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ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRS MILITARY HISTORY
No. W.S. 942

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS.

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 942

Witness

Patrick Joseph Berry,
48 Goldsmith St.,
North Circular Road,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of Mountjoy Prison staff,
1906-1922.

Subject.

His contacts with various I.R.A. prisoners
in Mountjoy Prison, 1917-1922.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No S.2251

Form B S M 2

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Patrick

STATEMENT BY *J* JOSEPH BERRY,

48 Goldsmith Street, North Circular Road, DUBLIN.

I am 70 years of age. I am a native of Kilkenny. I joined the prison service in Mountjoy in 1906. I have relatives still living in Kilkenny. My brother is there.

The prison employment was under the Civil Service and my authority was in Whitehall, London. The test for qualification was an elementary education. A medical examination and testimonials from local authorities, including the R.I.C., had to be produced. There was a standard height fixed and measurements. I passed without any difficulty and I took the appointment in 1906 in Mountjoy.

Prior to the Rising of 1916 I did not do very much from the national viewpoint until 1915. In 1915 we had German prisoners who were interned over some trouble in some camp. It was a camp for German officers and there was some kind of a mutiny and six or seven of these men were transferred to Mountjoy. Seán McDermott was there doing a sentence of six months for sedition in 1915. He was anxious to contact the German prisoners and I happened to be in charge of them at the exercise ground. So he asked me would I mind letting him have a chat with them. I said "Go ahead, Seán". They were down at the prison grounds and Seán on account of his limp had a bit of ^{*an effort P.B.*} stretch to reach them. He asked me if he might go to them. I told him to go ahead and that I would keep an eye out in case any of the superior officials came on the scene.

Seán carried on a long conversation with the Germans until the time for them to go to lunch. He had only one interview with them in my experience. But when he was released some days afterwards he came up to the prison to try to get a permit to see them but he was not allowed.

He never told me what he spoke to them about nor did I ask him. On the morning of his release he made a speech outside the gaol. As far as I am aware he got the normal remission for good conduct and would have been released before the end of the six months.

After Sean's release I used to come in contact with him on and off. These were chance meetings at Murray's of Fleet Street where we would have a drink together. During that period before the Rising he did not ask me to do anything. The other prisoners of interest before the Rising were Jim Larkin, Connolly and Sheehy Skeffington, but I had no particular contact with them.

The Rising. 1916.

at meet I used to meet pals on and off at that time and we always used to ~~park~~ here and there. They used to drill in places but I was never asked by them to go with them on account of the position I held, I presume. For this reason they might not have considered I would be reliable and so they would not be likely to open their minds to me. I was, however, well aware of their sympathies.

The 1916 Rising came on. I did not know anything about it until Easter Monday. But I knew beforehand that there was going to be a general mobilisation around Easter.

On Easter Monday I went down the city and saw the Volunteers in the Post Office. I knew the sentry who was posted outside the G.P.O. I think his name was Vincent Poole. I knew him from old days. I saluted him and he saluted me in return as much as to say "This is no place for you". I went back to the prison quarters. I was a single man at the time.

No prisoners were brought to Mountjoy until after the surrender. After the surrender the Fifth Lancers were sent down to Mountjoy from Marlboro' Barracks - about 100 of them. They arrived on Sunday morning or Monday morning. The first batch of prisoners came to Mountjoy on Monday afternoon, quite a big force of them.

I knew Liam Tobin and Eamon Duggan. I knew Tobin very well as the Tobins were neighbours of ours in Kilkenny.

The prisoners were brought into the reception room and the usual search and bath took place. I took particular interest in Liam Tobin. I told them to give him a nice bath for which he was very grateful. They were worn out. Another comrade, Tim Cronin, and myself made the prisoners as comfortable as possible by way of giving them smokes and so on. Cronin was a native of Kerry. The prisoners were dressed in prison garb to which they made no objection. Batches of them continued to come in. This first big batch was in Mountjoy for a long time doing mail bags and the usual prison work. The prisoners were kept in cells. As far as I know they were in "A" Division which was the ordinary convict one. They were there for some time and I got short notice from the office that they were being shifted to Portland. I had not much time to get in contact with the outside people on account of my duties which were at this time very heavy. I went across the road for some cigarettes to Mrs. Byrne, a tobacconist, whom I knew to be friendly with the Volunteers. I asked her to deliver word to 24 Munster Street where L. Tobin lived with his father, mother, brother and sister. The news was circulated with the result that they got a great send-off. Mrs. Tobin was down at the North Wall with other relatives and sympathisers who had come to see them off. She told me that Liam said "Mother, we put up a good fight".

