

## GAA Oral History Project

## Interview Report Form

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| <b>Name of Interviewer</b>                          | Joe Jordan  |
| <b>Date of Interview</b>                            | 12 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2011   |
| <b>Location</b>                                     | N/A   |
| <b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname) | Eamon Curry   |
| <b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>   |   |
| <b>Gender</b>                                       | Male  |
| <b>Born</b>   | <b>Year Born:</b> 1943<br><b>Home County:</b> Armagh  |
| <b>Education</b>                                    | <b>Primary:</b> N/A<br><b>Secondary:</b> Yes (But did not get school name)<br><b>Third Level:</b> N/A |
| <b>Family</b>                                       | <b>Siblings:</b> 4<br><b>Current Family if Different:</b> 4 children                                  |
| <b>Club(s)</b>                                      | Middletown  |
| <b>Occupation</b>                                   | Joiner  |
| <b>Parents' Occupation</b>                          | Farming   |
| <b>Religion</b>                                     | Roman Catholic  |
| <b>Political Affiliation / Membership</b>           | None  |
| <b>Other Club/Society Membership(s)</b>             | Local business centre, Voluntary work for church  |

REFERENCE NO. AR/1/56

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| <b>Date of Report</b>             | 24 July 2012   |
| <b>Period Covered</b>             | 1930s - 2011   |
| <b>Counties/Countries Covered</b> | Armagh, Monaghan   |
| <b>Key Themes Covered</b>         | Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Playing, Training, Managing, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Material Culture, Education, Media, Emigration, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, Scór, All-Ireland, Club History, County History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Relationship with the Association, Retirement, Relationships, Economy / Economics  |
| <b>Interview Summary</b>          | <p>Eamon Curry was born in the early 1940s In Middletown, Co. Armagh. His family background was one steeped in Gaelic games. The interview opens with reference to Curry's father playing in the local parish leagues int he 1930s and 40s and to neighbours crowding around the family's radio – the only one of the townland – to listen Michael O'Hehir's big match commentaries. He talks his own introduction to the playing of gaelic games: acquiring his first real football, playing hurling and football in school and using the hurling stick of his teacher, Sean Barrett.</p> <p>Barrett's club career in Armagh straddled two clubs. He began his playing days with Derrynoose, playing his first game in a field normally used to graze cows. He documents his playing record with Derrynoose and in the process sheds light on the nature of training and the impact of emigration. In the mid 1960s, he became involved with Middletown, which was affiliated to the GAA in 1967. He talks about his subsequent involvement in the club as a player, mentor and an administrator and sets out the major achievements along the way. He also mentions being borrowed to play with Clontibret in the Monaghan hurling championship and helping them to win a county title.</p> <p>Towards the end of the interview, Curry reflects on the changes in the GAA experience between the 1950s and 60s and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. He also considers the impact of existing economic difficulties on clubs in Armagh and suggests reasons why it may not be as damaging in terms of emigration as previous recessions in the 1950s, 60s and 80s.</p> <p>00:00:00 Eamon Curry introduces himself. Born in 1943 in the parish of Middletown. Mentions that he was the eldest child.</p> |

