

J.M. Stanley's Personal Written Account to the Pensions Board of his participation in the 1916 Easter Rising.

On the evening of Easter Monday 1916, I went into the G.P.O. to join the military action, which had started by that time. I had some previous acquaintance with James Connolly and in view of my knowledge of printing; he instructed me that I could be of most service by getting official publications and arranging their distribution. At a conference, which took place subsequently, with P.H. Pearse, James Connolly and myself and at which the commandeering by me – with Military Escort – of the Irish Independent Works was considered at length – it was finally decided that it would be of better military value if a smaller plant was commandeered, and I was accordingly instructed to take possession of the plant of Mr. O'Keefe at Halston Street.

For this purpose, I was armed with a revolver given me by James Connolly and I duly took over possession. I then assembled a staff and we produced and circulated two editions of the "Irish War News" and three issues of the Official Daily bulletins. This work involved my attendance at the G.P.O for two or three hours each day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in addition to dangerous penetration through the British cordons which were drawing in around the Post Office from Wednesday.

Our operations at Halston Street finished on Friday morning when I ordered my staff to disperse and as any further contact with the Post Office was impracticable – in view of the British Cordons, I had to "go on the run". I was interned in Frongoch until December 1916 and I rejoined the Volunteers immediately thereafter. My knowledge and experience of print frequently caused me to be requisitioned by Michael Collins for the production of very secret military printing, including the military organ an T-Oglac. This had to be produced

under exceptional conditions and mostly at night, and for the purpose, I could not even employ my own staff in their entirety as the British authorities (we discovered) had ways and means of finding out what went on in my own plant.

In consequence of this General Collins arranged with Commandant Byrne that if my military duties were found to clash with the production of An T-Olgac, I must be released from duties. For obvious reasons, that fact could not be allowed to become known, even to my other Company Officers. Moreover, these military printing duties were by no means terminated when my own plant was completely dismantled and removed in December 1918, as I was instructed by General Collins to purchase from England and set up a secret printing plant at the back of a newsagent shop in Aungier Street, where confidential military printing operations continued.

Amongst other military duties, I think I overlooked mentioning in my statement was the carrying out of direct instructions I received from General Collins to capture the Public Recruiting platforms of Colonel Arthur Lynch in the summer of 1918 at James Street, and at Saville Place. I continued my military duties right up to the time of the Civil War. In particular, I would refer to my participation in the following operations:

- Landys Bakery September 1920.
- Attempted rescue of Kevin Barry October 1920.
- Mobilisation at Oddfellows Hall for attack on Auxiliaries in the early summer of 1921.



THE IRISH PRESS, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 1936
The War Bulletins of Easter Week.
By JOSEPH J. BOUCH, Assistant Librarian at the National Library, Dublin.

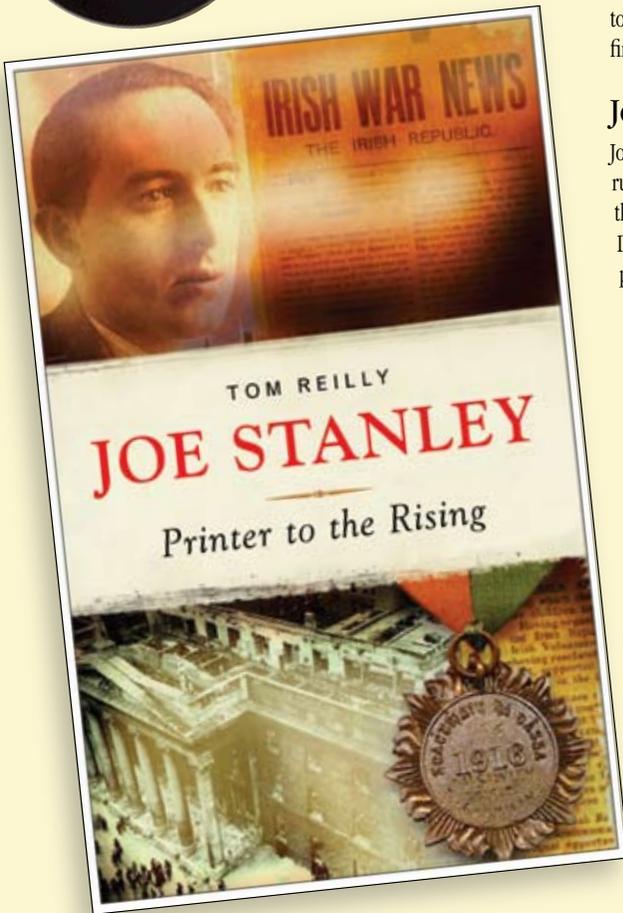




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Provenance

The Stanley Collection, recently acquired by the Irish Government, provides an unprecedented insight into Ireland's struggle for independence. A living history of the period from a prominent propagandist of the national cause, who published the Irish political and cultural views of the day. A history saved and handed down directly, over ninety years, through generations of his family to the electronic age when it has finally been reproduced for the first time and digitally recorded for posterity.

