

## No. 223—Jack McDonnell Of Patrickswell

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

**JACK McDONNELL** was a Patrickswell man, who, like the great Jack Shea, gave his hurling allegiance to Croom, and shed lustre on the Maigueside colours in many a tough encounter.

When Jack joined them, Croom were basking in the hurling sunshine that persisted for many a day, through the reflected glory of the magnificent win by the Maigue inspired Limerick in the much publicised final of the Cardinal Agliardi medals.

This was a tournament that proved one of the most successful of early G.A.A. days, its decider arousing nation wide interest, because it brought together those keenest of rivals — Limerick and Kilkenny, a meeting which was eagerly awaited, following the abortive All-Ireland Final of 1911, in which Limerick conceded a walk-over, rather than travel to Thurles to play Kilkenny, after the original fixture at Cork had been "washed out" by heavy rains.

**WHEN LIGHTS WENT OUT IN EUROPE.**  
It was 1914 when Jack first pulled on the Croom jersey — a fateful year for the world, as it saw the commencement of the first great armed conflict between the nations — a war which changed the face of Europe and made a profound alteration in almost everything the old-timers held dear.

It has been truly said that lights went out then in Europe which have never been rekindled, and certainly values changed for many things to mark a very definite break that separates like a wide gulf the pre-1914 days for those that have passed since.

Hurling opportunities were restricted in Limerick following the outbreak of hostilities, and thus a very great Croom side were denied opportunities of displaying their worth which would normally have come to them.

**ORIGIN OF N.A.G.A.C.**  
It was into this picture Jack McDonnell stepped, aggravated by the fact that by the time the G.A.A. had found ways and means of combatting the restricted opportunities of travel and the commandeering for military purposes of some of the pitches, included the then general factotum for all types of field games in Limerick—the Markets Field; Croom were trying their luck in a camp opposed to the G.A.A. This was a new body, formed actually as a counter to the Gaelic Athletic Association, and and it became known as the National Association of Gaelic Athletic Clubs.

Fedamore were the first Limerick club to secede from the G.A.A. and they did so as a protest against the County Board insisting on the 1915 county senior hurling final, in which they were to meet Claughaun, being played at the Markets Field, which they held was not a neutral venue. Claughaun refused to agree to a change, and got a walk-over when Fedamore persisted in their opposition to the venue.

**FEDAMORE JOINED NEW BODY.**

The N.A.G.A.C. was originally formed in Dublin by a break-away section of the Kickham Club, and Fedamore joined this new body, and entered for its championship—a club even open to the entire country.

In this they proved very successful, winning out by defeating Castlebridge (Wexford), 1-1 to 0-1, at Wexford Park, on December 10, 1916.

The Fedamore victory gained for the N.A.G.A.C. certain adherents in Limerick and Croom were one of the clubs which left the G.A.A. for this new organisation. In their first game they were matched against the All-Ireland title holders, and at the Markets Field on February 4th, 1917, they beat Fedamore, 5-1 to 4-0, after a splendid game, a feature of which was the fine goalkeeping of Jack McDon-

nell, who played a major part in the win by an inspiring display between the sticks.

Jack had been figuring for some time previously and to much advantage in the Croom colours, but this was the first real test of the man, and he rose to the occasion in sterling style.

Victory over the champions, Fedamore, however, did not mean the title for Croom. They caught the first tartar in Ballybricken, whom they only beat on a re-play, and in the final they lost to South Liberties, 1-1 to 1-0, after a really hard-fought and exciting struggle.

**THE ALL-IRELAND.**  
The N.A.G.A.C. All-Ireland Championship was run this year on a county basis, and Limerick qualified again for the decider, which they won, defeating Wexford 5-2 to 1-1, at the Markets Field on September 2nd, 1917. Jack was unable to play in that game, being injured in the drawn match against Ballybricken. The Limerick players on the occasion were: T. Mangan, M. Mangan, P. Mangan, M. Mullane, J. O'Shea, M. Feely (Croom), J. Keane, J. Whelan, J. McNamara, D. O'Donnell, captain; M. Harrington (Fedamore), Tom Grady, P. Keogh (Ballybricken), D. Mahon (South Liberties), J. Clune (Sarsfields).

