

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

OFF to America in a fortnight's time, as guest of the Limerickmen's Association of New York, is Mick Mackey, whom many good judges regard as the greatest hurler Ireland has produced.

On such a momentous subject opinions must differ widely, and county and provincial affiliations play a part. Corkmen of the old school still regard Jamesy Kelleher as the most remarkable of a long line of great hurling men. In Tipperary there are many claimants to the mantle—the Mahers, the Leahys, Martin Kennedy, Phil Cahill, to mention but a few. Lory Meagher would probably dispute with the Walshs, the Graces and the Doyleys for Kilkenny's crown. But above and beyond them all, the men that saw Mick Mackey hurl maintain he had a glamour and attraction that was all his own.

I remember meeting, some years ago, a man whose religious beliefs were not those of the majority and who admitted to me that the only break in a lifetime of strict Sabbatarian observance was "a visit to Croke Park one memorable Sunday afternoon to see Mick Mackey hurl."

It would be impossible to adequately cover Mick's hurling career in the scope of a single article. In view of the great interest aroused in his coming visit to New York, and mindful of the unique honour this invitation conveys, I am departing from usual practice in this series by devoting a few weeks to the hurling and football deeds of the mighty Mick.

A TRIBUTE IN VERSE.

These deeds have been honoured in song and story, and I cannot do better than open with a little tribute in verse, written by Tadhg O'Donnchadha of Doon, and which is set to the air of another great hurling ballad, "The Bould Thady Quill."

I

In Lim'rick's fair County—not far from that city—

Was born a hero if ever was one.

He was cordial and jovial, an "artist" at hurling,
His name is Mick Mackey from far-famed Ahane.

Sure he showed all how scoring was "easy"

By crashin' his way through every defence,
He adopted the solo, applied it with "gusto."

And soon his opponents were "taking offence."

Chorus

For ramblin', for rovin', for foot-

ball or hurlin'
There was no one to equal our hero at play,

May his name be remembered,
his deeds be registered,

And happy his life to the end of his day.

2.

In the year thirty-three, in his first hurling final,

'Twas played 'gainst Kilkenny—those men by the Nore—

A point was the margin, defeat was the verdict,

But Mick he showed signs of great things to be sure.

Then thirty-four brought fame and good fortune

To staunch Garryowen and the old Treaty Stone,

The All-Ireland was captured,
but the man who helped to take it,

Was our hero, Mick Mackey,
from far-famed Ahane.

Chorus.

3.

For fifteen years or more — the pride of all Lim'rick —

His fame it did spread through-out Erin's green "shore,"

When our county was down and inclined to be beaten,

'Twas: "Come on, Mackey! and give us a score."

Oh, who will forget the nineteen-forty final,

Kilkenny fought hard and caused us to fear,

But our darlin', Mick Mackey,
his boots he discarded,

And soon all Lim'rick resounded in cheer.

Chorus.

(4)

He travelled "the States," and gave exhibitions,

He's remembered by all who his hurling did see,

In Melbourne and Sydney and 'way off in Dixi,

His name it is sung even down to this day.

Now here's a toast to our greatest hurler,

Forever and ever may he with us be!

From his inspiration may come restoration

Of Lim'rick's proud honour and former glory!

Chorus.

RECORD IN TABLOID FORM.
GREAT OIREACHTAS WIN.

In tabloid form I give Mick Mackey's record on hurling and football fields.

Captain of the Limerick teams that won the All-Ireland finals of 1936 and 1940, he also helped in winning the 1934 title.

Mick has five Munster medals, won in 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1940.

He was a member of the Limerick team that won the National Hurling League five years in succession—1934 to 1938 inclusive, the only county ever to win five league titles in a row.

Mick played in nine Railway Cup hurling finals, and won on eight occasions. He was unfortunate that his side were beaten by a point in 1936, but captained the team to a great victory the following year.

He has eight Thomond Tournament medals, inscribed for 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1940, 1944, and 1945. Limerick were in America when the 1936 final was played, and a second string represented the County in that year's competition.

In addition to the great American tour, Mick was overseas on hurling trips on four other occasions—playing each time in London for the Ward Cup. In 1934 they beat Dublin there; in 1935 and 1937 Kilkenny were overcome, and in 1938 Tipperary proved the masters.

A great Oireachtas win was registered by Limerick in 1939, when they beat the Kilkenny team that had caused the sensation of that season by defeating Cork in a thrilling All-Ireland final. Mick Captained that Limerick team.

It would be impossible to tabulate all the big tournament wins Mick figured in with both Ahane and Limerick, but it must go on record that he played all through one of the most wonderful spells in modern hurling story, and proved the leading man in some of the great victories that helped Limerick write a hurling epic that may never be equalled.

I can only very briefly touch on that remarkable performance here. From October 15th, 1933, to April 24th, 1938—a period of four and a half years—Limerick played sixty-five games, meeting all the leading hurling counties. They won fifty-eight of them, drew four and lost three. That's a record that's going to take some beating!

I will try and recall some of the tournament successes. With Ahane, one of the finest trophies was the splendid John Daly Cup medal; whilst 1916 memorial and Aonach Kincora trophies were other hard-won laurels.

In County colours 1934 saw a big win over Galway, at Ennis, for the Cusack Cup. They won a set of suit lengths by beating Cork, 4-3 to 2-5, at Fermoy. That was a very bad day of thunder and lightning, and the last occa-

sion the far famed "Gah" Aherne donned the Cork jersey. To win the Hospitals Trust medals, at Croke Park, Limerick beat Dublin, 6-9 to 1-2. Another set of suit lengths came at Newport, where Limerick beat Kilkenny, 9-7 to 6-2. As far as I can remember that was the second big Limerick win in a final at the popular North Tipperary centre.

GAMES PLAYED ON FORMER AMERICAN TOUR.

For the benefit of American readers, anxious to recall Mick's previous appearance across the Atlantic, here are the games played on that tour:—

May 17th, 1936, at New York—Limerick, 3-7; New York, 2-3.

May 24th, 1936, at New York—Limerick, 6-3; New York, 0-8.

May 31st, 1936, at Boston — Limerick, 9-4; Massachusetts, 2-2.

On the home front, Mick also kept up the collecting habit, and picked up what must be a near record number of County Championship medals. Starting off with a minor souvenir, he added a pair of junior ones before winning the Senior County hurling title no less than fifteen times—1931, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, and 1948.

And for good measure he added five senior County football mementos—the years 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939.

That's sufficient to digest, I think, for the present. More next week.

MICK MACKEY was just fourteen years old when the present Ahane Club was established, at a meeting held on November 22nd, 1926.

He was too young then to play on the team but was often to be seen on the practice ground at Knockentry. Not until September 1928, however, was Mick first asked to wear the club colours.

It was a memorable occasion, as it marked the opening of one of the first Gaelic Grounds, with the exception of Croke Park, to be completely owned by the G.A.A.

The Ennis Road field was a rough and ready affair as Mick saw it that evening—little different from many of the badly enclosed, ill equipped pitches that then did duty in any of the parishes lucky to have even such an amenity. As his father and grandfather often did in the old days, it was a case of "togging off" by the side of a ditch for Mick and his team mates.

Two junior hurling games served to open the new grounds. In the first, South Liberties proved victors over young Ireland, and Ahane got on the winning road when they gained the verdict over Fedamore.

A PROUD DAY.

It was a proud day for Mick Mackey, as he had long hoped for a place on the team, and felt highly pleased that he had helped in gaining a win that was eagerly sought in Ahane and which marked a turning point in the fortunes of the team.

He still recalls the occasion with particular affection, and tells how Pat O'Reilly, now Chairman of the County Board, was Ahane goalkeeper, whilst Paddy Scanlan and Timmy Ryan made an excellent midfield partnership.

Ahane had their toughest game that season in the next round, and only survived the Bohermore challenge by a solitary point, 2-1 to 2-0. Opposing Mick Mackey on that occasion, as centre halfback for the losers, was Paddy Keogn, a veteran with a great hurling record, whose son, Jim, helped Limerick win Munster honours last year.

On June 16th, 1929, first championship honours came to Ahane and Mick Mackey, when Kilmeedy were defeated, 5-1 to 2-2, in the 1928 County junior hurling final.

When Ahane beat Cappamore, 1-8 to 1-2, in the Intermediate Championship of 1929, they defeated almost the identical team that contested the 1929 County senior hurling final with Croom later that season.

FAMOUS PARTNERSHIP.

The famous partnership between John and Mick Mackey was introduced on August 4th, 1929, when they helped to defeat Patrickswell in the County Minor Hurling Championship.

The following Sunday they wore the County jersey for the first time, when they were on the Limerick side that played Waterford minors, at Dungarvan.

R. Lyddy, now a member of the Corporation, captained the Limerick team that day, the other members being: P. Condon, M. Cregan, P. O'Shaughnessy, T. Kelly, M. Buckley, J. Ryan, D. Kirby, D. Hurley, J. Mackey, M. Mackey, J. J. Egan, P. McMahon, T. Flavin, M. Hickey.

The Waterford lads won—and went on to take the All-Ireland title, the team including Jacky and Declan Goode, J. Curley, D. Wyse, P. Lannon and F. Pinkert—the latter pair afterwards colleagues of Mick Mackey, as members of the Munster Council G.A.A.

Limerick minor hurling honours come to Ahane on August 3rd, 1930, when they beat Doon, at Cappamore, after a gruelling struggle.

When the intermediate championships were abolished in 1930, Ahane were allowed return to junior ranks, and with successes over Mungret, Ballybrown, Young Ireland, St. Patricks, Caherline, Templeglantine and Bruree, won

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HIS FIRST SENIOR MATCH.

Mick's first senior match was against Claughaun, in a challenge game at the Markets Field, the only occasion he played at that venue, scene of some of his father's greatest triumphs. His opponent was Micky Cross, then at the peak of a great hurling career.

His first championship outing in premier ranks was against Treaty. Played at Cappamore, the Ahane lads won 7-5 to 2-2. An objection threatened to deprive them of victory, but a replay was agreed upon, and this was fixed for the Ennis Road Grounds—the date, August 17th, 1930.

Torrential rain fell all through that game, and All-Ireland hurler Denny Lanigan, who refereed, equipped himself with a huge umbrella, making an unusual sight as he moved up and down the pitch.

Ahane won, and met Claughaun in the next round at Cappamore, to draw, 3-1 each. They won the replay, at Croom, 6-5 to 1-1—a fine achievement, as Claughaun included some great hurling figures—J. J. Kinnane and M. Cross, both of whom had represented Ireland against America at the Tailteann Games; Dan Troy, playing his last game after a dozen glorious hurling years, Joe ("Twager") O'Grady and Tom McGrath.

Heavy rains caused the postponement of the divisional final against Young Ireland, but the refixture encountered somewhat similar conditions, and the start was delayed by torrential rain, with intermittent thunder peals and vivid lightning.

A THRILLING GAME.

It proved a thrilling game, full of life, dash and scientific hurling, which Young Ireland won, 5-4 to 5-2, thus inflicting the first championship defeat on Ahane since they struck their winning vein in September, 1928.

That Young Ireland side was probably the greatest ever to represent the famous Club, including as it did, Jim Houlihan and the Mullane brothers of the Clare County team; Tommy O'Brien, who won the first National Hurling League title with Cork; Paddy Kenneally (Cork), Sean Kelly, Jim Fitzgerald, John O'Dowd, the O'Sheas, Jack Cusack, Gerry Markham, Paddy O'Shaughnessy and Bill O'Donoghue, later one of Ireland's best hurling referees.

Mick was a member of the Limerick Junior hurling team that drew with Tipperary 4-7 all, in the Munster Championship of 1930, played at Clonmel. "We were unlucky that day," Mick recalls, "and our forwards missed some great openings."

Tipperary won the re-play, at Limerick, 5-4 to 2-5, and went on to take All-Ireland honours, collecting the Triple Crown, as the minors and seniors also won, the only county ever to accomplish this feat. The Limerick players that day were:—J. Ryan (goal), J. Kirby, J. Fitzgerald, E. O'Brien, J. Kennedy, M. Mackey, W. O'Neill, J. Shanny, W. Ryan, M. Costelloe, Tim Ryan, Martin Ryan, M. Russell, M. Quinlivan, M. Danaher.

WENT AS SPECTATOR BUT PLAYED.

Mick Mackey went as a spectator to Limerick Gaelic Grounds on November 16th, 1930, to see Limerick play Kilkenny in the National Hurling League. The Shannonsiders were short, and he was induced to play, wearing a senior Co. jersey for the first time. Kilkenny included most of the players that afterwards figured in the three great games with Cork for the 1931 All-Ireland title, and won 3-4 to 0-3.

Mick recalls his colleagues of that occasion: Bob McConkey, Micky Fitzgibbon, Tommy O'Brien (Young Ireland); Willie Gleeson, Paddy Clohosey, Tom Shinney (Fedamore); Chris Ryan, T. Slattery (Dallacree); Tom McCarthy (Kil-

finane), Willie Hannon (Kilmallock), Micky Cross (Caughaun), Timmy Ryan (Ahane), Ned Cregan (Newcastle West) and Mick Hough (Dublin Young Irelands)—a native of Monegal.

One of his first tournament medals was that secured at Abington, with victories over Ballybricken and Cappamore. The Tournament was organised to aid the Benedictine Fathers of Glenstal Castle, who had some time earlier bought the ancestral home of the Barringtons, for conversion to a monastery.

One of the sweetest Ahane successes of the early club-days was the defeat of the reigning champions, Young Ireland, in the opening round of the 1931 County senior hurling championship. They followed up with victories over Hospital, Treaty and Croom, to win the first of fifteen senior finals in which Mick figured.

Paddy Scanlan captained that winning Ahane team, the other members of which were: D. O'Malley, M. McDonagh, P. Hilliard, J. Mackey, M. Mackey, Anthony Mackey, Tim Ryan, J. Ryan, M. Ryan, E. O'Brien, M. Hickey, P. Joyce, E. McDonagh, M. Quinlan.

The Limerick championship won, Ahane then set about asserting their superiority in the club tournament games which were such a feature of the Munster year at the period.

In the Newport Tournament, for a silver cup and set of gold medals, presented by Very Rev. Father Condon, P.P., Ahane beat Templederry, drew with Newport in the final, but lost the replay, 19 points to 13.

Mick Mackey, speaking of the games, agreed they were right tough ones—hard fought, with no quarter given or looked for. The replay with Newport was a particularly strenuous affair—a battle royal between close neighbours. "Newport had a great team then," Mick said, "but Clonoulty beat them in the Tipperary title race."

When Ahane beat a strong West Limerick selection at the Newcastle West Feis, 5-7 to 3-6, Mick was playing in an unusual position—right half-back.

Ahane figured prominently in the first big effort to raise funds for the development of the Limerick Gaelic Grounds, the organisation of Aonach Kincoira—a joint venture under G.A.A. and Gaelic League auspices that attracted a total attendance of 17,324, with receipts £1,361 17s. 6d.

THE FINAL.

The hurling final for the Aonach trophies resulted in a heavy reverse for Ahane, Newmarket-on-Fergus beating them 7-3 to 2-7.

