

No. 137—PADDY BARRY Of Boher

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

WHEN Limerick won the All-Ireland title of 1918 there was great rejoicing by Shannonside because of the fact that a period of twenty-one years had elapsed since Kilfinane put the one and only previous Limerick inscription on the hurling Roll of Honour.

The Castleconnell lads had fought hard in 1910 and 1911, and experienced hard luck of an unbending variety in the two All-Ireland finals for which they qualified. These disappointing experiences meant a set-back to the game and deprived some of the greatest of Limerick hurlers of honour they so richly deserved.

Paddy Barry signalled his entry to the hurling limelight with some fine schoolday performances that won recognition from the college authorities to such an extent that he captained the Munster side which, in 1914, won the All-Ireland Colleges' championship, after two exciting and epic struggles with Leinster.

We next find him shining at football, and with Fermoy he figured in some thrilling tussles, at a period when the Blackwater area was very much to the fore in this code. They fought the Cork senior finals of 1914 and 1915 but failed to overcome the great teams then coming out from the city in the colours of the Lees and Nils.

PLAYED AGAINST FINE FOOTBALLERS

Paddy, in those games, played against fine footballers like Billie Mackessy, who figured in seven All-Ireland finals, hurling and football, in a space of ten years; Murty Shea, who cycled seventy-five miles for every game the Lees played and the same distance after the match to his school in Adrigole; the grand Mehigans, Mick and Denny, and Billie O'Neill of the Lees, whilst Nils had men equally as famous in Sean Og Murphy, Pdraig O Caoimh, Tommy Riordan and Jack Young.

On his return to Limerick, Paddy was selected to play for the county in the Munster Junior Football Championship of 1916 but was unable to turn out, and lost a Munster medal, for Shannonside won the title that year and were unlucky to be beaten by Dublin on a re-play, in the All-Ireland final.

BACK TO HURLING CODE

His allegiance switched back to the hurling code in 1917, when he lined out with Boher against Caherline in the county senior championship. The date was June 17th, and Caherline won the game, 7-3 to 6-1. Boher, however, objected to the constitution of the winning team and must have had their information correct, because they were awarded the match.

They were later beaten by Newcastle West, 2-4 to 2-1, at Pallas-

kenry—a very good performance considering that the men from the western capital later won the county title and piloted Limerick to the great All-Ireland win of 1918.

Paddy Barry made his debut in Limerick senior hurling colours on July 8th, 1917, when he lined out with the Castleconnell selection against Midleton (Cork) in the opening game of the Munster championship, at the Markets Field. It proved a very exciting contest, which was generally rated one of the fastest and most scientific expositions of the national pastime witnessed at the venue for many a day. Limerick won 5-8 to 7-1, the wearers of the green and white being:—J. Ryan (goal), J. "Tyler" Mackey, P. Vaughan, J. Keane, M. Doherty, Sean Carroll (Castleconnell), Denis Lanigan, Paddy McInerney, Willie Gleeson (Young Ireland), Paddy Flaherty (Rathkeale), Willie Hough (Monegag), Paddy Barry (Boher), Willie Ryan (Cappamore), Dick Ryan (Pallas), Jim Murnane (Bruff).

MUNSTER FINAL

The Munster final was played at Cork on September the 2nd, when seven thousand spectators witnessed a great tussle for the laurels. Limerick and Tipperary were the contestants; the lead changed hands several times and even scores (3-4 all) was a fitting result. The re-play took place at the same venue on Oct. 7th, when Tipperary won 6-4 to 3-1. The gam was not up to the standard of the previous meeting, yet it provided some thrilling passages.

Limerick had revenge early the following season when in the Munster final of the National Aid Hurling Tournament, played at the Markets Field on March 24th they beat Tipperary 2-2 to 2-0.

A few weeks later Limerick had a good win over Waterford in the opening round of the Munster championship and qualified for another tilt at Tipperary. The pair met at the Markets Field on July 7th and after a thrilling, closely-contested tussle the game ended with honours even — each side having scored 5 goals and 3 points.

In preparation for the replay, the Limerick team went to Foynes for special training — the late Mr. James Dalton being appointed to take charge.

THINGS GETTING HOT ON NATIONAL FRONT

Meantime, things were getting hot on the National front and All G.A.A. games were now prohibited by the British authorities except under permit from the R.I.C.

