

Background - The following essay was composed for the Leaving Cert ( Honours ) 2013 By Daniel O Keeffe Colaiste Treasa - please take note content of this essay may not be copied but may be referenced - the essay is uploaded primarily to act as a source of information for the National schools children of the parish when entering the Dromtarriffe GAA - Schools essay competition) - More of Dromtarriffe's history can be found by accessing the links on the main page.

The hurling and football being played before 1884 was mostly on an unorganised basis, hampered by the lack of influential encouragement and authoritative rules. With the foundation of the Gaelic Athletic Association in 1884 – came a new association to promote the Irish culture. Political life at the time was dominated by the fierce struggles between the English Protestant Establishment & the Irish Tenants. Landlords at that period were employing wide scale evictions of tenants, acted to fuel the fierce nationalist spirit which swelled the ranks of nationalistic organisations, the Land League & the Gaelic League. In the early years of the GAA the main aims of the newly founded G.A.A. were to promote Irish athleticism and not just football and hurling. The importance of matches played at local or parish level should not be underestimated and had the GAA not been founded most may never have been played.

The arrival of the GAA had a rejuvenating effect in many areas encouraging existing clubs and leading to the formation of new clubs. Even before the founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association on 1884, a type of football known as Rough & Tumble was played in the Duhallow area. Dromtarriffe G.A.A. was founded in 1885 when these rough and tumble men threw their lot in with Cumann Lúthchleas Gael and enabled Dromtarriffe to field one of the strongest and first clubs in the country under the new rules (source 1– *Dromtarriffe A Parish History Tadgh O Muineachain*). Dromtarriffe G.A.A is

situated in the barony of Duhallow - a parish which straddles both sides of the Blackwater River Life for the people of Dromtarriffe at that time in history was one of considerable strife, as the Absentee Landlords began implementing evictions for non payment of rent due, only to be met with some strong opposition from the Boycott system encouraged by the leaders of the Land League, and Tenants Rights organisations. Early evidence from the history of the clubs formation tells us of the 1880s Dromtarriffe “Brass and Reed” Band which was composed mainly of members of the football club, and so wherever the team went – the band went too. At the head of the band was carried the G.A.A banner - on one side was “Dromtarriffe Gaelic Football club” and on the other “Insuppressible Duhallow – God save Ireland” – a challenge to the crown and a tribute to the people of Duhallow. The first president of the newly formed Dromtarriffe Football club was the local curate Fr Pat Browne. (Source 2 – *interview with club historian D.J.O Keeffe*).

Land League days in Dromtarriffe (source 1)

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw a great blossoming of National spirit in Dromtarriffe as well as in many areas throughout Ireland. This era was dominated by the forming of the GAA and the Land League. The land war was fought out bitterly in Dromtarriffe as Tenant Farmers took the advice of Parnell and Davitt and held onto their holdings. One local siege is recorded in my source “Dromtarriffe a History” which took place on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1887 and lasted for more than seven hours. The house was defended by several dozen men , many of whom were members of the Dromtarriffe Football team , and the attacking force had to retire discomfited , whereby the farmer secured undisputed possession of his holding for six months longer. Six months later a second attempt was made to gain possession. This time the bailiffs and police came with the battering ram – determined to knock the house. The police making full use of the element of surprise were faced with only three defenders enabling the attacking force to gain entry into the premises. The three occupants were arrested and taken to Cork jail and

faced trial in Millstreet courthouse. On the day of the trial the town was filled with Land League supporters . Prominent among the supporters were the entire Dromtarriffe Football team on horseback and dressed in their football togs. The three defendants were acquitted on a legal technicality .

Dromtarriffe 's All Ireland final - 1893

Despite the general decline that effected many clubs – some of whom folded between the year 1889 – 1892 due to various effects including the Catholic Church opposition , the death of Parnell and the GAA close ties to the Home Rule movement and rural emigration , Dromtarriffe on the field of play had successes in 1888 when they won the North Cork Championship but lost the County final match when refusing to play extra time, In 1891 the three County boards united under 1 county board ; Dromtarriffe were again North Cork champions however once again did not progress in the county further when defeated by the Nils. In 1892 Dromtarriffe once more emerged from North Cork and faced Clondrohid , runners up in the All Ireland final of 1891, at Coole near Millstreet – after a great game Dromtarriffe was beaten by two points. ( source 1).

In the 1893 County Final played on 17-7-1893 under Gaelic rules . As already detailed , Dromtarriffe had for many years being trying for the championship , met and defeated Castlematyr on the final score line of Dromtarriffe five points Castlematyr three points. Dromtarriffe played no game to reach the All Ireland final , they were fixed to play Laune Rangers in Mallow on 19<sup>th</sup> November and again the match was fixed on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1894 but Laune Rangers failed to turn up on both occasions and Dromtarriffe were awarded the game. Dromtarriffe had the privilege of picking players from other clubs and they did including players from Nils and William O Briens. Source - “ A view from Mount Hillary” by Pat Murphy .

Final of 1893 report-

In 1894 Dromtarriffe were disqualified from the Co. Board. They had played three Clondrohid men on the team against Fermoy. Clondrohid fielded no team that year and by rule could play with an adjoining parish . Dromtarriffe were the nearest affiliated team and so it was deemed legal for their players to play with Dromtarriffe - however Fermoy objected and were awarded the championship. In 1885 the Dromtarriffe GAA club reached its pinnacle point –membership including players was strong . Having won the North Cork championship they again faced a very strong Fermoy side who ended victorious after a titanic battle- but this match was to carve out an imminent ending for Dromtarriffe GAA – during the second half Dannie Kenneally from the club collided with a fellow teammate . At the time it seemed Kenneally was only badly injured for when asked how he felt at the end of the game , jumped the enclosed rope surrounding the pitch – however on the way home he became very ill and died the next day – this event echoed the end of the first golden era of Dromtarriffe Football and the playing fields of Dromtarriffe were silent for years to come. – source 1