That defeat was avenged in decisive fashion a little later. Ahane showed brilliant form in beating Toomevara, 2-3 to 1-4, at Ennis Show Grounds in the Maghera Church Tournament semi-final. The Tipperary lads were at the height of their fame and included noted hurlers like Tom O'Meara, Martin Kennedy, Garrett Howard and Jack Gleeson.

Newmarket-on-Fergus opposed them in the final, played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds, which Ahane won, 5-4 to 1-2. That was the first great Ahane tournament success.

Next week I hope to deal with Limerick's rise to inter-county greatness, and the part Mick Mackey played in same.

14th April 1956

A REMARKABLE feature of Ahane's second junior hurling championship's success was the fact that the team played five games in the space of seven weeks—March 8th, 1931, beat Young Irelands, 9-4 to 3-1, at the Gaelic Grounds; March 15th, beat St. Patrick's, 4-8 to 1-4, at Herbert's Field, Sallymount; March 22nd, beat Caherline, 8-4 to 5-0, at Gaelic Grounds; April 12th, Co. Semi-Final, beat Templeglantine, 11-1 to 3-0, at Croom; April 19th, Co. Final, beat Bruree, 8-5 to 1-3, at Croom.

Mick Mackey was injured in the match with Templeglantine, and did not play in the final, when the Ahane team was:—P. O'Shea, P. Hilliard, M. McDonagh, J. Ryan, M. Ryan, M. Quinlivan, E. McDonagh, J. Mackey, P. Joyce, J. Burns, P. O'Brien, T. Ryan, M. Hourigan, E. Delaney, M. Hickey.

Limerick opened 1932 with a great display against Tipperary, at Kilmallock, in the Jim Riordan Testimonial Tournament Final, on February 21st. Tipperary fielded the bulk of the players that had won All-Ireland honours in 1930, and a draw was a fitting result to an exciting and hard-fought game. The Shannonside fifteen was:—T. Shinney, T. Ryan, M. Cross, J. Kelly, M. Mackey, T. McCarthy, P. Joyce, D. Clohessy, P. Clohessy, M. Liston, J. Ryan, M. Fitzgibbon, J. Mackey, M. Haran, T. O'Brien.

In the re-play at the same venue on April 10th, Tipperary won, 4-2 to 3-3.

FEIS SEMI-FINAL AND FINAL

Limerick had revenge on May 1st, when in the semi-final of the Thomond Feis competition they beat the Premier County men, 5-4 to 4-1. In the second semi-final Clare caused quite a sensation by defeating Cork, all-Ireland champions, 4-3 to 3-4.

The Feis final on June 12th proved one of the outstanding games of the period. Three quarter way through Limerick forged ahead but Clare fought back in sterling fashion and were fighting hard for a winning goal when the long whistle brought relief to a sorely tried but brilliant Limerick back line.

This was the first big Limerick success with the team, which made such hurling history in after years, and Mick's first inter-county medal. The names of that fifteen will be recalled with interest:—Paddy Scanlan (goal), D. O'Malley, P. Clohessy, T. Ryan, J. Lane, M. Mackey, M. Fitzgibbon, T. O'Brien, M. Hough, John Roche, Jim Roche, E. Cregan, M. Cross, P. Joyce, D. Clohessy.

LIMERICK ROSE TO GREAT HEIGHTS.

Mick Mackey rates that final one of the most exciting of his early games, and feels that Limerick, who won 2-6 to 2-4, rose to great heights that evening. Clare subsequently proved their worth by winning the Munster title, but were narrowly beaten by a great Kilkenny team in

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the Blue Riband decider.

Limerick beat Tipperary, 4-2 to 1-5, in the opening round of the Munster Championships, at Cork. Mick Mackey was playing on John Maher that day, the latter being flanked by two of Ireland's best half-backs of the period—Phil Purcell and Garrett Howard.

The Cork-Limerick semi-final clash attracted a great crowd to Thurles on July 17th, and they were rewarded with one of the best games of many seasons, the Leesiders forging ahead in the concluding stages of a terrific struggle, to win, 5-4 to 3-5. Highlight of the day were the duels between Mick Mackey and Cork's great centre-half-back, Jim Regan.

CORK A BIG OPPOSITION.

"Cork were All-Ireland champions at the time," Mick recalls. "They had defeated Kilkenny in a second re-play of the 1931 final, and with four Blue Ribands in the preceding six years to their credit it was certainly no disgrace to be beaten by them."

Timmy Ryan captained the Limerick team, Paddy Scanlan was in goal. Those two, with Mick Mackey, Paddy Joyce and Denis O'Malley made five Ahane men on the side. Young Ireland with Micky Fitzgibbon, Bob McConkey, and Tommy O'Brien, and Fedamore with Tommy McCarthy, Paddy and Dave Clohese, had three apiece; the remaining positions being filled by Ned Cregan and John Roche (Newcastle West) Micky Cross (Claughaun) and Mick Hough (Young Irelands, Dublin), John Mackey (Ahane), and Christy O'Brien (Cappamore) came on as subs. during the course of the game.

A record crowd for a first round game were at Croom to see Ahane defend their title against the 1931 champions, Young Ireland.

A GREAT GAME.

Mick remembers it as "a great game in which no quarter was given or sought. It was a good, sporting tussle withal. Ahane appeared to have matters well under control at the interval, when we led, 2-3 to 1-0.

"The second half was not long under way, however, before it was apparent we were up against it, and ten minutes from the end a great goal by veteran Bob McConkey, scored almost from the corner flag, put Young Ireland ahead for the first time, to eventually beat us 6-1 to 2-5. That was the only hurling championship defeat we suffered between 1931 and 1940."

The teams that exciting day were: Young Ireland—Micky Fitzgibbon (captain), Jim Fitzgerald (goal), P. O'Shaughnessy, J. Kelly, M. O'Shea, G. Markham, M. Kennedy, P. Kennedy, J. Mullane, J. O'Dowd, T. O'Brien, R. McConkey, W. O'Donoghue, J. O'Shea, T. Mullane. Ahane—Timmy Ryan (captain), Paddy Scanlan (goal), J. Ryan, M. Ryan,

M. Mackey, J. Mackey, D. O'Malley, J. Moloney, D. Givens, P. Joyce, E. McDonagh, M. McDonagh, M. Hickey, E. O'Brien, M. Quinlivan, M. Aherne.

TOURNAMENT OUTINGS.

Ahane were more successful in their tournament outings. With victories over Adare and Fedamore, they won the second Aonach Kinvara Tournament trophies, and then went on to take the 1916 Memorial Cup and Medals, defeating Eire Og (Cork) in the semi-final and Newmarket-on-Fergus (Clare) in the final.

In the semi-final of the Rath Luirc Tournament they had a good win over Cork's Nemo Rangers, and met Glen Rovers, then coming into the Cork championship limelight, in the final. It proved a right tough struggle, and Ahane were ahead, 2-3 to 2-2, ten minutes from time when a dispute arose and the game was abandoned. A replay was eventually agreed upon, which Ahane won, 3-5 to 2-2.

Dealing with the National Hurling League campaign of that season, in which Limerick contested the final with Kilkenny, Mick told me the opening game was a most exciting one. Their opponents were Tipperary and the venue was Thurles. It was a very bad day, but those that braved the elements were treated to a thrilling tussle, which Limerick won by a solitary point.

Three weeks later, Galway beat Limerick, at Tuam, 4-2 to 3-3, after a first-class contest, with excitement intense throughout. Mick was not playing on that occasion, being laid up with a heavy cold.

HOME GAMES.

The next two games were home ones, Limerick disposing of Offaly, 7-2 to 3-3, and Clare (Munster champions), 4-2 to 2-2.

A play-off was necessary to decide divisional honours. This took place at Limerick and resulted: Limerick 3-2, Tipperary 1-1.

"We thus qualified to meet Kilkenny in the National League final," Mick told me. "The game took place at Nowlan Park, on April 9th, 1933. Great interest centered in our meeting and a huge Limerick crowd made the trip. I was playing left-half forward that day, and had as opponent, Paddy Phelan.

"Limerick opened very strongly and had most of the play for twenty minutes, but our forward work was very faulty. Then Micky Cross, playing a great game, was injured and had to retire, and Kilkenny forged ahead by the interval, 1-4 to 1-0.

"On the turnover, we cut the leeway, Timmy Ryan sending a pair of lovely points. Then Micky Fitzgibbon had to go off with an injury and our defences collapsed, Kilkenny winning readily, 3-8 to 1-3.

THE NORESIDE TEAM.

"Eddie Doyle captained that Nore-side team, which included many players we were to meet often-times in after years: Paddy Larkin, Peter O'Reilly, "Sag" Carroll, Paddy Phelan, Paddy and Eddie Byrne, Lory Meagher, Timmy Leahy, Johnny Dunne, hero of the 1933 All-Ireland final, Martin and Matty Power.

"Timmy Ryan was Limerick's captain; Paddy Scanlan gave a wonderful display in goals. Our full-backs were: Ned Cregan, Tommy McCarthy and D. O'Malley, Paddy Clohese, Micky Cross, and Micky Fitzgibbon manned the half-back line and when the latter pair were injured their places were taken by P. Joyce and J. J. Moloney.

"My brother, John, partnered Timmy Ryan at midfield, and with me in the forward line were M. Quinlivan and C. O'Brien. Our top forwards were D. Clohese, M. Ryan and M. Hough.

"That was my first introduction to really big hurling and, although beaten that day, we won the next five National League titles in a row, and John helped Limerick to six League successes—the only hurler to win six National League medals."

HEAVY defeat at the hands of Kilkenny, in that first great National Hurling League final in which Limerick figured, by no means discouraged the hurlers, who set about in earnest preparation for their Munster Championship campaign.

The situation at that time bears a striking similarity to the position of Limerick hurling just now, one of the reasons why I am dealing in such detail with the events of that period in the hope that as well as recalling the glories of Limerick during the years when Mick Mackey was in his heyday, the example of that great team will prove an inspiration to the lads of to-day, who have every opportunity of following in their footsteps.

A great Limerick crowd made the journey to Thurles on May 28th, 1933, where Clare were due to meet the Shannonsiders in the opening round of the Munster Championship. The Banner County lads were the holders of the title and big interest centered in the match.

MEMORABLE FEATURE.

A memorable feature was the chartering of a special express train to bring two players, who were engaged in a Dublin Championship tie at Croke Park that morning, to the venue. They were Jim Houlihan (Clare) and Christy O'Brien (Limerick), who also played on opposing sides in the Metropolitan game.

The match proved a disappointing affair, entirely devoid of thrills, Limerick dismissing the champions with surprising and consummate ease, the final score reading: Limerick, 6-8; Clare, 1-1. Mick Mackey was playing on Dr. Jim Hogan, a fine strong hurler and good long distance striker, who captained the U.C.D. team that won the Dublin Championship the following year. Thirty thousand people were at Thurles for the semi-final, in which Limerick played Cork. Murroe born Archbishop Harty, Patron of the G.A.A., threw in the ball, after addressing a few words of encouragement to the players.

Cork fielded a very strong fifteen that included hurling masters of the calibre of Jim Regan, Jim Hurley, Denny Barry Murphy, George Garrett and "Fox" Collins.

A right hard game it proved, with the standard of hurling high. Limerick won, 2-9 to 1-6.

THE FINAL.

In the final at Cork Athletic Grounds, Limerick were pitted against Waterford. The Shannonsiders were clearly superior all through and outclassed the lads from the Decies to such an extent that many of the spectators were on the way home when a flare-up occurred eight minutes from the end. Spectators invaded the pitch, and with Limerick leading 3-7 to 1-2 it goes without saying that they were very anxious to finish the game. The Garryowen players helped the referee in his efforts to clear the pitch, but it was to no avail, and the match had to be abandoned. It was a disappointing ending to the Southern decider, but Limerick were awarded the title by the Munster Council and thus qualified for another meeting with the Noresiders, this occasion in the All Ireland Championship Final.

The Black and Amber lads had reached their third successive final the hard way. Four goals down at half-time in their Leinster Final battle with Dublin, they staged a remarkable recovery to win, 7-5 to 5-5. Galway then gave them a terrific match before Kilkenny emerged, 5-10 to 3-8.

A HUGE "GATE."

All sporting records to then were broken for that final—45,176 people paying to see the game, it being reckoned that another five thousand were disappointed when all gates were closed twenty minutes before play commenced. The Limerickmen, who travelled by train the previous evening, were met at Kingsbridge by representatives of the Limerick men resident in Dublin, who gave them an en-

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The Boherbuoy Band was present in Croke Park and played "Faith Of Our Fathers" as Most Rev. Dr. Collier, Bishop of Ossory, stepped on the pitch, accompanied by President de Valera, with the then Chairman of the General Council Sean McCarthy of Cork. The referee was Stephen Jordan, T.D., Galway.

It proved a wonderful struggle and a grand hurling display. The sides were neck and neck during the greater part of an hour of real hurling thrills. They were level—four points apiece at the interval. It was still anybody's game near the end of the hour, when Johnny Dunne's wonder goal—the only major score of the day—gave victory to Kilkenny. Limerick fought back determinedly in a last effort to prevent defeat but could not master the Noreside backs.

THE TEAMS.

Both teams deserve to be remembered:

Kilkenny—Eddie Doyle, capt.; Jack Dermody (goal), Johnny Dunne, Lory Meagher, Paddy Larkin, Paddy Phelan, Martin White, P. O'Reilly, P. Byrne, Tommy Leahy, E. Byrne, J. Walsh, J. Fitzpatrick, Matty Power, Martin Power. (When Jack Dermody was injured he was replaced by Jimmy O'Connell).

Limerick—Micky Fitzgibbon, capt.; Paddy Scanlan (goal), Ned Cregan, Tom McCarthy, Micky Cross, Paddy Clohessy, Garrett Howard, Timmy Ryan, Mick Ryan, John Mackey, Jim Roche, Mick Mackey, Christy O'Brien, Pat Ryan, Dave Clohessy, (Bill O'Donoghue replaced Mick Ryan, who was injured).

Veteran sports writer, Paddy Devlin, who saw almost every All-Ireland final from the foundation of the G.A.A., wrote after the game: "It was the most intensive and exciting display of hurling over the full sixty minutes of play which the majority of us who were present have ever witnessed. I have never, indeed, seen hurling exchanges so pulsating as they were in this match. The striking was first time and impromptu all the time, and the scoring so close all through that altogether it was a most nerve shattering experience for everyone of that mammoth record hosting."

OTHER REFERENCES.

Jack Rochford, the noted Kilkenny hurling old timer was so impressed with Limerick that he said after the match: "I don't know how that Limerick team was beaten. It's the best team I ever saw coming out of Munster."

The "Irish Independent" in an editorial the following morning said: "Hitherto the football final has almost invariably drawn a larger gathering than hurling. The record is now held by hurling and that is something that Gaels will be proud of."

