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**Public Health and Housing in Limerick City,
1850-1935**

A Geographical Analysis

M.A. Historical Geography 2013

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*'...in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds
of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.'*

E. Evans, Irish Folk Ways, 1957

Abstract

While the industrial era was underway in Europe during the nineteenth century, Ireland was also faced with the issues of epidemic disease and slum housing. Most of the research undertaken to date has focused on the urbanisation of major towns in Europe on themes such as health, housing and social conditions. In Ireland, research on the same topic has concentrated primarily on Dublin but relatively little has been done to date on the other cities and smaller towns. This thesis hopes to contribute to the small but growing volume of research on Limerick city, while also providing a reference point for the development of other Irish cities during the nineteenth century. This thesis aims to examine the extent of poor health and poor housing in Limerick city during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century and also aims to highlight the response of the local government in alleviating the situation. Overall, this research aims to provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the changing urban geography of residential areas in Limerick city from 1850-1935.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work.

Signed: _____

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Chapter One: Introduction to the study of Limerick City

1850-1930

1.1 Introduction

If I was to relate to one tenth of the miseries I witnessed, it would be deemed incredible...four families sometimes in a room; one in each corner, nestled together to keep off the cold, on loose dirty straw, with one rug only between them; and young women without body linen or clothes of any kind under the rug.¹

¹ Anon, *Journal of a tour of Ireland during the months of October and November*, Limerick, 1836, quoted in P. Lysaght, 'Limerick, as others saw us', *Old Limerick Journal*, Vol.18, (1985) p. 15

1.2 Key Research Themes

1.2.1 Aim and Objectives

The primary aim of this thesis is to reconstruct and map the changing geography of public health and housing in Limerick City from 1850 to 1930. Three core objectives will be investigated in order to address the central aim. Firstly an examination will be made of the causes and consequences of poor housing and poor health in Limerick from 1850-1935. Particular reference will be made to the value and type of housing, the conditions and the locations of these houses within the city.

Secondly an examination will be made of the role of public bodies in alleviating the conditions of the poor, either by the provision of public housing (Corporation) or by health and sanitation improvements (dispensary system, philanthropic doctors and nuns, medical inspectors, sanitary officers). The impact of these public bodies on the people and conditions of Limerick varied over time. As the end of the nineteenth century approached, the role of the Corporation became more active in alleviating health and housing issues as the local authorities system provided more loans for housing and street cleaning. This included regulating obnoxious activities, lodging houses, tenement buildings and the cleaning up of domestic waste, house slops etc.

Thirdly, the researcher will aim to identify the changing urban geography of residential areas in Limerick city over the course of the nineteenth century and the growth of the tenement system within the city.

In order to address these aims and objectives a number of key themes were identified and investigated further. These included identifying firstly, the prevailing social conditions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Irish city, secondly, the nature of housing, thirdly, the causes and consequences of overcrowding, fourthly, the emergence of the tenement system, fifthly, the causes and consequences of poor health and finally the impact of the above on the spatial distribution of poverty in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland.

The use of key primary sources such as the *Primary Valuation of Ireland (1848-1864)*² and the *General Valuation Rate Books (1893-1938)*³ will provide information on the

² Printed Tenement Valuation, Union of Limerick, 1850

³ Limerick City General Rate Valuation Books, L/FR/RB/2

nature of houses in the city, particularly those which are valued at under £5,⁴ and their association with areas of poverty and often poor quality buildings. Buildings valued under £5 were likely to be of a poorer quality than those valued over £5. In some cases, buildings were valued at over £5 and were later subdivided into individual rooms and cellars were valued separately as a result. Although these buildings were over £5 in value, subdivision, overcrowding and exploitation of these properties led to these buildings deteriorating in quality and a resulting worsening of living conditions for the inhabitants. The use of the associated *House Books*⁵ will complement the findings from the Primary Valuation and the General Valuation Books by providing a quality number and quality letter, while also providing an indication of the size of the property using the rate of measure and the rent paid. Using these sources in conjunction with the *Census of Population* will allow the researcher to then provide a descriptive profile of the occupants of the properties. The Primary Valuation of Ireland, the General Valuation Books and the nineteenth century censuses can provide details of tenements at the parish/ward level. Once the nature of the housing conditions has been established, the researcher then hopes to establish the extent of diseases within the city for the research period and how these conditions contributed to poor health within the city.

1.2.2 Social and Housing Conditions

Poor housing quality and inadequate living conditions were one way of measuring poverty within an area. The location of a building was essential in determining the quality of a building as different locations were represented by different social statuses and socio-economic characteristics. St Mary's and St John's parishes in the city consisted of buildings which were generally older in type (c. 18th century) and dilapidated as a result, especially along side streets and lanes which were more confined due to the layout of the streets and generally containing one or two rooms. Houses along the main streets tended to be larger in size, often containing five or six bedrooms. Building material included brick or concrete, with roofs being of either perishable (thatch or wood) or non-perishable materials (slate or iron).

⁴ This source provides a detailed account of the value of all properties in the city at the mid-nineteenth century, while the later valuation records provide a comparison at the turn of the century, highlighting the uneven distribution of wealth and poverty within the city.

⁵ Printed Tenement Valuation, Union of Limerick, 1850

The physical environment or landscape was often significant as proximity to obnoxious activities and location of lodging houses played a role in determining the standard and quality of living conditions within an area and can often contribute to determining the value of a property nearby. Living next to a piggery, slaughter house or graveyard was not the most attractive place and also presented health issues. Disease was especially rampant in areas where dead animals and such matter were left to rot and decay. The remains of the animals were often left in a pile until complaints from the nearby residents about the 'smell of filth' forced the corporation to remove it. During the summer months, the carcasses of the animals were also covered in flies.⁶

There are social characteristics which also contribute to understanding the relationship between poverty and housing; these include family composition, employment status and health. These characteristics can be extracted from the Census of Population and provide a social profile to the poor quality houses. Employment of the head of household is important as the head of household provided the wage to support the family. Family size is also significant as the bigger the family, the more people require food and shelter, therefore requiring more income.

Limerick is comprised of three towns which make up its historic core: Englishtown, Irishtown and Newtown Pery. Englishtown occupied the King's Island part of the city which was home to the Viking and Anglo-Norman town. Irishtown is the later medieval extension which connects to the land on the south side of the River Abbey, while Newtown Pery is the eighteenth and nineteenth century development (dealt with more fully in chapter 2 and for a short history of the topography of the city, the Irish Historic Towns Atlas is recommended). The Newtown (St Michael's parish) had been run under a separate management from the corporation since 1807 and as a result, the Commissioners of St Michael's parish ensured the proper cleansing, repairing, draining and lighting of the new town. Englishtown (St Mary's parish) and Irishtown (St John's parish) in comparison had been described in the Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1816 as "having had for a considerable time the painful reputation of exceeding any other city in Ireland in the wretchedness of its inhabitants."⁷ In comparison the Newtown Pery area of

⁶ P. J. Ryan, 'The Sanitary Services', in the *Old Limerick Journal* (1980) Vol. 4, p. 15

⁷ *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland: Adapted to the New Poor-law, Franchise, Municipal and Ecclesiastical Arrangements, and Compiled with a Special Reference to the Lines of Railroad and Canal Communication, as Existing in 1814-45*, Volume 1.p. 639

the city had been described as ‘one of the handsomest modern towns in Ireland’.⁸ Houses were larger and better in terms of quality. Streets were wider in comparison to the confined streets and lanes of the older towns.

There were many other reports of Limerick similar to the one mentioned above. The *Poor Inquiry, Ireland* (1836) reported on the state of the poor and the charitable institutions in the principle towns, but more importantly it provided a descriptive and intelligent detail on the state of the poor in Limerick through the eyes of the local clergy with first-hand experience of the city.⁹ In the Poor Inquiry of 1836, Rev. O’Grady commented on some of the conditions of abject poverty in which:

I have seen whole families with no other covering than an old broken blanket and a torn rush mat to lie on, and the children playing naked...the rain coming in through the roof, not a spark of fire, nor any article of food in the room. The windows without glass, and the wind kept out by an old mat – every indication of the most abject poverty... the smell of filth...is so shocking that I think not only a human being but...a pig could not endure it.¹⁰

The water supply situation was still considered disgraceful towards the turn of the twentieth century. Many of the lanes had still no access to a water supply where the poorer classes of society lived. They had to make use of a fountain which was a quarter of a mile from the houses (location unknown) which provided water for an hour and three quarters every day for the people in the older parts of the city.¹¹ During the latter end of the nineteenth century, filthy and unsanitary conditions were noted in older parts of the city primarily with streets and lanes kept in the dirtiest of conditions with ‘the

⁸ S., Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland: Comprising the Several Counties, Cities, Boroughs, Corporate, Market, and Post Towns, Parishes, and Villages, with Historical and Statistical Descriptions, Embellished with Engravings of the Arms of the Cities, Bishopricks, Corporate Towns, and Boroughs; and of the Seals of the Several Municipal Corporations. With an Appendix, Describing the Electoral Boundaries of the Several Boroughs, as Defined by the Act of the 2d & 3d of William IV.* (London, 1837) p. 268

⁹ *Poor inquiry (Ireland). Appendix (C.)-Parts I. and II. Part I. Reports on the state of the poor, and on the charitable institutions in some of the principal towns; with supplement containing answers to queries. Part II. Report on the city of Dublin, and supplement containing answers to queries; with addenda to appendix (A.), and communications, 1836* (35) xxx p. 90

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 90

¹¹ *Third Report of her Majesty’s commissioners for inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes, Ireland, 1884-5* (C.4547) xxxi, p. 9

ashes, house slops and manure being deposited in the public street. The sewers...not properly trapped or sufficiently ventilated.”¹²

The 1908 Working Class Report for Limerick stated that poverty and overcrowding were still prevalent in Limerick. It recorded that the 1901 census returned that 32% of the population were occupying houses that were deemed overcrowded of more than two people per room, these figures were second to Dublin, but were higher than Cork, Waterford, Londonderry and Belfast. Over 40% of the tenements in Limerick consisted of two or three rooms only and the third room was usually an attic over the other two rooms (depending on the location on the city). The typical rent the inhabitants paid to live in these conditions was 1s.6d - 2s for a one-roomed tenement (Dublin was 3s), and 2s.3d - 2s.6d for a two-roomed tenement. However by 1909, Thomas Johnson stated the following with regards to old parts of the city:

...when I took a walk down those lanes and alleys, my wonder turned to disgust when I found that these houses were not only crowded into congested areas but many of them were insanitary and unfit for human habitation and, to my unpractised eye, did not appear to have been otherwise even when built.¹³

The Public Health and Sanitary Reports between the years of 1912 – 1915¹⁴ recorded incidents relating to sanitation and general health within the city. Disease was still prevalent especially in the poorer districts, where there was a lack of medical attention. The health and sanitation reports of 1912, 1913 and 1914 commented on the need for more refuse collections in the older parts of the town to secure better sanitation amongst the population of the city as a whole, and there was a complete absence of wash houses and baths which was considered a cause for concern due to lack of cleanliness of the poorer classes. By 1914, most areas still remained without water closets, and by 1915, the city was still considered very much behind with regards provision of adequate sanitation facilities and adequate accommodation. Sanitation in the slum areas was almost non-existent. The sanitary facilities were a disgrace and could be deemed non-

¹² Dr. Browne, Health Committee Diary Book (Limerick, 1891)

¹³ T. Johnson, 'Housing Conditions in 1909' in *The Limerick Anthology*, ed. Jim Kemmy (Dublin, 1996) p. 319-320.

¹⁴ M., McGrath, *Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth and Thirteenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the City of Limerick*, (Limerick, 1912-1915) LA/PH/1/1/10-13

existent. In many cases human refuse was deposited in buckets and left outside doorways and collected by the Corporation for the Corcanree and Watergate Depot.¹⁵

1.2.3 Housing and the emergence of the tenement system

In the latter part of the nineteenth century another type of slum emerged compared to the common two bed house built for a single family. The tenement system was one of the most unfortunate elements of the any housing crisis, which became well established with the poorest areas during the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Buildings that were once the Georgian houses occupied by the middle and upper classes became a different type of accommodation for a different type of society. Landlords divided up the houses into separate rooms and sublet them to tenants. The majority of these houses were without water closets and running water. Gross overcrowding within the rooms contributed to the spread of disease.¹⁷

In 1862 the living conditions of the poor in Dublin were described as a disgrace while Limerick was characterised as being second to Dublin in terms of housing. Landlords left their properties in a squalid condition while tenants were subletting corners of rooms to subtenants, further increasing the levels of overcrowding in already confined areas. The overcrowded living conditions also contributed to the spread of diseases, such as typhus where ‘washing facilities were negligible; clothing and bed clothes were flea and lice ridden; and in winter people huddled closer together for warmth.’¹⁸

With a growing population and a lack of housing, landlords could find other people to fill rooms within the tenements, resulting in overcrowding of the tenement system, while the wealthier classes moved out. Limerick was no different. The growth of the tenement system was facilitated by the exodus of the middle and upper classes to the suburbs. The Georgian terraced townhouses left behind were occupied by multiple families, such as Dublin and Limerick, where each house contained approximately twelve to fourteen rooms. Landlords could sublet rooms in order to maximise profits, which proved easier than the renting out of one and two storey dwellings. In Limerick,

¹⁵ M., McGrath, *Thirteenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the City of Limerick*, 1915, p. 7, LA/PH/1/1/13

¹⁶ J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, a study in urban geography*, (Dublin, 2000) p. 23.

¹⁷ However, the term tenement varies, where in Scotland, tenements meant flats. These were purpose built flats or apartments for the working classes with water supply and sanitation facilities. Conditions in these tenements were not as disastrous as Dublin or Limerick.

¹⁸ M. Crawford, ‘Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine’, in *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Dublin, 1999) p. 131.

Arthur's Quay (15 tenements, 83% of houses), Francis Street (10 tenements, 67% of houses), Bank Place (5 tenements, 71% of houses), Denmark Street Lower (6 tenements, 38% of houses), Ellen Street (8 tenements, 42% of houses) and Market Alley (14 tenements, 615 of houses) recorded several tenement buildings which were still in existence by 1901. This highlighted the Corporation's laxidasiical approach to tackle the issue.

1.3 Chapter outlines

Chapter one aims to provide an introduction to the study area, the time frame and the themes being discussed. It provides a breakdown of the study area, Limerick City, and the different parts of the city, different administrative boundaries and its various socio-economic patterns. Chapter Two highlights the evolution of the landscape to help the reader to understand the changes that occurred on the landscape that have impacted on its development and also aims to highlight the key themes presented throughout this research.

Chapter three aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the methodological framework and the sources utilised in undertaking this research. It looks at the primary and secondary sources used from the nineteenth and early twentieth century. It also provides key research questions, what the sources were used for and any limitations for these sources.

Chapter four examines the academic works within the study of historical geography, urban geography, health geography and other related fields. It focuses specifically on Ireland and Britain, key research themes and variations within and between towns and cities. This chapter also provides important information on general living conditions and health issues in Britain and Ireland.

Chapter five examines the housing situation within Limerick, the quality of the houses, types of houses, value of houses and the relevant location of houses, while also providing an examination of the physiognomy of the city. It also provides information on the social characteristics of the people living within these houses, the rent paid, the family sizes and number of rooms in each house (which aids in determining levels of overcrowding).

Chapter six examines the health conditions within the town which include the sanitary state of the streets, the cleaning of the streets, water supply, diseases and diets. It focuses on the minute books from the Corporation which provided information on the actual state of the houses and the streets. The Registrars of Deaths provided information on the types of diseases and the ages in which people died from particular diseases. It also provides information on particular areas of the city which were frequently reported to be in a 'filthy' state.

Chapter seven provides information on the solutions to the problem of poor health and housing. This chapter discusses the role of the hospitals and institutions and also the slum clearances which were being introduced from the late nineteenth century. This chapter will also examine slum clearances and social housing schemes and provide details on the conditions of the houses which were being demolished.

Chapter eight then provides a discussion of the results of this thesis and will look at particular area specific case studies within the city. These case studies will display information on the types of houses, housing quality, house value and the types of families living within these houses.

Chapter nine is the concluding chapter and provides a summary of the thesis and whether or not the aims and objectives have been met.

Chapter Two: The study area and the historical evolution of the city

2.1 The study area

The study area chosen was Limerick city. The city of Limerick is situated on the river Shannon in the county of Limerick, and in the province of Munster, 51 miles (N.) from Cork, and 94 miles (S. W.) from Dublin.

Figure 2.1: The development of Limerick city by c. 1846 (OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



2.1.1 The spatial extent of the city

The boundary of the city, as defined by the *Municipal Corporations Act of 1840* is utilised in this study. According to this Act, the city incorporated *c.* 2,400 acres (*see figure 2.1*). Prior to the 1840s Act, Limerick city had included the North and South Liberties. However, this area was considered too large to be governed effectively. Limerick's new boundary (the 1840 Act) was drawn up by an official at Dublin Castle, who also reported the issue of the inequality of the local taxation system. The 'poor agriculturists' of the North and South Liberties were paying excessive taxes to support the city's Corporation and developments while the wealthier paid very little.¹⁹ Losing this part of the city led to the dramatic decline in the spatial area of the city (and a drop in population of *c.* 20,000 people). The Municipal Corporations Act of 1840 was essential to Limerick as it introduced the 'reformed' Corporation to deal with the cleansing and repairing of the city and general governance.²⁰

2.1.2 Administrative divisions within the city

There were various administrative or territorial units used in the nineteenth century. The main units included townlands, civil parishes, wards and poor law unions (PLUs) and the district electoral divisions (DEDs).

In the early nineteenth century, the parish (total of 2,074 acres) was the key spatial and data collection unit for the city. There were eight parishes in total²¹ (*see table 2.1 and figure 2.3*). Even in the early nineteenth century these parishes were associated with certain social and economic characteristics and conditions. For example, St John's and St Mary's parishes, the older medieval sections of the city, were dominated by small, poorly built or aging houses, on narrow, unpaved or cobbled streets. Economically, these parishes were dominated by trades such as boot-makers, clothiers, pawnbrokers,

¹⁹ *Municipal Corporation Boundaries [Ireland]. Reports and Instructions by Lord Lieutenant, with reference to boundaries and Divisions of Cities, Boroughs and Towns, 1835-9* (23) xxvii.

²⁰ M. Potter, *The Governance and the People of Limerick, The history of Limerick Corporation/City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) pp 298-299.

²¹ St. Mary's parish (c.45 acres) was centred in Englishtown, St. John's parish (c.123 acres) and part of St. Lawrence's parish (c.60 acres) were located in Irishtown and St. Michael's parish (c.577 acres) was located in Newtown Pery. parish of Kileely contained 93 acres, St. Munchin's parish contained 216 acres, St. Nicholas parish contained 319 acres and St. Patrick's parish contained 639 acres.

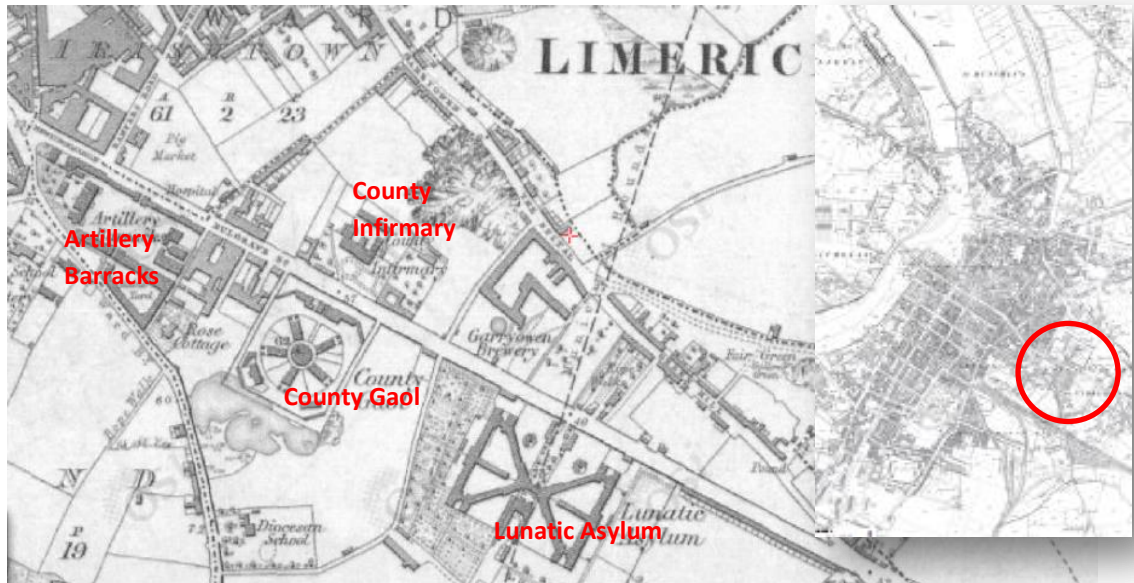
carpenters etc.²² St Lawrence's parish became an area for the mentally ill, physically ill and the dead, with institutions such as the Lunatic Asylum (1827), County Infirmary (1811) and Mount St Lawrence Graveyard (1844) all being built within this parish. The County Gaol (1816-1821) was also located here (all these buildings are outlined in *figure 2.2*). St Michael's parish provided housing for wealthier classes of society (due to the changes in architecture and value of the properties) such as doctors, solicitors, and surgeons.²³ Houses on these streets were larger in size (containing up to fourteen rooms) and were built under the Georgian style in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The streets were planned, quadrangular and paved. Other parishes bordered the city such as Kileely parish, St Patrick's parish, St Munchin's and St Nicholas parish which made up the suburban parts of the city. These parishes were less built upon than the four parishes that comprised of the core of the city.²⁴

²² Data extracted from various commercial directories, such as *Pigott's Directory 1824*, *Slater's Directory of 1856* and *Guy's Directory of 1912*.

²³ *Guy's Commercial Directory of 1912*

²⁴ Based on data extracted from The Primary Valuation of Ireland.

Figure 2.2: Limerick Institutions from 1811 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902).



By the mid-nineteenth century, the parish unit was decreasing in importance as a result of the *Limerick Corporation Act of 1853*, which introduced a new system of ‘wards’. These wards (*table 2.1 and figure 2.4*) included Abbey, Castle, Custom House, Dock, Glentworth, Irishtown, Market and Shannon. These wards replaced the parishes and were named after particular features associated with the city such as the Dock Ward, which was located along the docks and Glentworth Ward replaced the area along Glentworth Street (both in St Michael’s Parish). St John’s parish became the Irishtown Ward, St Mary’s became the Abbey and Castle Ward, St Michael’s (due to its size) was divided up into six wards, Custom House Ward, Dock Ward, Glentworth Ward, Shannon Ward, Market Ward and Irishtown Ward (part of). It was believed that these would be easier to manage and essential for the efficient governing of the city.

Figure 2.3: Civil parishes in Limerick city, 1900 (OS, 1:2500, V.10, 11, 14, 15)

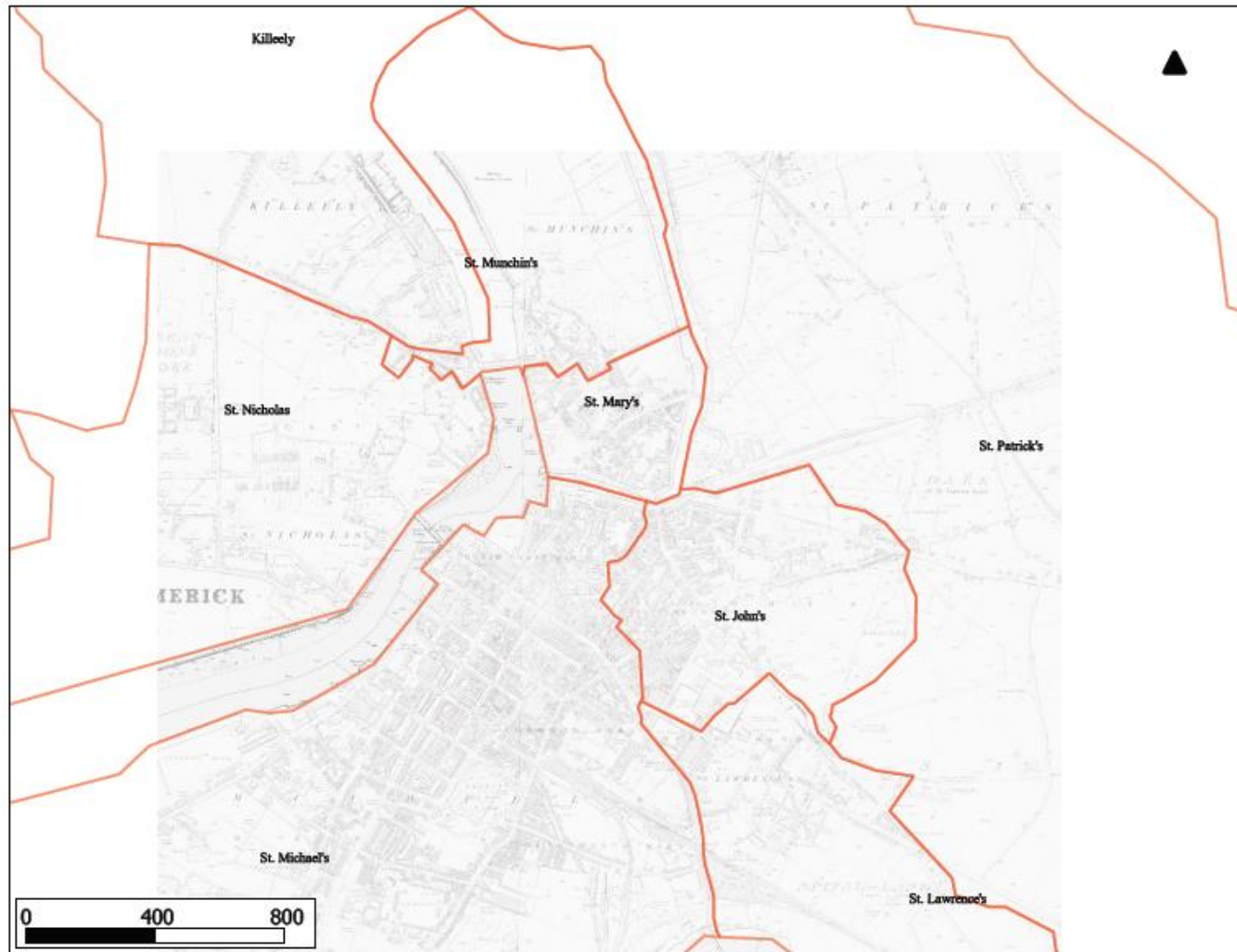
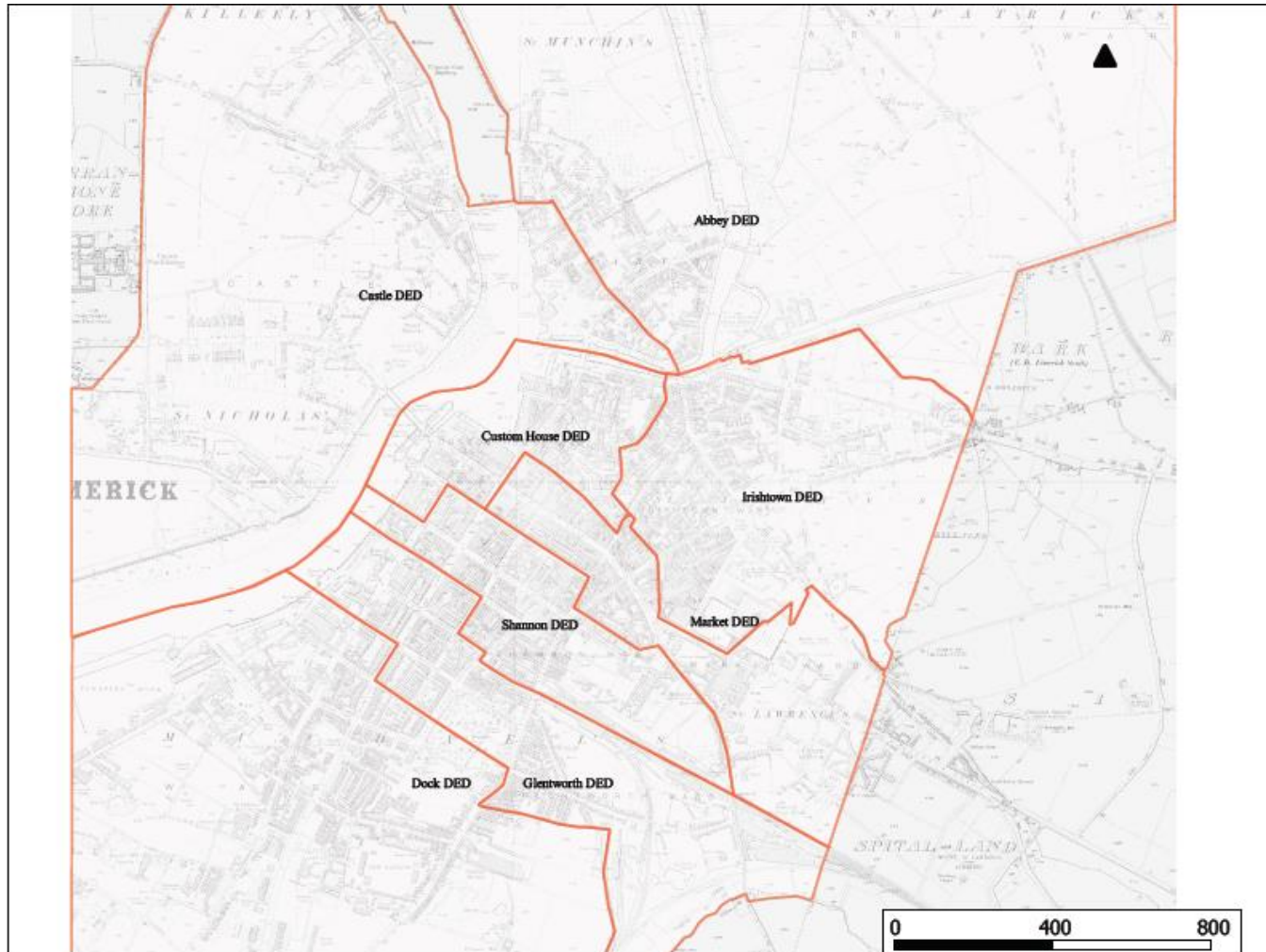


Figure 2.4: District Electoral Divisions, Limerick city, 1901 (OS, 1:2500, V.10-11, 14-15)



During the nineteenth century, the poor law unions were also being used but under a different function. They were not intended to highlight physical boundaries but instead indicate areas of destitution. Under the *Poor Law (Ireland) Act of 1838*, Ireland was divided up into 163 unions in order to relieve the destitute within Ireland. At the centre of each union was a workhouse, to cater for and accommodate the poor. Limerick city was located in the County Limerick Poor Law Union and covered 197 sq. miles and for a population of 140,000 people.

The DEDs were originally introduced after the Poor Law Act of 1838 to divide the unions which did not adhere to the county and barony boundaries. These DEDs were used for the registration of births, deaths and marriages and also for elections. These DEDs,²⁵ were also used for the 1901 and 1911 censuses, replacing the wards (and parishes) towards the latter end of the nineteenth century. Their names were listed numerically after the previous wards (e.g. Abbey Ward became DED No.1, Castle Ward became DED No.2 and so on).

Table 2.1: Table of city parishes, wards and DEDs in Limerick during the nineteenth century

City Parishes	City Ward	District Electoral Division
St. John's	Irishtown	Limerick No. 6 Urban, Limerick South Rural
St. Mary's	Abbey and Castle Wards	Limerick No. 1 Urban, Limerick No. 2 Urban
St. Michael's	Custom House Wards Dock Ward Glentworth Ward Irishtown Ward (part of) Market Ward Shannon Ward	Limerick No. 3 Urban, Limerick No. 4 Urban, Limerick No. 5 Urban, Limerick No. 6 Urban, Limerick No. 7, Limerick No. 8 Urban, Limerick South Rural
St. Munchin's	Castle Ward (part of)	Limerick No. 2 Urban, Limerick North Rural

²⁵ DEDs replaced the poor law unions which existed around the time of the primary valuation.

The city was also composed of three sections, the English town, the Irish town, and Newtown-Pery. The first and oldest occupies the southern end of the King's Island, an island encircled by the Shannon. The Irishtown was also an old town where the streets were wider than that of Englishtown. Since the development of Newtown Pery, Englishtown and Irishtown became neglected and deserted by the wealthier inhabitants.²⁶ Newtown-Pery was development from the latter end of the eighteenth century and continued its development into the nineteenth century on an area formerly called the South Prior's Land (*figure 2.5 and 2.6*). This land became the property of the Pery family about 1770 and the Newtown Pery was considered one of the handsomest modern towns in Ireland. The wealthier classes moved to Newtown Pery where the streets are spacious and occupied by elegant houses.²⁷

²⁶ S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland: Comprising the Several Counties, Cities, Boroughs, Corporate, Market, and Post Towns, Parishes, and Villages, with Historical and Statistical Descriptions, Embellished with Engravings of the Arms of the Cities, Bishopricks, Corporate Towns, and Boroughs; and of the Seals of the Several Municipal Corporations. With an Appendix, Describing the Electoral Boundaries of the Several Boroughs, as Defined by the Act of the 2d & 3d of William IV* (London, 1837) p. 947

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 947

Figure 2.5: Brunswick Street, South Priorsland, Limerick, 1897 (LCA, P/23/26)

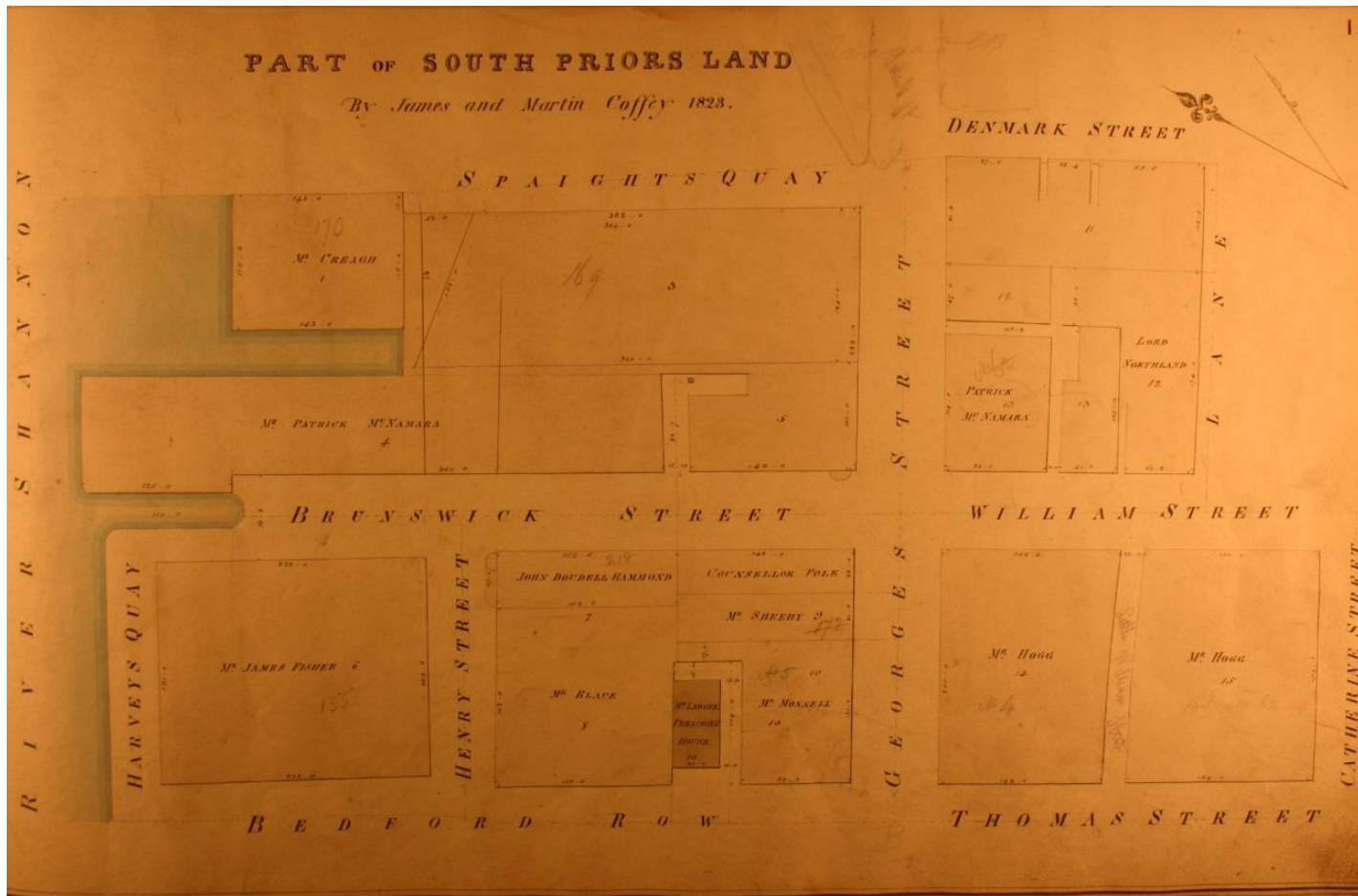
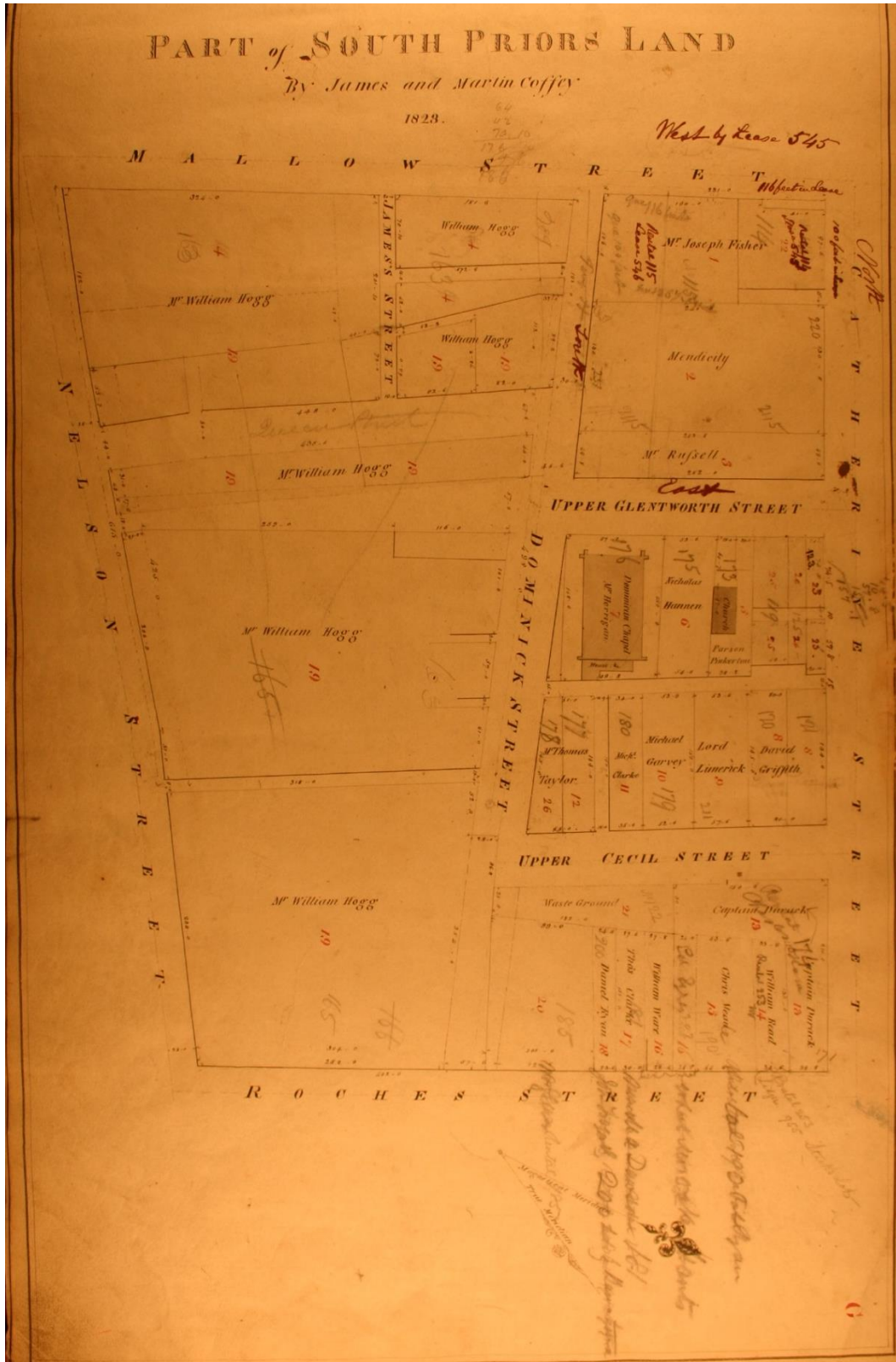


Figure 2.6: Mallow Street, South Priorsland, Limerick, 1891 (LCA, P/23/30)



2.1.3 Research time frame

The time frame for this research is 1850-1935. 1850 was considered a suitable starting point for a number of reasons. Firstly, the major expansion of Newtown Pery was near completion and hence the geography of the nineteenth and early twentieth century city was established. Secondly, the exodus of the middle and upper classes of the city had commenced, leaving their houses in Newtown Pery vacant. The movement of the middle and upper classes of society was recorded from 1840 onwards. Finally, the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* was completed for Limerick city in 1852 and provided a relevant starting point for the study of housing in the city as it highlighted areas which experienced low value housing (houses under £5) and subdivision of properties.

The cut-off point of 1935 was chosen so as to include the period in the immediate aftermath of the foundation of the new state thereby allowing an evaluation of the impact governmental change had on public health and housing in the city. This cut-off point also pre-dates the major housing schemes which took place from 1935 and therefore can be seen as a continuation of the latter nineteenth century.

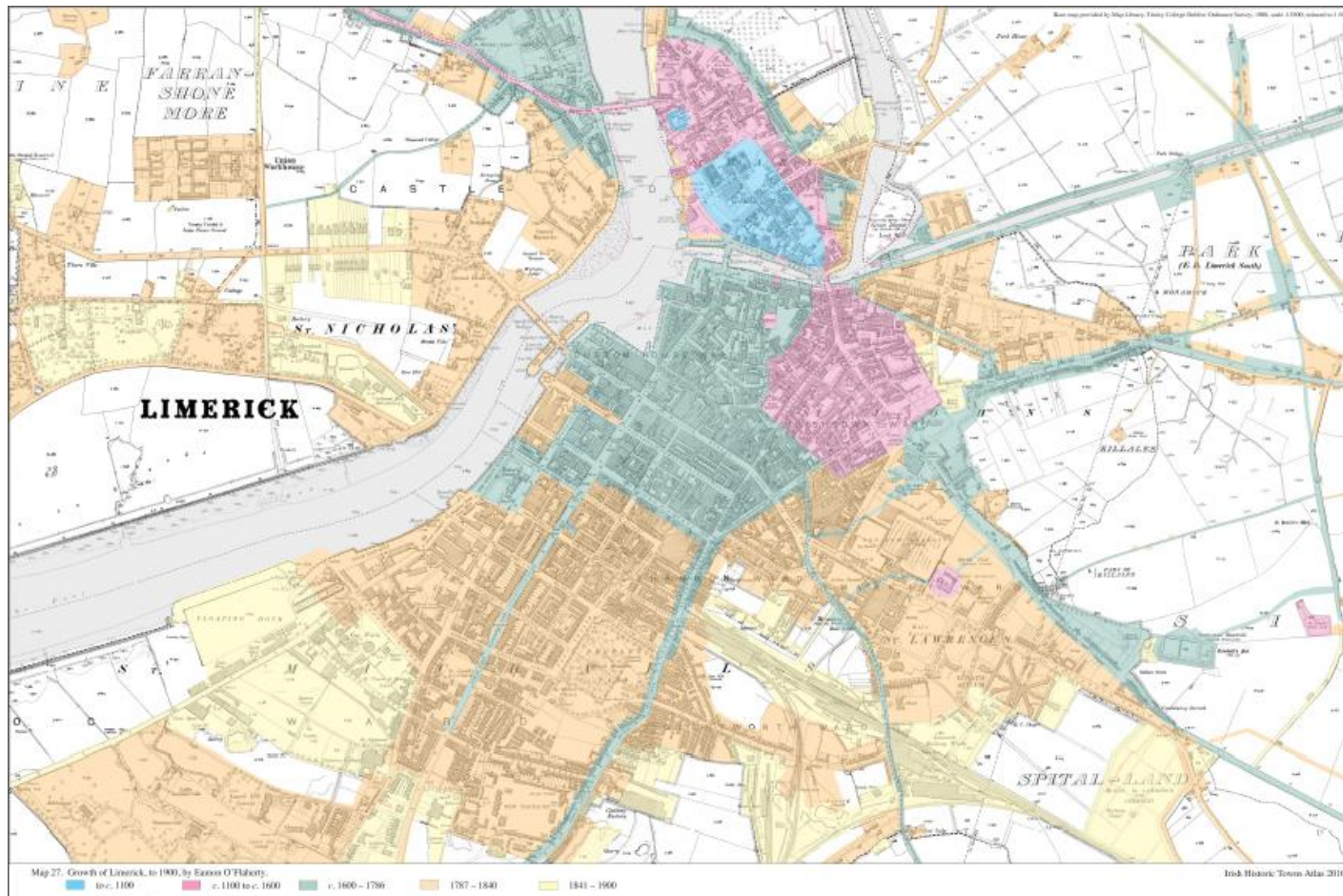
2.2 The spatial evolution of the city of Limerick – A historical introduction

2.2.1 Introduction

Limerick has a rich variety of past influences that have helped shape its landscape and its people. The city has progressed from a Viking town, to an Anglo-Norman town, survived the sieges of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and expanded through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its development originated in the ninth century on King's Island (later Englishtown, St Mary's Parish) and continued its growth from this point. *Figure 2.7* maps the chronological spatial development of the city from the ninth century, up until the modern day. It is clear from *figure 2.7* that the initial urban settlement centred around the Abbey river in medieval Englishtown. The period between the twelfth and seventeenth century then saw the spread of the urban environment around the remainder of Englishtown and across the Abbey River into Irishtown (St John's Parish). The development of Newtown Pery (St Michael's Parish) commenced in the latter end of eighteenth century (1760s) and led to a significant expansion of the city, although it was the only side of the city which continued to spread outwards. The Municipal Corporations Act in 1840 however led to a reduction of the

actual size of the city (where it excluded the North and South Liberties) and introduced a reformed Corporation to ensure the effective administration of the whole city.

Figure 2.7: The Growth of Limerick City up to 1900 (IHTA, map 27, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900)



2.2.2 Viking town

The city of Limerick has undergone many significant changes since its inception in the ninth century. The first authentic notices of Limerick represent it as a Danish settlement. The Vikings were recorded to have conquered Limerick in 812 and about the middle of the same century they made it one of their principal maritime stations, surrounding it with walls and towers which enclose the area. Their settlement was on the island (Scattery Island) which was enclosed by the River Shannon. Mary Street, Nicholas Street and Castle Street appear to have been the original thoroughfares of the Vikings. For nearly a century their power continued to increase, until Brian Boru assumed the dominion of Munster and Thomond, when he expelled the Danes from Inniscattery (Scattery Island) and Limerick, allowing the inhabitants however to continue in it, subject to their own laws and customs, on payment of an annual tribute.²⁸

2.2.3 Anglo-Norman town

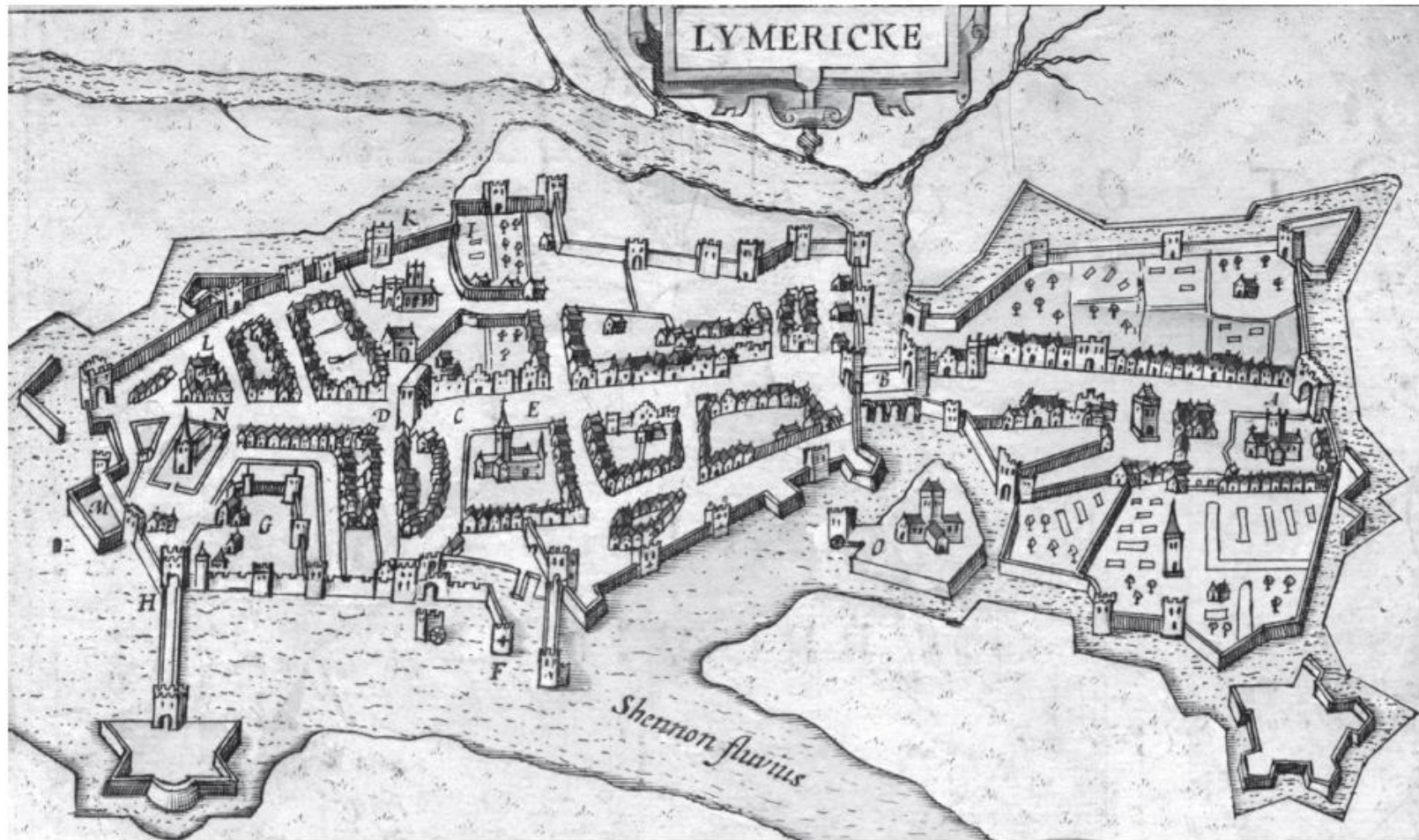
In 1174, the Normans arrived in Limerick where they were said to have constructed Baal's Bridge. However, major changes did not occur until a permanent hold of the city in 1197, when Limerick was said to have received its first charter, mayor and corporation under King John. Limerick, Cork, Dublin, Waterford and Wexford were the only Viking towns which existed when the Normans arrived. They built King John's Castle on King's Island (Englishtown) as it overlooked the River Shannon and provided a full view of the city. The municipal privileges provided by the charter allowed Limerick to benefit from new order and the population increased.²⁹ The Normans also constructed walls which enclosed Englishtown and Irishtown. The walls were for the defence of the city, and were closed at the end of each day. Anyone entering or leaving the city for trading was required to pay a toll. The walls (*figure 2.8*) spread to include Irishtown, just across from the Abbey River.³⁰

²⁸ S., Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland: Comprising the Several Counties, Cities, Boroughs, Corporate, Market, and Post Towns, Parishes, and Villages, with Historical and Statistical Descriptions, Embellished with Engravings of the Arms of the Cities, Bishopricks, Corporate Towns, and Boroughs; and of the Seals of the Several Municipal Corporations. With an Appendix, Describing the Electoral Boundaries of the Several Boroughs, as Defined by the Act of the 2d & 3d of William IV* (London, 1837) p. 942.

²⁹ S. Spellissy, *The History of Limerick* (Limerick, 1998) pp 30-7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp 30-7.

Figure 2.8: Englishtown and Irishtown showing city wall by John Speed in 1610 (IHTA, map 8)

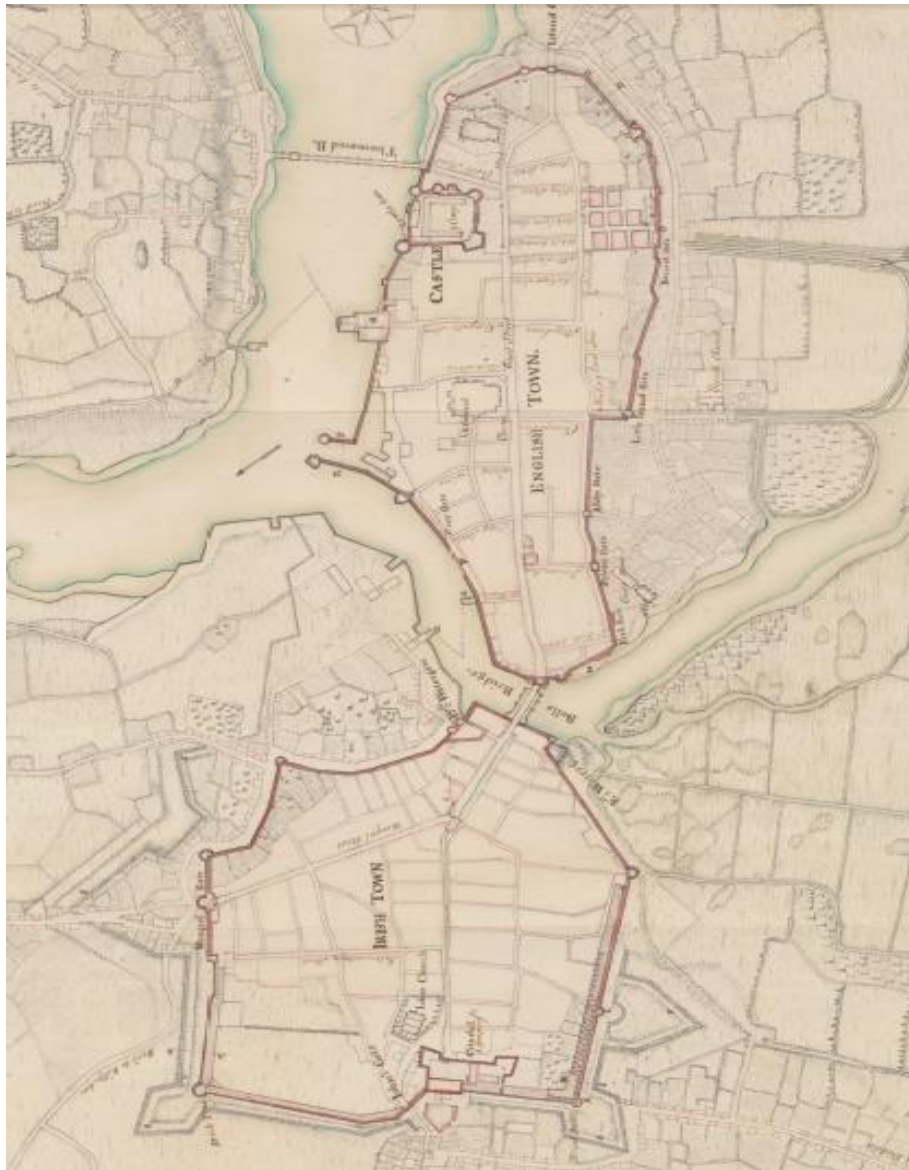


Between 1195 and the early 1200s, the layout of the medieval town was established. Two stone bridges were built, along with the castle, which created diversions from the main street. The realigning of the southern end of the city and the enclosure of the northern end led to the organisation of parishes and new churches. Limerick was granted burgage plots in the early 1200s where plots were rented at one shilling per year to the crown. The Kings Island section of the city was the main area of the Viking and Anglo-Norman settlement and forms the historic core of the medieval town.

On the southern banks of the river, Irishtown was walled from 1310-1495, and enclosed an area of 27.5 acres. This area was primarily occupied by craft-workers involved in leather, clay, bone and lace. The layout of the Irish town was Y shaped, leading from Baals Bridge to John's Gate. Mungret Street was developed to the south of the town. There was a series of lanes in Irishtown which gave access to long narrow properties which fronted the main street. This pattern was still evident in the nineteenth century plan. Irishtown had no administrative buildings over the course of its development.³¹ *Figure 2.9* displays the layout of the city at the turn of the seventeenth century. The town was still enclosed within the city walls and the majority of houses lined the main thoroughfares.

³¹ C. O'Rahilly, 'Medieval Limerick: The Growth of Two Towns' in H.B. Clarke (ed) *Irish Cities* (Cork, 1995) p. 172.

Figure 2.9: The walls of Englishtown and Irishtown in Limerick in 1752 (IHTA, map 16, by W. Eyres)



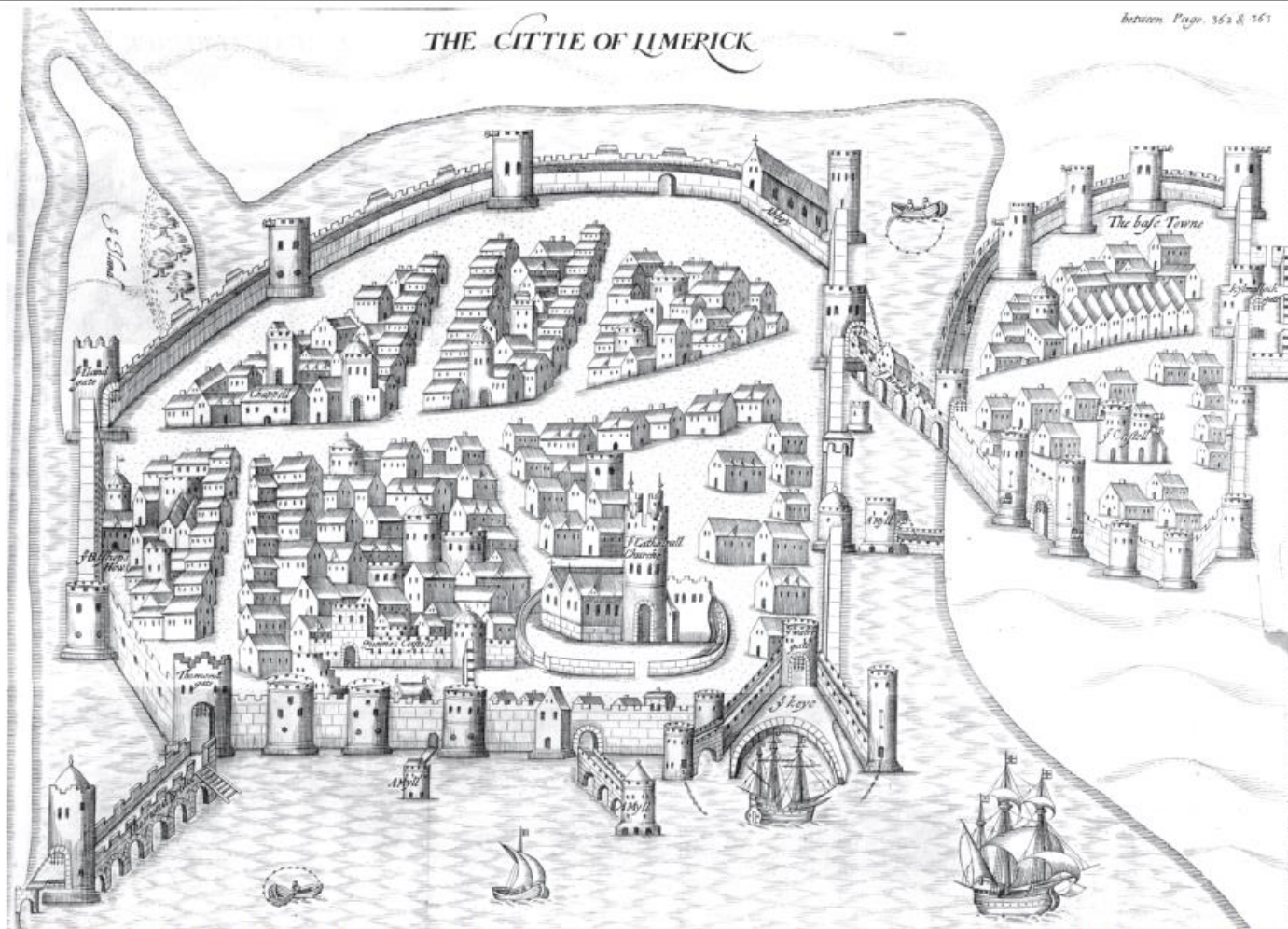
2.2.4 16th & 17th century town

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were classified mainly in terms of sieges which destroyed many buildings within Englishtown and Irishtown. *Figure 2.10* displays the city in 1633.

