



A



Century



of



Boston

GAA



BOSTON GAA



*Northeast Division of the
Gaelic Athletic Association*

*Cordially invites all
Footballers & Hurlers
Who Played in Boston in the 1940's
to Be A Special Guest
At The Official Opening of
The New G.A.A. Fields at
The Irish Cultural Centre
Boston Drive, Canton, Mass.
Sunday, October, 17, 1999 3 PM*



***SPECIAL GUESTS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING
OF THE NEW G.A.A. SPORTS FACILITY
AT THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE, CANTON, MASSACHUSETTS***

*Front Row: M. O'Malley, M. Cummings, C. Lynch
Second Row: E. Farrelly, L. Cummings, P. Manning, J. Joyce,
D. O'Connor, C Lydon, P. Mitchell. J. Bowen
Third Row: P. Casserly, B. Connaughton, S. Scollins, A. Wilkinson
T. Ford, M. Glynn, J. Foley*

Boston and North East Gaelic Athletic Association



1884 ~ 2000

Wherever the Irish went they took with them their natural love of sportsmanship and games, but in the rigid Puritan environment of the 19th century Massachusetts, there was little outlet for this activity. For the vast majority, just surviving meant six ten-hour days of back breaking labour and on the Sabbath, the inflexible Massachusetts laws prohibited any organized games. Nevertheless, in the Summer months they managed somewhat surreptitiously to hold outdoor functions labeled "Field Days", "Picnics" or "Sports" in the groves of the more secluded outlying towns such as Hull, where the vigilance of the police was more relaxed. On those occasions the main event was the tug-of-war contest usually arranged between rival counties. After 1875 we notice the inclusion of games of Football. Unfortunately, there is no mention of what form the games took, but we doubt if there were any specific or organized rules even to the number of players on each side.

Despite this early harsh environment, Boston has the honour of hosting the very first game played under the rules of the newly organized Gaelic Athletic Association outside of Ireland.

The game was played in Boston Common in June, 1886. The rival teams were Galway and Kerry and while history does not tell us who won, we do know that from that historic day Boston and Massachusetts had a firm and lasting commitment to the G.A.A. Football was the main attraction in both the number of teams playing and followers. Hurling was slower in gaining a hold, possibly because of the additional skill required, and the difficulty of securing an adequate supply of hurling sticks. It is then somewhat surprising that the earliest photograph in our files, is of the Boston Young Irelands hurling team, Massachusetts Champions 1913.

Some members of this team had played in All-Ireland finals at Jones Road, or Croke Park as it afterward became known and most were natives of North Cork. All of the teams both hurling and football were under the sponsorship of the various County Clubs. This arrangement, often unsatisfactory, continued until 1923. In the Spring of that year a group of young men having been born and raised in the fiery nationalistic spirit of the G.A.A. banded together and formed the Massachusetts Gaelic Athletic Association.

Instrumental in this were men like Morgan O'Connor, first President, James Galvin, John Lancaster and Micheal Darcy. A copy of the first Constitution and rules of the new organization is a prized possession of ours. For the next ten years the G.A.A. in Boston had a phenomenal growth. At its peak there were nine hurling and fifteen football teams affiliated. Some of the outstanding events of this period were the visits of the Tipperary Hurlers in 1926, John Joe Sheehy's famous Kerry Football team in 1927. (22,000 fans saw this game). Tipperary hurlers again in 1932 accompanied by Dan Breen and Kerry returned again in 1931 and played New England at Braves Field. This game was refereed by "Knacker" Walsh. Owen Mahon, still active here in Boston, played for New England in those years. Galway All-Ireland football champions in 1934 played here in 1935 at Celtic Park and in 1936 Kilkenny's hurling Champions played here also at Celtic Park.

While the Galway and Kilkenny visits were termed successful, the level of interest had waned perceptibly since 1927-29. America was in the throes of its worst depression. An immigration ban was rigidly enforced since the early thirties and this, combined with the outbreak of World War II, marked the end of the games in Boston. The G.A.A. ceased to function after 1937.

