

GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

JOHN QUINLAN of
Grange

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

WHEN Fedamore hurlers hit into a great period in senior ranks with a resounding win in early 1910, in the Munster Cup competition, one of the most earnest and enthusiastic players on the side was eighteen-years-old John Quinlan, of Grange.

Decided on the League system, that Murphy Cup struggle was one of the toughest ever waged for the famed trophy. Fedamore created one of the early shocks when defeating Croom, 6-15 to 5-9, at Kilmallock, with Mr. Johnny McSweeney, of Young Ireland, as referee.

Five weeks later, an even greater surprise was their defeat of a strongly fancied Young Ireland side, 1-17 to 2-10, also at Kilmallock.

In the course of a hard fought competition, they had one reverse, losing to County champions, Castleconnell, 5-8 to 1-11, at the Markets Field.

That defeat was retrieved when Castleconnell later lost to Croom, 3-9 to 1-8, and as the lads from the Shannon had earlier dropped a pair of points to Commercial, and Croom and Young Irelands had divided the points at their meeting, Fedamore qualified for the final, in which their opponents were the winners of the other group, South Liberties.

The final, played at the Markets Field, resulted in a brilliant Fedamore success, the final tally being Fedamore, 5-0; South Liberties, 1-0.

"SPEED TO BURN."

The youthful John Quinlan stirred the imagination of hurling lovers during this great series of games. Described as having "speed to burn," his quickness of foot was allied to splendid ball control, tons of pluck, and hurling skill and artistry well above the average. In a great Fedamore side that included such stalwarts of the caman as Con Scanlan, Ned Treacy, Egan Clancy, Stephen Gleeson and Mick Harrington, the youth from Grange stole much of the honours and displayed rich promise of a great hurling future.

Fedamore scored another great success about this period when they won a keenly contested Lyons Memorial Tournament competition. In the semi-final they defeated Young Ireland, 4-2 to 2-1.

The final was played at the Markets Field, on February 12th, 1911, before a fine attendance, and was a very good, closely contested game, which Fedamore won, defeating Castleconnell, 4-1 to 3-1.

THE TEAMS.

Mr. P. Mangan (Croom) refereed and the teams were:—

Fedamore—Con Scanlan (capt.); W. P. Clifford (goal), S. Gleeson, M. Burke, M. Harrington, P. Shinnors, P. Cavanagh, M. Whelan, Edward Treacy, John Quinlan, J. Ryan, Egan Clancy, J. Clancy, John Casey, P. Keane.

Castleconnell — Tyler Mackey (capt), J. Ryan (goal), P. Vaughan, M. Danaher, J. Leonard, P. Herbert, M. Sweeney, T. Benn, B. O'Connor, William Carroll, Sean Carroll, C. Mackey, W. Benn, T. Brennan, D. Conway.

Another worthwhile success scored by the Fedamore lads about this period was the winning of the Infirmity Cup.

With victories over Young Ireland, 7-1 to 4-1; Castleconnell, 8-2 to 3-2; Caherline (on a re-play) 5-1 to 3-1, Fedamore qualified for the final of the 1911 County Senior Hurling Championship, in which they lost to Ballingarry, 4-2 to 1-2.

Twelve months later Fedamore gained their great ambition when they won the County Crown, beating Ballingarry 4-4 to 2-2. This match was played at the Markets Field on November 9th, 1913.

ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK.

Economic conditions at home forced John Quinlan, like many others, seek a living in a foreign clime. He chose New York as his adopted home, where he continued his good work for Irish Ireland. Throwing himself wholeheartedly into everything Irish, he was an outstanding supporter of the Gaelic League, being himself a fluent Irish speaker.