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|  | <p>00:00:20 Discusses the schools in parish.</p> <p>00:00:45 First memory of the GAA: Mentions his father owning the only radio in the townland and all the neighbours coming over to listen to Michael O'Hehir's commentary. Tells story of getting the battery recharged in advance of big games.</p> <p>00:01:29 Mentions his father playing in parish league in the 1930s and 40s.</p> <p>00:01:45 Talks about early 1950s and new headmaster arriving on a motorbike to school. Recalls him producing a 'bag of hurling sticks' and playing out the back of the school.</p> <p>00:02:35 Mentions that PJ O'Neill was also promoting hurling so the two schools joined up and formed a team to play in a schools league in Armagh.</p> <p>00:02:54 Mentions first trip to Athletic grounds in Armagh to play a game against the Christian brothers school in Armagh, then the 'home' of hurling in Armagh. Talks about the game and scoring a 70. Remarks about the surprise of the CBS boys at the Middletown performance.</p> <p>00:03:55 Reads a press report of the schools game, with Middletown players, himself included, likened to well-known inter-county stars of the day.</p> <p>00:04:25 Mentions that the new headmaster in the school was Seán Barrett. Recalls the quality of Barrett's hurling stick and his delight in using it in games.</p> <p>00:04:55 Talks about the first football he touched. Mentions it was brought back from Dublin by the Mooney's, a neighbouring family. Refers to playing football informally.</p> <p>00:05:40 Mentions an Uncle involved with football in Derrynoose and being taken to matches there.</p> <p>00:06:00 Recalls being 'thrown on the team', aged 15. Mentions that other players were much older and wore their trousers and working boots on the field.</p> <p>00:06:36 Says the first major game he played was in 1957. Game was played in Kelly's field, used normally for grazing cattle.</p> <p>00:06:55 Talks about the success he enjoyed with Derrynoose in late 1950s and 1960. Recalls snow on pitch during mid-division final against Mullaghbawn in 1960.</p> |
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|  | <p>00:07:45 Reaching county junior championship final in 1963 against Forkhill. Mentions a trainer, Jackie Cauldwell, coming out to train team in the two weeks before final – refers to the training done and says it was ‘new’ to many of the players. Talks also about two players who had emigrated who returned from England for the final, played in Crossmaglen.</p> <p>00:09:15 Memories of that game. Recalls one of their ‘best players’, Gene McMahon, breaking his leg.</p> <p>00:09:35 Winning match and the ‘craic’ coming home on the bus. Doesn’t recall anything about celebrations that night.</p> <p>00:10:13 Talks about emigration in 1964 and the impact it: inability to field a team and the ‘ending’ football in Derrynoose for a time.</p> <p>00:10:35 Mentions that Middletown were starting to get a team together and documents the beginning of his involvement with them. Remarks that they were affiliated in 1967.</p> <p>00:11:15 Describes the team as being fairly good and young and comment approvingly on the structures of the club. Mentions being club chairman from 1969 – 1973.</p> <p>00:11:37 Refers to the youth of the administrators and players.</p> <p>00:12:03 Getting going in football and hurling and winning the all-county league in 1968, winning county hurling league in 1969 and captaining team. Other notable achievements at this time are also mentioned into the early 1970s. ‘Crowning’ achievement, winning county junior championship in 1974.</p> <p>00:13:03 Refers to playing clubs likes Crossmaglen and Clann Éireann who would have been the ‘backbone’ of the county football team, which went to play in</p> <p>00:13:22 Winning intermediate championship in 1976, winning hurling league in 1977. Refers also to getting minor hurling team started and being part of the management team with Gabriel Mallon and Sean Barrett.</p> <p>00:14:05 Mentions retiring from hurling and football ca. 1977 and taking over football team and then becoming a selector with the football team. Says he took ‘a back seat’ after that.</p> <p>00:14:45 Remarks on being an ongoing supporter of the club and refers to the friendships he built up.</p> <p>00:15:05 Interviewer refers to his distinction in winning</p> |
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|  | <p>championship medals in Armagh with two clubs.</p> <p>00:15:25 Refers also to 'borrowing' players and tells story of being borrowed to play with Clontibret, helping them win a Monaghan hurling championship.</p> <p>00:16:05 Mentions members of the Curry family involved in 1981 Middletown team.</p> <p>00:16:32 Talks about playing alongside his brother.</p> <p>00:16:49 Refers to younger brother Martin and his work for hurling with club and county.</p> <p>00:17:10 Reflecting on the size of panels and the absence of boots and togs for players in the past. Mentions also the frequency with which they played matches in the past, the absence of training and the paucity of injuries.</p> <p>00:18:40 Reflects on being an 'apprentice' and carrying everything to work. Mentions also working half-day on a Saturday and the contribution of 'manual' work to general levels of fitness.</p> <p>00:19:35 Refers to some of main characters and footballers with Derrynoose: James Keenan, Pat Keenan, Pat Tomley, Peter Makem, Master McMahon's sons (Eugene and Mickey).</p> <p>00:20:45 Mentions Paddy Kelly, Eamon Kelly, Arthur Woods, Seamus Keenan.</p> <p>00:21:10 Reflects on the age profile of the team he played on and the gap between older and young players. Remarks that a group in the middle, those in their early 20s, had been forced to emigrate.</p> <p>00:21:40 Considers the impact of emigration on many clubs in the 1950s, 60s, 80s. Suggests the 'bigger population' and greater underage involvement will mean the impact of current economic crisis will be less severe. 'They have a better chance of staying together...' Clubs are more stable than in the 1950s or 60s, when clubs could go out of existence very quickly.</p> <p>00:23:25 Mentions that the greater chances of going to university keeps young people involved in Gaelic games and renders them available to clubs.</p> <p>00:24:05 Offers gratitude to the club and people of Middletown and wishes them all the best for the future.</p> |
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**REFERENCE NO. AR/1/56**

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| <b>Involvement in GAA</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward<br><br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chairperson <input type="checkbox"/> Committee Member <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds-person<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Caterer <input type="checkbox"/> Jersey Washer <input type="checkbox"/> Referee <input type="checkbox"/> None<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): |
| <b>Record as a Player</b><br>(Titles won; Length of time played)    | Playing over a 20 year period, Curry won county titles with two clubs in Armagh: Derrynoose and Middletown. Refers also to helping Clontibret win a hurling championship in Monaghan.   |
| <b>Record as an Administrator</b><br>(Positions held; how long for) | Manager and Chairperson in 1970s, (approx. 6 years)   |
| <b>Format</b>   | <input type="checkbox"/> Audio <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual   |
| <b>Duration</b>   | Length of Interview: 00:24:33   |
| <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:        Joe Jordan

Date:            12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2011