In 1947 with the war over and thousands of young people pouring into the Country, the G.A.A. in Boston had a re-birth. From a weak beginning with only three teams in '47, - Cork, Galway and Kerry, it grew rapidly each year. In 1951 when National League Champions Meath visited the United States, Boston provided their toughest competition. The Meath visit was a turning point in the history of the G.A.A. in America. Traveling with the team was the newly elected President of the G.A.A., Michael Kehoe of Wexford, a man whose concern

North East



G.A.A.

Boston, Massachusetts

2000 Board Officers

Chairperson

JOHN McDEVITT
3 Country Lane
Winchester, MA 01890
(781) 729-8948

Vice Chairperson

PAT BLIGH
48 Rosemary Road
Dedham, MA 02026
(781) 326-3357

Secretary

ANN O'DEA
148 Faneuil Street
Brighton, MA 02135
(617) 782-3173

Assistant Secretary

TARA McMANUS
40 Alaric Street
West Roxbury, MA 02132
(617) 325-4718

Treasurer

CONNIE McEENEY
25 King Avenue
Medford, MA 02155
(781) 369-5577

Assistant Treasurer

MARTIN GALLAGHER
32 Harriet Street
Brighton, MA 02135
(617) 783-4235

Registrar

MICHAEL COYNE
18 Radcliff Road
Arlington, MA 02474
(781) 648-5707

P.R.O.

CONNIE KELLY
48 Bright Road
Belmont, MA 02478
(617) 484-8481

Trustees

MARTIN KANE
(617) 696-2958
MICKEY GREALISH
(781) 320-8597
PAT MULVIHILL
(781) 391-0819

Youth Officer

DONNIE KENNEALLY
229 Wildwood Avenue
Braintree, MA 02184
(781) 849-6175

INTRODUCTION

August, 2000

It is with a deep sense of humility as well as a great pride that we present this history of Boston's part in the promoting of the G.A.A. in this great nation for well over one hundred years.

From the very earliest days of our association, Boston has played a major role in the American history of the G.A.A. when hurlers, athletes, and footballers let by Maurice Davin in a tour of America, afterwards called the "American Invasion" in 1888, Boston was the only city to engage them in a hurling game.

Boston then had four active hurling clubs. Since the visit of the 1931 Kerry football champions Boston has hosted many great teams from Ireland including the All Stars in 1988 and 1999 and Down champions in '62.

Since the formation of the North American Board in 1959 many of its elected officers were from Boston, Michael Cummings, John Hehir, Mike O'Connor, Chris Sullivan, Kay Barry-McGlone, Mary O'Dea, Sean Lyons, Pat Hughes and Bill McGowan, to name but a few have all served with distinction on its governing body.

To all our brother and sister gael from all across this land, the N.E. Divisional Board and the Irish Cultural Centre extend a hearty céad míle fáilte and our best wishes for a happy and enjoyable visit to this great city.

To our guests from Ireland, to the referees and officials also a hearty welcome. To Seán Lyons for coordinating so well, the material for this history we offer our profound thanks.

Lastly to our playoff committee for their hard work and their dedication to ensure the success of this historic weekend. Our thanks to them will be that by their efforts they have shown that the G.A.A. in Boston is alive and well.

John McDevitt, Chairman
N.E. Divisional Board G.A.A.



NORTH EAST BOARD OFFICERS - 2000

Back Row (L to R): Mickey Grealish - Trustee, Martin Gallagher - Assist. Treasurer, Martin Kane - Trustee, Con McEleney - Treasurer, Michael Coyne - Registrar
Front Row (L to R): John McDevitt - Chairman, Tara McManus - Asst. Secretary, Ann O'Dea - Secretary, Pat Bligh - Vice Chairman

Missing from Picture: Pat Mulvihill - Trustee, Con Kelly - PRO, Coley Lydon - Honorary President, Donie Kenneally - Youth Officer

Boston and North East Gaelic Athletic Association

1884 ~ 2000



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for the difficulties besetting the fledgling G.A.A. centers scattered throughout the United States was matched by his persuasion and ability to correct a long standing inequity. At the urging of the officers from various cities and particularly from Henry Cavanagh of Cleveland, who became the driving force promoting their cause, the Central Council in conjunction with the various affiliated American Clubs established in 1950 The National Council G.A.A. of the United States.

