

My great great grandparents, David O'Mahony and Margaret O'Mahony, owned a general store on Barrack Street in Bantry. They lived above the shop as it was a three storey house. They had nine children, one of whom was my great grandmother, also called Margaret (Peggy). David O'Mahony and three of his sons were volunteers in the I.R.A. Jim, Jack and Pat were their names. Jim and Jack were training to become primary school teachers in St. Pats College in Dublin. Pat worked at home.

David O'Mahoney was tipped off that he was to be targeted by the Black and Tans. He stayed up for nights on end waiting for them. He never told his wife or children. One night the Black and Tans came and poured petrol around the outside of their shop and house and lit it on fire. A side door was missed and they escaped up Warners Lane. They stayed with their neighbours, the O'Hearys, for the night. They lost everything in the fire. The only thing David brought with him were the shop ledgers. The next morning when they went back they found that the only thing that survived was Margaret's silver thimble.

After the fire all the children split apart and moved into different relations houses. For years they all lived apart. Eventually they were able to rent a house in Main Street, Bantry. They moved again to Rock Villas in Bantry after a few years. They never recovered financially from the fire.

Some time later Jim, David's son, was teaching in North Cork and was shot. He later died of his wounds. His brother Pat went to America and never returned.

My great great grandaunt, Bridget Anne McSweeney, was a member of Cumann na mBan. She was Margaret O'Mahoney's sister. Anne was, never married. She would go up and down from Bantry, to Dublin on the train. She would bring pieces of bombs to West Cork hidden in her clothes.

One time she handed over a package, at Dunmanway train station. The next day the Police Barracks in Dunmanway was blown up. Our family has always been told that no one was killed in the explosion though none of us know for sure.

- Sive Buckley

Stories from Aodagh O'Sullivan. (My grandmother)

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