"As long as games survive enthusiasts will argue the merits of one form of football against another. There is no argument and no room for argument in the case of hurling. It stands on its own, superb and peerless. There is no game which calls for greater speed and stamina, for more skill, judgement, self control and accuracy of eye, and therefore, apart from its traditional claims no game is better adapted than hurling to give our youth a training in the qualities that make for manliness."

GLORIOUS UNCERTAINTY.

"And it has all the glorious uncertainty that left yesterday's laurels in the balance until the last moment of the hour, the uncertainty that would doubtless make every Limerickman say if the game were to be played again to-morrow the result might be different."

"Nothing like this final has been ever seen before at Croke Park or anywhere in Ireland. It was a great game played in the spirit that animates champions who know how to play the game for the game's sake."

After the match both teams were entertained to dinner at Barry's Hotel, at a function organised by the Limerickmen's Association, and at which warm tributes were paid to the splendid sporting spirit in which the great game was decided.

Limerick successfully defended the Thomond Cup this season, defeating Clare, 6-8 to 1-2, in the semi-final, and Tipperary, 4-2 to 2-2, in the final.

In the Newport Church Tournament the Shannonsiders beat Galway, 9-5 to 2-5, and took the trophies, at the expense of Clare, who were beaten 4-8 to 1-2.

Ahane regained Limerick senior hurling championship honours, defeating Treaty, Murroe and Fedamore on their way to the final, in which they triumphed over Croom, 1-7 to 1-1, after a gruelling struggle.

Ahane also played some good football that season, and were unlucky to go out on an objection after making much progress in the fight for Junior County honours.

NATIONAL LEAGUE VICTORIES.

Limerick finished 1933 with a series of great National Hurling League victories. First outing was against Tipperary, a game characterised by plenty of pace and good stick work. Limerick success marked their seventh consecutive win over the Premier County lads—a great achievement indeed.

Offaly, Galway and Clare were disposed of in turn, and on March 25th, 1934, at Limerick Gaelic Grounds, the home fifteen lined out against Dublin for National League honours. It proved a great and exhilarating contest, close tackling and fast striking being a feature of a hard fought final which Limerick won, 3-6 to 3-3.

John Mackey was the hero of that decider, the Press paying him this tribute: "To John Mackey must be given a special meed of praise: He simply was not to be stopped. He sped like a hare along the wing, and lashed in ball after ball. Clearly Mackey won the match for Limerick, and had he been absent Limerick would not be now holders of League honours."

AN EPIC FEAT.

"His goal prior to half time was an epic feat, which will live long in memory—a snap from Scanlan's goal puck, a sharp, low cut, and the ball resting in the corner of the net. That was the fair haired boy's answer to a prolonged period of Dublin supremacy. Indeed, it was the turning point of the great contest."

Wild scenes of enthusiasm greeted the final whistle, which were renewed when Sean McCarthy, President of the G.A.A., presented the Croke Cup to the Limerick captain. The winning team on that occasion, read: Mick Kennedy, captain; Paddy Scanlan (goal), Bill O'Donoghue, Timmy Ryan, John Mackey, Mick Mackey, Mick Hickey, Ned Cregan, Micky Cross, Mick Ryan, Pat Ryan, Jim Roche, Mick Sexton, Garrett Howard, Christy O'Brien.

Next week we will see how Limerick won the Golden Jubilee All-Ireland Hurling Blue Riband, and helped materially in bringing the Railway Cup to Munster that season.

28th April 1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane (Continued)

MANY are the tributes that were paid to Mick Mackey's ability as a hurler. I could not possibly, in the space at my disposal, reproduce anything like them all, but I feel that in justice to his record, and the opinion of many that he was Ireland's greatest hurler, some should be mentioned.

One of Clare's greatest Gaels wrote me some time ago: "Mick Mackey not alone was Limerick's best hurler, but he was the best hurler of all times and Paddy Clohessy was the best centre half back of all times. I have seen every important championship match for thirty years and that is my honest opinion."

Several poems were written singing the praises of the great Limerick skipper, and a well-known South Limerick hurling enthusiast penned this one following nine great All Ireland successes, in which Mick captained the Shannonside fifteen:—

Oh! Limerick is beautiful, as everybody knows,
'Tis there the early flowerets
spring and summers' grandeur
grows,
In days of old its men were
bold and fought like heroes
then,
And their renown is handed
down to Mick Mackey and
his men.

We followed you through Munster
and we shouted for your
fame,

On Dublin's far famed pitch
we stood that bears a glorious
name,

And cheered with joy each man
and boy, each maid and
matron when

We saw the sheen of white and
green, Mick Mackey and his
men.

From Corrin's heathland slopes
we came along by Galtee-
more,

From sweet Tipperary's border
towns, away by Shannon's
shore,

From the Banner County's hills
we came around by Foynes
and Glin,

To cheer that day the grand
array of Mick Mackey and
his men.

'Twas well we knew the game
would be both fierce and
strong that day,

When the Noreside boys came
on the pitch all eager for
the fray,

Resolved were they to win their
way and gain the Crown
again,

But we said "No? 'twill surely
go to Mick Mackey and his
men."

It was a glorious sight to see,
sweet music filled the air,
The happy throng were gathered
round and had no room to
spare.

In proud parade and undis-
mayed, each side came out
to win,

We said "no doubt, 'tis coming
south to Mick Mackey and
his men."

To each and all of our gallant
band, a tribute I would pay,
The great Mick Mackey first of
all was the hero of the day,
And Paddy Scanlan, tried and
true, has proved his worth
again,

Repelled attack with lightning
crack for Mick Mackey and
his men.

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

There's a boy who hails from
Fedamore, Paddy Clohessy
is his name,

A star with lustre bright, un-
dimmed and nation-wide
his fame,

And from Knockainey's storied
mound this year a man came
in,

'Tis Tommy Cooke, with slash
and hook, for Mick Mackey
and his men.

Then Timmy Ryan at centre
field, you heard his name
before,

His prowess at the ancient game
is known from shore to
shore,

Mick Hickey, fierce and strong,
would face a lion in his den,
But he'd rather stay to win the
day with Mick Mackey and
his men.

Of Jim McJartny, Feenagh's
pride, Mick Kennedy and
Ned Chawke,

Of Peter Cregan, Jackie Power,
I'd like to sing and talk,
John Mackey and Dick Stokes,
my boys, all fought like
trojans then,

And Jim Roche, so true from
'Croom Abu,' with Mick
Mackey and his men.

Now Paddy McMahon from
Ahane, I never can forget,
A tiger in the onset bold, he's
the man to smash the net,
Then cheers for all that gallant
band again and yet again,
That great fifteen, the white
and green, Mick Mackey and
his men.

I'll go down to Castleconnell
and I'll stay for an hour or
two,

And I'll call out "Tyler" Mac-
key to some cosy rendezvous,
We won't talk of County Coun-
cils, Boards of Health or
things akin,

And make no boast but drink
a toast to Mick Mackey and
his men.

"TERRIFIC GAME."

A Limerick City reader recalls a
terrific game played in Castle-
connell during the Emergency for
a silver cup, offered by Col. Tom
Feely, O.C., 7th Brigade.

The contestants were the 7th
Brigade (All Army Champions)
and Ahane (Limerick County
champions). Mick Mackey, Philly
Burns, Paddy O'Shea, Micky
O'Grady and Jim McGrath played
with the army lads, but Ahane
won by two points.

He comments: "I'll never forget
that game. I think it was the
only time the two brothers played
on opposite sides, and I can tell
you that you saw nursing at its
best that day."

Another reader, a West Lime-
rick man, has this to say:

"Mick Mackey was the human
dynamo which motivated Ire-
land's greatest hurling machine;
his the brain which conceived
most masterly scoring moves; his
the courage which urged his
comrades to greater deeds of dar-
ing; his the cheerful spirit which
added spice to the sweets of vic-
tory, and diluted the bitter pill
of defeat; for Mackey was, de-
spite his clowning, the two ends
and middle of a gentleman. A
hundred scribes might place the
crown of victory on a hundred
different heads, but my history
would record the name of Mick
Mackey, as the High King of Ire-
land's hurling men."

OTHER TRIBUTES.

From the South we have this

tribute:
"Mick Mackey was the best
hurler that Limerick ever pro-
duced, because it can be gleaned
from his achievements that he
possessed the outstanding essen-
tials that will never be equaled,
not alone in Limerick, but
throughout Ireland, and they
were: Hurling ability, team spirit,
physical fitness, dynamic personal-
ity, and last but not least, a
mental capacity that enabled him
to be in the right place at the
right time and do the right thing
in the proper way."

And from East Limerick:—
"His uncanny ball control, the
fear with which every defence
held his powerful thrust and at-
tack, the general like manner in
which he directed a whole team,
the high esteem and loyalty of
his team mates to him at all
times, and last, but by no means
least, his personality in general,
which drew crowds wherever he
went, these are some of the
reasons that make Mick Mackey
Ireland's greatest hurler."

In one of the newspapers of
his day this appeared:—
"Mick Mackey is one of our
greatest ball players, number one
indeed in the hurling world. His
success lies, apart from a power-
ful physique, expert control, quick
eye, and keenness of anticipat-
ion in what may be called 'scoring
mentality.' Other forwards try
to score, Mick means to and
does."

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THE 1944 Munster senior hurling final re-play between Cork and Limerick was again fixed for Thurles, the date July 30th.

The crowd was once more a great one. Thurles was packed to overflowing the previous night, and the morning of the game saw another influx of vehicles that transformed the Cathedral City to something like its appearance in the infant days of the G.A.A., when the great Archbishop Croke walked its streets.

A big number of Limerick enthusiasts left the city on the Saturday and walked the forty odd miles to Thurles. Sixty-five years old Peter Ryan set off from Lisnagry, walking thirty-five miles to see the game. The spirit of the old days was never more evident in our time than in that memorable year of 1944

DRAMATIC MATCH

It was a dramatic match, as extracts from some press reports will testify.

"Green Flag," writing in the "Irish Press," said:—

"Well played Cork! Gallant winners of the Munster Hurling final replay. Hard luck, Limerick, sporting losers of a classic that thrilled thousands.

"Inquests" are unavoidable after a game such as that which held the crowd in a spell, and while everybody, including the most ardent Limerick supporters, will congratulate Cork on their magnificent rally when all seemed lost, most people will agree that it was tough on Limerick to be beaten with victory almost in their grasp.

"The 'keep the game fast' last minute advice to the Cork men played a big part in the win, which was as dramatic as any we have seen in a Munster final.

"The champions set the pace early on, and although they had to give way to Limerick in the second and third quarters, they never forgot that little bit of advice.

"It was their lightning burst in the last quarter that swept a tiring Limerick centre-field and defence off their feet, and as grand a solo run as ever Mick Mackey essayed in his greatest moment was accomplished by Christy Ring, whose finishing shot was never touched by friend or foe until it landed in the net. It was a brilliant feat and only a player like Ring could bring it off after a gruelling game.

WHERE ALL AGREED

"After the match, I discussed with umpires, backs and forwards, the score, which gave Cork the southern title for the twenty-third time, and all agreed that while everybody within range pulled on the

ball, nobody touched it.

"It was one of these goals that a man gets in a lifetime and it came at the right minute when a score was worth a king's ransom.

"Luck seemed against Limerick as, in addition to the earlier goal, which Mick Mackey netted just as the whistle had gone for a free, the Limerick skipper knocked the lime off the upright in a bid for the goal that would again have levelled up, leaving the issue to be decided in extra time.

"Mick, when he appeared after the game with his little two-year-

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

old son dressed in the Limerick colours, was given a wonderful ovation as a tribute from all on his great display."

A CHERISHED MEMORY

In the "Irish Independent," we read:—

"For those who were at Thurles the last minute goal by Christy Ring, which brought victory to Cork and defeat to Limerick, will remain a cherished memory of a wonderfully artistic effort by a great hurler. To those who were not there it will be recited for many a year to come how the Glen Rovers' man ran from his own half almost to the Limerick line with the ball bouncing merrily on his hurley and then smacked it across for the goal that won the day.

"Had the referee played the advantage rule Cork's reign as champions was over, for just before their final rally Mick Mackey had walked through to crash the ball into the net, only to find that the whistle had sounded for a Limerick free, which was driven wide.

"Outstanding forward on the field was Mick Mackey. Con Murphy tried in vain to watch the Ahane wizard, who bobbed up in the most unexpected places to get or make scores for his side."

ADVANTAGE RULE

"Galteemore," in the "Tipperary Star," dealing with "the goal Mick Mackey might have got under the Advantage Rule," wrote:—

"When all is said and done, is it not the height of absurdity to frame a rule to protect the player who, though fouled, gets his score and then not give it to him. Advantage rule! Advantage for the man who commits the foul! As things stand after Sunday it will pay a back to foul a forward if he looks good for a score at all. If Limerick don't raise hell about that rule and do something to ensure that it works the right way instead of the wrong way, then the spirit of Garryowen 'ain't what it used to be."

"Carbery" in the "Cork Examiner":—

"It will rank with the classic Munster Finals of the past—in its stern naked grandeur, in its hearty manly spirit where rival surging bloods swing ash with freedom and abandon, where scores were level three times in the hour, where Mick Mackey treated us to all his wizard artistry.

"Mick Mackey played in the 1945 Railway Cup series, which Munster won.

"With a victory over Clare, at Ennis, on June 24th, 3-6 to 3-3, Limerick qualified for the Munster Final, which was played at Thurles on July 15th."

A TYPICAL MUNSTER FINAL

The newspaper described the game:—

"It was a typical Munster Final, the hurling was hard with men standing shoulder to shoulder and pulling first time in the air or on the ground with an abandon that was almost reckless.

"Limerick looked all set for a recovery of the title when Mick Mackey, with one of his old daredevil solo runs spreadeagled the Tipperary defence to score a great goal that had a huge Limerick following on their feet. But Tipperary's defence was superb and with Cornely the star, they stood up to a red hot Limerick barrage, in which Mick Mackey was the prime mover, to win 4-3 to 2-6."

The "Tipperary Star" said:—

"How fared Mick Mackey? On the whole he was well heid and though he careered around in his usual style, the Tipperary Captain, John Maher, and the left back, Phil Purcell, were successful on many occasions in spiking his guns. On other occasions, however, he was still the elusive Mick and he gave us almost all the spectacular hurling of the game."

Ahane paid a visit to Ballycastle, Co. Antrim, later that season, where they had a great game with the Dublin Faughs, who won 3-2 to 2-4. The Limerick scores on that occasion were contributed by—John Mackey (1-2); Mick Mackey (1-1), Timmy Ryan (0-1).

Limerick met Tipperary (All Ireland champions) in the opening round of the 1946 Munster Championship, played at Cork Athletic Grounds.

DANCING FEET AND SOLO RUNS

Two lightning goals in the first few minutes put Tipperary followers in confident mood, but slowly and surely the champions lead was pegged back; the dancing feet of Dick Stokes, the solo runs of Mick Mackey and the first time methods of Derry McCarthy, all contributing to the scores, which left champions and challengers on level terms at the half way stage.

A picture goal by Jacky Power in the twentieth minute of the second half set the Limerick men alight, and when, seven minutes later, John Mackey raced through for another major score, Tipperary's All Ireland crown was gone. Limerick, 3-5; Tipperary, 2-2.