When the prisoners were parading on their arrival at the prison some of them were in uniform and I heard the Governor say "Take that uniform off; it is disgusting". That made me and Tim Cronin very angry.

When that batch went away different groups came in. All of the big group who came first were sent to Portland gaol as far as I remember.

Some women were brought to the Female Prison but I had nothing to do with them. They included Countess Markievicz. She went from Mountjoy to Aylesbury. After the big group came in we had smaller groups coming off and on. No one remained in Mountjoy except for a short time.

When all the prisoners had gone to England some political prisoners were brought in on suspicion, but whether they were convicted or not I am not sure. The Frongoch prisoners came out in December and the others were released six months later.

Then we started about 1917 to get very busy. During the late summer of 1917 many Volunteer prisoners were brought in including Thomas Ashe, J.J. Walsh, Fionan Lynch, Austin Stack, Phil Shanahan, Alec McCabe and John O'Mahoney. They went on hunger strike and on a Saturday afternoon they were told that if they did not take food they would be forcibly fed. On that Saturday afternoon I was put in charge of the cell occupied by Thomas Ashe, (B.2).

I knew Ashe and when he came in we became very friendly. I was put in charge of him for the Saturday afternoon and the Sunday. He was not in bed and was not forcibly fed then. He would take water and he was very fond of a smoke. The ordinary prison food was brought round at the usual times. When the next meal was brought the previous meal was taken away. On the Sunday morning when they were bringing him down to the surgery room to administer the forcible feeding by Dr. Dowdall it was I took him down and I told him to give the Doctor a bit of his mind. When he went in the Doctor asked him to take his food voluntarily. Ashe replied "No". Then the Doctor said "If not I have no other alternative but to feed you forcibly". Thomas Ashe then said to the Doctor he would go down to posterity crowned with the blood of innocent Irishmen on his soul. He fed him through the mouth then and after that Ashe walked back to his cell. That was the first occasion. On Monday morning Ashe was again fed by Dr. Lowe but I was not present at that.

He was a man who knew nothing about forcible feeding. Dr. Dowdall was the prison doctor and it is possible he shifted his responsibility to Lowe. Lowe was brought in temporarily for that purpose. Dr. Cooke was the assistant doctor and he did not come down because I think he got a warning not to come near Mountjoy. It is possible Dowdall got a similar warning. To the best of my belief I was in Vaughan's Hotel at that time and Michael Collins rang Cooke up with the warning while I was there.

Lowe was practising somewhere as a doctor in the locality of Amiens Street. On Monday afternoon Thomas Ashe was brought to the Mater Hospital from the prison hospital. They thought they would never get him out quick enough as he became very ill as a result of the forcible feeding by Dr. Lowe which had not been done properly. He died that night in the Mater Hospital. An Inquiry was held at the City Morgue near the present C.I.E. building in Store Street. On the previous evening, Mr. Hanna, K.C., who was for the Crown (afterwards Judge) questioned me.. I was sent for by the Governor and brought before him. Hanna asked me about Ashe and about the routine and forcible feeding. There was some query about the food but I am a bit vague about that. Hanna told me that there was a bright future before me as far as promotion was concerned if I gave suitable evidence. So I told him I'd swear the truth.

On the following morning I was brought down with other warders and things went on smoothly until my evidence came on. I gave my evidence. I remember Maud Gonne MacBride was there and a good many sympathisers. I gave my evidence as I knew it and when I came to the remark Ashe made regarding the blood of innocent Irishmen going down to posterity there was applause in the Morgue with the result that the meeting ended in confusion.

Mr. Healy (who was for the prisoners) and Mr. Hanna had a few hot words. It nearly led to a riot. After this evidence I more or less became unpopular with my superiors and an object of suspicion. My colleagues of imperialistic tendencies gave me 'rubs' and 'cuts' now and then.

We got several circulars from the prison board to join the Army. Many of the staff volunteered. Needless to remark I did not. The prison authorities in Mountjoy did not express their disapproval but I felt it. (Appendix A)

Then Collins sent for me and I was more or less their Intelligence Officer in the prison and we were inseparable friends from then onwards. I was with Collins day and night carrying dispatches from and to prisoners. These were written dispatches. In spite of the fact that the prison authorities must have been aware of my sympathies following the Ashe Inquiry, no attempt was ever made to search me. Of course, I was pretty diplomatic and made no open profession of my sympathies.