The National Council divided the United States into three separate divisions, called Zones. New York was classified as Zone 1. Mid-West Zone 2 and New England as Zone 3. Each Zone was granted a provincial status with the parent body in Ireland.

While the Mid-West and New England completed their play-off schedule, New York withdrew from the organization thus dealing the Inter-Zonal competition a mortal blow. The Zones were a failure partly because of the financial difficulties of transporting players and teams such vast distances but mainly because of the withdrawal of New York, who regarded the Zones as a burdensome imposition.

By the late 1950's the games were once again thriving in Boston. Kerry, Erins Hope, Galway, Cork, Hartford, and Springfield all fielded Senior Football Teams. Galway, Young Irelands, Fr. Tom Burkes and later Hibernians Senior Hurling Team. Cavan, Connemara Gaels, Providence Shamrocks and Lynn has Junior Football Teams.

In 1959 at Philadelphia, the Zones as previously mentioned were abolished, and the American County Board was founded, with Jack Courtenay of Buffalo as its first President. This was a significant event in the history of the G.A.A. in Boston and in all the cities where the games were played outside of New York and New Jersey. It brought all of North America into the G.A.A. family officially with direct affiliation to Central Council, representation at Congress and allotment of All-Ireland tickets to the finals each year.

The visit of Down All-Ireland Football Champions to Boston in 1962 and the Boston Galway Hurlers visit to San Francisco for the first ever American County Final were milestones in the early life of the youngest and newest County Board.

Meanwhile in Boston, progress continued through the 1970's. St. Patrick's and Shannon Blues in Football were added to the roster of Senior Teams as were Connemara Gaels. Jamaica Plain Shamrocks and Columbkille's came in with Junior Football Teams. The Cardinal Cushing games and visits from representative teams from Roscommon, Kerry, Connaught Railway Cup Footballers, Carrolls All Stars, Glen Rovers and Tommy Larkins gave Boston fans the opportunity to see Ireland's best players in action.

It was in 1973 that Boston G.A.A. fans, through the initiative of former President Billy Kelly, saw the live telecast of the All-Ireland Football final from Croke Park. To the present day, this is a much looked forward to event each year. The mid-seventies again brought severe immigration laws and a drop in players coming from Ireland. Perhaps this was a blessing in disguise, it prompted the sponsoring of minor and juvenile teams composed entirely of Irish-American children of Irish parents. At present with eleven or more teams of under 14 and under 12 playing Gaelic Football under the auspices of the New England Minor Board founded in the mid-seventies, it helps the continuances of Gaelic Football in Boston.

Camogie came to Boston in 1977 and Ladies Football in the mid 90's. Boston Shamrocks are current North East and Co. champions since the very earliest days. Boston has played a leading role in G.A.A. affairs in North America, Michael Cummings - John Hehir - Billy Howe - Sean Lyons - Pat Hughes - Bill McGowan - Chris Sullivan - Kay Barry and former chairman and current Treasurer Mike O'Connor have all held office on the National Council and/or the North American Co. Board.

As we welcome the All-Ireland champions - the All-Stars - the team officials - referees and Central Council officers, we invite them to celebrate this historic day with us. Today has incredible significance for all of us here. It is the climax to years of effort, disappointment and hope. Today in conjunction with the Irish Cultural Centre we enter our new permanent home. The dream at long last is a reality to those no longer with us, our prayers. To all the others our eternal gratitude. To Central Council and to all gael's everywhere we offer our congratulations and best wishes on this, for us all a historic and joyous occasion.