The Munster Final at Thurles, in which Cork proved victors over Limerick, 3-8 to 1-3, was Mick Mackey's last big game; although he came in for the closing stages of the 1947 Munster Championship game, in which Limerick beat Tipperary 6-8 to 2-3—a match in which his brother John gave one of his greatest displays.

PART 12

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane (Continued)

THE Munster Final of 1944, played at Thurles on July 16th will ever be remembered as the "Bicycle Final."

Owing to war conditions, travelling to sports fixtures by motor car was absolutely prohibited. There was no mechanically propelled transport of any description but the crowd sensed a great game, and despite Emergency regulations the crowd was of full Munster Final proportions.

Hurling lovers knew it would be a battle royal, and they took Thurles by storm. The ordinary, if restricted, bus and train services on the Saturday were packed until the sides literally bulged and all deposited eager and enthusiastic crowds. Later on, the cyclists began to pour into the Cathedral town but by this time every hotel and boarding house was packed.

The early ones were lucky to get armchairs and couches, but everywhere had more than it could hold and they were still pouring in by the hundred. Luckily, the weather was kind, and under the midnight sky many slept in comfortable nook or convenient haybarn.

THE ROADS BLACK WITH CYCLISTS.

From dawn on Sunday morning the roads radiating to Thurles on every side were black with cyclists—a veritable procession stretching away thirty, forty and more miles in all directions. Never was the lure of a Munster Final illustrated in more striking fashion.

In addition to the bicycles, we had the pony traps, common cars, javeys, side cars and brakes to complete a grand picture. And the foot sloggers were there, too, and a few great old veterans tramped every mile of the road from Limerick in order to be able to say they did not miss the Munster Final. The scene at mid-day in Thurles was unforgettable. Under a broiling sun the spacious square presented an old world atmosphere that it may never recapture. It was like a page out of the past—a day that will go down in memory as much for its unusual setting as for the great game the old rivals—Cork and Limerick—served in such generous measure to the hurling hungry crowd.

His Grace, the Archbishop of Cashel, Most Rev. Dr. Kinane, threw in the ball and Bill O'Donnell, of Tipperary, was in charge of the whistle.

SPECTATOR'S COMMENTS.

John P. Power, writing in "The Leader" the following week said of that game:

"He was about thirty, well dressed and a good talker. He knew his hurling, too, and his hurlers. From the way he was speaking, fast, cocky, with plenty of slang, I deduced he must have spent some time in America, actually, or through the medium of Hollywood. The long hour or so we were waiting for the game to begin I unashamedly listened to his chatter. For he was not talking to me at all. I just happened to be seated on one side of him and his friend was on the other. But he spoke loud enough as if he did not mind who else heard him.

"Just as the teams were lining up and we were sorting out the players he remarked dolefully to his companion 'Look at that Joe; there ought to be a law against putting old timers like them on the field.' And he proceeded to pick out Mick Mackey, Tim Ryan and Jack Quirke. Really, at the time, I agreed with him. Surely the counties could do better than that. There must be plenty of lads in Ahane and Croom and Fedamore who could run the legs off Mick or Tim. How did they ever expect the Ahane farmer to hold that centrefield against Cottrill, Campbell or a flyer like Christy Ring.

And then, sure Cork were not much better off, putting Quirke up there on the forward line. A hard-driving back like Carroll or Cregan wouldn't give him a ball. There ought to be plenty of young material in the Barrs and the Glen.

"Did they think these men could last for ever? Year after year since 1932 they have worn the colours of their counties through hard, fast, desperate Munster and All-Ireland battles. Take Mick, for instance. He must have been

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

the most tireless, skilful hurler of his day. Certainly he was the most vital. Men who put his name forward as the greatest hurler of the century certainly have grounds for their claim. As a match-winner, Limerick never had his like.

IN 1936 AND 1944.

"In 1936 there were not half a dozen men in Ireland who could 'carry his hurley,' 1936, yes; but this is 1944. Since this new, warring decade opened, Mick has been anything but the swift, tearing, slashing champion of the middle thirties. Which is only quite natural, too. With the game he used to play, the fierce, driving game, the match winning game that took him from wing to wing, from goal to goal, he should have hung up his hurley years ago. And here they have him back again. A pity. It was really a pity to ask a man like Mick Mackey to go out there again and be out hurled, out run, by the sweeping, canny hurlers he would be up against. And after the services he did his county, too, the All-Ireland he had won.

"Sure I agreed with the fellow when he said there ought to be a law against throwing these old timers out there to be murdered. This was all before the game really got going, of course. Before these 'old timers' went into action.

"Well I remember a day in 1934 when a certain Martin Kennedy, leading a beautiful Tipperary fifteen, had a mixed Cork team beaten to their knees. Nothing could save them from the slaughter, it seemed. Indeed they hardly deserved saving. Then, quite suddenly, something inspired the Rebels. Tipperary's scoring ceased. From nowhere, it appeared, the ball was being driven down to O'Meara's goal. Cork forwards woke out of their lethargy. They even started to score. The slim, young back-man for Cork, where these scores really began, kept up the good work. He hurled Tipperary's forwards off their feet in that hectic last quarter. He hurled Cork to a sensational victory. His name was Quirke. Young Johnny Quirke from Blackrock.

SWEPT HIS COUNTY OUT OF DEFEAT.

"Thurles, July 16th, 1944, ten years later, saw him sweep his county out of defeat once more. As in 1934 this Cork team half deserved to be beaten. They drew ahead by a goal or two early on, and then leaned back on their hurleys to watch the Limerick men play. But for Quirke, the man I thought was past hurling, Cork would have been a well-beaten side.

"And on the other team, who was it who inspired the men to fight back and go into the lead for the first time with only some minutes to go? Who, indeed, but the other old-timer I would have on the side-line—the indomitable Mick Mackey himself. There he was, with all his old canniness, sure-of-eye, unerring in his points and passes. The speed may have

been missing in places but the hurling, the art he has always excelled in, was there, grand as ever. He won the match for Limerick. Quirke won it back for Cork; then fate stepped in and made a draw of it.

"Back in the centre-field, too, the grand old master covered himself with glory. Good old Timmie Ryann still proved that art and skill with the caman can make up quite a lot for a not-so-hot pair of legs. Tim practically dominated centre-field for a while and it looks as if he is teaching that fine-looking young McCarthy, his partner, all the finer points of the game, too.

THE "HAD BEENS" SHONE.

"So there they were, the old-timers, the has beens, Quirke, Mackey, Ryan, knocking the bluster out of my neighbour and, indeed, out of myself. As we were about to leave the field I heard him trying feebly to excuse himself. 'The standard of hurling is going down. Did you see the way Ryan could—' And so on. In every decade we hear this. The standard of hurling is going down. In the early days of the century when the London-Irish took the All-Ireland across the water the standard of hurling was going down. In Tom Semple's day and "Fox" Maher's, in Frank Burke's and the Doyles', in the Leahys' and the Coughlans' day, the standard was inevitably going down. And still we have the Mackeys, and the Clohessys' showing up. Men like Jack Lynch of Cork, O'Donnell of Tipperary, Jack Keane of Waterford—going down, indeed. If anything, I think the hurling is a grander game now than ever before."

Many were the tributes paid to Mick Mackey after this game, which ended with honours even. Here are some from the newspapers:

"Mick Mackey was again the star performer. Mick is probably one of the most spectacular personalities that has ever entered the hurling field. A thundering hurler from any point of view, he can give or take in a playful boyish way that appeals a lot to Tipperarymen. 'If Tipperary only had Mick Mackey they would have beaten Cork by twenty goals,' said a man leaving the field. Some day, perhaps, Tipperary may have a forward who can smash and turn and twist and shoot like the bould Mick.

OUTSHONE ALL THE STARS.

"If any man could be said to have stood out head and shoulders over such a gathering of stars as both teams numbered that man is Mick Mackey. Quite true, he lacked the speed of the days when his famous solos were features of every game in which he played, but his scheming and strategy, from which he notched 2 goals and 3 points should be an inspiration and example for all young forwards who aspire to reach the top."

"The play-boy, Mick Mackey, selling the dummy or cutting over a beauty of a point from the corner was again the hero of the crowd."

"The game was an individual triumph for Mick Mackey, who led the Limerick rally, weaving his way through the Cork defence to obtain himself or make for others the scores that helped his side to share the honours."

"Mick Mackey revealed all the artistry of his best years, and the points he scored from acute angles bore the hall mark of the master. It was hard to believe he had been hurling since 1931, for he still showed the pace and skill of his best years.

The great 1944 re-play, and the 1945 Munster Final will be dealt with next week.

SIX Limerick men figured on the Munster team that beat Connacht, at Galway, 7-5 to 0-6, in the Railway Cup semi-final on February 16th, 1941. They were: Paddy Scanlan, Jacky Power, Timmy Ryan, Dick Stokes, Mick and John Mackey.

Three days later, the unexpected and deeply regretted passing of Paddy Mackey deprived Limerick of a very promising player. His brothers, Mick and John, did not play again that season, in tribute to his memory.

Leinster beat Munster, holders since 1937, in the Railway Cup final on St. Patrick's Day, 2-5 to 2-4. Timmy Ryan captained the Southern side, other Limerick players being Peter Cregan, Paddy Scanlan, Jacky Power and Dick Stokes.

1941 will be remembered as the year of the great cattle plague, and this "Foot and Mouth Disease" ravaged some of the traditional hurling districts, with the result that the Hurling Championship ran very late.

MUNSTER SEMI-FINAL.

It was September 14th, when Cork and Limerick lined out at Cork Athletic Grounds in the Munster semi-final. The All-Ireland champions, without the Mackeys and Paddy Clohessy, were a listless side, and the Leisters won, 8-10 to 2-3. Jimmy Cooney partnered Timmy Ryan in mid-field, but neither proved the dominating personalities of other days.

Cork and Dublin fought the All-Ireland Final on September 28th, although both had still to play their provincial finals. Cork won, 5-11 to 0-6.

In the Munster Final played later at Limerick, Tipperary created a first-class surprise by defeating Cork 5-4 to 2-5. Bill O'Donnell gave a masterly display that day at mid-field for Tipperary, his placing of long distance frees and seventies being responsible, for more than half of his side's total.

WHEN MEDALS WERE STOLEN BY "TANS."

The Mackey brothers re-appeared in Limerick colours on May 2nd, 1942, when they lined out at Limerick in a game with Munster champions, Tipperary, in a third match for a set of medals which were originally put up for competition between the counties in 1918. On that occasion the match resulted in a draw, and the medals were later stolen by the Black and Tans during the War of Independence. They were not recovered until after the Truce, and it was around 1927 before the second meeting took place at the Markets Field, when a second draw resulted. No member of the original teams participated in the third meeting, which Tipperary won, 2-5 to 1-4.

On May 31st, Limerick beat Waterford, 4-4 to 2-5, at Cork, in the opening round of the Munster Championship. The newspapers said of this match: "Mick Mackey was the man of the moment, for

the winners. His goal from the side line transposed the game. Timmy Ryan gave a great display at mid-field and Paddy Carroll was a fine full back."

The Munster semi-final was played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds, where Cork (All-Ireland champions) beat Limerick 4-3 to 5-3. In a game that scintillated and sparkled, Limerick led at the interval, 3-0 to 1-4. The real thrills were in the second moiety, the sides were level twice and the deciding scores came to Cork almost on the call of time.

Cork afterwards beat Tipperary (Munster champions) 4.15 to 4.1, to regain the Munster Cup, which they last held in 1939.

RAILWAY CUP FINALS OF 1943.

The Railway Cup Finals of 1943 were voted by many the "best ever" in these competitions, and were watched by a then record crowd of 25,170, with gate receipts £1,302 5s 7d. The final scores were: Hurling—Munster, 4-3 (15 points); Leinster, 3-5 (14 points); Football—

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Ulster, 3-7 (16 points); Leinster, 2-9 (15 points).

Munster's win came through sheer grit and determination. Six points behind ten minutes from time, they scored two goals and a point in a turmoil of thrills, to win by a point—a grand effort by Christy Ring. Jack Lynch captained the side. Limerick players included Peter Cregan, Dick Stokes, Jacky Power, Mick and John Mackey. Stars on the Leinster side were Jim Langton and Nickey Rackard, the latter giving a great display against John Keane.

In the opening round of the Munster Championship, played at Ennis, Limerick beat Clare, 6-4 to 3-3, but the Shannonsiders lost to Waterford in the next round at Cork, 3-7 to 4-3. Timmy Ryan and Mick Mackey were great at mid-field against Waterford but two goals direct off frees by John Keane, plus magnificent goalkeeping by Jim Ware, helped Waterford to their one point success.

MICK MACKEY IN THE ARMY.

Mick Mackey served in the National Army during the Emergency, and army sports records contain many references to great games he played both for the Seventh Brigade and the Southern Command.

He won at least one all army medal, but gained glory, too, in many of the games in which his team were beaten. In a great final at the Army Grounds, Phoenix Park, in 1942, the Southern Command were leading the Eastern Command by four points with three minutes to go—Mick Mackey having contributed seven points to the Southern tally—when Mossy McDonnell, a native of Cork, got through for two great goals and the title in a thrill packed finish.

When the Seventh and First Brigades held spell-bound a great gathering at Sean Tracey Park, Tipperary, on October 3rd, 1943, Mick Mackey and Charley Tobin were in line to settle for the "Seventh" and notched five goals by splendid combined play. This game ended level—7th, 7-6; 1st, 6-9.

ANOTHER EXCITING ENCOUNTER.

Another exciting encounter was the meeting at Mallow on May 10th, 1944, in which 31st Battalion beat the Seventh Brigade 2-5 to 2-4. Mick Mackey and Jimmy Cooney operated at mid-field for the losers, who led at the interval, 1-1 to 0-1. The sides were level twice in the last quarter and entering the final stages, with 31st two points in front Mick Mackey made an all-out effort and cut the leeway with a lovely point.

A solitary point was again the margin of defeat at Limerick on July 26th, 1944, when the final tally read: 5th Brigade, 1-12; 7th Brigade, 2-8. Mick Mackey had three points for the losers that evening. Connacht qualified for their first Railway Cup Hurling Final when they beat Leinster, at Birr, 4-5 to 1-5, on February 13th, 1944. It was the westerners' sixteenth attempt to reach the decider.

When the Munster team was announced for the final, they were challenged by a second Munster string. The Cork Augustinian Church New Building Fund Committee offered attractive trophies and a very interesting match was the outcome, the official Munster side winning, 6-2 to 2-3. Highlight of that game was the exchanges between Mick Mackey and D. J. Buckley (Cork)—a pair that gave us many hectic and stirring encounters.

THE 1944 RAILWAY CUP FINAL.