Collins had a friend living in Mountjoy Street and I think she was a relative of Fionan Lynch. I used to meet him very frequently there. I often met him outside the prison gate. One night we went down the Phibsboro' Road and the Licensed Traders' Assistants had a strike on and Collins suggested a drink. I brought him in where the picket was outside the door. So he remarked "A nice place you brought me and a strike on". I happened to know the man who was on the picket so I said it was alright.

Then Mr. Barton was arrested and he escaped the night before Patrick's ~~night~~ ^{day}. My first interview with him was in the prison hospital. Owing to the fact that he had been an officer in the British Army the prison authorities wished to give him better treatment I think. I made some advance to him to show him I was a sympathiser but he was evidently suspicious and said something about Dublin Castle to the effect that he knew their methods. He gave me to understand that he considered I was

more or less a spy. So I had to get a verification of my sincerity from Mick Collins who was a great friend of his.

When I brought to Mr. Barton a verification that I was alright he was up in the top ward of the hospital alone. So in the course of a conversation I told him he was too high up in the world especially since he was not over-robust, or words to that effect. I told him to ask the Doctor to let him down to the ground floor. This was done.

I continued to carry the dispatches. I knew there was something on foot after that. I found Mr. Barton very solid and reliable and not excitable. He did not want anyone to do anything he was able to do himself. He was not long in when he escaped. I had nothing to do with it except the carrying of dispatches between him and Mick Collins. He did not tell me the day or the time he was going to escape. He did not want any help except whatever I gave in the carrying of the dispatches. He knew if he required any help all he had to do was to ask me. He never told me himself how he was going to carry out his escape but I heard beforehand from Dick Cotter or someone that a hacksaw had been brought in to him by Dick Mulcahy who paid him a visit.

As I was on the trade staff, being a plumber warder, I had more facilities for getting around the place than most of the warders and I carried my tool bag. The cells in the ground-floor of the hospital were after being reconditioned and they were not like the ordinary cell, i.e. the doors were not so thick and it would be easier to saw through them.

Mr. Barton was out for some time after his escape when he was recaptured. In the meantime I did not see him. He was brought in a second time but was not put into the hospital but into a division of the prison on his own. There was no one else in these quarters and there was a special warder allotted to him and his door was double-locked.

After Mr. Barton's escape in March 1919, an Inquiry was held and the authorities could not be convinced but that he went through the front gate dressed in the uniform of either a prison officer or a British military officer. The Vice-Chairman of the Prison, MacDermott, presided at the Inquiry. No one was blamed as a result of it. Mr. Barton was a determined man, solid as a rock. He was a great man. The conviction that he got through the front gate lasted until the twenty prisoners escaped over the wall. On account of the special precautions taken after Mr. Barton's escape I had great difficulty in getting in contact with him when he was in prison the second time. So I got him to smash the gas burner in order that I could get the key from the warder in charge to go in and fix it. It was a brain wave. Before that I was going to leave the correspondence on top of the toilet ^{? system} ~~system~~ but I concluded that would be risky.

When I went in to mend the gas burner I gave Mr. Barton the dispatches. I went in alone having got the key. It was not necessary to take an impression of the key as having got in once in the course of my duty I knew I would have no difficulty in getting in again. After that Mr. Barton was courtmartialled and he got a sentence of five years. That finished me with him as he was sent off to Portland Gaol.

Prior to the escape of the twenty prisoners I had a feeling that there was something in the air. I had been carrying dispatches between them and Michael Collins and one heard bits of conversation. But as I was very busy I had not time to go into details. I used to meet Liam Tobin, Tom Cullen, Frank Thornton, Mulcahy and others who spoke openly to me. But there was no actual statement made to me by either Collins or the prisoners of the proposed escape. That would be March, 1919.

The prison authorities did not question me after the escape of the twenty prisoners. But there was a tightening up from the discipline point of view. The usual prison Inquiry was held but as far as I know

no one was reprimanded as a result. An odd one of the prisoners may have been recaptured but I can't vouch for this.

