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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 624

Witness

Mrs. Mary Flannery Woods,
17 Butterfield Crescent,
Rathfarnham,
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of A.O.H. and of
Cumann na mBan.

Subject.

Reminiscences of the period
1895-1924.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

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ORIGINAL

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No. W.S. 624

Statement by Mrs. Mary Flannery Woods,

17 Butterfield Crescent, Rathfarnham, Dublin.

Memories of the Land League and Evictions.

I am 76 years of age. I was born in Monasteraden in County Sligo about five miles from Ballaghaderreen.

My first recollections are of the Land League. As a little girl I used to go to the meetings of Tim Healy, John Dillon and William O'Brien, and stand at the outside of the crowds listening to the speakers. The substance of the speeches was "Pay no Rent". If people paid rent, organisations such as the "Molly Maguire's" and the "Moonlighters" used to punish them by 'carding them', that means undressing them and drawing a thorny bush over their bodies. I also remember a man, who had a bit of his ear cut off for paying his rent. He came to our house. The idea was to terrorise them. Those were timid people who were afraid of being turned out of their holdings if they did not pay. I witnessed some evictions. As I came home from school I saw a family sitting in the rain round a small fire on the side of the road after being turned out of their house and the door was locked behind them. I asked the woman why she did not break the lock. She replied that she would be arrested. I asked why some neighbour would not take her in. "A grádhín, anyone that would take me in would be evicted too". The fight conducted by the Land League was for fair valuation, reduced rents and security of tenure. The landlords were all absentees and it was their agents that were persecuting the tenants.

There was never an eviction on the McDermott estate although they were poor. They were very good to their tenants. They were the McDermott's of Coolavin; they were called the princes of Coolavin and they were intermarried with the O'Rourke's of Breffni. My grandfather, John Casey, used to go to Coolavin House in the summer holidays to tutor the McDermott boy who afterwards became Attorney-General for Ireland. My maternal grandfather and grandmother were school-teachers. Their children and grand-children similarly taught later generations of the McDermotts.

To go back to the evictions I saw one terrific one. One day I saw my father and mother go out, also my maternal uncle John Casey, who carried a six Chamber revolver. There was a great crowd - the inhabitants of two or three townlands. The police were coming to evict a whole lot of families and the people were prepared to resist, but they had no weapons except spades and pitchforks, apart from my uncle's gun. They rushed the police who were running down a hill. The police knelt down and fired on the crowd, killing two people, Brian Flannery and Joe Corcoran, who were relatives of my mother's. The people charged the police, snatched their rifles from them and broke them on the walls. The police scattered, the Sergeant was badly wounded and one of them ran away into the mountain and was saved by a girl when he showed her his scapulars. He afterwards married her. I think Bermingham was her name and his Hayes. The Sergeant, Watty Armstrong, who was brought to the barracks by his comrades, died from the injuries he received. I remember the straw being spread on the road outside the barracks. The military were drafted in while the inquest was being held. I can't say whether anyone was arrested for this, but all the gaols

were full of people who were leading the agrarian movement.

A monument was erected by the people to Flannery and Corcoran on the road between Monasteraden and Boyle and years afterwards the Black and Tans or the Auxies passing in a lorry started firing at the monument and blew off the names. They had previously shot dead a little girl who was hiding in a field as they passed. It could be that they had been ambushed farther down the road.

My Fenian Relatives.

My uncle Tom Casey was a Fenian and he was denounced from the pulpit by the bishop, Dr. Durcan, and word came to him that he would not get his father's school. He started with a cousin, another Casey, for the States. They walked to Kilfree junction to take the train on the way to the port. After they had left home ~~Sean~~ ^{Alan Sinn} Finn, sent by the bishop, set out from Ballaghaderreen to Monasteraden and arrived after my uncle's departure. He followed him to Kilfree junction to say the bishop had changed his mind and would give him the school, but the train had left and my uncle reached America. He joined the American Army as the Civil War was in progress at the time. His motive, like that of all the Fenians, was to learn how to fight for Ireland. He was drowned in Silver River in the State of Oregon as he and two others were carrying despatches. He was buried there with his mule. My grandparents got an official notification signed by some General from America. I can't say on which side he was fighting. His brother Pat, also a Fenian, who was preparing to go to Maynooth, would not be accepted there and he came to Dublin and joined the Horse Police. He died suddenly after a short time. It was not my mother who told me these things as she died when I was twelve, but the neighbours.

My grandfather Casey built his own school. He was a fluent Irish speaker and a great mathematician and knew other languages and he must have taught them to his children because they knew them.

I was brought up in a hotbed of nationalism and my most vivid memories are of the boys returning home from some political meeting with their kettledrums and their green and gold sashes. We used to make flags in the school in Ballaghaderreen with the aid of a nun, Mrs. Grehan she was called. Mother Morrow^{ugh} Bernard was the Reverend Mother at the time. She was the woman who founded the Providence Woollen Mills in Foxford with the help of an Orangeman from the North. She supervised the teaching of the fancy work at that school where I went after the death of my mother. I was a pupil teacher there. I did not train for the teaching profession though I was asked by Fr. Moloney of Staleybridge near Manchester to go there as a monitress and live in the house with his aunt. But he told me there would be no question of boys, so I would not go.

My Teaching Posts.

I went to Galway City to teach the children of P. J. Murray. I spent three years there. I went back home and came to Dublin with ^{MADAM} ~~Máirín~~ ^{Sue} McDermott and stayed in 10 Fitzwilliam Place, as a visitor for a month. I used to drive out with the children, Frank and Eileen. Rita was then preparing to enter the convent at Mount Anville. Frank was afterwards a member of the Dáil. She got me a place in Monkstown with a lady, Mrs. McHugh, who was related by marriage to the McDermott's. I got very ill there and came into Vincent's Hospital. After a few more peregrinations, including a course in book-keeping, I went

to Mrs. Knight-Roche and from there to her relative Mrs. O'Farrell and went out as governess with them to Malta where her husband was a surgeon-General in the Army and where I stayed twelve months. I enjoyed myself very much with them and only came home to be married.

My First Literary Efforts.

I started writing stories and poems as a very young girl. I used to pretend to send them by post, sticking them into holes in the walls. I was not able to spell even when I started and used to address them to my "Antie" Biddy.

The Irish Fireside Club had a few columns in the Weekly Freeman which were signed by Uncle Remus. The Uncle Remus of my time was Hester Pyatt, a daughter of the famous Dr. Sigerson. I became a regular contributor to these columns and recruited children and young people to it. Part of the aims of the Club was the diffusion of knowledge, kindness to animals, etc. Some of my poems were published by the Irish Fireside Club. One was published in the Glasgow Herald. Fr. Glendon of Dominick Street, editor of the Rosary, published some of my stories and used to pay me two guineas. The Weekly Freeman published one called "Married through an Earthquake" for which I got a prize. I wrote that in Malta. It was there I also wrote a poem for Griffith's paper, "The United Irishman". I had put the General's address on it and somebody in his office handed him the paper and he brought it home and evidently discussed it with his wife. She said to me, "The General says you want to take the bread and butter off him". The poem was about Sarsfield and was full of sedition. The General was very Irish and very kind-hearted. He would always have Irish manufacture in his house. He and his family always remained very good friends of mine.

My Return to Ireland and Marriage:

In October, 1901, I came back to Ireland and was married in the following February to Andrew Woods of Donnybrook. I had never seen my husband till I came back. We came to know each other through the columns of the Irish Fireside Club before I went abroad and we kept up a regular correspondence. Mrs. O'Farrell was well aware of it and I showed her all the letters and it was she advised me to come home and get married. My fiancé came to meet me at Liverpool and it was on the gangway of the boat we first saw each other as I was getting off. I spent a couple of nights in Liverpool with a friend who was teaching and living in a convent there. After my marriage I lived in the village of Donnybrook in one of my father-in-law's houses in Eglinton Terrace. He was a dairyman and builder. He had been in Manchester and was put into jail after the van rescue episode, although he had nothing to do with it.

I Join the Irish National Literary Society.

It was Mrs. Pyatt introduced my husband Andrew and myself to the Irish National Literary Society where I came to know many notable people. I met them in Stephen's Green. Dr. Sigerson was practically always in the chair. Different members who were able, read papers in turn. I read one called 'Vanishing Connaught' to a crowded audience in the Little Theatre in Hardwicke Street. It was published in the "Sligo Champion" on 10th May, 1919, and in the "Independent". After that they co-opted me on the Council and they accepted anything I wished to contribute. I had a craze for writing and Fr. George O'Neill, English Professor at the University College, and others advised me to go on writing.

I was very pleased to see my stories advertised on the

boards carried by 'sandwich' men, but I could not at this time devote myself to writing. My home and children, and what was expected of me as a Poor Law Guardian of South Dublin Union, together with my duties as a member of Cumann na mBan, filled my day from about 7 a.m. to long past midnight.

In January, 1921, Seán Etchingham asked me to contribute to Martin Ryan's paper. I sent an article or two - one entitled the 'Gladiator' by Bean an Tighe, but soon after another article appeared and its author's signature was the same, so I dropped it.

I stayed in the Irish National Literary Society until Dr. Sigerson's death when we were advised by a Mr. Norman to join the Dublin Literary Society. I did not stay in that.

I Join the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

My husband was a member of the Hibernian Order and used to organise their outings in char-a-bancs to Glendalough and other well-known places. I became a member of the Ladies Auxiliary of that organisation. We were working for the poor children of the district - buying materials and making clothes for them, free of charge, and had interested priests and some well-to-do people in our efforts to the extent of becoming subscribers. At Christmas we would have a feast for the children and toys and clothes distributed to them. We got to know the McGlynn's in that way. It was Jim McGlynn brought in a Howth Mauser gun and a bandolier in 1914 to me to keep immediately after the gun-running. I kept it and gave it to a young Volunteer who asked me to lend it to him for training. He said he would bring it back but he never did and I don't know what became of it.

Somewhere in the last decade of the 19th century I remember walking in a funeral to Parnell's grave wearing an ivy leaf in my coat. I felt grieved and terribly alone and, of course, no one spoke to me. A coffin draped in purple, was carried borne on men's shoulders in this funeral. I was a member of the Hibernian Order and it was probably they organised the procession.

Anti-Recruiting Activities.

I took part with my husband in anti-recruiting demonstrations in Wicklow where Willie Redmond was trying to get recruits for the British Army. We who were trying to shout him down seemed to be in a minority. I attended another Redmondite recruiting meeting for the "Freedom of Small Nations" in Herbert Park, and here a man who, as he boasted, had given his son as a sacrifice to the cause, ranted and raved in bad rhyme something about the glory of it. Pembroke was then a benighted area, but the meeting was not a success, nor was it a large meeting. About this time I was visited by a Miss Kavanagh, a member of the A. O. H., who tried to persuade me to go to the Front and was very disappointed when I refused.

After the Rising there was lying propaganda about Roger Casement, even in type, and I fought it with the help of our President, Miss Nolan. This slimy English propaganda against a great Irishman was by some accepted as true.

After the Nachelor Walk shootings I visited the hospital where two of the victims were brought and I saw one of them - Pigeon - die. Nobody told me to do any of these things. I went on my own.

The Rising.

I heard from the McGlynnns who were in the Citizen Army, and a native Irish speaker called Michael Mullen, that there was going to be a rising, but I had no part in it. When it started all the people in Donnybrook were dumb-founded but I was not. I always regretted I had nothing to do with it. I knew Mrs. Batt O'Connor of Brendan Road whom I got to know about 1915 through our children attending the same school - Louise Gavan Duffy's. By now I used to go to an odd Sinn Féin meeting. I sent my eldest boy, Tony, to Pearse's school in Oakley Road on the advice of Hester Sigerson Pyatt. After the rising, and when the cordon was withdrawn, I visited Mrs. O'Connor. Her husband was in prison.

I Join Cumann na mBan.

It was Mrs. O'Connor who brought me into Cumann na mBan in 1916. She told me to go to Miss Gavan Duffy at her school in St. Stephen's Green and ask her to propose me. Of course, I knew Miss Gavan Duffy as my children attended her school. She sent me to be enrolled in the Ranelagh Branch by Phyllis Ryan in St. Enda's, Oakley Road. Mrs. Gordon (afterwards Mrs. Stack) lectured as did Nancy Wyse-Power, myself and others. I remember one of my lectures was on John Mitchell. St. Enda's had been wrecked by the British soldiers who were searching for Dick Mulcahy who had a flat there after his marriage.

Activities for Cumann na mBan and Volunteers.

I began to work actively for the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan. There was bill-posting, finding safe houses for the boys, feeding them, clothing them and housing

them. When our prisoners came in from English gaols I got orders to meet them. There was a house in Parnell Square, probably 25, where I met them, taking them to my own house (Liam Mellows, Seán Etchingham, Dick Mulcahy), Roebuck House, which belonged to Mrs. Despard; the O'Rahilly's and other houses. When prisoners broke camp I brought many of them to their several destinations. One of these was Mount St. Benedict's, Fr. Sweetman's School in Gorey.

I remember on one occasion, I think it was after the escape from Mountjoy, I got another woman to come with me to Bath Avenue. We let down our hair and linked the escaped prisoners to Roebuck. I knocked on the door and Mrs. Despard came to the window with a lighted candle. I gave my name and she was at the door in no time to let us in. As my memory is so confused I asked Christie Smith to give me some particulars about the escape from Mountjoy and the visit to Roebuck House, and I am giving you his statements describing not only those but many other incidents that took place about that time in which our house, 131 Morehampton Road, was used by the I.R.A. (Appendix A and Appendix B). I got about six men who were guards in Mountjoy Jail to leave the Free State Army. They had been members of the I.R.A. and I got into conversation with them. They asked me to get civies for them, which I did, and they came to my house for them, pretending they were raiding it. They were accompanied by Lil Kearns who posed as a woman searcher. She was, of course, a member of Cumann na mBan. I kept the uniforms and gave them the civilian clothes. Mrs. Humphreys took in two of them that night. I wouldn't take any man without a revolver and ammunition. After a week I sent them back in uniform for their pay which was given them. I found it very difficult to get these men accepted at I.R.A. Headquarters. Some of them were arrested as spies and put into Galway Jail where they were kept until they

thought of mentioning my name. I heard this afterwards from Pudge Gargan who was Camp Commandant.

How I Procured Arms for the I.R.A.

At that time also I got the Free State soldiers to sell me revolvers and ammunition which I sold again to our boys.

I got arms and ammunition in the same way during the British time in the Curragh and Beggars Bush. A boy, Harry McGlennon, who lived with Frank Kerlin came to me and said he was sent to me with arms. I took them, paid for them and ordered more. He told me he had got them from the soldiers in the Curragh. Another boy, Dan Cahill, brought me new guns, with 12 rounds of ammunition for each, which he had got in Beggars Bush. The guns were still in their packages when I got them. After the split I could have got machine guns from the same boy but Headquarters did not want to touch this transaction. Liam Mellows was in gaol at this time.

My First Meeting with Liam Mellows.

The first time I met Liam was in November 1920, a short time after he returned from the States. He called to my house in Morehampton Road where he came from O'Mara's. He enquired for Mr. Quinn which was the name under which Seán Etchingham who was staying with us, went. He came up the path as I was letting out two young men of "E" Company, 2nd Battalion. He walked straight into the hall without speaking.

My House a Refuge for Volunteers.

Of course, my house was an open house for Volunteers from all quarters, both officers and men. I always left a front and back window open so that they could come in from any direction. Malachy Sweetman and Jack Lawlor came in by the back after they broke gaol in Kilmainham. That might have been after the split. One night Fr. Sharkey, who was staying with me, went into the front room for a book. He put on the light and hearing an exclamation, he quickly turned it out again and returned to the dining room saying "that place is full of men". Of course he understood the situation as he was working with us. That is why he was silenced. I went out to the drawing room, did not put on the light, and asked the boys did they want any tea. They said they did. I brought them a bedroom jug full of tea and a quantity of thick bread and butter. I warned them to be gone before my husband got up for Mass the next morning and to come back later for breakfast. But when I went in to them after my husband left the house in the morning, they were still asleep on the floor on cushions and whatever they could get to sleep on. They were, no doubt, after carrying out some operation during the night. I would not be able to say who these men were, although I knew them all at the time. This sort of thing was happening every day and several times a day and often in the night. Paddy McDonnell was a Volunteer who came often.

I had the dump for arms upstairs and all the members of the 3rd Battalion, "E" and "M" Companies, knew it. Very often I was not there myself but one of the girls, Máirín or Eiléen or both would be there. They simply went up and got any arms, etc. that they wanted and the girls gave them food. I fed them all, got clothes for them

wherever I could. I gave them those of my husband who bore it very patiently. On one occasion he told me that the next time I was giving away clothes, I should give them my own. I gave away his second best topcoat which he had not worn for a long time, but he asked for it the very next week, as I think he gave away his best one.

My Husband's Conversion to Militarism.

My husband was supposed to be a great parliamentarian, and we kept up that pretence, as we found it useful. He had been converted to militarism by a Vincentian from Phibsboro' who gave a mission in Donnybrook Church and who stayed with us. My husband was very fond of Seán Etchingham and Liam Mellows, although at first he did not like the idea of keeping anyone but Seán. Both of them stayed two years at my house with short intervals of absence. After a while Liam dropped the name 'Anderson', thinking it had become known to the police, and from that on went under the name of 'Mr. Nolan'.

Many Volunteers from the country and especially from Galway, Clarenbridge, Killeenan, etc. came to meet Liam at our house.

Liam Mellows becomes a Beloved Member of the Household.

On that occasion of Liam's first arrival at our house he gave his name as Mr. Anderson and I admitted him at once as I thought him like Barney Mellows. I had previously refused admittance to Dick Mulcahy who was looking for a Mr. Quinlan, until my son Tony turned up by chance and said, "Don't you know Dick, Mother?". I brought Liam right upstairs and knew by Seán's shout of welcome that I had made no mistake.