That the G.A.A. in the County had not heavily suffered as a result of the loss of many well known clubs was demonstrated that very same day at Cork Athletic Grounds, where Limerick and Tipperary (All-Ireland champions) met in the Munster Senior Hurling Final. It was a great game, in which the lead changed hands several times, and even scores — 3-4 all, was a fitting result.

**A GREAT LIMERICK FIFTEEN.**

The strength of hurling in the county at the period is best understood by a study of the fifteen fielded at Cork, which was:—P. Vaughan, captain; J. Ryan, goal; J. Mackey, J. Carroll, J. Keane (Castleconnell), S. Gleeson, W. Gleeson, D. Lanigan, P. McInerney (Young Ireland), P. Flaherty (Rathkeale), W. Hough (Newcastle West), P. Barry (Boher), R. Ryan, P. Kennedy (Pallas), W. Ryan (Cappamore).

Limerick lost the re-play — another of those "pitched away" championships—for there can be no doubt that but for the disunity in the county, Shannonside had an unbeatable team that season.

This was proved twelve months later, when Limerick, despite the continued absence of several well known clubs, notably Croom, Fedamore, South Liberties and Ballybricken, won both Munster and All-Ireland honours.

The N.A.G.A.C. continued strong in the county that year, and Croom won the championship competition they organised, defeating South Liberties in the final, 3-3 to 2-0, thus revenging the defeat of the previous year.

**BEGINNING OF THE END.**

The break-away body was, however, losing ground in the county, and they were unable to hold an All-Ireland Championship competition through lack of entries. It was the beginning of the end for them actually, for in December the Limerick clubs who had seceded held a meeting and decided on renewing their allegiance to the Gaelic Athletic Association. That was the final death blow, and we find no further mention of N.A.G.A.C. activities in any part of Ireland.

Limerick won the All-Ireland G.A.A. Championship the following month, their opponents in the final being Wexford, their appearance showing the Slaneysiders did not suffer either as the result of the "split."

The Limerick players successful at Croke Park did not include any member of the break-away clubs, but there was a Fedamore man in the fifteen, Willie Gleeson, who, with his brother, Stephen, and

club-mate, M. Collins, left the Fedamore Club at the time of their break with the G.A.A., and continued in G.A.A. ranks as members of the Young Ireland Club.

The players who won the All-Ireland title of 1918 for Limerick were — Willie Hough, captain (Newcastle West), Mick Murphy, goal; Denis Lanigan, Paddy McInerney, Willie Gleeson, Bob McConkey (Young Ireland), Paddy Kennedy, Dick Ryan (Pallas), Tom McGrath, Dan Troy, Mick Rochford (Claughaun), Jimmy Humphreys, Willie Ryan (Cappamore), Jack Keane (Castleconnell), Paddy Barry (Boher)

The clubs who had played such a prominent part outside G.A.A. ranks forged to the front immediately on their return, and both Fedamore and Croom reached the finals of their respective divisions.

They both drew at the first attempt, Claughaun (2-0) holding Fedamore (1-3) in the Eastern decider at Cappamore; Croom and Rathkeale ending level 3-1 each in the final of the West at Adare.

Fedamore won their re-play, 3-2 to 1-0, and Croom beat Rathkeale, 5-2 to 3-2.

Thus we had the strange spectacle of two returned prodigals contesting the 1919 County Senior Hurling Final, which was played at the Markets Field on April 28th, 1920.

The field conditions were very bad following heavy rains but the game was an exciting one, fought in a most determined fashion, with every inch of ground stoutly disputed.

Fedamore led by 1 goal to 1 point at the turnover, and in a stubbornly contested second half only one score was conceded—a goal to Croom, which gave the victory by the minimum margin: Croom, 1-1; Fedamore, 1-0.