Maintaining his association with the games he joined the Limerick Hurling Club of New York, where he had as colleagues several well-known Shannonside exiles, notably P. J. Kiely of Rathkeale, captain of the side; J. B. Ahearn (Tournafulla), the vice-captain; M. Ahearn, James Ahearn (Tournafulla), B. Driscoll, P. Coughlan (Patrickswell), P. Barry, M. Gibbons (Ballygran), Egan Clancy, W. McNamara, J. Ryan (Fedamore), J. Thompson, Thomas Downes (Limerick City); Larry Hartnett (Newcastle West), Daniel Dunne (Ballingarry), A. Dunworth (Granagh), J. Keane (Herbertstown) M. Moloney (Monegae), J. Toomey (Croom), J. Leo (Bruff), M. McCormack (Manister)

GREAT GAEL IN EVERY FIBRE.

A great Gael in every fibre of his being, John Quinlan never lost contact with the homeland. When news of the 1916 Insurrection reached him he gloried in the events of that inspiring Easter Week and vowed that if ever the opportunity offered he would take his place in the fight for national independence.

He helped the physical force movement by every means at his disposal, and as the fight against the British intensified he grew restless and decided that his place was in Ireland to give any help he could in the fight against the ancient enemy.

In May, 1920, he bade good bye to his American friends and set out from New York on one of the great liners of the North German Line, his destination, Grange, Co. Limerick.

Immediately on arrival he threw himself fully into the fight. Around the old familiar hills of Grange and romantic Loug Gur, where his knowledge of history and tradition told him the Fianna had often drilled and hunted in the early days of our nationhood, John lost no time in perfecting his military knowledge and training himself to become a useful soldier of the Irish Republican Army.

FIGURED IN SEVERAL HOT ENGAGEMENTS.

The Volunteers were then in regular action, and armed clashes with the forces of the British Crown were becoming more and more frequent. John figured in several hot engagements, proving his courage and enterprise in no uncertain manner.

One of the most respected and enthusiastic members of the Flying Column, it was only natural that when one of the leading officers of the column fell into enemy hands in November, 1920 that John should be immediately promoted to the vacant rank.

He devoted himself very seriously to the task of procuring arms and ammunition and his fertile brain was ever devising ways and channels of capturing from the British the much needed means of continuing the fight against foreign aggression.

DIED FIGHTING FOR IRELAND

John Quinlan died fighting for Ireland. In the great attack on Caherguillamore his comrades last saw him with his rifle gripped tightly, going into action against the age-old foe.

A fine tribute to his memory appeared in the American Press of the period:

"To those of us who knew him, who had worked with him during the years in which he had striven to achieve the cause which he loved dearer than life, the news of his death came as a stunning blow. We know that we should not grieve—rather should we glory—that he has achieved the purpose for which he returned to the land of his birth."

"John Quinlan was essentially an Irishman of the type which, during the last generation has emerged in ever increasing numbers from the schools and colleges of Ireland and has become the great and dynamic force from which the various movements for the uplifting of the race derive their strength. To describe him is to describe them all; to understand him is to know that the freedom of Ireland is founded upon a rock of such immovable strength that not even the strongest and greatest force ever created by man can prevail against it."

"He was clean and pure of thought. He was generous and big-hearted, fiercely intolerant of everything mean and petty and whenever there was hard work to be done in connection with the various organisations in which he was active he was always willing and eager to be allotted the hardest and most thankless task."

THE FRIENDS OF IRISH**FREEDOM.**

"The Proclamation of the Irish Republic in Easter Week and the subsequent bloody suppression re-awakened in the hearts of Americans of Irish blood the love for Dark Rosaleen, and led to the growth of the friends of Irish freedom. Quinlan was one of the faithful few who had worked and hoped for the Irish Republic during the dark days when it was yet but a name—a secret to be locked deep into the hearts of Irishmen such as he. He threw himself heart and soul into the new movement and was one of the founders of the Padraig Pearse Branch—the first in the City of New York. He also helped to found St. Enda's Branch of the Gaelic League. He spoke of the possibility of the loss of liberty or life before he left America and quite calmly and without a bit of fear added that in any event he would leave no unprovided dependants."

"John Quinlan followed Pearse, Ashe, and McSwiney without regret. He would have wished nothing more than to die as he did—face to face with the enemy of his country, as he felt that his place in the gap of danger would be continually filled by Irishmen of similar calibre."

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