We loved Liam. The first time I saw my husband cry was after we heard of his execution. My husband came with me to claim his body. We took the car and on the way met Mrs. Despard and Mrs. McBride. We fetched Liam's mother and drove to Mountjoy but got no satisfaction there. Then we went to Tim Healy's house in the Liffey Valley, at the gate of which we were halted. A Free State soldier who was from Donnybrook and who had been in the British Army, recognised me and said, "Mrs. Woods, you can't get in". He called another soldier to take a message from us to his "Excellency". We demanded the body of Liam Mellows executed that morning. The soldier came back with the answer that his Excellency could do nothing in the matter, that it was to Gearóid O'Sullivan the Adjutant-General, we would have to go. We then went to Michael Conyn to ask him to take the necessary steps. He rang up, contacted somebody and made his request. The 'phone immediately went dead and we did not succeed in getting any contact again. The body was not given over to us but was buried in Mountjoy, and several years afterwards, probably after De Valera got into power, the body was removed and buried in Castletown, Co. Wexford, near where Liam's mother's people were born. Liam's niece, a Miss Whitmore, later Mrs. Brady, whose husband works for the railway, was living in that area and we used to visit there often during the Truce.

Liam's Activities as Director of Purchases.

Liam knew no fear and with him thought was action. It was in 1920 he came to me. He was then Director of Purchases. On his journeys he always had to take the first train from Kingsbridge and we brought him to the station and waited until the train went out to make sure he was safe. He pretended to be a business man and always read the "Times".

He dyed his hair and moustache the night before each journey, as otherwise his hair being so fair a detective would notice it was dyed. His journeys were for the purpose of meeting the guns which were landed in the South. Paddy Daly (now Dr. Daly) used to buy them in England for him. Mr. Murphy who had a shop in Liverpool was another supplier. I was in his house in Liverpool with a message from Liam and he was afterwards in mine. Liam would make those journeys at intervals sometimes of six weeks more or less, depending on when the guns were arriving. There was a Captain Collins in Cork who was looking after these landings for him. I saw a suite of furniture in Sceilg's which came into the country full of arms from America. Liam never brought these arms back to my house. He distributed them through his various agents, one of whom was "Sailor" Costello of Donnybrook.

Cathal Brugha supplied Liam with the necessary funds and Liam often told us that Cathal would sit all night with his mouth like a rat trap over a half a crown if it went wrong.

One day Liam, the two Ward Girls, my husband and myself went to Fairyhouse Races. It was raining slightly before we left but it turned into a downpour afterwards so that the place where our car was parked became liquid mud. The Auxies were greatly in evidence the whole day but they were trying to be friendly with the people. While my husband was at the machine the wheels were flinging up mud and we suddenly noticed the attention of the Auxies on us. Molly Ward was wonderful. She was very handsome and started to vamp one of the Auxies. Liam had a tweed cap pulled well over one eye and a cape over his shoulders. We greeted the Auxies in a very friendly way and immediately they offered help to move the car. They brought two planks to put under

the wheels and then threw themselves with Liam at the back of the car and got it out of the morass, one of them making some remark about the "Sinn Féiners". Liam replied that he would be able to deal with the "Sinn Féiners" when he got them. He was armed on that occasion, as always.

British Forces Raid No. 131.

About 12.30 one night there was a thundering knock at the door and my husband went to open it. Liam and Seán Etchingham were in the house, the latter in bed and Liam sitting on the side of the bed. Liam had time to rush down to burn some papers. I told them that the house was surrounded by the military. Liam was ^{back Siné} and they remained quietly where they were. Some of the military ran upstairs leaving a guard on the first landing where there were two two return rooms. Liam and Seán had their one bedroom on the top floor. Presently Liam came downstairs to the dining room, sat around the fire with us and whispering, inquired of me where was the document he had given me in the morning. I had completely forgotten it. I looked around me and remembered that I had put it into a casket on the sideboard. I whispered to Liam who got up and lit a cigarette for the soldier who was on guard at the door while I got up and removed the paper from the casket. It was a packet containing smaller packets. I handed it to Liam who opened it and handed me back one paper which I passed to my daughter who put it into her stocking. Liam used up the other papers, one by one, lighting cigarettes which he gave the soldiers. Liam said the paper he was interested in could not be destroyed as it could not be repeated. During this time the auxiliary officer who was with the military had the contents of two or three bookcases on the floor and was systematically searching every book, evidently

for some document. It was clearly not men they were looking for. They stayed from 12.30 till after 4 a.m. Before they left the auxie officer and Andy went upstairs to Etchingham's room and found him in bed, with the tommies sitting on the bed listening to the racing tips he was reading from the sporting papers he always had about him.

When they were leaving, the auxie officer showed me a bunch of papers. They were doggerel poems in manuscript that I had written for my son Enda. He asked me whether I had written them. I said, "Yes". He said, "If you don't mind yourself you'll find yourself in Ballymakinlar". The poems were running down the British and their flag. He took them away with him. The lorries rumbled away but quickly returned and I was certain they were coming for Liam. They knocked and when my husband opened the door the officer apologised and said he had forgotten his torch. After he left my husband informed us that the officer was a grand-nephew of Charles Stewart Parnell. During the examination of the books the officer had discovered the notes of a lecture on Parnell that my husband had given to the members of the A. O. H. in Donnybrook. He made no comment then but as he left the second time he told my husband who he was, adding "this work is very distasteful to me". It was Seán's and Liam's coolness that saved them on that occasion.

I always was in dread of raids while these were with me and I was specially afraid that Liam would be caught. I described in an article I wrote towards the end of 1920 the thoughts and feelings I had in those times, especially during the curfew hours. It was called "The Gladiator" and was published in "Young Ireland" of the 15th January, 1921. The gladiator was, of course, Liam, whom I looked upon as one of Ireland's great heroes.

I thought of collecting material for a life of Liam Mellows and I wrote to Seán Mac ConMara of Crusheen, Co. Clare, about Liam's doings after Easter Week, and I am giving you a copy of his reply. (Appendix C).

I also wrote a long time ago as well as I could remember the following account of his voyage to the U.S.A. as told to me by him.

Liam's Account of his Escape to America.

Liam told me that he with two others, Frank Hynes and Alf Monahan, spent several months in the mountains of Clare. In December, 1916, Liam Mellows made good his escape to America. His friends took him by car from Scariff to Cork, thence by boat to Waterford. Here off Helvic Head his boat lay for three weeks (weather conditions were so bad) and ultimately put back to Cork. Eventually he was taken to Liverpool, joined a ship as "able seaman" and signed on as a stoker, a job for which he was physically unfit. Here a new difficulty presented itself - he should have "Union" papers. He soon discovered that the man who engaged the crew carried all their papers in his bag. With Liam thought was action. He purchased a bottle of whiskey, let it be seen in his pocket and swaggering into the carriage in a seemingly, half-intoxicated condition, sat down beside his intended victim - the man with the bag - as the train left for Plymouth. The rest was easy. Having liberally helped his victim to the contents of the bottle he fell asleep when Liam unobserved flung the bag out of the window. On their arrival at the Docks the bag could not be found after an exhaustive search. No one remembered having seen it, no one was suspected of having caused its disappearance. All alike were without "Union" papers, all alike were helpless. They must go aboard without them. Time was short. After three weeks at sea the unseaworthy ship had to put about and return for repairs. Liam's feelings may well

be imagined on learning this. He told me how long this took to carry out, how someone wanted to go ashore (but I may be mixing this incident with the boat off Helvic Head. In fact, I believe it was in that boat someone he suspected wanted to go ashore but failed to get the necessary leave), his fear of detection and joy as they again put to sea.

It was during the time he stayed with us at "St. Enda's" 131 Morehampton Road, that he told of this never-to-be forgotten voyage which took one hundred days. Much of the story has faded from my memory, some of it could never fade. When signing on he gave his name as O'Ryan and promptly forgot it. He gave another name later. This, when he was questioned he explained was Irish for O'Ryan. I forget the name, but remember it was not Irish for anything and that Liam laughed heartily at the remembrance of it.

Liam must have suffered terribly on that voyage. Knowing nothing about stoking and afraid of being discovered, he feverishly watched the others working in this inferno, copying their behaviour, using nautical terms, swaggering, spitting even, a habit he detested in anyone.

A fellow stoker, a burly fellow, soon found him out and told him broadly he was "an imposter", that "he could never before in his life have handled a shovel". (At the time they were "feeding" the furnaces, stripped to the skin, sweat oozing at every pore, a raging fire blinding them with its fearful glare). And snatching the huge shovel out of Liam's hands and swearing at him the while, he demonstrated how it was to be used. Laughingly he (Liam) told of his attempts and of his ultimate success, while curses were hurled at him in the choicest of a seaman's vocabulary. Affectionately he spoke of the rough kindness and great-heartedness of this man for all his swearing.

Sometimes at the end of a "shift" he said he would be so overcome with exhaustion he would stagger away, lie down and sleep, before washing, regardless of the consequences, for the coat of sweat and grime must be washed off one's body while hot, else it hardens; when getting it off is "like tearing off one's skin" (Liam's description); so painful indeed that men have been known to jump over board to put an end to their sufferings. All this Liam suffered, all this and more, much more on this one hundred days of racking physical torture, with the ever present fear of being discovered and his anxiety for the gallant comrades he had had to leave behind - would they escape? What was happening in Ireland now? Would there be another "scrap"? Were others of his comrades in arms put to the torture - all his friends - oh young men of Ireland!

Liam Has Many Visitors.

While Liam was with us there were messengers constantly to and fro between him and Mick Collins about arms. These were Joe O'Reilly and Tom Cullen. The messages brought by these were always in writing and if Liam was out - which he usually was - I would hide them till he returned and I always kept any messengers who came from the country to see him. One of these was Pádraig Fahy, a teacher, who was an old friend of Liam's from Ardrassan, near where Edward Martyn lived. Liam would return at all hours, weary and uncomplaining, after a long day's work and seldom went to bed before 3, 4 or 5 a.m. In spite of my whispered threats and protestations he would always see anyone who was waiting for him, without waiting to take food. Often they would talk till dawn which meant an hour's or two

hours' sleep before another day's work

Mr. Kerr or Carr was the name of the man who was a frequent visitor to Liam Mellows at 131. I knew he was making grenades. My daughter Maureen took both ammunition and grenades out of Mr. Carr's house - a small house somewhere beyond Amiens Street and not far from St. Laurence's Church. Maureen said that she thought she could find the house yet, that there were children and that both Mrs. and Mr. Kerr spoke with what Maureen called an English accent, and I call either Lancashire or Liverpool. She reminded me that some few years ago I told her that I heard Kerr was dead and that a son was in a good job. I remember that too but forget who was my informant.

Mrs. Kerr came on occasion to 131 to see Liam Mellows. She told me how one night they were knocked up late by British military and when she "threw up" the window and began to abuse them and the Sinn Féiners for disturbing her and her children they went away apologising. She said "my accent saved us." She had a few sacks of grenades and a man "on the run" in the house.

It has occurred to me that Dr. Paddy Daly or maybe Una Daly may know something about the sea-faring man in Synott Place. Una was Liam's typist and secretary. Paddy was working on arms, etc. etc. Another - Red Christy Byrne or Burne was in close touch with the Mellows brothers and may be would have the name. I've not heard from the lady at 5 Synott Place and indeed hardly expected to. I wrote to her to ask her whether she had a sailor or sea captain staying in her house about 1920 or 1921.

On one occasion Jennie Mason, Mick Collins' typist, came with a thousand pounds for Liam. I took the money and

gave her a receipt for it. This money was for guns. Liam kept a book recording his orders for and purchases of arms and ammunition. The entries were recorded as "software". This book and a little notebook were handed with other relics by me to Liam Gogan of the National Museum who gave me a receipt. I gave the receipt to Ernie O'Malley who wanted to examine the books. One of the other relics was a copy of the "Hue and Cry" procured for me by a cousin of mine in the R.I.C. - which contained the names and descriptions of Seán Etchingham, Bob Brennan, Liam Mellows, Brennan Whitmore and many other Volunteers.

It was Liam's fate to be attached to organisation details when his mind and heart were out in the thick of conflict. During the Tan War his eyes turned longingly towards the "Flying Columns" in the hills of Ireland. But though he dallied with the idea of joining one of them, he recognised that his duty lay in the line his ability demanded - organisation - and he with a soldier's heart, stifled his longing and "kept to his last".

A long time ago I wrote down some of my recollections of those times with the intention of publishing a book. That is the reason I remember so much, but I am afraid all the same I have forgotten a lot and my mind is very confused especially about the dates and sequence of events. I am inclined to mix up the different periods, for instance I find it had to distinguish the incidents that happened before the split from those that happened after. I tore up what I had written.

Dr. Shaw's Kindness.

About 1921, Peter Hunt came on my list of wounded men to be housed and nursed. I had recourse to Dr. Shaw whose goodness I cannot praise too highly. I had on more than one occasion to listen to persons call Dr. Shaw an old Unionist when in fact he was helping us.

Peter Hunt was horribly disfigured and had his fingers burned to stumps and they were quite useless. I interested Dr. Shaw in his case and hid Peter in a house near the "Nine Arches". Dr. Shaw had him removed to Vincent's Hospital, sent to Germany for a newly-discovered serum with which he treated Peter, and this improved his facial injuries and his finger stumps, so that he could work, using his hands again. Dr. Shaw told me that the Germans had discovered this wonderful treatment during or after the first World War.

3

In 1923, not long after Liam Mellows' execution, Mrs. Mellows met with an accident, barked her shin and called in a doctor who treated her. Then she began to put ointment on the abrasion without consulting her doctor and when I went to see her in Mount Shannon Road she was in a bad way, very ill with watery blisters on her shin and I think, her leg as well. I informed Dr. Shaw. He called, treated her, and cured her. I said later on I wanted to pay him his fee. "Is there a fund?", he asked me. I answered I did not know, but I was acting on my own, and his reply rather shamed me, "If you can do a good turn, don't you think I can too".

I got him to leave his car where I.R.A. men would find it. It used to need polishing afterwards. One Saturday night they left his car all muddy outside instead of putting it in his garage which he had left unlocked for them. He

complained to me that people going to early Mass must have seen it.

Dr. Shaw lived in Ranelagh Road and was our family doctor for years - maybe from 1906.

I met a few men at his house during "at home" hours, and once had an unpleasant experience when asking one of the McGuirk's, taxi-owners, to meet me at the doctor's and I had asked Tod Andrews to meet me there. The young man refused to take us, saying something was the matter with the taxi and we must go to their garage with him for another. Tod was muffled up and I think McGuirk believed he was Dev. It was a Saturday night and I was glad to be at home with my family, but it was not to be. A messenger arrived after dark, a taxi was ready, and I left Tod at Mount St. Benedict's, went to Courtown and stayed at Etchingham's.

I remember Seán's shout of welcome when I answered to his call. They had been raided the night before and he showed me a gun he had removed a few hours before the raid from a place the raiders had pounced on. The time I am not sure of, but it may have been '23 (?).

The British Aliens Officer - a policeman - had ordered a Mrs. Lang and her sick children to leave Dublin forthwith. It was the time the German prisoners in the Isle of Man were released. I heard about it and dropped a letter in Dr. Shaw's letterbox. He called at her house in Leinster Place, prescribed for one child and advised her that she must on no account remove the child without his permission. He told me the Aliens Officer called on him later. Dr. Shaw threatened that did anything happen to this Irish-born child, he, Dr. Shaw, would hold the British Government responsible. The Langs - cousins of Andreas Lang who acted the part of

Christ in the Oberammergau Play - went to their home when they were ready, in company with other Germans ordered out by the British. I visited their home in '22 when Andrew, myself and our two daughters went to the play in Oberammergau. It is now 1951 and my cousins, the Bellevs of Drogheda, visited the Langs when they were in Oberammergau last year. Herr Lang is dead. Mrs. Lang lives with her son Arnold in the same house we saw them in '22, "They Remember".

My Work for Michael Collins - Procuring

Safe Houses: I Buy a House.

I always remained a member of Cumann na mBan and did any work that they gave me to do, posting and tearing down bills, etc. At a certain stage I ceased going to the meetings or to the parades because Mick Collins gave me instructions to absent myself from them and to act as if I were getting cool and careless. This would have been in 1920. He said to me, "You'll do whatever Batt O'Connor tells you". Batt was to act as a go-between from him. Mick's chief purpose was to get safe houses for himself and for the men, to carry out espionage and generally I was to do anything Batt instructed me to do.

Following on this I bought a house in Harcourt Terrace, the last house on the left-hand side facing the canal. It was owned by a Mr. Cantor, a Jew. Seumas O'Connor was the solicitor who completed the transaction. The price was £800 out of which he was to give me £10 but I never got it. I was buying the house ostensibly for my nephew. Mick himself used the house up to and perhaps after the Truce. Batt built a secret cupboard in it for arms and ammunition, and a man could hide in it, as also under the flooring in the foundation.

A trusted man called Byrne (?) did this sort of work for Batt who was a builder.

Other Houses I Procured for I.R.A.

Another house I got was 9 St. Mary's Road which I rented for six months from Mrs. Mary McCarthy, 9 St. Mary's Road, for Mick Collins and his men. Batt O'Connor instructed me to go to the house. The door was opened to me by Mrs. McCarthy's daughter, a Mrs. Barry, and I saw a picture of the brothers Sheares on the mantelpiece, so I thought she might be all right. I pretended the house was for my delicate sister who wanted to be near the Church and her doctor. I used to stay there to get Mick Collins' breakfast and my husband used to stay with me. Mick did not come there every night. After some time I got Mrs. Comerford to housekeep for Mick. One day Mrs. More O'Farrell came to call on Mrs. McCarthy, and finding Mrs. Comerford whom she knew, was very surprised. Mrs. Comerford reported the incident to Mick, who nevertheless stayed till the end of the lease. Mrs. Comerford left and I don't know who came then to look after Mick.

Liam Mellows' Lack of Confidence in Michael Collins.

When I first took this house (No. 9 St. Mary's Road) I wanted Liam and Seán Etchingham to come and stay there at night as it would be simpler for me. Liam refused and on that occasion he told me he did not trust Mick. He said he was interfering with his job as Director of Purchases by buying arms across the water and paying more for them than he was. He was buying them, he said, not to use them but to prevent him (Liam) from getting them. This shocked me

as I thought it awful that Mick in whom I had implicit faith was working against our best interests. I am sure Liam found it hard to tell me this as he was the most charitable person I knew and he was aware that I adored Mick as a little god.

Liam slept in No. 9 one night and one night only and that was because he wanted to see his mother there and we thought it would not be safe for her to come to our house as she might be trailed and we were sure that nobody suspected No. 9.