**A STONEWALL DEFENDER.**

Jack McDonnell was a stonewall defender that day, with able support from a fast and hard hitting back line. The victorious Croom fifteen were: Pat Mangan (captain), Jack McDonnell (goal), Ter Mangan, James Mangan, Tom Mangan, Michael Mullane, William Bourke, J. O'Shea, G. Howard, F. Keating, E. Halvey, D. Maher, F. Neiland, W. Corkery, Mick Feely.

Jack McDonnell's appearance in county colours, and the games he played with Croom right up to the 1931 final against the then up and coming Ahane, in which he had as team mate the present occupant of the G.A.A. Presidential chair—Dr. J. J. Stuart—will be amongst the matters dealt with next week.

PART I

# No. 223—Jack McDonnell Of Patrickswell

(CONTINUED)

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

**JACK** McDONNELL'S first appearance in Limerick County colours was at the Cork Athletic Grounds on May 16th, 1920, where he played in a game in aid of the South Infirmity and Fever Hospital, in which Limerick beat Cork, 3-1 to 1-2.

A large attendance saw the game, which was well contested all the way. The teams were level (1-1 each) at the interval, and it was some great net minding by Jack McDonnell which saved the day for the Shannonsiders when the home lads put on heavy pressure after the interval.

## THE LIMERICK PLAYERS.

The Limerick players were: J. McDonnell (goal), M. Mullane, J. O'Shea, Ter Mangan, Tom Mangan, G. Howard (Croom); W. Ryan, J. Humphries (Cappamore); W. Gleeson, D. Murnane (Fedamore); D. Lanigan, P. McInerney, R. McConkey, W. Hurléy (Young Ireland); J. Keane (Castleconnell).

Cork returned the visit the following Sunday and again suffered defeat. The game was played at the Markets Field, where Cork were again in action a week later, this time for the Thomond Feis, when Limerick registered its third win in successive weeks over the Leesiders, this occasion the score being 7-5 to 1-4. Rev. Father Hennessy, O.S.A., threw in the ball for the latter game.

## HONOURS DIVIDED.

Limerick were visitors to Dungarvan on Sunday, June 12th, where they played Waterford in the opening round of the Munster Senior Championships and divided the spoils, the Shannonsiders running out successful in hurling, 10-3 to nil; but losing the football, 3-2 to 1-1.

Jack McDonnell kept an untouched goal that day, one of the very rare occasions that a team failed to register any score in a Munster hurling tie.

## LIMERICK PLAYERS IN BOTH GAMES.

The Limerick players in both games were:

Hurling—J. McDonnell, goal; D. Murnane, W. Hough, W. Gleeson, J. Humphries, Ter Mangan, R. McConkey, P. McInerney, D. Lanigan, W. Ryan, G. Howard, J. Mullane, J. Keane, C. Ryan, Tom Mangan.

Football—J. Ryan, goal; J. Cassidy, D. Breen, C. McGrath, S. Collins, T. Kelly, J. Downes, J. Butler, P. Hassett, R. McCoy, D. Collins, M. O'Connell, E. Kelly, P. Murphy, J. Stapleton.

The tempo of the War of Independence increased rapidly as the 1920 summer turned to autumn. Limerick and Tipperary were down to meet in the Munster Senior Hurling semi-final at Cork Athletic Grounds on Sunday, Aug. 8th, but the British military authorities proclaimed the fixture and prohibited any type of Gaelic assembly in the Cork City area.

## SECRET SWITCH OF VENUE.

The G.A.A. secretly switched the game to Riverstown, an arrangement that was not generally known until the Saturday night before the match, but was then notified to the citizens in rather startling fashion.

It happened this way. Limerick made the journey to the Rebel City on the Saturday, and they travelled by char-a-banc, because there were no trains available as the railway employees refused to carry armed British forces who presented themselves for most of the scheduled trains which did not run in consequence.

## EVENING OF GREAT TENSION

The semi-bus or char-a-banc carried some 35 people, and the four wheels were shod with solid rubber tyres. It was supplied by a Bruff firm.