Despite the absence of travelling facilities, due to Emergency conditions, a record crowd of 31,031 paid £1,457 12s. 6d. to see Munster and Connacht contest the 1944 Railway Cup Final on St. Patrick's Day at Croke Park, which the men from the south won, 4.10 to 4.4. Mick Mackey did not play, and John filled the full forward berth. John Mackey and John Quirke (Cork) were both figuring in their eighth Railway Cup Final, and they played a big part in the Munster scoring. A remarkable feature about that southern fifteen was that it contained no Tipperary representative—the first occasion since the inauguration of the series in 1927 that the Premier County failed to gain a place.

In a Green Cross Fund game at Galway on April 29th, Mick Mackey figured in some exciting episodes in leading Limerick to a 4-8—3-10 victory over the home side, that was confirmed in a welter of thrills.

The following Sunday, Limerick and Cork qualified for the Thomsen Feis Final, the Shannonsiders beating Tipperary 7-4 to 3-0, and Cork defeating Clare, 6-7 to 2-6.

Limerick sparked in that final, to beat the All-Ireland champions, 4-9 to 3-1, after Cork had led by a point at the interval. The Mackeys contributed 3-3 to the Limerick total on that occasion.

MACKEYS IN DEVASTATING FORM.

When Ahane met the Tipperary champions, Eire Og, in a medal tournament final at Nenagh, on May 15th, the Mackeys were again in devastating form, being responsible for 5-1 of the 9-2 the Limerick Club scored. The Tipperary reply was also 5-1. The sides were level, 3-1 each, at the interval. Four of the Mackey goals came in the second half.

When Limerick beat Clare in the Munster semi-final at Limerick, 5-9 to 4-1, Mick Mackey had two goals and two points of the Garryowen total.

PART 10

1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane (Continued)

IN the opening round of the 1937 Munster Championship. Limerick, short of J. McCarthy, Mick and John Mackey, beat Clare, 5-5 to 4-1.

The Shannonsiders then encountered Waterford, at Clonmel. The game was played on July 4th, 1937, a date that will not be forgotten by Suirside, as it marked the commencement of a new era for Waterford hurling, when the county, after years of earnest endeavour, at last joined the ranks of the top-class hurling counties.

Best man of the thirty that day was John Keane, then a mere youth, who figured in many rare duels with Mick Mackey. To add that he more than held his own with the famous Limerickman is sufficient tribute to his great ability. The newspapers greeted his great display thus: "The fair-haired Mount Sion youth, who shone a few years ago as a minor, was the spanner in the Shannon-side scoring machine. Nimble and fast he was like a man on springs."

Charlie Ware hit a purple patch, crowning with a tremendous display a career of great achievement, whilst Johnnie Fanning, Mick Curley, Jimmie Mountain, Mick Hickey, Christy Moylan, Declan Goode, Willie Barron and Tom Greaney, were others that contributed their share to a great occasion.

DRAMATIC FINISH.

Paddy Scanlan's name will be forever linked with the securing of Limerick's hardest won success, especially for the three rasping shots he cleared in that many seconds of one of the most dramatic finishes I remember in hurling. Dave Clohessy's swift opening point, his beautiful goal from McMahon's foot pass, and that last wonder goal almost with the final whistle, that turned what seemed certain defeat to a brilliant victory were unforgettable. In the tumult and the cheering, Limerick qualified for their fifth Munster final in a row, 3-4 to 3-2.

Limerick met their Waterloo in that final, played at Cork Athletic Grounds, and in which they were beaten by Tipperary, 6-3 to 4-3. The press reports described it as "one of the greatest hurling matches of recent years," and speaking of Mick Mackey said: "The Limerick captain has played many fine games when on a winning team, but yesterday he was magnificent in defeat."

For one great Limerick caman wielder, it was his last game, for Mickey Cross retired from hurling following this final—bringing to the side line a record of achievement that is not often surpassed.

Johnny Ryan was the star of the

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Tipperary half-back line, in which John Maher also shone. Jimmy Cooney and Jack Gleeson won the bulk of the midfield duels; whilst Jimmy Coffey, "Sweeper" Ryan, Tommy Doyle and Willie O'Donnell were great in attack.

The Premier County lads crowned a fine achievement that season by defeating Kilkenny for the Blue Riband, in the only final played outside of Croke Park since the Noresiders beat them at Cork, for the 1909 title. The venue for the 1937 All-Ireland decider was Killarney.

NATIONAL LEAGUE CAMPAIGN.

That Limerick were far from a spent force was demonstrated in the subsequent National League campaign. Victories over Waterford (5-5 to 4-1), Cork 3-3 to 3-2), Clare (3-3 to 1-3), and Kilkenny (5-4 to 1-3) qualified them for the final, in which their opponents proved none other than All-Ireland champions, Tipperary.

The pair met at Thurles, on April 24th, 1938, and Limerick won comfortably, 5-2 to 1-1. "Recorder" in "Irish Independent" wrote of that game: "It adds to the merit of Limerick's victory that Tim Ryan, not yet recovered from a late illness turned out, while Mick Mackey, although suffering from a boil on his side did not spare himself during a trying hour."

The attendance at that game was 15,495, and gate receipts, £1,213 14s. 9d.—a record for a National Hurling League final.

The Limerick team on that occasion was: Paddy Scanlan, M. Power, T. McCarthy, M. Kennedy, P. O'Carroll, P. Clohessy, J. Power, T. Ryan, P. Walsh, J. Mackey, M. Mackey, P. Cregan, D. Givens, J. McCarthy, J. Roche.

This victory gave Shannonside its fifth League title in a row, an achievement that no other hurling county has succeeded in approaching.

WON 58 OUT OF 65 GAMES.

Over the period from October 15th, 1933, when Limerick won its first game of the 1933/4 League campaign, to April 24th, 1938, when the fifth title was secured, the Shannonside hurlers played sixty-five games in Ireland, England and America, against all the great hurling counties. Of these, they won no less than fifty-eight, they drew four and only lost three. That is an achievement that will take some beating!

Six Limerick players figured on the Munster side that beat Leinster, 6-2 to 4-3, in the 1938 Railway Cup Final. They were: P. Scanlan, T. McCarthy, P. Clohessy, T. Ryan, Mick Mackey and John Mackey, who figured as full forward. Jimmy Coffey of Newport, now trainer of the Cappamore lads, also played, and Jack Lynch of Cork, came on as a sub. The "Irish Independent" said the following morning "There was hard hitting in the hurling final, and over vigorous exchanges, in which Ned Wade (Leinster) and Mick Mackey (Munster) filled a leading role, featured the closing stages."

Cork beat Limerick, 5-4 to 2-5, in the opening round of the 1938 Munster Championship, at Thurles, but were themselves beaten by Waterford, at Dungarvan, 5-2 to 1-3, in a drenching downpour. Tipperary beat Clare, at Limerick, but lost on an objection, the "Cooney" case arousing considerable controversy at the time. Waterford won Munster honours, but lost to Dublin in the All-Ireland final.

THIRD MACKEY IN THE PICTURE.

A third Mackey came into the hurling picture in early 1939, Paddy, brother of Mick and John, who figured as full forward on the Munster team that beat Leinster, 5-6 to 2-4, in the All-Ireland Colleges final. Colleagues on that great Southern side included many who hit the hurling headlines in after years: Dr. Dick Stokes, Vin Baston, Tony Herbert, Harry Gouldsboro', and Kevin McGrath. Full-forward on the Leinster side was none other than the evergreen Nicky Rackard, then a student at St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny. Paddy Mackey's untimely death

a few years later was a big loss to hurling.

Both John and Mick Mackey were members of the Limerick team that won Munster Junior Football honours in 1939. The brothers, with Jacky Power, starred in the defeat of Cork, at Dromcollogher, 4-6 to 2-9. John and Mick figured together at midfield in the All-Ireland semi-final, at Galway, in which Roscommon beat Limerick, 2-9 to 2-4, after a stirring struggle. A few years later the Western lads were hitting the All-Ireland senior football limelight in Croke Park and captured two All-Ireland crowns in brilliant fashion.

THE 1939 MUNSTER FINAL.

With victories over Tipperary, 3-3 to 2-0, and Clare, 5-5 to 1-1, Limerick qualified for the 1939 Munster Final v. Cork. Played at Thurles, this meeting attracted 40,986 spectators ("Gate" £2,953), which was ten thousand more than the previous Munster best.

The press said of this match: "A game that will not be forgotten for many a day is but a poor description of a final that must rank as one of the greatest classics ever seen in the South, the issue hanging by a thread for sixty minutes, and one felt sorry that anybody won or lost a struggle that kept the record crowd on their toes for the hour. Level scoring and fluctuating fortunes never left a dull moment, and right up to the last second it was anybody's game. Limerick, holding a point lead, were being hailed as victors as the game entered the last lap, but to dash the Cup from their lips there was a dramatic Cork rally, and a great goal. For a moment there was a lull as the umpires consulted, but when the green flag was raised Cork were Munster champions once more, after eight years of waiting."

Limerick won the Oireachtas Trophy when they beat Kilkenny (All-Ireland champions), 4-4 to 2-5, later that season.

In the opening round of the 1940 Championship, Limerick were held to level scoring by Waterford, at Killarney, 4-2 to 3-5, but won the re-play, at Clonmel, 3-5 to 3-3.

In the Munster Final two meetings were also necessary. Cork and Limerick finished level, 3-6 to 4-3, the first day, but Limerick won a week later, 3-3 to 2-4. They were thrill-packed struggles.

Lining out for a vital championship game the third Sunday in succession, Limerick triumphed over Galway, at Ennis, 3-6 to 0-5, and the way was clear for another All-Ireland final, with Kilkenny once more providing the opposition.

For the second time, Mick Mackey captained an All-Ireland side when he led Limerick to victory, 3-7 to 1-7, before a crowd of 49,260, a great muster under war time conditions.

THE WAY HE TOOK!

A press report of that game had this to say of the Limerick skipper: "Twelve stone seven of dynamic, devastating energy, Mick Mackey didn't bother to run rings round the Kilkenny defence. The straight line, shortest distance between any two points, was the way he took, with the ball magnetised to his hurley, brushing aside the opposition by sheer force of personality."

Limerick also won All-Ireland minor hurling honours that day, and the double success aroused remarkable enthusiasm.

The homecoming of the teams was a memorable event. Army lorries decorated with the Limerick colours carried the members of the teams at the head of a procession, escorted by six bands, through streets crowded with cheering people.

Very Rev. E. Canon Punch, P.P., Chairman of the County Board, thanking the populace for their reception of the players, said that the like of it had not been seen in the city for probably a hundred years.

The appearance of Mick Mackey, holding the All-Ireland Cup aloft, was greeted with unbounded enthusiasm. There was tremendous cheering as he addressed the huge gathering, saying they were glad to be able to live up to the high ideals of the G.A.A., and were exceedingly proud of their win over a great Kilkenny team.

Part 9

1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Aha ne (Continued)

OWING to their American tour, Limerick were given a bye to the 1936 Munster Hurling Final.

For the fourth year in succession, Limerick won the Southern hurling crown, when they beat Tipperary, at Thurles, 8-5 to 4-6.

The "Irish Independent" report of that game said: "If one man more than another is deserving of credit for bringing victory to Limerick it was Mick Mackey, who was here, there and everywhere, and contributed no less than five goals and three points to the winners' total score. John Mackey was also well in the picture, and through the hour the brothers played with perfect understanding."

It was Mick's first time captaining the Shannonsiders in a championship duel. His initial essay as skipper of the side was marked by a marvellous display of hurling in which he rampaged from end to end of the field, opening up an attack or stemming a raid as necessity arose. In fact, he gave as brilliant an individual performance as has been seen for years, giving and taking hard knocks with a smile, while some of the scores that came as a result of his solo efforts were gems of constructive work.

In the All-Ireland semi-final, Limerick were fixed to play Galway, and the meeting took place at Roscrea before 10,850 spectators (gate receipts, £775 19s.).

Galway led at the interval, 2-3 to 0-7, after a half hour of thrills and a hundred and one exciting incidents that filled in that palpitating first moiety. It was maybe over robust, but withal clean and sportingly contested. The imperturbable, hawk-eyed Tom O'Mara, of Toomevara, who kept goal for Galway, saved his charge many times over in masterful fashion, giving a grand display.

Limerick went into the second which two great teams fought out a gallant battle."

THE 1936 ALL-IRELAND FINAL

Limerick beat their old rivals, Kilkenny, 5-6 to 0-3, in the 1936

All-Ireland final. The teams on that occasion were:—

Limerick—P. Scanlan (goal), P. O'Carroll, T. McCarthy, M. Kennedy, T. Ryan, M. Ryan, J. Mackey, M. Mackey, J. Roche, D. Clohesey, P. McMahon, J. Power.

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

Kilkenny—J. O'Connell (goal), P. Larkin, P. O'Reilly, P. Blanchfield, P. Byrne, E. Byrne, P. Phelan, L. Meagher, T. Leahy, J. half a changed team, and four goals and a point in seven minutes altered the whole aspect of the game. Fifteen minutes from the end spectators rushed in following an injury to a Galway player. The Connacht men refused to resume when the referee, Mr. Seamus Wrafter, of Birr, refused a request of their captain to put off a Limerick player, alleged to have caused deliberate injury to one of his team.

Galway returned later and tried to clear the pitch but the Limerick players and referee had then left. The scoreboard read at the time of the interruption: Limerick, 4-0; Galway, 2-4.

LIMERICK AWARDED THE MATCH

The Central Council awarded Limerick the match and suspended Galway for six months.

A Press report of this game said: "Timmy Ryan was great at midfield; it was one of his most magnificent displays. Mick Mackey was, as usual, the bright light of the Limerick fifteen. I have often wondered how the Shannonsiders would fare without him, for undoubtedly he has played more than one man's part in securing many of the big victories the Limerick men are so justly proud of over the past few seasons. A tireless worker, the part he plays in the green and white machine could hardly be over estimated. There were some hard and sharp knocks, more than a little of natural heat, but nothing to mar the fine spirit in

Walsh, M. White, J. Duggan, J. Dunne, M. Power, L. Byrne, Sub.—M. Burke.

"Vigilant," writing in "An Gaedheal," of the game, said:

"The men from the Shannonside fielded a combination of players that beyond all shadow of doubt proved itself to be one of the greatest hurling teams that Ireland has ever seen. It is a great all-round team with a back division that was almost literally unbeatable.

"I have seen and written about all the leading camán contests over a stretch of thirty years, and I can say honestly that I never saw a team better than this year's All-Ireland champions. All honour to Limerick for their superiority, but I honour them even more for the grim determination with which they have brought Limerick right to the forefront.

MASTERLY DISPLAY OF SUPERIORITY

"True, Limerick have won All-Ireland hurling honours before, but they have never won such honours by such a masterly display of superiority against such formidable opponents.

"I can look back to a Sunday in July, 1913, at Thurles, when Limerick met Cork in a strongly contested Munster championship tie, with Tom Semple as referee.

"Cork won that match in decisive fashion, but I have not forgotten the fierce determination but truly sporting spirit, in which a fine Limerick team fought out the issue to the finish.

"There was luck in the game, too, and Cork had all of it that was going. The Leesiders had a great team with Captain Barry Murphy in charge, and the redoubtable Andy Fitzgerald in goal. The great Jim Kelleher, old Duncourney's star was there too. 'Bowler' Walsh, Connie Sheehan, 'Major' Kennedy, and all the best of a great and big hurling county.