This was the first time I realised that Mick and Liam were not in each other's confidence.

I rented a house from Mrs. Field near the Tennis Ground in Harold's Cross Road, probably for three months at £30 a quarter. This was for Gearóid O'Sullivan who lived in it only a few days as Mr. Cooper, because it was probably discovered that the place was not safe. One story I heard was that the neighbours were spying on the place and the Cumann na mBan girls who were working there were too careless. Mrs. Field pursued me for the whole amount of the rent which I eventually procured for her.

In addition to these houses I was constantly searching for safe houses for other wanted men to spend a night or two in, and these men used to come to my house to leave or call for their arms. Cumiskey's private house in Marlboro' Road was one of them - he was a provision merchant in Donnybrook. Mrs. McCarthy of Parkgate Street gave me permission to send men there. Mrs. Byrne of Home Villas, Donnybrook; my sister Mrs. B. Woods of Eglinton Terrace, kept any men I sent her; Mrs. Considine's house in Morehampton Road and

Mrs. Hand's house on the same road were always open to men "on the run" and always had a welcome for them. Mrs. Nolan of Wellington Road took in Seán Etchingham, but after the split she refused to have anything to do with us. The McGlynn's who were Citizen Army people always took in people. Mrs. Cuffe, Paddy Little's sister, in Glenageary, took in Liam and Seán Etchingham for me but after a week she came and told me it was not safe as the house was watched. Alfie White's mother in Peter's Place took in men for me also Mrs. Eily O'Carroll's house, Peter's Place, was another refuge. Mrs. Humphrey's of Aylesbury Road, took in men I had got out of the Free State Army.

Mrs. Pat Bolger, Morehampton Road, stored arms for me and we put the bulky "Transmitter and Receiver" between the ceiling and slates in her house by forcing out a few boards while standing on a kitchen chair on a kitchen table.

Dr. Fleury of Portrane Asylum was wonderful. She took a lot of men from me who were suffering from various ailments. She took James Brogan when he was suffering from bronchitis and again when he was burnt on the railway. Tormey was also burnt on this occasion and was treated by Dr. Fleury. How she cared for them these men told me afterwards. She would first look after her mental patients, then the men I had committed to her care and last she would take her own breakfast. She spent her money on cigarettes and comforts for our men.

I should not forget Dr. Alice Barry. She kept a burnt man (?) until I arrived with the car and had him wrapped in an eiderdown while getting him to Portrane at night. Another of the men - Woods - was so badly burnt that we sent him to the Mater Hospital and when well we took him to a place of hiding, but where I forget - maybe to

Postrane. When Free State troops would swoop on the "Home" the men "on the run" used go about the grounds and were mistaken, as intended of course, for mental patients. Mr. Cosgrave's Government found out this and took measures to put an end to it - so I was informed but not by Dr. Fleury.

Dr. McElhinny was awfully good too. His sister-in-law, Máire O'Connor, was very helpful. I used to take and bring back messages from Liam to Seán O'Mahony's house in Gardiner's Row to Tommy Lavery's studio in Henry Street and to John Reynold's office.

Liam's American Friends.

I'd like to mention the people from the United States who used to call to our house to see Liam - Peter Golden, John and Mrs. Heron. It was John Heron who saved the Dáil loan from being gobbled up by Cohalan and Devoy. Dorothy Godfrey of New York visited Liam. She saw Fr. Albert in New York when he was hardly able to go about, he was so ill. She carried his case to the station. He arrived in Santyanna in a house that was derelict for twenty years where the water was brackish and there were no creature comforts. A protestant lady looked after him. He died there soon after. Miss Herbert who, Liam told me, was a great help to them all, visited him at my house as did Mrs. McWhorter. After Liam's execution "The Monitor" edited by Una Ford, had an article paying tribute to Liam's character and work. He had been a great friend of hers in America.

Bloody Sunday: Briana House.

On Saturday night before Bloody Sunday my car was taken away by a fair-haired Volunteer who told me where it would be found on the following morning. He had another I.R.A. man with him. I upbraided him for not giving me longer notice. Liam and Patsy (Seán Etchingham) were with us and they were never told that a house called Briana four or five doors away from us would figure in the following day's activities and they should have been told as obviously it meant serious danger for them and all of us. It was I had reported on that house and my children had told me about it. I informed Batt that there were strange men staying in Briana and evidently Mick had got information about them from Dublin Castle, probably through Brody who was a policeman working all the time for Mick.

Smith, the owner of Briana, was a secret service man and he had in his house, ostensibly as lodgers, a few other men who were also doing the same work for Britain. Mick had got on the track of all these men through his agents in the Castle, and on Bloody Sunday they were all either wounded or shot dead. Smith was among the latter.

A short time after the ambulance had removed the wounded I was standing on the road in the front of my house with some friends when a tall stranger came out of Briana, walked up and stood in front of me, looking at me up and down and measuring me from head to foot. He took no notice of my friends but turned on his heels and walked back to Briana. I got a shock as did my friends who uttered a prayer and walked away.

It must have been that night after my husband had gone to bed, I heard the front gate open. I raised the window,

and seeing as I believed Tans dressed like women, I called out aloud "who do you want?". I remember turning to the bed and saying to Andy "The Tans are coming for me, Andy". At the same time I heard a well-known voice - that of Mrs. Batt O'Connor - asking me to let herself and her children in. I was greatly relieved and told her to come in and stay as long as she liked. She had been advised probably by one of the Donnybrook police, to leave her house that night. She went back home the following day.

On the night of Bloody Sunday and for many nights after Tony and his I.R.A. friends slept at the gasworks near the warmth of the kiln. I had asked a friendly neighbour who was an Englishman, but a catholic, to take in Tony, but he was too nervous to do so.

Sergeant Tom Flannery's Work for I.R.A.

A cousin of mine, Sergeant Tom Flannery, who was stationed in Nenagh or Silvermines was also working for us. He had forty Black and Tans in his station. A spy - a mangey cur-used to point out some of the 1916 men to the Tans who would bring them into the barracks for identification. Tom would identify any man brought in for his inspection as a "decent man" and he was not thanked by the captors who at last desisted, telling the sergeant that they - the spotted men of 1916 - were all decent men according to him.

At the time when the I.R.A. were cutting trenches in the roads to impede the movements of the Black and Tan lorries, Tom came to Dublin to tell me to report to I.R.A. Headquarters that the Crown forces when closing those trenches, put traps in them for the I.R.A.

On another occasion when Mrs. Stopford Green and

Máire Comerford were on their way south they were held up by Black and Tans and brought to the barracks. Sergeant Tom Flannery was told to procure a woman searcher but the two ladies had gone away before he sent for the searcher.

Once a high officer - I must ask Tom for the name - I am almost sure it was Sir Henry Wilson - came to the barracks and pointing to a creamery, asked him why was it standing. Tom's answer was "We let people alone when they leave us alone".

A letter of his to me shows that on another occasion he took Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Seán Russell, my husband and myself to his mother's house near Boyle - Rory for a night, the others for a night or two longer and only because of want of room had to leave the Plunkett brothers and S. McGuinness in Boyle Military Barracks for the night. Rory slept in the kitchen and the rest in the best room where there were two beds lined up against the wall. This, I think, was after the split, and Tom Flannery had come up from Tipperary and came with us to Boyle. Rory was going on to Sligo alone but after a day in Clooncunny, where Tom's brother lived, the other four of us came back to Dublin.

I wrote a good while before that to Tom asking him to resign from the R. I. C. He came up from Nenagh without waiting to change from his uniform to civilian clothes, came into the house to me and did not even wait for a meal. He said, "Molly, where would I go to, there is no place for me at home. Have you a fund? If you had a fund lots of us policemen would resign as the work we are doing is not police work but military work. I can help the I. R. A. better by staying in the force". And he fulfilled his promise in any way he could.

I Collect Gold for Michael Collins and
Contributions for Prisoners' Dependants.

Another of my activities for Mick Collins was collecting gold in exchange for notes. On account of my husband's business and in other ways I was able to procure a lot of gold which I handed to Batt O'Connor.

I also organised collections for the Prisoners' Dependants' Fund with Batt O'Connor, Alf McLaughlin, - O'Higgins, Christie Kelly and W. J. Byrne. We met at Vavasour Square at the George Reynold's Club, which was our Sinn Féin meeting place. The area to be covered by us took in from Leeson Street Bridge to the North Wall taking in all Donnybrook up to and including Harmony Avenue. I did this work for two years or more, being appointed director at the opening meeting. All my collections were published weekly under the heading "Pembroke". I used to hand the money to my husband who lodged it and wrote out a cheque which I handed in at Mary Street to Aine O'Rahilly's office. I had of course got others to collect a lot of this money for me. I handed in £3,600 in this way, but when I asked the Fund for a return they said the amount was £2,000. It is quite possible that some of the money was utilised for guns or other purposes. I know I did this sort of thing myself. I bought clothes and guns with some of the money. Some of the Volunteers used to come from gaol - from English gaols too, and they were a deplorable sight. Their clothes were covered with vermin and I brought them to the garden and burned them, so I had to procure clothes for the men. I got many suits from Paddy Gleeson and from Eamon Martin and most of them were never paid for, certainly those got from Eamon were not. People used to give me lots of clothes. Some came from America and if we had known who sent them we would have

promptly sent them back they were so disgraceful - worn and disreputable looking. It would have been an insult to our Volunteers to offer them to them.

Liam Mellows brought me £40 from a Mr. Forde in Galway for the Prisoners Dependants' Fund. I wrote Mr. Forde for permission to spend it on arms for the men. His reply was short but to the point. "You may do what you like with it", and I did - that is the I.R.A. men and not their relatives benefited by it.

Some Raids I Remember.

A lot of incidents keep occurring to my mind but I am afraid you will find them very confusing as they are in no sort of order.

Tony and Noel Lemass came in one night to me. They had come across fields, evidently after taking part in some ambush, because their hands were all scratched. I dressed and bandaged their hands and said to Noel, "You will not go out to-night, Noel". With that we heard the troops in the road and we thought we would be raided, but I refused to let him go. I made him go to bed with Tony, but I took the bandage off their hands, placed cards, glasses, a jug of water and a bottle on the diningroom table to give the impression that there had been a party. The British forces raided the cottages near us, which they were constantly raiding, but did not raid us.

Another night the "Courts" off Belmont Avenue which belonged to my husband were raided and a lot of damage done. They were searching for Paddy, better known as "Charmer" Burke who was "on the run" there. He was looking out a small window of a room that escaped their notice.

I cannot recall who had given me the name of a nun in a hospital for cancer in Holles Street. Here there were a number of patients, all of the British Army. I saw the nun who agreed to take "Charmer" on condition that he should "keep his own counsel etc.". I think "Charmer" may have been ill with a skin infection and that Dr. O'Brien told me about this hospital or home. Somehow it occurs to me, "Charmer" became a patient but was not long there when I had word to go see the nun at once. The poor soul was in a panic. "You must take him now with you, Mrs. Woods. He's arguing with the soldiers and if it were discovered that I had him here I'd be sent out of the place". So that was the first and last time I sent anyone among patients in the Cancer Home or Hospital.

The British paid compensation for the damage done in that raid on the "Courts"; they even paid a second time. My husband sent the second cheque back much against my wish as I could have used it for the "boys".

Since my last visit I was rummaging through my papers and found some that I did not know I had. They are chiefly about raids and such things and as I wrote them some years ago when my mind was not so confused they give a better account of these incidents than I could give now. You could use them for my statement.

Raids at "St. Enda's", 131 Morehampton
Road, Donnybrook.

Raids at our home, morning, noon or night, sometimes twice a day by F.S. men wearing F.F. badges in their caps! Raids by C.I.D. from Oriel House ordered by my friend (?) Paddy Moynihan who when they - the C.I.D. - would

return empty-handed, he goaded to further efforts by saying "Mrs. Woods is one too many for you" as one of them - a man born within the precincts of Mountjoy Jail - informed me on the occasion of a "sit-down" raid when the C.I.D. arrived at 11.30 a.m. and remained to midnight. I forget the date but there were eleven houses on their list that morning and mine was one of the eleven. Cassidy, a Mayo man, who, when an I.R.A. man was fed and housed by my relatives in Ballaghaderreen, was in charge. He ordered the "woman searcher" upstairs to search my person and the persons of my two daughters, Maureen and Eileen. She found nothing although stripping off our clothes and removing our shoes even. We passively allowed her to undress us. She did not offer to dress us after a very thorough search, but she forgot that corsets might be receptacles for some things that would interest Mr. Paddy Moynihan. Seán Tumbleton often came in charge of men but he shamefacedly carried out cursory raids and I think must on one occasion at least have seen a considerable "dump" in a shed in the garden. Seán was an old friend of mine. Jimmy and Theo Fitzgerald when ordered to raid us, refused point blank saying they would rather resign than do such a thing. They were staff officers and brothers of Leo Fitzgerald who gave his life for Ireland. They were friends of Liam Mellows. I was sorry for them.

On the morning of the first "sit down" raid a nephew, Mr. Barry Woods, then a mere boy was coming to the house and as luck would have it saw the arrival of the C.I.D., turned and ran home, when he was sent round to warn our friends to keep away from "St. Enda's".

Cassidy informed me that I must get him, his men and woman searcher dinner. This time I had a faithful maid, Kathleen Lambert, who on my husband's advice agreed to cook

the joint that unfortunately was in before Cassidy's arrival. Although closely followed about the house by one man toying with a colt revolver, I managed to tell her roast the outside in a quick oven - then after our dinner on the outside "they will have a fairly raw joint". They had and did not complain. They got their tea themselves or their woman searcher.

In the afternoon Tom Danaher, a gardener in Muckross Convent, arrived after having sent two young girls on a message which I have never since been given. They not returning, he decided to come himself. Everyone was searched on arrival. Later again Mrs. Dermot O'Leary, a daughter of Count George Nobel Plunkett, came, was searched and detained. She had word about a prismatic compass, where I could purchase it. Fortunately she did not have it with her or in all probability the whole of us would be put under arrest. Mrs. O'Leary's baby was only a few months old, she was nursing it, but she would not be allowed out under escort to feed the baby, nor would the baby be taken to her. She was held prisoner until the raiders left about or after midnight, taking with them Tom Danaher, because he had a scrap of paper in his pocket with the No. 50 on it. Fifty was the number of Mrs. O'Leary's house, but whether this had to do with the 50 on the paper I've not ever heard. A number of young Cumann na mBan girls, although warned not to come to the house, disobeyed, were searched, monies for distribution among the prisoners' dependants taken from them, with the names and addresses. They were unsparing in their scorn of the C.I.D., were detained by them and bundled into the lorries waiting, when the former were leaving with much noise, shouting, etc. etc. I left Mrs. O'Leary home. Her house was literally torn asunder, even the floor boards were torn up, but nothing was found there. She lived with her husband in his father's

house in Marlboro' Road off Morehampton Road. When the young girls were being bundled out of the house some one of them said, "Aren't you taking Mrs. Woods and the girls?". The C. I. D. were angry with them and I think this saved us. They were not going to accede to any request of the young and fair who had scoffed them all night. One McManus born in Mountjoy was the only one of the raiders that seemed human. When he was leaving he said to me, "You'll find the money in the diningroom behind the mirror when we leave". One man and a lorry load of girls were taken away from 131 that night.

Another time I was in my dressing gown in my daughter Eileen's room getting her to "gargle" for the child had a severe cold when they arrived about breakfast time, the woman searcher coming upstairs at once. I had not time to hide a colt revolver lying on the table at her (Eileen's) bedside and threw something over it. I had had very little sleep the night before and I must have looked ill and certainly cross. I made a remark about people "barging" into the room of a sick child and frightening her. "I'll not do the child any harm", she rapped out unpleasantly, when I remarked, "Dyphtheria is very infectious you know. I'm afraid I'm sickening for it too. The doctor is coming any minute". The young woman walked out of the room and her friends, the raiders, joined her in making a hasty retreat from St. Enda's, for presently the hall door opened and closed on them and we could look forward to one day's rest from them at least.

Children, and not mine only, were wonderful during the whole time of terror, fighting and raiding of houses. I remember how during my absence when men severely burned about the head and hands came to St. Enda's nearly mad with

pain, Maureen and Eileen telephoned at once for two doctors saying it was for burns, and both men arrived with their bags and everything needful to the occasion, and before the doctors arrived they got the man whose hands were burned to keep them under water in a basin. And not even among themselves did they talk about any happening. One time Peadar O'Donal was in the house when Lil O'Donal came to see him. He had "broken" jail or camp. Enda met her at the door and to her amusement denied Peadar. "There's no one in the house", she declared, "but me. They're all out". Peadar himself had to come to admit Lil.

Eamon O'Toole came on one occasion to warn me we were about to be raided. There were about the house a few grenades, some 303 stuff and two colt revolvers. I tied the grenades in Eileen's knickers carefully examining the pins as I did so, put the revolvers on a cord around her waist, her sister's coat over all and the ammunition in a paper bag. She met the raiders at the gate and went to a neighbour's on Belmont Avenue until the raiders were gone.

The military raids were most frequent, yet they found nothing although there was quite a small arsenal under the roof.

A few arrests were made outside the house, for as the parties were just entering at the gate, C.I.D. who hung about on the road pounced on them. One of these was "Gus" Connolly with another whose name I cannot now remember. Then all were warned to keep away from 131. When contacting people working with me, I had to exercise the greatest precaution. I was followed around on many days openly and I just went for a nice and much needed outing and returned home, refreshed and amused, after a walk of two or three miles for I was and am yet a good walker.

One day my husband and I were coming from town when about the Appian Way we met a lorry full of uniformed men with my little son Andy in their midst. My husband stopped the car and I jumped out, but by then the lorry was going over Leeson Street bridge. My husband drove straight to the police station in Donnybrook reporting the matter and telling them that there'd be trouble for the "gang" if the boy was not sent home forthwith.

Andy was home shortly after. The "gang" had raided the house in our absence, emptied book cases on to the floor, pulled beds and bedclothes about, but had not found anything. "They searched my bed too", said Andy, "but they did not get my gun. I had it in the blankets. They searched the pillows and bolsters and threatened me when I wouldn't tell them where you kept the guns. Then they put me in the lorry and asked me and I said I'd go with them, that you'd get me back. When I was in Portobello I was outside the barracks. An officer asked me what was I doing there. I said "I'm under arrest". He only laughed and said, "what's your name?" "Andrew Cecil Woods", I said. "Well run away home, Andrew Cecil", he said, and I ran out and nobody minded".

