

Q1: Describe your earliest GAA memory and how you became involved in the GAA?

IN MUIRHEAD (BAGINAHSTOWN)
AT 12 YEARS OLD. I BORROWED A BALL
FROM THE G.A.B REP + PRACTISED IN OUR
GROUNDS

Q2: Did your family have a tradition or history of GAA involvement?

No

Q3: Did your relatives discuss their GAA experiences with you? What were they?

No.

Q4: Tell me how GAA affected your family life?

A LONG STORY
 EARLIEST MEMORY. OUR CLUB MINORS
 BEAT THE DUBLIN O'HANRAHANS IN THE COUNTY FINAL
 IN 1940. PLAYED IN THE ARMY 1941-45
 PLAYED IN THE GARDA SIOCHANA 1945-49
 PLAYED IN AUCKLAND 1949-1970
 REFEREED FOR ANOTHER TEN YEARS

Q5: Tell me what it was like to support your club/county when you were young and down through the years (travelling to games, prices of tickets, food, grounds visited, clothes worn, match-day traditions, local celebrations and traditions).

AS A MINOR I REMEMBER TRAVELLING
 TO DR BULLEN PARK IN CARLOW TO
 PLAY IN THE COUNTY FINAL

IN THE ARMY I PLAYED WITHIN THE
 ARMY

IN THE GARDA I WAS MOVED FROM
 PLACE TO PLACE AND NOT ABLE TO
 SET DOWN ROOTS

IN N.Z 1949 THE IRISH SOCIETIES
 CONTROLLED G.A.A UNTIL 1953 WHEN
 THE G.A.A WAS INDEPENDENTLY FORMED

Q6: If you had to choose just one game from all you've experienced, which would you choose? Why?

THE 1944 LEINSTER FINAL WHEN SEAROCKY DEFERRED DUBLIN IN A HURRY I TRAVELLED FROM THE CURRACH CAMP IN KILDARE TO SEE IT. THEY WERE MY HEROES. I WAS SENT A PHOTO OF THE TEAM RECENTLY + RELIVED THEIR FACES ONLY WERE TOLD THAT THEY WERE ALL DEAD NOW. A REMINDER OF OUR MORALITY ALL MEMORIES.

Q7: What impact has the GAA had on your life?

I AM NOW 87 YEARS' OLD + THE GAA HAS HAD A CONTINUING + MAJOR IMPACT ON MY LIFE SINCE I WAS 16 YEARS' OLD I AM STILL IN ADMINISTRATION IN AUCKLAND AND HAVE AN INTEREST IN A CLUB WHICH I FOUNDED IN 1945 + WHICH IS STILL GOING

Q8: What place and role does your club have in your community?

THE G.A.A PLAYS A VERY SMALL PART IN THE GENERAL SPORTING COMMUNITY IN AUCKLAND. HOWEVER IN THE IRISH COMMUNITY HERE THE FIGURE PROMINENTLY

Q9: What role did the GAA play as part of your school and/or college life?

NATIONAL SCHOOL + SECONDARY
— VERY LITTLE

Q10: Who do you admire most in the GAA and why?

IN IRELAND — NOBODY
IN NZ — A FEW MEN + WOMEN WHO KEPT THE GAME GOING IN THE FIFTIES SIXTIES + SEVENTIES + EIGHTIES

Q11: In your experience what have been the biggest changes in the GAA?

I HAVE VERY LITTLE KNOWLEDGE OF
CHANGES IN IRELAND

IN N.Z IT HAS BEEN A STRUGGLE
TO STAY ALIVE AS WE ARE VERY MUCH
A MINORITY CODE. IN THE FIFTIES
IMMIGRANTS CAME AND STAYED
NOW THEY COME AND STAY A SHORT
PERIOD

Q12: Have changes in your community affected your club and how?

NO - WE WORK IN TANDEM
WITH THE AUCKLAND IRISH SOCIETY
WHICH SUPPORTS US.

Q13: Do you think the role of women in the GAA has changed over the years and how?

IN NZ WOMEN HAVE TAKEN TO
THE GAME ENTHUSIASTICLY ESPECIALLY
IN THE LAST TEN YEARS

Q14: Describe the role of the churches and clergy in your club and how it has changed over the years?

THE PRIESTS (IRISH) HAVE ALWAYS
BEEN INVOLVED IN BOTH ADMINISTRATION
& PLAYING SINCE 1950. NOW FEWER
PRIESTS ARE COMING FROM IRELAND
AND WE MISS THEIR HELP & ENTHUSIASM

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Q15: Was there a connection between politics and the GAA for you, if so what?

NO

Q16: What have been the main disappointments you have had with the GAA?

WE HAVE ^{BEEN} LEFT ISOLATED & FORGOTTEN

Q17: Did the GAA shape your own identity in any way?

! IT OCCUPIED MY MIND & FIXATED
IT ON BEING IRISH

Q18: What role has Irish language and culture had in your club and on your personal involvement with the GAA?

PERSONALLY THE G.A.A. IN N.Z
HAS SHAPED THE CULTURE OF
IRELAND IN MY MIND

Q19: How important are rivalries within the GAA and what are yours?

WE ONLY HAVE THE NORMAL
SPORTSMAN LIKE RIVALRIES IN
AUCKLAND

Q20: Comment on the role of volunteers within the GAA?

! IN AUCKLAND WHEN WE WANT
VOLUNTIERS WE HAVE NO TROUBLE
IN GETTING THEM

Q21: Describe your experience with teams as a player, manager, committee member or supporter.

I HAVE BEEN A PERSON SUCH AS
YOU DESCRIBE THROUGH THE YEARS
AND HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED THE
EXPERIENCES

Q22: Describe your experiences, if any, with the GAA outside Ireland.

ANSWER ON QUESTION 14

Q23: Describe how media coverage of GAA in your lifetime has changed.

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IN AUCKLAND MEDIA COVERAGE
IS MINIMAL. THEY IGNORE US

Q24: What in your opinion are the biggest challenges facing the GAA in the future?

I AM NOT IN A POSITION IN N.Z.
TO GIVE AN OPINION ON THE G.A.A
IN IRELAND

IN N.Z WE ARE CONSTANTLY UNDER
PRESSURE TO STAY ALIVE. IRISH MEN
COME AND GO AND WE RELY ON N.Z
YOUTH WHO PLAY RUGBY + SOCCER IN
THEIR OFFSEASON. HOWEVER WE DO
TRY TO SPREAD THE G.A.A TO OTHER
PROVINCES

Q25: What does the GAA mean to you?

I HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE
G.A.A BOTH IN IRELAND + N.Z
FROM THE AGE OF NINE. I AM
NOW 87 YEARS. GO. FIGURE

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Q26: Do you have any pictures, documents, video etc. that you could share with us? Please provide a brief description.

Do you know any songs or poems about the GAA in your local area that you can send us or write in here?

Can you think of anyone else in your locality or in your family circle who we should contact for this project? Who are they and why?

I ENCLOSE ONE TREASURED
PHOTO WITH INFORMATION ON THE
BACK.

Q27: Is there anything else you would like to say about the GAA?

Q28: How did you hear about this project?

I WAS SENT THIS DOCUMENT BY
MARY GALWAY OF THE CONSULS' OFFICE

I hereby assign the copyright of the answers 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 questionnaire.

Signed:

Patrick Somers

Date:

18-8-10

Please Note: If you are aged 18 years or younger this must be signed by your parent / guardian. Failure to do so will mean that we are unable to include your responses in the Archive

PATRICK SOMERS J.P.