

## HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE



### MYLES W KEOGH - THE PAPAL MEDALS & SITTING BULL.

Myles Keogh was born in March 1840 at Orchard, Leighlinbridge, County Carlow to John and Margaret Keogh. He was one of nine surviving children and attended St. Patrick's College, Carlow.

Myles became a soldier of fortune, became a 2nd Lieutenant in the Irish Battalion of St. Patrick and fought with the Papal forces of Pope Pius IX against the forces of Garibaldi, who were at that time trying to unite Italy. The papal army were defeated but Keogh remained in Italy and became a Papal Guard. He received, along with all the St. Patrick's Battalion, a papal medal, *Pro Petri Sede* for defending the throne of Peter. He was also decorated with the *Order of St. Gregory the Great* for bravery and distinguished service.

He then travelled to America and fought on the Federal side in the Civil War. After the Civil War finished he ended up as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 4th Cavalry and fought alongside Custer at the battle of the Little Big Horn. He was killed along with everyone else at the battle on June 25th 1876. The only two bodies not scalped and mutilated were Custer and Keogh. The story is that Keogh had his papal medal around his neck on the day of the battle. It is believed that the Indians, being superstitious, did not mutilate his body because they considered the medal a powerful charm. It is recorded as well that when Sitting Bull was killed he was wearing Keogh's papal medal. The Sioux chief had taken it from around the neck of the dead Keogh. It is also reported that the Sioux regarded Keogh as the bravest man they had ever fought.

Keogh was buried a few days after the battle on the battle field but in 1877 his body was exhumed and re-interred at Fort Hill Cemetery, Auburn, New York with full military honours.

The only survivor on that fateful day was Keogh's horse Comanche.