The gun was a 22 cal. revolver I had given Andy to console him for the loss of his pigeon shooter which with his younger brother's the Staters had taken, saying they were "lethal weapons". Andy and Enda were respectively eight and six years, had a target in the garden at the back of the house and were very accurate shots.

Sometime a little later we were visiting friends in a country place outside Dublin where there were extensive grounds. Our host, carrying a pigeon shooter, aimed at and missed a decoy duck in a pond. "Let Andy try please", I said. Mr. X handed over the gun, which Andy raised and

he hit the duck. Thinking, in fact saying, it must be by chance, he pointed out a snail on a tree and invited Andy to have a shot at it. Andy promptly did and alas for the snail. Mr. X was agreeably surprised, but hinted that he thought it unwise to encourage one so young in the use of arms, even of a pigeon shooter. I thought differently but did not argue the point.

Andrew Woods, "St. Enda's",
131 Morehampton Road, Donnybrook.

A Home Ruler, believing in Redmond and his Party, he—very slowly and reluctantly until the shooting of political prisoners—came wholeheartedly into our camp. The brutal murder of young Kevin Barry affected him deeply as indeed did all the excesses perpetrated on a helpless people by the soldiery of the British King and his ministers. During one of the most frightful of Orange pogroms he was in the North day after day taking south victimised catholics who never after so much as thanked him. Not that he looked for thanks but maybe I did. At the shortest notice he had his car out night or day to take men "on the run" to places of safety and he never counted the risks he ran. For Michael Collins he had the greatest regard and during 1921 breakfasted with him on many mornings at 9 St. Mary's Road, of which I have already written. But he, like all of us, could not help loving Micheál, for despite malignant rumours to the contrary Micheál was a selfless man. Once I said to Mrs. Batt O'Connor "Micheál has an awful racking cough and he walks about the room at night". She said, "Micheál is neglected by himself. His meals, if you can call them meals, are irregular. Often he has only a bowl of soup late in the day when he runs into us and I get it for him". But Micheál had a price on his head and a big price too, and yet he was going about the city without a disguise.

On the arrest of one of his young messengers I saw Micheál Collins a grieved man fearful of the boy's being tortured. He said to Andrew, "They'll never get a word out of him even if they torture him" and he fell silent - I felt Micheál had a "lump in his throat" and not on account of himself.

My husband attended Micheál's funeral and he informed me on his return how someone among the lookers on shouted "Put him out", pointing out his car. Whoever the cur was and I think I know, he could not be aware of my husband's friendship for the dead "Leader" for it was thus Andrew Woods thought of him and regretted the manner of his death as a tragedy. "If Micheál were left alive", he often said, "he would bring the Army together again and tell the British to "go to hell". And who can tell? I for one believed it. Whenever Micheál after the 'split' met my husband he would say, "Is Mrs. Woods a republican yet?", in fun of course. "It shows you where Micheál knows himself to be", I'd reply, "and tell him I said so".

When Mr. De Valera was member for South Down and he was making a second attempt to cross the Border to address a meeting of his constituents, Andrew was a sick man with his doctor in attendance, but when word of the plan came to him he left his bed and met Dev some miles out of the city with his car, the engine "running" until that in which "Dev" had left Suffolk Street came up with him. "It only slowed down", he told me afterwards, "and Dev stepped out and into mine and we were away". As always Dev's movements were closely spied on then, and Republican Headquarters in Suffolk Street haunted by "shadows".

Dev got safely over the Border and addressed or was in the act of addressing the meeting when he was again put under

arrest and lodged in jail - I forget whether it was Derry or Belfast. When Andrew returned home he was violently ill. I 'phoned for Dr. Shaw of Ranelagh at that unearthly time between night and morning and he came at once and was in close attendance on him for the next week or so.

"I gave the jailer a rug", he said, "to give Dev. I hope he will". And I hoped so too, but it was a kind of forlorn hope.

We expected an "escape" from Mountjoy Jail on a big scale and at last got word when it would take place. Andrew was to have his car outside the Mater Hospital to convey some of them to safety. Here he remained for hours unaware of the tragedy being enacted within the grim walls of the prison, until I sent him word of what was happening and that he was to go. *That was the day Pader Brien was shot dead in Mountjoy. WND*

He never refused help to anyone, nor counted the risks during the Black and Tan terror when his house was at the disposal of the valiant men who fought against it. I knew him to come in from work and walk from room to room to see where he could sit to read his newspaper and then come to me and say, "Is there any place where I can sit down?". And there was, as often as not, very little place, for Sheila Humphreys might have her Irish class in one room, there might be a meeting in another, a few young men filling cartridges in another, and so the man of the house had to seek the quiet of his bedroom if he wanted to read his "paper" in peace.

In 1916 Andrew was out in the city day after day helping to get food into the poorer districts. The city was an inferno. One day I missed my eldest son Tony. We were cut off from the city by a cordon of soldiers. I could not

leave my other children and had a bad time until midnight when husband and son returned from the city. My husband had a military pass from the British for the purpose of helping with food distribution. I think it was that day he went to stables in Westland Row which were on fire, and released horses belonging to a Mr. Nolan, a butter merchant. They were frantic with fright and would have been burnt alive had he not ventured into the place. It was during this time he strained his side and never quite recovered from the injury. The nuns at Donnybrook wanted their van-man to go to the city for margarine as no butter was to be had. He refused point-blank. They appealed to my husband. He went into the stores of Nolan and Son, Burgh Quay, and on reaching the barriers where he had to have his "pass" examined, strained his side when the weight of the box over-balanced his bicycle, on his way to Donnybrook. All that week of terror he never rested, leaving home early in the morning after a breakfast of stale bread and tea and maybe an egg exchanged for something else for there was great scarcity of food, his next meal at or after midnight on his return home.

One day three soldiers strayed on to the Terrace where we lived. I shut the door, but was in mortal terror of them. If three tigers appeared I could not have been more terrified at their appearance. They passed on however. Even at this distant date I do not care to dwell on that aspect of Ireland's struggle for freedom - I mean the fear of England's uniformed bullies.

I had one of the German Mausers hidden in the house, belonging to a neighbour, and his bandolier. It was never found and in 1922 I handed it over to the I.R.A. An awkward useless heavy weapon, I forget whether there was ammunition in the bandolier, but I think not. Anyway the man who owned the Mauser must have got a handier weapon for he never

claimed the gun.

From now on until the time of Andrew's death he was more or less on the doctor's list with a "strained kidney". Then came the latest phase of the struggle for our independence when my husband knew no rest. His house was the home of leaders and men, the headquarters of Liam Mellows for over two years, and the target of our enemies. Andrew's death was hastened by his work for Ireland.

Andrew Woods made few enemies. Even to those who came to raid his place he was polite and this attitude may have saved us all, for only our eldest son was interned, having been arrested at a council meeting with Noel Lemass and other I. R. A. men.

On the morning of his funeral from the Sacred Heart Church, Donnybrook, on the 4th November, 1929, to Glasnevin Cemetery, those who attended both at the church and at his grave-side were of many creeds and many shades of political opinion. Mixing with members of the Government he helped to put into power from its President down, protestants, quakers, Jews, Free Staters, Republicans and Indians. Even from Indian students in London came messages of condolence and orders to the Dublin florists to supply wreaths for his grave. Telegrams of regret at his early demise and loss to his country poured in to "St. Enda's" from all over Ireland and from places as far away as California, Santiago, Rome.

From the late Mrs. Morrow Bernard, founder of the Foxford Industries, came a letter of appreciation and friendship and a promise to have his name put in her chapel for community prayers. This letter I have put in
Gilded M.W.
 Father Gleeson's life of this great Irishwoman - pasted into

my own copy of the book now in my son Enda's possession.

From Father Peter MacGuinness, head of the C. Carmelites in Rome, a valued friend of Andrew, came a letter of appreciation and sympathy. A short time previously this distinguished Carmelite gave Andrew and the friends who accompanied him on his visit to Rome, a princely reception, and during their stay detailed a student to take them to the places they would be most interested in.

In a word many great men and women whose names make history already, now 14 years since Andrew's death, sent letters which I could not destroy for they are precious to me as is the recollection of that great man Eamon De Valera carrying Andrew Woods' coffin on his shoulders from "St. Enda's" to the Church of the Sacred Heart in Donnybrook on the night before his funeral, together with I.R.A. men who loved him. For "Dev" Andrew had unbounded admiration and firm belief in his qualities of head and heart.

I was in London when raiders arrived one night or rather one midnight. A few days later Andrew joined me, looking very ill and very lame. Yes, he had seen his doctor, the foot would be sore for a while - it was a bad sprained instep. I called a taxi and we drove to the Jermyn Court Hotel, now the Haymarket in Jermyn Street, Picadilly - that is if it has escaped destruction.

"They thundered with their rifles on the door", he told me, "and when I called to them from my bedroom window a volley of abuse drowned what I tried to tell them, that I was coming down. I got into my clothes and unfortunately went out on a too-well waxed floor and fell, my foot going under me. I crawled downstairs and across the hall in the dark for I didn't get time to reach the switch. I forgot

to take off the chain and undid the catch when they began to force the door. I called to them to stop it or I couldn't open the door. Then a man threatened to blow the lock. When I succeeded in taking off the chain I was at once surrounded by a bunch of men in uniform, shouting, cursing, and demanding "the rats", etc. etc. It was about the worst experience I've had during the whole trouble", he continued. "They asked where were you. I told them you were on holidays" "A queer time of the year to be on holidays", a man with a revolver in his leggings and one in his hand, said. "Where were you on holidays?" I told him. "Hugh! Running in arms or ammunition", he exclaimed. I was in agony standing on the injured foot. "It's not an injured foot you have", he said, "Where are the fellows you're hiding?". I was angry and told him to go to hell and find them. There was a titter from his fellow raiders. I thought he would hit me. Now I didn't care. I felt so much pain I was desperate. During the time he kept me in the hall several men ran through the house, tapped the walls, scattered two of my cases of books and generally ransacked the whole place.

"The next morning, Captain McGarry and as bullying a crowd of men in uniform as it has ever been my experience to encounter, came to my business premises and began tearing the covers of all of Scott's jam pots. I protested to McGarry. He said, "We have information that Mrs. Woods is running in ammunition in Scott's jam". I informed him that that sounded too absurd to believe. Then they set to work, emptying sacks of rice, boxes of dried fruit, etc. about the place. Then I had to hop with them down to the cellar where they went through everything, even to kicking around empty boxes and everything that lay about the place. McGarry insisted you were running in ammunition and I said he now ought to satisfy himself about that while he was here. When they left and

left the stores in confusion I feared they'd take my car which was outside. Fortunately they didn't. But what on earth made them think that you're running in ammunition in Scott's jam".

"I explained to him. "As you are aware the prisoners in Newbridge are tunnelling a way to escape, I've sent in a few prismatic compasses in Scott's blackcurrant jam pots. There's a spy evidently among the tunnellers and they do not know him. I've had trouble in finding the compasses for when I went to Yeates in Grafton Street they had none or said so promising to send to London for one or more. I smelled a rat at once and said, "I'm going there myself". This was weeks ago when I had no notion I was coming here. "How did you suspect them?" When they asked me for my address of course". I then explained how I put in the compasses and how it was they could not be discovered unless one searched for them in the jam and that there were covers as he well knew on all Scott's jam - pink covers, very difficult to remove and still more difficult to replace properly.

"I said "I must notify Barney Mellows or Tony". He asked how and to his great amusement I told him how, and seeing he was amused I asked him if he remembered my asking him to give old Mrs. R. a seat in his car, when we were coming from town and she waiting for a tram. Yes he remembered, "Why?". "Well, between Captain McGarry & Co. & Mrs. R. & Co. they'll never stop until they make me a Joan of Arc.", I said, "for a friend informed me some time ago that old Mrs. R. advocated my being burned alive at the stake. The old witch", I said. "She must have felt queer when you stopped the car and I invited her to a seat and enquired after her health. I felt bubbling inside with laughter that afternoon and you thinking I was kind when I was trying to heap coals of fire on the old lady's head".

We hired a car in London and altogether had a pleasant enough time in the enemy's camp.

Raiders again at "St. Enda's", Donnybrook.

It was Monday morning - the Monday following the mutiny in Portobello Barracks the Saturday before, when Peadar O'Donal who had escaped from the Curragh Camp shortly before and Larry O'Brien a much wanted man, came to the house in spite of being warned of the risks they ran, did they do so.

Andeen was home from school with a cold and was in his bedroom or mine which looked on to Morehampton Road. He ran downstairs in alarm saying "the house is surrounded". "How do you know?", I enquired. "I see the shadows of soldiers with guns out on the path before Bolgers", he exclaimed, and then there was a thundering knock on the hall-door, a knock we had come to recognise as "the military". Tony and my husband hurried Peadar away to a place under the roof, Larry said, or we said to him I forget, that he was a piano tuner if he escaped recognition, so he sat at the piano. I delayed opening the door and stood when I had done so, looking down the barrel of a rifle - a Free State uniformed man behind it, another at the gate. I obstructed him, telling him put down his gun, that there was no need for it here. Then I heard Tony on the stairs and knew Peadar was safe. But imagine my surprise when the officer at the gate called to the man at the door "Get on the roof". The Staters were on the road, only one man came in. Tony, who a few moments before, had got Peadar through the skylight via a chair and the top of a linen press on the landing, advised the soldier that he would bring him a ladder. He did so. The soldier to Tony's amusement and

surprise, handed him his rifle, mounted the ladder and on to the slates returning in a few minutes' time.

"We had information that Charley Dalton and some of the mutineers were here at a meeting", he confided to Tony, taking his rifle and going out without going into any of the rooms. Peadar has this raid incorporated in one of his books, I think "The Knife". "Surely no one in his senses would go on a roof top to hold a secret meeting", we said. Maybe the officer was friendly to the mutineers tho' or thought "discretion the better part of valour" when he abstained from searching the house for the redoubtable Charley Dalton and his comrades. Anyway we are not enlightened, nor shall we be as to the why or wherefore of that funny raid.

The Wireless Set.

Many strange things happened during the years I worked for the I.R.A. and one of the strangest was the removal of a wireless set valued at about £200, the night before this raid from under the roof where this Free State soldier would have seen it the moment he pushed up the skylight.

The man who had left the set in my keeping was captured a few days later and interned for the next few years. He was Fergus Kelly. Then the wireless set started out on its adventures. I put it into nine separate parcels, one of them a hat-box, and sent it out the night of the day it had been left with me. The following morning eight of the parcels were returned, among them the hat-box. One young lady had sat up, so she informed me, all night on the parcel I had sent to her.

I immediately sent my daughter Maureen to Peter's Place

with the hat box to Mrs. Eily O'Carroll. Her house had been raided the night before and C. I. D. men hung about the place but must have thought my daughter was a messenger from a milliner's for no one spoke to her although C. I. D. men stood looking at her coming and going with the hat box.

Next I packed the parcels under a shelf in the house of Mrs. Bolger next door to St. Enda's for I had Free State uniforms in dress boxes from Switzers about my house, which were so innocently in view of the raiders that no one of them bothered to open them. Had they I'd be given a long rest by Mr. Cosgrave and company.

I then hastened to Army Headquarters across the city and reported the wireless transmitting and receiving set to Liam Pedlar and requested that it was to be taken from me. "Certainly". Liam, a friend of Liam Mellows and through Liam our friend promised to send a man and woman to the house where I told him the set was. They would not come to my house. They really wanted the set at Headquarters he informed me, but had not the "foggiest" as to where it was. He was very much annoyed with those who had not reported to him of its whereabouts, etc.

A man and woman called early next day not at the shop but at my house. I took them to the shop, which was let to Mrs. Bolger, not doubting their bona fides. The man whom I had not ever before seen examined the "set" and pronounced it valuable, looked about to see where he could hide it and finally pointed to a corner where the boards were eaten up with dry rot, saying "I'll be back to-night with a few tools and we'll put it there". I protested. I was promised at Headquarters that it would be removed at once. The young woman then agreed with the man that it would be dangerous to move it. "But I was informed you need it at Headquarters",

I remonstrated, all to no use. "I'll be back to-night with the tools", he promised again when leaving. I should have mentioned that the man advised me throw away some parts.

Mrs. Bolger and I waited anxiously in the unlighted hall. Hours passed and we heard St. Bartholamew's chimes strike twelve. Our man had not come. Still we lingered hoping that he might yet come and now it was one o'clock by St. Bartholamew's. I decided to slip out home and opening the door cautiously was surprised to see a cycling party of uniformed men pedaling by, out from the city. Afraid to close the door we drew back into the darker shadows, when a man we knew walked out from the shadows of the houses and handed one of the cyclists a letter, and vanished again into shadowland. I nearly shouted when Mrs. Bolger pressed my arm. We scarcely breathed, however, for that man was almost outside her door, a man we thought would not side with either Republican or Free Stater. He was Mr. Lamb, a tenant of my husband.

The following morning a lorry full of soldiers arrived, rushed into the shop and house and began a search for "a wireless set" by tearing up the boards in the corner where it was to have been deposited the night before. They had, they said, definite information that there was a wireless set there. It was well that we had moved it out to St. Enda's between 1 and 2 a.m. that morning, and I have been convinced ever since that the man and woman of the night before were spies.

After the disgruntled search party had gone, leaving the house as if a gale had blown through it, we set to work, and loosening some boards under the skylight in Bolgers while one of us stood on a chair, placed on a kitchen table, the other holding it, the chair, we made an opening, hoisted

one of Mrs. Bolger's children into it, handed up the parcels and got down the young boy; put the boards in place and the 'set' was safely under the roof and below the skylight. In the morning next day the kitchen was whitewashed and although other raids were made on the house and shop of Mrs. Bolger, nothing was ever discovered. Her husband was a prisoner in Newbridge then.