During this period there was a constant flow of prisoners coming in from different parts of the country. And for the important prisoners I still continued to carry dispatches to and from Mick Collins. Amongst these were the Brennans of Clare, Ernest Blythe, W.T. Cosgrave and many others whose names I cannot recall.

Hungerstrikes were of frequent occurrence. But the forcible feeding had been abolished after the death of Thomas Ashe. As a result of the hungerstrikes prisoners continued to be taken to the prison hospital and outside hospitals. Some of them were released under 'The Cat and Mouse Act'.

In or about that time I was made an honorary member of the N.C.O's Mess, Ship Street Barracks. A man named Bracken, a military policeman, joined our job as a temporary warder and it was through him I was made the honorary member. We used to go to Ship Street Barracks on a Sunday evening for a drink and I brought Michael Staines over there on one occasion with a view to purchasing arms. We did not succeed in getting the arms as we did not come in contact with any seller. I went to Ship Street on a few Sunday evenings. I still have my card of membership which I am also giving to the Bureau (Appendix "B").

We thought some of these military policemen would be willing to sell their webley revolvers which Mick Collins was anxious to get. Staines was a quartermaster and was anxious to get all the arms he could lay hands on but there was no tangible result from this effort. If there were any sellers there it was not possible to contact them as they would be under supervision there.

The next incident of interest was the arrest of Kevin Barry. He was on remand in Mountjoy. After he was sentenced to death by courtmartial

Tom Cullen waited for me outside the prison gate one evening. He said that Brigadier Dick McKee wanted to see me. We went a roundabout way until we reached John O'Mahoney's house in Cardiner's Place (Fleming's hotel). Dick McKee was waiting for me at the hotel and he discussed with me there and then the question of rescuing Kevin Barry. I told him there was only one way to take Kevin Barry out and drew a pencilled outline of the plan. My idea was to take him out on Sunday morning at Mass time when the milk car would be going in. In my candid opinion there would not be the slightest difficulty. All the rescuers had to do was to go up a few steps and turn to the left. There would be no trouble holding up the man at the gate about 7.30 a.m. or 8 o'clock. It would mean no loss of life. Kevin would be at the sacristy side in the chapel with an armed escort of I think one Auxiliary. They would go in with the milk cart, hold up the warder at the gate, go up the three steps, turn to the left to the chapel. They could get into the main body of the chapel, hold up the Auxiliary and take out Kevin. It was my honest opinion that there was no other way because Kevin would be down at the end of D.I., from which it would be impossible to take him out of the Condemned Cell, there being two Auxiliaries on guard there.

From what I gathered shortly afterwards I learned that Kevin Barry's mother was not in favour of any attempt to rescue him. I think she thought he would be reprieved on account of his youth. This is what Tom Cullen told me.

Then there was a kind of a plan on Saturday evening. I happened to be coming out the front gate and I saw Volunteers there. Extra military were posted on the inside so I waved off the Volunteers knowing that they would have no chance. On the outside I recognised Tom Burns and a few others. Whether they were planning to rescue Kevin or not I could not say but it struck me that they were. Realising that the situation was hopeless I waved them off.

I assisted the chaplain at the grave at the burial of Kevin Barry. He was put in a nice coffin and the chaplain (Canon Watters) read the prayers. I got four other warders to carry the coffin from the workshop to the graveside. On the Sunday, that is the day before his execution, I was speaking to/^{him}in his cell. The chaplain asked me to leave down the Mass vestments in the cell. There was a special Mass offered for him in the Female Prison on the morning of his execution. I served this Mass. Father Fennelly said it, asking the congregation to pray for the soul of Kevin Barry just about the time of his execution.

There was a general gloom and sadness over the prison on the day of Kevin Barry's execution. Everyone, Auxiliaries and Black & Tans alike, felt it. They were very fond of him. Canon Watters insisted on him getting Catholic Auxiliaries in his cell on that occasion. The gloom lasted for some days. I was not aware of any attempt to torture him during his time in prison. It is possible that after his arrest the soldiers may have manhandled him before he came to the gaol. But there was no manhandling as far as I am aware by the warders in Mountjoy. The Auxiliaries had no access to him until he was sentenced to death.

A week after Kevin Barry's death I was transferred to Maryboro' (Portlaoise) gaol. I think the prison authorities began to find me out and their suspicions hardened. I was working in Maryboro' in the normal way amongst the ordinary convicts for some time until 500 prisoners came from Spike Island. This would be about the spring of 1921. They were all political prisoners and were untried. The Gordon Highlanders were in charge of them. A Major Kennedy was the Commanding Officer. Of course I happened to know some of the internees. These included Michael Collins of Thurles. They were all from Kerry, Cork and Tipperary.