The Siege of Limerick in 1691 destroyed sections of the old town (Englishtown/St Mary's parish). The rebuilding after this period involved filling in the areas around St Mary's parish, which were destroyed by the siege rather than changing the actual street layout. Development continued along the streets which had been laid out previously.

Following on from this siege, new buildings were built within the old town which included the Mayors house, the Bridewell and the Tholsel.

Figure 2.10: The city of Limerick in 1633 (IHTA, map 9, by Pacata Hibernia 2)



Map 9. Limerick, 1633; size 30 x 37.5 cm (Pacata Hibernia 2).

Irish Historic Towns Atlas 2010

During the early seventeenth century, the city was still confined within the medieval city walls which had been used as defence and protection for the city. However, it also inhibited the growth of the city which was problematic as the population was increasing rapidly from the start of the seventeenth century (*table 2.2*).

Table 2.2: The population in Limerick city c. 1600-1792³²

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>
1600	3,000
1600	2,400-3,600
1659	3,605
c. 1680	c. 5,000
1706	11,868
1766	13,675
1792	c. 40,000

2.2.5 18th century town

The eighteenth century introduced changes in the development and layout of the city. The population was continuing to increase (c. 40,000 in 1792) and more housing was required. It was becoming evident that expanse outside the town walls was needed. Eyres's map highlighted that the city had reached its development within the city walls. By the 1760s, Irishtown was densely populated. The plots had become increasingly built upon as older houses on the main streets were replaced by taller houses with cellars (removing archaeological records).³³ By the mid-eighteenth century, the West Watergate area had become occupied by gardens and a dock on reclaimed Maradyke land.

³² E. O' Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 12.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Figure 2.11: The development of Limerick city by 1786 (IHTA map 19, by C.J. Sauthier)

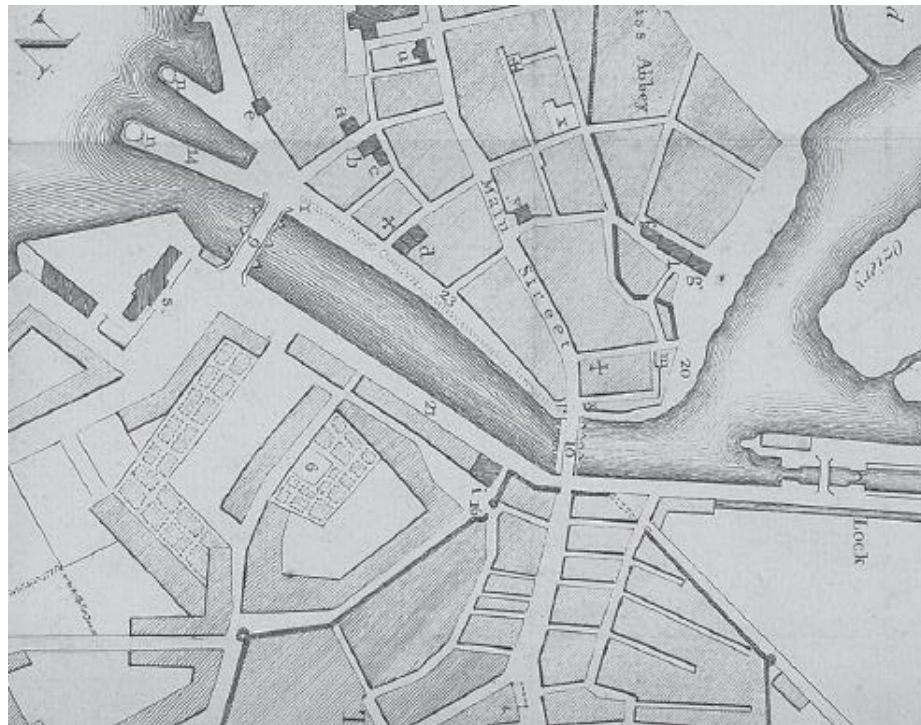


In the 1760s, the city had officially outgrown the medieval wall. In Englishtown and Irishtown, building structure and town planning was significantly different from that of Newtown Pery. The Old Grand Jury³⁴ was in charge of the running of the city from the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, the Corporation and the Grand Jury were comprised of the same members and had no positive effect on the city in any governing or administrative fashion.³⁵ Older parts of the city (such as St Mary's parish) were left to decay when the newer part of the city developed (along St John's parish and toward South Priorsland in St Michael's parish). A new bridge was constructed across the Abbey River after 1759 (*figure 2.11 and 2.12*), which provided incentives for capital expenditure on the land adjoining the city. This was particularly attractive to Catholic merchants who had reaped no benefits from the Corporation (who were mainly Protestant) and were forced to pay high taxes within the old town. Custom House was constructed between 1765 and 1769 and highlighted a commercial expansion of the town. The pace of urban change was then accelerated and allowed the Catholic merchants to develop the land along the south.

³⁴ The Old Grand Jury was originally twenty-three members that formed the 'corporation' of the city, elected by the sheriff to deal with administration matters and other functions. The jurors were always chosen from the wealthiest within the city. The system was unrepresentative and Catholics were rarely elected.

³⁵ M. Potter, *The Governance and the People of Limerick, The history of Limerick Corporation/City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) pp 193-4.

Figure 2.12: The Bridge and Abbey River, Limerick, 1786 (IHTA map 19, by C.J. Sauthier).



South Priorsland was located on the south side of the city. Here plots were leased and subleased by merchants, builders and lawyers and was gradually built upon over the next seventy to eighty years (evident from Colles map of Limerick 1769, *figure 2.14*). The first significant urban development took place with the building of six stone houses at St John's Square in Irishtown (1751-1756) which saw a change in the type of architecture and housing being used in Limerick. These houses were built in the Georgian style and resembled the town houses in Dublin. The 1901 census revealed that they were first class buildings and ranged in size from eight to thirteen rooms in each house. Building on new quays proceeded rapidly and assembly rooms were built on Charlotte's Quay in 1770. By 1787, Bank Place, Rutland Street, Arthur's Quay, Francis Street and Patrick Street had been built, giving the city its recognisable Georgian district.³⁶ These developments were undertaken by Catholic merchants (mainly Patrick Arthur and Phillip Roche). The Roche family were responsible for the development of the grain store (the Granary) on Michael Street. Terraced Georgian houses developed along the area over the successive years.

³⁶ E.O' Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 8.

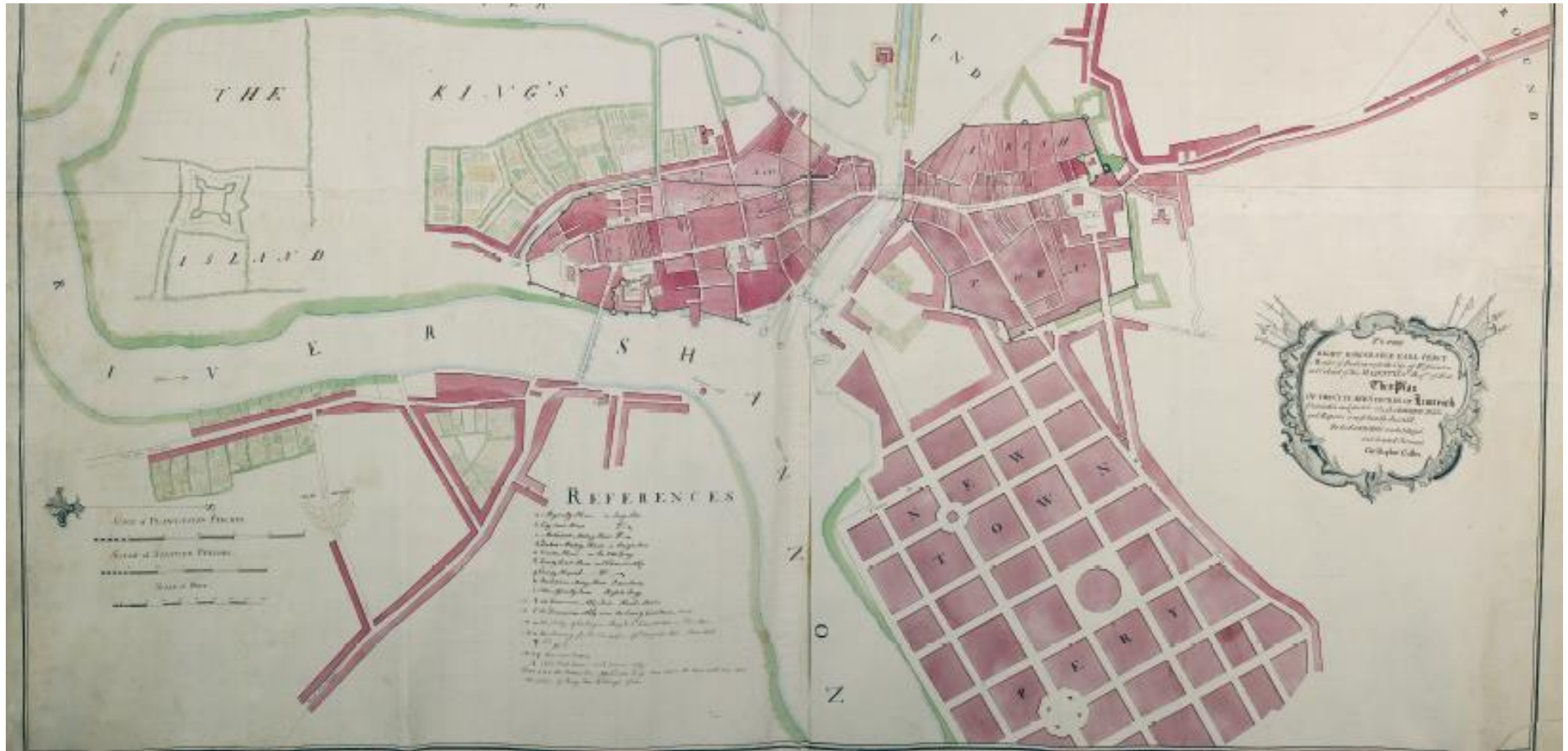
Figure 2.13: Georgian terraced housing at St John's Square in Irishtown, c. 1865-1914 (St. John's Church (Church of Ireland), St. John's Square, by Robert French, NLI in the LPC)



The development of Newtown Pery was led by Edmund Sexton Pery, who had acquired lands on South Priorsland. The development was funded by Revenue Commissioner who employed an Italian architect (Davis Dukart) to design the Custom House in new town. In 1765, Pery had paid David Dukard to design a town plan for the land he owned in the south of the city. The size of the city was to double after its new development. Plots were leased and sub-leased by Catholic merchants, builders and lawyers, and were continuously built on over the next seventy-five years.³⁷ Christopher Colles was the cartographer who drew up the map for the development of the new town. From his map (*figure 2.14*), the planned layout of the new town was evident. It contrasted greatly from the layout of the older parts of the city, Englishtown and Irishtown.

³⁷ NIAH, *An Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of Limerick City* (Dublin, 2008) pp 33-5

Figure 2.14: Proposed plan for Newtown Pery, 1769 (IHTA, map 18, by C. Colles)



As *figure 2.14* demonstrates, development continued along the quays in the latter half of the eighteenth century which initiated the later spread of the city southwards, starting from Charlottes Quay and working its way along the Custom House. The move southwards was gradual from 1780 onwards. The earlier historic centre however remained important until the early nineteenth century when the Exchange Building was moved to St Michael's Parish along with the Town Hall to Patrick Street.³⁸

The following is a list of significant developments which occurred in the eighteenth century which encouraged this period of change in Limerick. Most of the buildings were commercial buildings which brought trade and commerce to the new town.

- St John's Square 1751-57 (first Georgian architectural attempt for Limerick)
- Georges Quay 1760
- Matthew Bridge 1762 (connected the old town with South Priorsland to encourage development)
- Custom House 1765-69
- New Road 1767 (expansion of the city)
- Arthurs Quay *c.* 1780s (new urban expanse which encourages trading alongside Customs House)
- Bank Place 1790

The 'Sale of Limerick Catalogue' highlighted particular years of development within the city and also particular places. The main decades of development include 1770s, 1780s, 1790s, 1800s, 1830s and the 1870s. The areas listed in Newtown Pery included William Street, Henry Street, Roches Street and Denmark Street while in St John's Parish places like Church Street, Old Francis Street, John Street, Market Lane and Gerald Griffith Street were also listed. By the 1790s development was occurring along the Barracks and Gasworks around Frederick Street, Little Frederick Street, Mount Kennett Terrace and Windmill Street. At the turn of the nineteenth century, most of the

³⁸ E. O'Flaherty, 'Three Towns: Limerick since 1690' in H. Clarke (ed.) *Irish Cities* (Cork, 1995) p. 184

development was occurring on O'Connell Street, Glentworth Street and Catherine Street which continued along Barrington Street and Hartstonge Street by 1830.³⁹

³⁹ The researcher utilised this source in order to examine which part of city was being leased and to monitor changes which were occurring at particular timeframes and provided an indication to the types of activities on certain properties.

2.2.6 19th century town

As the nineteenth century arrived, Newtown Pery (St Michael's Parish) was still developing. Although Christopher Colles' proposed plan of 1769 was not fully implemented, the layout was similar. It still included a park for the people living within the area which was to contribute to the health of the people and link the city with the rural ideal. The town contained quadrangular buildings and a defined physical layout which was essential for the health and governance of the city. The houses were generally bigger than those in the old town and had a more open street layout which allowed for better ventilation of the streets compared to the more confined layout of the older medieval town.

Figure 2.15: Actual layout of the new town in Limerick, c. 1900 (OS, 1:10000)



Limerick experienced its most prosperous stage in the 1800s when ‘vast wealth was created which was reflected in the huge building boom of the period’.⁴⁰ This became known as the Georgian era in Ireland, with elaborate designs and building fabrics which contrasted greatly with the old town.

Patrick Arthur was a Catholic merchant who provided the groundwork for the development of the Newtown, which paved the way for Edmund Sexton Pery. The Arthur family, a city name, established a uniform row of housing along the quay, which became known as Arthur’s Quay which was marked as the most fashionable part of the city in the late eighteenth century.⁴¹ Architectural and physical differences were clearly noted between the different locations within the city. The older buildings were smaller and lacked the symmetrical style in Newtown Pery. Changes in trades were also noticed within the new town. Traditional trades such as milliners, carpenters, iron-founders, clothiers and bakers did not accompany the professional elite of St Michael’s Parish such as doctors, surgeons, opticians and academics. The trade directories throughout the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century continued to highlight these changes between St Mary’s Parish, St John’s Parish and St Michael’s Parish.

2.2.7 Economic activities in the city

*Ferrar’s Commercial Directory of 1769*⁴² recorded the majority of trades in St Mary’s Parish and St John’s Parish. The Main Street (possibly Mary Street) recorded trades such as chandlers, whip makers, shoe makers, woollen drapers, publicans and fruiterers. John Street in St John’s Parish recorded smiths, shoe makers and grocers. Mungret Street also recorded smiths, whip makers, clothiers, dyers, grocers and brush makers.⁴³ These were the main trades during the later eighteenth century. The new town had not been built upon substantially at this time to record trading.

*Lucas’s Commercial Directory of 1788*⁴⁴ recorded similar results to Ferrar’s. Broad Street listed skin and leather merchants, soap boilers, tanners, book sellers and grocers.

⁴⁰ M. Potter, *The Governance and the People of Limerick, The history of Limerick Corporation/City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) p. 250

⁴¹ J., Ferrar, *The History of Limerick, Ecclesiastical, civil and Military, from the earliest records, to the year 1787, illustrated by fifteen engravings, to which are added the Charter of Limerick and an essay on Castle Connell Spa, on water in general and cold bathing*, (Limerick, 1787) p. 90

⁴² *Ferrar’s Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1769*

⁴³ *Ferrar’s Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1769*

⁴⁴ *Lucas’s Commercial Directory of Ireland, 1788*

Nicholas Street listed hatters, grocers, tin ware dealers, boot and shoe makers and gun makers. Palmerstown recorded coopers and woollen manufacturers. John Street recorded grocers, chandlers, spirit dealers, skimmers, liquor dealers and haberdashers. Mungret Street recorded dyers, linen draper and brush-makers.

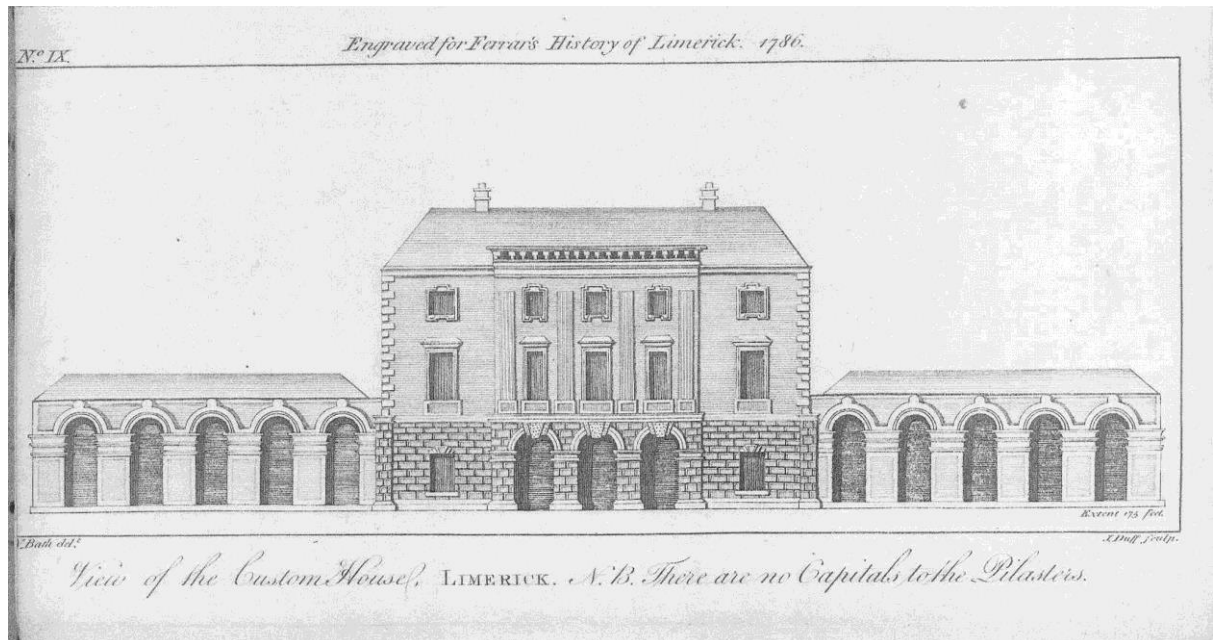
*The New Triennial Commercial Directory for 1840*⁴⁵ recorded major changes in the trading of the city. Academics were recorded for Baker Place in the new town, Lower Mallow Street, Catherine Street (three schools) and Thomas Street. Architects and civil engineers were also recorded for Georges Street (ten in total) and William Street. Bakers were records for Mary Street and Brunswick Street. Georges Street also recorded hairdressers and perfumers, dress makers and milliners. These trades contrasted greatly with the old town. Lime burners were recorded for Carey's Road and Thomondgate, along with tallow chandlers and soap boilers (which were also recorded for Mary Street).

*Bassett's Commercial Directory of 1880-1881*⁴⁶ included more merchant activities for the upper half of St Michael's Parish, along Upper Georges Street, William Street and Cecil Street. These streets were becoming more like Irishtown, dealing in trading and provisions. William Street recorded hardware dealers, provision dealers and spirit dealers. Denmark Street had recorded game dealers, as it was in close proximity to the old town. Ellen Street and Thomas Street also recorded the occurrence of provision dealers. Nelson Street recorded a pig buyer and High Street recorded tin smiths. Georges Street continued to recorded solicitors, bankers, brokers and coroners. In St Mary's Parish, Mary Street recorded flour dealers, old cloth dealers and boot or shoe makers. Higher social class trades were not recorded often in the older parts of the city. There was a clear divide in the activities between St Michael's Parish and St John's and St Mary's.

⁴⁵ *New Triennial Commercial Directory for 1840*

⁴⁶ *Bassett's Commercial Directory of 1880-1881*

Figure 2.16: Engraving of Custom House in Limerick city, 1787 (Engraved for Ferrar's The History of Limerick, Ecclesiastical, civil and Military, from the earliest records, to the year 1787, illustrated by fifteen engravings, to which are added the Charter of Limerick and an essay on Castle Connell Spa, on water in general and cold bathing)



The development of the commercial buildings on Rutland Street in 1805, along with the Custom House, allowed for the migration of fashion and commerce from St Mary's and St John's Parishes to St Michael's Parish. By the mid-1800s, a dividing line was clear between the old town which consisted of 'noisome trades as well as the bulk of increasingly marginal occupations such as boot and shoemakers' and St Michael's Parish which contained a rich mix of professional functions. 'The new town fed off the old town and drew upon its scarce resources, leaving behind a residue of crafts and trades'⁴⁷.

The creation of the Chamber of Commerce and appointment by Parliament of Commissioners for St Michael's Parish effectively stripped the Corporation of any of the duties and control of the suburban development. The measure of separation from the Corporation was achieved through the *Newtown Pery Act of 1807* which provided for the formation of a body (Commissioners of St Michaels Parish) to levy taxes and

⁴⁷ P. J., O'Connor, *Exploring Limericks Past* (Newcastle West, 1987) p. 49

administer the new town through paving, lighting, cleaning and night watch.⁴⁸ The funds the Commissioners of St Michael's Parish received were spent on improving and regulating the conditions of its prosperous district, leaving the old centre to the Corporation and causing a divide within the city.⁴⁹

2.3 Changing demography

An examination of population trends for Limerick city and county in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century identifies a number of general points. As *table 2.3* demonstrates the total population for Limerick city and county from 1821 to 1911 declined by 77%, however the rate of decline was greater in some decades than others. The population underwent severe social, economic and political changes after the Great Famine of 1845. The south of Ireland had a strong agricultural base, but the deflationary fiscal policy of the post-Napoleonic War government hit the banking sector especially hard, and witnessed a decline in the value of the agricultural goods exported in early 1800s and caused a deeper problem.⁵⁰ The total population began to decline in the mid-nineteenth century which accounts for the subsequent decline in the city and county from 1851 onwards.

⁴⁸ NIAH, *Introduction to the Architectural Heritage of Limerick*, (Dublin, 2008) p. 59.

⁴⁹ E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas No.21, Limerick*, (Dublin, 2010) pp 8-9.

⁵⁰ S. Duffy, *Atlas of Irish History* (Dublin, 2000) p. 88.

Table 2.3: Limerick city and county population from 1821-1936 (Census of Population for the years 1821-1936)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% Change</i>
1821	136,916	140,561	277,477	-
1831	153,625	161,730	315,355	+13.65
1841	161,997	168,032	330,029	+4.65
1851	127,387	134,745	262,132	-20.57
1861	105,712	111,565	217,277	-17.11
1871	93,112	98,824	191,936	-11.66
1881	88,311	92,321	180,632	-5.89
1891	78,607	80,305	158,912	-12.02
1901	72,456	73,642	146,098	-8.06
1911	72,229	70,840	143,069	-2.07
1926	71,172	69,171	140,343	-1.9
1936	72,407	68,746	141,153	+0.6

Table 2.4 displays the corresponding population levels at the city level from 1841 – 1911. There was a significant decrease after the Great Famine of 1845 in which many of the Irish died from starvation or emigrated to other areas. The population in 1851 for the city recorded 48,785 inhabitants, which fell to 38,518 people by 1911. After the introduction of the Irish Free State, the population began to climb again and reached approximately 41,000 people in 1936.

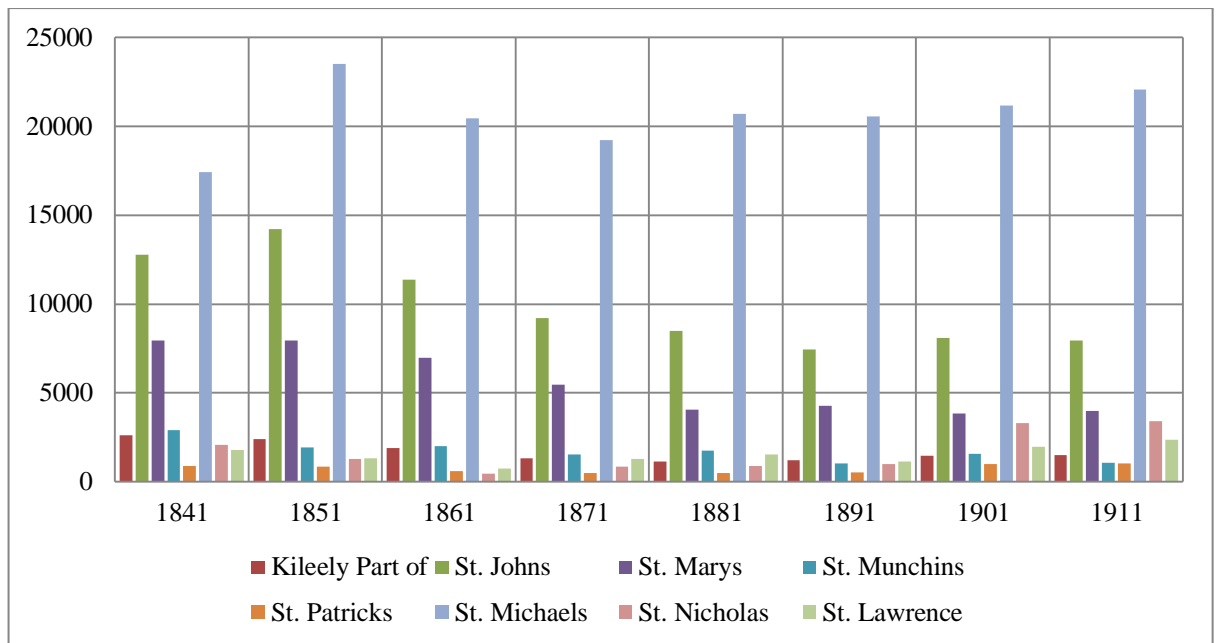
Table 2.4: Limerick city population from 1841-1936 (Census of Population for the years 1841-1936)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Area in acres</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Density per acre</i>	<i>% Change</i>
1841	2,618	48,391	18	-
1851	2,074	48,785	24	+8 %
1861	2,074	43,924	21	-11%
1871	2,074	39,353	19	-11%
1881	2,074	38,562	19	-2%
1891	2,074	37,155	18	-4%
1901	2,108	38,151	18	+2%
1911	2,386	38,518	16	+1%
1926	2,386	39,448	17	+2%
1936	2,386	41,061	17	+4%

The population of Limerick city in 1841 stood at 48,391 people and by 1851 this had increased slightly to 48,785. The increase was possibly due to the immigration of people from rural areas in search of work and shelter during the famine years. The population over the ensuing decades however was in a downward spiral and did not show signs of increase until 1901 (+2%). By 1926 when the next census was taken, the population for the city had climbed to 39,448, an increase of 2.4%, and by 1936, it had reached 41,061 inhabitants, an increase of 4%. The above figures display normal patterns for the city in comparison for other towns and cities in Ireland.

However, examining population levels at a micro level reveals a different story. The population within the city was not evenly distributed as displayed in *figure 2.17*. Some parishes experienced higher population levels than others throughout the nineteenth century. These included St Michael's Parish, St John's Parish and St Mary's Parish.

Figure 2.17: Population change for Limerick city, 1841-1911⁵¹



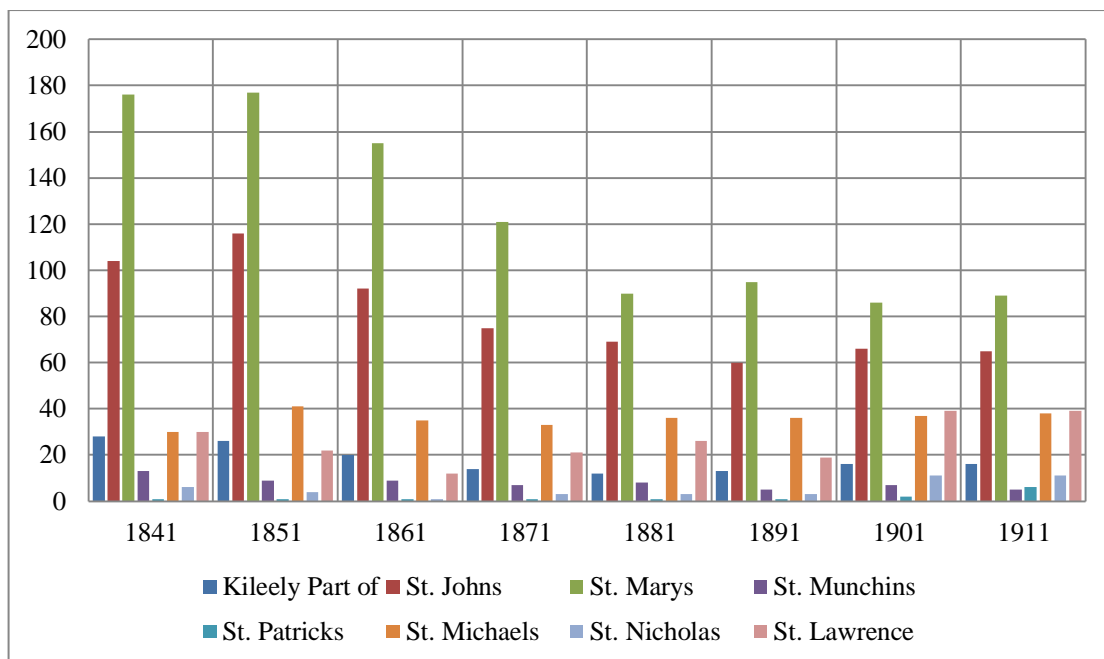
Although the census records display an overall decline in population for the city as a whole, the returns highlight an increase in St Michael’s parish, which consisted of the new urban development of Newtown Pery, which climbed from 15,068 people in 1821, to 21,178 people in 1901. The population living in St Michael’s parish peaked during the mid-nineteenth century. Population levels in St John’s and St Mary’s parishes continued to decrease over the nineteenth century. The possible population growth within St John’s parish could have been due to the number of people moving into the parish in search of cheap housing from rural areas. One of the reasons for the decrease within St John’s and St Mary’s parishes in the second half of the nineteenth century is possibly due to the availability of cheap housing in the tenements of the ‘new town’ from 1871 and the slum clearances that were taking place, in the ‘old town’ from the 1880s onwards.

⁵¹ Population numbers by parish are not available in the censuses after 1911.

2.3.1 Population density by parish

Population density (*figure 2.19*) for the city also highlights important population trends.

Figure 2.18: Population density by parish in Limerick city, 1841-1911



St Michael’s parish recorded the highest population levels for the city, but recorded the lowest population density which suggests that overcrowding was not as prevalent in St Michael’s parish. St John’s parish contained a high⁵² population level up to the 1850s and was recorded as second highest population density, suggesting that the area was densely populated and as a result overcrowded. St Mary’s parish recorded a continuous decline in population levels, although the area of the parish is significantly smaller than that of St John’s and St Michael’s, and as a result the population density is the highest in the whole city also suggesting overcrowding. However both the older parishes (St John’s and St Mary’s) recorded decreases in both population and population density from 1851 onwards although conditions did not improve and overcrowding and poor health conditions were still prevalent. Housing stock and housing type did not help in this matter as housing was in short supply and many houses only contained one or two rooms.

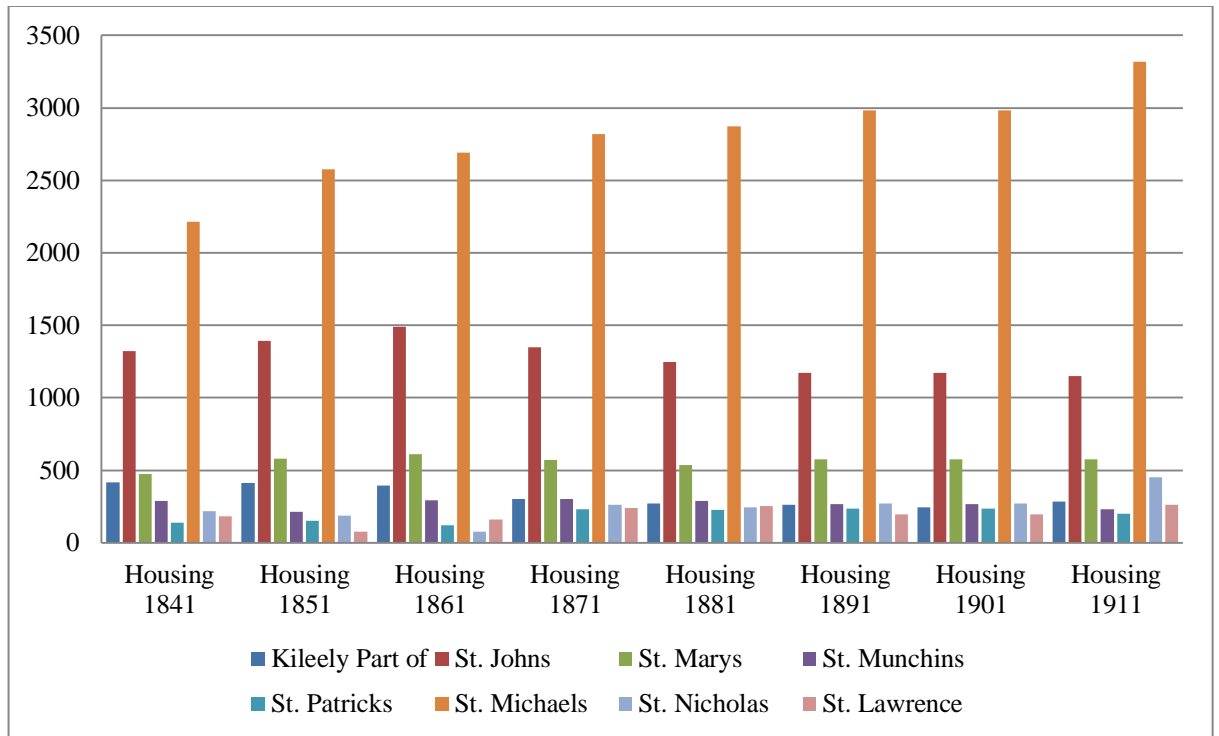
⁵² The average population per parish is c.6000 people. St. John’s remained above this figure.

Measuring population density at the street level is also significant. Not all houses on a street may be classified as overcrowded but some may have been more overcrowded than others. Population density at the street level can allow the researcher to examine particular areas of interest and using the household returns from the census can provide valuable information as to the makeup of the people occupying these residences.

Highlighting the relationship between population density and overcrowding is important. Population density is affected by the space within a location. If an area or street is narrow and confined, this means that the houses will be, and as a result the people living in this area will be crowded together. Population in older parts of the town are more densely populated due to the size of the areas and the number of houses available. The types of houses also affect the overcrowding as housing types vary within the city and some families have larger families than others. Broader street networks do not appear as confined and overcrowding due to the perceived available space however individual houses may tell a different story whereby a family may occupy a single room.

Examining the number of houses is also significant. *Figure 2.19* displays the number of houses in each parish. The average person per house for 1841 was approximately nine, but by 1911, the average had dropped to approximately seven. The number of houses available does not however reflect the size and quality of each building or the number of rooms available for that building. Housing types vary with regard to place. Different parts of the city contain different housing sizes and types. Lanes off the main thoroughfares in St Mary' and St John's parishes were small with usually only one or two rooms. One room was usually the kitchen or living area which was often a bedroom by night if the house was overcrowded. These houses were usually second or third class in quality (based on building materials and structure). Houses on the main streets then varied in size and were generally second class in quality. Other houses may then be higher in class, such as first class housing, but may also experience poor living conditions due to overcrowding. *Figure 2.20* displays the number of houses in each parish from 1841 to 1911. From the graph it is clear that the number of houses in St Michael's parish were increasing, while the houses in St John's are decreasing and St Mary's parish remained the same.

Figure 2.19: Number of houses in each parish in Limerick, 1841-1911



2.4 Conclusion

Limerick city when through many phases of development before the nineteenth century and as a result there are differences in the layout of the city. There were several boundaries used in dividing the city with the parish and the DED being the most reliable in identifying administrative areas. An examination of population was also important to look at the social profile

Chapter Three: Methodology and sources

3.1 Introduction

Historical sources are intended for a particular use, although in many cases, data may be extrapolated by the researcher for other uses. Records were kept for several purposes such as the governing of an urban and rural environment, the health condition of the population, the counting of people on a national scale and also private records such as diaries for personal use. Using the sources available allows the researcher to gather data about particular areas and people in order to undertake a comprehensive research.

Qualitative methodologies in historical studies predominantly rely on observations and data inferred from reports, pictures, photos, travel accounts and oral history accounts. They allow an inquiry from the 'inside', often humanistic, personal and subjective to a society's attitudes and beliefs. These primary sources describe the conditions of the people living in particular environments, and also the government and landscape at that particular time. Limerick city's special minute books are a good start when examining health related topics, providing information on houses, street cleaning and fever outbreaks. However, these reported may be favourable to the Corporation (the body which compiled them, in this case Limerick Corporation).

Quantitative methodologies examine a series of numbers, statistics or empirical facts which rely on deductive reasoning (macro to the micro, general to specific) in order to reach conclusions from sources such as the *General Rate Valuation Lists* which was collected by the local Corporation in the city. These lists provide information on the value of the buildings in Limerick, their location and the description of the property. Using mixed methodologies (both qualitative and quantitative) enables the researcher to get a comprehensive understanding of particular trends and why these trends occurred by combining figures with facts.

3.2 Primary sources

Primary sources consist of contemporary nineteenth century and early twentieth century source material which are relevant to the period and topic under investigation. Primary sources differ from secondary sources as they were compiled by people living within the timeframe and can offer first-hand knowledge. These sources were compiled by different people for different reasons. It is necessary to utilise these primary sources in

order to provide an in-depth understanding of the general living conditions and issues relevant to the urban poor in Limerick City during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These sources vary in type and scale.

3.2.1 National and local sources

A wide range of primary sources are available to the urban historical geographer. These include the national cartographic sources, such as the 1st edition six inch OS map of Limerick City (OS 1:10,560, County Limerick, sheet 5, surveyed 1840-41 (printed 1844)), or the later valuation office maps, produced in connection with the Primary Valuation of Ireland (Manuscript revision books and related maps, Limerick city, c. 1857-1971 (VO)). In order to interpret and work with these maps, it was also necessary to understand and analyse the contents of state sources such as *House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* (the most enhanced papers dating from 1801-1922), the National Archives of Ireland census records (taken every ten years from 1821 onwards) and the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* (1848-1864).⁵³ Limerick based sources such as the Minute Books (1807-1946) of the various public bodies, for example *Limerick Corporation Minute Books* (1691-1841, covering the area of Englishtown and Irishtown)⁵⁴ and the *City Council Reformed Minute Books* (1841-1899, covering the majority of Limerick City)⁵⁵ and *General Rate Valuation Lists* (1893-1938)⁵⁶ will aid in the examination of the conditions present in Limerick city during the timeframe being studied and also how the government addressed the issues. The Primary Valuation of Ireland provides a valuation of the dwellings within Limerick City around the mid-nineteenth century, while the General Valuation Books provide an examination of a valuation of dwellings at the turn of the century. Other minute books of interest include the *Bedford Row Lying-In Hospital Minute Book* (1868-1971),⁵⁷ *St John's Fever and Lock Hospital Records* (1816)⁵⁸ and the *Board of Guardian Minute Books* (1842-1922).⁵⁹

An examination and evaluation of these sources will allow the researcher to firstly, identify different residential zones within the city, secondly, compare and contrast the

⁵³ Printed Tenement Valuation, Union of Limerick, 1850

⁵⁴ Limerick Corporation Minute Books, IE LA L/OC

⁵⁵ City Council Reformed Minute Books, IE LA L/MIN

⁵⁶ General Rate Valuation Books, L/FR/RB/2

⁵⁷ Bedford Row Lying-In Hospital Minute Book, 1868-1971, IE/LA/P5

⁵⁸ St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Records, 1816-1905, Microfilm in Limerick City Library

⁵⁹ Board of Guardian Minute Books, 1842-1922, IE/LA/BG110

different health conditions throughout the city and thirdly examine the role of the local government in tackling the health conditions and the housing problem.

3.2.2 Cartographic sources

Maps are graphic representations that facilitate a spatial understanding of things, concepts, conditions, processes or events in the human world⁶⁰

Cartography is an essential source for geographers. Maps display the wider historical geographical network for particular places at a particular time, highlighting the acres they enclosed and the people they housed. They are an invaluable and significant tool in the reconstruction of the spatial and temporal changes of past environments and can aid in the examination of social (residential) and economic (location of piggeries, slaughter houses, stores) patterns. The mapping of urban areas therefore frames the landscape and allows the researcher to see changes that occurred in its character over time. They can also display the landscape across different years allowing the researcher to examine changes that have taken place, whether the city has expanded or where changes in general urban physiognomy have occurred. Historic maps can highlight the changing spatial patterns of town planning during the nineteenth century.⁶¹

Recent publications that have highlighted the significance of historical mapping, including publications by the *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*,⁶² *Mapping the Great Irish Famine*.⁶³ *Mapping London, Making Sense of the City*⁶⁴ and *Reading the Maps: A Guide to the Historic Towns Atlas*.⁶⁵

The IHTA was an essential part of this research as it provided a selection of OS maps at useful scales, and good quality facsimiles of historical maps which are not easily located otherwise. It also provides topographical information. Particularly valuable to this research was the IHTA map 2 for Limerick, which is a reconstruction at the

⁶⁰ J.B. Harley and D. Woodward (eds), 'Introduction', *The History of cartography, I, Cartography in prehistoric, ancient and medieval Europe and the Mediterranean* (Chicago and London, 1987), p. xvi.

⁶¹ Portrait of the City Conference, *Framing the Significance of Historic Urban Landscapes*, (Dublin, 2010).

⁶² E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010).

⁶³ L. Kennedy, *Mapping the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 1999).

⁶⁴ S. Foxell, *Mapping London, Making Sense of the City* (London, 2007).

⁶⁵ J. Prunty and H.B. Clarke, *A Guide to the Irish Historic Towns Atlas* (Dublin, 2011).

standardised scale of 1:2500 of the OS manuscript five foot town plan of 1840 which is held in the NAI (NAI, OS140). This was very useful to this research as it includes the streets, plot divisions and placenames, in fact all the information present on the 1840 OS map is to be found on the coloured IHTA map 2. The IHTA also included map 4, which was the OS map for 1900 at a scale of 1:5000.

The city underwent many changes between 1840 and 1900 with several streets being added and others were removed. Examples include a new lane leading from Nicholas Street to Peter's Cell in St Mary's Parish which does not appear in the 1840s map, but appears in the 1900 map (*see figures 3.1 and 3.2*). In some cases it was evident that laneways were cleared out while other streets saw the construction of new houses. In the map of 1900, many of the buildings were recorded, along with pumps and wells. Boundaries such as the wards and parishes were also more visible and represented by dotted lines.

Figure 3.1: Street layout, St Mary's parish, Limerick 1840 (IHTA, map 2, 1:2,500).

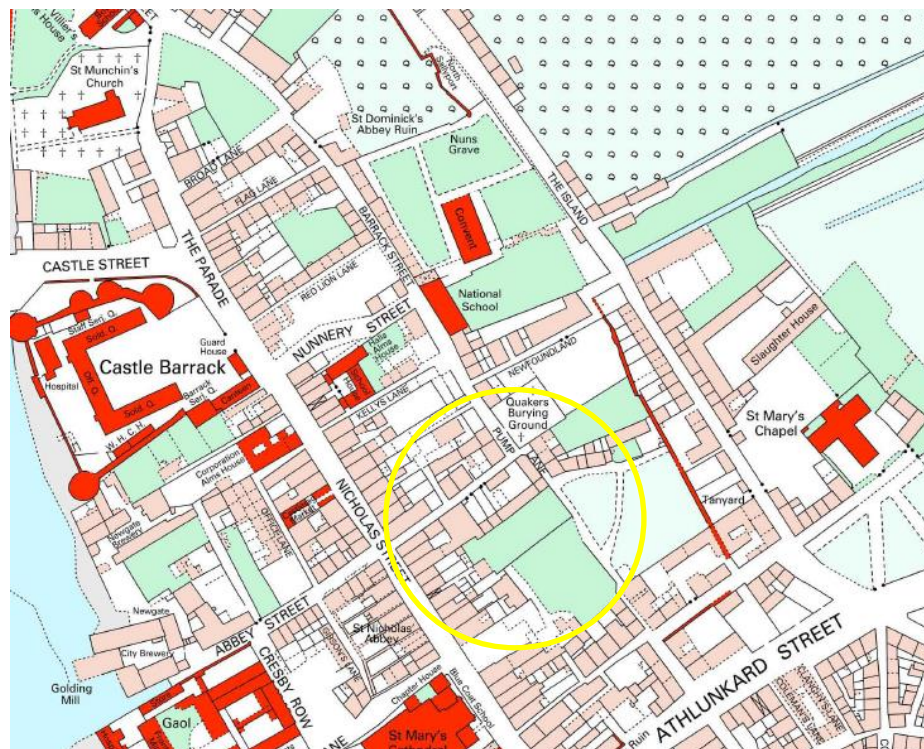
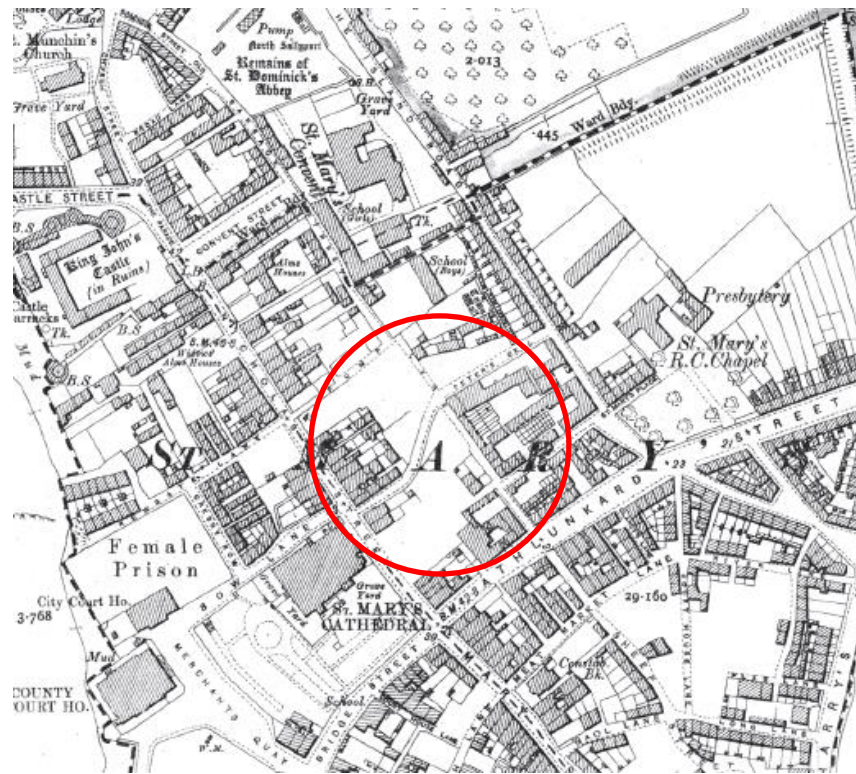
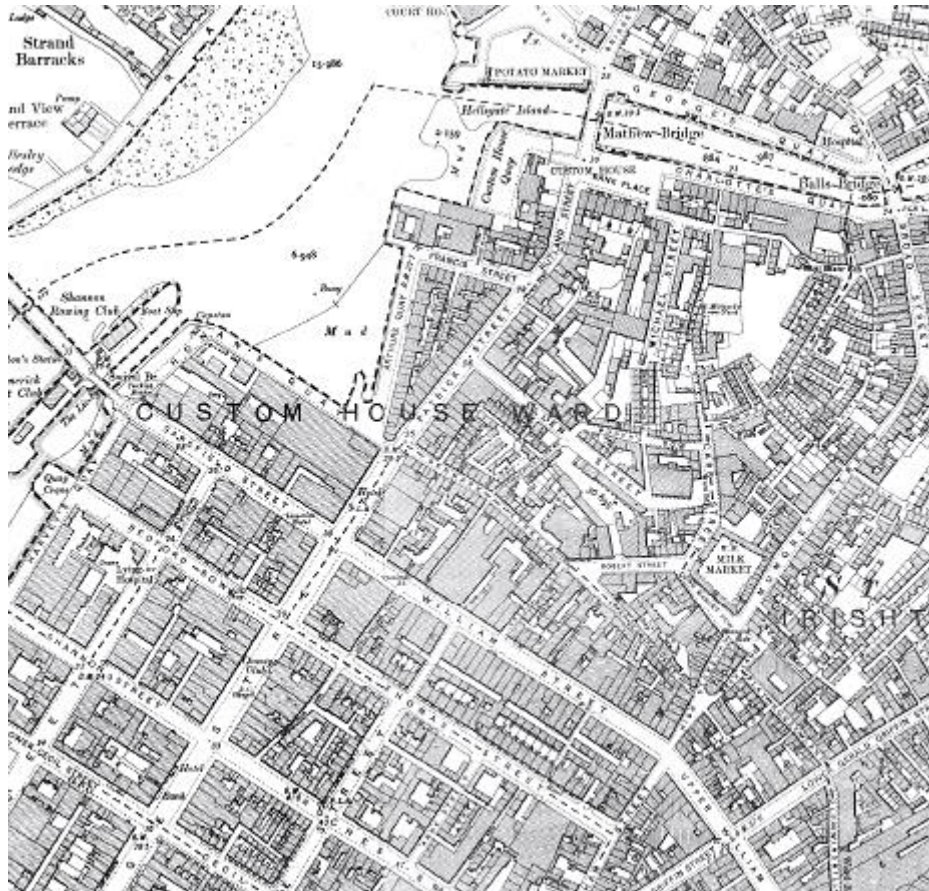


Figure 3.2: Street layout, St Mary's parish, Limerick 1900 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902).



IHTA map 4, Limerick in 1900, proved to be the most useful as it recorded the individual houses clearly. The streets were clearly defined and labelled which ensured accurate mapping for the researcher. The city was not developing as rapidly as it had done in previous decades and therefore a map of the city at 1900 proved the most consistent with street names while also providing the city at a stage in which it was almost completely built upon.

Figure 3.3: St Michael's parish in Limerick city, 1900 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)



.The IHTA also produced a series of facsimile maps which aided in the reconstruction of the historical geography of the town in terms of urban development and changes in street layout. Map 8 was a facsimile of John Speed's Limerick in 1610, which highlights the medieval core of the city and its medieval walls. Map 18 was a copy of Colles map for Limerick in 1769 which displayed a proposed urban development for Newtown Pery. Other important facsimiles include map 24 which provided a map of Limerick in 1850 displaying all valuation of £5 or more. This map proved complimentary to the thesis as the researcher mapped all values of properties under £5. This then creates a contrast between areas in the city where particular streets and lanes were wealthier than other parts of the city allowing the researcher to identify poverty clusters.

The topographical information was an essential component in the mapping of the research data. It provided details on the buildings dates, street dates, locations of wells and fountains, all of which were essential for the thesis. The topographical information

allows land use to be followed up to 1900 on particular sites. This was essential as many of the streets in Limerick had changed names between 1850 and 1900. The topographical information of the IHTA includes sections on population (no. 8) and housing (no. 9), drawn from the census returns. There is also much information to be found on manufacturing (no. 15) and education (no. 20), amongst other topics.

Mapping data was an important task in this thesis as it allowed the results to be interpreted at their fullest. Mapping of the data highlighted particular trends, or significant correlations between locations. Examples include the mapping of house values under £5 on IHTA map 4, 1900, and examining the location of these dwellings within particular parts of the city or whether they were spatially associated with particular types of activities. Mapping of obnoxious activities also aided in the understanding as to why these dwellings were low in value and also contributed to the understanding of poor health and social conditions within these areas. Using data from the Census of Population, the researcher mapped the number of people per room and highlighted particular areas within the city which were ‘overcrowded’.⁶⁶ The mapping of the data allowed the researcher to highlight particular spatial trends within the city and if these trends changed over time.

Some of the limitations of these maps however included difficulty in reading parts of the maps due to cracks and smears in which the researcher had to decipher which houses were matched which number when mapping from valuations and censuses. Some of the buildings were faded while some narrow lanes were not labelled. In some cases, house numbers did not accurately correspond to individual houses. Overlapping townlands recorded similar number for houses on the map, such as Sir Harry’s Mall being which was recorded in two overlapping townlands which presented problems for mapping. Mapping of boundaries also proved difficult as the boundaries were hard to define depending on the type of map and its legibility. Some maps did not contain any boundary lines on them, and there was no official ward boundary map for Limerick city.

⁶⁶ More than two people per room, based on the *Cost of Living of the Working Classes*, 1908.

3.3 Documentary sources

Documentary sources proved to be the most useful source during this research. ‘Documentary sources may be defined loosely as records relating to individuals or groups of individuals that have been generated in the course of their daily lives.’⁶⁷ Documentary sources were available at the national level and continued down to the local level allowing the researcher to place the development of Limerick in a national context. There are many different types of documentary sources available to the historical geographer which included state records (Parliamentary Papers) and non-state/private records (diaries, letters and photographs). Using a mixture of sources can enable the reader to see differences in view from the government and the people. When using documentary sources it is necessary to apply a careful methodology in order to extract the relevant information and understand the society at that time.

3.3.1 State records

The nineteenth century is full of records on urban governance. Counting the people through the censuses of population became a common subject, while the registration of births, deaths and marriages was also made compulsory.⁶⁸

The most useful state records for this research included the Parliamentary Papers. The term *Parliamentary Papers* covered all the published records of the activities of the British Parliament, however more precisely it refers in particular to the selection of papers which came before the House of Commons. The subjects covered by the parliamentary papers read ‘like a litany of human problems consequent upon the industrial revolution’⁶⁹ under issues such as enclosure, laws, trade, pollution, wages, employment, migration patterns, sanitation and charities etc. The papers are a unique way to firstly understand the social conditions and characteristics associated with poverty, ill-health and insufficient housing and its interlinked relationship with the government, secondly to examine the economic conditions in both urban and rural Ireland that led to the distress and upheaval of society and thirdly and perhaps more importantly, allows the researcher to examine the workings of the administrative processes (or lack thereof), the attitudes and beliefs of the members of Parliament on

⁶⁷ R. Miller and J. Brewer, *The A-Z of Social Research*, ‘A Dictionary of Key Social Science Research Concepts’, (London, 2003) p. 80.

⁶⁸ C. Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester, 2006) p. 23.

⁶⁹ Irish University Press, *British Parliamentary Papers Catalogue*, (Middlesex, 2005) p. 3.

society and selected events. The policing, control and relief of the poor by State had no effective local administration to enforce legislation⁷⁰ and ‘had never intended to cope with such unprecedented demands and duties.’⁷¹

The collections of works are a rich source for those interested in political matters. The papers were compiled by a select committee (from the Members of Parliament) to examine, report and deal with certain problems and also included minutes of evidence. They are a good way to examine the opinions of the committee during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, while also providing evidence to the actual state of the people and areas in distress. Examples include *Report from the Select Committee on the State of the Poor in Ireland, 1830*;⁷² *First, Second and Third Reports from the State of Disease, and the Condition of the Labouring Poor, in Ireland, 1819*;⁷³ *First report from the Select Committee on Medical Poor Relief; together with minutes of evidence, 1844*;⁷⁴ *First report from the Select Committee on distress from want of employment; together with the proceedings of the committee, and minutes of evidence, 1895*.⁷⁵

Parliamentary Papers also began to focus attention on providing relief for the poor although in many cases it was minimal.⁷⁶ Several reports on the conditions of the poor were also viewed by the researcher. It was made clear from reports the filthy conditions in which the poor lived and were constantly emphasised that they were the lowest class of society. Little emphasis was placed by the Parliament into the reasons why this was the case until later in the century. The parliamentary papers provided clear imagery of the actual conditions and contributed to data collect.

⁷⁰ J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, a study in urban geography*, (Dublin, 2000) p. 336.

⁷¹ L. Irwin, *Limerick, History and Society* (Dublin, 2009) p. 405

⁷² *Poor inquiry (Ireland). Appendix (C.)--Parts I. and II. Part I. Reports on the state of the poor, and on the charitable institutions in some of the principal towns; with supplement containing answers to queries. Part II. Report on the city of Dublin, and supplement containing answers to queries; with addenda to appendix (A.), and communications, 1836* (35) xxx

⁷³ *First, Second and Third Reports from the Select Committee on the State of Disease, and the Condition of the Labouring Poor, in Ireland, 1819* (314) viii.

⁷⁴ *First report from the Select Committee on Medical Poor Relief; together with minutes of evidence, 1844* (312).

⁷⁵ *First report from the Select Committee on distress from want of employment; together with the proceedings of the committee, and minutes of evidence, 1895* (111).

⁷⁶ The reports from the early nineteenth century frequently defined the poorer classes as vagrants, beggars, mindless, idle and worthless. These views on the poor were biased remarks. It must be remembered that not all the poor were beggars or involved in crime and promiscuity. As the century progressed, it was clearer that the image of the poor was changing.

