

Cork Burns
December 12th 1920





The Burning of Cork

Stories of The Revolution

I have ~~Three~~ stories to tell. My first story involves my maternal great grandad and how he cheated death at the hands of the black and tans. Born in August 1898 in cork city, Timothy O'KEEFE came from a family of proud republicans, but a newly married man he didn't want to get involved in the I.R.A. He worked in the waterworks on the Lee road and each night walked home through the Mardyke avoiding checkpoints and auxiliary troops.

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But one night he narrowly missed a black and tans bullet. Timothy knew from ~~Passat~~ experiences to avoid the black and tans. So he ran behind a tree and stayed low, as he checked to see if the coast was clear he saw a fellow night worker who was cycling behind him get a bullet to the head. And if he didn't avoid that bullet I wouldn't be here to tell the tale. My second story also involves Timothy and put him right in the heart of history. It was the early hours of August 23rd 1922 and the civil war was raging.



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Ireland was to awake to the news that Michael Collins was dead! Shot the evening before Béal na Bláth. His body was brought to Shanakiel hospital which was very close to the water works. Timothy and his friend persuaded soldier to let them in to pay their respects, they stayed for the rest of the night keeping vigil and reciting the rosary. Making them the first civilians to see Collins dead. There are a lot of family rumours that Timothy played a more active part because when he died in 1980 the IRA approached my great grandmother asking to give Timothy a full military funeral.

The family refused



**The body of General Michael Collins in repose at
Shanakiel Hospital August 23rd 1922**