The entire Limerick party left the city at 2 p.m. It was an evening of very great tension, for His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, was due to land in Ireland for a visit to his aged mother, who lived at the Limerick side of Charleville, but the British Government had declared that he would not be permitted to enter the country.

Actually, the liner on which he travelled, was intercepted by British Naval forces some miles from the Irish Coast, and His Grace was forcibly removed and taken to England.

The Limerick team and officials were halted at every military post between the Shannon and the Lee, and were searched and questioned almost twenty times, both by British soldiers and Black and Tans.

## "FRIGHTFUL CRASH."

And to cap everything, one of the tyres gave trouble and loosened off its wheel, with the result that it was about 9.30 p.m. when Cork was reached.

It was raining hard at the time and the streets were very slippery. The Limerick lads had arranged to stay at the Victoria Hotel in Patrick Street, which, at the time, had a veranda nearly fifty feet long, extending right out the sidewalk to the edge of the road. It was completely covered in glass and supported with metal pillars.

About two hundred people were under it sheltering from the rain, some of them awaiting the arrival of the Limerick team.

When the driver attempted to pull up, the cherabanc slid, hit the pillars, and there was a frightful crash that must have been heard for miles, as the whole roof, glass, iron and metal came tumbling down.

It was miraculous that nobody was hurt, and the occupants of the bus escaped although the side of the vehicle was all battered in. What saved the party was, probably, that they were all standing singing at the time.

## THE TALK OF CORK.

The fact that Limerick had arrived and the manner of their arrival was the talk of Cork on the Sunday morning. A large crowd made the journey to Riverstown, where the match, however, proved a disappointing one as the heavy ground militated against fast play. Limerick were deserving winners on the score, 5-7 to 3-3, as they were superior to their opponents in practically every department.

Mr. Willie Walsh of Waterford was the referee, and the Limerick players were: J. McDonnell (goal), P. Keane, D. Murnane, P. McInerney, J. Keane, W. Hough, D. Lanigan, J. Humphries, W. Ryan, G. Howard, W. Gleeson, P. Barry, Ter Mangan, Tom Mangan, Bob McConkey.

## THE MUNSTER FINAL.

The Munster final was fixed for Thurles on August 29th, but it was twenty-one months later before it was played.

The first postponement came at the request of Cork, who sought it because of the precarious condition of their Lord Mayor—Ald. T. J. McSwiney—who was on hunger strike in Brixton Prison.

Limerick readily agreed, and the G.A.A. demonstrated their sympathy with the heroic patriot by suspending all games during the period of the fast, which ended with the death of that great Irishman on October 25th after seventy-three days without food.

Sunday, October 31st, was declared a closed date all over Ireland as a mark of respect to his memory and as a protest against the inhuman treatment of him by the British Government.

## MARTIAL LAW.

By this time both Limerick and Cork were under Martial Law, a

position which continued until after the Truce on July 11th, 1921, during which period no G.A.A. activity was possible in either county.

The games were in full swing again almost immediately following the cessation of hostilities, and Jack McDonnell's first appearance was with Croom in a game against Young Ireland at the Markets Field on August 14th, which the city lads won, 4-2 to 3-2.

A fortnight later, in a return game at Croom, Young Ireland were again winners, this time by six goals to three.

Jack was on the Limerick team which travelled to Thurles on September 4th, to be defeated by Tipperary, 3-4 to 4-0. He was with Croom the following Sunday for their match with Cloughaun and had one of his worst days ever between the posts, the city lads winning 10-2 to 1-1.

## BACK AT HIS BRILLIANT BEST.

A week later Jack was back at his brilliant best when starring in one of the finest hurling contests played in Limerick for many a day, in which the Shannonsiders drew with Tipperary, 5-1 to 4-4. It was voted a fitting result by the great majority of the big attendance, the respective goalkeepers, "Skinny" O'Meara (Tipperary) and Jack McDonnell (Limerick) stealing much of the glamour of the occasion with sparkling performances.