Go mbeannig Dia ar zai Suine uzaib
agus go mbeannig Dia go seo ar an obair
aga sib ag zomnaide ag Seanam ar son
an Cumann Luth Chles Gael.

Presidents of North East Division Gaelic Athletic Association

(Not necessarily in order)

Morgan O'Connor
Pat Fleming
James Galvin
John Lancaster
Michael Darcy
Flor McCarthy
John Casey
John J. Kelly
Dan Mahoney
Pat Wallace
Tommie Shields
John Coleman
Dan Sullivan

John Walsh
Tom Glavin
Michael Cummings
Jack Twoomey
William Howe
Dan Shea
Pat Greene
George Shanley
Pat Curry
John Hehir
Brian Mulvihill
Jim Maunsell
Bernie O'Reilly
Kieran Sheehan

John McGuinness
Billy Kelly
Hugh Quinn
Tony Corley
Pat Hughes
Bill McGowan
Frank O'Rourke
Pat Hughes
Pat Bligh
Joe Lydon
Sean Lyons
Joe Lydon
John McDevitt

- 2000 NORTHEAST G.A.A. OFFICERS -

Honorary President ~ Coleman Lydon
Chairman ~ John McDevitt
Vice chairman ~ Pat Bligh
Secretary ~ Ann O'Dea
Assistant Secretary ~ Tara McManus
Treasurer ~ Connie McEleheny
Assistant Treasurer ~ Martin Gallagher
Registrar ~ Michael Coyne
P.R.O. ~ Connie Kelly
Trustees ~ Martin Kane, Pat Mulhivill, Michael Grealish
Youth Officer ~ Donie Kenneally

We wish to thank all clubs who participated. A special thanks to Michael Cummings who did the original research on the G.A.A. Thanks to Olivia Cahill of the Irish Emigrant for the front cover design. We regret any errors or omissions.

Thanks,
Sean Lyons

G.A.A. OFFICERS IN THE 50's



Back Row (L to R): John Coleman (Cork), Coley Lydon (Galway)
John Collins (Cork), Pat Lydon (Galway)
Front Row (L to R): Martin Qualters (Galway), Eddie Farley (Cavan)
Pat Greene - President (Galway), Walter Norris (Tipperary)