Reports from the Royal Commissioners, Department Committees or other investigatory bodies are also of equal importance, although were not appointed by the House and did not report to it. Their authority was the Crown or the Minister. In short, their reports came before the House of Commons ‘by command’, meaning that they were not to be printed but just presented.⁷⁷ Unlike the Select Committee which consisted of Members of Parliament, the Royal Commissioners consisted of committee members who had no connection with politics but were considered experts on the subjects to be investigated. Papers of interest include *Royal Commission on the Poorer Classes in Ireland, 1833*;⁷⁸ *Inquiry into the State of Large Towns and Populous Districts, 1845*;⁷⁹ *His Majesties Commission for Inquiry into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Law, 1863*⁸⁰; *Reports of her Majesties Commission for the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes, 1884-1885*.⁸¹

The reports were also useful to the research. The richest information on housing conditions and the lead up to housing reforms came from the commissions. As they were considered experts in the field, they contributed greatly to the changes which occurred toward the latter end of the nineteenth century. These reports provided information on the state of several towns, allowing the researcher to examine similarities between towns and cities, both industrial and non-industrial and allow Limerick to be placed in context (for example. Limerick was second to Dublin in terms of overcrowding, retail prices and rent). Several reports also included solutions to issues and the enforcement of Acts and Regulations to reduce the issues present within cities. Examples of this include the *Housing of the Working Class Bill, 1913*⁸², which implemented after the Inquiry into the *Housing of the Working Classes Report in 1884*.⁸³ The Bill amended and added powers of the local government and those of local

⁷⁷ Irish University Press, *British Parliamentary Papers Catalogue*, (Middlesex, 2005) p. 3.

⁷⁸ *First report from His Majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the condition of the poorer classes in Ireland, with appendix (A.) and supplement. 1833 (369).xxxii.*

⁷⁹ *First report of the commissioners for inquiring into the state of large towns and populous districts. 1844 (572).*

⁸⁰ *His Majesties Commission for Inquiry into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Law, 1863 (1834) vii.*

⁸¹ *Reports of her Majesties Commission for the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes, 1884-1885, (c.4547) xxxi.*

⁸² *Housing of the Working Classes, 1913. A bill to provide for the better application and enforcement of the Housing of the Working Classes Acts and to amend Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899. (c.452).*

⁸³ *First report of Her Majesty's commissioners for inquiring into the housing of the working classes, 1884-5 (C.4402) [C.4402-I] [C.4402-II]*

authorities and drew attention to enforcement of powers relating to housing. Issues such as house improvements, demolition, closure and provisions all became regulated under this act.

3.3.2 The Censuses of Population

The *Censuses of Population* were collated by governments to establish numbers and characteristics of a country's inhabitants. The first full census was taken in 1821 and were carried out every ten years and continued up until 1911. No census was taken in 1921 due to the War of Independence and only the general statistics of the subsequent census of 1926 are available to the public.

The censuses from 1821⁸⁴ record data for the area, houses and population, while the census from 1871 onwards provide information regarding ages, civil condition, occupation, birthplaces, religion and education. The two most in-depth available censuses include the 1901 and 1911 censuses, as they provide all the data from the House and Building Forms, Household Returns Form and the Enumerator Abstracts. This was significant because these are the only two censuses available at the micro level and provide information on the individual people living within the houses. This was useful to the research as it allowed a socio-economic profile to be undertaken of particular houses in order to examine a relationship between literacy levels, employment, family size and housing type. The census returns are arranged by townland, or in urban areas, by street which made it easier to map particular families and their type of house to particular streets. Different types of families lived in different areas of the city and in different housing types. Compiling the census data with the Primary Valuation data and the later General Valuation records allowed the researcher to examine housing value, housing type, social profile, occupation and house quality together.

In the 1901 and 1911 censuses, the Household Returns (Form A, *figure 3.4*) provide information on every member in the household including, name, age, sex, relationship to head of household, religion, occupation, marital status, birthplace and language. The census House and Building Forms (Form B1, *figure 3.5*) provide information on the dwellings, the number of windows, type of roof (slated, thatched) and the number of rooms occupied by each family, resulting in a classification of first, second, third or

⁸⁴ Originally organised by townland, civil parish, barony and county.

fourth class. The Enumerator Abstract (Form N, *figure 3.6*) also provides information on the number of people (male and female) and the religious denomination for each house on the street.

Figure 3.4: Household returns (form A) for Arthur's Quay in Limerick, 1901⁸⁵

NSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.
(Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.)

FORM A. No. on Form B. 2

of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 31st of MARCH, 1901.

No.	NAME and SURNAME.		RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE.	SEX.	RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	MARRIAGE.	WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If Deaf and Dumb, Blind, or Lame.
	Christian Name.	Surname.	Head of Family, Son, Daughter, Servant, Lodger, &c.	Roman Catholic, Protestant, &c.	None, or specify.	Years of age.	Male or Female.	State the Particular Rank, Profession, Trade, or other Occupation of each person. Children or young persons attending a school, or at any educational institution, should be returned as "Pupils." (Fill in the column for apprentices to read the Instructions on the other side.)	"Married," "Single," "Widow," "Divorced," or "Not Married."	If in Ireland, state in what County or City, or in what other part of the Kingdom.	Write the word "None" in this column, or, if the person speaks Irish, or speaks both Irish and English, write "Irish," or "Irish and English," or "Irish and English and English."	Write the number of fingers of the right and left hands.
1	Mr	James Hogan	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	60	M	Leading House Maker	Widow	Limerick City		
2	Thomas	Hogan	Son	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	32	M	Painter	Not Married	Limerick City		
3	James	Hogan	Son	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	30	M	Carpenter	Not Married	Limerick City		
4	Pat	Conran	Lodger	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	30	M	Printer	Not Married	Limerick City		
5	John	Corvins	Lodger	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	30	M	Labourer	Not Married	Killiney		
6	James	Common	Lodger	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	38	M	Tailor	Not Married	Limerick City		
7	James	Common	Lodger	Roman Catholic	Read & Write	26	M	Tailor	Not Married	Limerick City		
8	Richard	Shuhig	do	do	do	32	M	Civil Engineer	Widow	Limerick City		
9	Thomas	Bulleugh	Lodger	Roman Catholic	White	36	M	do	do	do		
10	Pat	Bonsidine	do	R. Catholic	Read & Write	31	M	Painter	Not Married	Cork		
11	John	Bonnet	do	R. Catholic	Read & Write	34	M	Labourer	Not Married	Limerick City		
12	Patrick	Connolly	do	R. Catholic	Read & Write	26	M	Taylor	Not Married	Limerick City		
13	William	McGinnis	do	R. Catholic	Read & Write	28	M	Labourer	Not Married	Limerick City		
14	Michael	Libbe	do	R. Catholic	do	50	M	Tailor	Not Married	Limerick City		
15	Patrick	Doohan	do	R. Catholic	Read & Write	21	M	Labourer	Not Married	Limerick City		

I hereby certify, as required by the Statute 63 Vic., cap. 6, s. 6 (1), that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

James Hogan (Signature of Enumerator.)

Mrs James Hogan (Signature of Head of Family)

⁸⁵ Form A highlights the families living within a house. This form highlights the relationship to head, the ages, the occupations, religious denominations and provides useful information for examining socio-economic profiles. It is clear from this example that there are 15 people living in this house and that some people are lodgers and not family members.

Figure 3.5: House and building form (form B1) for Arthur's Quay in Limerick, 1901⁸⁶

1.—HOUSE AND BUILDING RETURN.

For Law Union, *Suareck* District Electoral Division, *Arthur's Quay, Limerick* Townland, *St. Michael's* Parish.

Urban District, *No. 3* Times or Villages, *Arthur's Quay, Limerick* Street, *Arthur's Quay, Limerick* City, Urban District, Town, or Village, a separate return should be made for each portion.

No.	Description of House	Built	PARTICULARS OF INHABITED HOUSES							No. of Families	Name of the Head of each Family residing in the House	FAMILIES, &c.				Name of the Proprietor (if not the same as the Head of the Family) and whether the same appears in the Census
			Walls	Roof	Windows	Doors	Rooms	Water	Gas			No. of Persons	No. of Males	No. of Females	Persons under 16	
1	Built <i>immediately</i>	Yes	1	1	5	6	13	7	5	<i>Margaret Barrett</i>	1	1	1	1	<i>Barrett</i>	
										<i>Richard Conroy</i>	1	1	1	1		
										<i>John Peirce</i>	3	5	1	1		
										<i>Henry Rogers</i>	2	8	2	2		
										<i>Thomas Donnan</i>	2	5	2	2		
2	Built Shop	Yes	1	1	5	7	14	7	1	<i>John Rogers</i>	8	25	2	2		
3	Built <i>immediately</i>	No														
4	Built <i>immediately</i>	Yes	1	1	5	7	14	7	7	<i>William Booth</i>	4	10	2	2		
										<i>Maurice Conroy</i>	2	7	2	2		
										<i>Stephen Conroy</i>	1	3	2	2		
										<i>John Conroy</i>	1	1	1	1		
										<i>John Conroy</i>	1	6	2	2		
										<i>John Butler</i>	1	1	1	1		
										<i>Thomas Butler</i>	1	6	2	2		
5	Built <i>immediately</i>	Yes	1	1	5	7	14	7	5	<i>Michael Hamon</i>	2	6	2	2		
										<i>James Joyce</i>	2	5	2	2		
										<i>Richard Conroy</i>	1	2	1	1		

Figure 3.6: Enumerator abstract (form N) for Bank Place in Limerick, 1901⁸⁷

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

Form N.—Enumerator's Abstract for a Townland or Street.

County, *Limerick* Parliamentary Division, *Suareck* Poor Law Union, *Suareck* District Electoral Division, *Bank Place* Townland or Street, *Arthur's Quay, Limerick* City, Urban District, Town or Village, *Arthur's Quay, Limerick* Parliamentary Borough, *St. Michael's* Parish.

Abstract showing the Number of Dwelling-houses, Families, and Persons in the above-named Townland or Street, also the Religious Profession (so far as ascertained), of the People enumerated by *John Rogers*.

Note.—This Abstract should be carefully filled by the Enumerator, and attached in front of the File of the several Forms for the persons enumerated in the Townland or Street to which it relates.

When a Townland or Street is situated in two Parliamentary Divisions, or in more than one District Electoral Division or Parish, or is partly within and partly without a Parliamentary Borough, City, Urban District, Town or Village, a separate Abstract should be made for each portion.

Approved: *D. HARRIS, Dublin Clerk, 21st December, 1900.* *ROBERT E. MATHEWS, Registrar-General, T. J. BELLINGHAM BRADY, ROBERT J. BRAW, Commissioners.*

These spaces will be filled up at the Census Office. *64* *Annexed in 327th* *Vol. 3*

No. in this Form	DWELLING HOUSES			FAMILIES		PERSONS				RELIGIOUS PROFESSION										No. in this Form
	Number	Number	Number	Males	Females	Total	Roman Catholic	Protestant Episcopal	Other	Presbyterian	Methodist	Independent	Baptist	Other	All other	Information				
1	1	1		3	5	7	12	5	7											
2	1																			
3	1																			
4	1			4	8	9	17	7	6	1	8									
5	1			5	14	19	32	14	19											
6	1			5	9	19	28	9	19											
7	1			5	20	12	33	20	13											
8																				
9																				
10																				
11																				
Total	5	5		22	36	67	123	53	64	1	8									

Note.—The designation "Protestant Episcopal" includes, besides the members of the "Church of Ireland" or "Irish Church," the members of the Church of England, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and any other Protestant Episcopal Church.

⁸⁶ It is clear that three houses from Form B1 are subdivided as No.1 contains five families, No.4 contains seven families and No.5 contains five families. The number of rooms occupied by each family is also listed.

⁸⁷ The enumerator abstract separates the number of women and men living on a street and also highlights the number of people within a religious profession such as Roman Catholic.

The censuses allow the researcher to map the population available within the city at both the macro and micro level. The basic geographical units carried out by the census included the county, District Electoral Division (DED), townland or street. This is a hierarchical structure in order to make searching easier within the county.⁸⁸ The county is the largest territorial unit. From the county, the census divided into the DEDs and streets/lanes.

Although the census was intended for the use of counting people on a national scale, it also has other uses to the researcher. The researcher examined the different aspects of the census, such as location of houses, house type (number of rooms, class of house), occupation/activity (either of the house, i.e. lodging houses, or of the people, i.e. bootmaker) or living conditions (depending on the number of people per house and per room).

Using this information, the number of people living within the city and each parish or DED, and the number of available houses, the researcher could then determine the density of the population in the city and separate areas. The researcher could also determine which parts of the city were potentially overcrowded and provide a possible indication as to poor living conditions. The 1901 and 1911 census also allowed the researcher to see how many houses were occupied by one or more families, and how many families occupied one-roomed tenements (determining the average number of people/room and possible poor health locations). The researcher identified particular areas which contained tenement buildings. Using the occupational data, the researcher was able to associate particular types of occupations with particular groups of people who were experiencing poverty in particular areas.

The class of the houses was also obtained from the census of population and provided information relating to the structure of the house. Using this information, the researcher could determine if particular types of houses were associated with certain types of families in particular areas.

Other information extracted from the census included the location of tenement buildings and also the location of lodging houses which also provided indications to areas of poverty. The location of tenement buildings could be determined if there were several

⁸⁸ 'Digitization of Irish 1901 and 1911 Census Records', (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/about/index.html>)

families occupying one residence who may not have been directly related. Tenement buildings also indicated a separate unit of collections. Such places in Limerick included Arthur's Quay and Francis Street. It is difficult to distinguish between tenement buildings and lodging houses as they are quite similar with the number of people residing in them. In many cases, families generally occupy tenement buildings.

Limitations of the source included ink smears on the sheets, which made some figures illegible. Another issue was torn sheets, such as Arthur's Quay, 1901. Errors in the spelling of placenames was also deceiving as to whether these were new streets and also changes in street names and lanes from previous years.

3.3.3 The Primary Valuation of Ireland

The *Primary Valuation of Ireland*⁸⁹ was carried out between the years of 1848-1864 and acts as an important Census alternative as it provides details on the landlord or landowner, lessors, property description, where or not there was lodgers occupying the houses, the value and activity. The *Valuation (Ireland) Act of 1852* was one of the foundation statutes of the modern Irish rating system and was used to calculate the rates up until 1892. Its primary aim was to provide the value for each building/land in the country, while also providing a brief description of that property. It also provided information on where people lived (occupiers) in the mid-nineteenth century, the types of properties they possessed and the names of the lessors. It therefore provides an indication of the general state of the country's housing in the mid-nineteenth century. The valuation comprises of different sections. Associated books include House Books, Field Books and Tenure Books which also recorded details of the lands surveyed. The House Books provide information on the dwellings and out-houses. The Tenure Books provide information on whether the holding was leased or if the tenant occupied the dwelling at the will of the landlord. For this research, only the associated House Books were used as they contained information on the quality of the buildings.

The valuation was arranged by county, poor law union, parish and townland. The main tables recorded the following information: reference number (location on 6" OS Map), name of occupier of holding (tenement), names of immediate lessor (the person from which the holding was released), description of the property (house, office, land etc.),

⁸⁹ National Archives of Ireland: Printed Tenement Valuation, Union of Limerick, 1850

area of each holding, valuation of the holding and the total annual valuation of each holding.

The researcher used the valuation tables in order to obtain the location of the values of properties under £5. The value of properties under £5 was significant as they mainly represented buildings of a poorer quality and were generally more associated with extreme poverty. E. O’Flaherty had previously mapped all values above £5 in the Irish Historic Towns Atlas, to highlight the significant spatial gap between wealth and poverty within the city. It was hoped that the researcher would be able to understand the spatial patterns of the buildings under £5 and whether or not these properties were associated with poverty.

The values under £5 were divided up into three categories. This was to emphasise the different levels of house quality (for example, houses under £1 were often the poorest in quality) and also if there was a pattern in the location of houses. Those under £1 were in the lowest category and often comprised of stables. Those valued between £1 and £3 and were associated with small houses, offices and yards. Those houses valued between £3-5 were generally houses in better condition and in some cases included cellars. Breaking the houses into different categories allowed the researcher to identify different spatial patterns of the houses across the city and also contributed to possible sizes of the buildings.

Table 3.1: Colour coding for mapping Limerick’s valuations, 1850-1935

<i>Colour Representation</i>	<i>Valuation</i>
Yellow	Under £1
Orange	£1-3
Red	£3-5

Those properties which were valued under £1 were predominantly located in the laneways and back alleys within the older parts of the city. Those valued between £1-3 were usually located in laneways too, but were not as confined to these lanes and were also located on secondary streets. Any house valued between £3-5 was usually located nearer to the main street or in some cases, on the main street. These houses were spatially clustered in the older parts of the city and were excluded from the new town

with the exception of stables. Other features associated with low value include poor housing conditions, which included houses often reported as uninhabitable, and also houses which were small in size.

The valuation was also used to locate properties where subdivision was occurring. These were not limited to properties under £5. This provided information on the possible introduction of the tenement system in the city whereby houses were being sublet to numerous families. In addition, the location of all cellar dwellings was also noted and mapped. This allowed the researcher to identify other potential areas of poverty which may have been concealed if an analysis had been limited to properties under £5.

The researcher also extracted information from the Valuation on the location of obnoxious activities (such as slaughter houses, piggeries) and lodging houses. The function of these properties was more important than the value and as a result, all properties were mapped regardless of value. The obnoxious activities were often located in the midst of the houses, busy streets and lanes where the urban poor were residing and were often considered unhealthy due to their nature and caused health issues for the public. The values for these activities varied depending on size and location and scale of the activity. As a result all values were included in the mapping of this data. Living in close proximity to these activities may have caused serious health issues for the people surrounding it. Using this information, along with health records allowed the researcher to determine particular areas of illness and explanations as to why.

The significance of extracting information relating to the location of lodging houses was to determine the numbers of people living within these houses and the possible living conditions associated with these houses. Lodging houses were often houses of promiscuity, although in other cases, these houses became homes to families who could not afford or find shelter elsewhere. It was hoped that extracting this information would allow the researcher to identify particular areas of the city where lodging houses might exist and what type of houses they were. 'Lodgers' were also recorded under the names of the occupiers, and often signified lodging houses. The values for these houses also varied in value, depending on size of the building and location of that building. As a result, all lodging houses were mapped for this study (above and below £5) in order to determine if there were particular areas of lodging houses, and particular types of

lodging houses and if they had an association with poverty. Mapping of the values into separate categories would allow the researcher to examine the size of the house and using the census would allow the researcher to examine the number of people living within these houses. They were grouped under the following categories, similar to that of the house values:

Table 3.2: Colour classification for mapping Limerick’s valuations, 1850-1935

<i>Colour Classification</i>	<i>Valuation</i>
Yellow	Under £1
Orange	£1-3
Red	£3-5
Blue	£5 plus

Using a colour scheme allowed consistency in value and location of the buildings (while also allowing the researcher to examine areas of continuous lodging houses, obnoxious activities and poor residential value properties). Mapping values at various divisions allowed the researcher to examine the spatial relationship between obnoxious activities, lodging houses and residential properties.

After extracting the data on value for residential properties (under £5), and obnoxious activities and lodging houses, the researcher proceeded to map the data using the first editions 25” Ordnance Survey Valuation Maps in order to examine the spatial patterns and isolate potential areas of poor housing and deprivation. Due to the colour coding classification, it was clear that certain properties of certain values were located in small lanes and alleyways. Those properties valued at £3-5 were generally located on the main streets in the older parts of the city. Obnoxious activities, such as piggeries, were generally located off side streets, in the midst of housing. Without mapping this data, it would be difficult for the researcher to examine these types of spatial patterns. Mapping the lodging houses separately also contributed rich spatial data to the research, as it allowed the researcher to examine prominent areas of ‘lodgers’. Using the census social data in conjunction with the valuation allowed the researcher to determine whether or not these properties continued to be associated with poverty throughout the time frame being studied.

Issues that occurred when using the valuation data included mapping the data when two or more streets overlapped into different townlands. Street names appeared to be changing frequently in Limerick over the course of the nineteenth century and in some cases, street names mentioned in the valuation records did not correspond with the maps. Another issue presented to the researcher was the spelling of names which in some cases appeared as different streets, such as Piggott’s Lane and Pickett’s Lane, which were the same lane spelt differently.

3.3.4 The Primary Valuation of Ireland House Books

The *Primary Valuation of Ireland House Books* were used to provide information on the quality of the individual properties in relation to the solidity of the structure (quality number), and also to the age and repair (quality letter). The books provide a number for each property and also a list of buildings on that property, to correspond with the Primary Valuation of Ireland (although in some cases, streets or houses did not correspond). The books also provided information on the rate of measure,⁹⁰ valuator’s estimate, rent paid and any extra notes which may have been included by the enumerators. For the purpose of this research, the rent paid proved useful in order to see which houses paid low rents and which houses paid high rents.

Buildings were divided into ‘slate’ or ‘thatched’ buildings and then into five different classifications (*table 3.3*), with each of these having three conditions; new, medium and old. In some cases, thatched houses still existed and were mapped separately from slated houses due to their classification and structure.

Table 3.3: Quality number and description of properties for valuations, 1850 (Printed Tenement Valuation, Union of Limerick, 1850)

<i>Quality No.</i>	<i>Description of Property</i>
1	Slated house or office built with stone or brick and lime mortar
2	Thatched house or office built with stone or brick and lime mortar
3	Thatched house or office with dry stone walls pointed
4	Basement of 1
5	Thatched offices with dry stone walls

⁹⁰ In order to determine the value of a house, the valuator must first take the measurement of the house. This includes the length, breadth and height.

These conditions were subdivided as follows:

Table 3.4: Quality letter and description of properties for valuations, 1850

<i>Quality Letter</i>	<i>Description of Property</i>
A+	Built or ornamented with cut stone, and a superior solidity and finish
A	Very substantial building, and finished without cut stone ornament
A-	Ordinary building and finish or either of the above when built 20 years
B+	Not new, but in sound order and good repair
B	Slightly decayed, but in good repair
B-	Deteriorated by age and not in perfect repair
C+	Old, but in repair
C	Old, but out of repair
C-	Old, dilapidated, scarcely habitable

The House Books information on the rent paid was usually determined by the rate of measure and the quality of the buildings. If the rent was high, it may have indicated a good quality building, and if the rent was low, this may have been due to the poor quality of the house. Location also played a determining factor on the amount of rent paid. Rents in St Michael's Parish were significantly higher than those in St Mary's and St John's Parishes. Another reason for the high rents in particular areas may be due to the subletting of individual rooms within a house, rather than one rent for the whole house. They also provided an indication as to the economic status of the poorer classes who would not have been able to afford high valued rents if they were poorly employed or had a large family to support. This meant that poorer people were more inclined to live in areas where the rents of houses were lower.

Figure 3.7: Sample extract, house book for Irishtown, Limerick, c. 1850

City Limerick											Townland of			
No.	Name & Description	Local	Street	Plot	Quality	Number of Windows	Rate per Acre	Amount of Taxes	Gross Amount	Valuer's Estimate	Yearly Rent	Value of Cattle	Lease Rent	
								£ s. d.	£ s. d.					
	<i>Mungro Street</i>													
	<i>Jones's Place</i>													
	<i>White</i>													
1	Office	15.6	19.65	0.1	26	4	0	9	9	10-0				
2	House	25.0	18.65	0.1	46	11	2	3	1	3-0	10/10 Monthly			
3	House	16.0	17.67	0.2	16	28	6	2	9	1-10	1/2			
4	House	17.0	16.67	0.2	16	29	6	2	3	1-10	1/4			
5	House	14.0	17.66	0.2	16	24	5	0	10	2-00	1/10 weekly			
6	House	14.0	17.66	0.2	16	24	5	0	10	2-00	1/10 weekly			
7	House	19.6	17.66	0.3	16	34	7	0	19	2-00	1/6			
	Small office							1	0	1-15-0				

The researcher also used the House Books in order to provide both quantitative and qualitative data relating to the quality of the properties under £5 and those properties over £5 which had been identified in the main table as of interest. Using this source in conjunction with the value of the properties, the researcher was also able to determine the houses which were both low in value and poor in quality and which were low in value and good in quality.

Figure 3.7 displays an extract from the House Book for Jones's Place in St John's Parish. It displays the number of the property and a description of the property such as a house or office. It also displays the name of the landlord above each listing. For example, house no.2 was owned by Catherine Glenn. The house quality was listed as 2B

(thatch house, slightly decayed but in good repair) and had an average rent of 1/2 per week.

Limitations of the source included lack of legibility, whereby the source was hand written, and often difficult to read. In some cases ink was smeared while in other cases data was left blank. Some houses were also mixed up in the books, making it difficult to map as the houses were not listed numerically. Another issue was missing data entries whereby data was not available to map. This included whole streets and lanes within the Englishtown and Irishtown areas.

3.3.5 Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages

The Registrar of Marriages was introduced in the earlier half of the nineteenth century (1845) as a way to record all non-Catholic marriages in Ireland. All births, deaths and marriages then became recorded from 1864 onwards. Registration was originally a by-product of the Victorian public health scheme which was based on the Poor Law system to provide relief for the poor. Each union from the Poor Law system was divided into dispensary districts which subsequently became registrar districts for the registers. The registers were collected by a Registrar in each union and sent to the General Registers Office in Dublin.

The General Register of Deaths proved most useful for this research as they proved all data from deaths for the city of Limerick (1900-1930). These deaths were divided into separate sections under headings such as zymotic diseases, respiratory diseases, sporadic diseases etc., while also providing the age ranges for these deaths allowing an examination for the people most affected by diseases. These General Registers also provided information on the number of deaths within the workhouse for the city and also the hospitals. Using this data in conjunction with other sources (such as the Mount St Lawrence Burial Registers) allowed the researcher to examine the types of diseases people died from, their age range and also the places which recorded the majority of deaths.

3.4 Local sources

3.4.1 Introduction

The use of local sources is of utmost importance as it provides the relevant and original case study material. It is necessary to read about the people that have lived in the locality in order to understand the customs of the people and their lives during the

timeframe being discussed. Not only do local records provide information on what was happening at a national level, they also provide the micro details of the county, parishes and townlands which often get ignored at the national level. Local records may also provide information which is comparable to other cities in Ireland or may form a unique picture.

3.4.2 Local corporation records

Local corporation records were commissioned in each county borough in Ireland. The job of the local corporation was to record the on-going events within the city such as health, sanitation, crime, housing, fire prevention, environment, rates and all local administration. Under the *Municipal Corporations Act of 1840*,⁹¹ the Limerick Corporation was formed. The members of the local corporation held meetings weekly, fortnightly or monthly relating to matters of the city and recorded what was said in the various minute books. The books refer to issues such as sanitation, water supply, housing, local administration, rates, freemen and crime.

⁹¹ *Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act, 1840* (3 & 4, Vic., c. 108).

Figure 3.8: Sample extract, Limerick corporation special minute book, 1911 (LCA, L/SMIN/8/6).

1911 To forward a communication they received
1911 from Mr William Ryan complaining of the
unsanitary condition of his premises at 23
Upper Gerald Griffin St and requesting to be
furnished with the observations of the Council
thereon.

The letter from Mr Ryan called attention to the
state of the house yard and to. C and stated that
the Corporation and Sanitary Officers have it in
hands for over two years and though two doctors
Dr Gath and Graham inspected and reported
time after time to Mr Poacocks he never troubled
to come and look after it. The Landlady and
Mr Kennedy are old friends so he would go against
her. The yard is in a most terrible condition
wet and dirty and during the hot weather the smell
is awful. The landlady was taken to the Police Court
over it one year ago and got two months to set it
right but it is as near being done now as when
The to. C can't be used by anyone and the back
door threatens to fall every time it is touched

The special minute books for Limerick from the 1880s onward, are the most interesting minute books for examining the health and housing within the city and are well documented. These issues relating to health and housing became divided into appropriate catalogues for individual matters. These qualitative documents provide essential information on the actions and opinions of the local corporation within the city while also providing information on the sanitary conditions of the city. *Figure 3.8* refers to an issue with the sanitary condition of a yard on No.23 Upper Gerald Griffin Street. The council had made attempts to deal with the matter. The yard was reported to be in a wet and dirty condition and during the summer months the smell was ‘awful’.

The books also make reference to letters relating to the Public Health Committee and the Sanitary Committee although the whereabouts of these records is unknown. The books provide information on the conditions of the city and using this information

together with health related statistics allowed the researcher to understand the causes of disease within the city and also the effects on poor health from living in these environments. The researcher aimed to extract information relating to housing structure, housing type, poor quality housing and particular places where these issues related to. Other data extracted included the condition of the city, streets, quays and lanes. The researcher also aimed to extrapolate opinions of the local authorities when relating to the health conditions of the city and the public at large. The special minute books also provided information on the regulating of common lodging houses and obnoxious activities within the city. This data was essential to the research as they provided information on the economic aspects of living in the city and also on the conditions of these activities.

Special minute books relating to the health, sanitation, improvement and repairing of the city also provided invaluable information about the houses people lived in and the streets and lanes they were on, especially the poorer people in the older parts of the city. The minute books which examined these were divided up into different catalogues. The *Cleansing, Repairing, Improvement and Artisans' Dwelling Committee (1881-1924)*⁹² dealt with cleaning, repairs, improvement and artisans dwellings within the city. For the first few years in the early 1880s, the committee dealt mainly with cleaning issues, and from 1888, the Artisans' Dwellings were amalgamated. The *Public Health Committee (1885-1934)*⁹³ dealt with the sanitary services, including the inspection of slaughter houses, dairies, water supplies, housing conditions and medical issues. The later minute books of the Public Health Committee recorded the amount of work done since previous meetings, in order to determine if there were any improvements.⁹⁴

These special minute books enabled the researcher to examine the health conditions which existed within the city and if there were specific areas of the city which experienced the poorest conditions. The researcher also extracted information on water supply and to what extent the system was integrated within the city. Many of the streets and lanes remained without a water supply and sanitation facilities into the twentieth century, including areas such as Thomondgate, Carey's Road, parts of Garryowen. The later local authority reports from the 1890s to the 1920s provided information on the

⁹² LCA, L/SMIN/7/1-6

⁹³ LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1

⁹⁴ LCA, L/SMIN, 'Introduction'.

condition of the houses in certain parts of the city (including Lady's Lane, Gorman's Lane, and Brown's Lane) which remained without a water supply until the mid-twentieth century and where houses were uninhabitable in conditions and structure.

Limitations of the source included legibility of earlier local authorities reports which are hand written, while later government reports were often typed. Other issues included missing minute books, such as Volume 7 from the *Cleansing, Repairing, Improvement and Artisans' Dwelling Committee*⁹⁵ (1913-1917) and Volume 1 (Year unknown-1885), Volume 3 (1893-1900); Volume 5 (1907-1911), Volume 8 (1919-year unknown) and Volume 9 (year unknown-1927) from the *Public Health Committee Minute Books*.⁹⁶ Other limitations included missing complete collections such *Barrington's Hospital Admission Records*⁹⁷ (Private Records) and Minute Books. *St John's Admission Records and Minute Books*⁹⁸ from 1826 to 1886 were also missing and any records after 1905. This limited the information available to the researcher.

3.4.3 Public health committee diary book, 1910-1911

The *Public Health Committee Diary Book*⁹⁹ was a notebook containing letters and files relating to disease and other health conditions in the city. The notebook dates only from 1910 and 1911. The book contained notices from business relating to sewerage and sanitation and also contained letters from citizens complaining of noisome activities in the midst of crowded residential areas. Letters and reports were also written about the Royal and National Theatre with regards crowd control, health and safety and also to the licenced and unlicensed lodging houses within the city. The majority of reports were submitted by the Medical Superintendent Officer of Health, M., McGrath.

The researcher found this source to be useful regarding the outbreak of disease as it listed particular areas of interest and the conditions of the houses in which disease occurred. The Medical Officer also reported particulars about the people who suffered from diseases. Other information which proved useful was the obnoxious activities within the city and the places they occurred. First-hand descriptions of the conditions in which people lived next door were recorded, whereby children were ill due to the smells

⁹⁵ LCA, L/SMIN/7.

⁹⁶ LCA, L/SMIN/8.

⁹⁷ Barrington's Hospital Admission Records, N/A

⁹⁸ LCL, *St. John's Admission Records and Minute Books*, Microfilm

⁹⁹ LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1.

arising from putrid matter. Individual business which also posed issues to the health of the public were listed and letters were exchanged with the Medical Officer relating to such matters. Common Lodging Houses were regularly inspected although little information exists on this matter for Limerick City.

Limitations of this source include the time frame as the diary is only available for 1910 and 1911. No other diary relating to health is available for Limerick city.

3.4.4 Annual reports on the health and sanitary conditions of the city of Limerick, 1912-1930

The Annual Reports on the Health and Sanitary Conditions of the City of Limerick provide essential information on the general condition of the city from 1912 onwards. These reports include the number of people living within the city, the number of houses available, the overcrowding within the tenements and statistics on births and deaths. The reports also include information on the food and drugs act on safe food, housing of the working classes, types of diseases present within the city and general conditions in the city regarding water, waste, lodging houses, baths and wash houses, ambulance calls and factory visits.

These books provided rich information on the diseases within the city which proved useful to the researcher in order to determine which diseases were present within the city in particular years and also provide an indication to the sanitary state of the city. Reductions in the number of diseases and deaths from diseases within the city were also extracted and comparing different years showed reductions in the types of diseases and provided indications to health improvements.

The information regarding houses for the working classes was also essential as it provided information on the dwellings for the poorer classes, the location and rent of these dwellings and how many were built. This was essential to examining the alleviation on poor housing conditions and the reduction in overcrowding.

Limitations of this source include nine missing annual reports prior to 1912. There are also missing reports for some years such as 1916 to 1925 which provided a gap in the information relating to disease and the sanitary condition of the city.

3.4.5 Mount St Lawrence burial registers

The *Mount St Lawrence burial registers*¹⁰⁰ recorded the people buried in the Mount St Lawrence cemetery from 1855 to 2008. The registers recorded over 70,000 people to be buried within the cemetery. The records contain the names, addresses at time of death, ages, position of the grave and dates of death of all those buried in the cemetery. Deaths from hospitals and institutions were also included in these registers making it easy to map particular years which experienced peaks in deaths. Although the registers do not state what people died from, cross checking with the Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages allowed the researcher to examine particular areas which may have suffered from diseased conditions.

The researcher utilised this source to locate where people were living when they died and whether or not these deaths may have been associated with disease. For example, it recorded the number of deaths in hospitals and the workhouse. Examining the home addresses of the people that died, it was clear that the majority of people were from St John's and St Mary's parishes. The source was also used as it provides the ages of the people that died as some diseases were more prone amongst the younger and older groups of the population such as measles.

This source also highlighted the social status of the poorer classes as many of the poor were buried without headstones. One portion of the graveyard is associated with that of the poorer classes of the people of Limerick. In some cases the church provided an iron cross for families who may not have been able to purchase headstones. Other graves are more elaborate such as the Republican Plots which contain some of the wealthier people living within the city and are located in a separate area to the poor.

Limitations on this source include missing burial records, missing data entries on records such as names, ages or addresses. Legibility also presents an issue where all data was handwritten in the register books.

¹⁰⁰ LCA, L/BG/1-3.

3.4.6 The 1907 ‘Sale of Limerick’ catalogue

The *1907 Sale of Limerick catalogue*¹⁰¹ was introduced in 1907 in order to lease large sections of the land in Newtown Pery. The Sale was introduced by the Earl of Limerick. The leases contain sixteen detailed maps of the city and a detailed catalogue providing information on the properties and the lease holders. The source is an invaluable record of property and mapping of large parts of the city. The source also records the date of the original lease, the second lease of that property and the value of the property. The ‘lot no.’ on the catalogue corresponds with that of the map so that the reader can see all details available for that property. The source provides rich information on the major landowners in Limerick during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The catalogue also provides information on areas of the city which were classified as ‘building grounds’, allowing the researcher to follow spatial patterns in the city. Other information included was the type of activity on the land, whether school, timber yard or stores, all of which contribute to the economic patterns of the city.

¹⁰¹ LCL, ‘The 1907 Sale of Limerick Catalogue’, (<http://www.limerickcity.ie/Library/LocalStudies/The1907SaleofLimerickCatalogueMaps/>)

3.4.7 Limerick City General Valuation Rate Book (1893-1971)

The *Limerick City General Valuation Rate Books*¹⁰² were carried out from 1893 to 1971. For the purpose of this research, the books between 1893 and 1938 were chosen. The books began at 1893 and continue every year upwards. Under the *Limerick Corporation Act of 1853*, the city was divided up into eight electoral wards; Abbey, Castle, Custom House, Dock, Glentworth, Irishtown, Market and Shannon Ward. The books were then organised under these wards, containing all the streets and lanes listed alphabetically in each ward. The data recorded in these books include; reference to map, local number, occupiers, immediate lessors, description of tenement, area, lands (in monetary value), buildings (in monetary value), total value and any revisions made are highlighted in coloured pen to correspond to specific years.

Figure 3.9: Cabbage Market, Limerick, general valuation record c. 1930 (LCA, L/FR/RB/2/1/39).

(C) COUNTY BOROUGH OF *Limerick*
 O.S. *7* *Cabbage Market* Street Union of *Limerick* Electoral Division of *Limerick*

Reference to Map	No.	NAMES		Description of Tenement	Area	Lands Annual Valuation				Total	REMARKS
		Occupier	Immediate Lessor			Leads	Buildings	Publicans, Public-houses, Clubs, Billiard Saloons, &c.	Other		
	1	<i>Richard Padden</i>	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>House</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>	
	2	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>House</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>	
	3	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>House</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>	
	4	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>House</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>	
	5	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>John Padden</i>	<i>House</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>			<i>3 0 0</i>	

The researcher extracted the same data from the Rate Books as from the Primary Valuation of Ireland (houses valued under £5, lodging houses, obnoxious activities, subdivision and the location of cellar dwellings). The data was also mapped and allowed the researcher to draw comparisons with the mid-nineteenth century. The researcher was then able to highlight particular areas of persistent low value housing

¹⁰² LCA, L/FR/RB/2.

and increases or decreases in the location of lodging houses, obnoxious activities or subdivision of properties.

Mapping the data between the Primary Valuation of Ireland and the later Rate Books was difficult as some streets no longer existed and others had changed names. Many of the houses were classified as 'building grounds' or 'ruins' toward to latter end of the nineteenth century and as a result received no value on that property. Some of the lanes did not have names and others had become incorporated into other areas such as Magdalene's Row which was incorporated into the Good Shepherd Convent. Another issue was the missing book for Irishtown *c.* 1910 and as a result, a later rate book for Irishtown had to be used (1930-1938). Although it was of a later time frame, it provided the original valuation and the revisions made from that date. It also allowed the researcher to see significant changes in the spatial patterns of houses and the improvements that took place.

3.4.8 Trade directories

The use of directories and newspapers may be ‘significant as a source from the eighteenth century onwards, providing valuable insights on the local social scene and on local commercial activity.’¹⁰³ Limerick was the first city to issue a directory, John Ferrar’s Directory of 1769.¹⁰⁴ Directories were generally published in areas of a strong commercial nature.¹⁰⁵ For the economic aspect of the city, the researcher relied on the use of trade directories which varied across the period of the 19th and early 20th century, such as Pigot’s Directory (1824), New Triennial Directory (1840) and Bassett’s Directory (1880-1881). The commercial directories provided key information as to the economic makeup of the city and allowed the researcher to examine if particular trades were associated with particular parts of the city. In the older parts of the city, St Mary’s and St John’s Parishes, trading mainly consisted of boot and shoe makers, basket makers, pawnbrokers and so on. The newer part of the city, Newtown Pery consisted of solicitors, bankers, agents, auctioneers which emphasised the contrast within the city. Those that were employed as bootmakers and clothiers were far more likely to be poor than dentists and doctors. The researcher extrapolated information from these commercial directories over the course of the time frame being studied and examined whether or not there were any changes in the economic activities (or obnoxious activities) of the old town.

Some of the limitations of the commercial/trade directories include sparse information, puzzling omissions in the collections and double entries.¹⁰⁶ Earlier directories such as Pigot’s Directory of 1824 were far more inconsistent than later directories such as Guy’s Directory, 1912 as the later books provide the house numbers for the trades. The later directories of the nineteenth century and those in the early twentieth century provided more information on the types of trading available within the new town. It was clear that the old town had dwindled in its trading and the new town was more prosperous.

¹⁰³ W. Nolan, *Irish Towns, A Guide to Sources* (Dublin, 1988) p. 147.

¹⁰⁴ M. Franklin, *Tracing your Limerick ancestors* (Dublin, 2003) p. 77.

¹⁰⁵ J. Grenham, *Tracing you Irish ancestors*, 3rd ed., (Dublin, 2006) p. 140.

¹⁰⁶ W. Nolan, *Irish Towns, A Guide to Sources* (Dublin, 1988) p. 147.

3.5 Conclusion

The use of primary sources is essential when undertaking research. They provide valuable information on the city at particular periods in time and the data extracted can be used for particular issues or can be extrapolated to examine various patterns within health and housing. The use of various sources enables the researcher to reconstruct the past environment of the city in terms of health and housing and also the people living within the city. Primary sources provide information for the country and for individual towns and cities, allowing the researcher to examine variations between other places in Ireland.

Chapter Four: Literature review

4.1 Introduction

The main aim of this research was to reconstruct the changing urban geography of public health and housing in Limerick city from 1850 to 1935 and also its association with poverty. This literature review aims to explore the dominant themes associated with the nineteenth and early twentieth century urban environment while also aiming to examine the main reasons for poor health and housing within cities. This review examined various journals articles, books, government documents and similar studies which enabled the researcher to examine various common themes within this study area.

4.1.1 Population trends

Urban geographers are interested in the global distribution of urban settlements and where people and activities are distributed within the urban landscape. This involves examining the underlying physical, social and economic contrasts between the inner-city and suburban areas.¹⁰⁷ As the industrial revolution began to spread from Great Britain to Western Europe in 1800, only 3% of the world's ten most populous cities were in Europe (mainly London, Paris, Naples), the rest were in Asia.¹⁰⁸ As the century progressed, many towns and cities began to become more urbanised with the vast majority of them in Europe alone. The transformation of the cities during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a result of the 'dual revolutions' (democratisation and industrialism). Many changes were taking place to encourage these processes of change, including governance, transportation and communication, employment, the rise of the factory system and education, as well as social change (social progression, included alterations in culture, religion and economy etc.).¹⁰⁹

However, industrialisation did not occur everywhere. Limerick for example did not undergo an industrial revolution but did follow the urbanisation process which accompanied industrialisation. During the nineteenth century, urban population was increasing due to an influx of migrants from other generally smaller urban areas, and also from rural environments in search of work. As a result, the shift from a rural to urban environment contributed to serious health issues and social problems.

¹⁰⁷ J. Rubenstein, *An Introduction to Human Geography, The Cultural Landscape* (London, 2005) p. 440.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

¹⁰⁹ K. Hill, 'Tales of the city' in *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 34 (Cambridge, 2007) pp 1-2.

Urbanisation began to increase at an alarming rate and cities lacked an appropriate method of governance in order to control the health and social issues. The urban conditions characterised by disease, poverty and overpopulation within the urban environment required the traditional institutions that had controlled smaller and more orderly populations, to adapt to these changes, but also paved the way for the creation of new political and social machinery to control and refine the social revolution that was going on around them.¹¹⁰

Population processes can also involve a shift from cultures and values of distinctive traditional societies to the more universal values of a largely urbanised and urban centred society, from which social segregation and marginalisation may become apparent. These processes also vary with regard to national, regional and local differences within the economic and social structures.¹¹¹ Urban population growth created and contributed to many of the urban conditions of poverty, overcrowding and disease which were experienced by cities in the nineteenth century. As the century progressed, reform was needed, and society began to take an interest in the layout and planning of cities. It had become impossible to avoid the problems that were present among the growing urban populace. As a result of the growing population and immigration issue, housing and sanitation were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the '40s immigration, especially in Liverpool.'¹¹² Swift (1985) referred to the Irish immigration into Britain as 'a trickle in the 1790s, a stream in the 1820s, a river in the 1840s, and a flood from the late '40s.'¹¹³

Population growth was also noted in other places in Europe such as Spain, although not to the same extent as Britain. During the nineteenth century, Spain experienced changes in the growth of its population and its cities. It was between 1830 and 1900 that most of the old Spanish towns outgrew from what were their earlier city boundaries, which often dated from the sixteenth century. Like other urban centres in Europe, Spain undertook considerable urban planning and renewal with primary focus on Madrid and Barcelona. Planners were commissioned to map this renewal and also the expansion of

¹¹⁰ D. Englander, *Britain and America, Studies in Comparative History 1760-1970* (London, 1997) p. 104.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹¹² R. Swift, et al., *The Irish in the Victorian City* (London, 1985) p. 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the city.¹¹⁴ It was becoming clear that minor expansions of the major Spanish cities would be inadequate in order to cater for the growing population.¹¹⁵ However, Spain's participation in Europe's urbanisation commenced at a much later stage in the nineteenth century, continuing into the twentieth century.

Madrid did not show much splendour in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹¹⁶ The housing was basic and the streets were of a 'poor condition'. Madrid began to grow upwards to cater for the influx of population, but by the nineteenth century this was no longer possible, and the city began to expand outwards.

Barcelona became increasingly important as a commercial and manufacturing town in the eighteenth century in which its population continued to increase. It remained inside the city walls and continued to grow until the mid-nineteenth century, exploiting the area and as a result, causing poor hygiene for its citizens. Like Dublin, Barcelona was also regarded as been among the worst in Europe for its conditions. After a cholera epidemic, the decision to demolish the fortified area was taken in 1854.¹¹⁷ Barcelona's new town plan was outside what became the old town, causing it to decay, similar to that of Limerick.

Ireland's population increased rapidly in the first half of the nineteenth century. By 1841 there were 8.2million people living on the island. After the first decade of the Great Irish Famine, the population began to decline, reaching 6.5million by 1851 (almost 20%).¹¹⁸ No other population suffered like the Irish. Ireland's population loss was dramatic, widespread and long term.¹¹⁹ The emigration of the people contributed the greatest decline and altered the population of its European counterparts. The population of Ireland continued to decrease until the 1960s, when the declining trend reversed, when Ireland experienced population growth both in terms of births and by the

¹¹⁴ R. Lawton, & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989) p. 195.

¹¹⁵ Hall, T., *Planning Europe's Capital Cities, Aspects of Nineteenth Century Urban Development* (Oxford, 2010) p. 128.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹¹⁸ M., Kelly & A. Fotheringham, 'The online atlas of Irish population change 1841-2002: A new resource for analysing national trends and local variations in Irish population dynamics', in *Irish Geography*, Vol. 44, No. 2-3, (Dublin, 2011) pp 216-217.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

return of emigrants.¹²⁰ Dublin's population continued to increase steadily from 1800 (182,000 people) onwards. The city recorded 304,802 people in 1911. Emigration from Dublin city and county remained low throughout the nineteenth century.¹²¹

This population decline was noted in Limerick also where figures continued to decline throughout the research timeframe. Major population declines occurred in 1851 (21%) and a further 17% in 1861. Population in the city and county had slowed down by 1911 where there was only a 2% decline, and the population stood at c. 143,000 people.¹²² Limerick's new town also spread out from the old town, leading it to decay from the inside. As the new town expanded along River Shannon, the physical layout of the streets was changing and also the types of housing. As the population of the city fluctuated, different parts of the city experienced population peaks and declines. Many parts of the city remained unsanitary and led to the spread of disease.

4.2 Urban development and layout

'Functionally the geographical character of a town is determined by economic and social significance within some regional context.'¹²³ The town plan of an area has attracted the attention of geographers, historians and town planners in order to value the importance of the buildings in the townscape¹²⁴ and also the people that occupied these areas and the activities they were engaged in. Examinations of a town plan show that 'three element complexes' of streets, plots and buildings enter into individualised combinations in different areas of the town.¹²⁵ It is important to understand where town plans originate and development. Physical layouts vary with regards to each town (whether medieval or eighteenth century, industrial or port towns).

The development of the urban network in Ireland was influenced by repeated colonisation movements, as early as medieval times.¹²⁶ The topographical historical geography of our towns was expressed in the streets and buildings, and is connected to the history of urban society. Cities and towns reflect the culture of the coloniser and the

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 217.

¹²¹ M. Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital*, 'A social and economic history, 1860-1914' (Cork, 2011) p. 2.

¹²² NAI, Census of Population Records for Limerick City for 1841-1911.

¹²³ M., Cozen, 'Alnwick, Northumberland: A Study in Town-Plan Analysis' in the *Institution of British Geographers*, Vol. No. 27 (London, 1960), p. 3.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 3.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹²⁶ W. Nolan, & A. Simms, *Irish Towns, A Guide to Sources* (Dublin, 1998) p. 9.

colonised, their historical cultural community, adaptations and their advance to a modern society.¹²⁷ These influences can be seen with reference to Ireland, as impacts from colonisation have helped shape the urban landscape. Duffy¹²⁸ commented on how urban settlements date back to the seventeenth century, displaying a degree of planning, while the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century showed redevelopment and modernisation of the urban landscape.¹²⁹ The improvement of settlements has been defined as the ‘restructuring’ of the landscape, which heightened throughout the nineteenth century in Ireland with restructuring present in the urban landscape of the major towns and cities such as Dublin, Belfast, Cork and Limerick, as well as improvements in governance, planning, social, economic and aesthetic matters.¹³⁰ This restructuring was also an adjustment to the increase in population from c.1750,¹³¹ which continued until the famine in Ireland around the mid nineteenth century. While many European cities were influenced by the classical architecture of Greece and Rome; the most immediate exemplars of restructuring in small Irish towns were likely to have been formally planned eighteenth century extensions to Dublin and Limerick influenced by the Georgian design.¹³²

The experience of living in an urban environment during the nineteenth century varied with regard to location but also differed amongst social classes. Urbanisation and industrialisation were growing at an alarming rate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and as a result town planning, housing and sanitation became inadequate and inescapable. The internal urban development of many cities in Western Europe was accelerated by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century with high population growth and industrialisation. Many urban environments observed the erection of new buildings and the introduction of new urban planning, with broad streets and elegant architecture, providing a contrast against the overcrowded and rundown buildings in older areas of the city, which lacked sufficient planning and proper governance. Many areas of the urban landscape experienced slum conditions, often associated with poverty, filth, disease and overcrowding. These slums were also associated with areas of low-income and high unemployment. As the wealthier classes migrated to the suburbs

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

¹²⁸ P. Duffy, *Exploring the History and Heritage of Irish Landscapes* (Dublin, 2007) p. 228.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 236.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 227.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 219.

¹³² Ibid., p.236.

and to the newer parts of the cities/towns in order to escape the chaos and suffering in the slums, their houses, which had been built for the sole purpose of occupying one family residents, were filled with several families from poorer and lower classes of society. However, these buildings did not have the facilities or space to cater for the overcrowding of families within them.

The layout of the urban landscape was meant to emphasise the grandeur and elegance of the city, and 'the grandeur and elegance' of its people. From the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, the establishment of a main centre and the creation of parks became a dominant theme in many western cities. All streets and squares were elegantly displayed. The introduction of the 'green space' was to link the urban with the rural. Parks became elegant areas and allowed access only to the middle and upper classes. The development of newer parts of the cities, along the suburbs, allowed for the social segregation. Social segregation and marginalisation however became an obvious theme, as wealthier classes associated problems such as the spread and contagion of disease with the poor. The urban environment presented 'glaring contrasts between splendour and squalor, between riches and poverty, intelligence and ignorance, order and chaos.'¹³³ This social segregation heightened a contrast in social status, creating a polarisation and marginalisation between different areas within urban environments. The poorer classes suffered the most, and lacked the means to help themselves. The wealthy were also horrified at the housing conditions in the slums, in which back lanes, sheds and cellars became overcrowded with an influx of population, thronged with disease and filth, unhealthy conditions and a lack of sanitation services.

The contrast between the old and new areas of the city/town could not be ignored and was frequently commented on by travellers passing through the city. Older areas of cities originated in the medieval period. Their street layout and design was different to the later eighteenth and nineteenth century town. Older areas formed a clustered layout of streets and back lanes, tightly packed with a mixture of buildings and activities such as piggeries and slaughter houses. Its overcrowding and lack of cleanliness provided favourable conditions for the spread of disease. Poverty was the main cause of overcrowding but was also a consequence of it. Migrants who came to the city often lived in tenements houses with other families, while others shared sheds and cellars.

¹³³ L. Wirth, 'Urbanism as a way of Life' in *The American Journal of Sociology* (Chicago, 1938) pp 14-15.

The Dublin city slum areas provided an example of one of the worse slums in Europe.

Slums were defined as the following:

..an area overcrowding and dilapidated, usually old housing, occupied by people who can afford only the cheapest dwellings available in the urban area, generally in or close to the inner city. The term usually implies both a poverty-ridden population, an unhealthy environment, and a district rife with crime and vice; it is also often associated with concentration of people in certain ethnic groups.¹³⁴

Slums were also defined in terms of their social disorganisation. Slums were also characterised as “areas of lost souls and missions”, where there are no standards of decency or social conduct except those imposed by outside authority.¹³⁵ The slum cycle is also a vicious one whereby from the day a child is born into the slum environment, he or she is brought up with the concepts of the world they live in. He or she can only know disorder and squalor. His/her biological heritage cannot be changed,¹³⁶ but society may try to help its less fortunate members. However, this is not always the case. Many of the poor could not better their situation without help. The majority of the poorer classes attempted to better their situation through emigration or by sending their children to school at an early age. Not all of the poor became idle beggars or prostitutes.

The over-crowding of slums and of individual places was one of the main problems, which contributed to the spread of disease and the insanitary conditions. As the century progressed, the urban layout began to change, with the introduction of wide streets by the Wide Street Commissioners (1757), allowing more space between buildings and opening up the city to provide more light and fresh air. The Wide Street Commissioners contributed to the improvement of the city by widening the streets and by creating new ones.¹³⁷ It was seen that by widening the streets to allow fresh air to ventilate the streets would improve living conditions and the disease by also removing the smells associated with unhealthy living.

¹³⁴ R.J., Johnson et al, *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, 1994).

¹³⁵ R., McKenzie, ‘The Neighbourhood: A Study of Local Life in the City of Columbus, Ohio’ in the *American Journal of Sociology* (1922) Vol. 27, No.2, XXVII, p. 506.

¹³⁶ A., Monson, ‘Slums, Semi-Slums, and Super-Slums’ in *Marriage and Family Living - Housing and Community Development* (1955) Vol. 17, No. 2, p. 118.

¹³⁷J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums, 1800-1925, A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1998) p. 68.

4.3 Society and being poor

As a result of the growing population within nineteenth century towns and cities, and the problems associated with this growth, changes were noted within society. Poverty was associated with areas of unemployment, disease and overcrowding, while newer suburban developments became areas of a higher social status. As a result of the changing urban layout, social segregation and marginalisation became an obvious theme which occurred in the majority of cities.

4.3.1 Perspectives on defining poverty

Poverty is often described as the denial of choices and opportunities, poor employment opportunities, exclusion from society, lack of education and poor health. The Royal Statistical Society in 1887 stated that:

...by the word '**poor**', I mean to describe those who have a fairly regular though bare income, such as 18s-21s a week for a moderate family, and by '**very poor**' those who fall below this standard, whether chronic irregularity of work, sickness, or a large number of young children.¹³⁸

Those who rise above this standard are 'above the line of poverty'.¹³⁹ Charles Booth was considered to have been a pioneer in the research of poverty and adapted a particular 'line of poverty' in the late 1880s to divide the people of London into those 'in poverty' and those in 'comfort'. He tested the people in two ways; firstly as to how they live and secondly as to how they work. He divided the people into eight classes evident in *figure 4.1*. The lowest class represented by the darkest colour (black) and the higher classes by the lightest colour (yellow).

¹³⁸ C. Booth, 'The Inhabitants of the Tower Hamlets (School Board Division), Their Condition and Occupations' in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 50, (London, 1887) pp 328-9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp 328-9.

Figure 4.1: Eight Classes of poverty according to Charles Booth (LSEPS, Charles Booth online archive)



It has been argued that Booth did not actually invent the poverty line.¹⁴⁰ The concept has been said to have been invented by the Charity Organisation Society in 1886 in providing money to families for out-door relief.¹⁴¹ In 1870, the Elementary Education Act¹⁴² also developed a criterion for poverty whereby parents who could not pay for child education would be exempt from paying school fees for a select period of time. However, nowhere in the act was there an indication of the criteria for justifying the remission of fees for those experiencing poverty. The criteria seemed to be decided upon 'locally'. In 1887, it was argued by Edward Buxton, London School Board's former chairman, that 'no machinery that you could possibly invent would enable you to say what each parent is able to pay; and even if you could do so, the circumstances of the parents vary from week to week'.¹⁴³

It was in the latter end of the nineteenth century that Charles Booth's (a philanthropist and social researcher) undertook a sociological survey to investigate the lives of the

¹⁴⁰ A., Gillie, 'The Origin of the Poverty Line' in the *Economic History Review*, New Series, Vol. 49, No.4 (1996) p. 728.

¹⁴¹ Charity Organisation Society, *Exceptional Distress*, (UK, 1886) p. xxv

¹⁴² *Elementary Education Act, 1870* (Vic, 33 & 34, c., 75).

¹⁴³ *Report of the Commissioners on Education* (P. P. 1887, xxix), Q. 31,425 (16 Feb.).

working classes which highlighted a clearer understanding between the direct link between poor quality housing and poorly paid employment. Benjamin Rowntree's (another philanthropist) sociological survey in 1901 provided an updated version of anyone considered to be poor or in a state of want if his/her wage fell below 21 shillings and 8 pence a week.¹⁴⁴ The identification of overcrowding and slum conditions then became linked to a bigger problem - the problem of unemployment and the uncertainty of work.¹⁴⁵

Modern definitions can also aid in our understanding of poverty in the past. Modern definitions also provide poverty lines on minimum levels of spending, but also include deprivation indexes which include access to other resources other than income which were not included in definitions from contemporary sources. Social exclusion also remains important when examining poverty within society. Poverty and social exclusion are reported to affect all groups, the young, mature and old. It is often more prominent with people who are unemployed and live in less desirable places. Poverty can mean more than a lack of what is necessary for material wellbeing. It is also the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy life and enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and the respect of others.¹⁴⁶ It is often through a lack of freedom and respect that poorer classes of society often lack a 'voice' in society and they remain unheard.

Poverty lines from modern definitions may not aid in our definition on nineteenth century poverty, although examining social exclusion and unemployment status contribute to our understanding. Examination of proximity to resources also contributes to our understanding of what it means to be poor and can be applied to the research period.

4.3.2 The problem of poverty

Nineteenth century towns and cities all experienced some form of poverty, which was seen as the main cause of health problems within cities. With a growing population, contributed to by immigration from other towns and cities, poverty was inevitable, and became associated with over-crowding and disease. Poverty however, is relative. Its

¹⁴⁴ B.S. Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, (1901).

¹⁴⁵ M., Fraser, *John Bulls Other Homes* (Liverpool, 1996) p. 65.

¹⁴⁶ National Human Development Reports, 'Human development to eradicate poverty' in the *Human Development Report* (1997) p. 5.

definition varies with regard to different expressions across different locations. What may be defined as poverty in one area may be very different with regard to another area. Poverty has also been described as a fluid situation, in which men and women move through various levels during their lifetimes as a result of changing circumstance.¹⁴⁷ Poverty may be socially and culturally constructed if people are born into poor conditions.¹⁴⁸ It has been argued that ‘for the very reason that they are poor, instead of receiving help from their affluent communities, they are viewed with suspicion and fear, marginalised and excluded.’¹⁴⁹ One modern definition of poverty defines being poor as ‘anyone who is in difficulty for a sufficiently long period of time, so that his/her standard of life is seriously affected, is considered poor, as against people with only temporary problems.’¹⁵⁰

During the nineteenth century, if the poor were unable to work, owing to the fact that they were orphans, widows, foundlings or the elderly, they became deemed as ‘deserving’. It was from this that church bodies and private organisations began to aid the poor.¹⁵¹ This can be examined in many nineteenth century towns and cities where the poorer social classes were often termed as subordinate and beneath the wealthier classes.