The wireless set had now come to rest over Mrs. Bolger's kitchen for many months to come until after the general release of the political prisoners and her husband's homecoming. Then one day Mrs. Bolger informed me that tradesmen were going on the roof to strip some slates for repairs and fearing they might stumble on our "secret" we decided to disinter it in the same way we had interred it. So finally and after a great deal of manoeuvring we conveyed it to my house, put it under the roof just inside the skylight in the ceiling until the Sunday night after the mutiny in Portobello Barracks when it was called for by Mr. Alfie White who claimed it for the Fianna. Then for the last time I helped carry it bit by bit with Mr. Alfie White, my husband and Mrs. M. to our car and sent it speeding on its way to where I knew not, nor did I care.

When the Free State officer at the gate on Monday morning shouted to the soldier "Go on the roof" how happy I felt that all was clear, for had the set been there the man must have seen the bundles and reported to his officer, and more than likely my husband who knew nothing about it until the night before would have been arrested and probably had up for theft.

Various Journeys I Made.

I also jotted down a few other things as I find I can collect my thoughts better when I sit down to write. I may have told you some of these things before. If not you can use them for my statement.

I may have been going to visit my relations in Sligo County, I forget, but even if I had no message of a military nature I'd report to Batt. Anyway Batt brought me word from Mick Collins that I was to see the Flying Column and find out what arms they had. I went as far as Hunts' in Moygara and here I forget whether it was Peter Hunt or John Casey (both I.R.A. men) took my message to the "Column" who arrived the following morning from Cuponagh before I was out of bed and joked me because they had caught me napping. There were several men, I remember, and they gave me an account of themselves and the arms they had and how badly they needed everything - arms and ammunition. On my return to Donnybrook I sent word to Brendan Road and saw Batt. In a short time Batt brought me word from Mick that "with the arms and ammunition they had they could get more". The police barracks were attacked soon afterwards and as well as I can remember Batt mentioned about "a raid on the police barracks" when giving me Mick's message. I felt it hard to take or send the men Mick's reply, and so did Batt.

? I arrived at and left Sligo the evening before the men attacked the town. I was looking for an I.R.A. man - Paddy Giblin. I saw Jim Hunt and Alec McCabe in an hotel in Sligo and inquired of them if they had him a prisoner. They seemed to know nothing about him. I met Maggie McMahon in Ballaghaderreen and she informed me she had been sent to look for Paddy Giblin also. I know no more about it unless it was a signal.

I was credited with getting the town of Sligo attacked by the men of - was it the O'Rahilly Camp? When I denied it I would not be believed and was told "You made sure to leave the town in good time". It was rumoured that the I.R.A. came down that night and attacked the town in stockinged feet. I cannot vouch for the truth of this rumour.

Mick Keyes injured his spine escaping from Wexford Gaol where he was imprisoned by the Free Staters. Mrs. Childers had told me about a very safe place where I could take him. I was helped by Miss Sullivan (Curis) a sister to the lady in whose house Keyes was for long "on the run". First I got Keyes to Roebuck House. When he was a few days there I got uneasy and removed him on a Sunday. The following morning raiders arrived at Roebuck House. Keyes was well looked after at a house in Stoneybatter. I believe it was Dr. Shaw attended him. He remained there until cured when my husband with Mrs. Mellows and myself in the car took him to Wexford. A little later our car got ditched and we had to have help to get it again on the road.

The German Gun Runners.

I did not mention about the German "gun-runners". Mrs. Humphreys housed two or three - that is they slept at 36 Aylesbury Road. I think one of them stayed with Seán McMahon, brother-in-law to Jimmy and Theo Fitzgerald. At that time - it must have been 1920 - my house was a hive of industry. Under Seán Condrón's direction the boys used to be filling 303 cartridges. Barney Mellows was often there at this work. Mrs. Mellows kept two of the gunners. They had to be escorted by us to these addresses lest they divulge their identity to the enemy.

They dined and suppered at 131, then, ^{were} conveyed to their several houses. What delayed their departure from Ireland Liam Pedlar may, and I have no doubt, will remember. They were left on our hands for long. We had to keep very strict watch over these men because they imagined all Ireland was republican. We went to the theatre one night and Dick Mulcahy came to us and very agitatedly ordered my husband to get them away as quickly as possible. We did not however.

The British Government were informed of this gun-running when the men disputed among themselves back in Germany. Liam Mellows told me this. The Kapitan informed on his fellow gun-runners. One of them was called Eichblatt (oakleaf). Bobby Briscoe will know all about this story. He was in it.

Mattie O'Brien and Christy Smith.

Other incidents I remember. Liam, Etchingham, my husband and I called at Christy Byrne's for a man - Mattie O'Brien we called Darrah - when he had finished his job destroying Co. Wicklow Barracks. Darrah told me in confidence that Christy Byrne made him promise he would not carry out any "operation" while in his house. I think Mattie had completed his work at that time. Mattie told me that when he went to claim his pension, mentioning the work he had done in regard to the Co. Wicklow police barracks, the members of the Board roared laughing, explaining that he was the sixth or seventh man who had made that claim. I think Christy Byrne would be an extensive farmer and either a County Councillor or a Poor Law Guardian or both.

Darrah was so run down that I had Commandant Joe O'Connor's permission to send him to the country for a res

He went to Hunts in Moygara and was not idle. He taught I.R.A. men the right formula for grenades. Mattie is now living in Moyne Road, Ranelagh.

Now that I remember it Dr. Shaw came to me one day and said to me "There is one young fellow will soon be shooting all round him if you do not get him away for a time". So it was arranged that Christy Smith be sent away for a rest. He was on the Active Service Unit. He is a man with a great record since 1916, whose first officer was Andrew McDonnell, then not much older than himself - 15 or 16 years ~~ago~~. As well as I remember Christy went to relatives somewhere. That is the man who sent me the account of his visit to Mrs. Despard etc. that I gave you.

As already stated the doctors of Dublin were wonderful. I may have forgotten Dr. Lynn and others whose names I cannot remember at the moment. Yes, another - Dr. Stopford Price.

The Seaman Who Smuggled Arms.

There was a seaman here in town in a street off Dorset Street, Synott Place. I brought him a verbal message about guns from Liam one early morning and he told me about his troubles with sailors and dishonesty, etc. etc., all of which I promptly retailed to Liam who made light of it, saying something to the effect that always there was trouble with "these fellows" but on the whole that they were not a bad lot.

Heroic Cumann na mBan Girls.

Máirín Aherne came from Cork. She knew the McSwiney's and was the only republican of her family.

At that time a few "waistcoats" were sent to 131. The waistcoats had ammunition - 303 stuff I think, or maybe

45, and were deadly heavy. The bullets were stitched in rows. I put one on Máirín stuffing French wadding between it and her shoulders and she started for home.

The next time she came to 131 for more, she showed me her shoulders where they were skinned. Somewhere in Cork there was a dislocation of traffic and Máirín had to leave the train and walk for some distance to get another connection. I forget where.

Máirín was a Cumann na mBan member who seemed to take things as they came. I inquired of Mary McSwiney if Máirín was all right. Mary said she was.

I remember another time Máirín arrived early with the palms of her hands torn. The Staters - she named them - put her under arrest in her own home. She begged to be excused and got out of the window of the toilet or bathroom. Her hands got torn when climbing from backyard to backyard by corrugated iron divisions. Again I gave Máirín a "waistcoat" and was more liberal with my cotton wool upholstery.

I remember no more about this brave young girl or if she arrived safely in Cork. The second time Máirín arrived she said a thick fog helped her to get away.

Another resourceful young woman was a relation of Mrs. Daithi O'Donoghue - Maggie McMahon. She left 131 with ammunition and when military (British) boarded the train - I think at Goraghwood - she handed her attaché case to a "Tommy" to help her out of the train. I cant say what time this was. Maggie McMahon was outstanding. She lived somewhere near Virginia, "John O' the Rocks" daughter. She stayed with an uncle, a priest, and must have been a wonderful provider for I.R.A. men from what I heard from people who knew her intimately. Maggie McMahon came to 131

often for ammunition. Other girls from the North came too on the same mission. At the moment their names escape me.

Annie and Eileen Gooney, Basin Lane, were very good workers too. Eileen is now Mrs. Harbourne and lives beside the police station in Rathfarnham, and Annie in Thomond House, Ballyboden. You remember Annie's husband, Dinny O'Brien, was killed on the road outside her house some years ago. I knew the three O'Briens well - Larry, Dinny and Paddy. They were three great Volunteers and were always in and out of my house. Those two girls should have a lot to tell as they were in the movement since long before 1916. Gon Colbert lived in their house.

Relics I gave the Museum.

Liam Mellows' list of places I was to call at I put in the Museum with relics which both Mr. L. Gogan and Dr. McCoy informed me were invaluable. One was an Order Book for "software" but of course this was camouflage: a small notebook too, photos, etc. I made notes on side margins of the books, or, in any case, I made notes explaining whatever might be hard to interpret.

One of the places on this list was Dr. Dundon's of Borris-in-Ossory. When I reached Clashganny Bridge it was wrecked. People helped after I informed them I came to see Dr. Dundon. "He's in gaol", they explained. My husband drove his car through a field and a river which was then "low", men falling in at the back of the car and pushing it on dry-land.

These people were friendly - waved us away and called out to send them word if we should want them on our return journey. I cannot tell what was the reason of my journey.

National Archives Act, 1986, Regulations, 1988

ABSTRACTION OF PART(S) PURSUANT TO REGULATION 8

**Form to be completed and inserted in the original record
in place of each part abstracted**

- (i) Reference number of the separate cover under which the abstracted part has been filed: WS 624/A
- (ii) How many documents have been abstracted: 1p.
- (iii) The date of each such document: 13 Dec 1951.
- (iv) The description of each document:
WS 624 Mrs Mary Flannery Woods.
Letter plane p 60

(Where appropriate, a composite description may be entered in respect of two or more related documents).

- (v) Reason(s) why the part has been abstracted for retention:
(c) Would or might cause distress or danger to living persons on the ground that they contain information about individuals, or would or might be likely to lead to an action for damages for defamation.

(These will be the reasons given on the certificate under Section 8(4).)

J. Moloney

Name: (J. Moloney.)

Grade: Col.

Department/Office/Court:

Date: 7 March 2003.

Lady's Offer to Betray Austin Stack.

Before the split one night Batt O'Connor and Andrew were in the hall of 131, an open letter in Batt's hand. He was leaving when I came on the scene. Andrew said to me something about a certain lady of the district - a notable catholic. He said Batt had got a letter out of the post which showed that the Castle offered her £1,000 for "Austin Stack's head, but she is holding out for £2,000". We were shocked. This was the time letters were being censored (unofficially of course) by I.R.A. before being despatched to their destination.

Time Passed. Máire Comerford asked me some time before a Catholic Truth Conference in the Mansion House at which this lady's name was announced as one of the speakers, if the story could possibly be true. I told Mary all I knew and added "I'll get a note underground to Austin". I did. Austin's reply was brief but to the point. I had asked him "Did offer to betray you to the British Government for the sum of £2,000", and Austin's reply to this question was "Yes, but you are to take no action in the matter". I handed this note to Máire Comerford and reading it she remarked "Austin is not our commanding officer". I knew Austin's handwriting and the note was written by him and is still in Máire Comerford's possession but I'll try and get it back and give it to the Bureau.

This lady was noted rather for a fondness of the platform and Mary remarked "We will not let her on the platform with the Hierarchy in the Mansion House, talking morality to us women or other women" or some such words.

This conference was about due. On the day word (verbal) was left at 131 that I was to be in the Mansion House in time.

I was not at 131 when the messenger came with this word from Cumann na mBan. Who left the message? The children said Eileen McGrane. I expected since this was a Cumann na mBan business that I'd get instructions at the Mansion House. I took my two daughters with me and Mrs. O'Byrne of Home Villas and her sister Miss O'Donoghue. I saw no one at the Mansion House to tell me what action I was to take. I said to the others: "We must stick together". I paid for all going in. A steward beckoned us to seats. I made a sign we would stay standing - we were at the end of a row of seats. Still I got no word what I was to do. We listened attentively until His Lordship began "Now that we have our own government how are we to support it?" He got no further for I and my four began to march towards him, when I said in as loud a voice as I could "March". Immediately there was pandemonium. A steward seized me. I held on to the back of a seat and a scuffle began for all the four resisted ejection by might and main and people jumped up in their seats calling "Take the ladies easy". Slowly and noisily and we protesting, we were loosed from our holds and driven to the door where I demanded and was given the money I had paid on going in. My umbrella - a borrowed one - was broken in the scuffle. Now the doors were shut but meeting Paul Farrell he said I ought to go back and demand compensation. We did - all five - and the door was opened to us and we burst in and again we were evicted, but without compensation. I did not know that Mrs. Paul Farrell (Dr. K. Murphy) was then kicking up a rumpus inside and that there was another outbreak of confusion and later when Mrs. Farrell was evicted, Sheila Humphreys and others on the gallery were doing their bit.

So their Lordships retired because they attempted to turn a Catholic Truth Conference into a political meeting.

I understand that the would-be betrayer of Austin Stack on going into the Mansion House had a note slipped into her hand and did not go on the platform. This I was told also - that Sheila was throwing leaflets on the assembly from the gallery and violently resisting arrest and ejection.

It must be soon after Cosgrave's accession to power when we rendered this Catholic Truth Conference abortive.

My Son Tony is Shot - Arrested - Escapes.

After the split my son Tony's headquarters was the Four Courts. He was leaving 131 one day for the Four Courts when "Pudge" Gargin and Jack Lawlor came in. They went away together soon after. Then I heard shots. Later Lawlor and Gargin returned to 131. "Where's Tony?", I asked them. They made some excuses, but instinctively I knew Tony had been shot. "I heard shots", I said. Still they would not admit anything.

Tony had met Cope's car somewhere in Dublin and ordered Cope out of it and he and Lawlor and Gargin drove away - Tony meaning to hand the car to Lawlor and Gargin, to take with them to the West. When Tony (all three men were armed) ordered Cope out of the car, he - Cope - said, "I'll have it back soon", and he had. Cope was then near Oriel House. Thornton and others followed the car, shot at Tony who left the car - this was about Clonskeagh - saying he felt "groggy". He was arrested and left at the City of Dublin Hospital with, fortunately, a clean bullet hole in the shoulder over his lung.

Dr. Alice Barry said Thornton went to her and asked her to go see Tony and do what she could for him.

In the evening Tony returned. Through the offices of a kind nurse, while a guard stood at the hospital door in

front, Tony slipped over a low wall at the back and home. I sent him away to Wexford for a week on the advice of Liam Mellows and Patsy Patrick, after Dr. Shaw had seen him. His father did not know he had been shot for a long time after

Some More Journeys to the Country.

I completely forgot about my visit to Captain Collins (he was Liam's agent in Cork) but remember being in Cork and that I visited the Woollen Mills and had "The Bells of Shandon" rung for me while I was in the Church. Mr. O'Mahony knew my husband and so the "Bells of Shandon" rang out a surprise for Cork because of his good offices. We will have stayed in Cork for a night, anyway - maybe more. It was Liam sent me on this occasion and I took with me the list of addresses I mentioned before. This might have been the time I went to Queenstown too.

The next place I remember is Alec McCabe's. Alec was not there. I saw his mother and his wife and I felt I was suspected by them. I had not met them before. I left no message though I must have had a message. It must have been Liam sent me there too. If I had the list I gave the Museum it would be a great help to me in regard to all these places I visited. I imagine all these journeys that I have recently mentioned took place in the Truce period. I'll try and get back that book for a time.

I Raise a Flag of Mourning.

Mr. Seán Mc Bride and others were in hiding in Seán Moloney's of Beechwood. His (Seán Moloney's) wife Róisín (now Mrs. Jim Colbert of Kill, Co. Kildare) was one of my best helpers. Seán Moloney was brother-in-law to the Maguires of Shelbourne House, Merrion Row. It was there

I purchased a Republican flag and had them put a black deep border around it and I got a young fellow to put it high up on a standard before University College where the warring parties were discussing the Treaty. It remained a few days, maybe a week, flying on the standard. I did not see it again. This was meant as a sign of mourning for our surrender to England.

Former Friends Raid My House.

A few weeks after the attempted blowing up of Oriel House by the I.R.A., I, my daughter Máirín and a friend walked full tilt into a man from Oriel House on our way from Mount Shannon Road to Merrion Road with small arms. We - or rather I - stood to speak to him. We were friends before the split. We got away with it. The man led raids on my house often and I think on one occasion must have seen a "dump" I had put away. If so, he did not pretend to see it; but when one of his men was about to go into the back garden, he remarked "There's nothing there" or words to that effect. This man's name was Seán Tumbleton of Oriel House.

My Work for City Relief Committee of White Cross.

I have already mentioned I think my work as Director for Pembroke of the Prisoners Dependents' Fund. I had been returned a Poor Law Guardian and was co-opted by Mrs. Despard and Madam McBride on the City Relief Committee of the White Cross. I was not able to do much for the families of prisoners jailed and "on the run" until then. I took to the families so distressed by the jailing and internment of their breadwinners the doles the White Cross would have awarded them. Never did any of those families complain to me and many - indeed all of them - were proud of their man and unafraid of raids and raiders and ready to hit back.

How I Got Messages to the Prisoners.

When Tony was a prisoner in Arbour Hill a British Officer called Clements recommended to me by Joe Mooney after his release used to take in my messages to Tony. Even if he were not straight he (the officer) could not get my message which was usually about the way things were happening outside, for it would be invisible on the inside of the envelope which, opened up, I would write on with skimmed milk mixed with a little water. When fine ash of a cigarette or any ash was rubbed over this the writing came out clearly. My reason for not putting the invisible between the visible of my letter was that should the Censor be smoking and drop ash on my letter, everything would be discovered.

Tony would know when there would be a message on the envelope. I'd seal the letter with a ring with a seal, or say, excuse odd paper and envelope or something like that. My messages never failed to carry but to show that no matter how secretly one tries to carry out work where more than oneself alone knows, there is danger, as proved by the incident of the pots of Scott's jam which brought about the raid on 131 by Seán McGarry's brother. The leakage must have occurred within the camp or jail. So raiding went on and we had no rest from the men in Oriel House. Many of those Free Staters, however, did not like the job of raiding 131 because they had so often found shelter and food there.

I am asked to set up a Dressing Station.

Another thing I forgot to tell you about. The Third Battalion officers came to 131 - I think a day or more before the "Cease Fire" order (the Truce) and arranged with me about a "Dressing Station" or, if you will, a temporary hospital in Peter's Place. On that evening at 6 o'clock I was to have

everything in readiness for wounded men should the necessity arise. I was to keep this order - for such I considered it - secret, but I must have help.

