



Mayo Society of New York

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Founded 1879; incorporated 1891 as Mayo Men's Benefit, Patriot and Social Association of the City of New York; later as Mayo Men's P & B Association and in 1985, gender neutral as the Mayo Society, Inc. of the City of New York.

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NEWSLETTER

MAY 2022

Regular Meeting Tuesday, May 10, 2022
Where: St. Sebastian Parish Center
39-60 57th Street
Woodside, NY 11377
Time: 7:30 P.M. Sharp
Regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. There are no meetings July & August.

Our President's Note

Dear Members and Friends,

As the 2022 Mayo Society New York President, I would like to thank all members, trustees, officers, Chaplin, and our board of directors. It has been an honor to attend all meetings, dinner dances, and parades as your president.

Throughout my term I have done my best to work with everybody in order to make sure all voices were heard and lead the society as a team.

One of my greatest moments was leading the society in the NYC Saint Patrick's Day Parade this past March. I hope I made all members proud as your president, as I was extremely proud to represent our great County of Mayo.

I would like to thank all members for working with me this year and making this experience so enjoyable. I would like to especially thank Rita Lydon Lenz, Mary Coyne, and Betty McLaughlin, for all of their hard work and dedication to the society, I could not have done it without you!

Our next society meeting will be in May, and I hope to see everyone there!

In addition, we plan to have a small celebration in June to celebrate our County and our successful year!

Thank you all for nominating me to be your president, and it has been a pleasure to serve you all!

Happy Mother's Day

Mike McMahon
President

Upcoming Events and News

- A **Pop-Up Gaeltacht** on May 24 is an informal gathering of Irish speakers of various abilities where they can meet and talk in a convivial atmosphere. Make your way to the New York Irish Center for an incomparable evening of networking, music, and discussion, all in Irish, through and through.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/greenwood-lake-irish-fest-2022-tickets-288225850277>

- **Mother's Day Mass and Breakfast** at the Irish American Center, Mineola on **May 05**. \$15 per adult, \$5 per child. Reservations are required.

<https://irishamericansoc.com/calendar/>

- **LIC Laughs! Comedy Night at New York Irish Center, Sat, May 14, 8 – 10 PM**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/greenwood-lake-irish-fest-2022-tickets-288225850277>

- **Greenwood Lake Irish Fest 2022 by Festival Works. Memorial Day Weekend: May 28-29**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/greenwood-lake-irish-fest-2022-tickets-288225850277>

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The Mysterious Disappearance of James Connolly

In early January 1916, Pádraig Pearse and Eoin MacNeill, Chief of Staff of The Irish Volunteers, met with James Connolly to discuss and discourage his plans for leading his Irish Citizen Army in a rebellion. Connolly had been very vocal about the need to stage a rebellion while Britain was at war with Germany. He saw the war as an opportunity for Ireland that would never come again. He felt his 200 or so members of The Irish Citizen Army would have to initiate it.

MacNeill was concerned that rash action on Connolly's part would provoke the authorities to arrest or disarm the Irish Volunteers, causing a situation where he believed defensive force may be necessary. This was the only force he would authorize. He felt it foolish, wrong, and counter-productive to rebel without a good chance of success.

The Irish Volunteers had been founded in 1913 as a nationalist response to the Ulster Volunteer Force who were founded to try to stop the implementation of Home Rule. The UVF armed themselves with arms illegally imported from Germany. The Unionists threatened rebellion if Home Rule were implemented.

The British Government ordered the British Army, stationed at The Curragh in Co. Kildare to march on Ulster. Many officers refused, offering their resignations. Faced with an extremely embarrassing situation, which was called the Curragh Mutiny; the government backed down, claiming the orders were a misunderstanding.

Pádraig Pearse remarked "the Orangeman with a gun is not as laughable as the nationalist without one." In 1914, Erskine Childers landed in Howth, Co. Dublin with 1,000 German rifles. These were the arms MacNeill was worried about.

MacNeill didn't know Pearse answered not only to him. The Volunteers was infiltrated by the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), a secret oath-bound organization dedicated to establishing an Irish republic by force of arms. Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh were recruited from the Volunteers by Seán MacDiarmada and his mentor, old Fenian Tom Clarke.

The war began a few days after the Volunteers' guns arrived at Howth. Home Rule passed but was postponed due to the war. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party supported Home Rule and pledged Ireland's support to Britain's war effort. The vast majority of the Volunteers mustered into the British Army. These were known as the National Volunteers. Those who stayed in Ireland were still called the Irish Volunteers. The IRB made these men their army.

Connolly had founded the ICA along with James Larkin, the leader of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) during the Dublin Lockout of 1913. It was a strike that lasted eight months and saw the Strikers abused and assaulted by strikebreakers and the Dublin Metropolitan Police. The ICA was founded to protect them.

Connolly considered the Irish Volunteers weak because they were led by MacNeill, whom he knew would take no aggressive action. He distrusted the IRB, knowing how they operated in secrecy. He was quite outspoken about his intentions. On the headquarters of the ITGWU, known as Liberty Hall, was hung the huge sign "We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser But Ireland".

MacNeill met with Connolly, at the suggestion of Pearse to try to "talk sense" to him about starting a rebellion. Connolly ended up telling MacNeill "We will have the honor of dying for Ireland, while you will one day give wonderful lectures about it!"

Unknown to Connolly, the IRB were already planning a Rising for Easter Sunday 23 April 1916. Connolly had indeed thought the Irish Volunteers would join in once the ICA started. That would mess up the IRB planning, which included aid in arms and possibly soldiers from Germany.

On 19 January 1916, James Connolly mysteriously disappeared. Nobody knew where he was or could contact him. The ICA were worried that he might have been arrested by the authorities. The Countess Markievicz was calling for the ICA to begin an insurrection. Michael Mallin talked her out of it.

Mallin, second in command requested a meeting with the IRB military council. He reckoned they were behind the disappearance because nobody else had been arrested. At the meeting, he told them that if Connolly didn't reappear within a specified time, the Citizen Army would take action. Éamonn Ceannt asked him "What could your small number do in such a situation?" He answered, "We can fight and die, and it will be to our glory and your shame!" Then Pearse said "Yes, by God, that is so, and here's one who will be with you!"

According to witness statements, Connolly had actually been in the home of IRB member John Cassidy, manager of the Dolphin's Barn Brick Works, also used to train Volunteers with explosives. It is widely believed nowadays that the meeting was pre-arranged. If so, it doesn't explain Connolly's failure to tell anyone.

Connolly re-appeared on the morning on 22 January at Countess Markievicz's house where he was lodging, visibly exhausted.

When she asked where he was, the most he said about the incident was "I don't like to talk about it. I have been through Hell, but I have converted my enemies." His enemies might also have claimed to have converted him.

From this point, he stopped any talk of impulsive action and the Citizen Army trained together with the Volunteers. He joined the IRB and the military council, which now numbered seven. He was made Commandant of the Dublin Brigade. Connolly said "These two organizations no longer maintain their separate identities. They are now The Irish Republican Army."

Kevin Rooney