

TIPPERARY ATHLETES

Philip Sheppard

by Michael O'Dwyer

Philip Sheppard was born on 19 April 1878 at Main Street, Cloughjordan, County Tipperary. He was the fifth son of James Sheppard, the local tailor, and Mary Sheppard (née Gorman). His parents got married in Grawn church, near Cloughjordan, on 22 October 1866. He was the younger brother to William, James (died in infancy), John and James, and older brother of Patrick. His sisters were Sarah, Margaret and Bridget. A keen athlete, Philip Sheppard's sporting highlight was his participation in the GAA's national pole vault championship on 22 May 1898 which was farmed out that year to the sports meeting held in Cloughjordan organised in aid of the building of the Church of St Michael and St John, the first Catholic church to be built in Cloughjordan. Philip finished third in the pole vault championship. The winner was Mick Ryan, Knocknacree, Cloughjordan, and runner-up was John Sullivan, Modreeny, Cloughjordan. In non-championship events held at the sports meeting Philip won the 220 yd and 120 yd handicap (which he started at scratch), and was runner-up in the 100 yd and long jump. The 1901 census shows Philip Sheppard was working at the time as a grocer's assistant to Michael O'Reilly in Main Street, Cloughjordan. However, after his employer died in December 1901, he emigrated to New York in January of 1902 on the ship *Germanic*. Philip married his fellow-passenger, Sarah Sullivan. They were married on 26 October 1902 and settled in West 154 Street, Manhattan, New York. Born to them were James (1904), Philip (1904), John (1906), Margaret (1908), Patrick (1909) and Joseph (1911). Philip Sheppard died on 13 October 1911 in a tragic workplace accident at the grocers he was employed with. He was aged thirty-three, and is interred in Calvary Cemetery, New York. A grandnephew of the Cloughjordan-native is Belfast-historian Barry Sheppard.