I went to Sheila Humphrey's after I had taken linen to Peter's Place and made up beds in either Eily O'Carroll's or Mrs. White's. Sheila agreed to come and suggested to me that we should take Mary Comerford with us. She came and either took Miss Broderick with her or went for her. When Miss Broderick arrived, Mary advised me (aside) to hand over the station to her - Miss Broderick - nominally which I agreed to, as I thought we would not mind very soon whose name the station would be in. Secretly I resented Mary's suggestion.

Mary and Sheila went out scouting. I forget about Miss Broderick. Six o'clock and not a shot fired and that was to be the hour. The girls returned soon after, telling us the British soldiers were confined to barracks. That is all I know about the matter. Now that I think of it - George Lawlor may have been one of the men who "mobilised" me for the job - and Seán Condon, M. Tannam and Kevin McCann.

Four Courts.

I woke up with the boom of a gun in my ears and jumped out of bed, pushed up the window sash and listened thinking we were attacking Beggars Bush Barracks. The night before I had to send a man to lead a convoy out of the city and I think he was Jack Lawlor, now in Canada.

We called the I.R.A. man "Scrounger Reilly" who came to me with the message unless I'm mixing him up with another, but I think I'm right.

The gun boomed again while I leaned out of the window and astonished I ran into my husband's bedroom but failed to waken

him. The sound came from the city. Then I dressed and went out of the house taking the key of the hall door for there was a great fear on me - could it be the Staters attacking the Four Courts? Tony and Liam and Rory and Joe were there and Dick Barret and oh - the gun boomed at intervals and not a soul awake, seemingly.

I ran practically all the way by Leeson Street and when near Trinity College I saw green uniformed men inside the windows. I was now on the Quays and a few people were gathered there looking across the river where a machine gun was in action and a crowd of people around it. Long after I was told that the gun could and would have been "put out of action" were it not that the crowd of people were around it. Had the Four Courts garrison - I mean their gunners fired to silence the gun there would have been more than the machine gun silenced. I went to cross to the Courts and a man detained me. "You'll be shot", he shouted and I said "I have a son inside there and I know the man on the door". "That man has been shot", he declared. Then I remarked a Red Cross man on the "Metal Bridge" and I began to think and think quickly and I turned and ran and walked back to Morehampton Road the same way I had come. (Later I heard that the man I thought would be at the gates was not shot). I ran in home. It was very early. I went upstairs but everyone was asleep and time was passing, so closing the door after me I went to Eamon O'Toole's house and roused the brothers. Eamon got on his brother Jerry's motor bike and took my message to Andy McDonnell in Cabinteely Barracks and Bray Barracks, both places of which he was in command.

Then leaving O'Toole's in Church Lane I went to McGlynn's on Eglinton Terrace, knocked them up and got Jack Lawlor, I.R.A., out of bed and told him mobilise "E" Company - any of them he could find and come with them to

breakfast at 131 and that I'd have it on the table for them. The men arrived in no time, hastily had breakfast and were away and now my husband and my two daughters were up and all having something to eat walking about the house agitatedly. My two young sons were down in the West with my people. I or rather my husband and I agreed that I should go with Eileen to the Broadstone and send her to join her brothers. Maureen and my maid should look after the house. I think Maureen was then though very young, in Cumann na mBan, Ranelagh Branch, and Tony in the Four Courts.

When I went on the platform - Broadstone - I met Sheila Humphreys and the late Una O'Connor and Sheila said I should report at a number I forget in Parnell Square. I had run into my sister at the station sending her young son down to the West also, so on reaching the house in Parnell Square, together we thumped and kicked at the door but could get no reply. There was some firing in bursts and a house across the Square from us on fire - the Orange Hall I learned later. An empty shell fell on the street beside us and my sister was nervous so we crossed to the Parnell Monument and sheltered somewhere there until by degrees I had her at the trams in or about D'Olier Street. Then I returned to Suffolk Street where I met my husband and Dr. English. Mary Comerford came in and told me wait and she would give me ammunition to take in to the Four Courts. She said she had been there already and was returning. I waited - Seán Etchingham came in and laughed when we met again and said when I complained of Mary Comerford for whom he had a great regard "The Ranelagh Branch is in 41 York Street - you should be there".

I went to York Street and was there and then put in charge of supplies and Commandant Joseph O'Connor gave me

instructions. At last I had won out but I sure had to hunt up my job and for a long time after I was wrathful to think that the women of my own Branch had not sought me out. Our work at York Street central - something or other - was principally feeding the I.R.A. men fighting in the city, or in that area of the city.

The house was not fortified - it was a ramshackle old place and maybe it would have been attacked but if it had there would be a massacre of the people living all around us. After my arrival at 41 I went to the Commandant "E" III and upstairs with him were Fr. Paddy Browne, Fr. Costelloe, Seán Etchingham, Brian O'Higgins who saluted me with "Molly Flannery I'm not surprised to see you here".

There may have been a few others, but I do not remember them.

Men of the I.R.A. began to come in to confession and I went first and was coming out when some of the boys whispered "what's he like?", and I whispered back "grand" - this was Fr. Costelloe.

Bread vans and milk carts left supplies at the door of 41 and I myself went out to provision people and ordered goods "to be paid for when we had secured our independence" and left notes for the goods all of which were delivered. People came to 41 with cooked hams, but I only remember Mrs. Farnham and her sister or sister-in-law carrying in between them a roast joint and soup, the latter in a huge bedroom ewer. The late Tom Nally offered himself to help at our dressing station in nearby Beverley Smiths. I remember dressing with him a hand and sending the man directly to Vincent's for Beverley Smiths was dusty and about the last place in Dublin to dress a wound in.

I did not go again to Beverley Smiths. Jack McGowan, a young I.R.A. man from Skerries, with his sister who carried his revolver between her shoulders to Dublin, came to 131 the morning of the Four Courts' attack, but I was not there. How he found out that I was in York Street I do not know but he came there and reported and left ^{and/} a few hours later was dying in Vincents. He had been accidentally shot by an I.R.A. man. Jack McGowan may have had rank for he used come to see Liam occasionally and slept at 131 on more than one occasion, it being too late to travel to Skerries, or more correctly too early in the mornings to travel home when their conference would be over.

We had two prisoners in York Street - one of them a demented jew - I was informed he was the man who had pointed out Sheehy Skeffington to Colthurst who shot or ordered Sheehy Skeffington to be shot by his men. I forget how. The other was a Rathmines man, shot later by I.R.A. as a spy and for whose shooting Frank Lawlor was murdered on the Golf Links at Milltown-or was it Milltown? Dwyer was his name. I was sorry for him for he had been in jail with my son Tony. But I was told I needn't grieve for him for he was ripe for killing.

On the Sunday after the fall of the Four Courts we left York Street. I was one of the last to leave and saw Commandant J. O'Connor lock up the place. 41 was not attacked. I forgot to mention that when the Four Courts garrison was locked up in Jameson's (?) ^{DISTILLERY} ~~Brewery~~, Mrs. Mellows and my daughter Maureen came in with a message to me: I was to get files and they would get them in to the Brewery. Both Mrs. Mellows and Maureen had been speaking to the Four Courts men at the Brewery and their message to me was from the men.

I went out to Donnybrook getting the password in case the

guard would have been changed before I'd return.

Eamon O'Toole got me the files; I was back in a short time, but not before the prisoners were removed to Mountjoy Prison.

Madam MacBride visited 41 York Street and tried to persuade us to leave it and the young women with me, all of Ranelagh Branch Cumann na mBan, were wrathful. I was very surprised and said, "Madam, if you get the Staters to down arms we surely will be glad to evacuate 41". When the girls got more hostile I reminded them that Madam had a son in the Four Courts. Madam left 41 York Street then and later I heard went to see Arthur Griffith who refused to give her an interview. I believe this is correct, but do not remember Madam having an interview with Commandant J. O'Connor. Had she, I believe I'd remember.

Of the young women who were with me I would like to say how earnest and fearless they were and cheerfully worked to the point of exhaustion. At night we lay down on bare mattresses in two rows, men and women, and a passage in the middle where a guard with a torch marched all night. The sound of his even tread I slept to and one night a bit headachy I hunted 'round for something to raise the mattress under my head and found somebody's boots - a man's boots - and stuffed them under the mattress, and slept.

Odd as it may seem to many I liked it all and so did the young women, for it was for Ireland - for faith and fatherland. We thought we were going to see Ireland free of foreign domination at last.

On reaching home I was informed that one or more - I forget, of the Four Courts garrison had come to 131 saying they had escaped, I think/^{they/} had visited me in 41 and that I had advised them to come to 132 and rest for a while. They did

as they were advised but all but one were gone when I returned home on Sunday. One man had a haemorrhage - I think O'Rourke was the name but I forget now and anyway things began at 131 soon after my arrival.

I lit a fire in a large range lying idle for some time, maybe a long time, and soon a roaring coal fire began to turn the coal black range to a fiery red. Then to my utter consternation the oven became a shooting gallery and I was quite sure the range would be blown out - up, for who could tell, there might be grenades among the cartridges going off. I forgot that when the heat would grow less the shooting would stop, but there was a loud knocking on the hall door. I quickly shut the kitchen door and another leading to the hall and opening the hall door there was a lady in a fur coat I had not met before, standing there. "Is Mrs. Woods in?", she enquired. I had my sleeves tucked up and a big apron on for I was preparing to bake bread. I said, "I am Mrs. Woods", at the same time drawing the door close to me where I stood practically outside it, half my mind on the range and half or less on my visitor. She must have easily seen my distraction. There were five more shots and I could hear them - then the lady said something about America in a nasal tone and I said something foolish - wouldn't she come to see me some other time, etc. I did not see that lady again.

Then Brennan Whitmore arrived with a complaint about a missing car I think and was soon followed by raiders and riot. They found a man in bed upstairs but did not arrest him. They may have forgotten him. They locked me into the front room from where I could easily have walked out by the window. My sister, sitting on an old-fashioned highly-polished music box containing both arms and ammunition, kept up a running

fire of abuse of them. The music box resembled a hall table and was used as such with a beautiful barometer set between the outspread wings of an eagle - a present from a friend in Ghent. Fortunately I had sent out a Lee Enfield with a young woman before the raiders arrived. This young woman, Daisy, is now working in Ballsbridge Hospitals' Trust.

At last the noise over, 131 settled down to a quiet night - a joyless night, but sleep did not forsake us. I think that is all - at least all I remember.

I forgot to mention that I went to Mrs. Hand's on Morehampton Road and found Captain Quinn there. He came with me to 131. The range had somewhat cooled in the meantime and he opened the oven door when clips of 303 fell out all over the place - some not exploded.

More Places I Visited with Despatches.

I used leave and collect despatches occasionally with Tommy Lavery in Henry Street (his studio was there), also in a teashop run by the nieces of Colonel Moore. It was called the "Spoon & Bill Cup" or the "Bill and Spoon Cup" which was kept by nieces of Colonel Moore. I remember being there often before the attack on the Four Courts. Leaving one day with Máire Comerford, we began to look for posters to tear down. When we were on O'Connell Bridge a big crowd gathered around us and over the people's heads a man gave me a penknife seeing I had only a hairpin to do the job.

A Coup that did not come off.

It was from Seán Condon I took the uniform from a warder's house near Mountjoy Jail. It was from 131 Seán and his men left to blow up bridges one night. The job

did not come off. Seán and a few men were back early the morning after. I remember this clearly because I was waiting for the morning papers and terribly disappointed when the job failed. I think the name of the friendly warder was Fennelly. He hanged himself when sent away from Mountjoy Prison - or was he strangled by some agent of the British?

Our Car is Taken.

It was Seán Bolger, ex I.R.A. man and then of Oriel House, that took our car which cost £500. Cahill, garage owner of Donnybrook, paid my husband £10 for the wreck when he got it back long afterwards. Someone informed me that Seán Bolger boasted when he took the car that Mrs. Woods could not get around so quickly now.

My Association with Mrs. Childers.

Mrs. Childers taught me a code I was to use when writing to her. I used it once when writing Mrs. Childers from London re information on the "Irish Loyalists" the name under which the police who suffered for their loyalty to the English Crown went by. I think I cannot have got the code right because Mrs. Childers told me later not to use it and I forget it now absolutely.

Pat McMorrow, an Indian living in Judd Street, London, gave me much information which I took to Mrs. Childers and which she said was useful to us.

I gave Mrs. Childers the map of Mountjoy Jail inside after Lil O'Donnell told me she had a better way to effect escapes. The map was given me by McManus the warder who was born in Mountjoy.

I would not agree to the shooting of any man on guard,

so the men plotting the escape of Liam and Rory and others had thought out another way and were eager to get the word to go on with it. It was never attempted and maybe was not workable.

I think all the underground information I received at one time went to Mrs. Childers. Mrs. Reynolds of Wolfe Tone House, Rathfarnham (this house has now no name and is next door to Collins, the chemists) used leave the Newbridge packets for me in Considine's, Morehampton Road. I'd go with them to Bushy Park Road to Mrs. Childers and take away whatever happened to be there for me. Once I remember taking packets from a house in Stonybattery - all from Newbridge.

When I arrived at Mrs. Childers' house I found two C.I.D. men in possession who had Mary Comerford in custody and were waiting instructions from Oriel House as to what they should do with her. Some other C.I.D. men had taken away Malachy Sweetman. I said to the servant who was also in the hall, "Has my sister come?". She said, "No". "Keep her when she does. I'll be back". I went off but was followed by one of the C.I.D. men on a bicycle. He put his bicycle by the tram stable at Terenure. He got into the same tram as I did but upstairs. I got out before he reached the top and I disappeared into a shop, went to the toilet which was dark. I had lost my pence-nez when leaving Childers so was unable to read the messages before destroying them.

I was very many times in Childers. Mrs. Childers had a small iron pot and matches beside her couch to use in case of emergency for the destruction of paper, etc. Her son, Erskine, told me one time I met him in Bob Barton's that his mother slept little if at all, and wrote practically all night.

How I first came to know Mrs. Childers I do not remember - maybe through the Comerfords or Bartons.

I got for her, whenever possible, information as to where there were military posts and their strength - that was on my journeys into places in the country.

The Raid on Con Little's House in Mespil Road.

Apparently there was a meeting at Con's when the Oriel House men arrived. Con, Barney Mellows and another escaped, but Paddy Rigney and "Fr. Murphy" were arrested as they heroically held the Free Staters at bay while the others escaped by the back.

When I arrived home that afternoon I found Con, Barney and the other waiting for me. I took Con to Miss Kent's private hotel in Earlsfort Terrace and persuaded my daughter Eileen and Nellie Campbell of Swinford who was on a visit with us to spend the night at Con's with his housekeeper who would not stay there alone. Con told me to get a gun that was concealed in his garden, but when I went it was not there. The raiders came back to Con's that night and went to the girls' bedroom as Eileen recognised Seán Bolger who led the raid and who used to be often in our house during the Tan war.

"Fr. Murphy" was, I think, an enigma and an amateur surgeon. He had been in the British Army or Navy. I saw his name, rank and address on his suitcases in Con's.

The Prior of Dalgan Park, Galway, where Fr. Murphy had been a student, came to 131 when there was a rumour that he (Fr. Murphy) would be executed. My husband went to see Kevin O'Higgins, who denied it. My husband went to Kevin O'Higgins also when Count Flunkett's daughter died and

got Jack and George Plunkett out of jail - on parole, I think.

I took Mr. Michael Comyn to Miss Kent's the night of the day we buried Harry Boland. After he had been warned not to stay at home that night he came to 131 and we thought it best to act on the warning given in the graveyard.

Experience on a Tram Journey.
(Like a Cartoon by Cruikshank).

The tram was on the line where Dame Street opens opposite the Bank of Ireland when a burst of gunfire electrified the passengers of whom I was one. I felt I should not join my fellow passengers because the fire was not directed on the tram. If it had there would have been no time to get anywhere. Both seats were empty in a trice and on the floor heads bent together, lay the passengers. It looked ridiculous or rather ludicrous.

I was on my way to Seán O'Mahony's and when I got out of the tram there was what seemed a running gun-firing - someone was being pursued. I heard later that was true. I took shelter in a shop for a short time. No one spoke to me, nor I to them. Then I made a dash for the hotel while still hearing the shooting more distant. I was not allowed to leave the hotel - maybe some hours - a long time it seemed to me.

One day Sheila Humphreys sent me word that I was to disfigure or tear down any Free State recruiting "signs" I could manage. I asked Tony's advice. At dusk he gave me a small can of lamp-black and I began with a paint brush on Morehampton Road to disfigure the pictures. My youngest boy waited to see what would happen and I went on. A lady and a child seeing me made the Sign of the Cross on

her forehead and hurriedly hustled the child away. Something happened at the first poster I lamp-blacked and one of the two men who leaned against it swore "I'm destroyed" and of course he was. Enda then hurried away.

Really we spent all our time at work on one thing and another to frustrate the work of the Free Staters. They would go out and put up posters and we followed tearing them down in city and suburbs or we would start out with paste brush and posters and the Staters would follow and while they were still wet, tear them down. Then we began to set a watch on the posters. This would be of Saturday nights.

My Captain, Phyllis Ryan, commissioned me to form branches of Cumann na mBan wherever I should see the need of them in my wanderings around the country.

My first attempt was in Omeath, where I was informed there was a branch but they usedn't to meet at regular times. I met the Captain, Mary Oakes, who lived there and she promised to call a meeting and notify me. No meeting was called and the Captain made excuses. Then there happened something which we should identify ourselves with by collecting money. I called to the Captain. No, she had no boxes. Could she get any? No. I crossed the harbour to Warrenpoint and found out the Sinn Féin Club. No new boxes there either but a great deal of indifference. However, some man gathered up about half dozen old boxes for the collection the Cumann na mBan ladies in Omeath were to go out with the next Sunday.

I made paste and refurbished the old boxes and left all but one which I kept for myself, with Miss Captain Oakes. Yet not one member of the Cumann na mBan, of which this lady was Captain, had I ever set eyes on. Promises and excuses and

she the Captain said she would meet me outside the Church after early Mass with such members of her branch as she could mobilise.

