

The Posting of Proclamation in St Stephen's Green

Senior Cycle Activities

Background

A photograph taken on St. Stephen's Green, on Easter Monday, 1916, showing Dr. Edmund J. McWeeney interested in the Proclamation

On Easter Monday, 1916, considerable rebel activity took place in this area of Dublin. A number of copies of the Proclamation were posted around the area. The Proclamation was posted on the railings outside Dr. Edmund McWeeney's home at 86 St. Stephen's Green.

The photo was taken by a Catholic Priest, Father Sherwin, who was based in the area of St. Stephen's Green.

By 1916, professional photographers mainly took portraits of people or of landscapes. Many of the landscape pictures were produced as postcards, and sold as holiday souvenirs. The increasing popularity of small cameras such as the Kodak Brownie meant that middle class people who could afford to buy a camera could take pictures of everyday events, working as amateur photographers.

In Dublin, the large collection of W H Lawrence is now owned by the National Library of Ireland, and the images can be found in many Irish history books about the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These photographs provide invaluable evidence to historians, and others who are interested in the past.

Photographs often end up in public museums after they have passed through a number of owners or finders. The caption for this photograph in the catalogue of the National Library of Ireland reads as follows:

“Includes original letter from 'Uncle Myles' [V. Ronan] written in 1948 to 'Vincent' enclosing the photograph 'for which I have been searching for a long time for your keeping'. Note on verso reads: 'Photo taken by Fr. Sherwin, C.C., St. Stephen's Green, on Easter Monday, 1916, showing Dr. Ed. McWeeney interested in the Proclamation' and signed Myles V. Ronan P.P.”

Glossary: [verso means reverse]

Questions and activities

1. Why would a priest own a camera? Would he have been aware at the time that it would prove to be such an important photograph?
2. We have very few pictures taken at this stage of the rebellion. Can you suggest any reasons for that?
3. Dr. Edmund McWeeney is holding the Proclamation at the two bottom corners. Can you give a reason why he is pressing against the proclamation?
4. Is the proclamation pasted or nailed to the frame? Why did the organisers of the rebellion decide to post up the proclamation since it was so difficult to read?
5. The proclamation has a number of creases. Can you suggest why it is creased like this, and how it might be related to the history of the rebellion?

6. Why is this picture regarded as being a significant image associated with the the period of the Easter Rising?
7. Dr. McWeeney lived on St. Stephen's Green. How would the lives of his family have been effected by the decision of the rebels to take over the park area?
9. Edmond McWeeney filled in and signed the McWeeney family 1911 [census return](#). What was the listed occupation for each of the individuals listed on the form?
10. The area around St. Stephen's Green was the scene of very fierce fighting during the Rising. Research any one of the following to get an indication of the significant events that took place during the 1916 Rising – Countess Markievicz, Michael Mallin, Royal College of Surgeons.

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