Limerick won the re-play at the Markets Field on November 27th, 4-3 to 3-2, after another exciting tussle in which the issue was in doubt to the final minutes.

## HIS NEXT VISIT TO MARKETS FIELD.

Jack's next visit to the Markets Field was on March 26th, 1922, when he figured with a Croom side which Young Ireland beat 9-1 to 6-1. This defeat cost him his place on the county team—for his vis a vis, Mick Murphy, who was Limerick goalkeeper of the All-Ireland 1918 side, played a "blinder," which ordained his return to the Limerick jersey for long delayed Munster Final of the 1920 Championship, which took place at Cork Athletic Grounds on April 2nd, and which the Leesiders won, 3-4 to 0-5.

Eight weeks later, on May 28th, Limerick and Cork met in another Munster senior hurling final, that for the 1921 final, at Thurles, this occasion, where Limerick won 5-2 to 1-2—a big turnabout in fortune within such a short time.

Jack hung up his hurling boots until after the Civil War, when Newcastle West beat Croom, 4-4 to 3-3, in the West Limerick Senior Hurling final the following Sunday.

Part 2

# GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

## No. 223—Jack McDonnell Of Patrickswell

(CONTINUED)

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

**J**ACK McDonnell's first hurling appearance in 1923 was at the Markets Field on May 20th, when he helped Croom win the senior tournament final for the Father Connolly Gold Medals, defeating their old rivals, Fedamore, 5-3 to 4-33.

Limerick figured in two Munster Senior Championship Finals for 1922 titles, at Thurles, on July 1st. A then record crowd of twenty thousand spectators saw the games.

It was a typical Munster hurling match, and reminiscent of some of the greatest games played for the Southern crown. It was an hour of thrills not easily forgotten, as well as the splendid display of Willie Hough in the Limerick defence, and Jack McDonnell "between the sticks." A draw, with scores reading 2-2 all, was a fitting result.

### THE LIMERICK PLAYERS

The Limerick players were: Jack McDonnell, goal; Dave Murnane, Willie Hough, Denny Lanigan, Willie Gleeson, John Joe Kinnane, Tom McGrath, Garrett Howard, Bob McConkey, Chris Ryan, T. Mangan, Paddy McInerney, M. Mullane.

Tipperary won the football final, but the Shannonsiders made a gallant showing. Their colours were worn by: F. Cassidy, captain; Michael Ryan, goal; M. Walsh, C. McArdle, J. Nestor, J. Reynolds, J. Carey, M. O'Connell, J. Horan, M. Dayoren, T. Crawford, J. Curmeen, J. Grimes, P. Ryan.

The 1923 Munster Championships opened at Tralee that day fortnight, where Limerick defeated Kerry in senior hurling, 8-5 to 2-2.

### THE WINNING TEAM

The members of the winning team were: J. McDonnell, goal; D. Murnane, W. Hough, D. Lanigan, W. Gleeson, J. Humphries, Mick Neville, P. McInerney, J. J. Kinnane, J. Ambrose, P. Hogan, M. Mullane, J. Keane, W. Ryan, T. McGrath, C. Garvey, J. Kelly.

Rathkeale created something akin to a sensation when they knocked Croom out of the county championship in a high scoring game at Rathkeale on August 5th.

The walls of the Markets Field bulged the following Sunday when the greatest crowd ever to patronise that storied venue gathered there for the re-play of the 1922 Munster Final between Limerick and Tipperary. The attendance was almost thirty thousand, the charge 6d. and 1/-, with an extra shilling to the stand or sideline and the Munster Council collected its first "gate" to top the thousand pound mark—the actual receipts on the occasion being £1,370.

### FIGURE ONLY ONCE APPROACHED

This figure was only once approached in the long history of the Markets Field—on August 2nd,

1925, when the receipts were £1,321 from a Munster Final meeting between Cork and Tipperary. Even with admission charges very much increased in the intervening years, the thousand pounds mark was never crossed again for any event at this venue.