The poor in Ireland could be broken into two groups, the poor and the sick-poor. ‘The sick poor had attracted sympathy rather than hospitality’ which reflected on ‘the popular recognition that sickness was not confined to the lower orders; partly also the realisation that, whereas poverty was the result of improvidence and idleness, sickness was an act of God.’¹⁵² However, society was slow to understand the connection between poor hygiene and sickness, and there was a general acceptance that the lower orders were poor because they were sick.¹⁵³ This can be examined in relation to Limerick city where clear distinctions were present between the new development of the city¹⁵⁴ and the older

¹⁴⁷ R. Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2005) p. 11.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁹ E. Minigione, ‘Urban Poverty in the Advanced Industrial World: Concepts, Analysis and Debates’, in *Urban Poverty and the Underclass, A Reader* (Oxford, 1996) p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ A. Tosi, The Excluded and the Homeless: The Social Construction of the Fight Against Poverty in Europe, in *Urban Poverty and the Underclass, A Reader* (Oxford, 1996) p. 83.

¹⁵¹ R. Fuchs, *Gender and Poverty in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, 2005) p. 11.

¹⁵² G. O’Brien, ‘State Intervention and the Medical Relief of the Irish Poor, 1787-1850’, in *Medicine, Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) p. 199.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹⁵⁴ Newtown Pery/St. Michael’s parish

parts of the city,¹⁵⁵ where higher cases of disease and poverty were located. With such a large influx in population in urban areas from immigration as well as an increase in birth rates, poverty increased and contributed to the already excessive numbers of overcrowding and disease, notably in London and Dublin. Like the majority of urban areas in the nineteenth century, poverty contributed to problems faced by the poor and destitute, including a majority of immigrants.

4.3.3 Poverty and nineteenth century society

Upper classes of society had become both horrified and fascinated by the large industrial cities which seemed to stand for what a writer in 1840 called ‘a system of life constructed on a wholly new principle’.¹⁵⁶ However, this new system of life also brought about unwanted conditions, where streets were lined with filth, and the smells were revolting due to increases in population and no proper urban planning in place, such as housing, sanitation and water. These urban conditions contributed to the spread of diseases amongst social classes. As a result, governments began to develop a whole new idea of a ‘clean’ city, free from beggars and noisome activities, such as piggeries and slaughter houses. The growth of the city outwards and the formation of new suburban areas became characterised by a higher social status. This new system of urban development began in the late eighteenth century and became more noticeable during the nineteenth century. Many trades and businesses followed the movement of the city in the direction of the wealthy in order to maximise full economic and social benefit. It was seen as more economically viable to locate in areas with higher degree of wealth and of social status, where society would be more likely to afford their needs and wants. The majority of trades located within these areas included clothiers, booksellers, bakers and tailors, along with professions such as solicitors, doctors and dentists.¹⁵⁷ As a result, older parts of the city often fell into decline. Policy makers and reformers began to open up the city with new urban planning and design, allowing the circulation of air within the city and introducing parks and gardens as green open spaces to link the urban and rural.

The development of housing facilities did not compete with the influx in population. Overcrowding affected the poorer classes, which was also noted in many cities

¹⁵⁵ Englishtown and Irishtown/St. Mary’s and St. John’s parishes

¹⁵⁶ A, Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London, 1977) p. 12.

¹⁵⁷ Data extracted from various commercial directories for Limerick.

worldwide. This overcrowding became one of the main driving forces behind the migration of middle and upper class residences to the suburbs. The buildings they left behind were occupied by ‘incoming workers, too poor to afford better...’ and ‘...the only accommodations were cheap lodging houses, run-down tenement buildings from which absentee landlords derived as much rent with as little expense as possible while awaiting the profits of rising real-estate values.’¹⁵⁸ These lodging-houses and tenement buildings provided a quick solution to the increase in population but was not the healthiest of environments or the safest, with many families/tenants occupying one room within the building.

¹⁵⁸ D. Englander, *Britain and America, Studies in Comparative History 1760-1970* (London, 1997) p. 105.

4.3.4 Social segregation & marginalisation

The extent to which social segregation developed and persisted in the rapidly expanding cities of the nineteenth century requires a considerable knowledge of the various forces influencing residential choice: economic (job, housing, transport); social (links with family and friends, cultural ties, the status and amenities of residential areas); and demographic (age, family and household structure and stage of development).¹⁵⁹

Types of society varied with regard to location, with some urban environments experiencing a more defined social status than other areas. Social status remains a dominant theme in the study of nineteenth century cities, in which their status was implemented ‘in their physical development, their government, and their culture.’¹⁶⁰ However, it is necessary to examine the role of social class within the urban environment. Hill poses a significant question as to whether urban people conquer their own environment or *vice versa*. Many reformers that contributed to the changing urban environment and the development of suburban residences were of higher social standing, therefore having a ‘voice’ in society and the means to conquer their environment. Many of the poor were unable to vote, lacking a voice in society, which contributed to the decay of their poorer urban environment.

There are three stages that contributed to the development of the liberal city: sanitary, social and moral.¹⁶¹ The first stage of sanitation is about opening up the city, allowing the free circulation of people. The second includes the society and thirdly, is the creation of a moral wellbeing for the people.¹⁶² The opening up of the city and the introduction of a sanitary state was a way of portraying the urban society as organic, again linking the urban with the rural, a desire for cleanliness and natural order. The social and the moral are linked, in which people from the upper classes of society and status believed that they are able to improve the behaviour of the lower classes, by encouraging them to act in a better and more civilised manner. The introduction of parks and gardens in upper class areas of newly urbanised cities and towns increased the ‘moral’ idea behind this. Parks acted like a stage in which only upper classes were allowed enter, and the lower classes of society would watch and try to impersonate those who were deemed superior than them. Hills also comments on this and refers to

¹⁵⁹ R. Lawton, & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989) p. 169.

¹⁶⁰ K. Hill, ‘Tales of the city’ in *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 34 (Cambridge, 2007) p. 154.

¹⁶¹ P. Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (Chicago, 2003).

¹⁶² K. Hill, ‘Tales of the city’ in *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 34(Cambridge, 2007) p. 157.

parks as having an ‘ordering’ process, an idea for turning the drunk and disorderly poorer classes into something more along the lines of the middle class.¹⁶³ ‘This was a century of class-consciousness: of discrimination between groups by minute divisions of fashion, taste, speech, smell, behaviour, spiritual belief and interests.’¹⁶⁴ The earlier urban society of towns and cities was composed of gentlemen, merchants and artisans who became disgusted by this influx of what soon became ‘an urban proletariat badly housed, subject to extremes of temporary affluence and poverty, and not easily adapted to discipline of town and factory life.’¹⁶⁵

Occupational information is a useful measure of status and can be obtained from the census, where there are distinct differences between doctors and surgeons and masons and clothiers. The census of population can provide six social indicators which can help define social statuses. These include the existence of domestic servant in the household, lodgers, the sharing of dwellings by two or more households, children returned as scholars, children returned as gainfully employed, and wives returned as being gainfully employed outside their household.¹⁶⁶ The keeping of a domestic servant was to emphasise status and ‘the result of the universal fastness of the age, the all-pervading desire for the possession of wealth and love of display’.¹⁶⁷ The keeping of lodgers is the opposite of that and indicates the inability of the household to preserve the dwelling intact for the family.¹⁶⁸ The employment of children between the ages of 5 and 15 was also considered to lower the status of a family; similar to if the wife of the household was employed outside the home.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 157.

¹⁶⁴ J. White, *London, in the 19th Century* (London, 2007) p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ D. Englander, *Britain and America, Studies in Comparative History 1760-1970* (London, 1997) p. 104.

¹⁶⁶ K., Cowland, ‘The identification of social (class) areas and their place in nineteenth-century urban development’ in the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers – The Victorian City* Vol. 4, No.2 (1979) pp. 240-241.

¹⁶⁷ T., Wright, *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes* (London, 1867).

¹⁶⁸ K., Cowland, ‘The identification of social (class) areas and their place in nineteenth-century urban development’ in the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers – The Victorian City*, Vol. 4, No.2, (1979) pp. 241-241.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 241.

4.4 Housing

4.4.1 Introduction

The development of suburban life and improvements in urban planning was a result of trying to escape the evils of disease within the city and other such related issues, such as overcrowding and poverty. Drummer (2008) commented on how health and geography are interlinked, and that spatial location (the geographic context of places and the connectedness between places) plays a major role in shaping environmental risks as well as many other health effects.¹⁷⁰ Smith (1979) commented that overcrowding within urban centres 'was the result of population increase outrunning the increase of housing stock and the consequent huddling of poorer communities, especially immigrant Irish, into the cheapest accommodation they could find.'¹⁷¹ Examples of this could be seen in London and Liverpool. Eventually, overcrowding led to the movement of the wealthy classes from the inner city to the suburbs, developing the suburban landscape. Here, they developed their own way of living, free from poverty and overcrowding. They were spared from the smells and dirt of overpopulated town, its homeless, and its beggars.¹⁷² However, disease was not confined to one social class, and continued to pass from place to place and person to person.

¹⁷⁰ T. Drummer, 'Health Geography: Supporting Public Health Policy and Planning', in *Canadian Medical Journal Association*, Vol:178 (2008) p. 1177.

¹⁷¹ F.B. Smith, *The Peoples Health 1830-1910* (London, 1979) p. 223

¹⁷² J. Prunty, *From City Slums to City Sprawl: Dublin from 1800 to the Present, in Irish Cities* (Dublin, 1995) p. 116

4.4.2 Crowded living conditions

Williams¹⁷³ contributes to the discussion of the poor by describing the crowded¹⁷⁴ housing conditions in which they lived.

By the sight of scores and rooms, filthy and crowded, by the sight of two thousand and more crammed upon an acre of land, by these sights and by scores of others witnessed in the east, west, north and south of London is in the fire kindled which may not be put out with mere contempt.¹⁷⁵

He also commented on how inspectors found in Camberwell an ordinary room of about 140 square feet in area, in which a family of five persons made their home, which became a common theme in times of overpopulation and poverty, but he also adds that another room had contained no less than “seventeen men, women and children sleeping in one room”.¹⁷⁶ Although overcrowding was considered ‘a bad thing’, it also offered warmth, in which a ‘thinly inhabited and highly ventilated room is apt to be a cold room, and underfed people are sensitive to cold.’¹⁷⁷ These conditions were common throughout many of the cities and towns during the nineteenth century. Many of rural migrants that flocked to cities in search of work contributed to the increase in population and overcrowding. Poverty added to this issue and many tenants could not afford to pay rent, so shared tenements, sheds and cellars with other people in order to procure a means of shelter.

In Ireland, Dublin recorded a higher level of overcrowding than the rest of the country and the housing condition was similar here to the main towns in England. Dublin proved to be a distinct case where the majority of the working class population were occupying tenement houses that were previously owned by the wealthy. Overcrowding in Dublin by 1901 was unparalleled by any other city in Ireland with approximately 41% of the

¹⁷³ R. Williams, *The Face of the Poor or The Crowding of London's Labourers* (London, 1897).

¹⁷⁴ Crowding: it should, perhaps, be explained that by the word crowding, we mean here the placing together of too many dwelling places, and by consequence of dwellers on one area. The solid masses of the houses so placed block out a large quantity of air and by retarding its movement, oblige the dwellers to breathe the same air over and over again, which soon becomes so charged with carbonic and other noxious gases that it becomes highly injurious to health. Nature has plainly laid down that there is a limit to the number of people which should be together in one place. Extracted from R. Williams, p. 7.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷⁷ E.S. Robertson, *The State and The Slums* (London, 1884) p. 4.

city occupying overcrowded tenements.¹⁷⁸ In 1911, 26,000 families lived in tenement houses with 20,000 of these single rooms.

Overcrowding in Galway became a serious problem like other places in Ireland by which ‘in 1812 the average family size was 5.8 persons and in many of the streets and lanes of the city centre, there were up to six families per house.’¹⁷⁹ Conditions such as this contributed to the spread of disease and misery within the city, and an Inspector for the Commission for the Connaught area, Dr. John Crampton, commented on the profile of Galway during the epidemic that raged throughout the country from 1817-1819:

Galway was well circumstanced for the spread of contagion: streets narrow and dirty; dunghills and stagnant water under the staircases of even the better houses; a separate family to each floor, scarcely any rear to them; cellars filled with poor of the lowest orders and of the most negligent and filthy habits.¹⁸⁰

4.4.3 The slums and the tenement system

Slumdom in Leeds during the nineteenth century depicts a clear picture of the housing conditions. Slums can be defined in terms of ‘old’ and ‘new’, in which ‘old’ slums consist of village life, whereas ‘new’ slums date from town life.¹⁸¹ It was during the period of manufacturing and the introduction of the factory system that the vast majority of slumdom began to take place. Landowners rented land in order to maximise profits, and with the ‘sole view of crowding as many houses as possible on the ground, with the result that the districts were packed as we find them to-day [nineteenth century].’¹⁸² The slums consisted of the erection of houses, in rows of property, fronting the backs of other houses, creating a dark and crowded space between buildings, which became evident down the courts and alleys of streets.¹⁸³ These slums were not scattered pockets of ‘extreme destitution of criminal behaviour but as vast sections of inner city which,

¹⁷⁸ *The Cost of Living of the Working Classes Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade in the working class rents, housing and retail prices, together with the standard rates of wages prevailing in certain occupations in the principal industrial towns of the United Kingdom, with an introductory memorandum*, 1908 (cd.3864) p. 561.

¹⁷⁹ J. Murray, *Galway: A Medico Social History* (Galway, 1994) p. 43.

¹⁸⁰ J. Crampton, ‘Medical Inspection of Connaught’ in *The Report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons*, (1819).

¹⁸¹ D.B. Foster, *Leeds Slumdom* (Leeds, 1897) p. 4.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp 7-8.

like the unexplored tropics, seemed both exotic and remote.’¹⁸⁴ Sanitation amongst the slums was almost non-existent. Water-closets and ashpits were common after the mid nineteenth century. Water-closets were flushed once a day (in Leeds), leading to inhalation of unhealthy smells, and what was once believed to be the cause of disease. Ashpits were far more unsanitary, often placed under rooms or near cellars.¹⁸⁵

As a result of the overcrowded slum conditions within cities, city councils decided on clearing considerable quantities of slum property. Those that were not cleared out were cleaned out and opened up to allow fresh air through.¹⁸⁶ The surplus population meant that landlords could find other people to fill rooms within the tenements, resulting in overcrowding of the tenement system, as highlighted by Williams (1897), while the wealthier classes moved. Ireland was no different. In Dublin, this meant that better off people lived in well-constructed houses, mainly the eastern side of the county.¹⁸⁷

There is a growing amount of material available (such as Prunty and Kearns) on the housing conditions and problems faced by the poor throughout the nineteenth century. Confined, cramped and dirty living conditions became no doubt a cause for concern, and disease was not confined to any one social class. Wealthy middle and upper classes of society began to secularise themselves and migrate to the suburbs in order to escape the wretchedness within the overpopulated with city centre. The growth of suburbia was initiated by the middle class, and aided in encouraging the spread of the city. Street improvements and transportation systems were implemented in these areas and left the other parts of the city to fall into decay.

Prunty states that it was easy to define the Dublin city area in the early nineteenth century, however, it got harder as the century progressed with the growth of the city environment outwards into the surrounding suburban area,¹⁸⁸ leaving the inner parts of the city to suffer degradation with the poorer classes. The city environment over the course of the nineteenth century presented many unfavourable and disadvantageous

¹⁸⁴ D. Ward, ‘The Progressives and the Urban Question: British and American Responses to the Inner City Slums 1880-1920’ in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (1984) p. 305.

¹⁸⁵ D.B. Foster, *Leeds Slumdom* (Leeds, 1897) pp. 11-12.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸⁷ L. Kennedy *et al.*, *Mapping the Great Famine-A Survey of the Famine Decades* (Dublin, 1999) p. 65.

¹⁸⁸ J. Prunty, ‘From City Slums to City Sprawl, Dublin from 1800 to Present’ in *Irish Cities* (Dublin, 1995) p. 109.

conditions for the population as a whole, with the slums being a major problem. Whitelaw questioned why brothels, soap manufacturers, slaughter houses, glass houses and lime kilns were all allowed exist in the midst of the crowded population.¹⁸⁹ The medical report into the Inquiry of the *Causes and Character of the Disease of the Lower Orders in Dublin, 1822*¹⁹⁰ emphasised the social conditions of the poor, but did not discount the role of the influential environmental conditions. The tenement system was one of the most unfortunate elements of the Dublin housing crisis, which became well established in the poorest areas during the nineteenth century.¹⁹¹ One reporter commented in The Daily Nation paper in 1898:

I had seen many disagreeable sights in my slumming experiences but none so disgusting as the inhabitants of this horrible den of filth, reeking with every sort of abominable odour . . . a picture of squalor and misery such as, I trust, I shall never be compelled to gaze upon again.¹⁹²

In Dublin, while Whitelaw was undertaking an early morning survey as early as 1798, he was surprised to discover the appalling conditions of overcrowding within such confined spaces, in which 10 - 16 people were constrained to one room in some houses. The Dublin tenement slums were regarded as the worst slums in Europe, which has been frequently commented on by a number of travellers passing through the city where rack-renting landlords 'viewed their properties as little more than cattle sheds to be packed with humanity.'¹⁹³ Close and dirty living conditions provided an ideal situation for the spread of contagious diseases,¹⁹⁴ three of which the most persistent diseases were cholera, typhoid and dysentery. These descriptions are enough to enable the reader to visualise the demoralising living environment of the poor. The conditions in Dublin were termed 'hellish', in which 'buildings were decayed, dangerous and sometimes collapsed, killing occupants'.¹⁹⁵

In Britain, the slum problem was also referred to as 'tightly packed dens'¹⁹⁶, which became a focal point for diseases, houses for thieves, vagrants, prostitutes and paupers.

¹⁸⁹ J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, A Study in Urban Geography* (Dublin, 2000) p. 25.

¹⁹⁰ T.C. Speer, *Inquiry into the Causes and Character of the Diseases of the Lower Orders in Dublin* (1822) pp. 165-166.

¹⁹¹ S. Duffy, *Atlas of Irish History* (Dublin, 2000) p. 23.

¹⁹² K. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life* (Dublin, 2006) p. 13.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 1

¹⁹⁴ J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, A Study in Urban Geography* (Dublin, 2000) p. 26.

¹⁹⁵ K. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life* (Dublin, 2006) p. 2.

¹⁹⁶ E.C. Midwinter, *Victorian Social Reform* (London, 1976) p. 3.

Steady outmigration to the suburbs left part of the city to decay. The homes they left behind and the burden of degradation became the tenement homes for the poor who remained.¹⁹⁷ These houses, which were once occupied by single upper class families, were now occupied by several families, each sharing the same facilities, and often sleeping, cooking, bathing and working in one room.

The disgraceful state of the sanitary conditions was described by Whitelaw in ‘painful, and often disgusting details’.¹⁹⁸ Landlords left their properties in a squalid condition while tenants were subletting corners of rooms to subtenants, increasing the overcrowding of already confined areas. These living conditions contributed to the spread of diseases, such as typhus. ‘Washing facilities were negligible; clothing and bed clothes were flea and lice ridden; and in winter people huddled closer together for warmth. The state of housing in sustaining typhus was recognised, although the precise role was not understood.’¹⁹⁹

4.4.4 Suburban migration and suburban growth

Movement from the city centre was a way of avoiding the evils presented by overcrowding and disease. The emergence of suburbia, in the sense of an almost exclusively residential area on the outskirts of cities and towns, has been largely ascribed to the post-1815 period.²⁰⁰ ‘Almost all British and American cities and towns had undergone a continuous urban spread since 1880, which had resulted in an extensive bleeding from the centres as a result of suburbanisation.’²⁰¹ By the standards of the Victorian period, the degree of social segregation achieved in these new areas was moderate.²⁰² During the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, the planned residential garden suburbs in America known as ‘romantic suburbs’, were originally developed with ideas of ‘social mix’ and ‘social balance’ in mind, as solutions to the overcrowding of central areas.

¹⁹⁷ S. Duffy, *Atlas of Irish History* (Dublin, 2000) p. 23

¹⁹⁸ J. Whitelaw, *An Essay on the Population of Dublin* (Dublin, 1805) p. 64

¹⁹⁹ M. Crawford, ‘Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine’, *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (1999) p. 131

²⁰⁰ F.L.M. Thompson, ‘The rise of suburbia’, in Morris R.J., *The Victorian City, a reader in British Urban History 1820-1914* (London, 1993)

²⁰¹ D. Englander, *Britain and America, Studies in Comparative History 1760-1970* (New York, 1997) p. 134.

²⁰² S. O Maitiu, *Dublin Suburban Towns 1834-1930* (Dublin, 2003) p. 19.

Residential suburbs in most European cities tended to be on their west side, as was the case in Paris and London. Such expansion was precluded in Dublin owing to barriers such as the Phoenix Park and undesirable industrial development in the liberties area. In the eighteenth century, landlords initiated the building of estate towns; and during the nineteenth century we find a number of towns developing as resorts or railway centres by a number of satellite towns which were established around the major urban centres of Dublin & Belfast in the twentieth century.²⁰³ The old houses of the wealthy and the merchants became the living quarters of the artisans and workers especially in the labour intensive textile industry, as most of the trading was decentralised from the city centre to the suburbs. The only ground on which middle-class houses could be built was on the fringes of the city as the municipal area was almost entirely built up. The percentage of metropolitan population moving to the [Dublin] suburbs rose from 12.4% in 1837 to 29.6% in 1891.²⁰⁴ The new suburbs were planned as residential, although the need for manual workers and retainers saw to it that the back lanes, courts and especially mews became the residences of whole families.²⁰⁵ As a result, ‘the death rate in the city of Dublin was very high compared to other cities in the United Kingdom and was one of the reasons for the flight of the affluent to the suburbs.’²⁰⁶

Housing conditions that were already considered detrimental for the poor in 1800 became appalling by the 1840s and many of the migrants into the city lived in half-derelict streets by 1841.²⁰⁷ Lawton *et al.* (1989) described Dublin as being a destination for the desperate, in which they became attracted ‘by the city’s welfare infrastructure, and particularly by the dozens of charities that had proliferated in the century-and-a-half before a general poor law was finally introduced into rural Ireland in 1838.’²⁰⁸ In Limerick, the new town of wealth and style considered itself superior to the former old town, which was viewed upon as an embarrassment to society. The population in the older parts of the city had become marginalised since the development of Newtown Pery.²⁰⁹ Like any city, wealth allowed for expansion, and with ‘trade as the livelihood of

²⁰³ W. Nolan, & A. Simms, *Irish Towns, A Guide to Sources* (Dublin, 1998) p. 10.

²⁰⁴ S. O Maitiu, *Dublin Suburban Towns 1834-1930* (Dublin, 2003) p. 19.

²⁰⁵ S. O Maitiu, *Dublin Suburban Towns 1834-1930* (Dublin, 2003) p. 20.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

²⁰⁷ R. Lawton & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989) p. 185.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁰⁹ J. O’Connor, *Exploring Limericks Past* (Limerick, 1987) p. 49.

any city,²¹⁰ Limerick soon began to spread outwards into the surrounding areas, following patterns of other cities which had also undertaken suburban growth, abetting in the growth and decay of the older parts of the city. Many institutes were deliberately built outside the city centre, such as military and artillery barracks, were promptly becoming bordered by interests of new consumers and institutions. O'Connor²¹¹ noted that the 'asylum, gaol, hospital, infirmary and workhouse bulked largest in the landscape and impelled the built-up area along in their [barracks] direction', all which arose out of the *Poor Relief Act of 1838*.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 41.

²¹¹ Ibid., p. 45.

4.5 Health

4.5.1 Introduction

Geography and health are intrinsically linked. Where we are born, live, study and work directly influences our health experiences, including the air we breathe, the food we eat, the viruses we are exposed to and the health services we can access. The social, built and natural environments affect our health and well-being in ways that are directly relevant to health policy.²¹² These experiences and differing environments may be examined historically in relation to society's health during the nineteenth century where an accumulation of issues such as overcrowding, disease and lack of sanitation all contributed harmful health effects.

Health geography uses concepts and methodologies from the discipline of geography to investigate health-related topics, encompassing society and space, and conceptualising the role of place, location and geography in health, well-being and disease.²¹³ With health geography being a sub discipline of human geography, it also deals with interactions between people and the environment. Health geography seeks to explore the social, cultural and political contexts for health within a framework of spatial organisation.

Traditionally, research in health geography spans two distinct avenues: the patterns, causes and spread of disease, and the planning and provision of health services. The study of health geography can be applied to the improvement that occurred in health during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The development of an urban planning scheme ensured the health and safety of the people and provided an examination into the patterns, causes and spread of disease between classes.²¹⁴ Health has become an increasingly popular topic with relation to the nineteenth century urban development. Population increase and poverty contributed to the overall poor health conditions during the nineteenth century, which were present in the majority of urban centres. A lack of hospitals, medicine and vaccination (which were introduced later in the nineteenth century) contributed to the spread of disease amongst society.

²¹² T. Drummer, 'Health Geography: Supporting Public Health Policy and Plannings' in *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Vol. 9 (New York, 2008) p. 1177.

²¹³ M. Meade, *Medical Geography* (New York, 2010) p. 1

²¹⁴ T. Drummer, 'Health Geography: Supporting Public Health Policy and Plannings' in *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Vol. 9 (New York, 2008) p.1177.

In the more contemporary period, public health and town planning are blood related cousins, with common ancestry in the sanitary movement of the 1840s.²¹⁵ The concept of public health was reported to have appeared in the early nineteenth century as part of a wider rethinking of the laissez faire ideology. ‘Edwin Chadwick and his colleagues deployed urban mortality and morbidity rates to show that the pursuit of health could not be left to the individual.’²¹⁶ The Health of Towns Association in 1846 explained that air loaded with putrid gases from decaying animal matter and vegetable substances was ‘an actual poison’.²¹⁷ It was questioned if illness came from breathing in bad gas from poor ventilation. This encouraged an interest in the layout and planning of the urban environment,²¹⁸ whereby people should not live in confined lanes or in close proximity to dangerous activities. Sanitary research had confirmed the excess concentration of sickness and death in courtyards, dens, blind alleys, backs, *cul-de-sacs*, turnings, winds and closes.²¹⁹

4.5.2 Health issues

There is abundant evidence that early modern cities were unhealthy, with life expectancy, especially among their poorer people, substantially below that of rural areas. This is a characteristic which persisted throughout the nineteenth century despite steady improvement following the sanitary reforms and better urban design and housing from the 1870s.²²⁰

A tainted water supply, uncontrollable diseases and social reform were amongst these health issues. Health issues became a popular cause of concern in the nineteenth century as improvements were made in medicine, towns and cities were becoming clearer, and middle and upper class society began to become more concerned personally with disease and well-being.

Conditions in Glasgow for example, deteriorated during the nineteenth century. Overcrowding and epidemics resulted from squalid and unsanitary conditions. Visitors frequently described scenes of 15-20 people huddled together in one apartment.

²¹⁵ M., Herbert, ‘A City in Good Shape: Town Planning and Public Health’ in the *Town Planning Review* (1999), Vol. 70, No. 4, p. 433.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

²¹⁷ The Health of Towns Association Pamphlet, *Why are Towns Unhealthy?* (1846) p. 2.

²¹⁸ M., Herbert, ‘A City in Good Shape: Town Planning and Public Health’ in the *Town Planning Review*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1999) pp 434-435.

²¹⁹ M., Herbert, ‘A City in Good Shape: Town Planning and Public Health’ in the *Town Planning Review*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (1999) p. 435.

²²⁰ R. Lawton, & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989) p. 15.

Mortality rates for Scotland ‘exhibited extreme instability’. There was an increase in the death rate in all age groups and was higher in Glasgow than other major cities in Scotland. The death rates in Glasgow alone increased from 24.8 in 1821-1824 to 39.9 in 1845-1849.²²¹ This was due to severe epidemics, mainly typhus and cholera. Mortality rates also reflected poor diets and consumption patterns.²²²

Ireland experienced many of the same health issues as other towns and cities in Europe over the course of the nineteenth century. Mortality rates, whether children or adults, were the standard by which the effectiveness of the public health administration of an area could be judged. The annual death rate in Dublin in 1899 was higher than it had been in any year since 1880. It was recorded that at 33.6 per thousand living, it exceeded that of any large city in Europe or the United States and compared to mortality in London, Edinburgh and Leeds.²²³ In Dublin in 1900, a public meeting was held at City Hall where evidence was received from the Registrar General, medical officers of health and other members of the medical profession (amongst others). One owner of a tenement property was heard from, but no voice was speaking from the slums in a stand to cover up the actual state of the city. The tenement conditions in the city continued to be reported as overcrowded, dilapidated, dirty and ill-ventilated and were still the prime cause of high death rates.²²⁴

In Galway, conditions were not much better. A tainted water supply caused bowel disorders amongst the population who drank from the lower river town water supply.²²⁵ Refuse was allowed to accumulate on the streets, and like Limerick, piles of manure were located outside some houses to be sold to the rural farmers as fertiliser. Conditions in the Galway Liberties however were better and, as trade improved, many of the commercial people came to live in Dominick Street, Prospect Hill and College Road. The suburban area around Galway, like Rathmines in Dublin, was attractive to the wealthier classes, and Salthill was already well known as a holiday resort.²²⁶ Growing concern for society (both poor and wealthy) was initiated during the 1820s, largely due

²²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

²²² R. A. Cage, ‘The Standard of Living Debate: Glasgow, 1800-1850’, in the *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (1983) pp 179-180

²²³ J. O’Brien, *Dear, Dirty Dublin, A City in Distress, 1899-1916* (London, 1982) p. 102.

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 103.

²²⁵ J. Murray, *Galway: A Medico Social History* (Galway, 1994) p. 43.

²²⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

to the ‘influence of two clergymen of differing persuasion but united in their concern for the people of Galway.’²²⁷

In Limerick, the insanitary lanes, with their open sewers and overcrowded houses were the cause of much poor health. The issues were not addressed by the Corporation and local health authority and allowed charitable bodies and the hospitals to deal with the results of poverty and disease. Toward the latter end of the nineteenth century, conditions had not improved. In 1885, a Public Health Committee Diary recorded the state of ‘James Punch’s yard in Cornwallis Street...flooded with stagnant water and sewerage; and a fearful smell from the boiling or rendering of horse flesh in a premise in the cabbage market’.²²⁸

4.5.3 Water / sanitation

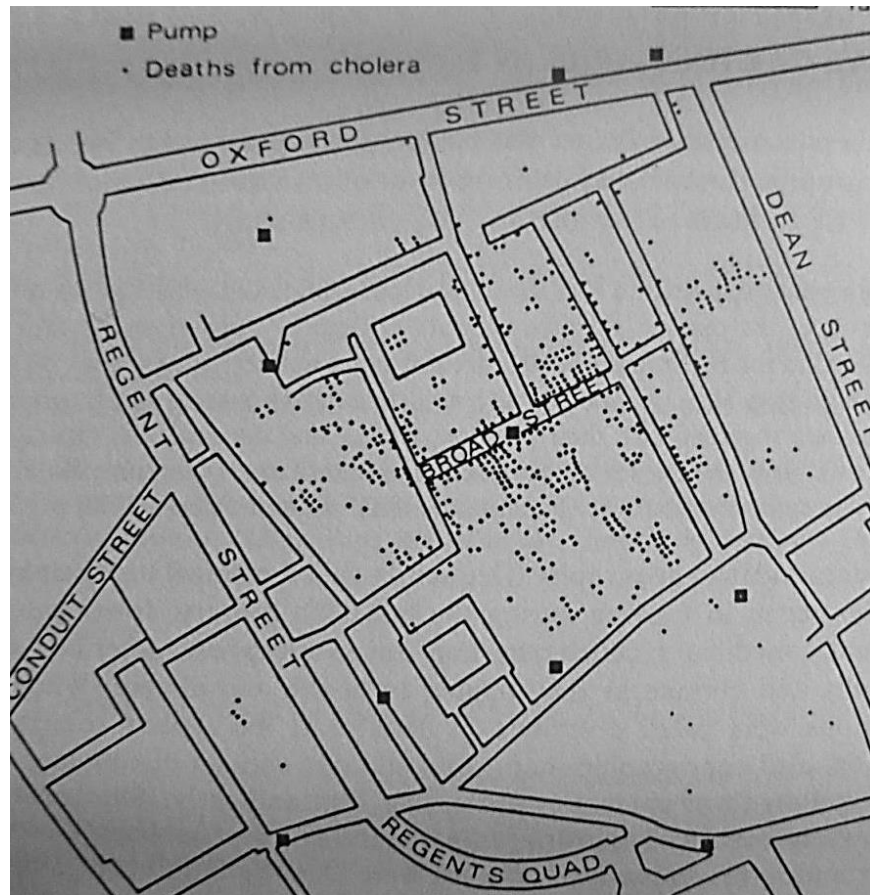
Drinking water was a serious issue for the nineteenth century population and affected people in many parts of the world. Water is an important resource for human consumption, but a tainted water supply in many urban environments during the nineteenth century aided in the spread of disease amongst society. Tainted and infectious water was more common in urban environments than rural, as populations were greater and more concentrated. One traveller that visited London highlighted the effects of the overcrowding population on the insanitary conditions of the river, ‘the smell of the water forced themselves at once upon my attention’, and went on to describe the whole of the river as ‘an opaque, pale brown fluid’²²⁹ which in turn had a knock-on effect on the drinking water. The most notability disease associated with water was the spread of cholera (most famously written about in London and Dublin). The most famous nineteenth century map of the water-borne disease was John Snow’s 1854 *Dot Map of Cholera* around Broad Street in London. *Figure 4.2* below highlights the location of the water pump on Broad Street and the cluster of cholera cases around it, showing the connection between cholera as a water-borne disease.

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 45.

²²⁸ J. Kemmy, ‘Housing and Social Conditions: 1830-1940’ in the *Old Limerick Journal, Barrington’s Edition*, Vol. 24 (1988) p. 72.

²²⁹ S. Halliday, *The Great Stink of London* (London, 2007) Preface.

Figure 4.2: John Snow's Dot Map of Cholera, London, 1854²³⁰



In many towns and cities in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, people drank water from the surrounding rivers and canals as there was no proper water system in place. The increase in population affected the water in rivers and canals which became contaminated with excrement and other unwanted waste from the overcrowded environments. Dumping of waste into the rivers, streams and canals was commonly done, and in London, 'the street, and any convenient ditch, used to be the best place to get rid of London's unwanted waste and detritus. From there, it would flow or be washed into a stream or river, and eventually out into the Thames.'²³¹

During the 1840s in England, Edwin Chadwick introduced his visionary plan of integrating water-supply, self-cleansing sewer and drainage system for London, which began to spread to other urban areas. The *Health of Towns Act* in 1848 enabled local

²³⁰ J. Snow, *On the mode of communication of cholera* (London, 1855)

²³¹ S. Foxell, *Mapping London, Making Sense of the City* (London, 2007) p. 142.

authorities in England, Wales and Ireland to raise funds on the rates to establish drainage schemes and water-supply systems. The *Nuisance Removal Acts* of 1855, 1860 and 1863 were carried out successfully, and eventually began to extend out and clean up rural areas.²³² In London and Dublin, basement cesspits were overflowing, infecting other water supplies and contributing to the cholera epidemics that occurred throughout the city from 1831-1866.

Sanitation was taken more seriously in Ireland from the 1850s on. *The Public Health Act (1848)* and the *Dublin Improvement Act (1849)* provided power to the Dublin Corporation to take action against sanitary nuisances, and they also became more involved in draining, cleansing, paving and lighting of the city, until a permanent health committee was established in 1866.²³³ In 1863, the new waterworks was completed for the Rathmines Township. However, the battle for pure and adequate water in Rathmines had been a long process. A tainted water supply brought cholera when it visited the Kingstown District in 1866 and killing 127 people, a rate of 70.3 per 10,000 persons living, while in Dublin during the same epidemic, the rate was 33.7.²³⁴

The newly constructed Newtown Pery in Limerick was also inadequately supplied with water, even compared to the old city. Accordingly, in 1825 the Commissioners of St Michael's Parish, the governing body of Newtown Pery asked the engineer called Leadbetter to estimate how much it would cost to install a system of piped water, which he suggested would cost a sum of £43,000. In 1825, an Act of Parliament provided for the construction of such a system to supply water to Limerick City and its suburbs. Work was delayed until 1832, when the great cholera epidemic of that year focussed attention on the necessity for improvements in the city's water supply. In 1834, a private company, the London Waterworks Company began the construction of the city's first water supply system. It remained in the hands of the London Waterworks Company until 1883, when the Corporation purchased the Limerick Water supply system from them. Thus, the water supply system was introduced at the instigation of a body of

²³² Ibid., pp 198-199.

²³³ S. O Maitiu, *Dublin's Suburban Towns* (Dublin, 2003) p. 82.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 97.

improvement commissioners and not by the Corporation and it remained outside municipal control until the very end of the nineteenth century.²³⁵

4.5.4 Medicine, disease and doctors

The Poor Law Unions made an impressive contribution to the nation's health with the introduction of the poor law hospitals and training of nurses.²³⁶ As towns and cities began to become cleaner environments to live in, advances in theory and practice of medicine was underway, and vaccination was introduced.²³⁷

The Medical Charities Act of 1851 (enacted in Ireland in 1852) created 723 official dispensary districts whereby medical officers and midwives were to attend the poor. A committee of guardians and rate-payers were to run the dispensaries, issuing a ticket for medicine and advice. In 1867, a parliament grant subsidised both the salary of the doctor and the midwife and the cost of the medicine dispensed.²³⁸ The following table provides the data for the dispensary districts and the increasing number of dispensaries and doctors/midwives for each of the census years.

²³⁵ D. Lee, 'Evolution of Limericks water supply', in *Remembering Limerick* (Limerick, 1997) pp 297-301.

²³⁶ E.C. Midwinter, *Victorian Social Reform* (London, 1976) p. 51-52.

²³⁷ K.H. Connell, *Some Unsettled Problems in English and Irish Population History, 1750-1845* (1951) p. 226.

²³⁸ D. G. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Dublin, 2005) p. 269.

Table 4.1: Dispensary Services in Ireland from 1851-1911 (Annual Reports of the Commissioners for Administering the Laws for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland, under the Medical Charities Act, 14 & 15 Vic., C, 68, 1851-1871, and the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board for Ireland, under the Local Government Board (Ireland) Act, 35 & 36 Vict., c. 109, 1872-1911)

<i>Year</i>	<i>PLU Stations</i>	<i>Dispensary Districts</i>	<i>Dispensary</i>	<i>Doctors</i>	<i>Apothecaries</i>	<i>Midwives</i>
1851	163	723	960	776	29	7
1861	163	718	1021	777	39	55
1871	163	718	1063	801	40	177
1881	163	721	1102	808	40	268
1891	160	721	1155	810	43	341
1901	159	747	1196	811	47	508
1911	158	741	1213	810	49	729

Physicians in Ireland, mainly Dublin and Cork, campaigned to establish a purpose built hospital, free from contact with other buildings, in which fever patients could be rapidly removed without interference with others. They also aimed to tackle what they believe was the source of the infectious diseases, ‘the immense heaps of putrid matter piled up in close and confined back yards.’²³⁹ The heaps of putrid matter were linked to the dirty and confined living conditions among the poor in the slum areas. Packed into tenements houses, back lanes and yard sheds, with often many families sharing one premises, disease had free reign to run through the streets at a furious pace. In such confined spaces, disease was inevitable and ‘spread uncontrollably from room to room, and from floor to floor’.²⁴⁰ Human waste was only one part of the problem that existed throughout many parts of the growing towns and cities during the nineteenth century. Dung yards, dairy yards, slaughter houses and other obnoxious activities were located among the residents within the city, which contributed greatly in the growth and spread of disease. With no proper sewerage system in place, human waste remained on the street until heavy rainfall washed it away.

²³⁹ J., Prunty., ‘From City Slums to City Sprawl: Dublin from 1800 to the Present’, in *Irish Cities* (Dublin, 1995) p. 110.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Cholera was not confined to any one area of the city and was reported at different intervals at different places throughout the city. It was unknown what had caused the dreadful epidemic to occur for the second time. One doctor commented that with the advance sanitation systems present at the time that there should be little danger of the dreadful disease. The disease originated in India c. 1817, which favoured conditions in the person, the location and the sanitary conditions and the climate. The disease was reported to have reached London and Edinburgh in 1831, causing devastation to the countries. In Paris, 18,400 people became victims of the disease out of a population of around 600,000. From there it was reported to have travelled to the States.²⁴¹

4.5.5 Disease reports

Murray defined ‘infectious’ in *Situations of the Poor* (1801) as ‘that which occasion the sick person to taint the atmosphere around him, so that it becomes capable of exciting in others, who are exposed to it, a similar disease.’ There appeared to be a connection between area and people. The theory of contagion had not yet gained popular acceptance, but increasing bodies of evidence began to demonstrate that the incidence of fever could be traced from one family or household member to another - or to any contact. It was becoming obvious that the living conditions of the poor were contributing to such issues of disease. Modern medical research highlights that the eighteenth and nineteenth century term fever covers two distinct infections with similar epidemiologies: typhus fever and relapsing fever.

In Dublin and Limerick, the notifiable diseases included typhoid fever, measles, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera, smallpox, typhus fever, diphtheria and were frequently highlighted through the registers of deaths. Many diseases flourished in the filthy conditions of the streets. Faulty drainage in the middle class areas, where water closets were being rapidly but inefficiently connected to the main sewers, were the likeliest cause of the high mortality. An extensive draining programme was the only effective remedy to deal with the issue. The year 1866 was regarded as marking the birth of effective sanitary legislation in Dublin, and the *Sanitary Act 1866* embodied provisions of the English Sanitary Statutes, and extended them to Ireland. The *Public Health Act of 1874* marked the beginning of a more professional approach to eradicating the urban

²⁴¹ *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 28 August 1892. Issue 46; col G

fever nests, although it was the provisions of a more comprehensive 1878 public health legislation which were to prove more useful.

In the nineteenth century, four major epidemics occurred in 1813-19, 1826-7, 1836-7 and 1846-9, while in the second half of the century, epidemics became localised, the severest occurring in 1879-80 and 1898.²⁴² In the popular mind fever and famine were related. Throughout the nineteenth century, medical opinion associated typhus²⁴³ with 'want of provisions', although doctors also appreciated that poverty, squalor and overcrowding were somehow implicated. They were not wrong, but the connection was more complex than they imagined.²⁴⁴

It was during the mid-nineteenth century that the medical profession was becoming aware of the clinical distinctions between different fevers during the first half of the nineteenth century. However, it was not until William Jenner published his work in 1849 that typhus, typhoid and relapsing fever were accepted as distinct diseases.²⁴⁵ It is not surprising that nineteenth century doctors, faced with a multiplicity of symptoms during the epidemic of 1846-9, struggled to give accurate names to the fevers they treated.²⁴⁶ The Registrar General²⁴⁷ also distinguished between typhus and typhoid. Their statistics are reasonably trustworthy from 1870 on. The data demonstrates a sharp increase in death rates from the ages of ten to fourteen years, rising to a peak in the mid-forties. The death rate is lower amongst children than adults.²⁴⁸

²⁴² Crawford, M., 'Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine', *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) p. 121.

²⁴³ Also known as gaol, camp or ship fever.

²⁴⁴ Crawford, M., 'Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine', *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) pp 121-122.

²⁴⁵ W. Jenner, 'On typhoid and typhus fevers, -attempt to determine the question of their identity or non-identity...' in the *Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, Vol., 9 (1848-1849), new series, no's. xxxiv-xxxvi, pp 663-80, 726-36, 816-28.

²⁴⁶ Crawford, M., 'Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine', *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) p. 123.

²⁴⁷ *The General Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Ireland) containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland*

²⁴⁸ Crawford, M., 'Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine', *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) p. 125.

In the early nineteenth century, ‘the three...occupations most commonly treated for fever in Dr. Stevens Hospital on 1816-17 were labourers (docks, distilleries, breweries), tradesmen (shoemakers, tailors, bakers, smiths), and servants.’²⁴⁹ However, due to their contact with the destitute and the inhalation of infected dust, both doctors, clergy, lawyers, magistrates, jurors, workhouse officials, hospital staff and relief workers, amongst others, all became exposed to typhus.²⁵⁰ Like cholera, typhus was no respecter of age, gender or social class. Everyone was vulnerable.²⁵¹ Among the poor, the disease spread throughout the entire household, while in better-class families the disease confined to the fever victim and the rest of the household remained untouched. The relative cleanliness, the less cramped living conditions of better off homes, and the inability of the lice to survive at room temperature halted the propagation of the infection. Furthermore, de-loused and bathed typhus victims could not infect others by contact. But, while the mode of transmission was inhibited by cleaner environments, the resistance of the wealthy to typhus was low.²⁵²

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, in Dublin there was a reduction in tenement housing; cellar dwellings had all disappeared; a public baths was opened in 1885, with an adjoining wash-house and a disinfectant unit for those in contact with smallpox and fever.²⁵³ Post famine Ireland offered better living conditions outside the main cities, even for the poorest sections of society. The improvement in housing conditions, better economic and social conditions and the growing effectiveness of public health programmes helped stamp out disease. In Ireland, the *Public Health Act of 1878* provided the framework for the control of infectious diseases, but the resolve of local authorities to clean up urban squalor, and tackle the eradication of infection lacked determination.²⁵⁴ Mortality was also used to measure the condition of Dublin’s poor against other urban areas and in 1899 the death rate had hit 33.6/1000 for the Dublin areas alone, while London’s average was 19.6.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 125.

²⁵² Ibid., p. 129.

²⁵³ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 135.

²⁵⁵ Clarke, H., *From City Slums to City Sprawl: Dublin from 1800 to the Present, in Irish Cities* (Dublin, 1995) p. 117.

The over populated housing conditions of the nineteenth century also became a major *foci* for diseases as often more than one family had to share a one room for numerous functions such as washing, cleaning, sleeping, eating and sometimes working. This issue of overcrowding continued well into the nineteenth century and was most notably obvious in Dublin, which became dubbed one of the worst slums in Europe, and frequently commented on by travellers into the area. The dreadful and detrimental houses occupied by the poor were once elaborate tenement buildings, had fallen into decay and degradation, as the overpopulating poor failed to maintain the health standards. These tenement buildings were built for the sole purpose of occupying one family residence and lacked the facilities to cater for the influx in population.

The maintaining of residences and cleanliness proved to be of major importance for society. With such confined living conditions, and lack of medical attention within the poorer areas caused disease to spread quickly.

The major killers -typhus, relapsing fever, diarrhoea, dysentery- were not caused by low levels of nutrition. They were social diseases, passed from person to person by vectors such as lice or fleas, which found it easier to operate when the human populations were crowded together in search of food.²⁵⁶

Another serious issue was that of mortality which resulted from the spread of disease. It peaked during the mid-nineteenth century, and in large urban cities where epidemics (cholera, typhoid and typhus, intestinal and lung disease) reflected an inadequate water supply and overcrowded housing conditions which often worsened in phases of very rapid growth.²⁵⁷

Cholera ravaged through Britain as severely as continental countries. In 1832 Paris had more deaths in one week in April (5,523) than London had in the whole year (5,275).²⁵⁸ Mortality was also used to measure the condition of Dublin's poor against London and in 1899 the death rate had hit 33.6/1000 for the Dublin areas alone, while London's average was 19.6.²⁵⁹ Cholera was reported to have reached London and Edinburgh in

²⁵⁶ L. Kennedy *et al.*, *Mapping the Great Famine-A Survey of the Famine Decades* (Dublin, 1999) p. 65.

²⁵⁷ R. Lawton, & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989) p. 15.

²⁵⁸ F.B. Smith, *The Peoples Health 1830-1910* (London, 1979) p. 237.

²⁵⁹ J. Prunty, 'From City Slums to City Sprawl: Dublin from 1800 to the Present', in *Irish Cities* (Dublin, 1995) p. 117.

1831, causing devastation. Cholera was not confined to any one area of the city and was reported at different intervals at different places throughout the city. Cholera caused the population to restrict their diets to certain foods, or to refrain from eating at all.

From the eighteenth century there was a growth in the number for hospitals, both small and large scale. However, most hospitals were founded by surgeons, with a focus primarily on the upper-class clientele, who could afford the treatment. Poorer classes of society did not procure the means in order to afford treatment. In hospitals, patients were not clients but rather recipients of charity and therefore practitioners tended to have more control over them.²⁶⁰ Many small scale hospitals were present within the cities and towns, where houses were converted to hospitals. However, these were usually small, with often only a limited supply of beds, like the Charitable Infirmary (1718) on Cork Street in Dublin, having only four beds. These small scale hospitals were seen as an intermediary stage towards purpose built hospitals which arrived later in the century. Purpose-built often meant larger and was usually located on the suburbs of the city, to avoid congestion from overcrowded streets and lanes.²⁶¹

The idea of building a general hospital to serve the poor and sick of Limerick first came to be seriously considered in the early nineteenth century around 1821 or 1822, following the crisis of the outbreak of cholera. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the word fever was coined for cholera, typhus or typhoid, amongst other diseases, as no proper medical definition was provided for the differing diseases. In Limerick, these fevers were mostly associated with Irishtown (one of which was Palmer's Lane, which would have been overcrowded). Limerick city and county were among the worst affected areas, with people dying of disease and starvation on the streets, while their bodies remained unburied, eaten by birds and animals, or else were buried in mass graves.²⁶² As previously stated, no social class was safe, as disease spread quickly from person to person, although favourable conditions made the fevers more common amongst the poor. Limerick already had its own '*Fever and Lock Hospital*', today's *St John's Hospital*, while in Dublin, a number of general hospitals had been built by private individuals such as *Stevens' Hospital* by Dr. Stevens and

²⁶⁰ G. Boyd, *Dublin 1745-1922 Hospitals, Spectacle and Vice* (Dublin, 2006) p. 23.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁶² M. Potter, *The Government and the People of Limerick, The History of Limerick Corporation/City Council 1197-2006*, (Limerick, 2006) p. 228.

Mercer's Hospital by Mary Mercer. The Barrington family followed this idea, building the *Barrington's Hospital*, by Matthew Barrington and his father, Joseph Barrington,²⁶³ in which construction began in March 1829. The Acts set up for the hospital clearly stated that the hospital was intended for 'the use of the Poor of the City and County of Limerick'.²⁶⁴ Only for the poor of Limerick who suffered from accident or chronic disease could attend the hospital, and its full title was to be: '*Barrington's Hospital and City of Limerick Infirmary*'.²⁶⁵ Official opening was arranged for December 1st, 1831, when the door opened 'for the reception of the Poor and victims of accidents'.²⁶⁶

Vaccination became more popular after the 1840s. In England and Wales, the poor law was required to vaccinate any person of the population. In Ireland, it was restricted to those within the workhouse. Mortality was declining from 1500 deaths in Ireland per year in the 1850s, to less than 900 on 1864, to 20 in 1867, 19 in 1868 and 20 in 1869. Around the mid-nineteenth century, causes of deaths within the workhouses were mainly attributable to consumption, atrophy, dysentery and fever.²⁶⁷ Compulsory vaccination was not introduced until 1863 which is why mortality was decreasing. Ireland had a serious outbreak of smallpox in 1871, which caused 566 deaths and 3,248 in 1872.²⁶⁸

4.5.6 Health and society

'Self-help in health matters, public hygiene, dietary reform' became the main 'ingredients in a coherent and articulate campaign to save the nation by combating the ill-health of its citizenry.'²⁶⁹ Middle and upper class families became more concerned for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their family members, as medical practices and vaccination were becoming more popular and readily available. This concern was heightened during the nineteenth century as disease became associated with poverty. Movement to the suburbs was to leave disease and poverty confined to the older parts of

²⁶³ M. Tierney, 'The Origins and Early Years of Barrington's Hospital', in *The Old Limerick Journal, Barringtons' Edition* (Limerick, 1988) p. 33.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

²⁶⁷ *Seventh Report for Administering the laws for relief of the poor in Ireland*, 1854 (1785) p. 5.

²⁶⁸ D., Brunton, 'The Problems of Implementation: the failure and success of Public Vaccination against smallpox in Ireland, 1840-1873', in *Medicine, Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999) pp 138-139.

²⁶⁹ P. Sterns, 'Middle Class Women and Health Reform in Nineteenth Century', in *American Journal of Social History*, Vol.10 (Oxford, 1977) p. 490.

the city, while wealthy classes consisting of doctors and surgeons began to locate within the suburbs. Profound changes in women's (middle and upper class) roles underlay their active interest in health reform. The social transformation of society in urban areas with regards to health was sparked by industrialisation and urbanisation. The population increase and the spread of uncontrollable diseases forced society to redefine their responsibilities with regard to health reform. An overall and gradual increase in health reform was noted throughout Europe. Women began to take a more progressive role in health reform in the United States also, with similar patterns were emerging in Ireland where they offered charitable philanthropy as nuns and nurses in hospitals.

Sterns also commented that individual action was needed in order to combat the problems faced by ill-health matters in the country, and to control and plan the layout of the environment for future reference.²⁷⁰ Such control and planning could be done by removal of obnoxious activities, which were located in the midst of the crowded population in many cities, and also by the introduction of street planning, better sanitation, water supply, lighting and gas. This sort of planning enabled the clean-up of the urban environment, but not only controlled the environment, but also controlled the individual to better themselves with regard to health. 'Health reformers promoted the active assumption by men and women of the responsibility for their own health, and the health of their families, and the health of society at large.'²⁷¹ However, this control and organisation of health reform was mostly undertaken by the middle-class society, philanthropists and other charitable and institutional organisations, who often supplied aid and hand-outs to the deserving poor who were not able to help themselves. Although it was considered the poor's own fault if they were poor, social transformation was desperately called upon by the poor and the destitute during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.²⁷² They lacked the means to help themselves, and had to rely on the charity of others to help them.

At the end of the nineteenth century, it was clear that reforms in health and sanitation were contributing to positive effects on cities. Life expectancy also increased according to Smith (1979), where between 1838 and 1854 the average age at death (for males) in England and Wales was 39.9 years, which grew to 41.9 years by the 1880s, and 44

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 498.

²⁷¹ Ibid., p. 490.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 490.

years by 1890.²⁷³ Towards the end of the nineteenth century changes in health and governance contributed to increasing health and wellbeing of society. It also contributed to ensuring proper health and sanitation facilities were in place to help ensure that there would be little or no recurrence of the above health issues in the future.

4.6 Conclusion

What has become clear from an examination of the various literature available was the conditions in health and housing within many towns and cities. Variations did exist between towns and cities in the level of experience although the themes were similar. Similar types of diseases were occurring due to the conditions and many areas recorded overcrowding at various levels. Many of the housing conditions impacted severely on the health of the people living within the urban environment. What is also significant is the contrast in social status and the variations in the level of health and housing conditions within cities.

²⁷³ F.B. Smith, *The Peoples Health 1830-1910* (London, 1979) p. 197.

Chapter Five: Housing as an indicator of poverty in Limerick city, 1850-1935

5.1 Housing and population in Limerick

When examining the issue of poverty in Limerick city in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it is important to investigate the link between housing stock, housing quality and the people. This chapter will discuss two different ways in which housing and its link with poverty can be investigated. The can be done by examining physical quality and value of a house, using a group of indicators such as house value, house quality and the class of the house. Housing value is a good indicator to the quality and condition of the house and can aid in determining the size of a building as larger houses are often higher in value while lower houses are often smaller in value and in many cases is affected by the location of the house. The value of the building is also an indicator to the amount of rent paid but the people living in the house. The quality of the house can contribute to the condition of the dwellings, whether it is new, or old and dilapidated. Examining the house quality can also contribute to examining the living conditions of the people within these houses which were contributing to poor health. The class of the house provides the number of rooms in a house, types of building material used and the number of windows available.²⁷⁴ Examining the socio-economic profile of the people living in the houses also contributed to an examination of poor health and poverty. Some houses may contain one family while other houses may contain several families. The socio-economic profile provides information on how many people live within each house and also provides an indication as to whether or not these people experienced poverty.²⁷⁵

5.1.1 Housing valuations in Limerick from c. 1848

Valuation is significant when examining housing properties as it provides an indication of the quality and size of a building. It presents a useful guide to highlighting areas of poor quality housing although does not present a complete map of the characteristics associated with overcrowded and slum areas. Houses which are valued at over £5 may

²⁷⁴ Not all first class houses however experience first class conditions similar to that not all third class houses experience third class conditions. Variations exist within the dwellings.

²⁷⁵ The types of indicators vary from poor literacy levels (unable to read and write), poor employment (labourers) and the size of the family. Examining the types of people that live in these houses contributes to understanding how people lived in poverty.

also experience overcrowding due to subdivision. It must be noted that poverty is not limited to properties of £5 and under. Many houses which were once owned by middle and upper classes of society and were valued at £5 and over were subsequently subdivided in the latter half of the nineteenth century.²⁷⁶ The subdivision of these houses meant that the rooms, shops and cellars of the tenement buildings were valued separately so as to take account of the different units within the property.²⁷⁷ Living conditions within these cellars were not pleasant environments and were often described as dire and hellish.²⁷⁸ Some tenement buildings were valued at £5 or more, simply on the size of the building as opposed to the living conditions within the building, and may not have been occupied by multi-occupant families. Therefore housing valuation is a significant indicator but needs to be used in conjunction with other variables and sources.²⁷⁹ The Irish Historic Towns Atlas for Limerick²⁸⁰ has already mapped the values for the city of Limerick of £5 and over.

From examining *figure 5.1*, it is clear that certain areas of the city, along St Mary's and St John's Parishes, are almost completely excluded from the valuations of £5 or more.²⁸¹ Houses on the main streets were generally larger in size than the side streets and lanes and alleyways, often containing up to fourteen rooms, in comparison to two to four rooms. Houses usually contained seven to nine rooms on the main streets and were often 2nd class in building material and structure. The laneways off the main thoroughfares are smaller in size and often contained two rooms, and usually 2nd and 3rd in building material quality and structure. This contributed to the valuations of the properties being significantly lower. Due to the size of the houses and the laneways and the lack of sanitary facilities, these dwellings and the areas in which they were situated were deteriorating in quality and therefore likely to effect the later valuations.

²⁷⁶ Such examples include buildings along Arthur's Quay, Michael Street and Francis Street.

²⁷⁷ The difference between boarders and lodgers is unclear. It is possible that boarders were more permanent residents within a house while lodgers were temporary and often moved house on a regular basis.

²⁷⁸ K. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life* (Dublin, 2006).

²⁷⁹ The valuation itself also provides an indication of the possible class of a building (and also can provide a guide to the possible class of the people occupying the building), a description to the function of that property and whether or not there is adjoining land such as gardens, stables or offices.

²⁸⁰ E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No.21. Limerick* (Dublin, 2010).

²⁸¹ Any values of £5 or more within these areas were predominantly confined to the main thoroughfares such as John Street, Mary Street, Broad Street and Nicholas Street etc.