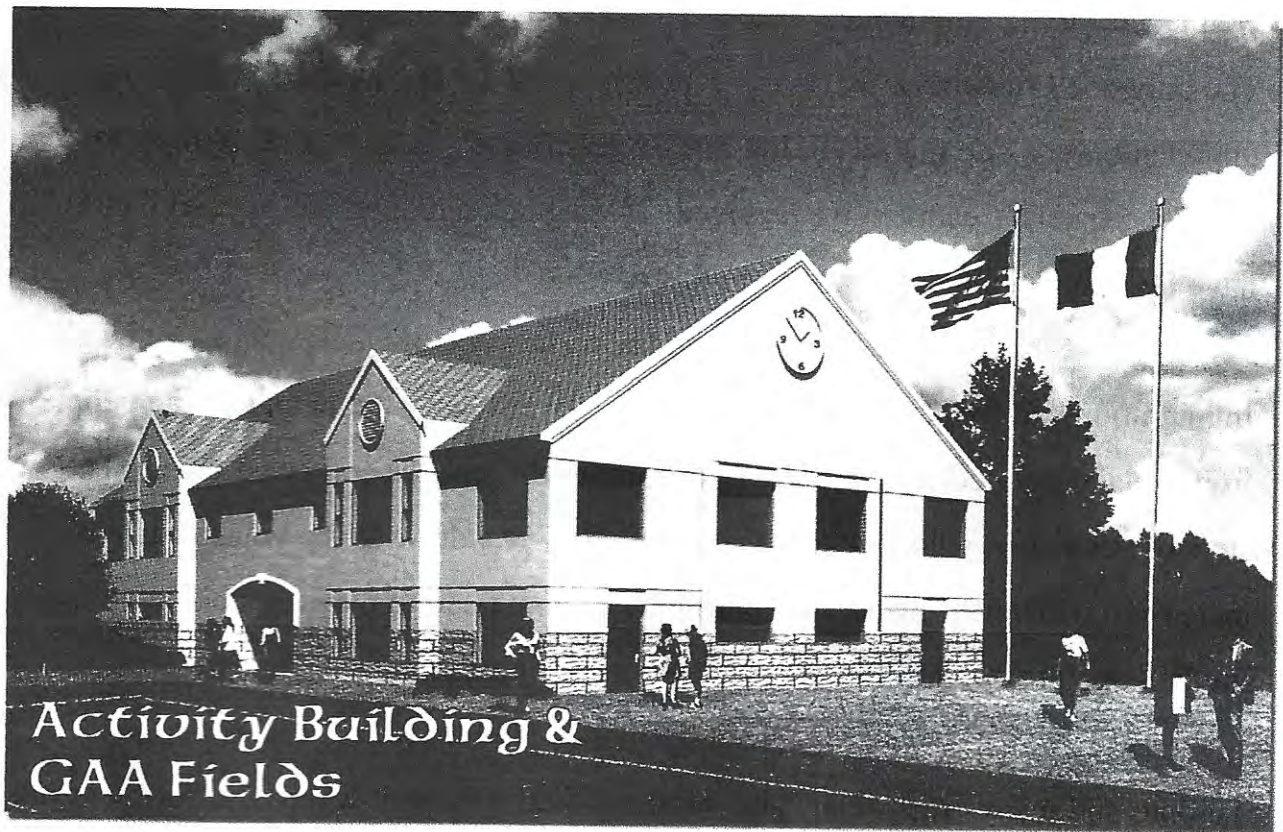
Back Row (L to R): Florrie McCarty, Martin Barrett, John Coleman, Pat Joe Lynch
Michael Hurley, Billy Howe
Front Row (L to R): Martin Qualters, Michael Cummings, Pat Curry, John Joe Darcy, Pat Greene



Pictured above are the presidents of the Eastern New England G AA since it was Chartered in 1927 till 1975
Seated l to r Michael Darcy first pres, John Walsh Jack Twomey, Kieran Sheehan
Back row Pat Curry, John Hehir, Billy Howe, Mike Cummings Bernie Reilly, Jimmy Maunsell Billy Kelly
Joe Green standing in for Pat Green Missing John Coleman Brian Mulvehill George Shanley ,J McGinness
TOM CLAVIN



MIKE O'CONNOR, CHAIRMAN OF DEVELOPMENT, JOE McDONAGH, PRESIDENT G.A.A., NOEL CONNOLLY, PRESIDENT OF IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE, AND SEAN LYONS, BUILDING AND GROUNDS, AT THE ENTRANCE TO BUILDING SITE AT BOSTON DRIVE, SEPTEMBER 1996.



Activity Building &
GAA Fields



50 YEAR MEMBER AWARD

Left to Right

Sean Lyons, Billy Howe, Matty Duggan



WATERFORD LADIES

enjoying a nice Summer day at the Irish Cultural Centre in Canton

Left to Right: Olivia Cahill, Jen Kusz, Andrea Melaugh, Lynn Cahill,
Caroline McFadden, Elizabeth Monaco

Official Opening of the G.A.A. Facility

October 1999 at The Cutural Centre, Canton, Mass



JOE McDONAGH, CUTTING THE RIBBON

Pictured with Joe

*Jim Grogan, Mike McGrath, Mike O'Connor, John Hehir, Joe McDonough - President G.A.A.,
Pat Callaghan, John McDevitt - Chairman North East Board (partly hidden),
Phelim Murphy - Connaugh Council President*



*Billy Kelly & Bernie O'Reilly
Past Presidents of the New England G.A.A.*

R SAW DILBOY CLASSIC



1962 AMERICAN BOARD SELECTION vs. DOWN ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONS

Front Row (L to R): Bernie O'Reilly, John Greene, Joe Greene - Captain (R.I.P.), T. Duffy, Ed Hamill, F. Cremins, John O'Connor, Mike Hennigan, Richie Fleming