"Mick Feely, of Croom, captained the Limerick lads. Ter Mangan, 'Tyler' Mackey, Sean Carroll, Pat needy, M. Cross, P. Clohesey, G. Vaughan, Egan Clancy, were among the outstanding men on Limerick's side. 'Limerick deserved more scores than they got,' I remarked to my friend, Seoirse Clancy, who was afterwards martyred for Ireland, whilst Mayor of Limerick.

"We will be back again, and with better luck, Vigilant," was the cheery reply.

"Limerick has had splendid victory since then, but this victory has given the city and county of the Violated Treaty its crowning glory.

"How little we thought that evening of twenty-three years ago when joking with 'Tyler' after the match, when John Power, of Pilltown, then Kilkenny's great goalkeeper, remarked to him: 'You'll be in the game a long time yet, Tyler, and surely the veteran is, by his worthy sons, more in the game today than ever. Long may be flourish.'"

WINNERS OF 20 SENIOR COUNTY MEDALS

Mick and John Mackey helped Aha ne to victory in five successive county senior football championship finals as under:—

- 1935—At Rathkeale, October 4th, 1936—Aha ne, 3-2; Abbeyfeale, 1-1.
- 1936—At Rathkeale, August 15th, 1937—Aha ne, 0-7; Foynes, 0-3.
- 1937—At Askeaton, May 15th, 1938—Aha ne, 2-3; Glin, 0-8.
- 1938—At Foynes, April 23rd 1939—Aha ne, 0-2; Abbeyfeale, 0-2.

Re-play at Limerick Gaelic Grounds, August 13th, 1939—Aha ne, 1-9; Abbeyfeale, 1-2.

1939—At Askeaton, May 26th, 1940—Aha ne, 0-1; Glin, nil.

The brothers also figured in the winning of fifteen Limerick senior hurling crowns, so they each have twenty senior county championship medals, which must be a record for individuals, not equalled, to my knowledge, by any other player, since the G.A.A. was established.

John Mackey holds another record in being the only hurler ever to win six National League medals. He also boasts nine Thomond Tournament trophies, laured not easily secured.

Limerick, seeking their fourth successive National Hurling League title, suffered the first League defeat since Kilkenny beat them in the final of the 1932-3 competition, when they lost to Tipperary, at Thurles, 4-5 to 2-4, in October, 1936.

The newspapers described this "a game worthy of the occasion, and for thrills and spills was equal to the best that the two famous counties have given us.

"Limerick were short three of the team which defeated Kilkenny in the All-Ireland final—Mick and John Mackey and Mick Ryan, the vacancies being filled by J. Toomey, M. Power and D. Givens.

"Holding Limerick to level scoring at the interval Tipperary had done well, but at the change of sides there was little to show that we were to have a sensational finish or that the champions were facing defeat. Limerick went ahead soon after resuming and were leading by three points, when Tipperary turned on the pressure, and two goals in quick succession changed the whole aspect of the game.

THE TEAMS.

The teams were:

Tipperary—J. Butler (goal), D. O'Gorman, J. Connolly, B. Hickey, J. Ryan, J. Maher, W. Wall, J. Cooney, W. Barry, Jimmy Coffey, T. Treacy, T. Doyle, W. O'Donnell, T. Hannon, D. Murphy. Sub.—M. Bourke.

Limerick—P. Scanlan (goal), P. O'Carroll, T. McCarthy, M. Kennedy, M. Cross, P. Clohesey, J. Toomey, T. Ryan, M. Power, D. Givens, J. Power, J. Roche, D. Clohesey, P. McMahon, G. Howard.

Limerick compensated with victories over Laois, 7-1 to 2-4; Waterford, 4-3 to 2-3; Galway, 8-3 to 0-3; Kilkenny, 6-3 to 4-1; Dublin, 4-6 to 0-6; and a draw with Clare, 3-2 apiece; and faced Cork for the final tie, with a win over the Leesiders sufficient to give them their fourth successive League crown.

That game was played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds on April 18th, 1937, and Limerick won 11-6 to 5-1. John Mackey was unable to play in this last match, owing to being injured in the engagement with Clare and Garrett Howrad had earlier announced his retirement after many years sterling service to the national game. The Limerick team against Cork was—P. Scanlan (goal), P. O'Carroll, T. McCarthy, M. Kennedy, M. Cross, P. Clohesey, J. Power, T. Ryan, M. Ryan, D. Givens, M. Mackey, J. Roche, D. Clohesey, P. McMahon, J. McCarthy.

Seven Limerick men—Mick Hickey (goal), T. McCarthy, J. Toomey, M. Kennedy, T. Ryan, Mick Mackey and D. Clohesey—figured on the Munster side that beat Connacht at Ennis, 4-5 to 3-1, in the Railway Cup semi-final. With Connacht that day played T. Hoban, first Mayo hurler to figure on a provincial selection.

THE MUNSTER TEAM.

In the final, in which Munster beat Leinster, 1-9 to 3-1. Mick Mackey captained the winning side, the other Limerick representatives on that occasion being P. Scanlan, T. McCarthy, M. Kennedy, P. Clohesey, T. Ryan, J. Mackey, and P. McMahon.

In all, eleven Shannonside hurlers wore the Munster colours that season.

Limerick won the Ward Cup for the third time, when they beat Kilkenny, 3-5 to 3-3 in London on Whit Monday.

How Limerick lost their Munster and All-Ireland crown in 1937 and regained it in 1940, will be told next week.

May 1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Aha ne (Continued)

THE 1935 All-Ireland final whet the appetite of the hurling fans, and when Munster and Leinster lined out in the Railway Cup decider on St. Patrick's Day, 1936, a then record crowd for the competition saw them play.

It was little wonder! Leinster had ten Noresiders on duty plus five from the Metropolis. Munster called in nine from Limerick, with two each from Clare, Cork and Tipperary. A great game it proved, worthy of the occasion and the crowd, with Leinster gaining the narrowest of wins, 2-8 to 3-4, in a storm tossed finish that will be long remembered.

With victories in quick succession over Laois, Clare, Waterford, Tipperary, Galway, Kilkenny, Cork and Dublin, Limerick won with undisputed merit their third consecutive National Hurling League title.

In the club ties, the Mackey brothers, Mick and John, added further to their collection of trophies by helping Aha ne to victory in the County senior hurling and football finals, and in the replay of the 1916 Memorial Tournament decider, in which St. Finbarrs (Cork) provided the opposition.

Most exciting of all was the meeting of Aha ne and Fedamore in the East Limerick final, highlighted as it was by the clashes between Mick Mackey and Paddy Clohessy—two of the best men in their respective berths in the game at the time.

INVITATIONS FOR AMERICAN TOUR

The publicity associated with Shannonside's record run of hurling successes attracted interest across the Atlantic, and invitations were extended to Limerick for an American Tour.

Ten years earlier Tipperary played their way right across the American Continent—the first County team to tour the United States. They were followed by Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Cavan footballers. In 1934 the Kilkenny hurlers made the trip, so the Limerick visit was the third made by a hurling county.

A few of the later ventures had not proved the success of earlier tours, and it took some time and a lot of negotiation before it was finally agreed that Limerick hurlers and Cavan footballers should go to America—the first occasion both codes were represented together there by visiting Irish teams. The project proved the most successful of all such visits, and enabled the American Association clear old claims due in connection with three previous visits.

It was the only trip a Limerick hurling team ever made to America, although it must not be forgotten that Limerick athletes and hurlers were well to the fore in the teams that participated in the American "Invasion" of 1888; that courage filled idea of early G.A.A. days that proved a financial flop, but laid the foundation of a strong Gaelic athletic movement in America.

THE LIMERICK TEAM

Two of the originally nominated Limerick party—Jackie O'Connell and Dave Clohessy—were unable to make the trip, and the following gathered at the Imperial Hotel on Friday morning, May 8th, 1936, for the first stage of the journey to America:—Timmy Ryan, who captained the team; Paddy Scanlan, Mick Mackey, Garrett Howard, Micky Cross, Paddy Clohessy, Tom Mc-

Carthy, Ned Cregan, Jim Close, John Mackey, Jim Roche, Mick Ryan, Mick Kennedy, Micky Condon, Mick Hickey, Tom Shinnery, Paddy McMahon, Jacky Power, Dan Flanagan and Christy O'Brien.

Denny Lanigan, County Secretary, travelled as team manager, accompanied by Tim Humphreys, Vice-Chairman of the Co. Board.

The team and travelling officials were accompanied to Cobh by a number of admirers, the entire party making the journey by bus. As the time fixed for leaving drew near the approaches to the hotel were densely packed, and traffic in Catherine and Roche's Street became impossible. It was with difficulty that the travellers' luggage was loaded, and when the members of the team appeared they were greeted with enthusiastic cheers and shouts of good luck and a pleasant tour.

BLESSING FROM FRANCISCAN

Rev. Fr. Dermot, O.F.M., an enthusiastic follower of the Limerick hurlers, was present and imparted his blessing to the tourists, after which Mr. Denis Lanigan thanked the citizens for their wonderful send-off, and assured them that the Limerick hurlers would do their utmost to carry the Limerick flag unsullied, and would return loaded with still further honours and fit and well to enter the fray for the regaining of the All-Ireland Crown.

The bus festooned with the green and white colours of Limerick, in addition to the National and American flags, then set off amidst a salvo of cheers which the occupants gratefully acknowledged.

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Along the road to Cork greetings were exchanged, and on arrival in the Rebel City animated scenes were witnessed as officials of the Cork County Board wished the travellers good luck and citizens joined in the expression of good will to a great hurling combination.

On the Friday night the Limerick hurlers and Cavan footballers were entertained at the Westbourne Hotel, Cobh, the attendance including P. J. O'Keeffe, General Secretary, G.A.A.; G. Arthurs, Secretary, Ulster Council; Sean McCarthy, Secretary, Munster Council; Sean McCarthy, Chairman, Cork County Board; P. J. Mehigan ("Carbery") and John Joe Sheehy (Tralee).

PRESENTATIONS

A number of presentations were made to the members of the teams. The Limerick Gaelic League and Thomond Fels Committee presented each of the Limerick party with a travelling rug. Mr. Tadgh O'Shea, N.T., on behalf of the Milford Gaels, presented cigarettes, a hurley and a ball to the Limerick captain. Messrs. P. J. Carroll & Co. Ltd., Dundalk, presented "Sweet Afton" cigarettes to the members of both teams and Messrs. M. & P. O'Sullivan, Cork, presented the Cavan and Limerick players with sets of briar pipes and pocket knives.

When the teams embarked on the "Manhattan" at 6.30 on Saturday morning in ideal weather, the Commodore welcomed the visitors and said he hoped that they would have a pleasant trip and bring back to their native land fresh trophies.

The teams were only a day out when Mr. Michael McKnight, one of the Limerick supporters travelling with Limerick, died suddenly on board—a tragic happening deeply regretted by all.

A great crowd—in fact too many—and the customs officers were considerably hampered in their checking job. Music was provided by the members of the Cavan Fife and Drum Band.

GAMES IN YANKEE STADIUM

On Friday the teams were received by Acting Mayor Sullivan at City Hall, and later went to Innisfail Park where they had a light practice. On Saturday they had their first view of the Yankee Stadium.

In glorious sunshine and before an audience of 40,000 people, Limerick beat New York 3-7 to 2-3 and Cavan beat the same opposition in football, 1-7 to 0-5, after two great games, in the Yankee Stadium on Sunday.

The scenes in the Stadium will long be remembered by those present. The brilliant sunshine, the flags, the green sward of the playing pitch, and the variegated colour of the summer dress of the crowd completed a memorable picture.

The Limerick lads were first to appear, and the sight of their green jerseys sent the crowd wild. Three bands—Cavan Fife and Drum, La Salle Brass Band, and the Clan Eireann Pipers led the parade, and the ball was thrown in by Mr. James Reeves,

underwriter of the tour, and the donor of the very valuable trophy for the hurling game.

In charge of the whistle was Mr. Jack Ahearne, of Cork, who was recently the guest of honour at the twenty-second annual banquet of the Gaelic Athletic Association of Greater New York. I am grateful to Rev. Fr. Ahearne, of Copsewood College, for the very fine brochure issued in connection with that interesting event, and which tells how Jack Ahearne, after his arrival in New York from his native Kilbrittain in 1914, played hurling for three years for Limerick in old Celtic Park before transferring to his native County Cork senior team, with whom he has been associated as player and administrator ever since.

BRILLIANT STICK WORK

Right through the hour there was brilliant stick work, Limerick quickly proved worthy of their reputation of being champions—clean, snappy hurlers, speedy and dashing as panthers. They hurled with perfect combination and quickly adjusted themselves to the smaller pitch in the Stadium.

The play of the Mackey brothers enthused the spectators, who cheered to the echo the dazzling work of the pair. The American Press were amazed at their combination and understanding as they raced along the wing—Mick to John, John to Mick, back and forth several times. So they juggled with the leather before one or other parted for a spectacular score. In that first game Mick had 1-3 of the Shannonside total, John contributing another three points.

Limerick won the magnificent Reeves Trophy—the most expensive and artistic ever presented for international Gaelic competition, when they beat New York selected, 6-3 to 0-8, in the second game of the series, again decided in the Yankee Stadium.

This match, played in broiling heat, with the mercury high into the eighties was a searching test, with superior team work the factor that decided the issue in the visitors' favour. On the same occasion Cavan were held to level scoring by the New York footballers, 2-3 to 1-6.

In the final game of the tour, Limerick gained possession of the Limerick Club Cup, when they defeated the Massachusetts All Stars, 9-4 to 2-2, at Russell Field, Cambridge.

WHAT AMERICAN SPORTS WRITER THOUGHT.

American sports commentator, Dan Parker, writing in the New York "Daily Mirror" on the first game at the Yankee Stadium said:

"Nothing reflects the temperament of a people more accurately than the games they play. Hurling is Ireland's national pastime, and if you have never seen a hurling match I beg of you to defer awarding the palm to hockey, football, lacrosse or polo as a he-man's game until you have had Erin's game demonstrated to you by two good teams. Hurling combines the best features of baseball, a heavy-weight elimination tournament, hockey, a battle royal, golf and football.

"It is no game for a fellow with a dash of lavender in his make-up. A good hurler must be prepared at all times to stop, pick his head up from the field of battle, slap it back into position and resume the fray without once taking one eye off the player he's assigned to watch and the other off the enemy's goal.

"Having seen a hurling match one can understand readily why so many of the pioneers of baseball were of Irish blood, and why those of Celtic stock took naturally to America's game. Their encounters have been making one hand catches and sharpening their battling eyes ever since Finn MacCool invented the game of hurling with an oak tree and a Dane's skull.

THE TEAM WORK.