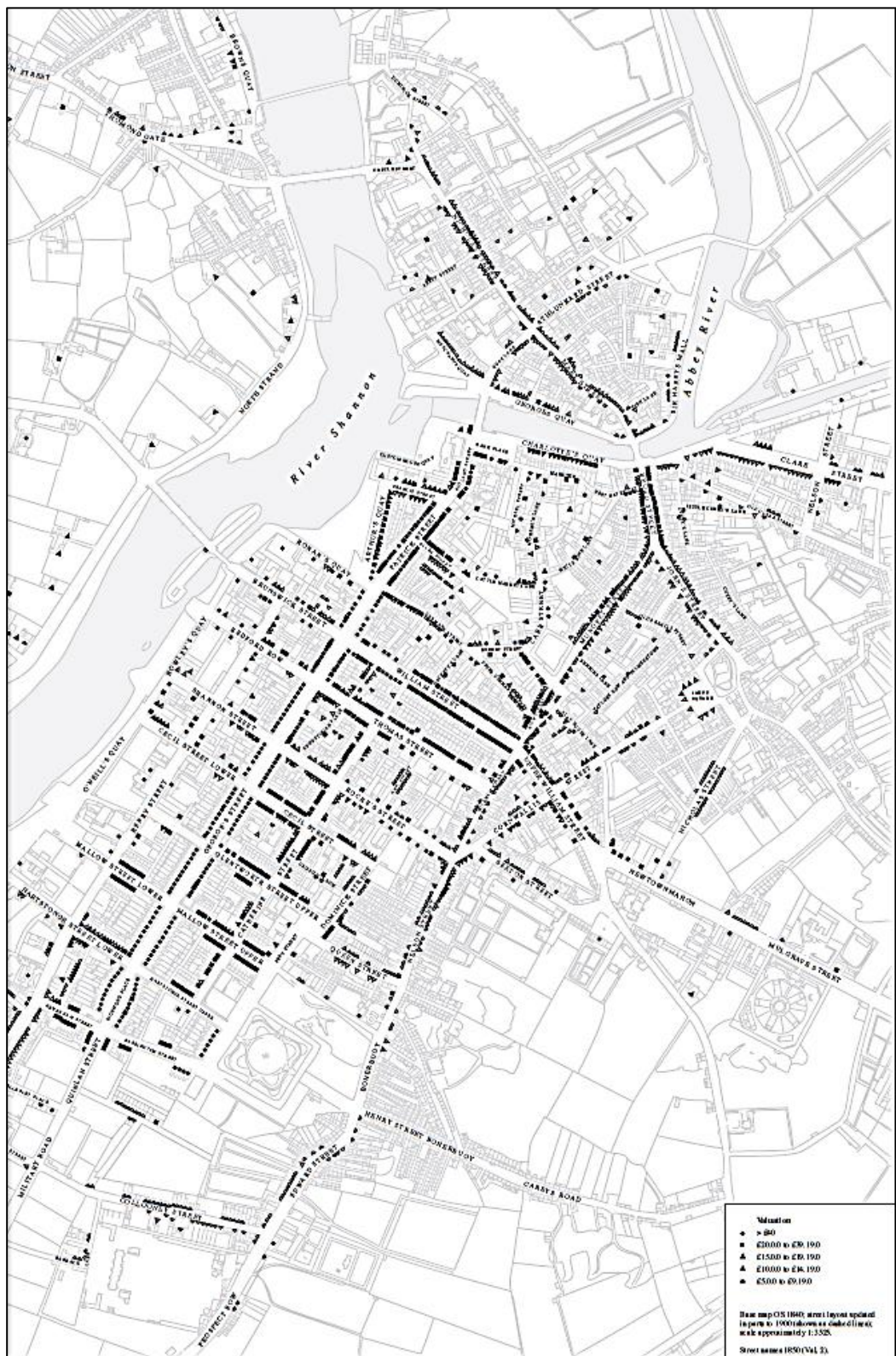
St Michael's Parish in contrast, is relatively constant in its valuation of £5 or more.²⁸² However, later on in the nineteenth century, many of the houses on these streets were to become tenement houses for the poorer classes. This parish consisted of a different layout than the older medieval town. The town had a planned grid section and as a result, housing sizes were planned and the only laneways were for stables which continued to remain as stables. *Figure 5.1* therefore provides valuable information which will be used in conjunction with other sources.

The valuations of dwellings of most significance to the researcher are those that are under £5 or where subdivision was recorded. The Primary Valuation of Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century and the Valuation Books at the turn of the twentieth century however do not highlight the exact condition of properties or the number of people occupying a property, but the associated Valuation House Books at the mid-nineteenth century will give an indication of the quality of a property. The books do indicate the number of separate units (subdivisions) within a property highlighting the early subdivision of houses, similar to the subdivision of tenement houses in the 1901/1911 censuses. Therefore it is necessary to examine the associated Valuation House Books in conjunction with the valuation records to analyse the quality of the buildings under £5 as indicated by the quality letter, and the rent paid. Although the House Books do not tell us how many people were living in a building, it does provide information on the unit of measure which gives an indication of the actual size of the property.

The value of a property can therefore provide some indication of areas associated with poverty. Poor employment opportunities meant that people had no choice as to where they lived. Rent was cheaper where houses were smaller and poorer in quality.

²⁸² The main streets such as Georges Street, William Street, Catherine Street, Mallow Street, Glentworth Street etc. all recorded values of over £5.

Figure 5.1: Properties valued at £5 or more in Limerick city at the mid-nineteenth century²⁸³ (IHTA, OS 1:3525, map 24, by E. O’Flaherty)

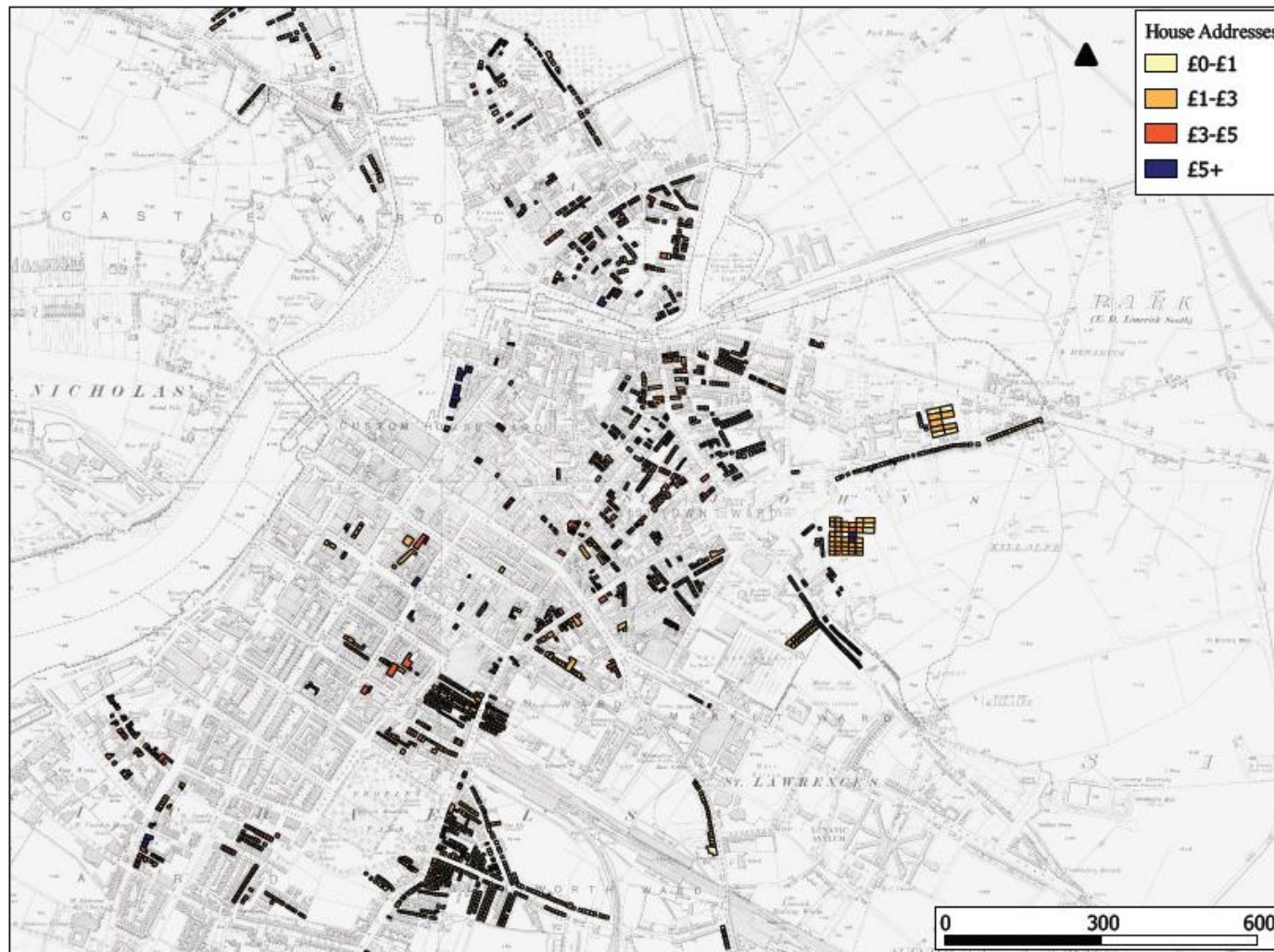


²⁸³ E. O’Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, No.21, *Limerick* (Royal Irish Academy, 2010), Buildings valued at £5 or more.

5.1.2 Valuations of £5 and under in Limerick

The spatial pattern of low value dwellings in Limerick city was mainly associated with St Mary's and St John's Parishes. It was clear that many of the lanes were valued below £5, while buildings on the main thoroughfares still maintained a value over £5. The smaller and more confined lanes and courts off secondary streets were mainly valued under £1. Houses were generally smaller in these lanes. There were fewer low value houses recorded in St Michael's Parish due to its later development and changes in architectural style. Houses were usually over £5 in value as a result.

Figure 5.2: Primary Valuation of Ireland, Properties of £5 and under for Limerick city, c. 1850



5.1.3 St Mary's parish

The majority of houses valued in St Mary's Parish ranged from under £1 (yellow), to £1-3 (orange), where the determining factor appears to be the location of property. The main thoroughfares of the towns are predominantly valued over £5 (*see figure 32*), however some dwelling values fall within the £3-5 range.²⁸⁴ Off the main thoroughfares, secondary streets such as Sheep Street, Abbey Street, and Crosby's Row or along Sir Harrys Mall highlight a range of properties that are classified as under £1 to £1-3. The hidden and confined lanes and alleyways that are branching off the main and secondary streets, which are not visible to the human eye from the main thoroughfares, are valued at approximately £3 or under, some as low as under £1, such as River Lane,²⁸⁵ Fish Lane (£1 7s 0d), a court off Nicholas Street, Meat Market Lane (£0 18s 0d) and Castle Lane (£0 18s 0s).²⁸⁶ These houses were small and poor in quality according to the house books. The average quality of houses was mainly first class in solidity, although 'medium' and 'old' in *age and repair*. This meant that houses were slightly decayed, either 'in or out of repair'.

²⁸⁴ These properties are found mainly along Mary Street, Nicholas Street and Athlunkard Street.

²⁸⁵ A typical house in River Lane in the 1901 census was classified as 2nd class, with an average of three rooms per house, an average of one family per house (approximately two people per room). The typical head of the household was returned as labourer, pork butcher or fisherman, while the women, who were also working, were chiefly employed in housekeeping or as domestic servants.

²⁸⁶ In 1901, the census of population recorded that a typical house in Castle Lane recorded both a mix of 2nd and 3rd class housing, with an average of two rooms per house and an average of one family per house (approximately two people per room). The typical head of household was also employed in labour (general and tailoring) while pedlars and fishermen were also recorded. Women were employed under the same headings as River Lane, while in some cases children were also returned as employed as factory workers (house No.5) as young as the age of 15. The average house in Meat Market Lane was 2nd class with an average of two rooms per house and one family per house (approximately two people per room). The typical head of household was also employed in labour, while women were employed as charwoman and housekeepers. House No.3 was also subdivided as a tenement house amongst four families employed under the same headings as previously mentioned.

Figure 5.3: Housing on Athlunkard Street (Sean Curtin, A Stroll Down Memory Lane)

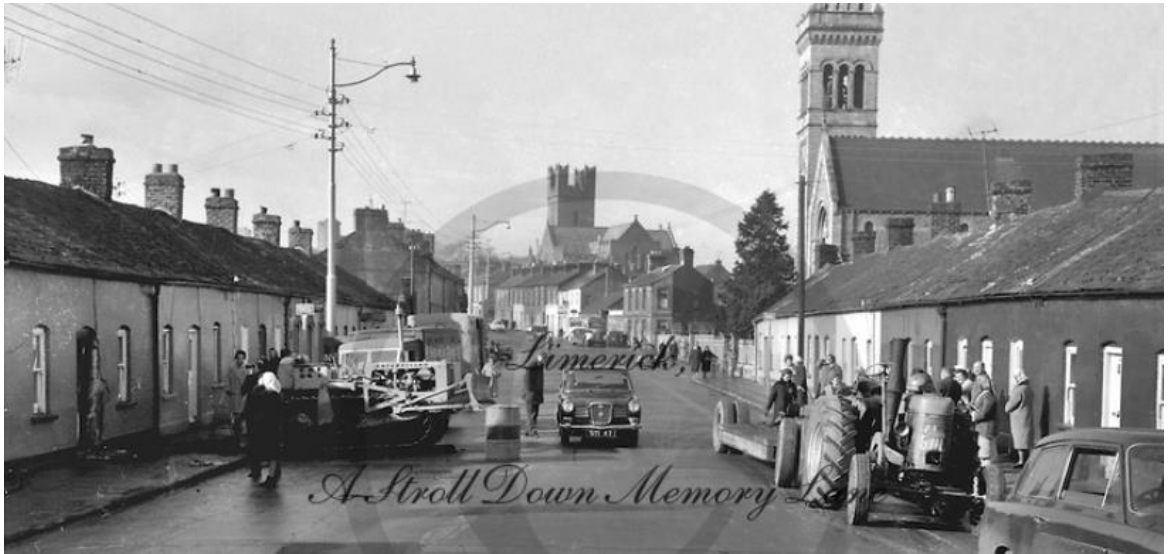
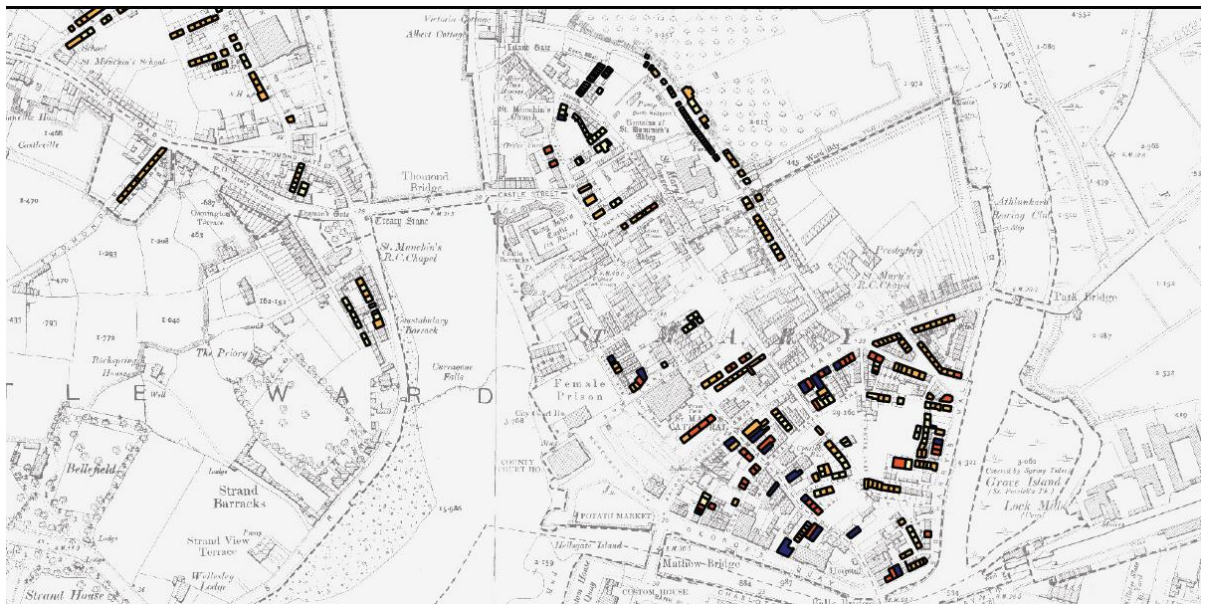


Figure 5.4: St Mary's parish valuations under £5, c. 1850



The east and west side of St Mary's Parish are split almost in half by the adjoining streets of Nicholas Street and Mary Street. The majority of laneways along the south eastern side of St Mary's Parish contained a concentration of lower values of properties under £5 (*see figure 5.4*). Proximity to the quays may have played a role in determining values of properties, as prosperous quays provided wealth and prosperity to an area but also attracted labourers who rented homes nearby, while in other cases it may be due to the quality and density of the houses together. Other areas on the east, such as Island Road, also recorded low value housing of £1 and under, possibly due to the close proximity of these houses to an obnoxious activity (i.e. slaughter house), which was also located alongside St Mary's Chapel and a nearby burial ground. The majority of properties surrounding the site of St Francis Abbey to the south-east also recorded concentrations of lower value housing of £1-3, such as Long Lane and Flag Lane, both of which were narrow and confined laneways adjoining Courthouse Lane.

5.1.4 St John's parish

St John's Parish also displayed a high concentration of low value housing. The main thoroughfares²⁸⁷ were relatively free from low value housing and contained values of £5 plus (*see figures 5.1 and 5.5*), highlighting a relationship between the high value housing and the location on main streets.

²⁸⁷ The main thoroughfares included Broad Street leading from Baals Bridge (which connects the two older towns within the city), to Mungret Street and John Street.

Figure 5.5: St John's Parish valuations under £5, c. 1850



As *figure 5.5* demonstrates, Broad Street was classified as having properties ranging from approximately £15-£40, John Street ranging from £5-£15 and Mungret Street ranging from £5-£20. However, the majority of laneways branching off Broad Street were valued at approximately £1-£3, such as Beltavern lane (£1 0s 0d), Sullivan's Lane (£2 15s 0d) and Flag Lane (£2 8s 0d). As we move southwards down along John Street, the valuation of properties changed. The laneways along the east of John Street display properties valued at £1 and under. Examples include Forker's Lane (£0 18s 0d),²⁸⁸ Washes Lane and Billy White's Lane (£1 17s 0d) (*see figure 5.5*). Curry Street²⁸⁹ (also referred to as Curry Lane), which runs almost parallel to John's Street, contained tenements valued at approximately £1-£3. The dwellings appeared to have been two storeys high with chimneys to the rear and doors facing a narrow lane at right angles.

²⁸⁸ By 1901 Forkers Lane recorded only one house. It was classified as 3rd class, with an average of four people per room. The household returns revealed that the head of household was a dock labourer, while the wife was employed as a washwoman.

²⁸⁹ The exterior walls of the row of houses still stand from possibly the sixteenth century. The walls are patched and broken with original openings blocked, and consisted of small and randomly coursed stones.

Only a narrow passageway separated these houses from adjacent buildings and many of the dwelling were said to have been homes to artisans.²⁹⁰

Figure 5.6: Houses on Curry Lane c. 1970 (LCM)



An old school register of the 1850s of the Brother Welsh Memorial School²⁹¹ on John's Street recorded some of the place names listed above, amongst others,²⁹² which were considered some of the poorest places in Limerick. That same register recorded many of the trades and occupations of the fathers of the children as rag-gatherers, thatchers, labourers, dairymen, coopers, grave-diggers, coffin-makers, bootmakers, tinmen, blacksmiths, car-makers and so on.²⁹³ These trades were classified as semi-skilled or manual occupations, which often did not provide sufficient funding for shelter, food and clothing for families. Therefore it is no surprise that these lanes and alleyways consisted of Limerick's poorest people.

Senward's Lane fed off Curry Street also recorded low value housing of £1-£3 while Donovan's Lane contained properties valued at £1 or under. This area however was

²⁹⁰ J. Hill, *The Building of Limerick* (Dublin, 1997) pp 42-43.

²⁹¹ J. Kemmy, 'Housing and Social Conditions: 1830-1940', in the *Old Limerick Journal, Barringtons' Edition*, Vol. 27, No.2 (Limerick, 1988) p. 71.

²⁹² Mass Lane, Bushy Lane, Scott's Lane, Ball Alley Lane, Curry Lane, White Wine Lane, Forkers Lane and Jones Lane

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

surrounded by marshy land and confined within the remains of the town wall. To the west of John Street, along Broad Lane, Bushel's Lane (Cabbage Market), Madam Parry's Lane, Clampets Bow and Broad Lane all contained many properties valued at £1-£3. The laneways on each side are short in length, compact in the number of houses available on the lane, and are enclosed by a main street and secondary street (*see figures 5.1 and 5.5*). Property values on Mungret Street range from £5-£20 with Blackbull Lane and Benson Lane being the only two lanes which contain lower value properties, ranging from approximately £1-£3. It is possible that due to the street connecting with St Michael's Parish and also its proximity to an abundance of markets, that many of the houses could have been owned by a more prosperous mercantile class.²⁹⁴ Other areas feeding off Mungret Street of lower value included Jones Place, valued between £1-£5. The area, surrounding the milk market, between Whitewine Lane and Dixon Lane are also valued at approximately £1-£3. On the opposite side of the milk market, the dwellings on Palmerstown and Taylors Row were valued from £1-£5.

In close proximity to these narrow lanes and low value housing sits John's Square.²⁹⁵ To the rear of this Georgian splendour, James Street and Barrack Lane were valued at between £1-£3, similar to Brennan's Row and Summer Street which adjoined Nicholas Street. Smaller laneways and alleyways had also been consumed into the £1-£3 range, such as Thomas Court and Mulcahy's Lane.

Not far to the east of Broad Street, Old Clare Street had a much broader street layout, due to the streets being of a later date, which fed from Lock Quay and joined with Nelson Street, acting as a connecting street. Many of the houses on Clare Street were valued between £1-£5, although the properties were much larger in size than the properties occupying the laneways and alleyways.

²⁹⁴ Ferrar's Directory of 1769 recorded brush makers, smiths, wool draper, coach makers, cabinet makers, clothiers, dryers and inn-holders. Triennials Directory of 1840, '41 and '42 recorded wool combers, flour dealers, chandlers, haberdashers, bread dealers, spirit dealers and grocers, dress makers, wool combers and manufacturers and bakers. Bassett's Directory of 1880-81 recorded provision dealers, marine dealers, farmers and grocer and spirit dealers.

²⁹⁵ The square consists of an early Georgian middle class terrace houses that were still holding its value in the 1850s because it faced away from the maze of streets and lanes of lower class housing in the Irishtown.

5.1.5 St Michael's parish

St Michael's Parish contained a small proportion of low value housing and any low value housing that did exist was confined to lanes and alleys along the outskirts or in close proximity to the old town, while others were located along the docklands. *Figure 5.1* highlights that the majority of streets on St Michael's Parish were occupied by high value housing ranging from £40 plus in areas such as Georges Street, to secondary streets such as William Street, Thomas Street, Cecil Street and Glenworth Street in the £20-£40 range. Augustinian Lane and Chapel Place which adjoined Roches Street to Thomas Street contained properties valued from £1-£5, similar to Little William Street which connected Thomas Street to William Street. Both these laneways were relatively small and confined places and contained only a small number of properties. It is possible that the values of houses within these areas were of a higher value due to the fact that they were a later development. Houses built later witnessed changes in the type of architecture due to social changes that were taking place.

Figure 5.7: St Michael's parish valuations under £5, c. 1850



Further east in St Michael's Parish, along Edward Street, Boherbouy and Henry Street South, a clear spatial concentration of low valued dwellings existed in a maze of lanes and alleyways. Brown's Lane (£1 7s 0d), Stokes Lane (£1 17s 0d) and Hall's Lane (Lydia Lane) (£1 7s 0d) all consisted of densely confined plots of small tenements located behind the main tenements on Edward Street. The triangular tract of land enclosed by Boherbouy, Henry Street South and Dixon's Lane, consist of a maze of lanes, forming a chaotic pattern. As a result, lanes were narrow and houses were built at every angle and available space. The pattern is significant and highlights a lack of

housing.²⁹⁶ Many of the properties located along Carey's Road and Boherbouy were once the dwellings of labourers and underwent the first city slum clearance in the 1840s in order to cater for the new railway terminus²⁹⁷ although many of the house clearing initiatives did not start taking place until the 1880s.

Further east in St Michael's Parish, the lanes between Dominick Street and Nelson Street all recorded low value housing. These lanes include White's Lane (£1 14s 0d), Lady's Lane (£2 8s 0d), Flag Lane and Hunt's Lane (£1 10s 0d). These lanes were confined and were extremely narrow, aiding in the valuation being significantly low. Other areas along in the south of St Michael's Parish were still under construction with a significant number of streets and lanes classified as building grounds such as Barrington Street, Richmond Street, Carrols Lane and Punches Lane according to the Primary Valuation of Ireland.²⁹⁸ Carroll's Lane and Punches Lane both consisted of low value housing of £1-3. One reason for this is the close proximity of the docklands and therefore these properties were labourers' dwellings. The surrounding area is also classified as a building ground which might be another contributing factor to the low value of the houses.

In the west of St Michael's Parish, the lower part of Henry Street was also classified as low value housing, along with Wellesley Place and Naughton's Lane. This area is located along the docks and in some cases provided housing for dock labourers as recorded by the 1901 census. The streets leading from Henry Street to the river became a warehouse district by the turn of the twentieth century.

From examining the sources, it is clear that certain areas within the city that contained low value housing and were linked with particular employment patterns. Many of the houses appeared to be small and of second and third class in terms of quality. Particular clusters can be identified with the qualities of poor quality housing, poor employment

²⁹⁶ Amongst these lanes, areas such as Hennessey's Lane, MacCurdles Lane, Richardson's Lane, Picket's Lane, Barry's Lane, Henry Place and Bowles Place form an area of poor quality and low value housing along the fringes of the city.

²⁹⁷ E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 10.

²⁹⁸ *The Sale of Limerick Catalogue* referred to Barrington Street undergoing leases from 1831, with many of the houses undergoing a second lease by 1881. Richmond Street (Place) also recorded leases and development in 1805, 1809 and 1837, while Punches Lane was unrecorded.

possibilities and low in value. These clusters will be identified later in the thesis in more detail.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁹ The main areas include the lanes along Carey's Road, lanes off Nelson Street and Queen Street, houses along Arthur's Quay amongst others. These houses vary in size and are occupied by families of various sizes, while others also contained boarders and lodgers.

5.2 Limerick city Rate Valuation Books 1893-1930

The later General Rate Valuation Books provide similar information to the Primary Valuation of Ireland for a later time period, c. 1893-1930 (*figure 5.8*) although at a local level. The source recorded the value of houses, house subdivision and also the building function. From examining the later rate books from 1893-1930, property valuations of £5 or under had continued to spread across the city since the valuation of the 1850s. *Figure 5.8* displays a denser concentration of these houses which indicates conditions had not improved. The same places are still evident and new streets were added. However the number of properties under £1 had decreased from 1017 in the 1850's to 138 in the 1900s. These were confined to the lanes and alleys which had previously been outlined in the 1850s.³⁰⁰ New areas of low value properties (under £5) had emerged along the docklands of St Michael's Parish, off O'Connell Avenue, along Garryowen and Roxboro, Carey's Road and Sexton Street North.

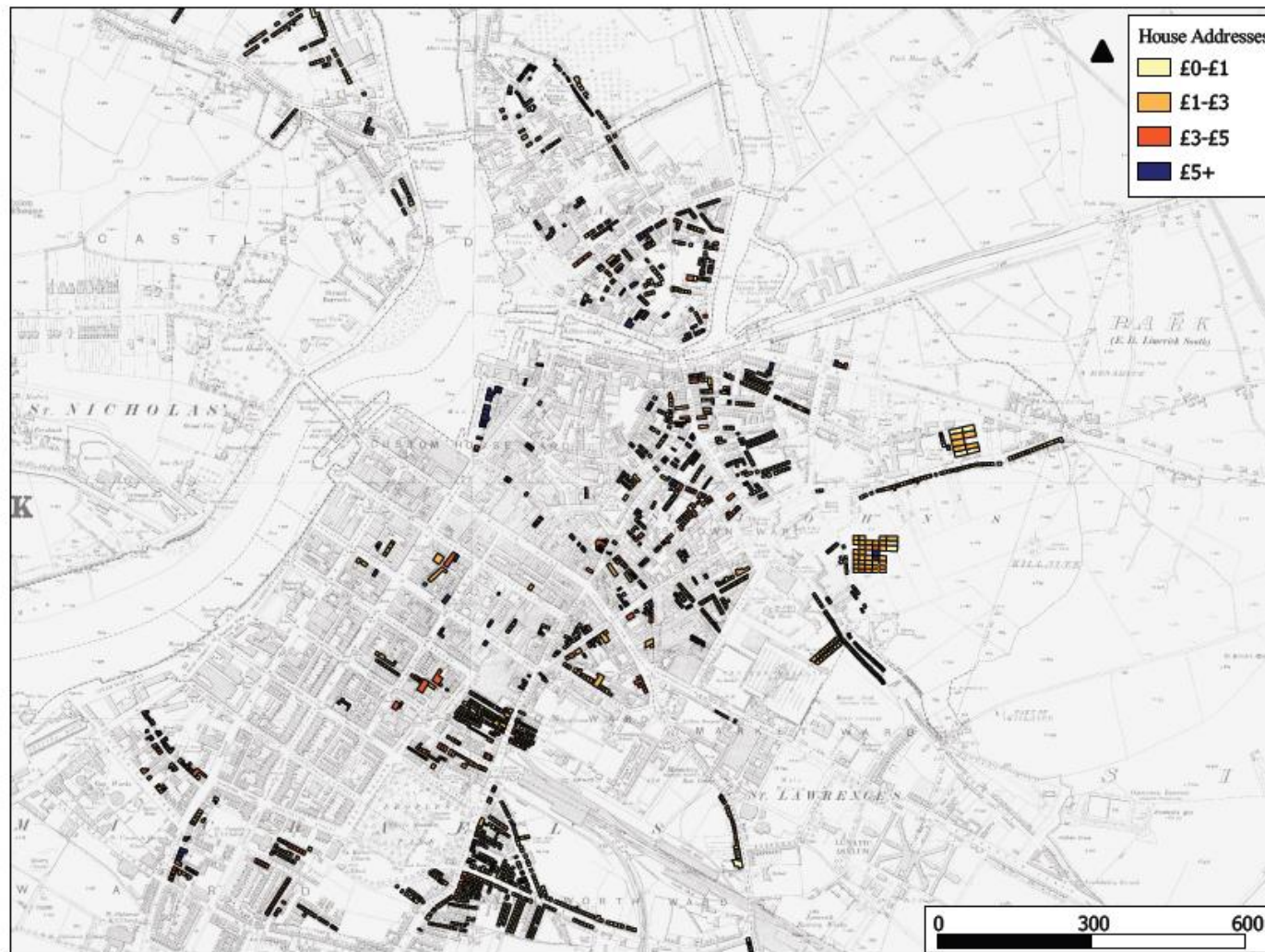
Limerick remained non-industrial throughout the nineteenth century although continued to export produce to other cities in the Britain. As a result many of the labourers moved to the docklands. Limerick City Minute Books from 1850-1900 continued to record development along Garryowen and Roxboro during the nineteenth century and the area remained associated with the poor.³⁰¹ Many wealthy people did not wish to live next to the Lunatic Asylum or the City Gaol which had been erected during the course of the nineteenth century. Carey's Road and Sexton Street recorded some of the worst conditions in Limerick over the century.³⁰² These houses were old and confined and remained without running water and water closets for much of the nineteenth century which meant that it was very much behind the times in terms of hygiene. Diseases were also recorded from the conditions within these houses and many were whitewashed and cleaned out as a result.

³⁰⁰ Areas of persistent poverty still remain within the city

³⁰¹ Various entries in the Limerick City Council special minute books.

³⁰² LCA, various entries from L/SMIN from 1880s-1910,

Figure 5.8: Rate Valuation Books 1893-1930, Properties £5 and under in Limerick city



5.2.1 St Mary's parish, c. 1900

Older areas of the city such as St Mary's Parish (Abbey & Castle DED) experienced a decrease between 1893-1910 in the number of properties of £1 or under in comparison to the 1850s. One of the main reasons for this change is due to a large portion of the parish recorded as 'ruins' by 1893 according to the Rate Valuation Books.³⁰³ Another reason could be the clearance of such houses to make space for new housing schemes in the late 1880s. Many of the houses which occupied these lanes were previously recorded as housing 'lodgers'. By 1900 individual tenant names (as opposed to nameless 'lodgers') were recorded in the rate books. On Exchange Lane, Nicholas Street, Sir Harrys Mall and Bishop Street, the Thomond Artisans' Dwellings Co. recorded owned housing in 1910 according to the Rate Valuation Books, which were recorded as 'building grounds'.

³⁰³ Some of the streets and lanes which recorded ruins included Mary Street, Gaol Lane, Meat Market Lane, Glue Yard Lane and Bonfield Lane, meaning that they had no value attached to the property, and the rate books provided no indication as to whether these ruins were still inhabited.

Figure 5.9: St Mary's parish valuations under £5, c. 1900



Many of the lanes off the main streets such as Exchange Lane (£1 4s 0d & £2 10s 0d), Francis Place, Gaol Lane (c. £1 7s 0d), Long Lane and Sir Harrys Mall (£3 0s 0d) all recorded valuations of £1-£5. Some of the main thoroughfares such as Newgate Lane³⁰⁴ (Abbey Street), Barrack Street/Lane, Old Dominick Street, Athlunkard Street, Nicholas Street and parts of Mary Street all began to record properties of £3-£5 by 1900.³⁰⁵ By the time of the 1901 census, St Mary's Parish had very little to do with trading within the city as a whole which had an effect on housing value and quality. Trade and commerce had moved from the old parts of the town to the new town. Houses in St Mary's Parish were neglected and deteriorating as a result, which many of the poor took advantage of by occupying these houses. Many of these houses remained without water

³⁰⁴ By 1901, the census revealed that seven of the properties on Newgate Lane were classified as 2nd class tenement houses containing on average two and three families. The majority of people per room were four, and in some cases seven people per room were recorded. The typical family consisted of a shop keeper as head of household. Other trades consisted of wire workers, stone masons and general labourers. The women were recorded as housekeepers in most cases while the majority of children were recorded as scholars. The tenement houses recorded similar trades, with extra lodgers consisting of relatives such as mother-in-laws (house No.5), brother-in-law (house No.9) and boarders (house No.8 & 12).

³⁰⁵ This highlights that although families in these areas experienced poverty in some form, not all families experienced it to the same extent. The dwellings listed all contain one family, with the only exception being Meat Market Lane. The families listed display no aspects of gross overcrowding and are generally employed in low paid casual labour. Therefore although the houses are low in value, the families are not experiencing chronic poverty where they might be forced to take in lodgers to subsidise rents. The families are not large in size as to apply pressure to the chief wage earner.

closets also which contributed to unsanitary living conditions and neglect by landlords and the corporation.³⁰⁶

Across Thomond Bridge, many areas were experiencing low value housing similar to that of the 1850s, although properties under £1 were almost non-existent. The majority of housing along Sexton Street North ranged from £1-£3, similar to Cross Road and Quarry Road. The Sale of Limerick Catalogue³⁰⁷ continued to record development up to 1888, when Quarry Road recorded leases for the development of six houses, a forge, a garden and a quarry at a yearly rental value of £5 6s 0d.³⁰⁸ O'Halloran's Lane and Thomondgate also recorded properties between £1-£3 in value, while the majority of properties developing along North Strand Road or the Ennis Road were retaining property value of £5 or more.

5.2.2 St John's parish, c. 1900

The majority of properties in St John's Parish³⁰⁹ witnessed very little change and continued to be valued under £5. However, like St Mary's Parish, a similar reduction in the number of properties under £1 can be noticed, highlighting the possible successes of the social housing schemes which were underway by 1930.³¹⁰ Most of these areas were in St Mary's and St John's Parishes. Many areas by 1930 were recorded as 'building grounds' or 'ruins', such as: Walsh's Lane, Clampet's Lane, Carey's Lane, Ryan's Lane and Sullivan's Lane. The majority of properties in St John's still ranged from £1-£3 while properties under £1 were in minority. The main thoroughfares such as Broad Street and John Street still held status in property valuation of over £5 (as the streets were still busy and somewhat prosperous), although many of the lanes off Mungret Street and lower Gerald Griffith Street (Cornwallis Street) were still dotted with buildings £1-£3 in value, e.g. Jones Place and Old Francis Street.

³⁰⁶ Various entries from the L/SMIN and the public health committee diary book.

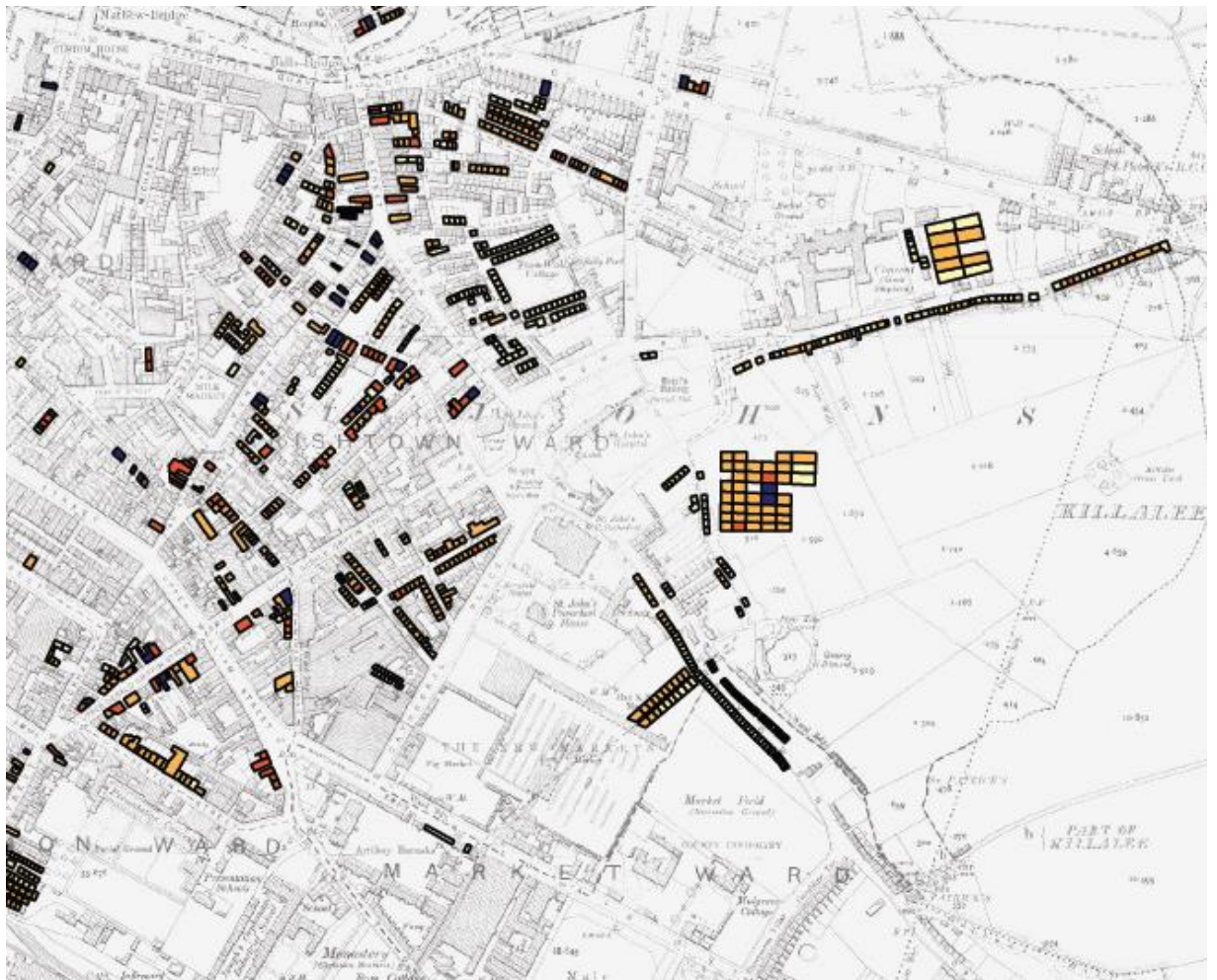
³⁰⁷ LCA, *The 1907 'Sale of Limerick' Catalogue and Maps*

³⁰⁸ LCA, *The 1907 'Sale of Limerick' Catalogue and Maps*

³⁰⁹ DED No.6, Irishtown Ward Rate Book c.1930-1938. A later valuation book was used due to the earlier copy being unavailable.

³¹⁰ It is likely that the lowest valued houses were removed first due to their conditions.

Figure 5.10: St John's parish valuations under £5, c. 1930



The area along Clare Street and Old Clare Street continued to develop toward the latter end of the nineteenth century, with Curry Lane, Garveys Lane and Millers Row all consisting of £1-£3 properties in value. Properties off Old Clare Street continued to depreciate in value while properties along St Lelia Street and St Lelia Place also witnessed a decline. Many of the lanes surrounding White Wine Lane were still valued at £1-£3, while the West Watergate Area had developed significantly, having been built upon by the Thomond Artisans' Dwelling Company as part of a slum clearance scheme sometime in the early twentieth century.³¹¹ New houses were built and the area was cleaned up to make space for one family dwellings. Michael's Street, Punches Lane and Punches Bow had also witnessed new developments, with new buildings erected during the century, categorised as £1-£3 in value also.

³¹¹ LCA, L/FR/RB/2/1/19, pp 41-44.

5.2.3 St Michael's parish, c. 1900

After 1900, St Michael's Parish continued to contain only a small proportion of low value housing. The main streets (such as George's Street/O'Connell Street, William Street, Roches Street) were high value (above £5), while the houses along the docklands recorded a small portion of dwellings under £5 (such as on Frederick Street, Windmill Street and Cogan Stand). Newenham Lane recorded values of £1 or under while Naughtons Lane continued to record values of £1-£3. The areas between Barrington Street and Wolfe Tone Street (Colooney Street) witnessed an increase in housing of approximately £1-£5, not surprising considering the location to the barracks and docklands, while many of the streets surrounding these streets were of a higher valuation.

Figure 5.11: St Michael's parish valuations under £5, c. 1900



The areas that witnessed the most persistent poverty in the city continued to be located off Dominick Street and Nelson Street, in which Whites Lane, Lady's Lane, Hunt's Lane and Flag Lane continued to be valued between £1-£3. Other areas which recorded persistent abundance of low value housing (under £5) from the 1850s to 1900 included the cluster of lanes along Edward Street, Boherbouy and Careys Road. These areas retained the status of poor quality building and ranging from £1-£5.

5.3 Conclusion

From examining the Primary Valuation of Ireland (c. 1850s) and the Limerick City Rate Valuation Books (c. 1893 – 1938), there has been a significant decrease in the amount of houses under £1 between the mid and late nineteenth century while houses valued from £3-£5 remained relatively constant. Many of the streets continued to be of low value within the older towns of the city. The mapping of property value has proved informative in identifying areas of low value housing. In addition it is clear, from an examination of the evidence from the 1901 house returns that many of the people who occupied these houses were employed in manual trades, however they experienced different levels of poverty, depending on housing size and family size.

5.4 Housing quality

The Primary Valuation House Books are another source which aid in determining the level and quality of a property and contribute to the overall understanding of the nature of poor quality/low value buildings in the city. The quality number and quality letter extracted from the house books aid in the identification of areas of upper and lower class quality.

The majority of buildings in Limerick valued at £5 or under in the city were classified as Class 1 solidity (meaning they were slated offices or houses, built with stone, brick or lime mortar) according to the House Books (*figure 5.12*). However, the actual state of repair is a better indicator of the actual standard of living conditions within the building. The locations of these houses within the city were confined to the side lanes in St Mary's and St John's Parishes, and also in the east of St Michael's Parish. Housing quality ranged from 'sound order and good repair' to 'old and in/out of repair'. St John's Parish appeared to display houses which were old but in repair.

Figure 5.12: Building Quality, Class 1, in Limerick city, c. 1850



Buildings which were Class 2 and Class 3 in quality were recorded as thatched buildings and were mainly confined again to the small lanes in St John's Parish and also a small few in the east of St Michael's Parish along Carey's Road. These houses were recorded to be 'slightly decayed but in repair' to 'old and in repair'.

Figure 5.13: Building Quality, Class 2, in Limerick city, c. 1850

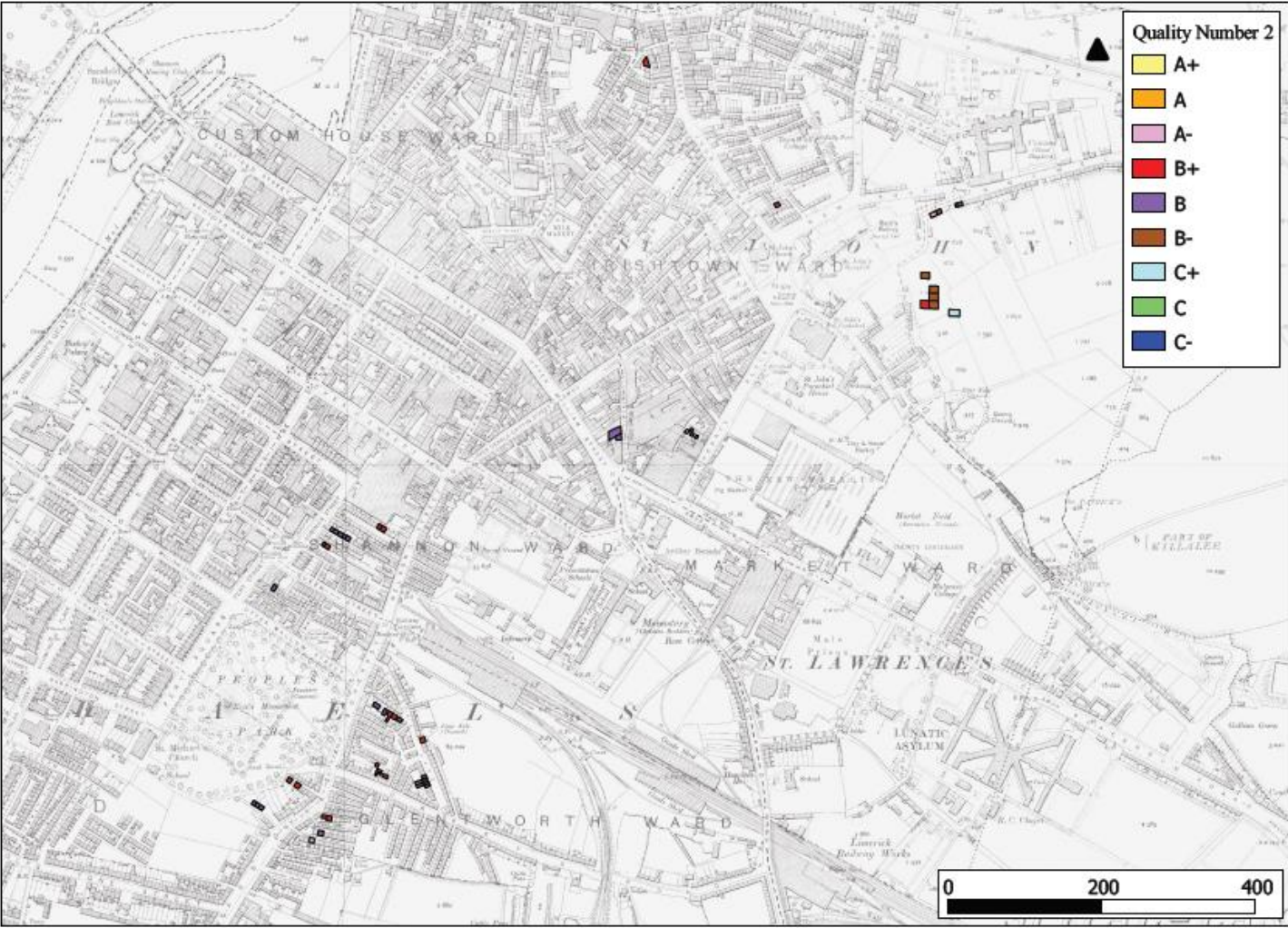


Figure 5.14: Building Quality, Class 3, in Limerick city, c. 1850



5.4.1 Housing quality in Limerick in the mid-nineteenth century

Older parts of the city, side lanes and alleys off main thoroughfares such as Nicholas Street and Abbey Street, were occupied by ‘medium and old’ types of buildings. Crosby Row was classified as ‘not new, but in good sound order and good repair’, while Post Office Lane, Barrack Lane and Exchange Street/Lane were classified as ‘old and out of repair’. However, later on *c.* 1900, Barrack Lane and Exchange Lane both underwent a clearance and housing scheme due to the state of the buildings.

Sir Harrys Mall to the east of King’s Island recorded 1st class building quality in ‘solidity’ and ranged from ‘ordinary building’ to ‘finish/substantial building’, while others were classified as ‘not new but in solid order and repair’. The houses located closer to Baals Bridge were classified as 1st class ‘solidity’, although they had obviously begun to decline in quality and were classified as ‘old and deteriorated’ by the mid-century.

Across Baal’s Bridge, lanes and alleys off the main thoroughfares were also characterised by ‘medium and old’ buildings. The majority of houses were classified with reference to 1st class ‘solidity’, slated houses built with stone or brick. Buildings along O’Sullivan’s Place or Moore’s Lane remained ‘relatively new, in sound order and in solid repair’. Curry Lane, adjacent to Broad Street and John Street recorded ‘slightly decayed’ buildings. Many of the lanes of Old Francis Street, which continued to remain in poor building quality until the turn of the century and recorded the majority of houses as ‘old’, some in repair and others not. The pattern continues along Benson Lane and Blackbull Lane off Mungret Street. Whitewine Lane and Rosemary Place, again located near to the market area also recorded buildings that had ‘deteriorated by age’ while others remained ‘old and in need of repair’.

Houses located on Old Clare Street, Cassidy’s Lane or Magdalene’s Row were categorised as thatched properties, 2nd and 3rd class solidity, these were eventually incorporated into the grounds of the Good Shepard Convent.

Not surprisingly, buildings located on the main streets of St Michael’s Parish remained in comparatively good quality, considering the area underwent a later development and consisted of a more modern town plan. Houses in this area were slated and built of brick, windows were larger and allowed more light into the rooms and rooms were bigger. As a result of the change in architectural planning, houses were of a better

quality. When they were built, they were fit for the purpose of serving one family. However, during the nineteenth century the purpose of these houses changed, and they became tenement homes for several families. Therefore, many of the buildings were valued at over £5 which also highlighted the spatial variations in value within the city. Unlike the streets and lanes of St Mary's and St John's Parishes, the areas which were characterised in St Michael's Parish as being under £5 were confined to the docks and also in close proximity to the old town, Carey's Road and Boherbouy. The House Books referred to these properties as 'medium' in age and repair, considered 'not new, but in sound order and good repair'. The high quality and high value of buildings within St Michael's Parish was due to the buildings being slated rather than thatched and therefore of better quality.

Thatch housing that did exist in St Michael's Parish was located in close proximity to St John's Parish, on the lanes adjoining Dominick Street and Nelson Street (Flag Lane, Hunt's Lane,³¹² Lady's Lane and White's Lane³¹³). This area continued to be classified as poor quality in terms of structure and low value up until the twentieth century. The 1901 census recorded that the houses on all four lanes were classified as a second class buildings with two rooms.

Further in the south of the new town, streets and lanes along Joseph Street and Colooney Street (Wolfe Tone Street) were characterised by low value properties which were under £5 (approximately £1-3 in value). These houses were described as in 'sound order and good repair'. The laneways located around Boherbouy and Edward Street remained populated throughout the century as under £5 in value and experienced

³¹² Houses on Hunt's Lane were valued between £1-3 and fifteen of these houses were occupied by lodgers. According to the census of population, all houses were second class and contained an approximately two rooms. The houses were occupied by general labourers, sausage packers, pork butchers, domestic servants, coachmen and others as unemployed. Women were returned as domestic servants or unemployed. In house No.20, a boarder was recorded as 'living on outdoor relief' from the Board of Guardians. Mainly houses recorded 'read only' in literacy levels.

³¹³ Houses on White's Lane were all between £1-3 and eight of house contained lodgers (a total of twenty-nine houses) in the general valuation lists. The 1901 census recorded that these houses were second class buildings and contained approximately two rooms, with an average of three people per room. The people who occupied these houses were mainly general labourers, carpenters, blacksmiths, house painters and porter. Women were employed as seamstresses, servants, housekeepers and charwomen. Literacy levels on the street were poor, with several cases of 'read only' and 'unable to read or write'.

‘decayed, deteriorated and old’ buildings.³¹⁴ Housing out along Carey’s Road (the average house was valued at £2,0,0) had continued to spread throughout the century to cater for the growing population as more buildings were included in the Rate Books valuations than the Primary Valuation of Ireland. Many of the houses on this road were occupied by labourers³¹⁵ along with coachmen, butchers and railway workers according to the census. Some of the houses were classified as thatch houses. Cahill’s Lane (£0,18,0 to £1,7,0), Lee’s Lane and MacAllister’s Lane were some examples of thatch housing, built ‘with stone or brick’, of ‘sound quality, slightly decayed and deteriorated by age quality’.

5.4.2 Conclusion

Examining house value, housing quality and location is significant to understand which areas experience the poorest conditions and what types of houses experience the poorest conditions. It is clear that the quality of the building may also be contributing to the value of a building. It is clear that the houses which are low in value (under £5) appear to be also poor in quality. Some were in need of repair while others were out of repair and scarcely habitable. Very few houses on the main streets were recorded to have poor quality, while many of the side lanes also contained thatch housing. The census revealed that many of these houses were also small in size, with some being overcrowded and occupied by lodgers.

³¹⁴ Some of these buildings were also classified as ‘dilapidated’, such as those on Piggott’s (Pickett’s) Lane (valued between £0,18,0 to £1,17,0) and Carney’s Lane.

³¹⁵ E. O’Flaherty, *Irish Historical Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 10.

5.5 Class of housing

The class of housing for the city can be obtained from the censuses of population from 1871 onwards and provides an indicator of the quality of buildings in the city as a whole.

Figure 5.15: Percentage of Class of Housing in the City, 1871 to 1891³¹⁶



After 1871, the class of a house was determined by material of walls, roofs and the number of rooms etc., which is quite significant due to variations between the different classes of houses and the size of houses. The class of the house can therefore contribute to the building quality which varied across the city. Examining house class over various years can aid in the identification of changes in buildings quality and reductions in the number of third and fourth class housing alongside increases in first and second class dwellings as demonstrated in *figure 5.15*.

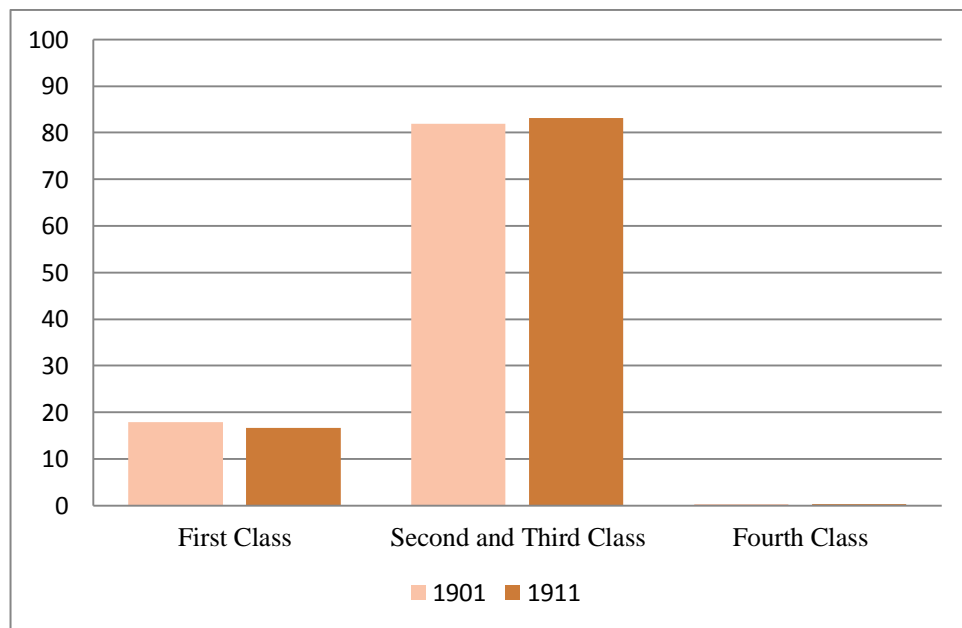
Figure 5.15 displays information extracted from various censuses of population and highlights the class of houses in Limerick from 1871-1891. Over the course of selected years, second class housing makes up the bulk of housing in the city. Over the course of the decades in question there was an increase in second class houses and a

³¹⁶ 1901 and 1911 are excluded due to amalgamation of second and third class housing and are included on a separate graph.

corresponding decrease in third and fourth class housing. While the majority of city dwellers may therefore have been occupying second class housing by 1891, other evidence suggests that the conditions within these houses may not have been second class. Similar results were recorded for 1901 and 1911 where second and third class housing made up the majority of the housing stock.

One of the reasons for the increase in second class housing was due to the introduction of the Local Government Board (LGB) in 1872 (under the LGB Act of 1871) which introduced slum clearances from the 1880s. Small scale initiatives in the 1880s were also carried out by private housing associations that were constructing purpose built houses for single family occupancy. These housing schemes were a main contributor to the decrease in third and fourth class accommodation (examples include Garryowen and John Street in which 21 houses were built).³¹⁷

Figure 5.16: Percentage of Class of Housing in the City, 1901 to 1911



³¹⁷ The Public Health and Sanitary Reports from 1912 also provided details on the type of dwellings built and the areas where they were constructed in an effort to monitor improvements in the city through housing of the working classes. The overall result was an increase in more suitable housing (single family homes with sanitation and water facilities) in the form of social housing, although overcrowding was still prevalent in many areas of the city. These houses would be second in class due to the building materials and the number of rooms within them. These houses would also contribute to the reduction in the number of third and fourth class houses within the city.

Many of the buildings in the new town were transformed into tenement buildings for the poorer classes (which became known for multiple occupancy tenements) by the time of 1901 and 1911 census. This also contributed to the decrease in demand for third and fourth class housing. However, as discussed previously this did not necessitate a decrease in the levels of poverty or an improvement in conditions experienced within higher class housing. Rather, it just moved the problem of overcrowding to another form of accommodation. First class housing experienced a slight decrease within the ten years, while second class remained relatively the same. By 1911, the percentage of second and third class housing had increased to approximately 80% of the city's housing stock.

Table 5.1 and *table 5.2* below record the micro data of the town and highlight the percentage of the class of housing within each DED. The tables display the percentage of houses in each category of first, second and third class housing for each DED,³¹⁸ and also recorded the number of houses for census years 1901 and 1911. Housing in the city grew from 5,880 houses in 1901 to 6,314 houses in 1911 (increase of 13.5%). The majority of housing was in the second class categories in 1901 and 1911, with the exception in Dock and Castle ward which experienced declines. Much of the third class housing remained the same, while a minority experienced declines; Castle Ward also recorded a slight increase in the number of second class housing.