Back Row (L to R): Bernie Dillon, Pat McCarthy, Matt Dooley, Dick Hynes, Joe Courtney, Pat McDevitt, Kevin Loftus, Roger Lee (R.I.P.), John O'Brien



Massachusetts Selected Team - 1951

Croke Park, New York



1953 NEW ENGLAND GAELIC FOOTBALL SENIORS

Defeated by the Midwest at Boston in the 1953 final on a score of ten points to nine in the first All-American Gaelic Football Championship. (twelve-club selection)

Front row left to right: F. Quinn, M. Glynn, J. Mahony, P. Galvin.

Second row left to right: Father Solan (Chaplain) T. Cronin, S. Walsh, P. McAuliffe, C. Lydon, E. Farley, J. Fair (Trainer)

Third row left to right: T. Curran (Manager) E. Wise, J. McHugh, T. Keating, D. Walsh, E. Darcy, J. Green, P. Green.

Back row left to right: C. Sheenan, J. Downey, M. Cummings, B. Sullivan, P. Burke, M. O'Malley.



1980 BOSTON OLDE-TIMERS TEAM

Who defeated New York Olde Timers 1:12 to 1:10

Front Row (L to R): Bernie O'Reilly - Cavan, Tom McNally - Columbkille's Noel Stack - Erin's Hope, Bill Feeney - Kerry, Richie Fleming - Cork, Tom Cummings - Galway, Paddy Clarke - Erin's Hope, Mike Hynes - Galway, Mike Foley - Hartford

Back Row (L to R): Jimmy O'Brien - Galway, Jim Maunsell - Kerry, Pat Meade - Erin's Hope, Billy Kelly - Galway, Joe Greene - Galway (R.I.P.), Pat Conneely - Hartford, Con Kelly - Kerry, Pat McCauley - Erin's Hope, Joe McGlone - St. Patrick's, John Greene - Galway, John Shine - Erin's Hope (R.I.P.), Jim Keady - Columbkille's



NEW ENGLAND ALL-STAR GAELIC FOOTBALL TEAM (1956 SENIORS)

Reading from left to right with affiliated club name

Front Row: John Foley, Hartford; Noel Connelly, Galway; John Walsh (Capt.), Galway; Robert Sullivan, Cork; Tim Foley, Hartford; Billy Sullivan, Cork; Edward Connors, Worcester; Peter Galvin, Kerry; John Driscoll, Cork.

Back Row: Henry Cavanagh, Cleveland, National Coordinator of the G.A.A.; Brendan Woods, Hartford; Patrick Cooke, Erin's Hope; Danny Foley, Hartford; Edward Darcy, Galway; Michael Cummings, Galway, Treasurer of the National Council; James Stanton, Hartford; John Mahoney, Galway; Michael Culhane, Pittsburgh, Chairman of the National Council; Christopher Reaney, Galway; Edward Walsh, Cork; John Green, Kerry; Colman Hickey, Cork; Patrick Sullivan (Manager), Boston.

(Lost to the Midwest All-Star Team by a score of 21 to 14 in the All-American Championship Final at Cleveland, Ohio, August 12, 1956.)



1999 NEW ENGLAND MINOR TEAM

Back Row Left to Right: Jay Lyons (Selector), James Walsh, Dan Cabral, Kevin Nagle, Steve Bligh, Declan Healy, Paul Cremins, Colm Murphy, Jamie Kelly, Gareth Francis, P.J. Gill (Manager), Michael Lenihan

Front Row Left to Right: Chris Eggers, Danny Kenneally, Kathleen Madden, Kieran O'Leary (Captain), Brendan Bligh (Captain), Pat Shaughnessy (Captain), Brian Healy, Colm Kelly, Warren Reilly

Absent Michael O'Connor, Jr., Sean Lyons