The 1922 re-play never produced the spectacular exchanges of the drawn struggle. On the smaller pitch the exchanges were close and tenacious, the pace terrific and the casualty list high. It was one of the dourest struggles in the annals of the championship, which Tipperary won, 4-2 to 1-4.

### NEXT VISIT TO MARKETS FIELD

Jack paid his next visit to the Markets Field on September 16th, where he figured with Croom against Claughaun in a match in aid of the Limerick Pork Butchers' Society.

The City lads won that game but engaged Croom again the following Sunday, when the result was a draw, Claughaun 3-0; Croom, 2-3. This latter match was for the Sweeney Tournament, Claughaun winning the re-play on October 28th, 4-2 to 2-0.

Croom had long holiday following this game and it was mid-summer of 1924 before we again meet them at the Markets Field for a game in aid of the C.B.S., and in which they beat Young Ireland 5-4 to 2-2.

### THE WEST LIMERICK CHAMPIONSHIP

In the West Limerick Championship, the Croom lads were held to a draw by Kilfinny, but won the replay after an exciting game at Rathkeale on August 24th. A month later they had revenge over Rathkeale, when they beat them in the West Limerick final, 4-4 to 1-1.

Croom had a great game with the great Cork side, Blackrock, in the semi-final of the Charleville Tournament, and although beaten, put up a magnificent display against one of the best club teams in the country.

On December 7th Croom qualified for the county senior hurling final, when they defeated Kilfinane, 5-2 to 1-0 at the Markets Field.

### THE CROOM CLUB

The annual general meeting of the Croom Club held on February 15th, 1925, was one of the most eventful in the history of the Club, as it sanctioned the purchase of the splendid grounds, which was later to prove the popular centre for some of the greatest club and inter-county games in the history of Limerick hurling. The meeting decided on equipping the grounds as a first class sports field, a bold move at a time when the G.A.A. had hardly a field it could call its own anywhere outside of Croke Park. The meeting appointed P. Mangan, captain of the senior hurling team, and F. Reid, general Club Secretary.

There were six thousand spectators (gate receipts, £150-14-6) at the Markets Field on March 15th for the 1924 Senior Hurling Championship final. The contestants were the old protagonists, Croom and Fedamore, with the latter strongly fancied for the honours. Croom, however, proved the surprise packet and won comfortably, 6-3 to 2-1.

### THE VICTORS.

Mr. D. Lanigan (Young Ireland) refereed, and the Croom players were: Patrick Mangan, capt.; Jack McDonnell, goal; Ter Mangan, Tom Mangan, M. Feely, M. Mullane, J. Hayes, T. Breen, W. Burke, J. Fitzgerald, T. Keating, M. O'Neill, G. Howard, J. O'Shea, J. Griffin.

The following Sunday Croom collected another set of medals by defeating Kilfinny in the final of the Rathkeale Senior Hurling Tournament.

Croom made an unexpected exit from the West Limerick Championship when they lost their first round match to Newcastle West, 3-4 to 0-3, at Rathkeale on August 16th, 1925.

They were on the losing side again a month later when in the semi-final of the local Tournament, in aid of the new Grounds Fund, Young Ireland beat them, 4-5 to 4-3, after a stirring game, in doubt to the last whistle. The blue and gold lads won out the tournament later, defeating Mallow in the final, 6-3 to 4-1.

### A WEST LIMERICK FINAL

When Croom and Newcastle West met in the final of the West Limerick Championship at Rathkeale on August 1st, 1926, the attendance was a record for the venue and they were rewarded with a typical meeting between the pair in which the exchanges were close and hard fought for fifty minutes, after which Newcastle West pulled out to win, 4-2 to 0-4.

At the Croom annual general meeting held early in 1927, the committee were able to report considerable progress in the work of field development, including the provision of extensive side-line seating and a dressing pavilion. The officers appointed were: Chairman, D. B. O'Donnell; Vice-Chairman, T. Keating; Treasurer, J. Moriarty; Secretary, F. Reid. T. Mangan was elected captain of the senior hurling team.