Early on Sunday I waited alone outside the Church expecting the collectors would be out with the congregation and have their boxes. John and Mrs. McNeill came out of the Church and we talked together, and people began to come with their pennies and small pieces of silver and soon my box began to sag with the weight of the coppers. I handed the box to the Captain that evening and washed my hands of her. Whether I had flags I do not remember, but I think not. The McNeills were mildly amused when they met me begging in Omeath where I had taken a house for the children during the summer session of Irish. Omeath! Oh! - Meath - of Sunday drunks and spiritless Irish - or were they Irish?

I could tell of many other incidents during this time but I think I have given enough.

SIGNED

Mary Flannery Woods

(Mary Flannery Woods)

DATE

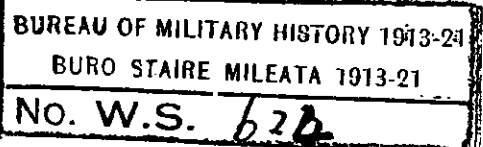
13 December 1951

13 December 1951.

WITNESS

S. Ni Chiosain

(S. Ni Chiosain).



Appendix A

ESCAPRE FROM MOUNTJOY

Nov. 1921

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 624

In the summer of 1921 Mountjoy Prison housed hundreds of prisoners captured and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for their activities in the War of Independence. Along with two others I had been captured, armed, one month before the Truce of 1921.

Court-martialled in Kilmainham we were sentenced to 15 years penal servitude. Seven years of this sentence was remitted.

On the 6th of July 1921 along with ten others I was transferred from Arbour Hill Military Detention Prison to Mountjoy. After one night in the basement we were all transferred to separate cells in A Wing.

Mountjoy was used as a clearing station for Penal Servitude prisoners. From there they were removed to English and Scottish jails.

Within a few days of arrival in Mountjoy, a large number of prisoners, myself included, were examined by a doctor, as a preliminary to removal to either Dartmoor or Portland.

However, with the coming into operation of the Truce on July 12th, transfers to British jails were suspended; but Mountjoy continued to fill up.

The opening of discussions between the Irish and British leaders created a harvest of rumours amongst the prisoners. We were not allowed newspapers and the most persistent rumour was, of course, to the effect that the discussions had broken down. In the event of that

happening our speedy departure to some English Jail was a certainty. Gradually, as negotiations outside progressed, discipline inside relaxed and conditions improved. Visits were permitted and with a little ingenuity or sleight of hand visitors could pass cigarettes, etc., while the warders backs were turned.

If guns could be smuggled in it would not be hard to pass them across to the prisoners, given a favourable moment.

So the idea of escape was born.

Leo Fitzgerald and Liam Troy talked it over and decided it could be done.

Liam Troy was O.C. of the Cabinteely Coy. South Dublin. He was engaged to a Miss Merryman who, with the help of a friend Mr. ... had secured a permit for a weekly visit to him. He told her of the intention to attempt an escape and asked her help. She told him the search to which the visitors were subjected was not very strict and that she was willing to smuggle in anything she could.

Miss Merryman secured a .45 from Liam's brother and was able to get in with it and pass it to Liam. The gun was empty and it was on the following visit a week later she brought in the six rounds to load it. This time it was not so easy. The Warder stayed close during this visit and as time was running short, Miss Merryman asked him to be a sport and give her a chance to kiss her sweetheart. He obligingly turned his back and she passed a handkerchief to Liam containing six rounds of .45 ammunition.

"3"

Leo Fitzgerald had arranged in similar manner with his sister, Mrs. Ryan, to bring in a gun. Between them three weapons were conveyed to the prison and successfully passed in.

Only one of these guns was serviceable, the .45 brought in by Miss Merryman. A french .42 and a Bulldog .45, both empty, were useful additions.

The first plan decided on by Fitzgerald and Troy -- who were the key men in this and in the later successful attempt -- was called off. It was to be attempted on a Sunday morning when all the prisoners were at Mass. Eight men were to conceal themselves under their beds. This could be done by placing the top of the bed trestle on the pipe which ran through the cells and by placing the bottom of the bed on the stool placed sideways on the floor. We were to hold-up and overpower any of the prison staff in A Wing during Mass; tying and gagging them and placing them in the baths. We hoped to secure from them the keys to the Workshops. There we were to get Warders' uniforms and proceed by way of the Female prison. Others of the prisoners at Mass were in the plan and we hoped to have the way clear for them before Mass was over. Of those who were to conceal themselves under the beds I remember, besides Fitzgerald and Troy, a McDermott of Elphin, Roscommon and Paddy Ryan of Longford. We were actually under the beds one Sunday morning when we were told the attempt was off.

Various reasons were given why the escape was not attempted. One was that the keys of the Workshops would not be available on a Sunday morning. Another reason, which is the one I am inclined

to accept was that the attempt was called off from the Outside.

However, Liam and Leo lost no time in preparations for another plan. The guns were in . Why not make use of them. This time we were to attempt a disguise as Auxiliaries. For that the principal item would be the hats. Leo Fitzgerald got busy and made a few which he passed to me. They were made from the material used in the prison bed quilt. The Crown or Cap badge being made from the official Prison Prayerbook. I tried one on for Leo and to me it was quite passable in the dusk of the evening. It was one of these I had on in our successful break. The other, along with two gags intended for the first escape , was found under my mattress by Auxiliaries who raided the prison and searched prisoners and cells on the night we escaped. However, Leo said he would get ~~xxx~~ real hats and once more his sister, Mrs. Ryan, and Miss Murrman came to the rescue. Four Auxiliary hats were smuggled in.

Leo Fitzgerald moved around from one to another, discussing an idea as it occurred to him. We had five hats and that number were to attempt the break. I asked Leo if we could include Tom Keegan. He agreed. Keegan included Paddy O'Brien, making seven in all. The guns had been passing from one to another because of the danger of search. For some days I had the loaded gun. We had it in turn. Altogether we had the guns for a few weeks prior to our escape.

The attempt was to be made on a Saturday evening immediately after we had come in from exercise, about 4.30 p.m. We were supposed to go right to our cells on coming in from exercise and a Warder on each landing would lock up. However, you could evade lock-

up for ten or fifteen minutes by keeping away from your cell. Usually the Warder would pass on to the next cell and continue his routine if you were not at hand.

We counted on this start. Only when the others had been locked up would we be missed. Even then our absence might not cause serious alarm as we were not all on the same landing; and one prisoner ~~might~~ had often hid in the cell of another.

But it did not work out that way.

Immediately we came in from exercise on the evening agreed we proceeded by way of the top landing of A Wing around to B Wing. The seven were Leo Fitzgerald, Liam Troy, Gerry Davis, Paddy Rigney, Paddy O'Brien, Tom Keegan and Christy Smith. The attempt depended on getting to the basement of B Wing in time to catch the Warder there and get his keys.

Most of us had trench or dust coats on the stairway between the ground floor of B Wing and the basement. We put on our hats.

The Warder, Dunleavy by name, was about to lock up the last of the criminal prisoners in the Basement when we confronted him. Despite the disguise he recognized some of us and called me by name. Immediately we held him up and relieved him of the keys. Troy took the keys and at the same time Fitzgerald chucked the chain to which the Warder's whistle was attached, taking the button ~~with~~ from his tunic along with it.

Tom Keegan and myself locked the Warder up, putting him in along with the prisoner. Leo Fitzgerald had the loaded .45. Gerry Davis

had the Bulldog and I had the french .42. Gerry's gun and mine had the chambers stuffed with candle grease by way of camouflage.

I threatened the warder about raising the alarm. By this time Troy had already got busy with the keys. There were two locks on each door and a number of doors to get through before reaching the Reception Room gate which would take us to the main road inside the prison and almost opposite the main ~~gate~~ entrance. Leo Fitzgerald, with his black trench coat and his gloves and a cigar was in great form and Troy was cool and collected as he tried one key after another by the light of matches which we had saved for the purpose.

However, not much progress had been made before the alarm was raised. Dunleavy, helped by the criminal started to shout and ring the cell bell. Again Keegan and myself ran back and threatened him but it was no use. By now several prisoners in the Basement, some of them British Tommies, had taken up the cry. The Basement rang with shouts of " Help! Sinn Feiners are escaping !".

As Keegan and myself rejoined the others we saw two warders come down the stairs and go towards the cell we had just left. But still, though the game seemed up, Troy, encouraged by the others, continued to put doors and locks behind us. The alarm was now in full cry and I think what really enabled us to proceed was that no-one seemed to give a thought to the Main Gate.

The hunt proceeded in the grounds, towards the Hospital and Bakehouse and around the walls. At last we reached the Reception Room gate and here again it appeared to be a forlorn hope.

The key got stuck in this gate and would not turn..... but the gate was not locked. From this point it had been agreed that two men Fitzgerald and Troy, would go forward towards the Main Entrance. There were Three gates yet to tackle. The inner gate, guarded by a British sentry, was not locked and was opened as required by the sentry. In the dark of a November night it was hoped the sentry could be bluffed into opening the gate by using a Cockney accent along with the Auxiliary disguise. This is just what happened. As Fitzgerald and Troy approached the sentry one of them called out to him to open the gate. He held the gate open with his left hand, while in his right hand he held his rifle. But having no keys now, they being stuck in the Reception Room gate, it was not sufficient to get by the inner gate. The guards and warders were still to be tackled between the Outer or Main and the Second Gates. Looking back now after 29 years it must be admitted that luck in abundance was with us.

Commotion and confusion had taken possession of those in the Control room of the Prison. As the attempt to open the Reception Room gate was being made four of the hunters passed us at the double, thinking we were Auxiliaries.

Seeing Fitzgerald and Troy pass the sentry the rest of us followed. Again as Fitz and Troy approached the Second Gate a Warder opened it for them; and on getting between the Second and the Main Gates they calmly informed the warders that they were going out and to open the Gate for them.

One warder said he did not know them and would have to get

an Auxiliary to identify them, while another mentioned that they had no key.

Leo Fitzgerald pulled his gun and held them up. Gerry Davis and Paddy Rigney rushed into the office where usually an Auxiliary guard of two was to be found. At this time I was the last in line and beside the sentry. The shouting had attracted his attention. He was still holding open the gate and seemed uncertain what to do. Immediately I stuck a gun in his ribs, warning him not to move. When the story of this escape was first written some twenty -six years ago I was blamed for not disarming the sentry. It was overlooked that just as I was holding him up a Warder came running ~~was~~ towards us shouting " Stop these men and identify them !" -- and I had to give my attention to him also.

It proved to be the Chief Warder, Hipwell by name. I covered him and ordered him in towards ~~where~~ the others, where he was taken care of. As he was lined up with about five others it was noticed he had a key in his hand. Troy calmly announced " I think this is what we are looking for " , as he reached up and removed the key. It proved to be a master key. Troy inserted it in the wicket of the Main Gate and swung it open.

Fitzgerald ordered us out , saying he would hold them and he did.

As I got a few yards from the Gate I looked back. Fitzgerald had stepped out. But he immediately pushed the Gate and stepped in again. Firing three shots in the air , he stopped the immediate activity of those we had lined up and put them back in place.

He overtook us at the top of the Avenue leading to the N.C.R.

"9"

Rigney complained that he was exhausted and unable to go on. He told us to go ahead. But our luck was still in and the problem was solved for us. A motor cyclist with side-car turned in towards the Avenue. He had to slow up anyhow as we were bunched in the gateway leading to the Prison. We put Rigney in the sidecar and off he went. Paddy O'Brien then raced across and boarded a tram on Berkeley Road. The other five of us had a shake-hands at the wall of the Mater Hospital and even then we did not travel far before our next stop.

Fitzgerald insisted on going into a pub. in Mountjoy Street. It is now Bugler's, The Mountjoy Bar , and we remained there for some time.

This was the last escape before the general release of Prisoners in Decemebr 1921 and January 1922.

Miss Merryman, who played such a prominent part in the escape later married Liam Troy, since dead.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 624

A P P E N D I X AESCAPE FROM MOUNTJOY - NOVEMBER 1921.

In the summer of 1921 Mountjoy Prison housed hundreds of prisoners captured and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for their activities in the War of Independence. Along with two others I had been captured, armed, one month before the Truce of 1921.

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The opening of discussions between the Irish and British leaders created a harvest of rumours amongst the prisoners. We were not allowed newspapers and the most persistent rumour was, of course, to the effect that the

discussions had broken down. In the event of that happening our speedy departure to some English Jail was a certainty. Gradually, as negotiations outside progressed, discipline inside relaxed and conditions improved. Visits were permitted and with a little ingenuity or sleight of hand visitors could pass cigarettes, etc. while the warders' backs were turned.

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Miss Merryman secured a .45 from Liam's brother and was able to get in with it and pass it to Liam. The gun was empty and it was on the following visit a week later she brought in the six rounds to load it. This time it was not so easy. The warder stayed close during this visit and as time was running short, Miss Merryman asked him to be a sport and give her a chance to kiss her sweetheart. He obligingly turned his back and she passed a handkerchief to Liam containing six rounds of .45 ammunition.

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Fitzgerald ordered us out, saying he would hold them and he did. As I got a few yards from the gate I looked back. Fitzgerald had stepped out, but he immediately pushed the gate and stepped in again. Firing three shots in the air, he stopped the immediate activity of those we had lined up and put them back in place.

He overtook us at the top of the avenue leading to the N.C.R. Rigney complained that he was exhausted and unable to go on. He told us to go ahead. But our luck was still in and the problem was solved for us. A motor cyclist with side-car turned in towards the avenue. He had to slow up anyhow as we were bunched in the gateway leading to the prison. We put Rigney in the side-car and off he went. Paddy O'Brien then raced across and boarded a tram on Berkeley Road. The other five of us had a shake-hands at the wall of the Mater Hospital and even then we did not travel far before our next stop.

Fitzgerald insisted on going into a pub in Mountjoy Street. It is now Bugler's, The Mountjoy Bar, and we remained there for some time.

This was the last escape before the general release of prisoners in December, 1921 and January, 1922.

Miss Merryman, who played such a prominent part in the escape, later married Liam Troy, since dead.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S.

Mrs. Woods,

You already have the particulars of our escape from Mountjoy. About the 3rd or 4th evening after it you came to Billy Carroll's, Bath Ave., accompanied by Mrs. Byrne and we went to Madame Despard's, Roebuck House, where you handed me over to what was my impression of a ghost.

Mrs. Despard was in bed when we called and she answered the door herself. It was my first meeting with her and I never forgot it. She had on a long white nightdress. Her white hair was hanging down and coupled with the sunken cheeks I thought it was a resurrection and I think it was there and then I decided it was no place for me. I left after breakfast the following morning and did not return. I stayed with Tom Keegan at No. 6, but I remember first telling you that I would not go back to Clonskeagh.

I was in and out of 131 and the mystery trip to Dublin Castle is still a mystery to me. It happened about the time Tony took Cope's car. I gave the gun back to the man who gave it to me, we parted and I did not see him again. This I can say that he produced a card or some authority which gave him access to the Castle. I saw him produce it at the gate and he came out carrying a very large suitcase which appeared to be very heavy. I watched as instructed to see if he was followed. One of the Cahill's was at the wheel of our car in Dame Street. The case was deposited in a house in the vicinity of Mountjoy Square and we drove back to 131. In the meantime I had started to work for the Port and Docks Board. There were some raids for arms including one on Colonel Maurice Moore's house which was carried out on the Sunday that Mick Collins and Arthur Griffith were addressing a Treaty meeting in the West which had been proclaimed by Billy Pilkinton and his staff. Col. Moore was down at it and I remember the abuse his wife gave us during the raid. On the morning of the attack on the Four Courts I called at 131. You were out. I reported at North Great George's Street and contacted my Coy. - Coy. C II Batt.

We took over shops on opposite corners of Marlborough Street and Parnell Street - Archer's, Pork Butchers and Healy's, Publicans, and barricaded them. After a few days in Healy's the majority of us moved into Findlater's, O'Connell Street and started to bore through the walls towards what was then Bridgeman's shop, now on the corner of O'Connell and Parnell Streets. It was held by Free Staters as was also the banks on opposite sides, the Provincial, corner of O'Connell Street and Parnell Street, opposite Rotunda and The National Bank, corner of Parnell Street and Parnell Square.

We met with no resistance from the Staters which surprised me as we had to get in one by one through a small hole in the wall. We captured I think 11 Staters with arms in Bridgeman's - one had been killed shortly before.

There was nothing upstairs in Bridgemen's to barricade the windows and we came under heavy fire from both banks. Garry Holohan with about 6 others crossed Parnell Street Lower down to attempt to capture the National Bank while those of us in Bridgemen's drew the Staters fire in order to give Garry and his party a chance to get across the road.

They captured the bank. Jimmy Brennan, Annie's uncle was badly wounded beside myself and Tom Burke. He lost his right arm Ernie O'Malley's brother was also killed in Bridgeman's.

We had a good deal of shooting with the crowd in the Provincial Bank, but perhaps the best feature of the event was our appearance.

In boring through the walls towards Bridgeman's we had come into a photographer's; it was I think over a shop, a fruiter's called

Lamb's. Some of us had put on some of the fancy hats used for taking pictures. Mine was a very small straw hat held by elastic. I had seen a similar one on a monkey with street organ. Others had large Mexican hats; our faces were black from sweat and soot and plaster and perhaps it was our appearance frightened the Staters.

Fall of O'Connell St

Before the (a day or two) a large number of us in the various buildings in O'Connell Street were told to get away as best we could. We scattered each man for himself. I managed to get to Donnybrook after a good deal of hide and seek. You were again out and I had a good sleep at No. 6 and made my way again across town and contacted some of C Coy. II Batt. I stayed on the North side where we were endeavouring to gather and re-group. Even then the tunnel into Mountjoy was being planned. It was I gathered Rory O'Connor's idea. (but Tony may be able to give you particulars of the conversations inside Mountjoy about it). You will appreciate that after so many years it is hard to be strictly accurate but I think my own memory is good for the events of that period. Anyhow it was in July and very shortly after the capture of O'Connell Street that preparations were under way to attempt the rescue of H.Qrs. staff from Mountjoy by means of a tunnel from a house in Glengarriff Parade. I can say I was in on the discussions about it because I had been in the Prison before. Sean McEntee had been asked to take charge of it in his capacity of engineer and we had several meetings in the home of Tom Burke, North Summer Street, arranging the details. I was present at those meetings with McEntee, Fergus O'Kelly, Frank Henderson, Frank Daly and Tom Burke.

