict. Leaving Limerick after a game and drinking in pubs. Dinny Burke driving. Hitting a sheep whilst on the road driving. Meeting in Lythes of North Earl St, Dublin the next morning. Selling the sheep.</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>Played Harty Clup hurling in Mount Mellery Secondary School</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Format</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Length of Interview: 56:55</p>
<p>Language</p>	<p>English</p>

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: 20th June 2012

23/3/2010

1 CRONIN (1)

Regina Fitzpatrick,
GAA Oral History Project,
Boston College

Regina, a ghrá,

Further to our pleasant taping session in Mulligans this morning many things I should have mentioned occurred to me subsequently...!

I'll confine myself here to two matters that you might wish to ^{add to} Section 22 of the Questionnaire relating to my time in London 1957-59:

The football (British soccer) pools were an addiction in the UK - and in Ireland albeit illegal in the Republic in these years and for decades later until the launching of the national lotteries.

Not to be outdone Gael-Linn, then of Grafton St., ran a similar gamble - but exclusively on Gaelic games. It was well organised in Paddington, Nottingham Gate areas of London when I arrived in 1957 and a full-time agent O'Nualláin recruited me as a volunteer - or son na cúise - sub-agent. I seem to recall the subscription was a shilling a week and the green/blue result sheets arrived somehow each Friday evening. My roommate, a Welsh lad once had a handsome win even though he never saw a Gaelic match and in spite of the fact that his father was a Black-and-Tan in the deadly Cork area in 1920.

More

The second matter involves Whit Monday, latterly called the June Bank Holiday, which for many of us emigrants (54,000 emigrated in 1957, mainly to England) was nearly a second St. Patrick's Day.

The G.A.A. booked the British premier venue, Wembley for a replay of the National Hurling League Final and the year I attended, 1958, some 50,000 came to ^{see} Kilkenny do it again - with Clare, I think.

A big part of our cowardly entertainment on the day was booing the constabulary from the London Metropolitan Police, who patrolled the aisles.

This was our day in our multitudes to get even for the harassment for the rest of the year - there was no love lost between Paddy & Police then.

Don't know when the Wembley fixture was abandoned but, presumably, when emigration was almost reversed in the 1960s, it couldn't be financially justified. For long after there was a shadow of the event played in the obscure Mitcham Stadium.

Beir Bua 7 Beannacht

Michael Cronin