### NATIONAL HURLING LEAGUE

The National Hurling League was in the second year of its existence, and in the first game of the new competition Limerick were fixed to play Dublin. It was a great fillip for the Croom venue when it was selected to stage this very important and attractive game, which Dublin won 5-1 to 1-3. Captain Lyons of Croom House, brother of the late Spenser Lyons, a former Chairman of the County Board, threw in the ball.

Croom's defeat in the county final of 1927, and their return to capture the crown two years later, will be amongst the matters to be dealt with in the concluding article on Jack McDonnell's career in next issue.

## GREAT LIMERICK SPORTSMEN

## No. 223—Jack McDonnell Of Patrickswell

(CONTINUED)

By SEAMUS O'CEALLAIGH

THE 1927 Limerick Senior Hurling Championship was one of the greatest in the history of the competition.

First shock came that year with the defeat of the reigning champions, Cloughaun, by their old rivals, Young Ireland.

The Cloughaun team that won the 1926 championship was a fine combination and it was a big surprise indeed when Young Ireland beat them 3-7 to 1-4 in the opening round of the 1927 competition.

Fedamore won the 1926 junior hurling county title, and this brought to senior ranks some great players, including the grand figure of after years, Paddy Clohessy.

Fedamore and Young Ireland qualified for the East Limerick senior hurling final, and the game was played at Croom on October 16th. After a magnificent game, in which both sides gave of their best with every inch stubbornly contested, the result—a draw at 3-1 all—was hailed by the bulk of the spectators as a fitting ending to a grand contest.

**A GLORIOUS STRUGGLE.**

The pair met again on November 13th when the huge crowd were kept bubbling over with excitement all through a wonderful hour of hurling thrills. It was a glorious struggle, vigorous and fast, tough as any ever fought for the hurling crown, yet played in an admirable sporting spirit.

At half-time they were level, 1-1 all, and when Mick Neville sounded the final whistle they were still level, 3-2 all. Again the crowd were satisfied, and debated in lively fashion as they left the grounds the thrills and throbs of two hectic hours, with the promise of at least another before the issue was decided.

The third meeting did not take place until March 11th, 1928, and it was a great tribute to the pulling power of the teams when a huge crowd braved snow, sleet and intense cold to see the play.

**TOO KEEN TO BE SPECTACULAR.**

The hurling was again tough and tenacious—too keen to be spectacular but full of lively and exciting incidents. Young Ireland, playing against the hurricane, were on top most of the first half, until that doyen of hurling midfielders, Willie Gleeson, equalised with a splendidly judged shot a minute from the interval, 1-2 all.

The City lads were expected to win well in the closing moiety, but Fedamore weathered the conditions better and won by the narrowest of margins, 3-2 to 2-4. In fact it was even narrower than that, for Paddy O'Shaughnessy was shooting the sliotar between the uprights for the equaliser when the long whistle interrupted that vital flight.

**THE COUNTY SENIOR FINAL.**

The County senior hurling final was played at Croom on March 25th, and brought together the age old rivals, Croom and Fedamore. Rivalry between this pair was of the keenest and the fact that Croom had so many successes to their credit in the more recent meetings suggested a power packed struggle with the issue close.

The game, however, never got to the expected heights as Fedamore dominated the midfield exchanges, where Willie Gleeson and Chris Ryan formed a great partnership. The Croom defence bore the brunt of the battle and it was only some outstanding work by Jack McDonnell in goal, ably assisted by Mullane, Ter Mangan and Jack Shea, that kept the final score at 5-4 to 1-1 in Fedamore favour. The Eastern lads led 2-3 to nil at the interval.

Rathkeale won Western hurling honours the following year, but lost in the County Final to Young Ireland, who had ousted Fedamore in the East.

Croom were back representing their division in 1929, their toughest game in qualifying being against Newcastle West, whom they beat, 3-3 to 2-4.

**OBJECTIONS.**

Objections dogged the course of the championship in the East. Young Ireland had a close call

from Pallas, whom they beat at Hospital, 2-4 to 2-3. Pallas had a rod in pickle, however, and got the game on an objection. A young Ireland counter objection failed.

