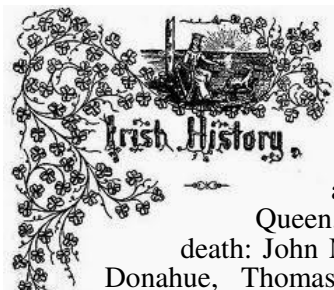


# *The Legend of the “Nine Famous Irishmen” Fact or Fiction?*

## *The Legend*



In the Young Irish Disorders in Ireland in 1848, the following nine men were captured, tried and convicted of treason against Her Majesty, the Queen, and were sentenced to death: John Mitchell, Morris Leyne, Pat Donahue, Thomas McGee, Charles Duffy, Thomas Meagher, Richard O’Gorman, Terrance McManus, and Michael Ireland.

Before passing sentence, the judge asked if there was anything that anyone wished to say. Meagher, speaking for all, said, “My Lord, this is our first offense, but not our last. If you wish to be easy with us, this once we promise, on our word as gentlemen to try to do better next time. And next time – sure we won’t be fools to get caught.”

Thereupon, the indignant judge sentenced them all to be hanged by the neck until dead, and drawn and quartered.

Passionate protest from all the world forced Queen Victoria to commute the sentence to transportation and exile for life to the remote, barren wilds of Australia.

In 1874, word reached an astounded Queen Victoria that the Sir Charles Duffy who had been elected Prime Minister of Australia, was the same Charles Duffy who had been transported into exile there 25 years before. On the Queen's demand, the records of the rest of the transported Irishmen were revealed and this is what was discovered:

### **The Queen’s Record of the Rest of the Transported Irishmen:**

1. **Thomas Francis Meagher:** Governor of Montana
2. **Terrance McManus:** Brigadier General, U.S. Army
3. **Patrick Donahue:** Brigadier General U.S. Army
4. **Morris Leyne:** Attorney General of Australia
5. **Michael Ireland:** Successor to Michael Ireland
6. **Richard O’Gorman:** Gov. General Newfoundland
7. **Thomas D’Archy McGee:** Member of Parliament, Montreal, Minister of Agriculture and President of Council Dominion of Canada.
8. **John Mitchell:** Prominent New York Politician. Father of John Purroy Mitchell, Mayor of New York at the outbreak of World War I.

Sources: [www.northtipsinnfein.com](http://www.northtipsinnfein.com), Cuyahoga West Tracer Vol 17, #3, 1993, and many, many websites on the internet.

## *The Reality*

*“The best histories may sometimes be those in which a little of the exaggeration of fictitious narrative is judiciously employed. Something is lost in accordance, but much is gained in effect.”*

*Thomas Barington Macaulay, British Poet, Historian and Politician.*

*from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:*

“The Young Irelander Rebellion was a failed Irish nationalist uprising by the Young Ireland movement It took place on 29 July 1848 in the village of Ballingarry, County Tipperary. After being chased by a force of Young Irelanders and their supporters, an Irish Constabulary unit raided a house and took those inside as hostages. A several-hour gunfight followed, but the rebels fled after a large group of police reinforcements arrived.” William Smith O’Brien, leader of the Young Irelander movement was subsequently arrested and convicted of high treason. He received a death sentence, which was commuted to life exile in Tasmania.

*from [www.freak-search.com](http://www.freak-search.com), per Mr. Taylor Kingston:*

“At first I found the story very attractive, but then I began researching its claims. It is riddled with errors! Very few of its claims are true. Some of the nine were never even arrested. Only four of the nine were ever convicted and transported, and not all to Australia. Only two of them attained any of the positions they are said to have attained, and most of them were dead before 1874. One of them probably never existed. Professor David Wilson of the University of Toronto, biographer of one of the nine, calls it ‘probably the greatest concentration of Irish-American myths in a single space.’ I also find it hard to believe that Queen Vic was so curious about the other eight Irishmen that she would seek out a report on them.”

*from [www.speakwithoutinterruption.com](http://www.speakwithoutinterruption.com)*

*Mike McCormack, AOH National Historian: Irish Examiner*

“The myths about historical events and people were structured to provide a predetermined mindset for Americans. But people don’t want to hear the truth unless you make it interesting. As for the Nine Famous Irishmen story, that’s all a bunch of hooley! They were never sentenced to anything but banishment. There was no worldwide outcry. And the Queen could not have cared less what happened to them. It is true though, that they became successful after escaping from the prison camps. But the popular story is all wrong.”

