

John McCooey was convicted of larceny at the Monaghan Quarter Sessions held at Castleblaney on 4 April 1849.

Petitioning the Lord Lieutenant was the only real hope of obtaining a commutation of sentence. Petitions, also known as memorials, were prepared by the convict or by a representative and referred directly, in the first instance, to the Lord Lieutenant. He then referred them, via the Chief Secretary's Office, to the trial judge, the local constabulary and sometimes to the governor of the local gaol to confirm statements made by the convict protesting innocence, age, size of family, or state of health as mitigating factors. All petitions were investigated thoroughly.<sup>1</sup>

**Petition**

Mountjoy Square, 8 Nov 1849.<sup>2</sup>

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 7th inst, with inclusions. The Prisoner was tried, for three instant charges of larceny, and found guilty of each, at the Spring Sessions held in the County of Monaghan. He was sentenced to imprisonment for the two first convictions, & transportation for 7 years, for the third. There were not any mitigating circumstances in this case, which in my opinion makes the Prisoner a proper object of Mercy.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient Servant

James Major

To His Excellency The Earl of Clarendon. Lord Lieutenant General and general Governor of Ireland  
& &

The Petition of John McCooey

Humbley Sheweth

That your petitioner is a prisoner in Monaghan Gaol, having been tried at the last April Sessions of Castleblaney and sentenced to Seven Years Transportation for Larceny of some Bread and a Shawl.

Your petitioner need not now deny the charge against him or the justness of the sentence nor is it for that purpose he now addresses your Excellency but humbly to state he is a young man, that it is the first charge ever made against him and that he deplores and ever will deplore in bitterness of sorrow the shame and disgrace that has befallen him and that in the Spring of his life he should be Cut off from the Sweets of Liberty by an unworthy act which the deepest poverty and distress and the pangs of Want could alone reduce him too.

Your petitioner if restored again to liberty hopes by a life of honest industry for he is young and able, to redeem in some measure the solitary act which has cast the foul stain on his character and humbly and earnestly implores your Excellency will take his case Kindly into Consideration and grant a Commutation of his Sentence.

And petitioner will ever pray

Monaghan Gaol, 3 Nov 1849

Cover: Let the law take its course, 18 Nov 1849

### **Gaolers Report.**

John McCooey, 18, committed 1 April 1849, convicted 4 April 1849 - Larceny of clothes, tried before Jas Major Esq., 7 years transportation, conduct in gaol – good. This boy was tried for three separate Larceny's at the Quarter Sessions sentenced one week imprisonment for each of the two first convictions and transportation for the last. It appears he was in Great Poverty at the time, his father in Gaol for Larceny & could get no employment, he stated at the time he preferred being transported than of being starved. John Mayne, Governor of Monaghan Gaol

### **John was transferred to Dublin.**

418. John McCooey, from Monaghan, committed to Newgate Prison on 5 September 1850, convicted 4 April 1849, larceny of clothes, sentenced to 7 years transportation, 19, 5'7<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>", grey eyes, brown hair, fresh complexion, single, R&W, labourer, sent to Mountjoy Prison on 16 December 1850, twice before convicted, character – indifferent. <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/topics/transportation/transp8.html>

<sup>2</sup> John McCooey, Petition CRF 1849 Mc59. <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2305043354/view>

<sup>3</sup> Dublin-Newgate (Richmond) Prison General Register 1849-1858, Book no 1/12/3, item 3