

Account of the Death of Abina Murphy, 19 August 1923 (three sources)

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https://www.academia.edu/12268206/Final_list_of_Cork_War_of_Independence_and_Civil_War_deaths_updated_20_July_2015_April_1916_December_1923

18th August 1923 A party of armed men shot at a member of the National Army on Gerald Griffin Street and he returned fire. A second party of men opened fire from behind him and Abina Murphy St. James Square was shot in the abdomen while Miss Kathleen Deasy Spangle Hill was shot in the throat. Abina Murphy died the following day in the North Infirmary.

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Cork Tragedy
Shot Dead in Street
(Reference not noted)

The Inquest

At North Infirmary yesterday afternoon, Mr. Coroner James J. McCabe, solr., held an inquest into the shooting of Miss Abina Murphy, l, St. James's Square, off St. Mary's Rd, Cork. The fatality arose out of an attack which had been made on a military officer on Saturday night in the Black Pool District.

Mr. Maurice O'Connor, State Solr., represented the authorities.

The Following jury were sworn; - Messers. E. Coughlan, Ald. (foreman), Simon Daly, T.C.; John Glynn, T.Fitzgerald, James Gibbney, T.J. Curran, J.Ellard, P. Bresnan, C. Seacy, M.O'Callaghan, D. O'Leary, J.Tierney, J.Walsh, Charles Manning, James Duffin, Joseph Donnelly, Chas. McCarthy.

Detective Jerh. O'Sullivan appeared on behalf of the Civic Guard.

Mr. W. F. O'Connor, solr. represented the next-of-kin.

The jury having viewed the body evidence was then taken.

Mrs. Kate O'Callaghan, 132 Blarney Street, stated that the deceased was her sister, and was 33 years of age. Deceased was unmarried, and a shirt-maker by occupation. She resided with her mother, whose support she was. Witness last saw her alive on Saturday last at her residence. She was then in perfect health. On the following Sunday morning certain information came to witness's knowledge in consequence of which she came to the North Infirmary. She saw the deceased there, but she was unconscious. Deceased died at 3 that evening.

Miss Mollie Lunch, 90, Roche's Buildings, stated that she met the deceased at her house on Saturday last, Deceased remained in the house until 10.30. Witness and Maggie O'Sullivan accompanied the deceased as far as the top of Fever Hospital Hill. They parted with her there about 10.40p.m. Deceased went down the hill towards her home. Witness returned home also. Witness heard five or six shots as she was near her home. That was the last occasion she had seen the deceased alive.

Dr. L. J. Brown, North Infirmary, deposed that he was acting House Surgeon. Deceased was admitted at 1 1.20 p.m. on Saturday. Deceased was very collapsed on admission. She had a gun shot wound in the right lumber region. In front the abdomen the bullet could be felt under the skin. Deceased was operated on by Dr. Daniel Hegarty and witness was present at the operation. There were ten perforations of the of the intestines. The bullet passed from the right to the left across the centre of the abdomen. She died the following Sunday evening at 5.45. He could not identity the pullet (produced). Shock and hemorrhage, due to the gun shot wound, was the cause of death. It was Dr. Hegarty who removed the bullet.

Answering Mr. W. F. O'Connor, solr., the witness said he considered the bullet was fired from close range.

At this stage the Coroner expressed the opinion that a post mortem was necessary, and the inquest was then adjourned to Friday at 3 O'clock, a post mortem to be held in the meantime.

Condition of Miss Deasy

On enquiry at the North Infirmary last night, it was learned that Miss Deasy was getting along satisfactorily.

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<https://www.ucc.ie/en/theirishrevolution/collections/cork-fatality-register/register-index/1923-56/>

Civilian Abina Murphy (aged about 34) of 1 St James's Square (off St Mary's Road), Cork (Gerald Griffin Street, Cork city)

Date of incident: 18 Aug. 1923

Sources: Death Certificate (Cork Urban District No. 4, Union of Cork), 19 Aug. 1923; *CE*, 20, 21, 22, 25 Aug. 1923; *FJ*, 20, 21, 25 Aug. 1923; *Ulster Herald*, 25 Aug. 1923; *Donegal News*, 25 Aug. 1923; Murphy (2010), Appendix 2, 338; Keane (2017), 363, 423.