"A good hurling team will keep the air longer than a juggler. It is permissible to catch it with one hand, usually the left, and as it comes sailing through the air and give it a hearty belt with the end of the club. Clever hurlers can pass the ball from hurley to hurley as if they had lacrosse sticks. The teamwork is magnificent to behold. So is the mayhem. The first rule of hurling is to keep your eye on the ball and let your opponent's skull fall where it may. However, despite the terrific amount of shillelah swinging there are surprisingly few serious casualties. The proverbial luck of the Irish seems to be with every hurler who dashes headlong at an opponent swinging his own club at the very same ball at which the opposing player is taking a pot shot.

"It takes a strong physique to stand up under an hour of hurling, for the pace is swift as well as gruelling. It is little wonder that the Irish have no plagiarists in hurling. They invented the game, and though they haven't copyrighted it, no other race has attempted to play it. I suppose the explanation is that no other race is constituted temperamentally like the Irish. However, if it takes an Irishman to enjoy playing the game, one need not be a Celt to get a kick out of watching it. Anyone who watches a hurling game is both fascinated and amused by it. So to those who demand an exotic sports thrill I recommend a visit to a hurling match."

DINED AND WINED WHEREVER THEY WENT.

The Limerick players and officials were dined and wined everywhere they went in America, at dances, dinners, and banquets, but most homely gathering of the lot was that which assembled at the home of Mr. Pat O'Connell, a former member of the old Castleconnell team, and well known then as a tug o' war man and a weight thrower all over the counties of Limerick and Tipperary.

The visitors proved delightful guests and even had not Pat seen to providing talent, the Limerick lads would have sufficed. Mick Mackey sang the "Rose of Tralee," Mick Kennedy obliged with "She Lived Beside The Anner," Timmy Ryan was not found wanting and did his share.

Jim Lee of New York, brother of "Thomond," of the "Limerick Leader," gave one of his famous recitations, and Mike Kett, another of the old Castleconnell team, told how he and the famous "Tyler" helped to revive the team in the early years of the century; whilst John Hartigan, known as the "Aha ne song-bird," did full justice to "The Bold Galtee Mountains."

WONDERFUL RECEPTION ON RETURN HOME.

The team got a wonderful reception on its return to Limerick. The excitement started at Rath-Luiric, where the townspeople turned out, headed by the local band, to welcome the Limerick lads. At Banogue bonfires blazed, and at Croom over two hundred school children waving green and white flags lined the side walks.

When Limerick was reached, some three hundred cars had joined, the vehicles conveying the returning party. At the City boundary, the Mayor and representative citizens met the players, and the scenes of enthusiasm exceeded anything witnessed in the city for many generations.

Five bands participated in the procession, in which over three thousand pupils from the Christian Brothers' Schools marched, and a public welcome was accorded at the O'Connell monument.

The team travelled home on the s.s. Washington, which left New York on June 3rd, arriving at Cobh on June 9th.

9th May 1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane (Continued)

IN preparing for the 1934 All-Ireland final replay against Dublin, Limerick had the services of the well known Cork trainer, Jim Barry.

Everything was in readiness for the great day when a bombshell burst in the Shannonside camp. Ace netminder Paddy Scanlan had to cry off the team owing to illness. Former Limerick and Munster goalkeeper, Tommy Shinney, of Fedamore, was pressed into service at short notice. And right worthily he filled the gap. His defence was superb, whilst his deliveries were as good as ever Croke Park witnessed.

It proved a great battle. The first half produced tackling as keen as ever seen on the hurling field, with little or no open play. Dublin had two white flags before Dave Clohesey shot to the net for the only goal of the half hour. In the twenty minutes before the interval only one score was conceded—a point to Dublin which left the sides level at the turn-over.

Two goals to either side—secured in as many minutes—following the restart, altered the whole aspect of the game. Dublin added three points in fairly rapid succession, and clung to this lead until ten minutes from the end.

THE STRENGTH OF THE RYANS.

Entering the last quarter the strength of the Ryans, Tim and Mick, asserted itself at midfield. They pulled away from their opponents and using all their mighty vigour, rained down balls on the Dublin defence.

Timmy dropped a soft ball high and slow, and in swept the three Limerick full forwards, with Mick Mackey bringing up the rear. In the melee, Jacky O'Connell placed Dave Clohesey for the goal that left the teams level. The Shannonsiders missed a few chances in the dying minutes and another draw looked possible.

But there was that hidden strength of Limerick rising to the top—a presage of victory. It came swiftly when Mick Mackey pounced on a short puck out. With the sliotar glued to his hurley, he moved in from the wing on one of his famous solo runs. It was do or die and the packed field knew it. So did every man of that great Dublin team.

Throwing everything he had into the effort, Mick advanced steadily to shooting position, then

as he put over the winning point. In the hundred seconds that remained a point by Jacky O'Connell, plus a goal by Dave Clohesey wrote a story on the scoreboard that was hardly a true record of a thrill-packed final.

Dave Clohesey had four goals to his credit in that great game—one of the most noteworthy performances ever recorded in a Blue Riband decider.

GREATEST MAN OF THE THIRTY.

And of John Mackey, the newspapers said: "John Mackey was the greatest man of the thirty. Pulling first time, he drove more balls onwards than any three men, and literally appeared to be all over the field. Undoubtedly, he is the best man in the position in Ireland."

For the record, the match was played on September 30th, 1934, and the final score was: Limerick, 5-2; Dublin, 2-6. Mr. Stephen Jordan, T.D., refereed. Attendance was 30,250 and gate receipts £2,447 4s. 8d. Most Rev. Dr. Harty, Archbishop of Cashel, started the game. He was escorted to midfield by Sean McCarthy, President of the G.A.A., and by Frank McArdie, President of the American

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Council of the Association. The Limerick players were: Timmy Ryan (captain), J. Mackey, M. Mackey, J. Close (Ahane), P. Shinney (goal), Dave Clohesey, T. Clohesey, T. McCarthy (Fedamore), J. O'Connell, J. Roche (Croom), M. Ryan (Murroe), M. Kennedy (Young Ireland), G. Howard (Portroe), E. Cregan (Newcastle West), M. Cross (Cloughaun).

Scenes of wild enthusiasm greeted the Limerick victory, renewed when the cup was presented to the captain, Timmy Ryan, by His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Harty, who expressed his great pleasure at seeing his native county win such a remarkable victory in a game that was as superb an exhibition of hurling as he had ever witnessed.

A press report of the game concluded: "The pace was terrific, the marking, perhaps, the closest ever seen. The game was one sweep of clenched courage. It was the epic close of the season's classics. Great men won and great men lost. Their names shall be remembered forever."

THE RECEPTION AND HOME-COMING.

The team, headed by the famed Boherbuoy Band, which had travelled to Croke Park for both the drawn game and replay, then marched to their hotel, where they attended a reception given by Limerick residents in Dublin.

The home coming the following evening was a memorable event. Fog signals were exploded and tar barrels blazed as the train carrying the team arrived in Limerick. A civic welcome was given by the Mayor and Corporation, who were attended by members of the Fire Brigade. A procession was then formed and was led by forty horsemen, wearing green and white sashes. The team rode in open carriages through crowded streets, flanked by guards of honour of boy scouts. Flags were flying from many houses, bonfires were numerous and windows were illuminated, as four bands played the team to their hotel, from one of the windows of which speeches were delivered by the Mayor, Councillor P. F. Quinlan; the Chairman of the County Council, Mr. John McCormack; Ald. M. Keyes, T.D.; Timmy Ryan, Denny Lanigan and Jim Barry.

BANQUET AND CEILI.

Three weeks later the members of the team were entertained at a public banquet, which was representative of the business, sporting and professional life of the county, with no resemblance to any previous G.A.A. function in Limerick. The All-Ireland medals were presented at a most successful ceili, voted by all as the best ever held in the city.

And now a link on the great Limerick Mayoral chain records the fact that the County team won the Jubilee Year All-Ireland hurling crown.

Seven Limerick men figured on the Munster team that beat Leinster, 3-4 to 3-0, in the Railway Cup final the following St. Patrick's Day. They were: Paddy Scanlan, Tom McCarthy, Mick Kennedy, Paddy Clohesey, Timmy Ryan, John and Mick Mackey, Mick Cross was also picked but was unable to play owing to illness.

NATIONAL LEAGUE CROWN.
In retaining their National the sweet sound of ash on leather

League crown, Limerick played some thrilling games. Held to a draw by Cork, at Croom, they ensured possession of the honours when beating Kilkenny 1-6 to 1-4, at Nowlan Park, in one of the great games of the period.

Played on May 12th, 1935 (gate receipts, £973), the outstanding features of this hurling epic were speed, dash, close tackling, and quick accurate striking.

Never before was an hour filled with such thrills of sensation and excitement, and it was only in the closing seconds that Limerick's triumph was assured.

Jacky Power, who last year completed twenty-one years in Ahane colours, when he helped them regain County senior hurling championship laurels, made his debut with the Limerick team during that League campaign—Paddy McMahon and himself playing their first game, at Croom, against Dublin, on April 28th, 1935.

Many good judges of the game hold that Mick Mackey reached the height of hurling perfection in the Munster semi-final against Cork, played at Thurles on July 28th, 1935.

The "Irish Independent" of the following day said: "The match was a personal triumph for Mick Mackey of Limerick, who gave one of the most brilliant and spectacular individual displays of hurling ever seen."

Limerick won well, 3-12 to 2-3, but the occasion will be remembered for an incident following a clash between two players at midfield. A Cork man was accidentally injured, and for the moment appeared in a serious condition. Doctors rushed to his aid and the Last Rites of the Church were administered, as players and spectators knelt. The player was later removed to hospital, where he quickly recovered, being discharged the following day.

THIRD SUCCESSIVE MUNSTER TITLE.

Limerick won their third successive Munster title a fortnight later at Cork, where they beat Tipperary, 5-5 to 1-4. This game had two heroes—one, Paddy Scanlan, the Limerick goalie, who for three years had shown himself one of the greatest goalmen the game produced and lived up to every word of his reputation; the other, the tall, back-haired Phil Purcell of Moycarkey, who combined the speed of a deer with the cool, accurate judgment and drive of a golf champion.

The way was clear for another meeting of Nore and Shannon, and when the pair met on September 1st, 1935, they were watched by a record crowd for any match to then at Croke Park—46,591.

In the long history of the Association no important match was played under such adverse weather conditions. So persistent was the blinding downpour that in itself this very fact must stamp the recollection of this match in the minds of everyone present. It was surely a great game that could be great under such conditions.

The players rose to it like Vikings and by their determination and courage raised the national game into a still higher and more unassailable position of pride and glory than it ever before occupied.

TERRIBLE CONDITIONS.

Kilkenny won (by the narrowest adapted themselves better to the possible margin), because they terrible conditions, and played the ball on the ground.

Limerick, who had hurled thirty-five matches in two years without a defeat, went down fighting gamely and cleanly, as only champions could. In a field that was ankle deep in water, Mick Mackey threw off his boots and tore into the struggle. His dazzling solo runs and powerful stick work were breath-taking in their intensity. He pegged down Kilkenny's early score with a beauty drive between the posts, and then followed a flashing cross by Jacky O'Connell, which McMahon netted. The next score was a great Mick Mackey point from a free that gave Limerick a four points advantage.

The Noresiders hit back fast and forceful—it was level pegging once more, two minutes from the half time whistle, and then Matty Power snatched the minimum lead with a glorious drive from near the touchline.

Mick Mackey bulldozed his way through half a field full to place Jacky O'Connell for the shot that levelled again. Hot and hectic the battle raged, as rain and wind ruled high in that last epic half-hour, with men and women enthralled though dripping wet from head to heel.

No score for ten exciting minutes, and then from midfield, the Kilkenny captain, Lory Meagher, shot a magnificent point. It opened the sluice gates to the Nore, and quick as lightning White shot a point, and then a goal, that left Kilkenny five points in the lead with ten minutes to go.

A SUPERB FINISH.

It was a superb finish. Heart throbs missed a beat as Mick Mackey dropped a ball in the square that McMahon first timed to the net. Veteran of a hundred battles, Mick Cross, advanced with a terrific drive that cut the black and amber lead to the minimum, and with time all but spent the last great scene of that drama packed encounter was enacted.

Mick Mackey soloed his way down the middle of the field, the slippery ball under wonderful control, the active brain planning the move ahead. The road to the net looked open and Mick put everything he could muster into the master drive.

But he reckoned without the uncanny anticipation of great Kilkenny defender, Paddy Larkin, who cut in to cover the vital opening as Mackey struck. Courage won the day and Larkin crowned his best display ever with a grand final offering that brought a great victory back to the Nore.

MR. DE VALERA'S BROADCAST

Radio Eireann broadcast a series of special interviews on the game that night, in the course of which President de Valera said: "We are to be envied by other nations in possessing such a great national game as hurling. Even in the unfavourable conditions of this afternoon one cannot fail to see what a really great game it is. No other can compete with it as an all-round manly game, requiring strength and skill in a remarkable degree. As a school game it should be encouraged more than it is. An effort should be made to bring down the cost by providing cheaper and better hurleys. The G.A.A. should see to this and perhaps devote some of its resources to subsidising the manufacture."

"To-day I witnessed one of the most thrilling games of my life," said the American Minister. "I am tremendously impressed with the speed of the game, which is new to me, and my admiration for the valour and the courage of the hurling player is of the highest. It is a great game, worthy of the best sporting traditions of Irish sportsmen."

The French Minister said that it was the first time he had seen a hurling game, and he expressed himself delighted with the event. He thought the game was a very fast one and very well played. He was greatly struck by the enthusiasm of the great crowd despite the rain.

Next week's instalment will deal with the American tour, and the recapturing of the All-Ireland crown in 1936.

May 1956

No. 176—MICK MACKEY of Ahane (Continued)

LEINSTER had won the Railway Cup Finals of 1932 and 1933, and qualified for the 1934 decider by beating Connacht, at Roscrea, 7-6 to 4-6.

When the Munster team for the Final was announced it was something of a sensation to find Limerick players filling seven places on the side. All however, justified their selection. It actually proved a very formidable combination, displaying all the dash and determination characteristic of Munster hurling at its best.

With five Limerickmen in defence, it was pleasant to read afterwards the many tributes paid to the magnificent back play in the second half—the equal of any witnessed in Croke Park.

One press report said: "The first impression one gathered was the good form shown by the seven representatives from Limerick. Four of them were brilliant throughout; the remaining three were good when not excellent."

GREAT PLAYERS.

"Paddy Scanlan captivated the crowd with a cool, calculated and finished display. He pucked out long and strong and never made a mistake during the hour. A special word of praise must go to Paddy Clohosey, who was the most brilliant man on the field. A tireless worker, he was as accurate at overhead balls as he was at ground play. Timmy Ryan more than held his own at midfield, where he was opposed by the one and only Lory Meagher. Mickey Cross, playing in his sixth Cup Final, enlivened a fine reputation with one of his best displays. Tom McCarthy renewed acquaintance with the hero of the 1933 All-Ireland Final—'lovely' Johnny Dunne, as Noreiders admirers christened him after that game; and the Killinane man held him scoreless, no mean feat. Ned Cregan, who had Matty Power to contend with, did not get much time for fancy hurling, but managed the wily Noreider as well as I saw any other defence man do. Mick Mackey was playing on Eddie Byrne, who was in fine fettle, but the rising Castleconnell star managed to give him the slip on two occasions to take passes from Larry Blake that finished up in the back of the Leinster net."