The Central Council were quick with a counter move. They proclaimed August 4th a Gaelic Sunday and ordered that every club in the Association play a game without this permission on that

day. Fifteen hundred such games were arranged all over Ireland at which big crowds attended. There was no interference from the authorities anywhere and the ban was broken.

A fortnight later, the replayed semi-final of the championship took place at Cork Athletic Grounds, where after a splendid struggle Limerick emerged winners by a solitary point, 3-0 to 2-2.

The Munster final took place at Thurles on September 15th and resulted in an easy win for the Garryowen lads, the final score reading: Limerick, 11-3; Clare, 1-2. Mr. Tom Semple refereed, and the winning fifteen were: W. Hough, P. Kennedy, D. Ryan, M. Rochford, D. Troy, T. McGrath, D. Lanigan, P. McInerney, W. Gleeson, J. Keane, P. Barry, R. McConkey, W. Ryan, J. Humphries, M. Murphy.

THE ALL-IRELAND FINAL

Limerick had Galway as visitors to the Markets Field for the All-Ireland semi-final on September 29th and won comfortably.

In preparation for the Blue Riband decider the Limerick lads had good wins over both Cork and Dublin, and Croke Park was visited on Sunday, January, 26th, 1919 for the All-Ireland triumph that came after a lapse of twenty-one years. Limerick beat Wexford that day, 9-5 to 1-3, with Willie Walsh of Waterford the referee.

It could not be classed with the great games that have been played for the Blue Riband of Irish hurling, and despite the grim determination of the Wexfordmen, Limerick were early masters of the situation, the verdict being never in doubt. The team was the same as beat Clare in the Munster final.

For the 1919 championship, Limerick beat Clare in the opening round at Ennis Show Grounds, 6-6 to 4-1, but were themselves beaten by Cork in the Munster final, played at the Markets Field, 3-5 to 1-6. Despite the fact that no special trains were permitted, close on twenty thousand people paid £800 to see that Cork victory.

SPECIAL TOURNAMENT.

In the semi-finals of a special tournament to help the County Infirmary, Limerick beat Clare 7-3 to 3-3 and Cork beat Tipperary 1-3 to 1-2. Ten thousand spectators saw the final on November 2nd, when Limerick reversed the championship verdict, beating Cork 6-3 to 3-1.

Limerick beat Waterford, at Dungarvan, 10-3 to nil, in the opening round of the 1920 Munster championship, and were fixed to meet Tipperary in the semi-final, at Cork Athletic Grounds on August 8th. The Rebel City being under Martial Law, the game had to be transferred to Riverstown. The Limerick team and officials travelled by charabanc, as no trains were running due to the patriotic stand of the railway employees, who refused to work trains on which members of the British Forces of Occupation attempted to travel.

Most Rev. Dr. Mannix was expected to arrive at Cobh that week end and photographs of him were worn by the Limerick men, but were torn off by the military at Charleville.

In Patrick Street, Cork the Limerick charabanc skidded and struck one of the supporting pillars of the porch outside the Victoria Hotel, and a loud crash of the ironwork announced that the boys from Garryowen had arrived.

A big crowd saw the game, which Limerick won well, 5-7 to 3-3.

A DAY OF MOURNING.

The Munster Final between Cork and Limerick was fixed for Thurles on August 29th, but postponed owing to the fact that Cork's Lord Mayor—Terence McSwiney—was on hunger strike in Brixton Prison. As a token of sympathy no G.A.A. games were played during the period of the fast, which ended with the death of the heroic patriot on October 25th after 73 days protest. Sunday, 31st October, was observed by G.A.A. clubs as a day of mourning, and no games were played.

Many of our players abandoned the hurley for the rifle during this stirring period in Irish history, and it was April 2nd, 1922, before Cork and Limerick eventually met in that final of the 1920 Munster Championship, Cork winning 3-4 to 0-5. Two months later, the same teams met in the 1921 final played at Thurles, when Limerick won, 5-2 to 1-2.

Paddy Barry had played in all these games for Limerick right on from 1917, and it was hard luck indeed when illness prevented him participating in the 1921 All-Ireland final, in which Dublin were defeated.

The following year found Paddy in the Metropolis and he hurled for two seasons in Dublin colours before moving for a spell to the Aran Islands, where he formed a hurling team of Irish speakers and did useful work towards the propagation of hurling there.