Leslie Price (Tom Barry's wife) was to arrange with people in a house selected by Rory O'Connor to let us use it for the tunnel and offer them accommodation elsewhere but they were not agreeable and we took over a house on the opposite side of the Parade which would mean a much larger job. This house was occupied by a Mr. Valentine, a member of C. Coy. II Batt. Late at night about midnight I think Sean McEntee arrived with word that the people in No. 28 or 30 across the Parade had gone on holiday and we were to go into their house. We entered, one man by the window letting the rest of us in and at daylight we started to work from the kitchen but by 2 O'clock the house was surrounded by Free State troops under Colonel O'Reilly and we were captured. Sean McEntee tried to conceal himself in the coal cellar where we were dumping the takings from the hole in the floor. For a while we thought he had succeeded as we were about 20 minutes in the tenders outside before he was brought out.

We were taken to Griffith Barracks and a few hours later transferred to Kilmainham. We made several unsuccessful attempts to get out of Kilmainham. In September we were transferred to Gormanstown Camp and a few hours after we entered nine of us escaped. The work of completing the camp was still going on and a party of workmen were putting the finishing touches to the outer row of barbed wire. We decided to risk their attitude if we tried cutting the inner row. We had a pair of pliers stolen from a workman who had been working in Kilmainham. Very few of the prisoners were aware of what we were at. Most of them were engaged in settling in their new quarters. We were the first batch of prisoners to be sent to Gormanstown in the Civil War, about 200 I think. We succeeded in cutting a hole at the bottom of the wire working a little at a time, when the camp patrol of military policemen were out of sight, and when it was ready just took a chance.

The workmen were all right, one said good luck to me as I got through leaving part of the seat of my trousers after me. It meant crossing a field in full view of the camp, but there was oats in stooks in the field and by casually moving from one to the other I made it to the next field and there went into top gear.

Noel Lemass caught up on me. I stopped an elderly man on the road

and took his bike. He asked for his lunch which was on the carrier and I gave it to him, and told him I would leave it in the Railway Lost Property Office, Dublin, if I got there. It was the first address I thought of. But I did not get far. Seán Quinn who had got out also was on the road and I took him on the backstep of the bike. We got a puncture going down a hill and stopped at the first house we came to. I brought the bike in and was telling the woman who came to the door that I would like to leave it there and would call back when I got something to repair it, but she replied by saying it was Mr. So and So's bike. He got it back needless to say.

Quinn and myself got to Dublin between 9 and 10 that night having walked all the way except for the few miles on the bike. I called at your house and stayed at No. 6. The following day I was assigned to the 2nd Batt. A.S.U. My activities from then until the following February were carried out with the A.S.U. and 2nd Batt. and were mostly on the north side of Dublin. They included raids, burnings, barrack attacks and ambushes and quite a few lucky escapes. But I generally found time to drop into 131, and some of my recollections of St. Enda's are amusing. Mr. Woods (Andy) was I think very upset by the thought and tragedy of the Civil War, and on this particular night he had a small group of influential people which I think included the Lord Mayor in the front room where they were exploring the possibilities of bringing both sides together, while a group of us were in the dining room armed and preparing for some job or other and it struck me that while Andy was discussing peace he might be sitting on a dump. It was from 131 a group of us left to attempt the capture of the guard at Westland Row Station. It failed, one Stater being shot and myself being chased all over the neighbourhood.

There was the time Maura Comeford seen me change my gun to my overcoat pocket when about to leave the house and she remarked it was rather long for the pocket and would I like a short 45 for it. On saying I would she drew one from the belt of her skirt and exchanged. Another night on going into the house the door was opened and I was told to put them up and felt something stuck in my mid-section. It was Barney Mellows and the weapon was a corkscrew. Barney told me of the attempt to carry out something big not mentioning what it was and told me if I would like to be in on it to be there on such a night (at 131). Well I was on hand and a party of us left your house by car. Father Sharky and Miss Ryan were in the party. We went to Mrs. Mellows' house and took away 7 rifles and called at a house in Sandymount and collected some Free State uniforms and then left for the Scalp where we were to meet Paddy Darcy with a party.

It was after the executions as I remember the password was "Fisher" the name of one of the lads executed. We had tea in Butler's of the Scalp and then Father Sharky, Miss Ryan and the driver left for town.

We took the stuff out to a field and waited for Darcy but he did not show up. (Later we heard his area was surrounded and as he could not get at his rifles he decided his party would be no use unarmed). In the morning the three of us who remained overnight had breakfast in Butler's and set out over the hill to Shankill Station where we boarded the train for Dublin. As there was a guard in Harcourt Street Station we got off at Ranelagh. That night we left for Clondalkin to assemble for the big operation which was to be an attempt to capture Baldonnel Camp and garrison. We moved up the canal bank before midnight and assembled at a little 2-roomed house which I think was occupied by a lock keeper. I was an outpost with rifle and small arm and was lying on a bank when I chanelled a party coming towards me. They gave the correct password. They were in Free State uniform and I ordered them to remain where they were. I had not been told this was likely to happen. Some one came up from the house and told me to let them through and later I learned they were from Baldonnel Camp and were to help us.

We had a pilot with us who was to take up a plane if the operation

was a success. The complement of men necessary to attempt the job was not there and it was postponed and we were told to get away. A few of us boarded a canal boat and got a lift and had breakfast in Mrs. Mellows House. I went on afterwards to 131 where I met Barney and told him what happened. He was very annoyed the job did not come off, but I believe the number needed for the job was 90 men and as it was late in the Civil War nearly all were in jail. We had, I think 59 present that night and it was a well armed party with rifles, small arms and machine guns.

After operations on the north side I would often drop in for a cup of tea or a glass of wine and a chat and on 2 occasions I watched from the far side of the road a raid in progress and went in when it was over.

The many old I.R.A. who came and went from 131 could multiply these incidents by the thousand and ~~one~~ memories. 131 should make good reading and you have the time and ability to write them.

I stayed in Seamus Moore's house at that time, 51, Lr. Beechwood Ave., and as it got later in the Civil War and tougher, in order to get across in safety (particularly when I was armed and needing my gun early in the morning) I would go down the South Quay's to Ringsend across the Locks and up the Dodder and drop in to 131 on the way to Ranelagh.

- (1) Capture of Bridgemen's, of those present I remember Tom Burke O.C.C. Coy. Jack White Vic O.C. II Batt, Garry Holoughan, Sean Mooney, Jimmie Brennan, Tom McGrath, Desy O'Reilly, C. Smith.
- (2) The tunnel into Mountjoy - Sean McEntee, Hugh Early, Ned Gahan, Jimmie McManus, Sean Quinn, - O'Neill, Peter Campbell, Martin Hogan, Liam Moore, C. Smith.
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- (5) The trip to the Scalp - Father Sharky, Miss Ryan, unknown driver, Denny Kavanagh, Bob Thompson, C. Smith.
- (6) Present at Baldonnel - Tom Derrig, Sean Dowling, J. Doyle, J. Healy, J. Brogan.

Of the escapes that took place from Gormanstown Camp after I had left there I have gathered this information. The prisoners would be taken from the Compound or Camp proper to a Recreation Field and a Guard would be placed around it. At tea time they were brought back to the camp and the Guard withdrawn.

Sean Condron and Bob Thompson were amongst the first to get away from the Recreation Field and about a dozen succeeded by this method before it was discovered. The side line of the Football Pitch was only 6 or 8 yards from the barbed wire and a group played cards in between. They scooped a shallow hole under cover of the card game and before time to be taken back to the Camp, Condron lay down in it and the card players covered him with grass.

About 4 or 5 yards away the same procedure was adopted and Thompson was covered up. The prisoners were brought in and Condron and Thompson lay rigid for $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours until it was time to change the barbed wire. They got away alright.

This method was later improved on by Jim Cotter who had the holes made deeper.

Sections of bread trays from the cookhouse were smuggled out and the holes covered and sods of grass laid on top. Before time to be taken back to camp the man or men selected would get into the hole under cover of card game and the attempt on the barbed wire would be made at dusk just before the search lights came on.

A P P E N D I X B.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIRE MILEATA 1913-21
NO. W.S. 624

Mrs. Woods,

You already have the particulars of our escape from Mountjoy. About the 3rd or 4th evening after it you came to Billy Carroll's, Bath Ave., accompanied by Mrs. Byrne and we went to Madame Despard's, Roebuck House, where you handed me over to what was my impression of a ghost.

Mrs. Despard was in bed when we called and she answered the door herself. It was my first meeting with her and I never forgot it. She had on a long white nightdress. Her white hair was hanging down and coupled with the sunken cheeks I thought it was a resurrection and I think it was there and then I decided it was no place for me. I left after breakfast the following morning and did not return. I stayed with Tom Keegan at No. 6, but I remember first telling you that I would not go back to Clonskeagh.

I was in and out of 131 and the mystery trip to Dublin Castle is still a mystery to me. It happened about the time Tony took Cope's car. I gave the gun back to the man who gave it to me; we parted and I did not see him again. This I can say that he produced a card or some authority which gave him access to the Castle. I saw him produce it at the gate and he came out carrying a very large suitcase which appeared to be very heavy. I watched as instructed to see if he was followed. One of the Cahill's was at the wheel of our car in Dame Street. The case was deposited in a house in the vicinity of Mountjoy Square and we drove back to 131. In the meantime I had started to work for the Port and Docks Board. There were some raids for arms including one on Colonel Maurice Moore's house which was

carried out on the Sunday that Mick Collins and Arthur Griffith were addressing a Treaty meeting in the West which had been proclaimed by Billy Pilkinton and his staff. Col. Moore was down at it and I remember the abuse his wife gave us during the raid. On the morning of the attack on the Four Courts I called at 131. You were out. I reported at North Great George's Street and contacted my Coy. - Coy. C II Batt.

We took over shops on opposite corners of Marlborough Street and Parnell Street - Archer's, Pork Butchers and Healy's, Publicans, and barricaded them. After a few days in Healy's the majority of us moved into Findlater's, O'Connell Street, and started to bore through the walls towards what was then Bridgeman's shop, now on the corner of O'Connell and Parnell Streets. It was held by Free Staters as was also the banks on opposite sides, the Provincial, corner of O'Connell Street and Parnell Street, opposite Rotunda and the National Bank, corner of Parnell Street and Parnell Square.

We met with no resistance from the Staters which surprised me as we had to get in one by one through a small hole in the wall. We captured I think 11 Staters with arms in Bridgeman's - one had been killed shortly before.

There was nothing upstairs in Bridgeman's to barricade the windows and we came under heavy fire from both banks. Garry Holohan with about 6 others crossed Parnell Street Lower down to attempt to capture the National Bank while those of us in Bridgeman's drew the Staters fire in order to give Garry and his party a chance to get across the road.

They captured the bank. Jimmy Brennan, Annie's uncle was badly wounded beside myself and Tom Burke. He lost his

right arm. Ernie O'Malley's brother was also killed in Bridgeman's.

We had a good deal of shooting with the crowd in the Provincial Bank, but perhaps the best feature of the event was our appearance.

In boring through the walls towards Bridgeman's we had come into a photographer's; it was I think over a shop, a fruiterers called Lamb's. Some of us had put on some of the fancy hats used for taking pictures. Mine was a very small straw hat held by elastic. I had seen a similar one on a monkey with street organ. Others had large Mexican hats; our faces were black from sweat and soot and plaster and perhaps it was our appearance frightened the Staters.

Before the fall of O'Connell Street (a day or two) a large number of us in the various buildings in O'Connell Street were told to get away as best we could. We scattered each man for himself. I managed to get to Donnybrook after a good deal of hide and seek. You were again out and I had a good sleep at No. 6 and made my way again across town and contacted some of C Coy. II Batt. I stayed on the North side where we were endeavouring to gather and re-group. Even then the tunnel into Mountjoy was being planned. It was I gathered Rory O'Connor's idea (but Tony may be able to give you particulars of the conversations inside Mountjoy about it). You will appreciate that after so many years it is hard to be strictly accurate but I think my own memory is good for the events of that period. Anyhow it was in July and very shortly after the capture of O'Connell Street that preparations were under way to attempt the rescue of H.Qrs. staff from Mountjoy by means of a tunnel from a house in Glengarriff Parade. I can say I was in on the discussions about it because I had been in the Prison before.

Seán McEntee had been asked to take charge of it in his capacity of engineer and we had several meetings in the home of Tom Burke, North Summer Street, arranging the details. I was present at those meetings with McEntee, Fergus O'Kelly, Frank Henderson, Frank Daly and Tom Burke.

Leslie Price (Tom Barry's wife) was to arrange with people in a house selected by Rory O'Connor to let us use it for the tunnel and offer them accommodation elsewhere but they were not agreeable and we took over a house on the opposite side of the Parade which would mean a much larger job. This house was occupied by a Mr. Valentine, a member of C. Coy. II Batt. Late at night about midnight I think Seán McEntee arrived with word that the people in No. 28 or 30 across the Parade had gone on holiday and we were to go into their house. We entered, one man by the window letting the rest of us in and at daylight we started to work from the kitchen but by 2 o'clock the house was surrounded by Free State troops under Colonel O'Reilly and we were captured. Seán McEntee tried to conceal himself in the coal cellar where we were dumping the takings from the hole in the floor. For a while we thought he had succeeded as we were about 20 minutes in the tenders outside before he was brought out.

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About four or five yards away the same procedure was adopted and Thompson was covered up. The prisoners were brought in and Condrón and Thompson lay rigid for 3½ hours until it was time to chance the barbed wire. They got away alright. This method was later improved on by Jim Cotter who had the holes made deeper.

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Copy of reply to my letter to Seán MacConMara,
Crusheen, Co. Clare.

Crusheen,

Co. Clare.

28.4.36.

Dear Mrs. Woods,

Needless to say I'm only too glad if I can be of any assistance in doing honour to the memory of one of Ireland's most valiant sons.

When the Volunteers disbanded at Moyode Liam Mellows resolved to make a bid to reach Dublin probably via Limerick. Two of his officers volunteered to accompany him. They took to the mountains of Derrybrian and then on for the Clare mountains. After a couple of days travelling they arrived tired and hungry in the Ballontra mountains about three miles N.W. of Tulla. Here they decided to rest for the night. For the moment I'll leave them until I explain how Michael Molony found them. The Molonys were country (farmers). This boy "Micho" had served his time to the grocery business in Dublin. There he joined the I.R.B. He was home some time before the formation of the Ir. Volunteers, and was instrumental in forming a Company in his own parish, Knockjames. I was Batt. Comdt. of that area, he was Co. Captain and had his men mobilised for Easter Week. His father had a mountain farm a mile or so from his home. On this farm was an old house roofed with corrugated iron, around it a few fields

enclosed with stone walls. In one of the fields "Micho" had three young horses one of which he intended to train for farm work and had made a great pet of it.

The evening before he met Liam and his friends this horse to Micho's surprise grew restive, jumped the wall followed by the other two, all three taking to the mountains. Micho followed the runaways until night began to fall, when he returned home. During the night he had a dream of being in contact with strangers. At day-break he went to look for his horses and after a while saw them in the distance. As he went in their direction he saw a man kneeling, his hands before his face as if praying and two others lying on the heather beside him. When "Micho" came close to them he saluted "Good morning". The kneeling man rather startled returned the salute when Molony gave them to understand that he was a friend and said to Mellows "You're a Dublin man" and to "Alfy" Monahan "You're from the Northern Counties". When Frank Hynes spoke he said "You are a Galway man". "Micho" Molony then took the fugitives with him and leaving them in the old house roofed with corrugated iron, was soon back again with breakfast for all three. It was then Liam asked Molony if he knew me and finding that he did he told him to let me know where he was.

When I received this message I took two of my most trustworthy men into my confidence (Seán O'Keefe and Con Fogarty) and we set to work and made up about £6, four pounds ten shillings which I received from Fr. Crowe. This he collected at a dinner among 9 priests. Con Fogarty was then signal-man at Crusheen Stn. and the Clare Volunteers were linked up with Limerick under the command of M. P. Colivet with the rank of Col. Colivet was then travelling for the "Shannon Foundry" Limerick. (He is now

Chairman of the housing Board). The following morning Colivet passed thro' Crusheen on his way to Galway, when Con Fogarty told him I was anxious to see him. On his return I met him at the 2.30 train, explaining my business.

He instructed me to go to Limerick the following day. There I received an envelope from the late Seumas Leyden. I understand this envelope contained £140 given by Miss Madge Daly all of which I had handed over to Liam.

So they settled down in their mountain home, hiding by day and taking what exercise they could by night. Liam had his violin, there were visitors, music and songs, often a wrestling bout and always the Rosary in Irish led by Liam.

Miss Broderick of Athenry generally got communications thro' to G.H.Q.

Fr. Tom Burke (Then Sec. to the Bishop of Galway) sent me word I was to meet him at Fr. Crowe's a few days later in Gort. Liam was a lonely man leaving his two comrades. He met me as appointed at O'Brien's Castle, which was about three miles from his "mountain home".

I had a "bike" for him and with our lamps lighted we arrived safely at our destination after about a 6 miles run. At Fr. Crowe's we met the late Fr. O'Meehan, then P.P. of Kinvarra and Miss Barry of Gort waiting for us. Miss Barry had two nuns' uniforms.

Fr. Crowe told me afterwards that "the two nuns" attended Mass at 6.30 the following morning in his Oratory and that Liam was perfect.

(The night I parted from Liam at Fr. Crowe's, 11.30 - his last words were "Seán I'll never forgive myself if there's

a scrap in my absence". When I met him again it was a few weeks before the Civil War)

The whole party, two priests and two nuns went by car to Cork, called at Hotels and Convents, Liam's disguise still held.

Arrangements having been made, Liam worked his way to the U.S.A. as stoker. * Before leaving he arranged that everything he wrote me should be read contrary.

P.S. If you write Fr. Crowe, P.P. Corofin, Clare, I'm sure he will assist you - or Fr. Tom Burke, P.P. Kilshanny, Clare. If I can be of help to make clearer this muddled account I'll be only too glad to do so.

Sincerely yours

SEÁN MacConmara.

* I shall write down as well as I can remember Liam's own account of his voyage to the U.S.A. told to me. (M. Woods)

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BÚRO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21
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