I was called to a shop owned by a Miss Kelly. I think it was a hardware shop. Here I met some of the local Volunteers including Jimmy Kelly, Bill Kearney and Lar Brady. They were preparing for

tunnelling with a view to facilitating the escape of the prisoners.

I brought in tunnelling instruments, including flash lamps. Another warder gave me a hand, but I cannot think of his name now, in helping to distribute the instruments to the internees. This warder was sympathetic. *I now remember that Butler was his name 1913*

I came up to Dublin with dispatches on the Saturday before Bloody Sunday. I had some information anyhow from the prisoners but I don't think it was anything very much. On Bloody Sunday I was along with two other Volunteers at Crossguns Bridge expecting to meet some of Collins' men such as Cullen or Tobin. As we were chatting at the bridge, to my great surprise, who put in an appearance but Michael Collins himself. This would have been about 12 noon. I left the two Volunteers and went to Collins, shook hands and walked away with him. Instead of going down by the Canal way we walked down to Doyle's Corner and at Doyle's Corner the Auxiliaries were raiding and holding up people coming from Berkeley Road Church and Phibsboro' Church. On account of I being with Collins I felt very shaky, especially for him. If anything happened to Collins I'd be blamed for bringing him a dangerous way.

Both Collins and myself were held up by an Auxiliary Officer armed with a gun at the crossing at Doyle's Corner. He told us to 'put them up'. So I said we were alright and I produced the old Ship Street pass and told him we were out of Mountjoy. He used a rough adjective and said "Pass on". Mick was cool, calm and collected and did not show any fright. We walked along Berkeley Road and as we came to Bill Connolly's off-licence shop, which was a favourite house for Detectives and Volunteers alike, I saw Bill going in the halldoor. I tipped him on the shoulder and he jumped with fright. I said to him "You were always pretty anxious to meet Mr. Collins and now I have the honour of introducing him to you". He brought us inside and in order to get the best brand of Sherry from a top shelf he smashed a whole row of bottles in his excitement. He was delighted and excited especially on such a

dangerous morning. We left after a short time and I escorted Mick as far as Mountjoy where we parted. He may have walked down to Vaughan's Hotel. Nothing else happened as far as I am concerned on that day.

I was often at a party in the house of Liam Tobin's brother-in-law in Munster Street with Mick Collins. Before I went to Portlaoise, I had been at a party at Noonan's in Munster Street. Noonan was Liam Tobin's brother-in-law. I met there Liam Tobin, Gearoid O'Sullivan, Tom Cullen and other friends of Collins. We were not long there when we got word that a raid was on in the street and we had to skip it in the middle of the fun. We went out the backway.

On another occasion before I went to Portlaoise I was at Phil Shanahan's in Foley Street with a Volunteer. It was during curfew with the result that we stayed a little too long. When we got out they were raiding all round and we could not get to any friend's house and I was locked out of the gaol. We tried the Western Hotel at the Broadstone but were told they were booked out. So I said to my Volunteer friend Garrett that there was only one hope and that was to make for the Soldier's Home in Abbey Street. We made our way from the Western Hotel along back lanes to Abbey Street. I had heard in the Prison Mess that soldiers had stayed in this place. My friend agreed to come with me as it was our only hope. But it was decided that I should do the talking as he was a bit fiery and I think he was carrying a gun. So I rapped on the door and we bluffed our way in with the door-keeper by saying we were ex-soldiers. He asked us what "mob" we were in and I said "the Royal Engineers". We were asked was it 1/- or 1/6d. accommodation we wanted so we decided on the latter. Inside we met a lot of soldiers. We had nothing to eat until breakfast the following morning. We conversed with the soldiers and the 'Sinn Feiners' were discussed and so forth. They had a very poor opinion of them. We became very patriotic, toasting the King. My friend looked daggers at me/and I was afraid he'd break out and give the show away. After breakfast

the following morning I returned to the prison. I was queried and reprimanded for being absent without leave.

Another time I was at Jim Kirwan's public house in Parnell Street and while I was there the Auxiliaries came in to use the phone. Collins who was there quietly slipped out the backway without attracting the attention of the Auxiliaries. The raiding was going on all round Parnell Street and I slipped away too without being held up. This was a favourite meeting place. On that occasion there was a friendly Detective along with Collins whose name I think was Ryan. Ryan slipped out with Collins.

