

STORIES

OF THE

REVOLUTION

1916

1923

I interviewed my nana, Jenny Hurley Heffernan, she is from Drinagh in West Cork but now lives in Cork City and she had stories to tell me about her father James Hurley. James Hurley was an IRA volunteer member of the Drinagh H Company, 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, Cork. He grew up in the townland, 'Curraghnaloughra', Drinagh and was baptised on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1890, there was no record of his date of birth but usually baptisms took place the day after birth. He was more than likely born on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1890.

My great grandfather James and his two brothers Patrick and John, were members of the Drinagh company of the IRA. James's duties were to watch after dark for sudden arrival of RIC and Auxiliary patrols in the Drinagh area (These were the police in Ireland during the War of Independence better known as 'The Black and Tans').

James had to send messages and goods to company and brigade commanders in the area.

My nana told me a story about how her father learned to swim, by diving into a river when he was fleeing from the black and tans, this is how he learned to swim. He also hid from 'the tans' in fields and sheds under the heifer and bullocks. There were barns where grain was stored and it was another good hiding spot.

My nana told me that her father didn't like to speak much about those times and she wished she had known more from him. She heard more from her mother Elizabeth in later years. There were many safe houses in local farms and in barns where volunteers hid.

James Hurley received a medal for his role in the war. My nana found his medal many years later and got it framed and mounted. I am very proud to be his great- granddaughter and have a picture taken with his medal for this project.



## Monuments in Drinagh

There is a monument in Drinagh outside the national school in memory of Seán Hurley who was killed during the 1916 rising. I took a selfie in front of it for you to see.



Two years ago, I was in Drinagh with my family for the centenary memorial for Seán Hurley and since then a statue has been built outside the Gaelic Bar.



Story collected from Jenny Heffernan, 78 Merrion Court, Montenotte, Cork.

I interviewed Tom Nyhan from The Paddock, Enniskeane about his grandfather Thomas Aherne. This story was very heart breaking and cruel in so many different ways.

Tom Aherne was born in 1872 in Mauldour, Timoleague. In 1900, he went to live in Fort-Robert, Ballineen. He worked as a farmer. He married Juliann O'Brien in 1905 from Kilmeen and they had 8 children.

Tom was a member of the Connagh Company of the IRA. His job involved giving advice, encouragement and fund raising for IRA. He was a member of the Republican court that was set up in the area. The court was in Keelnaconnagh, Ballineen. The people who worked in the court were Thomas Aherne, David Walsh, Timothy Warren and the clerk was Patrick O'Mahony.

In 1917, one of Tom and Juliann's children Annie died from pneumonia, she was only 3 years old. Their youngest child Tom Junior was born on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1919. The following year on the 20<sup>th</sup> June, his wife Juliann died. Tom took care of the rest of their children until the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1920, only a few months after his wife died, the soldiers of the Essex Regiment from Ballineen came to his home at dusk. They arrested him and took him to Ballineen barrack. The next morning, when his children were going to school they saw him looking out the window of the barracks (which is now the Garda Station in Ballineen). They did not know that they would not see him again for over a year. He was later taken to Cork jail and stayed there until after Kilmichael. That was a morning of terror. Tom was asked to sign papers saying he would have no more involvement with the IRA and Sinn Féin, he refused to do this and was not released home. He was taken to Ballykinler prison camp, in Dundrum Bay in the County Down without a trial. Where they were treated very badly.

He was released October/November 1921. When he went home, he became a very successful farmer with cattle and machinery. He won

awards for farming, he even made silage in the 1930's. This was extremely rare in those times. He also became a Peace Commissioner by the state!

I live in The Paddock, Enniskeneane and would like to thank my Grandad Tom Nyhan for sharing such a heartfelt story with me.

Hope you enjoyed my project.

Thank you,

Miah Heffernan Nyhan

By

Miah

Heffernan