When Pallas beat Cappamore in the next round, 8-2 to 5-1, the losers took up where Young Ireland had failed and they succeeded in ousting Pallas through the Council Chamber.

Cappamore won Eastern honours by beating Cloughaun 5-2 to 4-3, whilst Croom came out of the West with a 6-2 to 4-2 win over Kilmeedy.

**A DELAYED FINAL.**

The 1929 County Senior Hurling Final was not played until April 13th, 1930, and resulted in an easy victory for Croom, who won 7-4 to 2-1. The winning players were:—T. Breen, captain; J. McDonnell, goal; W. Bourke, Ter Mangan, M. O'Brien, W. O'Brien, J. O'Dwyer, Jim Roche, J. Griffin, W. Griffin, M. O'Mahony, P. Kearney, M. Haran, J. Hayes, W. Corkery.

Croom and Newcastle West had their most controversial meeting in the 1930 Western semi-final. At Rathkeale, the Croom lads won a hectic game, 2-6 to 3-2, on September 7th, but at a meeting of the Western Board a few days later the referee, Paddy Flaherty of Rathkeale, reported that he gave Croom a close in free from which they scored the winning point. He afterwards discovered that this was a wrong decision and consequently Croom were not entitled to the score and hence he declared the match a draw.

The Board adopted the referee's report but Croom said they would not re-play. Newcastle West then objected to the constitution of the Croom team.

**CENTRAL COUNCIL'S RULING.**

The Central Council, on being appealed to, ruled that the referee could not alter his decision after the game, but on the objection being dealt with by the County Board Newcastle West were awarded the match, a decision which the Munster Council subsequently upheld.

Newcastle West were afterwards beaten on a re-play by Young Ireland in the county final.

Croom regained the Western crown when they beat Newcastle West, 4-4 to 3-0 at Rathkeale, on September 13th for the 1931 title.

Ahane won out in the East and collected their first of the 16 senior hurling championship titles at the Gaelic Grounds on October 4th when they beat Croom 5-5 to 1-1.

**THE TEAMS.**

The teams that day will be of interest:

**Ahane**—Paddy Scanlan, captain and goal; D. O'Malley, M. McDonagh, P. Hilliard, John Mackey, Mick Mackey, Anthony Mackey, T. Ryan, J. Ryan, M. Ryan, E. O'Brien, M. Hickey, M. Quinlan, E. McDonagh, P. Joyce.

**Croom**—T. Breen, captain; Jack McDonnell, goal; M. Horan, Dr. J. J. Stuart (now President of the G.A.A.), J. O'Brien, M. O'Brien, P. Kearney, J. Roche, J. O'Dwyer, J. Kennedy, A. Keating, W. Corkery, M. O'Mahony, J. Griffin, W. Griffin.

That was Jack's last game.

I can do no better than conclude this sketch of his career with an appreciation I received from one of his close associates of hurling days:—

"As one who was very intimate with 'Jackie' as his friends called him, I believe that he is not as well known for his outstanding hurling as he should be. He was a top class goalkeeper in his day, not alone in Limerick but in Munster also.

"A brilliant career was cut short by his untimely death in 1936. Mick Neville of Kilfinny, who was a West Board official at the time, tendered the sympathy of the Gaels by saying: 'The death of Jackie McDonnell has shocked the Gaelic world. We are poorer by the passing of a great hurler and true sportsman'.

**WON THREE COUNTY TITLES.**

"Jackie won three County titles with Croom, with several Western Championships thrown in. This is

certainly an achievement when one remembers that Croom's total of championship successes only number six. His team mates were the Mangans, the Howards and the Roches, and it was a sight to see such great caman wielders train in Mangan's field in Carass.

"Incidentally his son, Michael, is also a prominent player of Gaelic games with Croom, and for many years past has helped to keep alive the game in his native parish. For fifteen years he has played for Croom, but has yet to emulate the deeds of his famous father."

PART 4