³¹⁸ District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) were introduced after the Poor Law Act (Ireland) 1838 to divide up the Poor Law Unions which did not adhere to the county and barony boundaries. These DEDs were used for the registration of births, deaths and marriages and also for elections and were also used for the 1901 and 1911 censuses, replacing the parishes.

Table 5.1: Class of house in Limerick city, 1901

<i>DED, 1901</i>	<i>No. of Houses</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>2nd Class</i>	<i>3rd Class</i>
Abbey	666	11%	65%	14%
Castle	875	8%	77%	7%
Custom	373	39%	37%	1%
Dock	1050	17%	75%	4%
Glentworth	846	18%	73%	6%
Irishtown	1063	5%	78%	10%
Market	428	30%	51%	2%
Shannon	579	24%	59%	2%

Table 5.2: Class of house in Limerick city, 1911

<i>DED, 1911</i>	<i>No. of Houses</i>	<i>1st Class</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>2nd Class</i>	<i>% Change</i>	<i>3rd Class</i>	<i>% Change</i>
Abbey	828	4%	-7%	75%	+10%	14%	-
Castle	937	10%	+2%	71%	-6%	8%	+1%
Custom	411	27%	-12%	55%	+15%	1%	-
Dock	1322	13%	-4%	73%	-2%	3%	-1%
Glentworth	785	17%	-1%	71%	-2%	6%	-
Irishtown	972	8%	+3%	70%	-8%	9%	+1%
Market	497	18%	-12%	61%	+10%	1%	-1%
Shannon	562	19%	-5%	61%	-2%	1%	-1%

The tables also highlight the difference in the location of the class of housing whereby the highest percentages of first class housing were located in Custom House DED and Shannon DED (both in St Michael's Parish). These areas all represented the lowest percentages of third class housing. Abbey DED (St Mary's Parish) and Irishtown DED (St John's Parish) displayed opposite results, low percentages of first class housing and higher percentages of third class. The tables also show increases in the number of houses within each DED, which may be due to social housing schemes.

By the turn of the twentieth century the majority of houses in Limerick City were second class housing, with the exception of some areas in St Mary's Parish, such as Cassidy's Lane, Castle Lane, Moores Lane, O'Halloran's Lane and Rhebogue, which consisted of third class housing. Areas in St John's Parish which also consisted of third class housing included Forker's Lane, Hill's Lane, Carey's Lane, Kerry Bow and the Townwall and Watergate area. Third class housing in St Michael's was very scarce, and in the majority of streets it was non-existent, as extracted from the census of population.

5.6 Conclusion

Most housing within the city were second in class although not all these houses were occupied by one family. We have seen in some cases that the census of population recorded subdivision within houses which were second class. Although these houses may have been second in class, many of them did not experience healthy living conditions as will be discussed in chapter six.

5.7 Families by household category

After examining the physical characteristics the houses, it is necessary to examine the types of people living in the houses and how it varies from house to house. One family occupying a poor quality house would not have the same effect as multiple families occupying a poor quality house.

Limerick recorded several multiple family households in the city throughout the nineteenth century. The census of population for 1901 recorded that 32% of the population were living in overcrowded houses of more than two people per room. *Figure 5.17* displays the number of family households in each house for the city from 1871-1891. The results demonstrate an increase in the number of one-family households in each house in the city over the three decades, while the number of two, three and four+ family household began to decrease steadily. Again, this is linked to the slum clearances and the public housing schemes which took place in the 1880s. This highlights the possible success of the slum clearance and social housing schemes within the city, and also highlights the start of clearance of people within the city. If one-family households were increasing, this meant that there was a reduction in the number of subdivided houses as it refers to the families in each house. The table also highlights the decline of the tenement system by 1891 as the number of families by household was gradually declining. *Figure 5.17* and *5.18* highlighted that the majority of one-family households were living in second class houses.

Figure 5.17: Number of Families by Household Category in Limerick city, 1871-1891

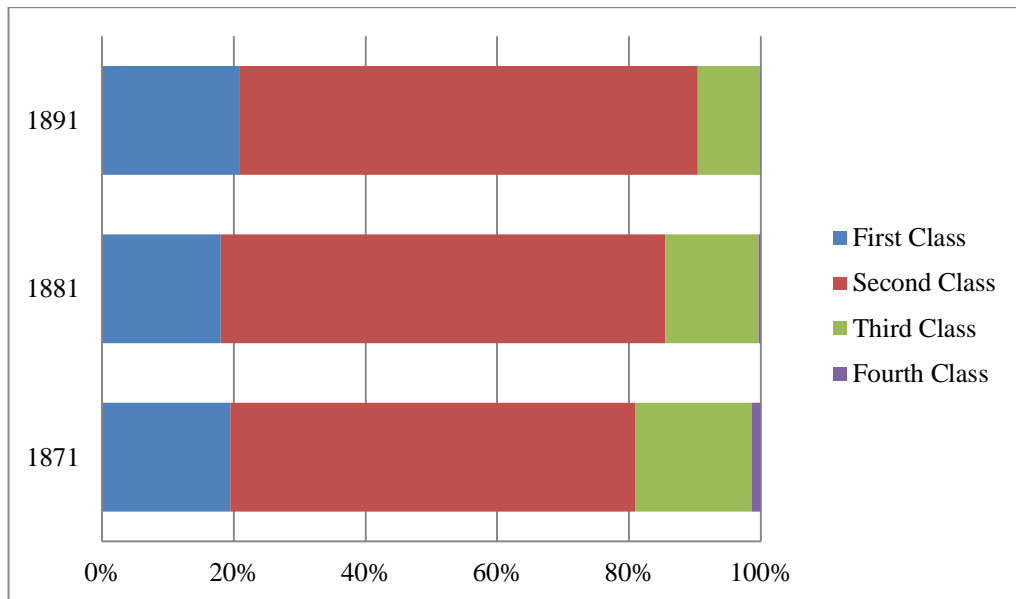


Figure 5.18: Number of Families by Household Category in Limerick city, 1901-1911

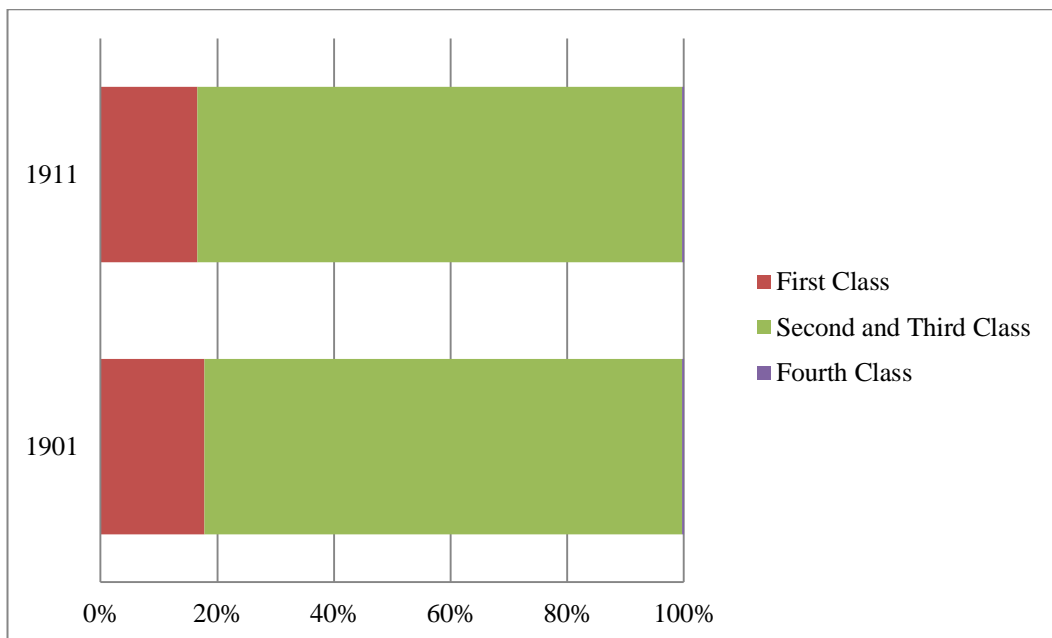


Figure 5.18 demonstrates a continuation of the previously identified pattern in 1871-1891. It is interesting to note that the number of four family households is higher than three family households, which means that certain houses in the city were containing four families or more. By 1901 and 1911 Limerick still had areas which were experiencing persistent poor quality housing and high levels of occupancy. In a report by 1908, it was stated officially that a room containing two or more people was deemed overcrowded.³¹⁹ In classifying overcrowding through the Census of Population, the researcher has therefore also defined overcrowding in terms of numbers as anything above two people per room. In some cases, depending on number of rooms in a house and the number of family members, some rooms may contain a husband and wife, and one child, or in other cases one room may consist of three small children, in comparison to those rooms which contained people of different circumstance, varying ages and mixing of sexes.

Table 11 & 12 (appendix A) display areas of the city that were overcrowded based on the above classification. It is evident from *figures 5.19 & 5.20*, that many of the streets and lanes in older parts of the town are classified as overcrowded.

³¹⁹ *The Cost of Living of the Working Classes Report of an enquiry by the Board of Trade in the working class rents, housing and retail prices, together with the standard rates of wages prevailing in certain occupations in the principal industrial towns of the United Kingdom, with an introductory memorandum*, 1908 (cd.3864) p. 63.

Figure 5.19: Overcrowded Streets in Limerick city, 1901



Figure 5.20: Overcrowded Streets in Limerick city, 1911



Some of these areas that are overcrowded include the laneways near to Carey's Road and Boherbouy, others along the Custom House in St Michael's Parish which recorded several tenements and various places in St Mary's and St John's Parishes.³²⁰

5.7.1 Overcrowding in St Mary's parish

Census prior to 1901 recorded that the population levels for St Mary's and also for St Johns Parishes were higher than the number of available houses. This meant that the population density for these parishes was extremely high (180 people per acre in 1841 and 90 people per acre in 1911) due to a shortage of housing. In Limerick, Dominick Street Old, Barrack Lane and Love Lane were all overcrowded with three people per room. Areas to the west of the island, Newgate Lane (Abbey Street) and Post Office Lane were also experiencing overcrowding with three people per room, similar to Hassett's Bow off Nicholas Street, Court House Lane, Sheep Street and Mill Lane near Georges Quay. Across Thomond Bridge, a number of lanes were recorded as overcrowded with three people per room also. These areas included Cashel's Lane, Loughlins Lane, Halloran's Lane and Goggin's Lane. George's Quay showed early signs of social change by the mid nineteenth century (1830) when the middle classes were vacating the area. The Primary Valuation of Ireland recorded that two houses had been subdivided and one contained lodgers. At the turn of the twentieth century, the century recorded overcrowding in 1901 and continued up to 1911. By this time, houses on Mary Street were overcrowded, as a result of their use as tenements, while Mill Lane, Newgate Lane, Crosby Row, Hassett's Bow and Pump Lane were displaying similar results of subdivision.

5.7.2 Overcrowding in St John's parish

Across Baal's Bridge and heading into St John's Parish, Lock Quay, Sullivan's Place, Moore's Lane and Beltavern Lane, all of which located along the Abbey River, were overcrowded with three on average per room. By 1911, only Sullivan's Place recorded three people per room, the other streets have been reduced to two. Rosberry Place had an average of four people per room while Whitewine Lane had an average of three people per room. By 1911, Rosberry Place had recorded a drop to three people per room while Whitewine Lane dropped to two people per room. Many areas to the south

³²⁰ The average value of houses on Carey's Road and Boherbouy are under £5 while the class of these houses is second class. House in the Custom House District are above £5 in value, and first class in value.

displayed similar results, though the town was undergoing slum clearances and housing schemes from the 1880s onwards. By 1911, Forkers Lane was displaying an average of 5 people per room, an increase from 4 people per room in 1901. By 1901, John Square was overcrowded clearly indicating that these one family houses of Georgian splendour had become tenement buildings. Many other streets and lanes recorded overcrowding in 1911 such as Playhouse Lane (3) and Cathedral Place (3).

5.7.3 Overcrowding in St Michael's parish

The Georgian buildings along Michael Street, Bank Place and Arthurs Quay had become heavily overcrowded (more than two people per room) by the turn of the nineteenth century and were now tenement buildings. Todd's Bow, a lane off William Street had recorded 6 people per room by 1901. The lanes off Catherine Street and Whites Lane were similar. Further south, Roden Street (Joseph Street) contained an average of 5 people per room.

Areas along Boherbouy such as Walshes Lane³²¹, Stokes Lane³²², Lidia's Lane, Glovers Lane and Hennessey's Lane continued to have crowded conditions in 1901 and 1911. These lanes were cramped and confined and continued to be that way until into the twentieth century. Barry's Lane had recorded an average of 4 people per room, while Roxboro Terrace recorded similar results by 1901. Glover's Lane recorded similar results to Stoke's Lane and Walshes Lane, with two houses recorded as subdivided and Lidia's Lane also recorded one tenement house.

5.8 Conclusion

So far, we have looked at the value of the houses and the significance of this and their location. We have also looked at the quality of these houses and whether or not housing quality varies with regard to place. The class of the houses has also been looked at and how many households in each house. This is important for determining the level of

³²¹ The typical house on Walsh's Lane was a second class building consisting of one to two rooms on average. The average family size was four people (approximately three people per room). Three houses were recorded as tenement buildings. The typical family consisted of a brick layer, labourer (dock and general) and store gas workers. Women were employed as seamstresses or housekeepers.

³²² Houses on Stokes Lane were also second classes buildings with two rooms per house. The average family size was five people (approximately three people per room). The typical family consisted of painters, factory workers (clothing), button hole workers and general labourers. Women were employed as seamstresses and dress makers. Literacy levels were good (read and write) with the exception of houses one to four

overcrowding in the city. We have found that particular areas and houses are associated with overcrowding per room. Next, the researcher will examine the location of lodging houses and economic activities within these residential environments. This is important in order to determine whether or not the value of dwellings in an area is affected by the location of an obnoxious activity or lodging houses in the same area.

5.9 Location of Lodging houses

The overcrowding within cities led to an increase in slums, the re-adaptation of houses into tenements and lodging houses, the illegal subdivisions of plots of land, and the erection of makeshift housing on vacant lots by squatters throughout the city (although there is no evidence to suggest this for Limerick).³²³ Lodging houses were different to other types of accommodation (such as the regular tenement accommodation) as they were intended for short stay where you paid for your bed by the night. These lodging-houses and tenement buildings provided a quick solution to the increase in population but were not the healthiest or safest living environments, with many families/tenants occupying one room within the building. The location of lodging houses is very significant to identifying and examining spatial locations of poverty. There is a very fine dividing line between tenement buildings and lodging houses. These houses were originally:

“...intended for temporary shelter of a minimum kind, [but] all too often became permanent homes for the near destitute and near criminal classes and almost indistinguishable from a normal tenement house except by their gross overcrowding and promiscuity”.³²⁴

Dwellings of the urban poor varied in type but were uniform in their low quality, and at the bottom of the hierarchy of housing were the common lodging houses.³²⁵ The Common Lodging Houses Act was 1852-1853³²⁶ referred to the houses as ‘hot-beds of crime and moral depravity amongst that [marginal/outcast] class of the population’.³²⁷ Another Common Lodging Houses Act was introduced in 1859³²⁸ which was made compulsory by all towns and commented on the condition of single rooms occupied by families and recorded several places (in England) where families resided in one room. The report drew attention to the cisterns and untrapped privies which were not sufficient

³²³ H. Platt, ‘Exploding Cities: Housing the Masses in Paris, Chicago, and Mexico City, 1850-2000’ in *Journal of Urban History* (2010) p. 577.

³²⁴ J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815-1970* (UK, 1978), p. 64.

³²⁵ C., Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity, The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester, 2006) p. 64.

³²⁶ *Common Lodging House Act. A Copy of report made to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by Captain Hay, one of the commissioners of Metropolitan Police, on the operation of the Common Lodging-House Act, 1852-3* (237) lxxviii.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 1-2

³²⁸ *Common lodging houses. A report on the Assistant Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis, specially charged with the control of common lodging houses, on the condition of single rooms occupied by families in the metropolis, 1859 Session 1* (215) xxii.

trapped over drains causing serious causes for concern within urban environments.³²⁹ In many cases these common lodging houses were discrete sites of governance and freedom where moral, mental and physical forces were encouraged and exercised, full of thieves, beggars and prostitutes, who were considered the marginal members of society.³³⁰ The typical rent charged for one night within these lodging houses was anything between 1d and 1s a night.³³¹

Limerick recorded a large number of lodging houses in the mid-nineteenth century, with approximately 775 houses reported as containing lodgers in the Primary Valuation around 1850, however by 1900, the Valuation Rate Books recorded that this number had fell to 479 lodging houses, a reduction of 38%. This was partially the result of the removal of older and more dilapidated house in the slum clearances of the 1880s and the provision of more suitable accommodation in the new social housing schemes. Another reason for the reduction in the number of lodging houses could be due to the introduction of the tenement system which housed people in a similar way to lodging houses although housing sizes of the tenement buildings were generally bigger. The Lodging Houses Act also contributed to the reduction in the number of houses as it forced the owners of these houses to keep them in sound repair and avoid overcrowding. Failure to do this would result in a penalty. Any landlord who did not abide by these rules would have their lodging house closed down.

In Limerick, the values and locations of lodging houses based on the Primary Valuation of Ireland are presented in *figure 5.21*. Variations in value are significant in which higher valuations are more associated with larger houses, but not necessarily of better quality. Certain houses which were listed as lodging houses were actually ordinary houses which were just sublet by individual people. These were family dwellings which were simply let as a space as opposed to being a commercial venue which were not always distinguishable from a historical source. This subletting of a private space may have been a sign of desperation on the part of the individual families and their need for

³²⁹ *Common lodging houses. A report on the Assistant Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis, specially charged with the control of common lodging houses, on the condition of single rooms occupied by families in the metropolis*, 1859 Session 1 (215) xxii, p. 2.

³³⁰ T., Crook, *Accommodating the outcast: common lodging houses and the limits of urban governance in Victorian and Edwardian London* (Cambridge, 2008) p. 414-415.

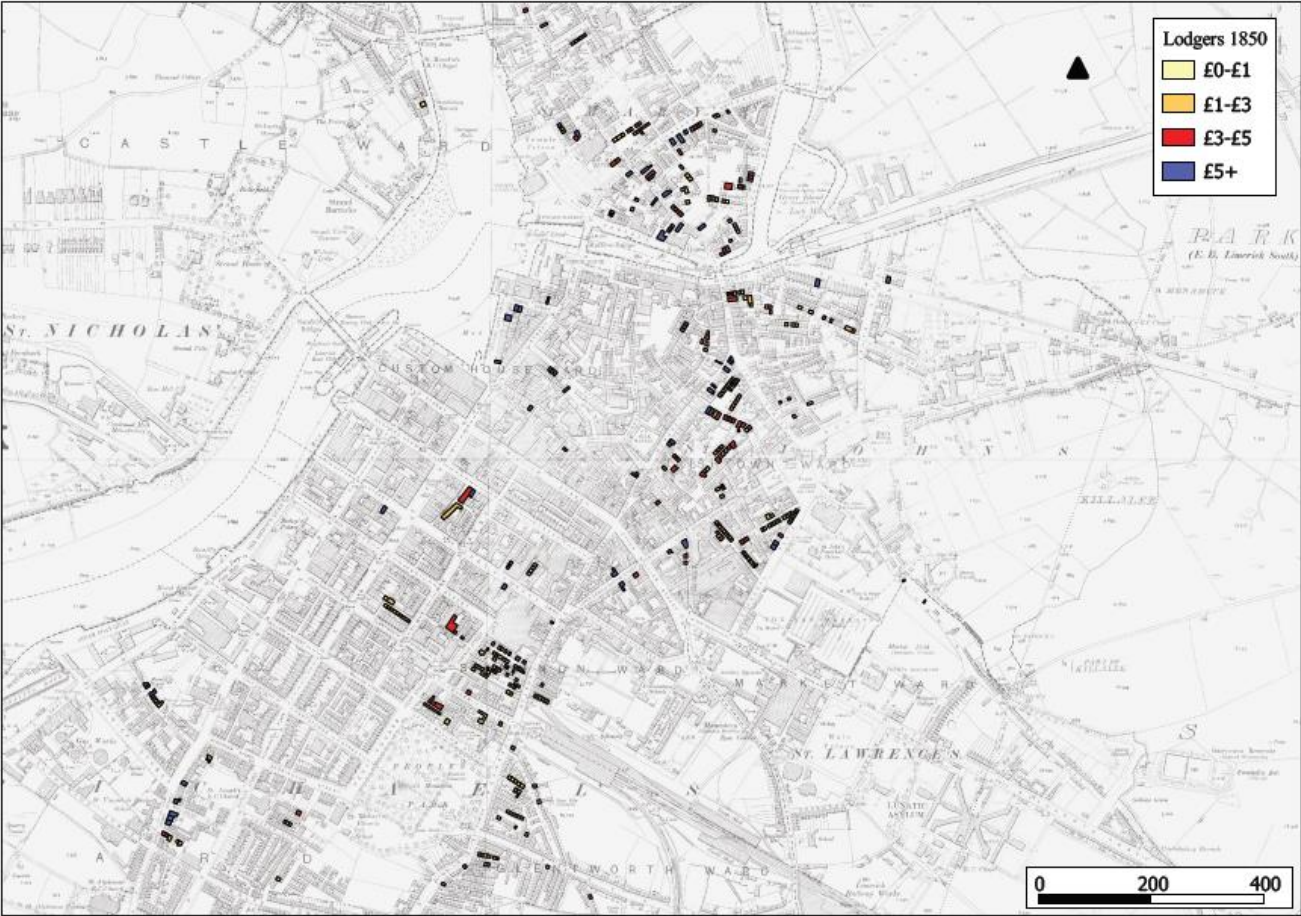
³³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 418.

extra cash to survive. These houses did not have the facilities to make these houses healthy for subdivision. Many were not legally registered as lodging houses but it is difficult to examine which houses as no lodging house register for Limerick survives. Lodging houses over £5 may have been bigger in size, were required to be kept in proper repair, including facilities. This may have been the case for commercial lodging houses, although the majority of houses are for poor families and poor lodgers. The location of these houses contributes to the value of properties where lodging houses in St Michael's Parish were significantly bigger than those in older parts of the town due to the architecture style. Therefore the size and location of lodging houses is significant. Many of the houses experienced the same conditions of overcrowding even though they were larger in size.

From examining these lodging houses, it is possible that some catered for the more transient population, while others catered for the professional population. The census of population from 1901 was more inclined to hint toward the houses catering for the transient populations as many of the trades included labourers and other lower class occupations where a single night or two might not prove harmful for people.

5.9.1 Lodging houses in Limerick c. 1850

Figure 5.21: Lodging House Valuations in Limerick c. 1850 (MS revision books, VO; base map OS 1:2500, 1902, sheets V.10-11, 14-15)



5.9.1.1 Lodging Houses in St Mary's parish, c. 1850

The Primary Valuation of Valuation recorded a high level of lodging houses in the older parts of the city such as St Mary's Parish (184 lodging houses) and St John's Parish (290 lodging houses).

From examining St Mary's Parish, the majority of lodging houses are located along the main streets of Mary Street and Nicholas Street and along George's Quay and valued at £5 or more as they were generally bigger in structure than houses on the side streets. Lodging houses located off the main streets generally tended to be of lower value approximately £1-3 in value, either due to their location, or being generally smaller in size. The city, as a whole, contained very few lodging house that were valued at under £1, however, those that did exist tended to be located along the less prominent streets, such as Pump Lane, Flag Lane and along the top of Dominick Street in St Mary's Parish.

5.9.1.2 Lodging Houses in St John's parish, c. 1850

The majority of lodging houses in St John's Parish ranged in value from £1-3 and were again located in the side streets and lanes. However, lodging houses which were over this value were located mainly along John Street and Mungret Street and ranged from approximately £5 or over. To the rear of the main streets, especially along John Street, the majority of lanes contained lodging houses of £1-3. These houses were mainly occupied by families who enjoyed the close proximity to the main streets.

Lodging houses located on Old Francis Street again ranged from £3-5 or £5 plus, while Palmerstown (the adjoining street) ranged from £1-5. Many of the lodging houses off Cornwallis Street Upper were also classified as £1-3, while Cornwallis Street Lower was in close proximity to Roche's Street (the new town) and recorded a higher value of £3-5 and £5 plus, possibly due to the location near the new town.

5.9.1.3 Lodging Houses in St Michael's parish, c. 1850

Other areas that recorded a concentration of lodging houses included Edward Street, Boherbouy and Henry Street South which lines the outer section of the city. Many of the lanes located off these main streets ranged from £1-3 such as Ball Alley Court, Brown's Lane, Henry Place, Pickett's Lane, Dixon's Lane and Lee's Lane. These

dwellings provided housing for labourers of the city and the census returns highlight subdivision amongst families.

Clusters of lodging houses valued at £5 or more were located along Arthurs Quay. A large number of the houses were occupied by people and their families seeking employment along the docks (the 1901 census records fruiterers, corn store packers, general labourers, porters etc.). Not far from Arthur's Quay, Denmark Street, Ellen Street and Market Alley recorded another cluster of lodging houses located in close proximity to the centre of the town and also to the docks. The Public Health Committee Diary Book³³² recorded some of the most unsanitary conditions within these houses (discussed in chapter six).³³³ These houses, such as Market Alley, were also in close proximity to the pig market and other markets within the city centre (milk market).³³⁴ The diary book was kept by a medical inspector whose job it was to examine areas of the city which may have been contributing to poor health.

The main centre of the town along George's Street and its adjoining streets remained relatively free of lodging houses. Hotels existed for those that were travelling through the city. However, areas to the south of the city such as Newenham Street, Naughton's Lane and Windmill Street all recorded lodging houses, possibly due to their close location to the docks and proximity to employment for workers while much of the area at this time was still under construction and classified as 'building grounds'. Adjacent to the main street (George's Street), Catherine Place recorded another concentration of lodging houses in a court at the rear of No.65. It is possible that these dwellings became lodging houses due to their location between the old town of poverty and the new town where people tried to find employment. In 1856, Slater's Directory³³⁵ recorded a hotel and several public houses for this street. One of the reasons for this is the close proximity to the train station to the east, and the main street to the west.

The stretch of lanes from Nelson Street to Dominick Street such as Flag Lane, Hunts Lane and White Lane all contained lodging houses ranging from £1-3. The 1901 census

³³² LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1(1).

³³³ Examples include the keeping of pigs within houses or in close proximity to houses; the dumping of offal on the streets; overflowing cesspools etc.

³³⁴ LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1(1).

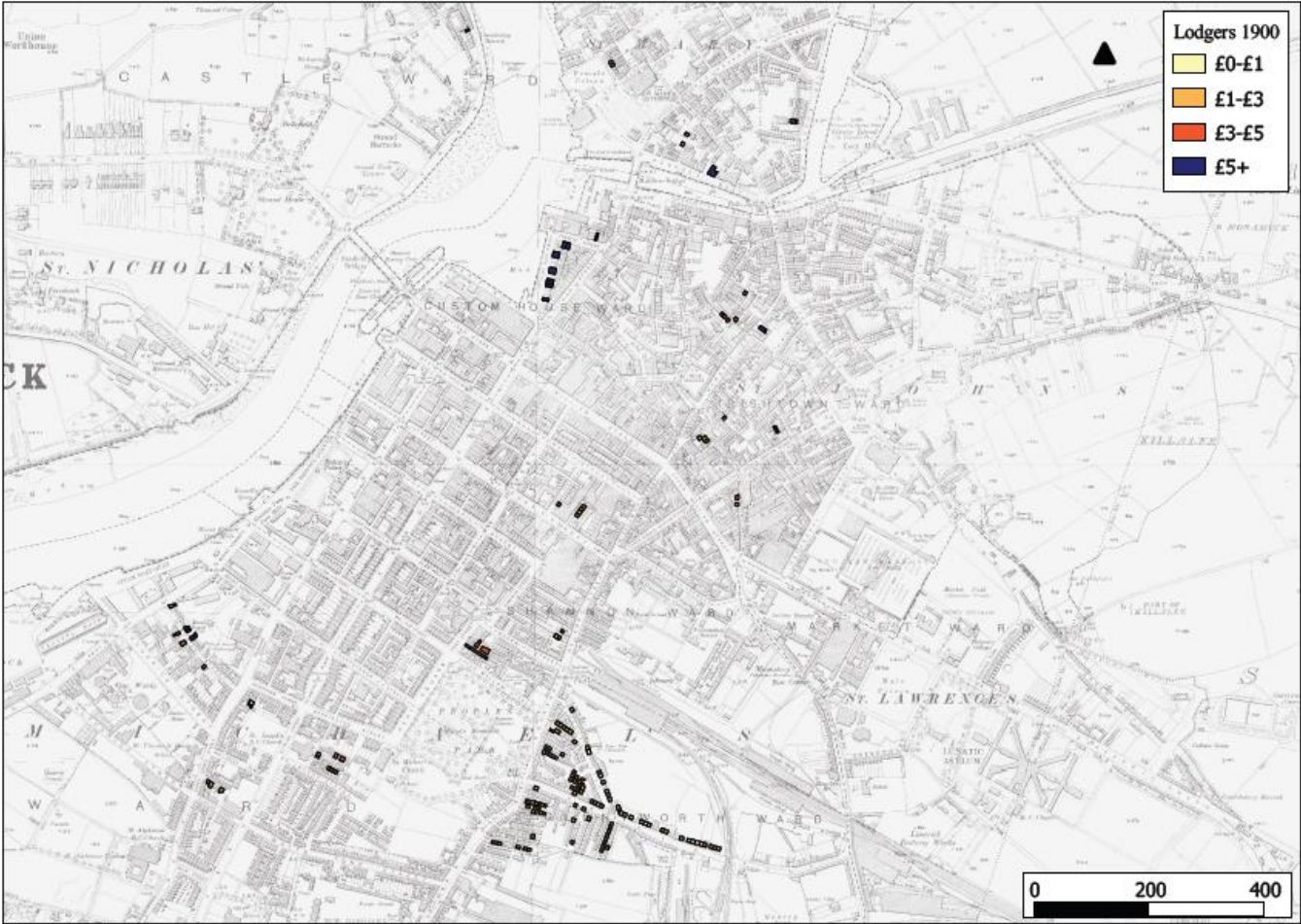
³³⁵ *Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory of Ireland*, 1856.

continued to record subdivision of these houses. The census also revealed that it was families that were occupying these houses instead of single travellers.

Areas off Pery Street, such as Myles Street and James Street also contained lodging houses, valued from £3-5 approximately and were also located in close proximity to the train station. It is possible that these dwellings catered for labourers who were employed on the new railway which begun in the late 1840s.

5.9.2 Lodging houses in Limerick, c. 1893-1930

Figure 5.22: Lodging house valuations, Limerick city c. 1893-1938 (MS revision books, VO; base map OS 1:2500, 1902, sheets V.10-11, 14-15)



One of the most significant changes that took place between the latter end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century was the reduction in the number of lodging houses. Older parts of the city were no longer as densely populated as they had previously been. Some of the possible reasons for this change could be due to the *Towns Improvement Clause*³³⁶ which was passed in 1847 for the regulation of lodging houses amongst other general town improvements such as lighting, paving, cleansing etc. The clause stated that all lodging houses from that date onwards had to be licensed, and could only be hired for a night or less than a week at any one time. All lodging houses were required to hold no more than a fixed number that should be allocated to that house, and follow rules to promote cleanliness and ventilation. Anyone who failed to follow this legislation was liable for a 40shilling penalty. Other reasons for the reduction was possibly due to the increases in public housing schemes, increased development outside the city centre which contributed to the exodus of the middle classes of society and the introduction of the tenement system within the city centre.

5.9.2.1 Lodging houses in St Mary's parish, c. 1893-1930

The majority of lodging houses were originally recorded along Mary Street (21 lodging houses) and Nicholas Street (30 lodging houses) however many of the buildings recorded on Mary Street at the turn of the twentieth century were classified as 'ruins' according to the Rate Books of 1893. This was due to large sections of St Mary's Parish, including Mary Street and Nicholas Street, experiencing dilapidation. It is possibly that many people stayed in lodging houses as they had no homes of their own. Others stayed in lodging houses awaiting employment while ships were docked.

...intending passengers tended seek accommodation in cheap lodging-houses, of which the city abounded at the time...The condition of most of these beds, complete with livestock, can best be imagined...³³⁷

It is questionable as to where these people moved to after the houses were classified as 'ruins'. The 1901 census recorded twenty buildings which were subdivided and occupied by various numbers of families (approximately two to ten). Some occupiers left the cities in the summer in order to find work in the countryside (hop-picking, pea-

³³⁶ *Town Improvement Clauses Bill, as regulated by the Select Committee, 1847*, p. 39.

³³⁷ K., Hannon, 'Coffin Ships', in *the Old Limerick Journal-Famine Edition*, Vol. 32 (Limerick, 1995) p. 1.

shelling) while others, like ballad singers, left to embark on their annual tour of market towns or roam elsewhere and enjoyed cost free living in a field or barn.³³⁸ In many cases, others may have moved to tenement buildings which provided a more permanent long term shelter.

Figure 5.23: Tenement buildings on Mary Street, 1910 (LCM)



³³⁸ T., Crook, *Accommodating the outcast: common lodging houses and the limits of urban governance in Victorian and Edwardian London* (Cambridge, 2008) p. 418.

Figure 5.24: George’s Quay, c. 1930 (LCM)



Sir Harry’s Mall, Long Lane, Athlunkard Street and Meat Market Lane had undergone slum clearance and public housing schemes from 1888 which possibly accounts for a decrease in the number of lodging houses previously recorded on these lanes.

Table 5.3: Selected Lodging Houses in St Mary’s parish from c. 1850-1900

<i>Street</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1900</i>
Athlunkard Street	11	0
Meat Market Lane	7	3
Sir Harry Mall	3	2
Long Lane	6	2

5.9.2.2 Lodging houses in St John's parish, c. 1893-1930

Significant decreases in the number of lodging houses were also noticed in St John's Parish. John Street, Old Francis Street and Palmerstown were some of the main areas which recorded reductions in the number of lodging houses, along with several side streets. The only areas that underwent housing schemes around this time were John Street and Nicholas Street (Cathedral Place).

Table 5.4: Selected Lodging Houses in St John's parish from c. 1850-1900

<i>Street</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1900</i>
John Street	0	2 (in rooms)
Old Francis Street	17	0
Palmerstown	25	1
Nicolas Street	10	0

One of the possible reasons for this reduction in lodging houses could be due to the apparent shift to tenement houses which gained more popularity in the latter half of the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth century. Inspections to these lodging houses had also increase under legislation. However, some still recorded demoralising conditions by 1910 such as John Street (*figure 5.25*). Below is an extraction from a public health committee diary book with reference to lodging house conditions in 1910. The extract highlights the overcrowding within the rooms. *Room no.1* contained five females and three males (mixing of sexes) which was only registered for a maximum of five people. *Room no.2* contained eleven men, all sharing beds, which was only registered for nine men. *Room no.3* was returned as satisfactory, although in the kitchen, a seventy year old woman was returned as sleeping on a bed on the floor. This highlights the conditions of the houses and also the unsanitary conditions in which people were living. There should be no case of any person sleeping in a kitchen where food must be eaten.

Figure 5.25: An account of a lodging house on John Street, 1910 (LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1(334))

J. D. Peacock Esqr
City Surveyor -

15. 6. 10
L/AH/PH/1/2/1(334)

Sir - I beg to report -

I visited John O'Hanoghue's Common Lodging House,
this morning the 15th inst - at 1.30. P.M.

No. 1 Room for married people I found 4 Beds occupied
by 5 female, + 3 male persons. This room is only registered
for 5. There was 3 over the registered number - allowed.
In one of those Beds I found two sisters, Hannah Jackson
and Mary Jackson the are about 16 or 17 years of age.
The are known as two young suspicious characters,
the gave their name at first time as O'Brien but I knew them.

No. 2 Room I found 11 men sleeping in 5 Beds 2 men in each
1 small Bed, 1 man. This room is only registered for 7
men. There was 2 in the room over the registered number -
those 3 Rooms are laye the beds + bedding are clean.

No. 3 Room, I found 3 Beds with one man sleeping in each bed
this room is registered for 4 men. 1 less than registered number

In the Kitchen I found a bed thrown down on the floor -
with and old woman sleeping in same her age is about 70 yrs

I remain Sir
Your Obedt Servant -
John McNamee Inspector -
Common Lodging House &c.

By the 1930s, the Georgian houses located on John's Square had become lodging houses, similar to those on Clare Street. The houses were larger than most, allowing more people to reside in them.³³⁹

5.9.2.3 Lodging houses in St Michael's parish, c. 1893-1930

The numbers of lodging houses increased in the areas along Arthur's Quay, Francis Street, Bank Place and Rutland Street, whose streets at the start of the nineteenth century consisted of wealth such as the location of the Custom House, the Town Hall and the Quays.

Table 5.5: Selection of Lodging Houses in St Michael's parish from c. 1850-1900

<i>Street</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House c. 1900</i>
Arthur's Quay	9	8
Francis Street	5	12
Bank Place	0	6
Rutland Street	1	2

However, buildings along these streets consisted of a different building fabric than that of the old town which is why these lodging houses were valued at £5 or more. Arthurs Quay and Arthurs Mews were regarded as tenement buildings by 1900, due to their close proximity to the docks where many of the occupiers were recorded as labourers and dealers, possibly hoping to get employment in the area since trading was still occurring. Other reasons for the crowding here could have been due to lack of housing in other parts of the town. Market Alley, not far from Arthurs Quay, had still recorded lodging houses and low value properties throughout the latter end of the nineteenth century, highlighting areas of persistent poverty as many of the houses were recorded as poor in quality, and several of the houses kept pigs in the houses or nearby. The street was also in close proximity to a slaughter houses whereby people tended to keep pigs and sell them to the slaughter houses for a high price in order to make money.

Lanes along Dominick Street recorded a high concentration of lodging houses valued at £1-3, similar to lanes along Boherbouy and Carey's Road.

³³⁹ The lack of clarity between lodging house and tenement buildings is evident here as there is a discrepancy between two sources. While Rate Books referred to these houses as lodging houses, the census of population referred to them as private dwellings which were subdivided.

Table 5.6: Selection of Lodging Houses (2) in St Michael’s parish from c. 1850-1900

<i>Street</i>	<i>Lodging Houses c. 1850</i>	<i>Lodging Houses c. 1900</i>
White’s Lane	14	19
Lady’s Lane	7	14
Flag Lane ³⁴⁰	16	15
Hunt’s Lane	11	17
Carey’s Road	1	42

The reduction in the number of lodging houses in the city is significant from 1850-1900. It contributed to a reduction in the number of unsuitable and unsanitary conditions in houses and also contributed to a decrease in levels of overcrowding in certain areas of the city. It must be remembered that many houses also contained lodgers but were not classified as lodging houses. Landlords and landladies continued to rent out rooms to people as a profession without registering the houses for fear that health officers would fine them, meaning that landlords would lose out on profit.

5.10 Obnoxious activities in Limerick, 1850-1938

The Primary Valuation of Ireland and the Valuation Rate Books not only provide the value of properties, they also provide a description of properties, for example; house, house and yard, office, and store etc. A buildings activity is important when examining the local geography of an area and aids in determining the types of activities and trades present in the city at any given time. The association of differing activities is also important and can often enhance or reduce living standards in a given area. By mid-

³⁴⁰ House No.16 was subdivided and occupied by three families. One room in the house was occupied by the McGrath family. Daniel (21) was the head of the household. He was employed as a general labourer. He was able to read and write. His wife Eliza (25) was unemployed. They had no children to care for. Another room was occupied by Ellen Hogan. Ellen (30) was a seamstress from Co. Clare. She was able to read and write and was not married and also had no children to depend on her. The final portion of the house was occupied by two families, the Venners along with three boarders, the Dwyers. Thomas (25) was the head of the household and was also young. He was employed as a general labourer. His wife, Ellen (21) was unemployed. They had three children, aged between 1 and 4 years of age. Thomas had taken in three boarders to live with them. Theresa Dwyer was the main boarder. She was 35 years of age and had two children, who were also boarders, living with her and the Dwyers. There was a machinist in a factory, and her two children, Mary (10) and Joseph (12), were both in school. The families must have been receiving low income in order to be subdividing a house and sharing rooms.

century, the effects of these obnoxious activities on the health of the people were becoming more of a concern.

Some of the more serious non-residential functions which could impact on living conditions in nineteenth century towns and cities were the location of graveyards, piggeries and slaughter houses, all of which were highlighted in the *Report on the Select Committee of the Health of Towns 1840*³⁴¹ and became regulated after the *Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act 1854*³⁴² and the *Public Health Act 1848/1875*³⁴³. The *Health of Towns Act* in 1848 enabled local authorities in England, Wales and Ireland to raise funds on the rates to establish drainage schemes and water-supply systems which encouraged proper supply and disposal of waste from these activities. Prior to this any waste disposed from such activities was deposited on the street or in the river.

The *Public Health Act of 1848* enabled the set-up of a general Board of Health to give towns the right to borrow money and built sewers and reservoirs, organise the removal of rubbish and appoint a local medical officer. However, this act was not compulsory and proved expensive to towns. However in 1875, the *Public Health Act* was reintroduced and made compulsory to all towns, leading to the improvement of living conditions. The *Public Health Act 1875* was to encourage and enforce local authorities to provide a sufficient water supply and to construct and maintain any works relating to sewers, drainage, sewerage disposal, lighting and water supply (fittings, pipes and apparatuses). The Act also tried to regulate the food market and made laws against the adulteration of food. Any waste deposited from obnoxious activities was classified as a 'nuisance'. The word 'nuisance' included any premises in such a state as to be a nuisance or injurious to health. This included any pool, ditch, gutter, watercourse, privy, urinal, cesspool, drain or ashpit so foul as to be a nuisance or injurious to health.³⁴⁴

The *Nuisance Removal Acts* of 1855, 1860 and 1863 were aimed at sanitary conditions from obnoxious activities such as the piggeries and slaughter houses. All slaughter houses and knacker yards were required to obtain a license and become registered;

³⁴¹ *Report on the Select Committee of the Health of Towns, together with the minutes of evidence taken before them*, 1840 (384) xi.

³⁴² Irish Statute Book [available at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1981/en/si/0399.html>]

³⁴³ The Official Home of the Revised Enacted UK Legislation, (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1875/55/pdfs/ukpga_18750055_en.pdf) (November 2012)

³⁴⁴ *An Act to consolidate and amend the Nuisances Removal and Disease Prevention Acts, 1848 and 1849*, 1855 (1115) xxiv, p. 5.

otherwise a penalty of £5 would be applied for an offence, and every day after the conviction. The act was to ensure no cruelty to animals within the houses, that they should be kept in a clean and proper state and removing all filth at least every twenty-four hours. The removal of cattle and carcasses of cattle was enforced previously in the *Towns Improvement Clause, 1847*, which were to be removed and deposited correctly and likewise with any butcher meat not suitable for human consumption.³⁴⁵ Prior to this legislation, obnoxious waste was deposited on the street until heavy rainfall washed it away, which is why there was a need for a proper sewerage system. In order to ensure these rules were kept, inspectors were sent to examine the areas and report any nuisances that were brought to their attention.³⁴⁶ Various special minute books in Limerick commented on the conditions of houses in close proximity to obnoxious activities, while also commenting on conditions within obnoxious activities (will be discussed in Chapter Six).

Therefore an examination of selected activities will contribute to the understanding of the poor health and sanitary conditions of dwellings and contribute to the understanding of why some dwellings are of lower value than others and if location to obnoxious activities was affecting housing value and living conditions. These activities included slaughter houses, piggeries and graveyards.

The location of obnoxious activities within Limerick was limited during the nineteenth century. Any that were present were confined to the old towns of Englishstown and Irishtown. The reasons behind this were to keep the new town free from these activities due to the unsanitary conditions and the smells association with these activities. The ideal location for these activities would be within an isolated area away from the congested streets and lanes. However, all the slaughter houses and piggeries recorded in the sources lie in close proximity to nearby dwellings, especially those near laneways. This contributed to the poor quality and conditions within the houses. Wealthy people would not wish to live near these activities, but the poor were forced too. They had no choice as houses located around these activities were low in value. Many of the neighbours complained of smells and sickness due to the conditions of these obnoxious activities which were often swarmed with rodents. Animal waste was often left in piles

³⁴⁵ *Towns Improvement Clause* (1847) pp 40-43.

³⁴⁶ S. O Maitiu, *Dublin's Suburban Towns* (Dublin, 2003) pp 85-86.

at the sides of yards or streets until the corporation forced scavengers to remove it.³⁴⁷
The effects of the conditions will be discussed in a health chapter.

Table 5.7 & figure 5.26 highlights the location of obnoxious activities within the city between 1848 and 1864 and *table 5.8 & figure 5.28* display those listed from 1893-1938.

Table 5.7: List and location of obnoxious activities in Limerick city, 1848-1864³⁴⁸

<i>Parish</i>	<i>Street</i>	<i>Activity</i>
St John's Parish	Curry's Lane	Slaughter House and Yard
St John's Parish	Ramper's Road	Pig Market
St Mary's Parish	Convent Street	Quakers' Burial Ground
St Mary's Parish	Island Lane	Pig Market
St Mary's Parish	Island Lane	Slaughter House
St Mary's Parish	Stable Lane off Ahern's Row	Slaughter House
St Michael's Parish	Cattle Market Lane	Slaughter House and Yard
St Michael's Parish	Church Yard Lane	St Michael's Graveyard
St Michael's Parish	Hackett's Lane off Lower William Street	Slaughter Yard
St Munchin's Parish	Church Street	St Munchin's Graveyard

Table 5.8: List and location of obnoxious Activities in Limerick city, 1893-1938³⁴⁹

<i>DED</i>	<i>Street</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Castle	Bridge Street	St Mary's Graveyard
Castle	Church Street	St Munchin Graveyard
Castle	Killely Road	Graveyard
Custom House	Little Ellen Street	Slaughter House
Custom House	Michael's Lane	St Michael's Graveyard
Irishtown	Cathedral Place	Pig Market
Irishtown	John's Square	St John's Graveyard
Irishtown	St Lelia Street	Pork Factory
Shannon	Augustinian Lane	Slaughter House

³⁴⁷ LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1(1)

³⁴⁸ Data extracted by the researcher from the *Tenement Valuation, Ireland. Copies of the instructions issues by the late Sir Richard Griffith in the Year 1853, under the provisions of the 15th and 16th Vict. C. 63, to the Valuers and Surveyors acting under him in making the tenement valuation of Ireland.*

³⁴⁹ Data extracted by the researcher from the Limerick City Archives, *Limerick City General Valuation Rate Books, L/FR/RB/2*

Figure 5.26: Obnoxious Activities in Limerick city, from c. 1848-1864



5.10.1.1 Obnoxious activities in St Mary’s parish, c. 1850

By mid-century, activities such as slaughter houses were still listed for St Mary’s parish. Island Lane was the main location, which contained both a slaughter house, and a pig market for the selling of animals. The Primary Valuation of Ireland also recorded that 18 houses located on that lane were valued at under £2. It is likely that housing value was affected due to the location of these activities on the lane. That same lane also recorded having two tanyards for the tanning of leather.³⁵⁰ Ahern’s Row was a small alleyway which also recorded a slaughter house, and three dwellings (one of which contained lodgers). As these houses were lower in value (under £5), renting them would be cheaper as a result. People who have a choice of where to live would not wish to live next to a place that kills animals. Therefore poorer people were forced to live next to obnoxious activities, and more inclined to contract disease or have a poor quality of life.

Table 5.9: Location of Obnoxious Activities in St Mary’s Parish in Limerick city, c. 1850

<i>Street</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Island Lane	Pig Market
Convent Street	Quakers’ Burial Ground
Island Lane	Slaughter House
Stable Lane off Ahern’s Row	Slaughter House

The parish also included St Munchin’s graveyard and Quakers Burial Ground (Convent Street). It was not until 1857 that the burial grounds were seen as a threat to urban society when an Act³⁵¹ became introduced under the House of Lords. Health officers also became introduced under the *Health of Towns Act of 1854*³⁵² and considered the effects of living in close proximity to a burial ground in a town and city. Graveyards were also often placed in the midst of a crowded city, and after several enquiries, there

³⁵⁰ Slaughter houses around this time were not clean environments. Animal remains were discarded in heaps, and dry, warm weather caused it to decompose, living offensive smells in the area. If it rained, decomposed matter or manure began to take a liquid state, and covered the lane and alleys, often blocking up drains.

³⁵¹ *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords, on the Burial Acts; together with the proceedings of the committee* (1856)

³⁵² *Report on the Select Committee of the Health of Towns, together with the minutes of evidence taken before them* (1840)

was an acknowledgement that graveyards effected health. In poor districts, people were often buried in mass graves. A report on burial acts³⁵³ considered what seemed to be a contribution to the spread of disease and highlighted the effect of interment of bodies in towns such as the exhalation of gases from the decomposing bodies, the effect it has on the subsoil after rain and as a result, the run off into drains and the water drunk by the inhabitants of the city.³⁵⁴ Another Act in 1857³⁵⁵ was introduced and stated that all proposed burial grounds had to be declared fit for consecration and that the area should have a railing or wall surrounding it.³⁵⁶

5.10.1.2 Obnoxious activities in St John’s parish, c. 1850

St John’s Parish also recorded obnoxious activities during the nineteenth century (*table 5.10*).

Table 5.10: Location of Obnoxious Activities in St John’s Parish in Limerick city, c. 1850

<i>Street</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Rampers Road	Pig Market
Curry’s Lane	Slaughter House and Yard

The prominence of the pig market on the corner of Rampers Road (later Cathedral Place), adjoining Mulgrave Street cannot be overlooked due to its size. This slaughter house was one of the main slaughter houses at this time, owned by Shaw and Sons. Thousands of pigs were brought through here yearly, approximately 300 to 600 pigs per day.³⁵⁷ However, this slaughter house was not located within a confined lane, and as a result main not have impacted on the nearby houses as those slaughter houses that did.

³⁵³ *Report from the Select Committee on Improvement of the Health of Towns, together with the minutes of evidence, appendix, and index. Effect of interment of bodies in towns, 1842 (509) xii.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3

³⁵⁵ *Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords, on the Burial Acts; together with the proceedings of the committee, 1856 (367) vii.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3

³⁵⁷ P. J. Ryan, ‘The Sanitary Services’, in the *Old Limerick Journal* (Limerick, 1980) Vol. 4, p. 15.

5.10.1.3 Obnoxious activities in St Michael's parish, c. 1850

St Michael's Parish also recorded slaughter houses (*table 5.11*) within close proximity to each other and in the midst of a busy part of the town.

Table 5.11: Location of Obnoxious Activities in St Michael's Parish in Limerick city, c. 1850

<i>Street</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Cattle Market Lane	Slaughter House and Yard
Hackett's Lane off Lower William Street	Slaughter Yard
Church Yard Lane	St Michael's Graveyard

Cattle Market Lane was in close proximity to the market place which is why the slaughter house was possibly located there. Many of the nearby lanes contained families, while some families kept pigs in the houses whereby they were in close proximity to selling animals to the slaughter houses. One example includes Market Alley extracted below. The extract comments on three tenement houses, each occupied by four families.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ Tenement No.3 kept one pig under the stairs in the house and the yard had no sty for the pig. Tenement No.4 kept six pigs on the premises, in the small yard in close proximity to a bedroom window. Tenement No.5 kept two pigs on the premises which were also in close proximity to a bedroom window.

Figure 5.27: Market Alley in Limerick city, 1911 (LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1(1))

LCA/PH/1/2/1(1)

The Chairman + members
of the Public Health Committee,
Gentlemen,

In accordance with instructions of your committee, I visited houses + yards at Market Alley, to ascertain the premises on which pigs were kept, the name of the person keeping them, and the conditions under which they are kept, I found at

N^o 3 a tenement house occupied by 4 families the kitchen of which is occupied by Joseph Dillon + family. He keeps 1 pig under stairs, there is no sty in the yard which is a small one being only about 12' 0" + 9' 6" it has concrete surface, drain gully trap has grate

N^o 4 a tenement house occupied by 4 families the kitchen are occupied by Thomas Shannon and family. He keeps 6 pigs in yard about 12' 0" + 15' 0" pig sty runs full length of yard, and is only about 5' 8" from the Bedroom window, there is also a portion of yard 8' 0" + 7' 0" in which there is also a sty the yard surface is flagged + concrete it has drain + gully trap

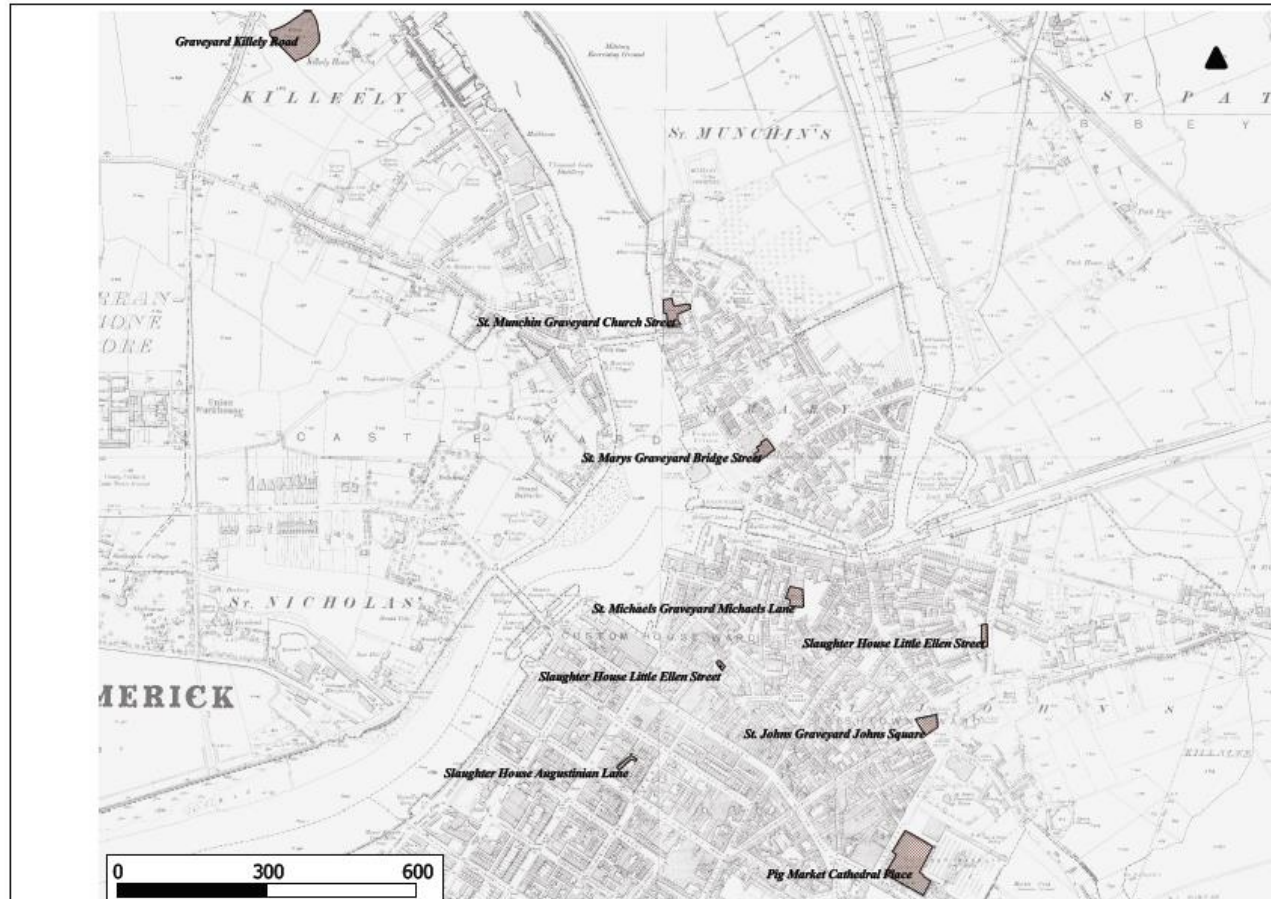
N^o 5 a tenement house occupied by 4 families the kitchen are occupied by John Cowan + family, 2 pigs are kept in yard 17' 0" + 6' 6" by N^o Benson who resides at N^o 19 Tollen St the sty is only about 1' 3" from Bedroom window yard surface flagged + concrete it has drain + gully trap

18th Oct 1911

I am Gentlemen
your obedient servant
Daniel Kermelby S. S. O.

5.10.2 Obnoxious activities in Limerick, c. 1893-1938

Figure 5.28: Location of Obnoxious Activities in Limerick city, c. 1893-1938 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902))



5.10.2.1 Obnoxious activities in St Mary's parish, c. 1900

By the turn of the twentieth century, St Mary's Parish recorded several areas with building grounds. The location of stores in the area was not as prominent as St John's, and although commercial buildings were recorded for the parish, many of the actually commercial activities had move to St Michael's Parish.

5.10.2.2 Obnoxious activities in St John's parish, c. 1900

St John's Parish continued to record the majority of obnoxious activities within the city. This parish contained the markets and the pig markets. The largest again being in Newtown Mahon.

5.10.2.3 Obnoxious activities in St Michael's parish, c. 1900

St Michael's Parish remained relatively free from obnoxious activities during the century but instead witnessed a growth in the commercial and professional sector. Slater's Directory 1856 recorded the emergence of solicitors and agents, while still containing merchants and clothiers on the main streets of the new town. By 1870, development on William Street, Roches Street and Cecil Street recorded high levels of merchant trading. This type of activity was not damaging to the quality of houses in the locality. By this stage, the northern half of St Michael's Parish had become mostly categorised by merchants, while the southern end of the street along Richmond Place was represented by solicitors, surgeons and dentists. Housing conditions within the south end of the Newtown would be kept in good condition due to the comparisons in employment. Therefore, obnoxious activities were more inclined to locate in poorer areas and areas where trading was more prominent, where the labourers would live in close proximity to employment, and where these activities would have access to pig markets. As a result, obnoxious activities such as slaughter houses and piggeries did not require the same type of cliental and as a result located in poorer parts of the city.

5.11 Conclusion

Persistent poverty remained in Limerick throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century although varied with regards to different locations. Particular clusters were highlighted. Some areas recorded low value, and experienced poverty through subdivision of housing, employment in unskilled labour or unemployment, while other houses recorded low value but were occupied by only one family with a comfortable and suitable family size. Similar results may be applied to houses of high value, some subdivided and some not. It is important to examine variations in areas to understand different levels of poverty. The use of sources to highlight valuation, quality, size and overcrowding combined enable the researcher to profile areas of persistent poverty. The location of obnoxious activities and lodging houses was also significant and were persistent to some particular to some areas in the city. Both these activities also contributed to the poor health within these areas and highlighted areas which were generally poor.

Chapter Six: Health conditions of the poor in Limerick city 1850-1930

6.1 Introduction

This primary aim of this chapter is to investigate the health conditions of the poorer sections of the population living in Limerick City during the latter part of nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth century. Not everyone experienced poor health to the same extent; variations existed between urban and rural environments, and among different classes of the population with some classes (usually the poorer classes) more susceptible to poor health than others.