After I being transferred to Portlaoise Mick Collins was undecided as to whether he would call me out of the prison employment and hand me over to Batt O'Connor. The latter who was a building contractor would give me employment. Tom Cullen informed me that Collins decided finally that it would be better to let me go down to Portlaoise, that I wouldn't be long there. Peter Breslin, John Daly and Tim Herlihy who were also warders in Mountjoy, took up my work then. But two of them did not last long as they were transferred to other prisons. They were probably caught out at something. Tim Herlihy had then to carry on on his own. Tim Cronin was dead at this time. He died at the time of the bad flu.

On the Monday following 'Bloody Sunday' I went to Kingsbridge Station to return to Maryboro' (Portlaoise) but I found that no trains were running until the evening. The trains had been stopped by the military. I did not go to Croke Park to see the Match although I had passes for it. I returned to Portlaoise and after a few days there I had to go out to Lalor's Mills to Brady's house to meet some fellows who were 'on the run'.

I have nothing else of importance until the General Amnesty in Portlaoise. This was at the Truce when all the internees were released.

I remained on for some time until the Provisional Government came on early in 1922. Then Fionan Lynch, who was Minister for Education in the Provisional Government, was instrumental in bringing me back.

When John Daly was coming to Maryboro' in July, 1921, I asked the Governor for permission to meet the train and he told me I could not do so without a permit from the competent military authorities and he sent me to the R.I.C. barracks. The permit was given to me and it was valid not only for that night but for three months. I have it still and I am presenting it to the Bureau (Appendix "C").

The Kilkenny Journal of Saturday, 19th January, 1935, published the words of a song by Phil O'Neill (Slieve Ruadh) who was a Volunteer that I knew well and met frequently. It is called "The Mountjoy Hotel" and was sung at many a Volunteer party at which I was present to the air of "The Mountains of Mourne". It is all about the period I have been describing and the sort of life the Volunteers enjoyed in Mountjoy gaol. I am presenting it also to the Bureau, (Appendix "D").

After I was brought back to Dublin by Fionan Lynch I was carrying on as a trade warder in Mountjoy.

When Collins was shot in Cork in August, 1922, the body was brought to Dublin on a boat called "The Classic" and I was one of a party that went down to the North Wall to take the body off early in the morning. The body was covered with the tricolour and I marched behind it to Vincent's Hospital. I followed the funeral subsequently.

When the Four Courts prisoners were brought into Mountjoy after the outbreak of the Civil War I shook hands with Rory O'Connor knowing him well from old days because he was the brains of a lot of the rescues. He was in good form and showed no resentment towards me. Also present were ^{Joe} Dick McKelvey and ^{Dick} Tom Barrett who were friendly. There was a ^{fight} ^{between} ¹⁹⁰³ ruck in the prison of the Irregulars and Free State soldiers. This was after the death of Collins. Some of the Four Courts men had their

guns on them when they were brought in and did not give them up. They were military prisoners. I don't think there was any search when they came in. There was a whippet tank in the yard, probably to prevent a break-out. The prisoners were brought in a Black Maria. When the ^{fight} ~~mutiny~~ started they were probably in about a couple of months. The ⁰⁹⁰³ ~~mutiny~~ ^{fight} started among the prisoners and firing took place. The prisoners fired at the Free State soldiers and the latter retaliated. Peadar Breslin, one of the I.R.A. prisoners, was shot and some of the Free State soldiers were shot. I was arrested that day at 1 o'clock. The Irregulars made up a sort of a trap mine which they placed in the exercise ground and I was accused of bringing it in to them, so I was arrested on suspicion. I was kept in the basement of the prison for a fortnight, locked in and under constant supervision. They suspected me of sympathy with the Republican prisoners because I got a feeler before that to join the National Army and I took no notice of it. I did not want to be a soldier. It was Paddy Daly asked me in the Prison Mess. Since I did not join it, it was concluded I was anti-Free State. After a fortnight in Mountjoy I was about to be shifted to Portobello as a prisoner. My wife instructed James Brady, a solicitor who lived in Palace Street, to seek my release under the Habeas Corpus Act. Then it was ordered that I be produced in Court. The Free State authorities refused to allow Brady to see me and before the Habeas Corpus business came on I was released.

