

Hannah McNally

## Chasing the Curse

In my travels to Ireland, the purpose of my project was to create a photo story capturing the curse that was set on the County Mayo Gaelic Football team and the legacy that it holds on Ireland 74 years after being set. My research was collected through a series of portraits and documented interviews of locals within County Mayo. After explaining my project and receiving consent from each participant to have their portrait taken and their interviews documented, I asked a few questions consisting of what they personally knew about the curse, whether they believed in it or not, and if they believed that it will ever be broken. Below I have added some portraits and overviews of some of the County Mayo locals that I interviewed.



Declan, 80 years old

County Mayo, Ireland

Declan had mentioned a different version of the story of the widowed wife at the funeral was the one to set the curse on the team. Which was interesting to hear because everyone else that I had talked to and the internet itself stated that it was the priest at the funeral who had cursed the team. Declan also mentioned how the weirdest situations in games would happen. For example, in the last minute of one All-Ireland game, County Mayo was winning and then the ball bounced weirdly 20 feet from the goal and ended up going over the goalies' head and they lost. He stated that although it is weird

to think about, he does believe in the curse.

Dean, 21 years old

County Mayo, Ireland

He was born and currently still lives in County Mayo. He is a fan of rugby and also plays music at the pubs for work, therefore he is surrounded by the curse when fans are in the pubs watching the games. Dean stated how he does not believe in the curse in the slightest bit and said that it



should have already been broken by now because the last person from the 1951 County Mayo Gaelic Football team has passed away. However, he does believe that other teams have just gotten better and that is why County Mayo has not been able to win the All-Ireland title.

Eamonn (Irish version of Edward), 70 years old  
County Mayo, Ireland



Lives in Deer Park East Born on Barrack hill, Westport. He is a fifth generation of this town and is now a tour guide for it. He is a huge sports fan and when asked about the curse he said that it was rummish (Irish version of rubbish). Eamonn stated, “It’s only looking for an excuse, they’re too nice and are missing that killer instinct.” In his lifetime he has watched the County Mayo team throw away five All-Ireland tournaments. Eamonn also mentioned that County Mayo will beat the good teams and then lose to the

easier ones.

Son of Vincent, 6 years old

County Mayo, Ireland

I spoke to this young boy, his father, and his mother at the same time, and collectively they informed me that they were all fans of the sport (he is wearing a County Mayo jersey underneath his jacket in the photo). The family said that since the curse had been set, the team has lost about 6 or 7 All-Ireland tournament finals. They think that the team uses the curse as an excuse when



they lose. The young boy also mentioned that the last member of the team passed away recently so he has hope that the team will win next year.

Overall, this was a great experience and from all the information that I gathered from every interview, it is safe to say that this so-called “curse” has been taught throughout all generations and is still very present throughout the County Mayo community and Gaelic Football fans. Hopefully I can get the chance to return to Ireland to follow up on this story because multiple locals stated how the last member of the 1951 team had recently passed away which should mean that the curse is broken and County Mayo is

finally free to win and All-Ireland title.