6.1.1 Key indicators of poor health

Poverty was a main driving force as to why people experienced poor health, while it can also be argued that poor health also contributed to poverty. Poverty forced people to live in environments which were unhealthy, which included the back lanes and alleyways of the city or within the tenement houses later in nineteenth century. The poorer classes of society often suffered harsher conditions due to their social or economic circumstances. Many of these houses were also found in close proximity to obnoxious activities which often intensified the problem. Many of these streets and lanes had no sanitary facilities or water supply available to the houses or people living in these areas until the early twentieth century. Several lanes in St John's parish (Gorman's Lane, White's Lane, Ryan's Place, Flag Lane, Benson's Lane, Taylor's Row) were all declared unfit for habitation in 1935 due to sanitary conditions, water and drainage.³⁵⁹ Other houses, mainly in St Mary's and St John's Parishes, were often without furniture and rooms were without beds. Streets and lanes were lined with heaps of 'filth', which often became liquidated in wet weather, leading to the spread of fever.

Poor health was also attributable to houses which were cold and damp, without windows and sometimes without doors. People were forced to sleep on the floors of rooms or on loose, dirty straw, which was often damp.

³⁵⁹ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/1-6

Four families sometimes in a room; one in each corner, nestled together to keep off the cold, on loose dirty straw, with one rug only between them; and young women without body linen or clothes of any kind under the rug.³⁶⁰

A person's employment status could also contribute to experiences of poor health. If people had no employment, they could not purchase food or clothing for themselves or their families. They would have no money for proper shelter or for bed linen or fuel for the fire.

Individuals or families whom were underfed and cold were more susceptible to contracting disease. Those that shared rooms often contributed greatly to the spread of disease, the most frequent of these was 'fever', which was a generic term which included typhoid, relapsing fever and typhus,³⁶¹ while other diseases included smallpox and consumption/tuberculosis. Whilst this form of disease was not confined to the poorest classes, it did contribute significantly to the high number of deaths from 'fever' due to their poor and overcrowded living conditions, which allow the 'fever' to flourish. The middle and upper classes of society often contracted this disease due to close proximity to the unhealthy environments, or through people who were in contact with it.

Overcrowding within houses was another issue which caused poor health. As previously discussed (in *chapter five*), the type, quality and economic activity of the buildings in Limerick varied with regard to place. People shared houses with families, friends or lodgers, sometimes to help with the rent, while in other cases due to lack of housing available for the surplus population. Another issue was the overcrowding in the subdivided houses, for example, a cellar. Cellars were often being used as places of residences of the urban poor in particular on the main streets in St Mary's and St John's (such as Mary Street or John Street) or in the new town (along Custom House).

³⁶⁰ Anon, *Journal of a Tour of Ireland during the months of October and November*, 1835

³⁶¹ W. Jenner, 'On typhoid and typhus fevers, -attempt to determine the question of their identity or non-identity...' in the *Monthly Journal of Medical Science*, Vol., 9 (1848-1849), new series, nos.xxxiv-xxxvi, pp 663-80, 726-36, 816-28.

6.2 Health conditions in Limerick city

Poor health conditions in Limerick were comparable to cities of similar size elsewhere in Ireland.³⁶² Diseases like typhus, cholera, dysentery and scarlatina were found predominantly amongst the poor. In many areas of the city there were no toilet facilities and no running water facilities within the houses (examples include some of the areas previously highlighted in chapter five including White's Lane and Lady's Lane, lanes located along Carey's Road, Palmerstown, Thomondgate, Arthur's Quay and Michael Street).

Sanitary conditions varied between the old and the new town, mainly due to differences in the physical layout of the city and town planning.³⁶³ These differences were partially due to the different attitudes of the St Michael's Parish Commissioners and the Corporation to town planning and the provision of vital services in the first half of the nineteenth century. In addition, the layout of the old town may have made sanitation provision more difficult as the houses were older and more confined whereas the new town was more spacious and planned.

The poor occupied the houses in St Mary's and St John's Parishes of the city as they were cheaper to rent³⁶⁴ due to their neglected state and geographical distance from St Michael's Parish which had become the main area of the city. These houses were small and poorly constructed which enabled the spread of disease. The location of these houses in narrow lanes and alleyways made ventilation and sanitation more difficult. As the century progressed, the poor found their way into the new town, again leading to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions within the tenement houses. Although these houses were larger, they were not prepared for the large numbers that resided in them and exploited their facilities. Several families were now occupying one room tenements. Many houses did not have the sanitary arrangements to cope with the large numbers of

³⁶² The death rate in Limerick for 1925 was 15.0, Cork was 15.5, Belfast was 14.0 and Galway was 14.9 according to the *Annual Reports on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick*.

³⁶³ St. Michael's Parish had the St. Michael's Parish Commissioners while the older parts of the towns were governed under the Corporation.

³⁶⁴ Houses in the older parts of town usually varied from 0/3 to 1/0 according to the *Primary Valuation of Ireland House Books* (c.1852 for Limerick City).

people and the city was ill-equipped to provide for the short fall as there were only eight public urinals.³⁶⁵

Since the local corporation was slow to react to the situation within the parishes, the conditions continued to deteriorate into the twentieth century. Reports about the health conditions were being made to the Corporation by committee officers, sub-committee officers, medical officers etc. and are recorded in the Limerick city special minute books. Some members of the corporation were also neglecting their duties (such as monitoring of the workers who were street cleaning) which meant that tasks such as street-cleaning were not being carried out effectively.³⁶⁶

The poor environment in which the poor of Limerick lived had a direct impact on the numbers of people suffering from various diseases in local hospitals and public institutions. The number of deaths in hospitals continued to remain the highest from 1900 to 1930, followed by the workhouse figures, although both recorded a decline in numbers throughout the thirty years.³⁶⁷

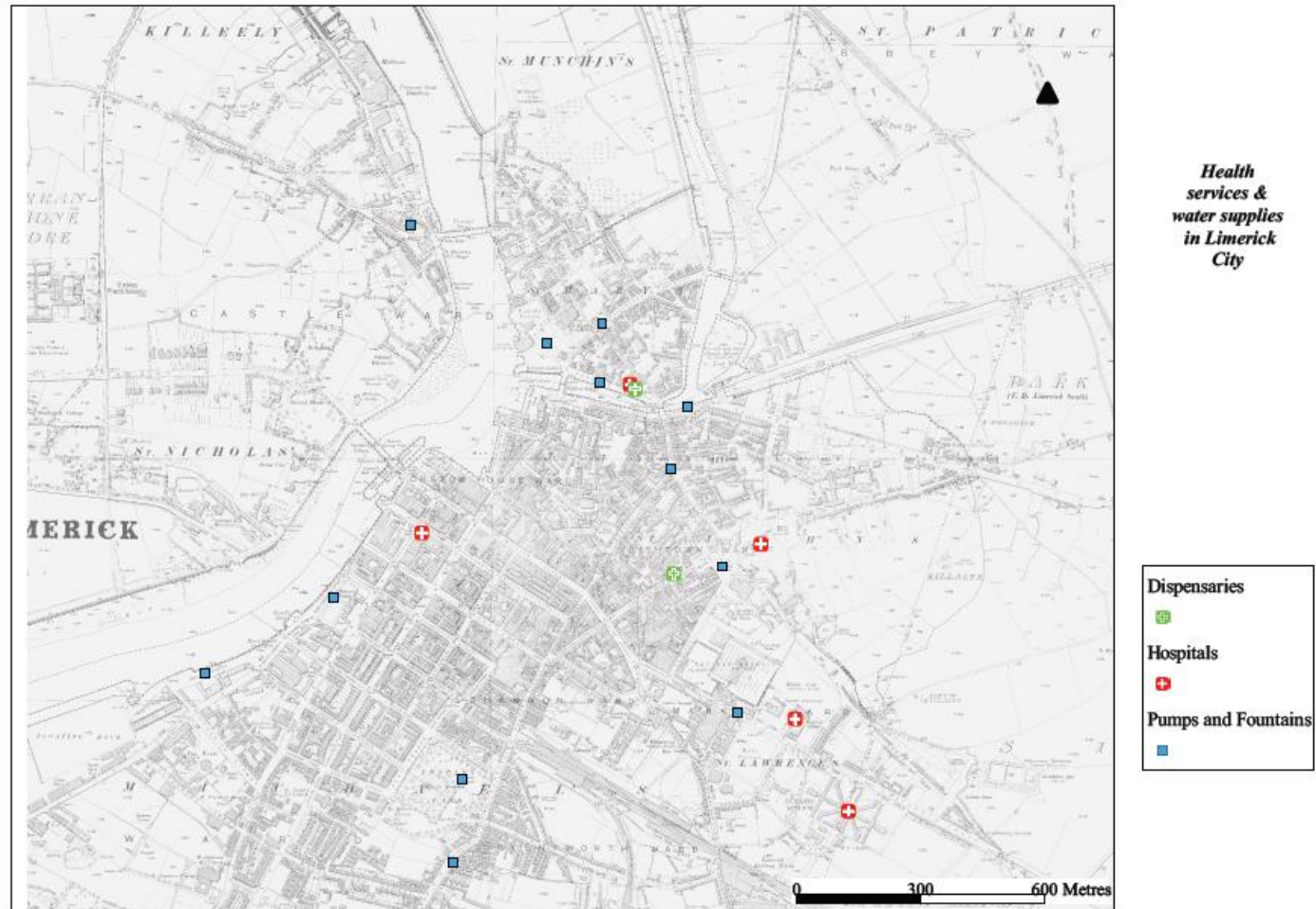
Medical practices were becoming more equipped to deal with disease and dispensary services were available to the poor in the city. The main types of diseases that were treated for included enteric fever, diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera (at certain outbreaks), consumption (various forms), scarlatina and measles (which will be discussed later in the chapter). There were several types of disease although these proved the most prevalent within the city. Many were spread from infected clothes and unsanitary conditions. Children within schoolrooms often contributed greatly to the spread of disease through clothes and milk. Overcrowding of people also ensured this spread of disease.

³⁶⁵ M. McGrath, *Thirteenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1915) p. 15

³⁶⁶ LCA, L/SMIN

³⁶⁷ According to figures from the Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Ireland for the years 1900-1930

Figure 6.1: Map of health services in Limerick city from 1850 ((IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)



Toward the latter end of the century, reductions in the number of diseases can be seen which complimented general improvements in the city. By 1911, a public health diary book commented several times during the year that the city had remained '*free from disease*'³⁶⁸ and any occurrences of disease were attributable to poor sanitation facilities in particular areas on the streets and the lanes such as Carey's Road or Thomondgate.

The city's record for the prevention of the spread of contagious disease was also improving in the later decades of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth century (as evident from the public health reports). However, scarlatina continued to remain a problem in the city from the summer months onwards and affected the children in schools especially in the overcrowded areas (also spread by inhalation and germs on clothing and skin). Tuberculosis, pneumonia and bronchitis continued to remain high amongst the population also which caused several deaths within the city from 1900-1930, although had appeared in the city in the late nineteenth century.

6.3 Sanitary conditions in the city

The people of Limerick complained about the sanitary conditions within the city from the late nineteenth century. These people were mainly from the older parts of the city like Dispensary District No.1 (Abbey and Castle Ward) and No.3 (Irishtown Ward). The Corporation special minute books and the public health committee diary book³⁶⁹ recorded several letters of complaints on the sanitary state of the streets and lanes. These unsanitary conditions (examples include house waste, animal waste, ash, decaying matter, overflowing sewer waste) were present throughout the nineteenth century. People were accustomed to living in 'filth' whereby their houses were dirty and so were the streets they lived on. These conditions continued into the twentieth century and although were more prominent in older parts of the town, they were not confined to these streets and lanes. Early in the twentieth century, the new town also recorded incidents of poor sanitary facilities and inadequate, especially in the Custom House District, due to the large number of poor living there and the houses that had become tenement buildings (Arthur's Quay). These houses were not intended for the large number of residents residing in them and as a result sanitation facilities were exploited.

³⁶⁸ The name of the disease was not stated.

³⁶⁹ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, L/AH/PH/1/1/1(1)

The special minute books provide details on the conditions of individual houses or several houses on streets and lanes in particular parts of the city from the 1880s. One recurring issue was the keeping of pigs in ‘unsuitable places’ and that ‘medical officers have given up reporting on this subject’.³⁷⁰ These areas (including West Watergate, White’s Lane, Gorman’s Lane, Young’s Lane, Arthur’s Quay etc.) continued to be recorded in the books up until the 1930s when the first large scale clearances began to take place as these houses were amongst the worst affected areas. In the 1930s, many lanes were classified as unfit for human habitation.³⁷¹

In July 1885, six reports were sent to the corporation about the sanitary condition of the houses on Pennywell Road which required immediate cleansing and whitewashing.³⁷² A ‘swamp’ of filth existed in Pennywell for some time due to poor sanitation facilities (lack of sewers and drains) and also due to neglect by the Corporation in supplying sewers to the area. It was reported on several occasions that conditions like this would lead to an outbreak and spread of disease. Attention was also brought to the Corporation about the unsanitary dwellings on Gaol Lane, Bow Lane, Sir Harry’s Mall and Mary Street which were let as lodgings (occupied by more than one family) whose condition were also a cause for concern.³⁷³ Large numbers of families living within one house contributed to the unsanitary conditions due to the lack of sanitation facilities. If these facilities were unavailable, people threw their refuse and waste out onto the streets, which contributed to the unsanitary state of the streets.

Several individual incidences of poor sanitation with regards to people’s houses were also recorded during the late from the 1880s. In some cases the people were prosecuted while the vast majority just received written warnings to clean up their premises.³⁷⁴ In August, 1885, a complaint was made against Mr. Kearney’s, whereby ‘filth’ was ‘oozing’ from his yard on Conway’s Bow³⁷⁵, off Mary Street, into Mr. Bennis’ yard, which was situated on George’s Quay, creating two unsanitary properties and endangered the health of the public.

³⁷⁰ LCA, L/SMIN/8/6, 13th December, 1911

³⁷¹ LCA, L/HC/HG/1-6

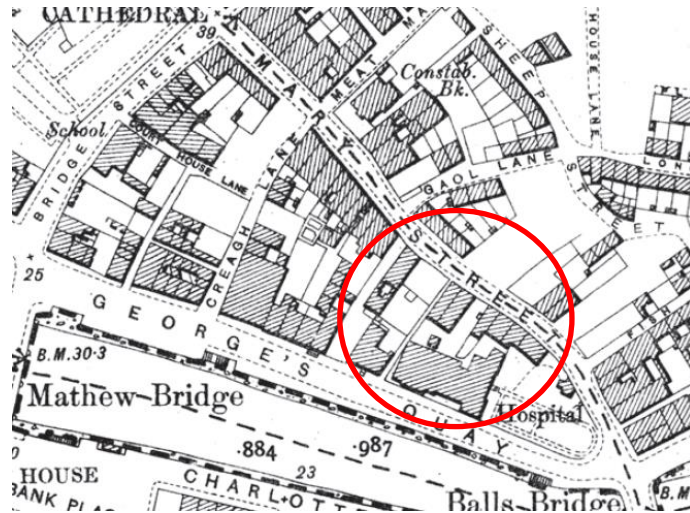
³⁷² LCA, L/SMIN/5, July, 1885

³⁷³ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 1885

³⁷⁴ LCA, L/SMIN/5, August, 1885

³⁷⁵ Street no longer exists due to demolition.

Figure 6.2: Approximate location of Conway's Bow in St. Mary's parish, Limerick city, c. 1900 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902))



This was due to poor sanitary arrangements, as individual houses were affecting the health of other individual's homes. Other cases of poor sanitation included owners who neglected to look after their properties, such as Mr. Foley who lived on Clare Street. Mr. Foley was summoned for the state of his property at No.10 on Clare Street where he had rented out the house to tenants (more than one family³⁷⁶). He also owned a house on a lane off Old Nelson Street which he also rented out to tenants and which were also recorded to be in a 'filthy state'. Notices were sent to Mr. Foley by the Sanitary Officers of the Corporation to clean up and whitewash all those premises due to their sanitary state. Similar complaints were made against Mr. Thomas McMahon Cregan (another landlord who rented out a property to tenants) for the state of houses on Quay Lane off Queen Street.³⁷⁷ In many incidents landlords kept their premises in poor repair as they were trying to maximise their profits from the renting of properties. In many cases this affected the health of the people living in these houses and also the people living in the area.³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ The minute book does not record the actual number of families residing in the dwelling.

³⁷⁷ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 13th August, 1885.

³⁷⁸ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 13th August, 1885.

By October, 1885, houses on Pennywell were still waiting for a water supply.³⁷⁹ The state of the open space across from the police barrack on Mary Street was still in a 'filthy' state where people continued to dump rubbish. Trenches, privies and back houses to the rear of houses on Halls Range and Prospect Hill were considered a cause for concern as they were kept in an unsanitary condition. Houses on Carey's Road and Lady's Lane were continuously referred to as being unhealthy, with several houses requiring disinfection and whitewashing.³⁸⁰ Sixteen owners³⁸¹ were summoned by the Corporation for the unsanitary conditions of the houses in these areas and for failing to make any amendments to these buildings.³⁸² Houses on John Street were also kept in a 'filthy' state with regards to the ashpits and yards, especially houses let as lodging houses which appeared to cause more problems due to the large number of people living in them.³⁸³

Some houses were considered unfit for habitation (Park Road),³⁸⁴ while others required white washing and cleaning up. By November 1885, the water supply in Pennywell was still considered a disgrace to society as it led to several fever outbreaks³⁸⁵ (the type of disease was unlisted, although it was likely to be fever). By December, 1885, letters from the LGB relating to the supply of water in certain houses on Pennywell Road were read at a meeting.³⁸⁶ Eighty-seven reports were made by Dr. O'Connor, together with a list of the owners and occupiers (the total number was not recorded) of the houses, and the executive notices to be served to the owners of these houses as a punishment for not maintaining the sanitary conditions. Thirty-seven people were summoned due to state of unsanitary premises.³⁸⁷

Several reports commented on the unsanitary state of West Watergate, Whitewine Lane and Margaret Place which were located in close proximity to the quays and St John's Parish. This area was occupied by the poorest classes of society within the city and also

³⁷⁹ LCA, L/SMIN/5, October, 1885.

³⁸⁰ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 13th October, 1885.

³⁸¹ Landowners names were not listed.

³⁸² LCA, L/SMIN/5, 13th October, 1885.

³⁸³ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 13th October, 1885.

³⁸⁴ Two Park Roads were listed for Limerick. Location unknown for particular street.

³⁸⁵ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 18th November, 1885.

³⁸⁶ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 8th December, 1885.

³⁸⁷ LCA, L/SMIN/5, 8th December, 1885.

consisted of low value houses (under £5) as previously outlined.³⁸⁸ Nearby this area, complaints were made against the houses on Benson Lane which was also located in Irishtown. Fifteen reports from Dr. Holmes were to the corporation about the state of these houses which were in a ‘disgraceful situation’.³⁸⁹ Several areas along Garryowen continued to remain in a disgraceful state as privies and yards were in an unsanitary state. Five slaughter houses were also to be cleaned out and whitewashed.³⁹⁰ It appeared the whole east side of St John’s Parish had been neglected by the Corporation due to lack of sanitary facilities.

In 1886, St Michael’s Parish was experiencing similar problems to St John’s and St Mary’s Parishes. This may have been due to abolishment of the St Michael’s Parish Commissioners, or due to the high numbers which now lived in the parish (over 21,000 people). Officers were sent to inspect all houses on Denmark Street and report back to the committee on the state of the sanitation of the said street.³⁹¹ Several galvanised bins had been placed on this street within the proceeding weeks to collect household waste.³⁹² These buckets however were often left filled up, and in many cases were not emptied by the corporation scavengers.³⁹³ By July 1886, tenement buildings were reported as unsanitary on Meat Market Lane, Courthouse Lane and River Lane, while several houses in Garryowen, Nelson Street, Old Clare Street, Hills Lane, Curry Lane, Quinn’s Lane, Broad Street and Beltavern Lane also required attention.³⁹⁴

On the 24th April 1900, a letter relating to the condition of Park Road was read.³⁹⁵ The area was considered unsanitary due to the number of cowsheds which were in close proximity to the houses and also recorded having heaps of manure located there too. On Park Road, manure heaps were reported as being so large that they encroached on the road. Rain also caused the run off of manure to block drainage in the area. In warm weather the smells were not pleasant and also attracted flies to the area. Similar accounts were recorded in the same letter for Mungret Street whereby the milk market was used to sell hide, milk and fowl. The area was kept unclean and reported having

³⁸⁸ LCA, L/SMIN, 1885 onwards.

³⁸⁹ LCA, L/SMIN/7, 30th March, 1886.

³⁹⁰ LCA, L/SMIN/7, 6th April, 1886.

³⁹¹ No other information on this street

³⁹² LCA, L/SMIN/7, March, 1886.

³⁹³ LCA, L/SMIN/7, March, 1886.

³⁹⁴ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 15th June, 1886.

³⁹⁵ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 24th April, 1901.

waste and litter scattered around which made it unsuitable for the sale of milk.³⁹⁶ The streets of Limerick were reported to be in a very dirty condition whereby the sanitary staff were unable to deal with the situation. The smaller streets, lanes and passageways were considered the most noticeable, where the surfaces were more uneven and littered with rubbish (ashes, vegetable and other objectionable matter).

In August 1900, Messr. Nash wrote a letter to the Corporation in reference to houses in Maradyke (located near Watergate) which were ‘rendered damp by the overflow from a defective water trough in the corporation depot’³⁹⁷. He requested that the houses be plastered and repaired as a result of the damage and also made reference to several letters of complaint which were previously made on the matter. Living in ‘damp’ houses caused health issues for people residing in them, such as pneumonia. The letter did not state for how long the houses were in a damp condition and did not record any disease present. In September, another letter was sent to the Corporation regarding the unsanitary state of the houses on Anne Street.³⁹⁸ The houses were considered in an unsanitary state in general and sewerage was percolating through the walls into the kitchen of these houses. The issue was raised to the City Surveyor who requested a new sewer pipe be laid for this area.³⁹⁹ No record of white washing was recording for cleaning the houses after the seepage of sewerage into the houses.

Individual businesses and people in the city were also slow to deal with the sanitation issues and contributed to the conditions. In July 1901, Mr. Forest (high constable) placed a watchman in Augustinian Lane and also had notices put up in the neighbourhood to prevent nuisances being dumped by people there at midday.⁴⁰⁰ The watchman reported a young man dumping fowl in the lane from a shop a few streets away. Lower Browns Lane and the lanes off Summer Street were also continuously kept unhealthy due to depositing of waste on them. The lanes were mud tracks which were not concreted and therefore were difficult to keep clean. It was recommended by the medical inspectors to concrete these laneways to allow the easy ‘flushing’ of the

³⁹⁶ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 24th April, 1901.

³⁹⁷ LCA, L/SMIN/8, August, 1900.

³⁹⁸ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 20th September, 1900.

³⁹⁹ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 20th September, 1900.

⁴⁰⁰ LCA, L/SMIN/8, July, 1901.

surface. The medical inspectors feared that an outbreak of disease would occur in the areas where germs would travel with dust particles and infect humans.⁴⁰¹

Unsanitary conditions in the new town were not just confined to the quays near Custom House. The houses along the docks at Mount Kennett were also causing issues. In August 1904, a letter was sent to the Corporation signed by the residents of Mount Kennett stating that some time ago a requisition was signed by the principal residents of the locality requesting that steps should be taken against the nuisances that exist in Mr. Donnellan's tenement houses where fifty people were housed without any sanitary accommodation.⁴⁰² The Health Committee had recommended that water closets be put into the houses, but nothing had yet been done to rectify the matter. A report from Dr. Shanahan at the same meeting was read where he stated that the houses located at Mount Kennett had no room for water closets. Instead the people living in this area were to make use of the nuisance bins which were made available eight or nine yards away from the tenement houses. These bins were to be emptied twice daily by the Corporation to service the people in the area.⁴⁰³

On 7th April 1910, many of the residents of the houses along the Garryowen district in Irishtown were also still without water closets. People living within the area petitioned the corporation in order to rectify this matter as they were all rate paying citizens.⁴⁰⁴ There was no sewer in the area to allow the removal of 'filth' to be efficiently drained from the area.

⁴⁰¹ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 14th October, 1903.

⁴⁰² LCA, L/SMIN/8, 31st August, 1904.

⁴⁰³ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 31st August, 1904.

⁴⁰⁴ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 7th April, 1910.

Figure 6.3: Petition for sewers in Garryowen, 1910 (LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1/(373))

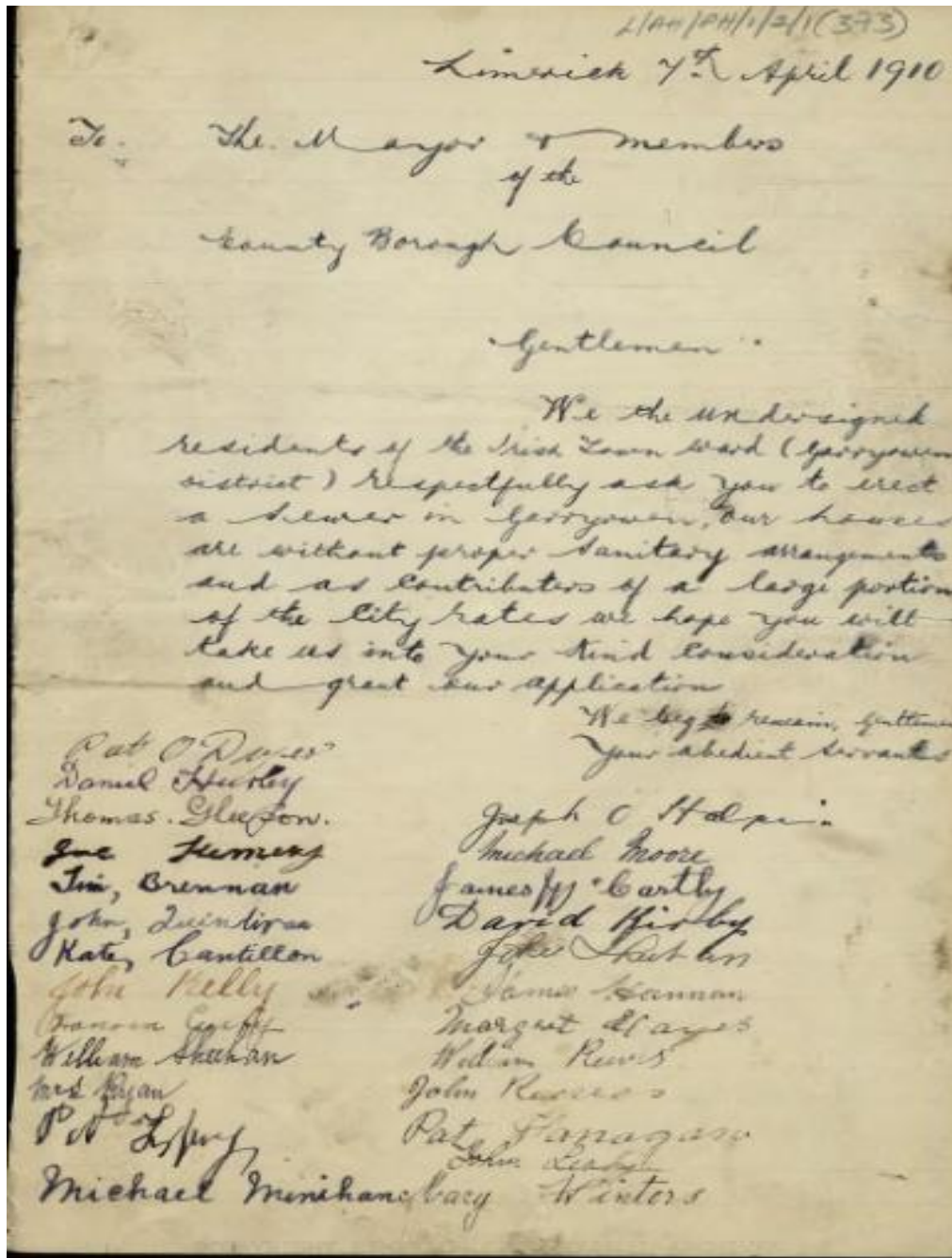


Figure 6.3 highlights a petition which was signed on 23rd August 1911, by 132 occupants of 25 houses to acquire a sewer for the area (Garryowen), all of which were without water closets, and considered in ‘a bad state of affairs’ and that there should be no reason as to why the house owners should not comply.⁴⁰⁵ It was clear that this area of the city was neglected as it went without water closets until the early twentieth century

⁴⁰⁵ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 23rd August, 1911

in comparison to parts of the city which obtained water closets throughout the nineteenth century. These citizens were all rate paying citizens and this petition also highlights the ineffective response by the government to tackle the issue of sanitation.

A Health Committee Diary Book in 1911⁴⁰⁶ provided notes on several areas within the city which still required sanitary arrangements, both on main streets and side lanes. Some houses on Mary Street (for example, numbers 11-14) were still requesting toilets facilities at this time. In many cases it was left to the owners of the properties, some of which no longer lived in the country. Older parts of the town waited longer for these facilities, depending on the wealth of the landlord and also on the willingness of the Corporation to implement effective legislation. The Corporation waited for the landlord to install water facilities rather than enforcing rules to ensure that all houses had these facilities for health reasons.

In the Public Health Minute Books for December 1911,⁴⁰⁷ it was reported that medical officers had given up on the reporting of rearing of pigs in domestic premises. Houses were unclean and yards were dirty. Waste remained on the surface of the yards as there were no sufficient drains. This was not just in older parts of the town; tenement houses also recorded similar results. It was stated that a large number of sanitary conveniences (the total number was unlisted) had been provided for these dwelling houses. However, water closets were frequently unattended to and pigs were again kept in back yards. Night soil was thrown out on the street as pails were not removed or emptied. The connections to the sewers were faulty and as a result the sewer traps were defective. That same report commented that bye-laws and nuisance removals were not always enforced by the sanitary authority.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 1911

⁴⁰⁷ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 1911

⁴⁰⁸ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 13th December, 1911

6.4 Cleaning of the streets

People had commented on the conditions of Limerick since the eighteenth century, which were ‘covered in dirt and dung’,⁴⁰⁹ which was a long standing issue with St Mary’s and St John’s Parishes. Many of the streets and lanes were dirt tracks, which required flagging by the corporation, and continued to be recorded this way into the nineteenth century. Steps to start cleaning of the streets in the older parts of the city had commenced officially in 1800 with the sale of ‘scavengers’⁴¹⁰ jobs, which ensured that nuisances of the town were removed daily from the streets of St Mary’s and St John’s Parishes.⁴¹¹ Men were employed to ‘scavenge’ the streets and lanes and remove all unnecessary and unwanted rubbish. This included animal or human waste, house slops, ashes etc. Following on from the removing of all dirt from the streets, a follow-up process was introduced soon after whereby water was poured onto the streets and lanes to ‘flush’ them clean. This process was used where the streets and lanes were densely overcrowded. It was also done to keep the streets clear of ‘disease’ whereby flies landing on waste could easily spread disease. By the early nineteenth century the system had been privatised. The contract to clean the streets was led by public auction, and for the first time the Corporation began to derive a profit from street cleaning.⁴¹² The Corporation’s role in street cleaning in St Michael’s Parish ceased with the establishment of St Michael’s Parish Commission (1810-1851), who maintained the running of this part of the city. As a result, the Corporation was left to maintain St Mary’s and St John’s Parishes. After the 1850s, the Corporation had to ensure the efficient running of the whole city. Its role in St Michael’s Parish previously was limited due to its incapacity to provide all the services for the growing city.⁴¹³ The areas in the new town which required cleansing included Charlotte and Arthurs’s Quays, Rutland Street,

⁴⁰⁹ M., Potter, *The Government and the People of Limerick, the History of the Limerick Corporation / City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) p. 214

⁴¹⁰ Scavengers were employed by the corporation to sweep and shovel waste and filth from the streets and lanes.

⁴¹¹ *Limerick Chronicle*, 30th July, 1800.

⁴¹² M., Potter, *The Government and the People of Limerick, the History of the Limerick Corporation / City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) p. 214.

⁴¹³ W. Mulligan, ‘The enemy within; the enemy without: How the wealthier class manipulated local government in nineteenth century Limerick’ (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Mary Immaculate College, 2005) p. 6

Francis Street, Patrick Street, Ellen Street and Denmark Street.⁴¹⁴ These areas were just outside the town wall but were in close proximity to West Watergate, which was surrounded by poorer classes of society. The proximity of these areas to the quays also meant that they were more likely to get ‘dirty’ due to the carting of provisions through the city by horse and cart, and the selling of animals such as pigs and donkeys. However, street cleaning was not fully enforced until the latter end of the nineteenth century by the sanitary officers and the Local Government Board, due to the unsanitary conditions of the streets whereby parts of the city still remained without sanitary services. The Corporation was left to maintain the remainder of the city with included Englishtown and Irishtown, the most overcrowded parts of the city. Here, street cleaning proved more difficult as lanes were narrow, unpaved and the drains usually ran down the middle of the lane.

By 1881, the localities of Garryowen, St John’s Parish and the Custom House district in St Michael’s Parish continued to highlight areas of ‘careless’ street cleaning and the ‘total absence of anything like real supervision’.⁴¹⁵ The scavengers were neglecting their duties in the clearing of the streets and as a result, the streets and lanes were still covered in dirt and filth. These areas were the most populated areas within the city and as a result they would have required the most supervision in order to ensure the efficient running of the city and to ensure that adequate care occurred in these areas. The Corporation Depot, where the waste was deposited, was considered a ‘disgrace’ and also a ‘danger to health’.⁴¹⁶ The minute books also continued to comment on the negligence of the ‘scavengers’, two of which were Mr. O’Sullivan who neglected to remove filth from Market Alley and the other was Mr. Kilbridge who neglected to cleanse Barrack Hill.⁴¹⁷

The throwing of ashes and house slops on the lanes and alleyways were choking up the sewerage system. A report in April, 1881, commented on a ‘large accumulation of refuse at the corner of Punch’s Lane’ at Carey’s Road as there was no way of disposing of it efficiently. The proposed solution to the issue was to place a dustbin in the area for

⁴¹⁴ W. Mulligan, ‘The enemy within; the enemy without: How the wealthier class manipulated local government in nineteenth century Limerick’ (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Mary Immaculate College, 2005) p. 6.

⁴¹⁵ L/SMIN/5, 11th January, 1881.

⁴¹⁶ L/SMIN/5, 11th January, 1881.

⁴¹⁷ L/SMIN/5, 15th March, 1881.

easy removal for the corporation.⁴¹⁸ In many cases, these dustbins were abandoned by the Corporation who failed to empty them when they got full. Garryowen, Curry Lane and Old Windmill Road and other places in Dr. O'Connor's District also required instant 'flushing' and cleansing,⁴¹⁹ and reported similar situations to Punch's Lane. In the new town, Catherine Street was also a cause for concern due to its sanitary condition. The committee requested that the water cart be sent in much earlier in the morning (6am) in order to collect the refuse and 'flush' the street after collection and that the carts should be kept at work more continuously during the summer months.⁴²⁰ The reason for this was due to the fact that during warm weather, the accumulated refuse polluted the air and drew attention to flies which contributed greatly to the spread of disease.

The area around St John's Church was kept in a 'filthy state' during the earlier 1880s, while stench traps were required to be created where convenient for the area.⁴²¹ Attention was also required for the area opposite Barrington's Hospital. Other areas which required cleansing included Queen Street and Dominick Street which were located between the new and old parts of the town. These areas were overcrowded and again rubbish was being deposited on the streets. A subsequent report in 1885 from the sub-sanitary committee officers relating to districts⁴²² in the old parts of the town were reported to have been kept in 'good order' and were flushed continually throughout the warm weather. There was also a request to increase the number of scavengers within the city to ensure that all lanes were properly cleansed before 10am every morning.⁴²³

The Council took over the cleaning and repairing of the city, and all work cleaning and repairing was to be done under the city surveyor in the late 1800s. However, several years later, on 18th May 1910, another letter was put toward the corporation about essential flushing of the streets in the old quarters of the city which were congested and that this should be carried out daily.⁴²⁴ The areas where privies were kept were reported to be breeding grounds for flies during warm weather and actively contributed to the spread of disease.

⁴¹⁸ L/SMIN/5, 12th April, 1881.

⁴¹⁹ L/SMIN/5, 10th May, 1881.

⁴²⁰ L/SMIN/5, 25th May, 1881.

⁴²¹ These exact location of these stench traps was not listed.

⁴²² These 'districts' were unlisted.

⁴²³ L/SMIN/7, 13th August, 1885.

⁴²⁴ L/SMIN/8, May, 1910.

6.5 Provision of a water supply

Cleansing of the streets and lanes within the city could not be done effectively without a water supply to 'flush' the streets. Sanitation is only one part of the problem and it is difficult to supply sanitation without a water supply. It was more difficult to supply water to the old part of the city as the foundations were already laid down.

The supply of water within the city during the nineteenth century was very much behind the times. While Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Belfast all acquired piped water systems in the course of the eighteenth century, Limerick had to wait until 1834 to receive this service.⁴²⁵ Before that 'the main sources of water were the never failing Shannon and wells scattered throughout the city'.⁴²⁶ The older parts of the city remained without an adequate water supply until late in the nineteenth century and in many cases, into the twentieth century for the lanes and alleyways. Even the main streets such as Mary Street were still in need of a modern piped water and sanitation service in the twentieth century, similar to that of Irishtown. Although the new town was more modern, it was also inadequately supplied with water.

In 1825, the scheme was granted by an Act of Parliament which provided for the construction of a system to supply water to Limerick City.⁴²⁷ A cholera epidemic occurred in 1832,⁴²⁸ which led to an urgent need to focus attention on the improvement of the water supply. In 1834, a private company, the London Waterworks Company began the construction of the city's first water supply system and it remained in the hands of the London Waterworks Company until 1883, when the Corporation purchased the Limerick Water supply system from them through the Limerick Waterworks Act.⁴²⁹

The Corporation had a lot of work to do on improving the supply of water to the city.

The Corporation

...took control of the property of the old company, which comprised a house, land and waterworks at Clareville, house lands and reservoir at Newcastle, two houses, lands, engine house and works at Rhebogue, house,

⁴²⁵ Milne, 'Irish Municipal Corporations' pp 280-92.

⁴²⁶ Michael MacCurtain, 'Limerick City Water Supply' in *Irish Engineers*, Vol.30, No.7, July-August (1977) p. 9

⁴²⁷ LCA, IE/LA/P9.

⁴²⁸ K., Hannon, 'The 1832 Cholera Epidemic', in the *Old Limerick Journal*, Vol.32, 1988) pp 48-50.

⁴²⁹ M., Potter, *The Government and the People of Limerick, the History of the Limerick Corporation / City Council 1197-2006* (Limerick, 2006) p. 215.

lands and reservoir on the Ennis Road, and house land and reservoir in Garryowen.⁴³⁰

Pumps and wells were supplying contaminated water to different parts of the city as reported in the minute books or by the city's officers during the later nineteenth century. In older parts of the city, pumps were located on the corner of streets or in lanes, while in the new town pumps were mainly restricted to the docks. There was a difference between the water supplies of the poorer classes and the wealthier classes, where wealthier classes often received a constant supply of water in the majority of cases. On January 28th, 1886, a letter was read from Mr. Forest, Medical Inspector, recommending that the fountain at the foot of High Street, where it was being used only by the independent class of persons, be removed to the end of Benson Lane in Palmerstown, which was the centre of the very poor and populous neighbourhood.⁴³¹

Water samples were being analysed in the early twentieth century, to determine different levels of contamination. On 30th January 1901, a report from Sir Charles Cameron commented on the analysis of two samples of water. The first sample contained an immense number of micro-organisms in a 'highly polluted water' while sample no.2 contained a moderate number of micro-organisms and a 'rather infectious water'. The first sample was recorded from a pump at the side of Mr. John Cross Lemonade Manufactory off Gerald Griffith Street. The second sample was from a water pipe premise of Mr. Ryan's Manufactory on Sexton Street. Both these supplies were located in the Irishtown district.

The supply of water also affected the cleaning and sanitation of businesses in the city, especially obnoxious activities. A detailed report was carried out by a medical inspector into each of the twenty-nine obnoxious establishments in the city in 1901.⁴³² Of these twenty-nine establishments, only five had a fitted water supply. It was reported that the cleaning of the floor after the killing of an animal cannot be 'efficiently performed by carrying buckets of water from a distance but only by a supply within the slaughter house'.⁴³³ In some exceptional cases the report referred to a hose which may be attached to a water pipe to insure a complete flushing and cleansing of any 'possibly putrefactive stuff'. The worst feature of the slaughter house cleaning was the surface water drainage,

⁴³⁰ LCA, IE/LA/P9.

⁴³¹ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 30th January, 1901.

⁴³² LCA, L/SMIN/8, 26th September, 1901.

⁴³³ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 26th September, 1901.

which choked the sewers and in many cases could not be done without effective drainage facilities.⁴³⁴

A quarterly report was furnished from the No.1 Dispensary District (Abbey and Castle Ward) from the Medical Officer in June 1902.⁴³⁵ The water supply was ‘largely polluted’ and ‘unfit for use’ which also appeared in the report from the Sir Charles Cameron. Mr. Forrest reported that the water was taken from a pump in the grounds of the Convent of Mercy on Nicholas Street, which had been abandoned since the report.⁴³⁶

On 9th July 1902, three samples of water for sent for analysis. The first two samples were found to be ‘peaty water samples with normal composition’ and were supplied from the Limerick piped water system. The third sample contained more micro-organisms and a large amount of saline ammonia. The water was impure although was not too much above that of the good quality water. The sample also contained traces of decomposition of sewerage or drainage from land having cattle on it. The third sample was from the Good Shepherd Convent. A letter was sent to the manager about the quality of the water from the pump used for the inmates of the convent stating that the ‘water should not be used for drinking or cooking purposes’.⁴³⁷

Five samples of water were also sent from the new town, from streets such as Cruises Street (hotel), William Street (Barrack), Rutland Street and Emmet Place. The sample from Cruises Street hotel was found to be ‘highly polluted’. A letter was sent to the manager of the hotel about the sample of water and a prosecution was served. The samples from William Street Barrack and Rutland Street (No.14) were considered to be ‘fairly good’ supplies while the samples from No.7 Rutland Street and No. 21 Emmet Place were considered to be inferior for use as they contained a large amount of ammonia.⁴³⁸ Sanitary officers were required to go each individual house for several streets and draw up a list of all houses which were kept in an unsanitary condition.

The poor water supply affected all parts of the city, although the supplies were poorer in quality in the older parts of the city, especially along Irishtown. The water received

⁴³⁴ L/SMIN/8, 26th September, 1901.

⁴³⁵ L/SMIN/8, 11th June, 1902.

⁴³⁶ L/SMIN/8, 11th June, 1902.

⁴³⁷ L/SMIN/8, 9th July, 1902.

⁴³⁸ L/SMIN/8, 2nd September, 1902.

from Castleconnell was reported to be constantly polluted although the citizens of Limerick continued to drink from its supply. People also bathed in this area in the summer months. Supplies from the River Shannon at Rhebogue (near Irishtown) and Clareville (Garryowen water tank) were both reported to contain no sewerage pollution in 1902, as a result of the treatment plant which was erected there in the 1890s.⁴³⁹

6.6 Obnoxious and offensive activities

The location and harmful effects of obnoxious activities in the city were mainly outlined in the chapter five. These activities allowed for the spread of disease due to decaying animal matter, blood, offal and also the burning of bones. Flies swarmed these areas in warm weather and aided in the transporting of disease to humans. Many businesses did not properly dispose of the waste from these activities and many did not have the facilities to do so, such as running water to ‘flush’ away the blood off the ground. The inspection of these activities became important from the 1880s, when businesses were being penalised for improper conduct.⁴⁴⁰ Other issues of obnoxious activities were carried out by private individuals who reared pigs in their dwellings or kept them in small back yards. Overcrowded dwellings were unhealthy alone, but adding livestock to the situation contributed to the smells, diseases and unsanitary conditions.

One letter recorded in the Public Health Diary in 1911 (*figure 6.4*) concerned Mrs. Burke’s house on High Street where she was reportedly engaged in the slaughtering of animals.⁴⁴¹ This activity created an offensive smell, especially in warm weather, and the decomposing animal matter was sure to cause disease. The approaching warm weather would contribute to arising fumes and may also contribute to a swarm of flies which would be attracted to the offensive waste from these animals.

⁴³⁹ LCA, L/SMIN/8, September, 1902.

⁴⁴⁰ Highlighted throughout the Limerick City Council special minute book from 1888-1902

⁴⁴¹ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 8th March 1911.

Figure 6.4: Obnoxious activities in Mrs. Burke's house in Irishtown, 1911 (LCA, L/AH/PH/1/2/1)

3 High Street
Limerick
5th April 1911.

Sir,
I Respectfully ask
you to place the following
letter before your committee
to-night.
gentlemen,
There is a
woman living next door
to me her name is
Mrs Lizzie Burke she
is carrying on business

Read & Return
Limerick
5/4/11

as marine dealer. She
also slaughters goats and
kids and dries animal
skins in her house. The
bad smell arising from
the business she carries
on is injuring me in my
business and is also
injurious to the health
of my family. I would
ask you gentlemen to
see to this as the warm
weather is coming on

again and it is most
dangerous to have a
business like this carried
on in a congested district
like High Street.
L/AH/PH/1/2/1
I Remain, (147)
yours Respectfully
Catherine Cosgrave

J. J. Peacocke Esq.
Executive Sanitary Officer.
City.

Incidents similar to this were also recorded in Caledonia Place where Mrs. Hickey kept three pigs in the back yard of her house (a size of 21ft by 14ft). The yard was kept clean however the space was too confined for the animals.⁴⁴² Six months later another complaint was added about Mrs. Hickey's residence where the pigs were causing a nuisance to neighbours. The children living next door were frequently sick and the doctor commented on how the nuisance may be the cause of the illnesses.

A complaint was sent to the Corporation by a neighbour who feared the ill effects of her neighbour's on Sexton Street in 1911 where she had a small yard (16ft by 20ft) in which she kept pigs, a donkey, geese, ducks, hens and a couple of dogs. The smell from the bones and refuse in the yard attracted other dogs.⁴⁴³ The letter also reported that a small lake of filth had formed. On wet days, steam and smells arose from the heap and the smell was unbearable. A fire was also kept alight to burn refuse and bones from the nearby barrack and was considered a nuisance to the public health. Children had frequently complained of headaches in the area.⁴⁴⁴

On August 25th 1911, a letter was sent from J. Matterson and Sons with regard to the carting of offal through the city. People in the city requested that the offal from animals be removed early in the morning as to avoid the smells and offensive sight of such a task.⁴⁴⁵

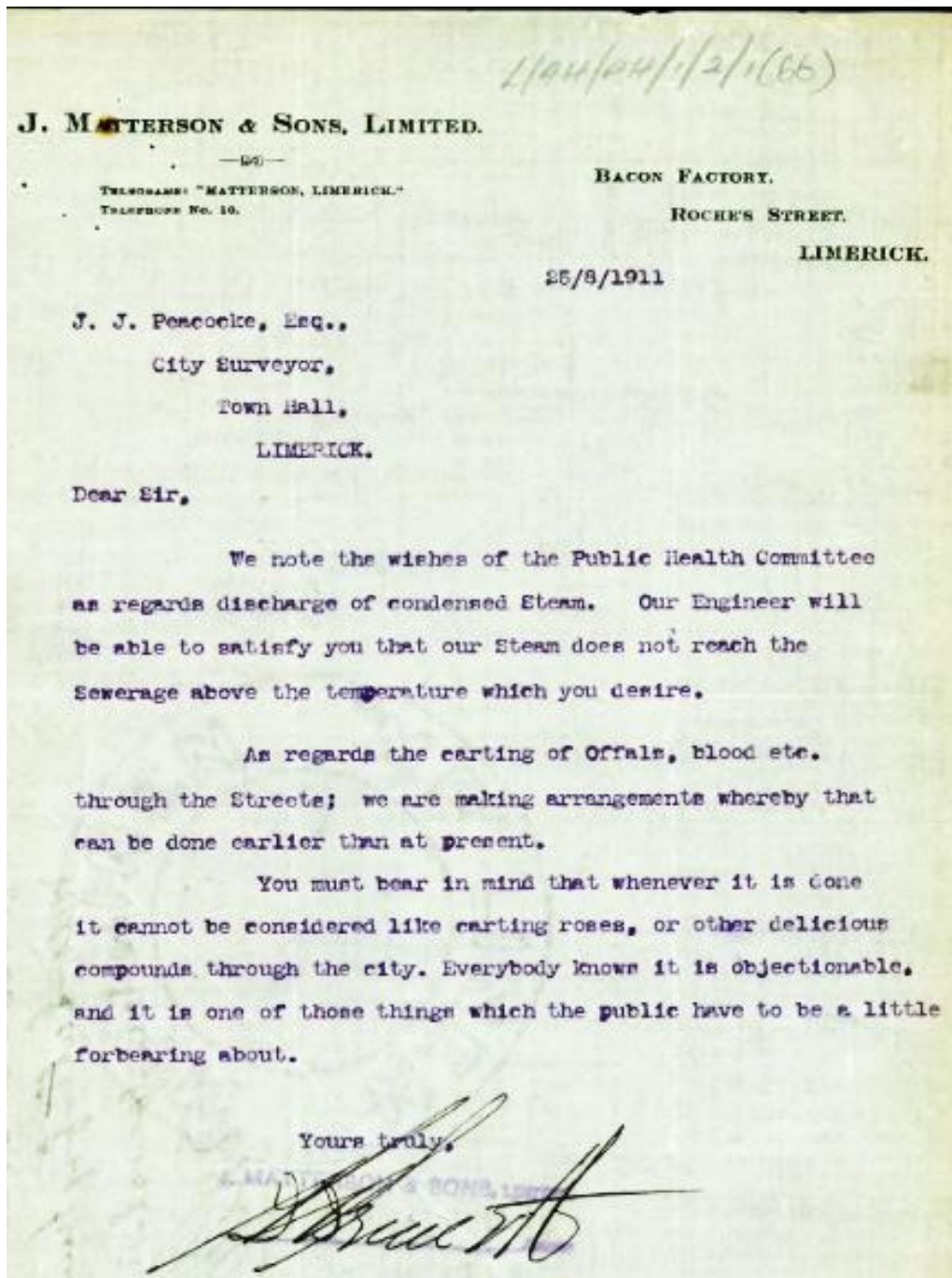
⁴⁴² LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 8th March 1911.

⁴⁴³ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 8th April 1911.

⁴⁴⁴ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 8th April, 1910.

⁴⁴⁵ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 25th August 1911.

Figure 6.5: Carting of Offal through Limerick city, 1911 (LCA,
L/AH/PH/1/2/1(66)



The sanitary state of the city was second to Dublin and was considered very much behind the times. The poor state of the physical environment in which many Limerick citizens resided had a direct impact on their health and in many cases had an impact on their mortality. However, as the twentieth century progressed, clearly demands were being made by the people of Limerick to clean up the city. The role of cleaning up the

city was slow and tedious, but was having an effect on the reduction of deaths from diseases. Some of the solutions to the issues are outlined below.

6.7 Occurrence of disease - spatial and temporal patterns

The special minute books recorded several occurrences of diseases within the city from the late 1880s to the 1920s. The majority of these had occurred within the old town. It is evident from the special minute books that this was mainly due to the general sanitary state of the streets and lanes. There was no universal routine for cleaning the waste from the streets and as a result, refuse was allowed to accumulate on the streets until odours occurred from the decomposing matter. The cold, damp and unsanitary facilities in houses contributed to the cause of disease while the overcrowding of people aided in the spread of the diseases. It was reported by medical officers that certain diseases like measles and scarlatina were contributed easily from one person to another, similar to that of fever.

In the autumn of 1900, there was a spread of bubonic fever (plague) within the city⁴⁴⁶. Dr. Barry, one of the medical doctors at the time, stated that one of the chief causes for the outbreak was the sanitary state of the tenement houses within the city and also the spread of rodents or fleas.⁴⁴⁷ In order to cleanse and repair the tenement houses, immediate assistance from the sanitary officers was required and lime washing was needed to disinfect the houses. Although the exact location of this outbreak is unknown, the tenement houses were mainly located in the Custom House District. Since their close proximity to the quays, which were usually infested with rodents,⁴⁴⁸ it is likely that this district experienced the outbreak.⁴⁴⁹ The Mount St Lawrence burial registers record two deaths from Cecil Street, four from Denmark Street and one from Ellen Street between August and October, 1900. A total number of thirty-seven were returned from the Limerick Union hospital and the Limerick Asylum.

In October of that year, fever cases were also reported in other parts of the city. Dr. Shanahan reported a fever outbreak at No.4 White's Lane on October 8th, 1900. John

⁴⁴⁶ The Mount St. Lawrence Registers recorded 40 deaths in August 1900. Eight died in Limerick Union and 3 from Barrington's Hospital. The remaining were from various addresses including Carey's Road, Mary Street, Garvey's Range and Gerald Griffin Street.

⁴⁴⁷ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 1912

⁴⁴⁸ A report in the Public Health Committee Diary Book in 1912 reported infestation of rodents along the Quays.

⁴⁴⁹ A report in the L/SMIN/8 book for 2nd April, 1901, recorded similar entries.

Heuntt was sent to hospital suffering from enteric fever (typhoid). The usual techniques of disinfecting and whitewashing were carried on the house to remedy the issue.⁴⁵⁰ On the 19th of October, the Local Government Board forwarded another report from Dr. Graham relating to the recent reoccurrence of two more fever outbreaks within the city. One case of the fever was recorded at No.57 Nelson Street while another was recorded from No.7 White's Lane. White's Lane and Nelson Street were in close proximity to each other.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁵⁰ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 8th October, 1900.

⁴⁵¹ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 19th October, 1900.

In July, 1901, scarlatina broke out in a school in Roxboro, where three 'slight' cases were recorded and removed to hospital.⁴⁵² In August, 1902, another outbreak of enteric fever was recorded in the city. Most of the cases were removed to hospital. In one case, a woman was prosecuted for allowing her child to attend the Christian Brothers School (in case of contagion) while the house was suffering from fever.⁴⁵³

A report was drawn up from the medical officers about the occurrence of fever in the city in September 1902. One case was located within the Watergate Area (typhoid), while another was from Ball-Alley Place (typhus fever). Both these locations were located at opposite ends of the city which showed no obvious sign of contagion. Various occupants of the house in Ball Alley Place were also warned not to go to work and the children were prevented from attending school. The cause of the disease was reported to be overcrowding, filth and poverty. On the 21st January 1903, two copies of reports were sent to the corporation on the occurrence of disease in the city. The first report was of an outbreak of measles which caused a very high mortality rate. The high death rate was mainly due to chest complications brought upon by exposure to poor accommodation and a need for nursing attention. The second outbreak was of typhus which occurred in three houses in Palmerstown and the fourth was in Ball Alley Place. Upon inspection of these houses, the inhabitants were found to be in a 'deplorable state of poverty and dirt'.⁴⁵⁴ In one case, the family consisted of one woman and six children, who were removed to hospital to an isolation ward. The same medical inspector reported on Ball Alley Place as being in a most 'unsanitary state' and a 'hot-bed of disease'.⁴⁵⁵

By 1910, fever was still prevalent within the city. A health committee diary book recorded the presence of fever in Jonses Lane (Irishtown) and North Strand. Other areas which recorded the prevalence of disease included Vizes Fields. In August, 1910, Vizes Field was the only location in the city to record fever. In one case, a father, mother and child had been taken ill due to the 'poverty and overcrowding in a bad insanitary house'.⁴⁵⁶ The house was soon after reported as unfit for habitation and was closed up

⁴⁵² LCA, L/SMIN/8, July 1901.

⁴⁵³ LCA, L/SMIN/8, August 1902.

⁴⁵⁴ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 21st January 1903.

⁴⁵⁵ LCA, L/SMIN/8, 21st January 1903.

⁴⁵⁶ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 1910-1911, p. 253.

Figure 6.7: Infectious Disease Notification Act and infectious diseases, 1899⁴⁵⁷

8

INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT, 1899.

During the year 44 cases of infectious disease were notified. The number of these cases and the deaths arising from them for the past five years are as follows :--

DISEASE	1915		1914		1913		1912		1911	
	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths	Cases	Deaths
Small Pox	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cholera	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Diphtheria	3	..	2	...	2	2	5	...	7	3
Membranous Croup	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Erysipelas	...	...	3	...	2	...	2	...	1	...
Scarlatina	23	1	101	10	32	2	21	...	48	...
Typhus Fever	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Typhoid or Enteric Fever	14	6	16	6	57	9	4	...	14	5
Relapsing do	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Continued do	4	...	1	...	3	...	1	...	2	...
Puerperal do	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
TOTALS	44	7	123	16	96	13	33	...	72	8

The data displayed in *figure 6.7* was recorded from the public sanitary report for the city and includes the number of cases and deaths for each disease from 1911-15.⁴⁵⁸ The number of deaths continued to decrease across the various diseases, while the number of people suffering from disease was also increasing. Enteric fever and scarlatina remained the worst diseases, continuing to effect adults and children. Scarlatina continued to remain higher in schools⁴⁵⁹ where children were more susceptible to the disease than adults. The disease was usually conveyed from person to person through clothing. Mothers were putting children in clothes without having disinfected them and as a result the disease was spreading through the classrooms. The disease continued to attack each year, with some years more serious than others. Enteric fever was also continuing to cause severe cases of disease. The public health and sanitary reports commented that the occurrence of disease and the number of deaths was an index to which the sanitary methods had been implemented. This meant that the number of deaths within the city was decreasing from the diseases due to improvements in health care and also in the knowledge of health care. Although, until those methods were more generally adopted

⁴⁵⁷ M. McGrath, *Thirteenth Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1914) p. 8

⁴⁵⁸ This information is only available until 1915 and continues again from 1925 from where only selected years exist.

⁴⁵⁹ M. McGrath, *Tenth Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1912) p. 8

within the city, it was likely that typhoid and other diseases would continue. Diphtheria⁴⁶⁰ was spread similar to scarlatina, through articles of clothing and cooking utensils. The number of deaths from diphtheria had been greatly reduced since the start of the twentieth century. Consumption also remained high in Ireland throughout the early half of the twentieth century, although cases continued to decrease⁴⁶¹ in Limerick toward the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁶² The vital causes of consumption were considered to be overcrowding and insanitary surroundings and once again drew the question of an adequate housing supply for the city. Dust also contributed to the problem of consumption in the city as it can carry the germs.⁴⁶³ The sanitary officers argued that this issue would be removed if all streets and lanes in the city were concreted as it would allow the flushing of the streets to be more easily controlled.⁴⁶⁴

On 17th May 1911, disease was also recorded along Carey's Road due to the sanitary conditions. It was reported that in order to ensure hygiene and cleanliness, every street and lane should be flushed particularly those along Carey's Road, Nelson Street, Lower Gerald Griffin Street, Mungret Street, Watergate, Windmill Street and Palmerstown, where disease was more likely to attack. These areas were some of the more congested areas in the city and required constant maintenance by the cleaning staff during the summer months due to the number of people resident here and the types of obnoxious activities within these areas. A large slaughter house was located in Palmerstown which was on the edge of the old town. Watergate also recorded obnoxious activities and was located in close proximity to the quays and markets, which offered favourable environments for the spread of disease. Windmill Street was located near the docks in the new town and provided accommodation for the poorer working classes. Houses along Carey's Road⁴⁶⁵ and Nelson Street⁴⁶⁶ provided poorly constructed accommodation for the poorer classes also and were often overcrowded and neglected

⁴⁶⁰ Diphtheria remained high in Ireland until about 1914, when an anti-toxin was discovered to help reduce the disease.

