

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1813-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1813-21

No. W.S. 322

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 322.....

Witness

Mrs. Sean McEntee (Margaret Brown),
9 Leeson Park,

Dublin.
Identity

Courier, Holy Week 1916.

Subject

Delivery of despatches to Galway
Holy Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness

Nil

File No. S.100.....

Form B.S.M. 2.

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STATEMENT OF MARGARET BROWN (Mrs. SEÁN MacENTEE),

9, LEESON PARK, DUBLIN.

About 1910, when I was a small girl in Eccles Street, a cousin of mine took me out to the house of Miss Kit Ryan (afterwards Mrs. Seán T. O'Kelly) where she was staying. They took me out to St. Enda's where we were received by Pearse. We met also Tom McDonagh, Willie Pearse and Tomás McDòmhnail there. That was my first association with any of the revolutionary leaders. I remember Pearse and Connolly at a Gaelic League meeting at the Mansion House. Alfie Byrne attempted to speak but was howled down by the audience. Pearse made an appeal that Alfie Byrne should get a hearing. At an Aonach in the Abbey Theatre in December 1914 or 1915, I met Seán McDermott.. I had previously known him. I met him on an earlier occasion when he was travelling to Kilkenny to a meeting and I was going to Bagenalstown where I worked. My brother, Dr. Paddy Brown, was a great friend of his. He used to come to our digs in Grove Park, Rathmines. We also met him a lot at Ryan's in 19 Ranelagh Road. I used to meet Ned Daly a lot at Céilís in Banba Hall. He used to walk home with us, also Jim Ryan who was in his battalion. Daly gave me the impression that he was in the Volunteers for the excitement. He seemed to keep great discipline because one night in our digs, when it came to the time for some Volunteer meeting, he ordered Jim Ryan to go to it and remained on himself with us. I remember we had only three eggs left for tea and Jim Ryan had to do without one.

I came to Dublin on the Saturday before Palm Sunday as I was to spend part of my holidays in Galway with Professor Power's family. I used, in fact, to come to Dublin every week-end, as I was preparing for my M.A. and used to study in the Irish Academy. I went on Holy Thursday morning to Ryan's in Ranelagh Road. Father Hannon, S.J., was there and they were discussing the plans in the document published on Spy Wednesday for the arrest of the Volunteer leaders and the seizure of certain buildings by the British. I was given two large sealed envelopes containing copies of the document for the Bishop of Galway and Tuam. I was taking the afternoon train from the Broadstone for Galway and when I arrived at the Station Seán McDermott came and gave me two despatches, one for Laurence Lardner of Athenry and one for George Nicholls of Galway. He did not tell me what was in the messages, but he said they were very important and that I should not let them fall into anyone's hands. I was to eat them if necessary. He then took an affectionate farewell of me.

When I got to Athenry it was getting dark. I went to the hotel and left my case. I found Lardner's - a public-house - at the corner of a street. It was full of people drinking. I walked through into a room at the back of the shop. Laurence was not there, but his brother and mother were. They told me he was in Dublin. They also mentioned that Mellowes was in the neighbourhood, I think in Oranmore. The brother assured me I would be safe in giving the message to himself. Athenry was full of police and the Sergeant came in to inquire who was the young lady that had come in. Mrs. Lardner told him I was her cousin who was working in Fim's. They asked me to have tea but I wouldn't. Mr. Lardner brought me out the back through a vegetable garden,

/which

which was very muddy, into which my high heels sank. My get-up was very unsuitable for that sort of an expedition. I reached the street and went to the hotel and had tea. Shortly before 10 o'clock the hotel people asked me was I staying the night. I said no. Then they said that there was curfew and I would have to go to the Station. When I reached it I found it full of police. It became rather cold and I had a long time to wait, so I sat with the night watchman who had a fire. I had sent a wire to Power's to say I was not coming until the night mail. Professor Power did not meet me in Galway as his motor-bike had broken down on his way to the station. I decided to stay in the Railway Hotel. I was not long in it when the Professor came to fetch me. I decided, as it was so late, not to leave the hotel till morning. The following morning Mrs. Tina Power came and she brought me to George Nicholls in his office. When I handed him the message he seemed very disturbed and excited. He asked did I know what was in it. I said no, and he said no more about it. Afterwards I delivered the sealed document to the Bishop of Galway whom I knew as his niece was in Eccles Street with me. He was worried about it and asked a lot about the contents. In the afternoon I went to Tuam by train and delivered the envelope to the Archbishop. I met George Nicholls a second time, either that day or the next. He made some remark about things having changed since I had given him the message.

That is all I remember about the events of 1916.

Signed: Walter Mac an tSaoi

Date: 18/11/49

Witness: St. Croagh

