

GAA Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Brian Becker
Date of Interview	4 th Oct 2010
Location	Gonzaga College High School, Washington DC, USA
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Andrew Healy
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>	
Gender	Male
Born	Year Born: 1960 Home County: Kerry
Education	N/A
Family	N/A
Club(s)	Washington DC Gaels GAA [Americas]; Atlantic GAA [Americas] Michael Collins GAA [Americas]
Occupation	N/A
Parents' Occupation	N/A
Religion	N/A
Political Affiliation / Membership	N/A
Other Club/Society Membership(s)	N/A

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Date of Report	16 th July 2012
Period Covered	1960s – 2010
Counties/Countries Covered	Kerry, USA, Canada, Americas, Australia, Australasia
Key Themes Covered	Travel, Supporting, Grounds, Facilities, Playing, Training, Managing, Coaching, Officials, Administration, Celebrations, Fundraising, Sponsorship, Education, Religion, Media, Emigration, Involvement in GAA abroad, Role of Clergy, Role of Women, Role of the Club in the Community, Volunteers, GAA Abroad, Identity, Rivalries, Club History, Irish History, Earliest Memories, Family Involvement, Childhood, Impact on Life, Challenges, Sacrifices, Outsider's Perspectives, Politics, Opening of Croke Park, Ban on Security Forces, Relationship with the Association, Professionalism, Purchase of Grounds, Economy / Economics
Interview Summary	<p>Andrew Healy charts his involvement in the GAA from his youth in Kerry to his move overseas, first to Amsterdam and subsequently to the United States where he was influential in the development of club in the Washington region. Healy discusses the centrality of the GAA to Kerry life and the narrowness of the social experience that was open to him there. He talks about the lessons he took from his early GAA involvement and discusses the beginnings of the Washington Gaels club following a meeting with a fellow Kerryman in the city. Healy discusses the development of the GAA in Washington – and wider continent – and reflects on the costs of participation, the competition from other sports, the barriers to growing the sports among the young Americans from non-Irish backgrounds, the unfair support given to certain units of the Association in America and difficulties in securing places to play. Healy also offers perspectives on the GAA in Ireland and is particularly complimentary towards Seán Kelly and his contribution towards the opening of Croke Park.</p> <p>00:00:20 Early involvement in the GAA: mentions that he born in Kerry, GAA as a 'religion' in Kerry.</p> <p>00:00:50 Growing up and lack of exposure to other sports. Belief that Gaelic games were the only ones played.</p> <p>00:01:17 Going to Amsterdam as a teenager and appreciation of what he had at home.</p> <p>00:02:00 Reference to relations being involved in the GAA</p>