After a fortnight in Mountjoy it was rumoured that I was to be shifted to Portobello and that I would probably get the "lead" on the way over "in an attempt to escape". My wife got this information.

I used to be interrogated by Seán Ó Muirthile and Dermot O'Hegarty concerning my activities against the Free State and as I got no exercise during the day I was exercised at night for a short period under strict supervision.

On resuming duty after the Habeas Corpus business I refused to work with the military authorities and I was sent to Kilmainham where the women were in prison. I was very popular with them all when I went over there. They were shifted to the North Dublin Union and I returned to Mountjoy.

I should have mentioned that at the outbreak of the Civil War, Phil Cosgrave was appointed immediately Governor of Mountjoy: the previous Governor, Munroe, was put in charge of the female prisoners and ordinary male prisoners. Paddy O'Keefe was appointed Deputy Military Governor.

In Mountjoy I carried on my work in the ordinary way. There was no political work for me to do. Knowing my previous history and knowing that I was a plumber warder the Free State people evidently thought the Republican prisoners might be using me for trap mines or bringing in arms or otherwise helping them. But I was not, nor did they ever ask my help. I was not in the part of the prison where the Republican prisoners were held. From the time the Four Courts prisoners had been brought in I had no contact with the Republican prisoners except to see them taking their exercises and I would get a friendly nod from them. I did not know anything about the pending executions of Rory O'Connor and his three comrades until that morning when I was going to Mass I heard they were to be executed.

I knew nothing about the execution of Erskine Childers.

I have nothing further to add except that myself and my colleagues carried on this Volunteer work without fee or reward and never expected anything out of it. We did it for the national cause.

(Signed)

Patrick Joseph Berry
Date: 3rd May 1954

(Patrick Joseph Berry)

Witness:

Sam Cosain

S. N1 Chiosain.

3rd May 1954.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

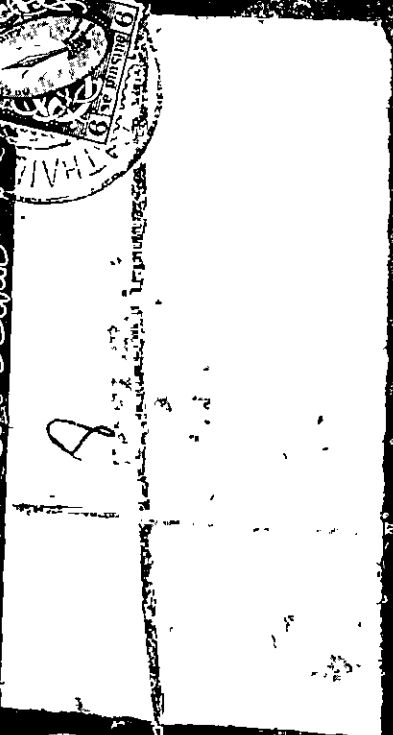
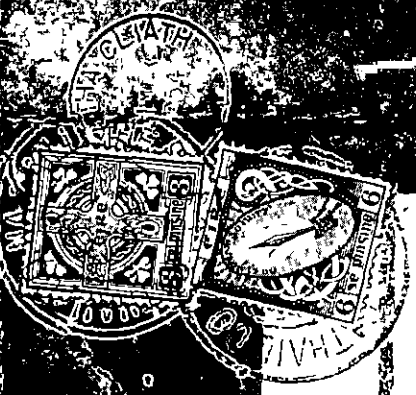
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Prof. Perry
Worcester



Sind hi Circa
Bureau State Ind
26 Spud in Paris
blatichat

A

ROYAL DUBLIN SOCIETY
MALL & BRIDGE
SPRING
INDENT AIR

R

Roscanill
No. 14

Royal Dublin Society

Appendix B



N.C.O.s' MESS,
SHIP STREET BARRACKS

Certified that

Mr *Berry*
is an HONORARY MEMBER of the above
Mess

R. S. Walsh

Major,

1st Pin out Marshal

Dublin *6th March 1920*

Curfew Permit

Mr J. Berry of Maryboro has permission to be
out of doors between the hours of 10pm & 5 am from 1.7.21

to 30 9 1921 inclusive

By Authority of the Compt Military Authority
Thos L^{td} for Col R.1C Maryborough

Appendix

DUBLIN,

November, 1915.