Joe Stanley

Joe Stanley was a young printer / publisher who during British rule in the early years of the twentieth century blatantly flouted the laws suppressing free speech under the very noses of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. Engaged in both printing and publishing material that supported the burgeoning nationalist and republican movements, Joe Stanley's was one of a number of mosquito press operations which lived on their wits to keep the presses rolling despite frequent raids and harassment. Joe himself was raided by the DMP over twenty times and closed down on many occasions.

Easter Rising

His crucial role came during the Easter Rising of 1916. As the fires burned and the rifles cracked around the GPO, he acted as Pearse's press agent, the leader of the Rising relying on Joe Stanley to get word to the masses that Ireland was rebelling once again. Numerous iconic documents and letters passed through his hands and many have survived to this day and have been digitally saved for posterity by his family.

The most significant and rare have been reproduced for the first time in the book 'Joe Stanley - Printer to the Rising'. These include what the family simply referred to as 'The Pearse Papers' - iconic handwritten transcripts by Pearse in the G.P.O.

The Irish War News / The Proclamation of the Citizens of Dublin - The First Documents

Pearse's war bulletins - the First Documents of the newly proclaimed republic, and the only documents issued from the G.P.O. signed; P.H. Pearse, President of the Irish Republic.

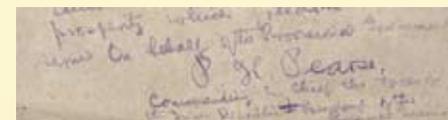
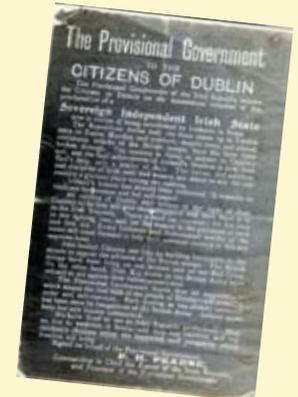
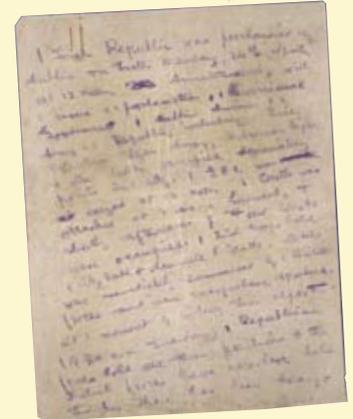
Frongoch

Joe Stanley was, for his part in the Rising, interned in Frongoch Camp in North Wales alongside Michael Collins, Dick Mulcahy, Oscar Traynor, Sean T O'Kelly and other leading figures. Joe's documents amply record what life was like for the prisoners in Frongoch and as secretary of the games committee he recounts the many impressive athletic achievements of Michael Collins. Along with all the other hut leaders Joe was court-martialled whilst in the camp which prompted him to write the satirical 'Frongoch Roll Call'.

All of this fascinating history is recorded for the first time in the book and the book's content formed a basis for the television drama documentary 'Frongoch' in which uniquely Joe is played by his great grandson - Trevor. Following his release from Frongoch, Christmas Eve 1916, Joe redoubled his efforts to produce propaganda, he printed the commemorative Proclamation at Easter 1917 for Cumann Na mBan with some of the original typeface used at Liberty Hall one year earlier - the aftermath of the Rising rekindling the national flame.

Joe's business eventually fell foul of British Censorship when he was finally closed down in 1918 by the G Division of the DMP - "having been relentlessly pursued by the British authorities" (Irish Independent Jan 1953). Joe was not for turning and continued printing An tOglach for Michael Collins and he even moved to a new modern media when he showed the Sinn Fein Review to his cinema audiences in Drogheda, where he moved to in 1919 to begin a new chapter in his so far eventful life.

'Joe Stanley - Printer to the Rising' is a unique account of a fascinating element of the period that led to the creation of an independent state in Ireland.



Contacts: Kevin Stanley, Michael Stanley

"The forgotten journalist who saved our history" The Irish Independent