

# TIPPERARY ATHLETES



**Jim Fahey**

by Michael O'Dwyer

Jim Fahey was born on 1 March 1879 at Ballymorris, Bansha, County Tipperary. He was the eldest son of Patrick Fahey, a farmer, and Elizabeth Fahey (née Merrigan). When he was the age of four the family moved to Corderry, Galbally. Though the village of Galbally is in County Limerick the townland Corderry is across the border in County Tipperary. Jim Fahey appears to have started his athletics career at seventeen when he leaped 34 ft 2 in. (10.41 m) in the three standing jumps at Galbally sports on 13 September 1897 and coming second to J. J. Chandler who set a world record that day with a jump of 38 ft 10 in. (11.83 m). This bettered the previous record, also set by J. J. Chandler, two years earlier at Bansha, of 37 ft 9 in. (11.50 m). The following year Jim Fahey travelled to Cork for the Irish athletics championships, but J. J. Chandler won again, with Jim Fahey running him a close second. In Thurles on 28 July 1907 at the Irish athletics championships Jim Fahey won two events. He won the standing hop, step and jump with 31 ft 4 in. (9.55 m) and also the three standing jumps with 35 ft 2 in. (10.72 m). Jim Fahey emigrated to the United States on the RMS *Oceanic* in May 1908 and on a visit home in 1913 he came second in the three standing jumps at the national championships at Mallow. The 'Irish Kangaroo', as Jim was called, was forty-four when he achieved his greatest jump. On 4 September 1923 at Chicago he covered the distance of 40 ft 3 in. (12.27 m) in the three standing jumps. This was certified as an American, and incidentally a world record, for that event. After working for forty years as a motorman (tram driver) in Chicago he retired in February 1950. Jim Fahey died on 6 October 1958 in Chicago, aged seventy-nine, and is interred in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Chicago. His wife Mary 'Mae' Fahey (née Delaney) was native of Garryard, Silvermines, County Tipperary. Their only child Fr Thomas Fahey (1926–93) was ordained in 1952.

## **Titles Won at Senior National Championships:**

### **Gaelic Athletic Association Championships**

1907	Standing Hop, Step and Jump	31 ft 4 in. (9.55 m)
1907	Three Standing Jumps	35 ft 2 in. (10.72 m)