Note: Two small groups of armed men belonging to the anti-Treaty IRA attempted to shoot a former National soldier on the night of 18 August 1923. One of their gunshots struck and mortally wounded Miss Abina Murphy of 1 St James's Square in the Blackpool district of Cork. The victim was a shirtmaker by occupation. She was shot while returning home—only a short distance from where she lived. The shooting took place on Gerald Griffin Street at about 10:45 p.m. Mrs Coughlan, a witness at the inquest, who lived at 25 Gerald Griffin Street and had just

returned home herself, told the inquest jury how all of a sudden Abina Murphy came through her front door and exclaimed, 'Oh! Mrs Coughlan, I am shot.' See *CE*, 25 Aug. 1923. Another woman named Kathleen Deasy of Spangle Hill in Cork was seriously wounded in the throat in this incident but appears to have survived. A third civilian was only slightly wounded, and this man was not detained for treatment. See *FJ*, 20 Aug. 1923.

Abina Murphy died of her wounds at the North Infirmary on Sunday evening, 19 August. See *Ulster Herald*, 25 Aug. 1923; *Donegal News*, 25 Aug. 1923. The medical evidence from the postmortem examination (provided at the inquest) indicated that a bullet had entered the victim's left buttock and traversed the bone of the lower part of the back, coming into contact with the backbone: 'The flattening out of the bullet [after it hit the bone] produced the severe internal injuries. There were ten separate perforations in the intestine, and several of the large blood vessels were torn, causing internal haemorrhage. The cause of death was shock following the internal injuries.' See *CE*, 25 Aug. 1923.

Abina Murphy was in 1901 one of the eight children of the widow Catherine Murphy of 11 Well Lane in Cork city. All eight of these children (four sons and four daughters), ranging in age from 8 to 20, co-resided with their mother in that year. Abina Murphy (then aged 13) was the third daughter. An older sister worked as a cotton weaver at a local factory. By the time of the 1911 census this family lived at 1 St James's Square in Cork. The household was much reduced in size, with only two daughters (Abina and her younger sister Mary Kate) co-residing with their widowed mother Margaret and two boarders. Both Abina (now aged 22) and Mary Kate listed their occupations as 'machinist' for the census-taker.

It seems that the intended victim of the attackers on 18 August 1923 was James Long of 302 Blarney Street, an ex-captain in the National Army who had resigned from the force at the end of June 1923. He told the inquest jury that as he was going to visit a friend living on Gerald Griffin Street, he spotted some suspicious-looking men who seemed to him to be lying in wait for him near the top of Hillgrove Lane and at the corner of the lane. He therefore approached two men at the corner with his long Webley revolver held behind his back, and when he reached these men, he asked, 'What's the game?' One of the two men then fired at him, but he sidestepped just in time to miss a bullet that appears to have been the one that struck Abina Murphy, whom Long had passed along the lane. Another small group of men fired five or six shots at him from the rear but failed to hit him. The two groups of shooters escaped, though James Long believed that he had wounded one of them while emptying his own revolver of a full round. See *CE*, 25 Aug. 1923.

An official report on this incident was circulated by the National Army Publicity Department: 'An officer of the National Army was passing along Gerald Griffin Street about 10:45 p.m. when one of a party of three civilians drew a revolver and fired at point-blank range. The officer, anticipating the occurrence, side-stepped and evaded the discharge from the weapon. His assailants immediately decamped, and the officer fired four shots at his attackers, wounding a man. At the same time another party of men opened fire from the rear, and two girls and a man were wounded.' See *FJ*, 20 Aug. 1923.

Abina Murphy was buried in St Joseph's Cemetery in Cork city on 21 August 1923. 'A large body of mourners followed the remains, which were carried on a motor-car.' Murphy had been a member of the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks (Cork Branch), which formally expressed the condolences of its members to the bereaved relatives of their late comrade at a special meeting. See *CE*, 22 Aug. 1923.