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	<p>and to the commonality of this.</p> <p>00:02:40 Lack of trained coaches when growing up.</p> <p>00:03:35 Only coach to make a difference in life – an American schoolteacher, Martin McCarrick, and his specific gifts. Reference to his sons being involved in teams.</p> <p>00:04:59 Joining the Washington Gaels club – meeting with another Kerryman in a pub and argument over Kerry GAA. Story about challenge game organised out of two pubs.</p> <p>00:06:00 Reference to American women’s interest in Gaelic footballers.</p> <p>00:06:15 Support from Irish community and disorganised nature of Gaelic games previously.</p> <p>00:06:35 Profile of players when club was established.</p> <p>00:06:49 Role as Chairman Irish Immigration Reform Movement</p> <p>00:07:32 Entering the Philadelphia League and travelling to games during summer. Importance of social aspect.</p> <p>00:08:25 Criticism of win-at-all costs mentality and value of volunteering.</p> <p>00:08:55 Costs of participation in GAA and gap between involvement at lower and middle ranks of the Association and higher ranks.</p> <p>00:10:00 Greatness of the GAA.</p> <p>00:10:20 Achievement of the GAA as an amateur organisation – reference to grounds etc.</p> <p>00:11:40 Explains reasons for belief that GAA doesn’t promote itself properly and compares GAA to rugby and soccer.</p> <p>00:12:55 Interest in recreational participation. Washington DC spring and fall leagues – participation rates, training and competition.</p> <p>00:14:00 Compares favourably the appeal of Gaelic games with that of American football – more fluid nature of the games.</p> <p>00:14:32 Difficulty of promoting Gaelic games in America. Importance of putting games on TV in America and appeal to</p>
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	<p>GAA authorities in Ireland.</p> <p>00:17:12 Appeal of Gaelic games to non-Irish – inclusiveness to all ‘shapes and sizes’ and use of natural physical movement. Openness to all standards.</p> <p>00:18:00 Criticism of International Rules and its promotion by Croke Park.</p> <p>00:18:55 Gaelic football and Australian Rules compared.</p> <p>00:20:40 Existing provision for Gaelic sports in Washington DC and plans to expand. Reflection on paucity of past promotional efforts and outline of existing youth programmes. Expansion of Gaelic games in Washington area.</p> <p>00:23:33 DC Gaels win national championships in San Francisco and difficulty of celebrating after September 2001 and celebrating at Irish festival in Baltimore. Recent successes of Baltimore men and women’s teams.</p> <p>00:24:37 History of team in Frederick, Maryland called Mason Dixon. Reference to absence of native Irish involvement and coaching of Martin McCarrick.</p> <p>00:26:00 Problems associated with developing games among Americans and need to thwart import of players from Ireland. Reference to money involved and attitudes towards that non-Irish born players.</p> <p>00:28:30 Death of ‘old minded people’ and replacement by young Americans.</p> <p>00:29:00 Opportunities for GAA in Canada and Australia arising from recession.</p> <p>00:29:50 Opposition to summer influx of Irish players – teachers and students – and reference to treatment of those players and its impact on GAA in America.</p> <p>00:30:20 Attendances at Gaelic games in United States and comments on promotion of those games.</p> <p>00:31:30 Egotism of many coaches and importance of emphasis participation.</p> <p>00:32:25 Profile of player population in Washington and sustainability of having American born players.</p> <p>00:33:40 Irish heritage of American-born players and difficulty of reaching Americans from different backgrounds. Commentary on religious and racial profile of American-born</p>
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	<p>GAA players.</p> <p>00:36:00 Predisposition towards Irish-American community and hopes that GAA opens up to wider community. Benefits that participation brings.</p> <p>00:37:50 Need for emigrants to open up mind in America and reflections on changing Ireland and improvements in communications.</p> <p>00:39:10 Description of the Kerry village he grew up in, the smallness of that world and the place of the GAA within it.</p> <p>00:39:40 Difference in between modern and previous generations of emigrant. Access of Irish children to wider world.</p> <p>00:41:30 Reflections on 'Celtic Tiger' economy.</p> <p>00:42:00 Comments on the influence of Seán Kelly as GAA President and reflections on the GAA attitudes to other sports and the opening up of Croke Park. Beneficial impact of decision on the GAA.</p> <p>00:47:40 Impact of suspension of Rule 42 on GAA critics and potential repercussions were Croke Park to have remained closed. Perseverance of Seán Kelly.</p> <p>00:50:45 Reference to previous ban on British security forces participation.</p> <p>00:52:44 Challenges facing the GAA in years ahead – humorous reference to Kerry/Cork rivalry; growing the games outside of Ireland; reference to prospects of a professional game and the importance of foreign participation; reference to proposal for a professional hurling league in America.</p> <p>00:56:25 Advice to proponents of professional game in America and reference past and proposed collegiate competitions.</p> <p>00:57:10 Criticism of payment by GAA in Ireland of coaches in America, the geographic focus of that support and the issues for volunteers. Reference to summer import of players.</p> <p>00:58:45 Reflections on GAA politics and the allocation of resources to America's nine divisions. Refers to neglect of mid-Atlantic, to training received and lack of follow-up resources.</p> <p>01:01:50 Discussion on the future competitiveness of American teams with Irish teams – refers to the physical</p>
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	<p>development of Irish players and gym training.</p> <p>01:03:24 Discussion the differences between sports in America and Ireland – mention of the use of scholarships by other sports in the U.S. and need for GAA to follow suit.</p> <p>01:04:45 Reference of economic incentive to play sports other than Gaelic games and the need for the GAA to compete.</p> <p>01:06:50 Challenges for D.C Gael in providing facilities and grounds. Mentions that D.C. Gaels were founded on 12 October 1988 in Arlington, Virginia and the realisation that club couldn't afford to play in Arlington.</p> <p>01:07:40 Discussion of the rise of soccer in America and competition with soccer for access to fields.</p> <p>01:09:20 Difficulty for D.C. Gaels in securing their own facilities and reference to cost of property.</p> <p>01:10:30 Developments in Boston and Chicago and lack of GAA claim over them. Reference also to development in Philadelphia.</p> <p>01:11:15 Final comments: recollections of growing up in Ireland and the role of GAA. Considers the possibilities for exporting the GAA overseas and compares the fervour and purity of Gaelic games in Ireland and professional sports in America. 'I believe that if the rest of the world had it...If the GAA was to spread its wings throughout the world and we all operated like the GAA do, I believe that we would have a much much better world.'</p>
<p>Involvement in GAA</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Player <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coach <input type="checkbox"/> Steward</p> <p><input checked="" 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 checked="" 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 since he was 4 years old, a 46 year career</p>
<p>Record as an Administrator (Positions held; how long for)</p>	<p>Founding Chair of WDC Gaels; Founding Chair of Mid Atlantic GAA; Founding Chair of Michael Collins GAA</p>

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Format	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration	Length of Interview: 01:15:55
Language	English

To be filled in by Interviewer:

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Signed: Brian Becker

Date: 4th Oct 2010