

ORIGINAL

STATEMENT BY MRS. ARTHUR GRIFFITH,

36 EATON SQUARE, TERENURE,

DUBLIN.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILEATA 1913-21
No. W.S. 205

I have no papers, notes or diaries belonging to my husband and he never talked to me about politics as I did not want to, having been brought up in a family in which my father was an ardent Parnellite and my mother a follower of William O'Brien, with consequent frequent disputes on political matters. We had a lot of political publications but I burnt them and all papers that might incriminate anybody from time to time for fear of raids. I never took part in any public functions or meetings, except once in Cootehill in the 1918 election where I went to stop people talking. Once when Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington wrote an article in "The Irish World" saying that my husband always kept me at home and gave me a bad time, for the only time in my life I wanted to write an answer to it, but he said it was better not as that would only give her statement more publicity which was probably what she wanted.

He did not take any part in the Rising as he was against all that and Sean McDermott had promised him that a Rising would never be started without his - Arthur's - knowledge. My sister was staying with us at the time and I was to accompany her to Queens-town on Easter Monday and see her off to America, but my husband advised me not to go as he was afraid there might be trouble. However, on Easter Saturday or Sunday O'Leary Curtis came and told Arthur there was now no danger of disturbance. I heard the priest at Mass on Sunday saying that the manoeuvres were cancelled, so I decided to travel with my sister, leaving my husband with the children, later learned from him that on the Monday he took the children out to go to some relatives and got only to the end of the road as he was informed of the fighting. He then went home and asked a neighbour to take the children so that he might go to see what was happening. The neighbour refused, thinking thereby to keep him at home and out of danger. On the Wednesday, however,

he went out and made his way by a circuitous route to Eoin Mac Neill's house at Rathfarnham. Some time after that he was arrested.

I had a very trying time in Cork. I had very little money with me as I had never intended to stay even a night. I came to the station every day in the hopes that a train might run. I went to the H.Q. of the Volunteers where I saw Terence McSwiney and Tom McCurtain. The former was in a terrible state of anxiety as he did not know what to do, having got conflicting instructions from Dublin. Eventually, on Saturday morning there were two trains and I got the second one which, however, only brought me to Lucan.

My husband did not leave Dublin at any time before the Rising to take a message to the country.

Arthur was born in Dublin where his grandfather had come to from Redhills in Cavan, having been thrown out by his Presbyterian family because he had become Catholic. While my husband was in jail his granduncle - a very old man - asked me to come with the children to stay with him in Cavan, but we did not go.

Before Sean McDermott was executed he sent a message to Arthur by someone who was in the prison, asking him to forgive him for not having kept his promise to inform him about the Rising, but he and others thought it would be better not, so that Arthur might live on after themselves to keep the National Movement alive.

My husband was a member of the I.R.B. and of the Volunteers and had been present at the Howth gun-running with his Unit. I was present at the foundation meeting of Sinn Fein in 1905. I do not remember who was present.

Signed: *Frank B. Gill*

Date: *3 March 1949*

Witness: *S. McCurtain*

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