Munster won, 6-3 to 3-2, and for all by Mickey Cross it was the first Railway Cup medal. Mick Mackey figured in eight further inter-provincial finals, and was on the losing side on only one occasion—in 1936, when the team he captained lost to Leinster by a point.

In 1934, the G.A.A. celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of the Association, which event took place at a meeting in Thurles on November 1st, 1884.

The capture of the All-Ireland hurling crown in Jubilee Year was the ambition of almost everyone in Sarsfield's County, and with that object in view every game was used as a means of finding the best players in the County, and fitting them for the hard campaign ahead.

HURLING AT ITS GREATEST.

Ahane opened that season with a great game against St. Finbarr's (Cork), played at Limerick Gaelic Grounds in the 1916 Memorial Tournament final. From the moment that President de Valera set the ball rolling it was hurling at its greatest, to prove one of the sternest and most electrifying games for many a day, completed

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in a welter of excitement as Cork forced the scores that left the issue undecided: Ahane, 7-1; St. Finbarr's, 8-1. The worth of that match re-opened the question of club games on inter-county lines, and many were the advocates of the idea—a return to the first system established under G.A.A. rules.

Limerick made their first visit to London on Whit Monday, and played Kilkenny in the annual game for the Monaghan Cup. The venue was Woolwich Stadium, to which the Gaels returned recently, after many years absence.

It proved an hour of unending thrills—the exiles being teated to some wonderful duels. The Mackey brothers hurled with a speed, skill and consistency that opened up innumerable scoring chances—Mick bringing the crowd to their feet with a stylish goal over his head, his back to the net.

BOB McCONKEY.

Another Limerick man to attract considerable notice on that occasion was veteran Bob McConkey, whose exchanges with Peter O'Reilly were models of cuteness and tenacity—a typical McConkey goal being the one he banged in on the rebound of a fine save by O'Connell, with a shot that no goalminder could intercept.

Limerick won narrowly, 5-4 to 4-5, the Cup being presented to the Shannonside captain, Timmy Ryan, by the donor, Mr. Owen Ward.

A fortnight later the Limerick lads were at Croke Park, to play Dublin in the Arus na nGaedheal Tournament final, for which Hospitals Trust Ltd. presented a set of medals.

A SUPERB SIDE.

A Press report of that game said: "It is many years since Croke Park witnessed such a predominance of one first-class side over another. To say Limerick were a superb side would scarcely be doing justice to the merits of the southern men. They were the fastest, the most dashing, the most accurate and the most brilliant side we have seen for quite a time. Just that style which all idealists conjure up to themselves when they envisage a hurling side at its best; no hesitation, no waiting on the ball, no overbalancing at the stroke; instead, a fast outward dash, a sharp sure pull on the stride, and a fast follow-through or a quick recovery as the case may be. Surely this was hurling at its best."

A HECTIC AFFAIR.

The Thomond Fels Final was a hectic affair Cork, who led by five points at the interval, surprised all by their high class display against a much fancied Limerick selection. In a pulse stirring finish the home lads just held their unbeaten record, to win, 3-6 to 3-4.

A week later the Shannonsiders opened their Munster Championship campaign, Clare providing the opposition.

The Dalcassians started off at a terrific pace and playing as a well balanced combination outclassed the holders for twenty minutes. Scanlan was the Limerick hero at a crucial time. He captured balls from short range although blinded by struggling men but a few yards away. The Press commented: "Short clearances are the test of a goalkeeper, and it

is doubtful if as good a man as Scanlan has been seen for many a year."

LIMERICK AND CORK AT THURLES.

The meeting of Limerick and Cork at Thurles on July 8th provided a game fit to rank with the best played for the Munster crown. Limerick's opening bursts were so powerful and so speedy that the early clashes gave the impression of an easy victory.

In a whirlwind introduction to top class hurling, newcomer Jacky O'Connell—now our very efficient County Secretary—crashed two unsayable shots to the Cork net. Opening into the second quarter the Leesiders showed their mettle and Limerick were lucky to be a goal clear at the interval.

Ten minutes from the restart "Micka" Brennan sent through the leveller—signal for a terrific Cork offensive that had Limerick with their backs to the wall. Mick Mackey fell back to aid the defence, bobbing up here, there and everywhere as the Rebel County assault mounted. In a nerve wracking moment for Shannonside supporters Willie Clancy of Mallow crossed a ball from the wing to give Brennan possession right on the edge of the square. The latter hit a bullet-like drive that looked unstoppable. But Scanlan thought otherwise. He rapped the leather down sharply and cleared with a mighty swing to save Limerick from what seemed certain defeat.

MICK MACKEY'S FAMOUS SOLO RUN.

With time all but gone, Mick Mackey pounced on the leather, followed that famous solo run—such a feature of his game in after years. Along the wing he travelled with the ball glued to his hurley as he stormed through. For one fleeting moment, every eye in that great crowd was on the bobbing figure in green and white as he brushed all opposition aside, and with coolness and precision slammed through the winning goal.

The second Southern title came easily after that, Limerick triumphing over Waterford in the decider at Cork, 4-8 to 2-5.

With a 4-4 to 2-4 win over Galway, in a tough tussle at Roscrea, Limerick qualified for the Blue Ribband battle for the second successive season.

Limerick, their hearts set on capturing the special medals struck to commemorate the Jubilee Year All-Ireland Hurling Final, met an unexpected reverse when Dublin held them to level scoring at the first meeting.

The issue between the pair was knit with the closeness that makes hurling often as fearsome as it is fascinating. Fortune swayed three, four times in the hour and left superiority undecided at the end.

The Press had this to say: "By the sums of their respective merits, on their spells of supremacy and bursts of spirit, in the debit and credit account of their luck and misfortunes, they have earned the privilege of another essay."

"GRIM ENDEAVOUR."

"As a contest of vigour and determination, added to skill and speed, it must rank as a splendid game. It was lit up by frequent flashes of brilliancy, but on the whole glowed only with the white heat of grim endeavour. The rivalry of the teams, fuelled by their own and the hopes of their admirers was too intense for artistry to have full play. A stroke unspoiled was a mark against the would-be spoiler. The game began at a great pace, which was well maintained to the end, and towards the momentum. Some may have felt it; only a few showed it."

The early lead of Dublin seemed too hasty to be reassuring and yet it took Limerick the greater half of the first moiety to equalise. For at least a quarter hour the Dublin backs were under continuous pressure and resisted with marvelous tenacity. But their efforts would have been in vain but for the inspired goal-keeping of Forde. Dublin may shudder to think what the adverse balance might have been were it not for the alertness and nerve of their cul baire. Almost on the interval, Limerick took the minimum lead, 1-5 to 2-1.

"Dublin equalled shortly after the resumption—Limerick forged five points ahead and then had a goal disallowed. It was the critical phase of the game but the Dublin defence never wavered. Sharp duels and mass attacks, loose sorties and quick reverses followed each other with pulsating speed. Then, in the closing minutes Dublin electrified the crowd with an amazing rally. They had two points, and on the call of time, Denny O'Neill, the Dublin full forward, with a superb personal feat, had the goal that mattered."

LIMERICK THE MORE FORCEFUL SIDE.

"Limerick were the more forceful side. They were more vigorous, more often in possession, more overstriding, but less trustful, less incisive, less dangerous. "Paddy Clohosey's play at present is incomparable. He has never been stopped in his overriding superiority. At times his place striking lacks accuracy, but for all round hurling and vigorous manhood he has no equal just at present."

"The Mackey brothers played more of the ball than any two men on the field. They are artistic and alert, full of speed, strength and science. Mick gave us a glimpse of his strength when he overturned Mick Daniels after both had set themselves for a fair and square 'jostle.' It was the real 'goods.'"

"Cross lifted and drove down with perfect direction and with the minimum of effort and without any apparent difficulty. A great sticker and a great man is Cross."

Most Rev. Dr. Harty, Archbishop of Cashel and patron of the G.A.A., started the game. An impressive feature was the unfurling of the National Flag on Hill 16, as a bugler sounded the General Salute, prior to the rendering of the National Anthem.

The next article will deal with the re-play and with the famous "wet day" final of 1935.

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To complete the hurling story of Mick Mackey, the man who will yet make the welkin ring as trainer of a new generation of Limerick All Ireland hurling stars, I quote from articles that appeared in the "Sunday Press" some years ago, and which are well worth reproducing. They will be read by the younger generation with avid interest, and re-read by many old admirers with undoubted relish.

"Cuchulainn the mythical hero of the Celtic saga, lives as the greatest hurler. Let us sit awhile and talk with the modern Cuchulainn—the once irrepressible, incomparable, the great Mick Mackey.

"There was nothing mythical about the solid 5ft. 8ins. Mick. Opponents who attempted to stop his avalanche-like runs will testify to that. No man since the founding of the G.A.A. has captured the imagination to anything like the same degree.

"Meet him to-day. Some two stones heavier, he is the same buoyant, laughing fellow, with occasional lapses into the reflective and serious.

RELATIVE MERITS OF OPPONENTS.

"I sounded him on the relative merits of opponents. His view was that the centre half back position is the most vital point of defence. He found most of these defenders tough, and his speed at times gave him the little advantage which is necessary.

"Jim Regan, Johnny Quirke (Cork), John Maher (Tipperary),

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

John Keane (Waterford), Jim Hogan and Larry Blake (Clare), Paddy Byrne (Kilkenny) and Dan Canniffe (Dublin), all these were men whose constant attentions would almost break one's heart, he reflected.

"His view was stated modestly, that some of these men were past their speedy days when he was at the zenith of his. Later on, with the passing of time, he too lost the necessary yard.

"Pressed to speak of his scoring I reminded him that I thought 1936 his peak year in that regard. 'Well,' he replied diffidently, 'I was credited with heavy scoring against Tipperary in 1936. That probably would be my luckiest day.' He thought the best match he played in, was against Cork in 1935.

"On the whole he thought good fortune never left him. Once only had he to retire from a game with an injury. Before taking the field in the League Final in 1938, against Tipperary, a former wound in his side had developed into an abscess. He was lanced and bandaged in the pavilion. It was an hour of suffering.

QUOTED ADVERSE CRITICS.

"Desiring to stir him into a heated discussion I adopted the tactic of quoting some of his adverse critics. His equanimity was undisturbed. The broad smile and that humorous glint of the eye convinced me I was unlikely to succeed. However, I ventured. 'They say you planned sometimes to annoy your man by unwelcome little taps!' His reply was that never did an opponent leave the field as a result of an injury from him. At times, perhaps, he did indulge in a little bantering, 'but that does not violate any regulations.' 'They say also,' I went on, 'that you overplayed the ball; that you hung on too long.' 'Balance that,' he said, 'against the number of times I parted, even when I could have gone through myself. Sometimes I parted and the passes went astray.'

"As a final shot, I asked, 'why did you not take your points from near frees in 1935?' 'One was taken when close on time, when we were four points in arrears. I dropped the ball near the square and McCarthy goaled from it.' My other point attempt failed. 'You recollect the frightful conditions. How many close frees were missed in last year's All Ireland under good conditions?' His logic was unassailable.

VIEWS ON TRAINING.

"Expressing the view that training was taken too seriously now, Mick said: 'In a way I suppose we did some collective training, but nothing like the way its done these days. First of all, nobody gave up his work. We did about two hours hard training each evening in the Gaelic Grounds, had a meal together in town and then home to bed.'

"That was all we needed to know of each other's play—then forget about it all and get down to the next day's work. I can tell you we were as fit as ever a team was on this kind of training—and better still, we enjoyed every game we played—and the celebrations afterwards.'

"I think the lads to-day take things too seriously altogether—some of them anyhow. Very few of them seem to really enjoy themselves as we did. Scanlan, McCarthy, Power and myself—we had great times in Dublin on All Ireland week-end. True, we wanted to win every match just the same as the other fellows, but, we got a great kick out of playing the game as well!

"I'd say, without fear of contradiction, that our 1936 team was one of the fittest hurling teams that ever walked on to Croke Park, and do you know we didn't get much chance to train at all that year. You see, we came back

from America late in May and we got a bye into the Munster Final. One more match—the semi-final—and we were into the All Ireland final.

"And yet, we were as fit as men could be. Maybe its the way you approach it. We always made up our minds to enjoy every minute of the game and we didn't worry about losing either.'

ANOTHER TRIBUTE.

To conclude this story of Mick Mackey, I turn over to Tony Myles for this tribute:—

"No greater compliment could be paid to the Mackeys than that they were the idols, not alone of Limerick, not alone of Munster, but of all Ireland, for when Limerick played it was to see the great brothers in action the crowd came

"Comparisons, in every generation are inevitably made with preceding generations as far as the merits of hurlers or footballers are concerned. These comparisons are seldom accurate, for times and circumstances differ, but in the case of the Mackey brothers comparisons will always be made with their own compeers.

"The fact that they will be ranked with Christy Ring, of Cork, and with other equally prominent players from Tipperary, Waterford or Kilkenny, and in many cases given preference over the best that Munster or any other of the provinces has produced, is sufficient tribute to their merit.

"Shall we ever again, I wonder, see the ball 'glued' to a hurling stick as only Mick Mackey knew how to do it, or shall we ever again see in action a player like him for the way in which he deliberately 'clowned' on the field.

"Never was Mick Mackey so dangerous as when he started his 'antics' on the field. These clowning antics of his kept the crowd splitting with derisive laughter — at least the portion of the crowd made up of his own supporters—but they drove the opposing players and supporters frantic with impotent rage.

"And that was really the object of Mick's antics, for, tender-hearted as a child himself, he knew how deadly mockery can be.

TACTICS BASED ON PURE PSYCHOLOGY.

"Thus, I have seen him in Munster and All-Ireland finals streaking along the sideline with the ball in his fist and his hurling stick outstretched rising and falling as if he were tapping the ball.

"The crowd knew it was a foul; Mick Mackey knew it better than did the opposing players who tried to stop him and call the referee's attention to it, but of all the shouting thousands the referee was invariably the person who last saw through Mick's manoeuvres for Mick ensured that his back was to the harassed referee.

"And to add insult to injury, Mick would have his tongue stuck out all the time to the opposing supporters on the sideline who were ready to burst with rage and apoplexy.

"But there was, as they say in Munster, a method to 'his madness.' Those tactics were based on pure psychology; make your opponent lose his temper, you keep yours and you have won half the battle.

"At other times I have seen Mick Mackey come tearing into the opponents' goalmouth, jumping as if he meant to sweep all before him with his stick and then, having completely rattled the backs, come to a dead stand, with uncanny precision, under the falling ball, catch it with one hand among a sea of flying hurleys and flick it to the net. Many a goal-keeper have I seen who was still unsure of the whereabouts of the ball until the green flag was raised.

"With John, cool and stylish, Mick formed a perfect partnership. They will be remembered as long as hurling families are spoken of and famous games are replayed around the hearthstones of Ahane and every village in Ireland."

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