SIR,

1 DEC. 1915

A recent Treasury circular on the question of recruiting for the Army as it affects the Civil Service has added to the powers of Heads of Departments to give to the Crown whatever service may be of highest value in the present crisis. More freedom has been allowed in the substitution of women, or men not of military age, for men fit to serve in the Army. The employment of such substitutes, as they become more efficient, will enable a larger number of Civil Servants of military age to be released from time to time, and meanwhile, arrangements are being made which will permit those who are anxious to enlist, but whose civil work is at the moment indispensable, to be attested forthwith, and to return to their work until such time as they are called up for military service.

2. Under these conditions, I am now directed to place on record the name of every member of the Department who desues, whenever he can be spared, to render military service under the terms, as regards pay, &c, allowed by previous circulars, to persons in the Civil Service at the time of the outbreak of War.

3. I accordingly invite you, should you so desire, to sign the enclosed form of Undertaking, and to return it to me for record, and for communication to the Director-General of Recruiting for Ireland, if and when your services can be made available to the Military Authorities. On receipt of the signed Undertaking there will be issued to you a receipt for it which you will be able to show to canvassers and recruiting officers.

4. You should state in the appropriate spaces on the form whether you are single, married, or a widower, and if you have children or other dependants, their number, their relationship to you, and their ages.

5. I would ask you to bear in mind in replying to this letter that the men in the employment of private Companies and Firms in Ireland cannot but be influenced by the example set in this matter of great moment, by the Servants of the State.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

Mad Dermot

VICE CHAIRMAN

W. Patrick J. Barry

THE MOUNTJOY HOTEL

A POPULAR SONG OF THE
TROUBLED TIMES

BY PHIL O'NEILL
(Slabh Ruadh)

One of the most popular songs of the "war" period in Ireland was "The Mountjoy Hotel," composed by our Special G.A.A. Correspondent, "Slabh Ruadh," in 1918. It was in vogue in every social gathering and its racy and natural humour made it a great favourite with friends, and even opponents of the movement. Soon after writing it, the author sang it at a St. Patrick's Day party of "the boys" in Finglass, Co. Dublin, and amongst the audience, and one who enjoyed it keenly, was one of the Mountjoy warders, Mr. Joe Berry, a Kilkenny man. The author having several requests for it lately, has given it to us for publication.—Ed. K.J.

THE MOUNTJOY HOTEL

Air—"The Mountains of Mourne"

(By Phil O'Neill)

I.

In Dublin's big town, there are
first class hotels,
Where they give board and lodging
to all the big swells,
There's blinds on the windows
and bells on the door,
And a beautiful carpet laid down
on the floor,
But the grandest of all and it's
now in full swing,
Is a beautiful building controlled
by the King,
I was there once myself and the
truth I can tell,
There's no digs in Dublin like the
Mountjoy Hotel.

II.

I was met at the tram by the
porter and bus,
And he took me along with a
great deal of fuss,
We drove thro' the town like the
Viceroy in state,
And never drew rein till we
stopped at the gate,
I was brought to a room where
they took down my name,
They asked my address and the
reason I came,
When I answered them questions,
the clerk rang a bell,
I was ordered a bath at the
Mountjoy Hotel!

III.

When I got thro' the bath, well
my blood was near froze,
The attendant, he brought me a
new suit of clothes,
The finish was fine and the pat-
tern grand,
And over it all was a beautiful
brand,
Then dinner was served—'twas
a glorious feast,
It consisted of five or six courses
at least,
But the liquors and brandies, they
made my heart swell,
I got drunk as a lord in the
Mountjoy Hotel.

IV.

The bedrooms were cosy, and
carefully kept,
When I lay down to rest, I im-
mediately slept,
But early next morning, without
By your leave,
'Get up,' says the boots, 'here's
hot water to shave,
The breakfast consisted of fish,
ham and eggs,
Yet I drained my old strabou-
pot to the dregs,
When I asked for the bill, sure
the waiter never fell,
'Tis all free, sir,' said he, 'in
the Mountjoy Hotel.'

V.

I went for a walk every day
round the grounds,
For the guests, as you know,
must keep within bounds,
When I asked for my pipe as I
wanted a smoke,
Says the boss very stiff: 'Do ye
think 'tis a joke?'

At last, came the day whé I had
to depart,
I almost got sick with the joy in
my heart,
For with all its great comfort,
the truth I must tell,
That, I won't go agair
Mountjoy Hotel.