⁴⁶¹ From 119 deaths in 1900, to 109 in 1910, to 95 in 1920 to only 59 in 1929.

⁴⁶² M. McGrath, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1929) p. 9

⁴⁶³ People would ingest these particles into the lungs or other organs.

⁴⁶⁴ M. McGrath, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1929) p. 9

⁴⁶⁵ The 1911 census recorded 14 second class houses being overcrowded with over 2 people per room.

⁴⁶⁶ The 1911 census record 12 first and second class houses being overcrowded. The street also recorded seven lodging houses and two pawn shops.

areas in terms of water supply and sanitary facilities. The conditions of these streets and the close proximity to obnoxious activities provided the ideal situation for the spread of disease.

In 1911, the public health committee wrote a letter to the LGB on measures that needed to be taken against child mortality due to diarrhoea and enteritis.⁴⁶⁷ It was suggested that mothers should be given feeding advice and also information on the management of children and information on food exposure and decomposing matter. It was hoped that this would reduce the spread of disease in the city.

Epidemic diarrhoea was common throughout the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. Although the number of deaths decreased, sharp attacks during the summer months⁴⁶⁸ led to diarrhoea amongst adults and children⁴⁶⁹ Four causes were highlighted: food (mainly milk), city life and population density, ventilation (both inside and out) and water. Dr. Grath continued to highlight the urgent need for flushing of the streets in the more congested poor districts of the city, and for scavenging to be carried out more efficiently.⁴⁷⁰

In August, 1911, the prevalence of scarlatina was again recorded throughout the districts of number 1 (Abbey and Castle Wards) and number 3 (Irishtown Ward). It had previously been recorded in the summer months and proved fatal to children. In July of that year, its presence was mainly associated with the Carey's Road area and along Vizes Fields. In 1912, an outbreak of measles amongst children occurred in the city. Limerick and Belfast were the worst affected areas. Scarlatina was still prevalent, occurring in 21 children, mainly due to transmission from milk and clothes. Cases of enteric fever were also recorded, although the number of cases affected was low due to improvements in the scavenging of the streets and lanes and the concreting of the latter which was occurring from the 1900s. The concreting of the surfaces would make them smoother and therefore waste was less likely to remain on the surface. Large amounts of 'flushing' were also carried out to 'wash away' any traces of the dirt and disease, all of which contributed to the overall reduction in the number of fevers throughout the

⁴⁶⁷ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 23rd August, 1911, p. 92

⁴⁶⁸ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 23rd August, 1911, p. 92

⁴⁶⁹ The earlier General Registrars do not record the time of year of certain deaths.

⁴⁷⁰ LCA, Public Health Committee Diary Book, 23rd August, 1911, p. 105

city.⁴⁷¹ In 1912, 144 houses⁴⁷² were also disinfected after infectious disease.⁴⁷³ In 1915 however, due to the improvements of whitewashing of houses and ‘flushing’ of the streets, only 56 houses were disinfected. Limerick was still regarded as very much ‘behind the times’ in the cleaning of the streets and the disinfecting of houses.⁴⁷⁴

By 1929, fever was still prevalent in Limerick, but not to the same extent as it previously had. Scarletina was still recorded amongst children, in which 99 cases were notified for 1929. Cases of consumption remained high within the city, with the number of deaths amounting to 69, in comparison to 65 in 1928. The main causes of the disease which still required attention included housing, feeding, fresh air, sunlight and exercise. Diseases like measles, whooping cough and influenza also required attention as they were not completely wiped out. Many of these diseases were the result of the overcrowding and insanitary conditions of the city.⁴⁷⁵

6.8 Major causes of disease and death in Limerick city from 1850-1930

William Wilde carried out the first survey on the state of disease in Ireland in 1851. He was the main contributor to the morbidity and mortality data for the Irish Census from 1851. He identified nine categories of infirmity and four classes of physical and mental handicaps (deaf and dumb, blind, lame and decrepit, lunatic and idiot). The further five categories included: the sick at home, in workhouse, in hospital, in prison and in asylums. These sick people were classified as ‘labouring under temporary or permanent disease’ of which he concluded with over 100 diseases (figure 6.8).⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷¹ M. McGrath, *Tenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick, 1912*, p. 1-6.

⁴⁷² The location of these houses was unlisted.

⁴⁷³ M. McGrath, *Tenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick, 1912*, p. 8.

⁴⁷⁴ M. McGrath, *Thirteenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick, 1915*, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁵ M. McGrath, *Twenty-seventh Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick, 1929*, p. 8.

⁴⁷⁶ M., Crawford, *Counting the People, A Survey of the Irish Censuses, 1813-1911* (Dublin, 2003), p. 71.

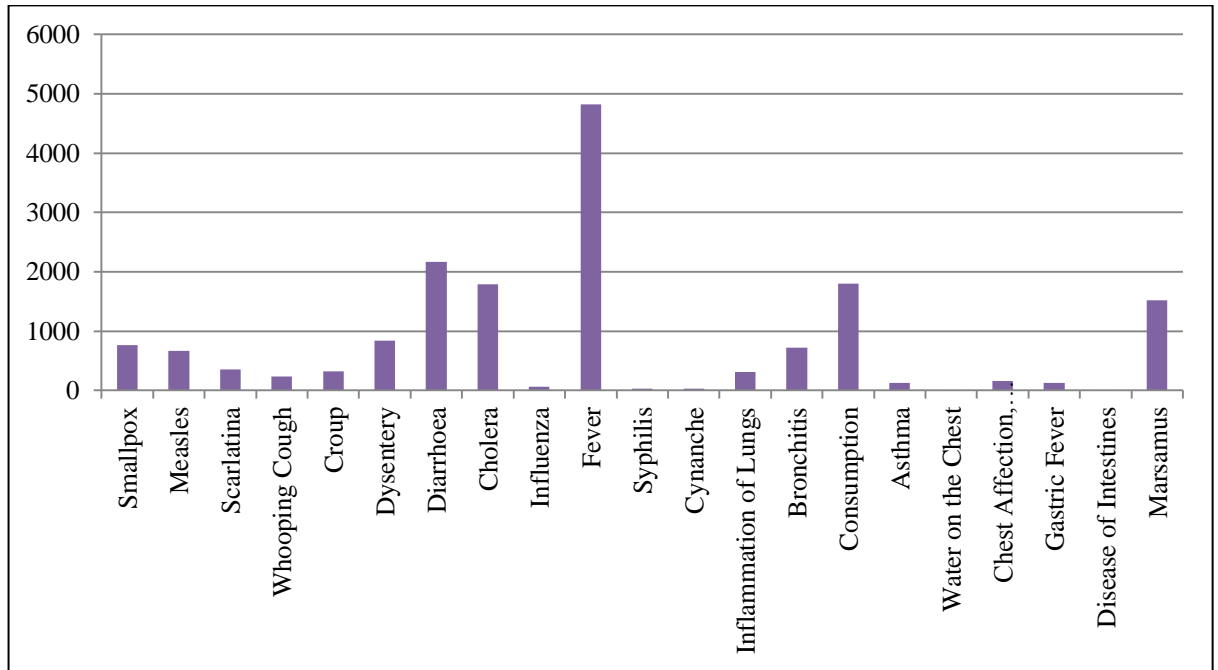
Figure 6.7: Classification of diseases by Wilde in 1851

<i>Zymotic Disease</i>	<i>Constitutional Disease</i>	<i>Local Diseases</i>	<i>Developmental Diseases</i>	<i>Other</i>
Smallpox, Scarlatina, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, fever, Diarrhoea, dysentery, cholera and rheumatism.	Consumption, other forms	Nervous system, circulatory system, respiratory system, digestive system, urinary system, generative organs, locomotive organs, integumentary system.	Childbirth, old age, others.	Injuries, unspecified and ill-defined diseases.

6.8.1 Disease and the 1851 census

The diseases for Limerick from the census of 1851 are recorded in *figure 6.9*. There were 12,080 zymotic deaths in Limerick during that year. There were twenty-one main diseases which caused the majority of deaths within the city. Of these deaths, nine were highly associated with the conditions of poor sanitation and poor housing in Limerick. These included smallpox, measles, scarlatina, dysentery, diarrhoea, cholera, fever, bronchitis, consumption. These diseases were specifically caused by water infected with faeces, infected dust particles from infected people, unsanitary living conditions, poor dietary conditions and general lack of hygiene.

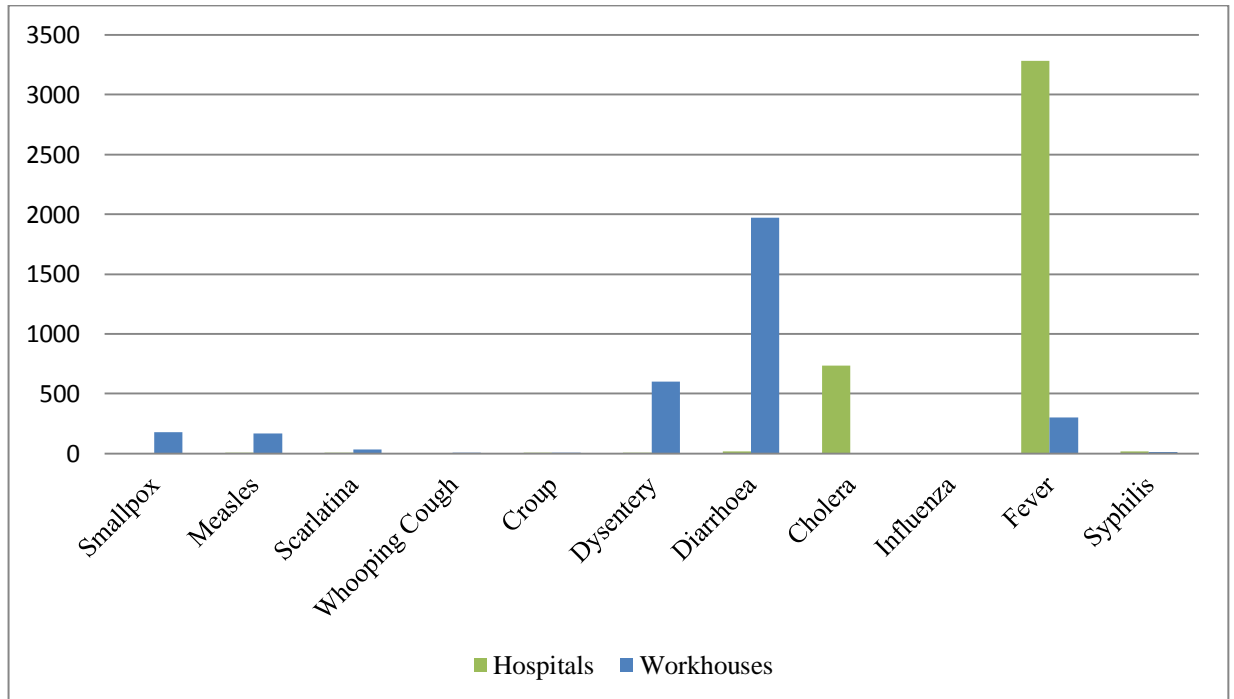
Figure 6.8: Number of deaths caused by diseases associated with poor health in Limerick city, 1851 (data extracted from *The Census of Population for the year 1851. Part III. Report on the Status of Disease*)



Diarrhoea accounted for 2,172 deaths within the city in 1851, with 1,973 of these deaths occurring in the workhouse (*figure 6.10*). It is unknown whether these patients entered with the symptoms of the disease or contracted it within the workhouse. The disease was usually spread by bacteria in contaminated food or water, which occurred more frequently in summer months when the bacterium was more inclined to flourish.⁴⁷⁷ Fever was more common to cause death in the hospital than the workhouse which was unusual considering the large numbers.

⁴⁷⁷ F.B., Smith, 'The first health transition in Australia', in G.W. Jones, R.M. Douglas, J.C. Caldwell and R.M. D'Souza (eds) *The Continuing Demographic Transition*, (Oxford, 1997) p. 40.

Figure 6.9: Zymotic deaths in the workhouse or hospital in Limerick city, 1851 (data extracted from *the Census of Population for the year 1851. Part III. Report on the Status of Disease*)



Fever was the most prevalent disease within the city and often denoted typhoid fever. There were 4,817 deaths caused from fever alone with 3,282 of these deaths occurring within the hospitals (presumably St John's Fever and Lock Hospital). The disease was contracted through ingesting food or water which was contaminated with the faeces of the infected person. Fever usually spread quickly through the city, from one person to another. Poorer classes of society, whose immune systems would have been weaker due to poor diets, often suffered more severe cases.

The number of people suffering from cholera had greatly reduced since the epidemic of 1832. In 1851, there were 1,790 deaths from cholera alone with 733 of these deaths occurring within hospitals. The absence of a proper water supply was still an issue until the twentieth century and people continued to drink from the pumps in the city and the river itself. Cholera was reported to have affected all parts of the city.

Consumption (later Tuberculosis) caused 1,802 deaths with 276 of these deaths occurring within the workhouse. Society was not aware that consumption was

contagious until the 1880s when it was put on the list as a notifiable disease. The tuberculosis bacterium was discovered in 1882 by Robert Koch, which made society aware that the disease was contagious.⁴⁷⁸ The disease was transmitted from person to person through the coughs or sneezes of the infected person. The higher number of deaths occurred in the age group of 15 – 25 years of age. From 1900, the term consumption was no longer used and it became known as tuberculosis and varied in several forms.

Measles accounted for 669 deaths in the city, 167 of these had occurred in the workhouse. These deaths were mainly occurring in children under the age of five years. The disease was highly contagious and often spread like consumption, from sneezing and coughing of the infected person. Between the years of 1841 and 1851, measles had killed 669 people in total, with 626 of these cases occurring in children under ten years of age.

Smallpox caused 761 deaths, 181 of these deaths occurred in the workhouse. Smallpox was spread from clothing or bed linen. School rooms proved the easiest way to spread the disease where children congregated together. Smallpox also accounted for a high number of deaths between 1841 and 1851, with a total of 761 deaths. Children under ten years of age accounted for 728 deaths.

6.8.2 Disease in Limerick 1900-1930

The General Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages⁴⁷⁹ recorded all the diseases which occurred in the city in each location, such as hospitals, public institutions and workhouses (*table 6.1*) for the city. A longitudinal analysis (1900-1930) of this source reveals a number of interesting conclusions. As *table 6.1* indicates the total number of people to die at home was greater than those who died in hospitals or public institutions from 1900-1930 (approximately 74%). The number of people dying in the workhouse also began to steadily decrease and witnessed a dramatic change after 1922 when it became the County Home. The number of total deaths continued to decrease from 1900 and major changes after 1922 when the total number of deaths dropped below 2,000 people per year in comparison to 3,000 in 1900 (*c.* 33% decrease). Major housing

⁴⁷⁸ A., Sakula, 'Robert Koch: Centenary of the Discovery of the Tubercle Bacillus, 1882' in the *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, Vol. 24, No.4, (April, 1983) pp 127–131.

⁴⁷⁹ Data obtained from a selection of *Register General reports of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Ireland* from 1900-1930.

schemes began to take place in the late 1920s and continued into the 1930s which allowed the cleaning up of the city and the introduction of better quality housing.

Table 6.1: Number of deaths in hospitals and institutions in Limerick city, 1900-1930 (data extracted from the *annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland)*, containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total No. Of Deaths</i>	<i>Infirmaries and Hospitals</i>	<i>Public and Lunatic Asylums</i>	<i>Workhouses (County Home after 1922)</i>
1900	3053	117	103	605
1901	2531	82	45	539
1902	2581	73	37	530
1903	2317	79	46	463
1904	2717	81	39	581
1905	2188	77	34	538
1906	2423	85	23	522
1907	2479	71	33	583
1908	2616	88	60	569
1909	2502	91	40	582
1910	2395	64	54	521
1911	2300	80	52	453
1912	2556	82	39	547
1913	2440	69	66	537
1914	2503	77	52	499
1915	2527	91	65	567
1916	2506	82	69	578
1917	2449	71	68	518
1918	2621	118	63	562
1920	2218	101	33	492
1921	2207	113	72	464
1922	2358	112	43	422
1923	1365	61	23	149
1924	1500	67	34	177
1925	1357	58	36	224
1926	1491	57	43	209
1927	1439	36	37	230
1928	1399	38	42	217
1929	1531	37	29	250

1930	1376	48	23	239
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Figure 6.10: Number of deaths in each institution in Limerick city, 1900-1930 (data extracted from *annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland), containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland*)

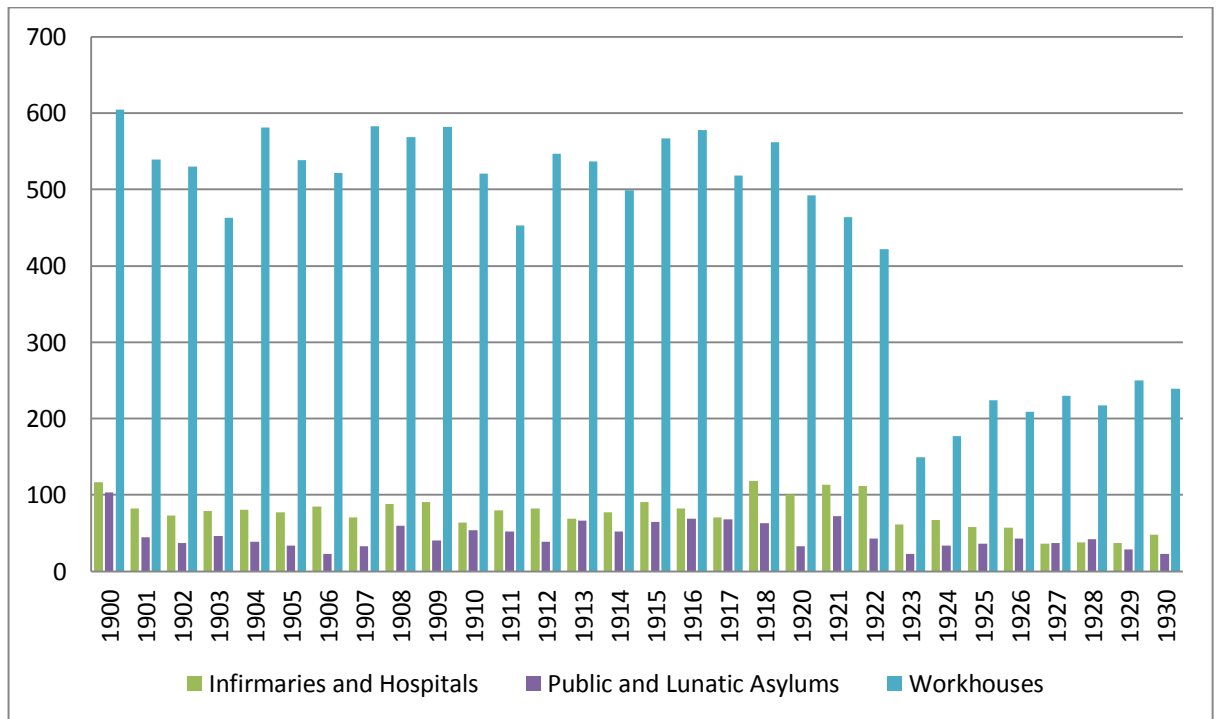


Table 6.2 contains a list of diseases which the author considers as representative of diseases associated with poverty and the poor health conditions in Limerick from 1900-1930.⁴⁸⁰ The main diseases included tuberculosis, bronchitis, measles, smallpox, influenza, pneumonia and respiratory diseases (until 1911).

⁴⁸⁰ These diseases were caused by bacteria in the air which infected the respiratory organs of the individual. Other diseases were caused by the transfer of bacteria from one person to another through contaminated food and drink (milk). Other diseases like pneumonia were due to cold and damp living conditions.

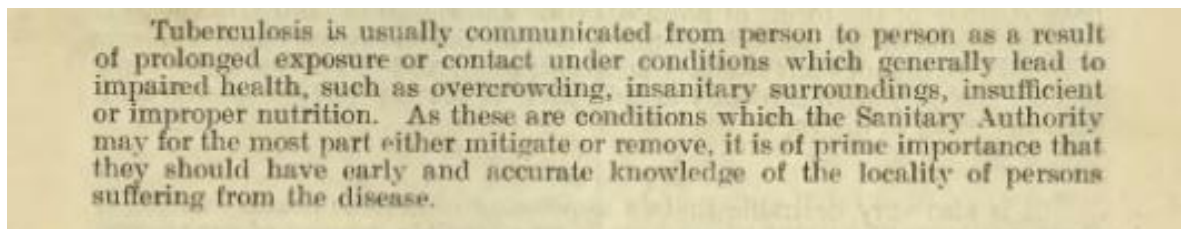
Table 6.2: Diseases due to poverty and its associated conditions in Limerick between 1900-1930 (data extracted from the *annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland)*, containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total No. Of Deaths</i>	<i>Small Pox</i>	<i>Measles</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>	<i>Typhus</i>	<i>Influenza</i>	<i>Whooping Cough</i>	<i>Diphtheria</i>	<i>Enteric Fever</i>	<i>Diarrhoea and Dysentery</i>	<i>Pneumonia</i>	<i>T.B and Phthisis</i>	<i>All other TB</i>	<i>Meningitis</i>	<i>Bronchitis</i>	<i>Respiratory System</i>	<i>Diarrhoea and Enteritis</i>	<i>Ill-defined and Unspecified</i>
1900	3053		2	0	2	169	1	6	17	56		337	89			583		
1901	2531		0	8	2	28	27	7	6	47		315	69			498		
1902	2581		67	4	2	50	14	6	19	53		346	33			446		639
1903	2317		46	3	3	27	33	8	8	46		322	66			395		383
1904	2717			1		24	79	3	14	48	119	329	100			377		623
1905	2188		1	3	2	21	26	18	26	50	103	301	30			334		512
1906	2423		5	2	1	20	0	25	14	52	113	312	62			305		551
1907	2479		57	3		38	22	8	8	41	139	296	88			301		489
1908	2616		30	7	1	79	15	9	5	54	147	235	116			364		405
1909	2502		6	12	0	20	42	8	14	38	93	270	86			362		493
1910	2395		0	5	1	19	79	10	7	35	109	286	65			311		507
1911	2300		0	9	1	7	3	8	10	0	102	244	24	21	272		70	1116
1912	2556		136	16	0	27	37	4	7	0	120	222	50	16	295		42	1061
1913	2440		15	8	4	22	25	7	20	1	86	250	51	20	219		51	1090

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total No. Of Deaths</i>	<i>Small Pox</i>	<i>Measles</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>	<i>Typhus</i>	<i>Influenza</i>	<i>Whooping Cough</i>	<i>Diphtheria</i>	<i>Enteric Fever</i>	<i>Diarrhoea and Dysentery</i>	<i>Pneumonia</i>	<i>T.B and Phthisis</i>	<i>All other TB</i>	<i>Meningitis</i>	<i>Bronchitis</i>	<i>Respiratory System</i>	<i>Diarrhoea and Enteritis</i>	<i>Ill-defined and Unspecified</i>
1914	2503		0	13	1	32	6	5	10	0	131	236	35	11	265		41	1108
1915	2527		3	7	0	27	18	5	11	2	114	203	61	25	208		21	1142
1916	2506		4	9	0	43	56	7	7	1	113	235	57	22	232		39	1067
1917	2449		36	9	4	42	20	7	15	0	105	248	61	16	274		34	1061
1918	2621		55	1	0	348	5	7	24	3	191	243	70	22	195		17	950
1920	2218		11	1	1	19	35	30	12	0	133	192	54	13	310		33	967
1921	2207		3	15		48	5	62	5	16	90	179	38	1	167	25	25	215
1922	2358		17	13		163	5	54	7	1	115	165	43		233	37	37	79
1923	1365		9	0		11	17		3	16	56	114	21	1	72	26	26	52
1924	1500			4		58	9	12	1		63	111	32		54	32	32	62
1925	1357		1	2		22	6	17	2	2	55	99	26		51	31	31	51
1926	1491		12	4		31	22	5	7	3	74	93	22	1	82	15	15	41
1927	1439		3	1		80	11	9	6	3	92	97	29	1	87	12	12	33
1928	1399		2	2		28	9	4	3		76	86	34		64	23	23	29
1929	1531		1	2		55	23	3	4	2	88	83	24		79	29	29	38
1930	1376		1	1		31	4	21	2		56	83	28		54	28	28	20

The main contributor to death after 1900 was tuberculosis with phthisis which accounted for the deaths of approximately 271 people each year and caused 337 deaths from tuberculosis in 1900 alone (80%). This number gradually declined throughout the next two decades until it reached 192 per year in 1920. The disease was mainly caused by the poor housing conditions within Limerick where houses were ill-ventilated and the laneways were dusty and often littered with rubbish. A Local Government Report in 1908⁴⁸¹ (*figure 6.12*) also commented that the disease was usually transferred from one person to another through exposure to the infected person or by the living conditions (overcrowding, sanitation etc.).

Figure 6.11: The causes and spread of tuberculosis in Ireland (*Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908, 'Memorandum on the Objects of the Act'*)

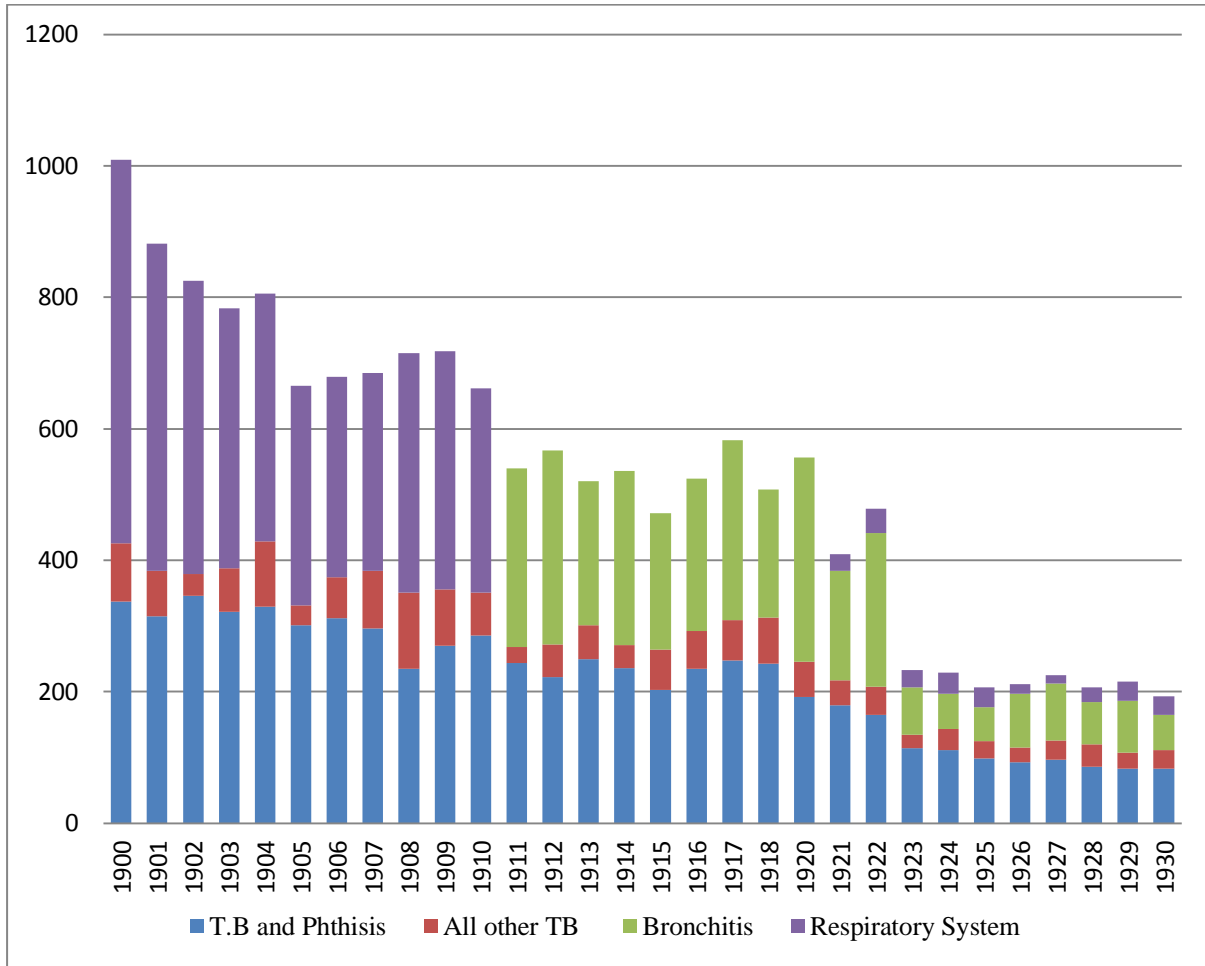


Tuberculosis mainly affected people aged five to thirty-five years of age. The main areas returned included Arthur's Quay (15 deaths), Athlunkard Street (22), Brennan's Row (10), Broad Street (6), Carey's Road (36), Cathedral Place (16),⁴⁸² Dickson's Lane (16), Garryowen (16), John Street (12), Mungret Street (19), Watergate (22) and Windmill Street (23). These areas are mainly located in St John's Parish with a small number located in St Michael's parish, along Carey's Road and Windmill Street.

⁴⁸¹ *Annual Report for the Local Government Board for Ireland, for the year ending 31st March, 1908.*

⁴⁸² Close proximity to the pig market.

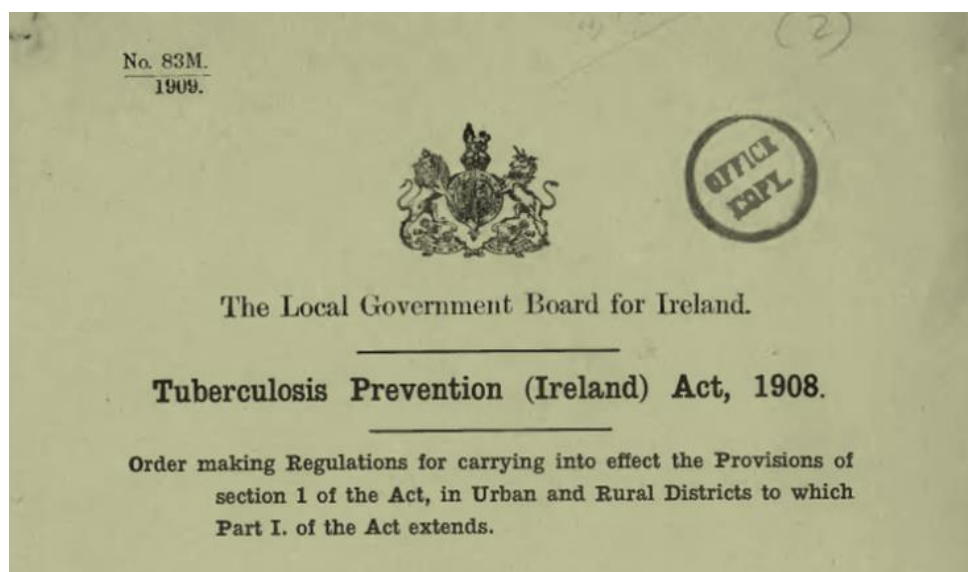
Figure 6.12: Deaths from tuberculosis (all forms) in Limerick, 1900-1930
 (data extracted from the *annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland)*, containing
 a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in
 Ireland)



A drop in TB (all forms) can be noticed in 1908. The main reason for the decline was possibly due to a vaccination prevention programme which commenced in 1908 which is highlighted through *figure 6.14*.⁴⁸³ Another reason may have been contributed to by housing schemes. A major drop-off in TB occurred after the Irish Free State was created in 1922 which possibly saw the strict implementation of disease preventive legislation.

⁴⁸³ Vaccination registers for population unavailable for Limerick

Figure 6.13: Tuberculosis Prevention (Ireland) Act, 1908



The Tuberculosis Prevention Act, 1908, Part I, required all medical practitioners to record the particulars of any person who they believed to be suffering from tuberculosis. This included people who were in workhouses, infirmaries, asylums, or elsewhere, such as their homes. This was a national attempt to identify all people suffering from the disease, where they lived, age, gender and occupation. This allowed the disease to be properly monitored and whether particular ages were most susceptible to the disease. It also highlighted particular areas where the disease may have been most prevalent. Part II of the Act dealt with the establishment and management of special hospitals and infirmaries to deal with cases of Tuberculosis and also the effective cooperative between sanitary and medical officers on the occurrence and form of the disease.⁴⁸⁴

The Tuberculosis Prevention Act must not have been greeted well in Limerick.⁴⁸⁵ Health reports from 1914 recorded that 1774 deaths had occurred from the disease in the previous fifteen years. A report sent to the Corporation highlighted that 666 deaths occurred in the County Borough alone from tuberculosis and that little action was done to rectify the issue. Methods to deal with the disease included dispensaries, domiciliary treatment and a sanatorium, all of which had been postponed due to financial issues with the Borough

⁴⁸⁴ LCA, *Tuberculosis Prevent (Ireland) Act, 1908, 'Memorandum on the Objects of the Act'*. IE/LA/L/LA/PH

⁴⁸⁵ The Board of Guardians Minute Book for this time frame is unavailable (May 1908 – October 1909).

Insurance Committee.⁴⁸⁶ It was stated that for every one person that died in Limerick, ten more were suffering from the same disease.⁴⁸⁷

Bronchitis was another major cause of death which led to the death of approximately 169 people each year, after 1911.⁴⁸⁸ Prior to the year 1911, bronchitis was unlisted. It is likely that the disease was included in 'respiratory diseases' along with conditions such as asthma, cynanche and inflammation of the lungs. The disease fluctuated almost every year although it appeared at its highest in the winter and spring seasons. It affected all age groupings, particularly those aged less than five years. In the years prior to 1911, respiratory illnesses accounted for 388 deaths per year which was usually brought on by the cold. In chronic cases, it would have led to pneumonia and other lung diseases, therefore causing death if untreated. Bronchitis peaked in 1920 when it reached 310 deaths in Limerick. Mount St Lawrence Register returned several results from the Union Hospital. Those that had suffered most severely were mainly children under five years of age, and the elderly, over sixty-five years of age. Other areas where people had predominantly suffered from disease included Gaol Lane, Cashes Lane, Back Clare Street, Athlunkard Street, Gorman's Lane and Boherbouy. The majority of cases recorded appear to be located in St Mary's Parish.

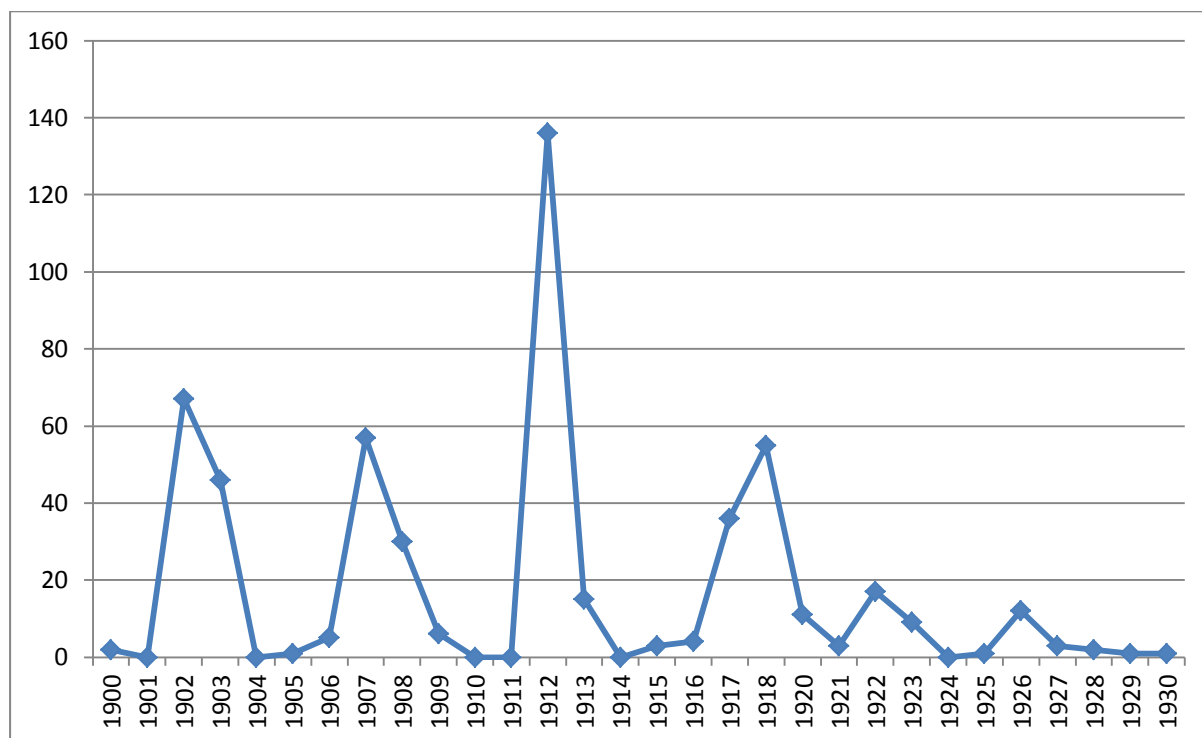
Measles usually affected those ages under five years. Measles killed approximately 24 people each year. However, there were particular outbreaks throughout the two decades when the numbers peaked above the average (*Figure 6.15*).

⁴⁸⁶ M. McGrath, *Twelfth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1914) p. 9.

⁴⁸⁷ M. McGrath, *Tenth Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1912) p. 10.

⁴⁸⁸ Approximately 11% of deaths in 1911

Figure 6.14: Deaths from measles in Limerick, 1900-1930 (data extracted from the *annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland), containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland*)



A major outbreak occurred in 1912 and caused 136 deaths in the city and county. The outbreak mainly attacked those under five years of age. The Mount St Lawrence Registrar for 1912 records that those under-five's (179 deaths in total) buried in the cemetery were mainly from areas like Taylor Street, Francis Street, Clare Street, Lees Lane, Palmerstown, Curry Lane, Market Alley, Carey's Road and Hunt's Lane. In 1911, only 61 deaths of children under the age of five were recorded and compared to 75 deaths in 1913.

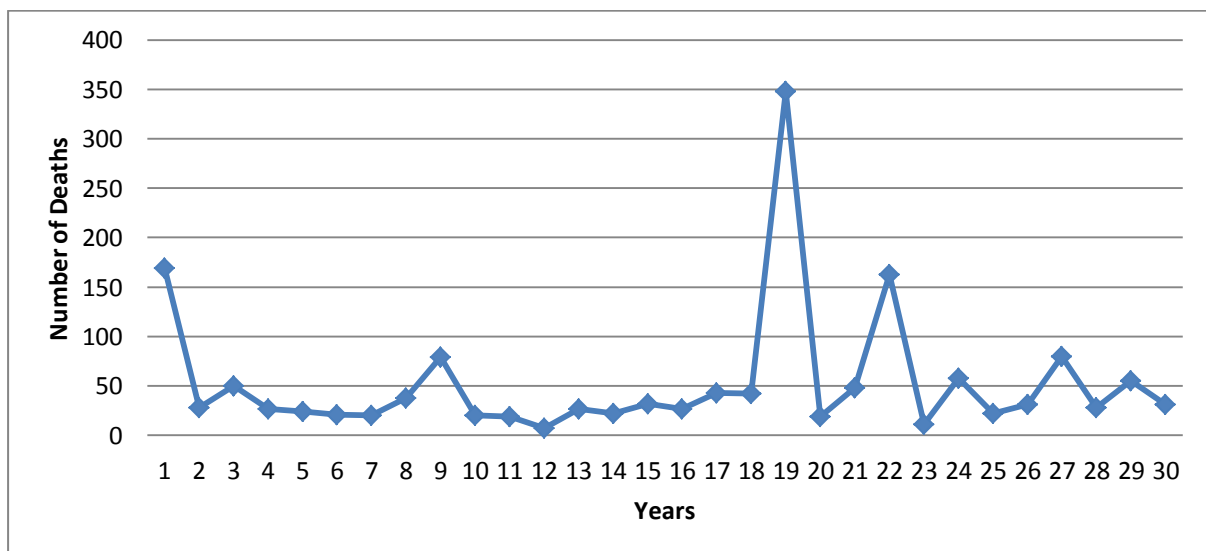
Influenza is generally less spoken about in Ireland although epidemics of this disease were common in the early twentieth century. The disease was confused with the common flu, although was much more severe. It attacked mainly young adults in comparison to the common flu which attacked the young, the elderly and the weak. Outbreaks occurred in Limerick during the following years (*table 6.3*):

Table 6.3: Number of Deaths caused by Influenza outbreaks in Limerick in selected years

<i>Years</i>	<i>Number of deaths caused by Influenza</i>
1900	169
1908	79
1916	46
1917	42
1918	348

The most famous of these epidemics occurred on 1918 with the ‘Spanish Flu’. It was claimed that the disease was brought to Limerick by the soldiers who returned from the war, as it was mainly the soldiers in the Sarsfield Barrack Hospital and in Newcastle West. In Limerick, it affected approximately 700 people but contributed greatly to the rise in mortality that year.⁴⁸⁹

Figure 6.15: Deaths caused by Influenza in Limerick, 1900-1930

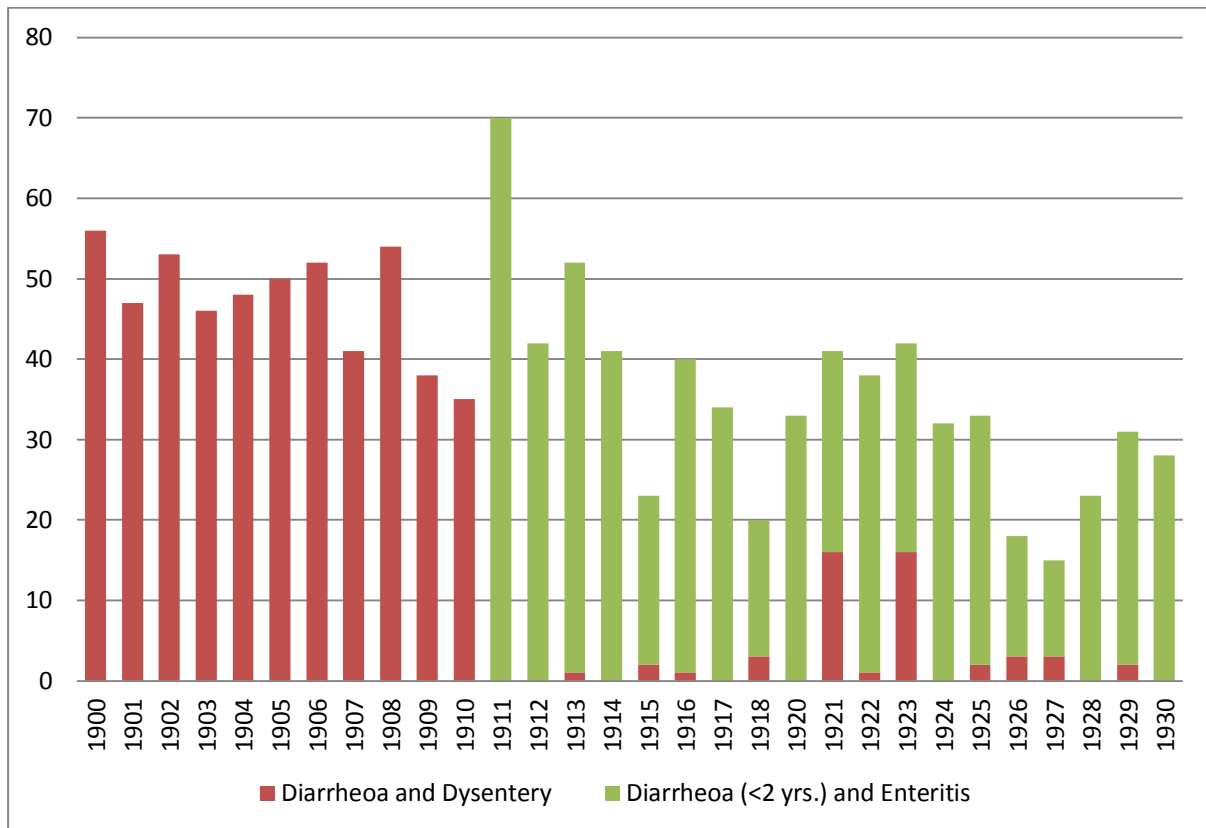


Deaths from diphtheria and dysentery were continuously decreasing from 1851 where they amounted to *c.* 3,000 deaths from these diseases alone. Although the diseases were still

⁴⁸⁹ *Limerick Leader*, 28th November, 2012.

affecting the people living in the city, the death rate from these diseases had greatly reduced. Diphtheria peaked once again in 1920 where it caused 30 deaths between the ages of one and five years.

Figure 6.16: Deaths from diarrhoea, dysentery and enteritis in Limerick, 1900-1930 (*annual reports of the Registrar-General (Ireland), containing a general abstract of the numbers of marriages, births, and deaths registered in Ireland*)



6.9 Conclusion

There are several factors which contribute to poor health. During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, these factors were mainly poor sanitation, overcrowding and lack of water facilities. The first half of this chapter focused mainly on the health conditions within the city, mainly sanitation, water supply, cleaning of the streets, offensive activities while the second half highlighted the types of diseases which occur from such conditions. It was clear that the majority of cases which occurred were located in St Mary's and St John's parishes with very little health issues being highlighted within St Michael's parish, with the exception of the Custom House district and the Carey's Road area. It was clear that there was a link between health conditions of the people and the health condition of the city as diseases such as measles, influenza, enteric fever and tuberculosis were more common spread by such unsanitary conditions and also the close contact to other people.

Chapter Seven: Solutions to the poor public health and housing conditions

7. Introduction

The issue of poor health and housing had continued for well over a century and was not an easy problem to overcome. Solving the problem of poor health in Limerick had been a slow process and had continued well into the twentieth century. The number of deaths in hospitals and institutions did begin to decline dramatically after 1922 which may have been due to changes in the health schemes for the people and also in the urban governance of the people such as street cleaning. An article in the *Limerick Leader* in May 1950 highlighted that houses in Limerick continued to experience overcrowding until the mid-twentieth century (*figure 7.1*). The first large scale slum clearances did not commence until the 1930s and many people continued to live in subdivided houses until later in the century. *Figure 7.1* describes the appalling conditions in which two families (eight people) were living in one small room (8ft by 8 ft). There was only one bed for the two families and also a mattress to be laid on the floor at night time. When this mattress is on the floor, it was reported that there was no room for sanitation facilities. It was suggested that the matter be dealt with by the Corporation by the people of the parish of Killeely at a situation which was a disgrace to humanity.

7.1 Solutions

In the earlier half of the nineteenth century, commentators were primarily concerned with identifying the problems associated with the urbanisation of towns and cities. This included the poor state of the housing stock, overcrowding and the health infrastructure. Limerick was no different to other urban cities in Ireland such as Dublin or Galway and faced serious problems with regards to housing. In order to remedy this issue, schemes were introduced by the local authorities to provide cheap housing for the working classes which were mainly confined to the parishes of St John's and St Mary's, where the need was considered greatest. The first housing scheme commenced in 1888 in St Mary's parish, although it was small in scale.

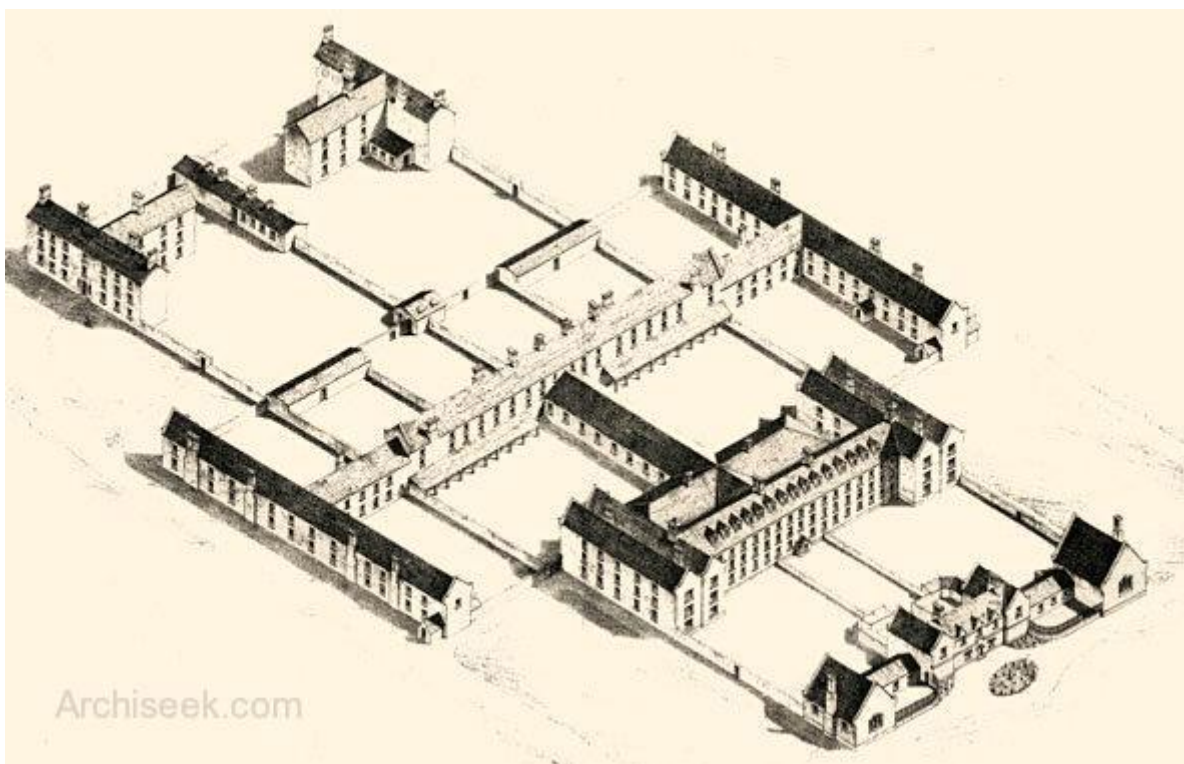
Improvements in health had been attempted in the earlier half of the nineteenth century through the hospital system and dispensary units. Hospitals were set up to deal with issues of fever and general accidents, such as St John's Hospital and Barrington's Hospital, again

located in the parishes of St John's and St Mary's. Other hospitals catered for maternity care and also aimed at providing relief for the poorer mothers in the city.

7.1.1 The Limerick workhouse, 1841

One main institution which the urban poor in Limerick accessed in times of need was the Limerick workhouse on the Shelbourne road. The poor law union⁴⁹⁰ was declared in 1838 and the workhouse was in operation by 1841, which was originally intended to hold 1,600 people, a capacity which was never reached prior to the famine.

Figure 7.1: Plan of Limerick Union Workhouse, 1841⁴⁹¹



In January 1845, only 1,136 paupers were recorded in the workhouse, which climbed to 1,290 in January 1846 and 2,512 by March 1846.⁴⁹² Conditions within the workhouse were extremely

...harsh and inhuman in order to discourage the spread of mendicancy. Loathed as it was by the poor, only the desperate of the destitute, could bring themselves to have recourse to the workhouse.⁴⁹³

⁴⁹⁰ *An Act for the more effectual relief of the destitute poor in Ireland, Vic 1 & 2, c.56.* p. 44

⁴⁹¹ 'Limerick Union Workhouse, 1841', (<http://archiseek.com/2012/1841-limerick-union-workhouse/#.UbbvbV9OPIU>) (January, 2013)

⁴⁹² P. , Bennis, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Limerick, 1780-1890* (Cambridge, 2009) p. 75

A major concern was the number of deserted women and children within the institution. If the head of the household was taken ill with disease, his wife and family were sent to the workhouse, or else became beggars.⁴⁹⁴ The poor law union for Limerick covered an area of 197 square miles, and also included part of County Clare. Therefore, not all the people were from the city of Limerick. Many people were from the county and some even travelled from Co. Clare.

A journalist's visit from the *Limerick and Clare Examiner* in 1847 led to a distressing discovery. When he saw the poor enter the day room, he was appalled by the 'human wretchedness, care and misery'.⁴⁹⁵ He commented that 'melancholy and dissatisfaction was marked on every countenance – young and old – and in the sunken eye, pallid features and trembling frame might be read the characters of death'.⁴⁹⁶ Many of them complained of the insufficiency of rations. On the day of the journalist's visit, there was 2,489 paupers in the workhouse, nearly 1,000 more than intended. Due to the overcrowding, and the issues of health and hygiene, the guardians were forced to reduce the number to 2,000 and to refrain from admitting any more patients. There was no alternate provision for the poor who waited outside the workhouse to be let in.⁴⁹⁷ Throughout 1848 and 1849, conditions continued to worsen and the number of inmates began to climb, even for outdoor relief. By November 1848, there were 4,200 in the workhouse and by January there were 5,838 paupers in the workhouse and the auxiliaries.⁴⁹⁸ The crowding of the people together undoubtedly led to a short supply of beds, while an increase in numbers put pressure on the cost of the workhouses to supply relief and food. The diet within the workhouse was completely inadequate, and many people were bedridden due to weakness. The 1851 census recorded that 1,973 people within the workhouse had died from diarrhoeal disease with a further 602 from dysentery and 304 from fever. This highlighted the extent of the conditions within the workhouse.⁴⁹⁹

The workhouse located on the Shelbourne Road was completed in 1841 for the relief of the poor under the poor law union act. Although the workhouse contained a hospital for the treatment of the sick, its primary aim was to accommodate the poor from the city and county

⁴⁹³ C., O'Murchadha, 'Limerick Union Workhouse during the Great Famine', in the *Old Limerick Journal*, Vol. 32 (1995) p. 39

⁴⁹⁴ P., Bennis, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Limerick, 1780-1890* (Cambridge, 2009) p. 75

⁴⁹⁵ *Limerick and Clare Examiner*, 13th January, 1847

⁴⁹⁶ *Limerick and Clare Examiner*, 13th January, 1847

⁴⁹⁷ C., O'Murchadha, *Limerick Union Workhouse during the Great Famine*, p. 40

⁴⁹⁸ *Limerick and Clare Examiner*, 31st January, 1849

⁴⁹⁹ *The Census of Population for the year 1851. Part III. Report on the Status of Disease*, p. 394

of Limerick and other surrounding areas such as Co. Clare. It was to provide temporary shelter as opposed to long term shelter, although became grossly overcrowded during and after the famine. An examination of the workhouse provided information on overcrowding within Limerick and the number of people which required shelter. An examination of the number of deaths and types of deaths also contributed to the cause of the poor health conditions within the city and the lack of services available to cater for the poor. The workhouse was built to accommodate 1,600 people when population for the city and county in 1841 was c. 330,000 people. By the mid-nineteenth century, the workhouse was overcrowded with double the number of people seeking relief. The following figures were extracted from various censuses of population:

Table 7.1: Population in the workhouse in Limerick, 1851-1911

<i>Year</i>	<i>Limerick Union Workhouse Figures</i>
1851	3570
1861	1906
1871	1623
1881	1755
1891	1568
1901	n/a
1911	999

A traveller to Limerick in 1849 commented the following about the conditions in Limerick and at the workhouse:

...Last year, when I went over to it, I found it clean and in good order; I now found it every way the reverse. In the parent and auxiliary houses there was no less a number than 8,000 paupers... [with] shewed evident symptoms of gross neglect. I have no words with which I can give any real idea of the sad condition of the inmates of two large yards...young female children; many of them were clothed in the merest dirty rags, and of those who wore a very scanty allowance; they were in the dirt collected on their persons for many weeks...they were evidently eat up with vermin-very many were mere skeletons...⁵⁰⁰

The number of people returned in the 1901 census of population as receiving relief from both the city and county was 6,277 people (1 out of every 23 people). By 1911, this figure was reduced to 4,045 people (1 out of every 35 people) which highlighted an increase in the health facilities available to the public and the gradually increase in the availability of housing which was occurring from 1888.

The workhouse did not provide an efficient solution to the issue of public health and housing in Limerick. Although it was built to provide a form of accommodation for the poor and also a hospital to treat illnesses,⁵⁰¹ it did not provide safe and healthy conditions. Conditions were harsh and many people died within their homes as the workhouse had no room. Towards the 1900s the number of deaths was declining. The death registers recorded decreases from 605 deaths in 1900, to 521 in 1910, 492 in 1920 and 239 in 1930 for Limerick Workhouse.

⁵⁰⁰ C., Kelly, *The Grand Tour of Limerick* (Cork, 2004) p. 122

⁵⁰¹ The types of diseases people entered with, and suffered from, included typhus, relapsing fever, dysentery, diarrhoea, measles, smallpox, bronchitis and consumption. Many were sick due to the conditions within the workhouse, the poor diets and poor sanitation. Others died outside the workhouse, waiting to get in (as the workhouse was often over its limit for accommodation).

7.1.2 St John's Fever and Lock Hospital

St John's hospital was generally for the reception of poor patients who were sick with fever and other contagious diseases.⁵⁰² From the 1860s, the town was forced to appoint medical officers of health, to teach people about hygiene. This aided in the reduction of disease from crowded conditions.⁵⁰³ Considerable alterations and improvements were proposed for the hospital in 1888 to alleviate conditions, where nursing nuns were employed and resided in the building. The hospital went through continuous financial hardship since it catered mainly for the poorer classes, who did not pay for medical treatment. In July 1889, the hospital was unable to extend its usefulness to the poor due to lack of money.⁵⁰⁴ Patients with every form of bodily disease were admitted to the hospital. The nuns nursed the suffering patients and the doctors generously supplied free assistance.⁵⁰⁵ In 1896 however, the hospital was still without surgical equipment and facilities, while both Barrington's Hospital and the County Infirmary had acquired these facilities much earlier.⁵⁰⁶

The records for St John's Hospital during the nineteenth century are incomplete. It is unknown how many people were treated yearly within the small hospital and specific diseases they entered with and where these people were coming from.

⁵⁰² LCA, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Minute Book*, 8th March, 1888, L/AH/PH.

⁵⁰³ P. , Bennis, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Limerick, 1780-1890* (Cambridge, 2009) p. 75.

⁵⁰⁴ LCA, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Minute Book*, 12th July, 1889, L/AH/PH.

⁵⁰⁵ LCA, *St. John's Fever and Lock Hospital Minute Book*, 10th February, 1893, L/AH/PH.

⁵⁰⁶ J., Devane, *A History of St. John's Hospital in Limerick* (Dublin, 1970) p. 44

7.1.3 Barrington's Hospital

Barrington's Hospital was established for the poor of the city and was to act as a general hospital rather than specifically for fever or maternity welfare. The hospital was not set up by the corporation, but by a local wealthy merchant. The care received within the institution was reported to have been very comfortable:

Would any gentleman send a sick domestic to workhouse hospitals, with their cold, bare, lime washed walls and unsympathetic associations – associations destructive of self-respect among the humbler classes?...In Barrington's Hospital, on the contrary, the patient experiences all the comforts - perhaps much more than the comforts - of home: and there are facilities for the admission of relatives and the enjoyment of their society which the sick appreciate in a way that those who enjoy good health cannot understand.⁵⁰⁷

Figure 7.2: Barrington's Hospital (LCM)



Construction began on Barrington's Hospital in 1829 on George's Quay in St Mary's Parish, for the suffering of the people in slums of St Mary's and St John's parishes. The hospital clearly stated that it was intended for 'the use of the Poor of the City and County of

⁵⁰⁷ *Limerick Chronicle* correspondent (1872) quoted in K., Hannon, 'Bring him to Barrington's', in the *Old Limerick Journal*, Vol. 24 (1988) p. 84

Limerick'.⁵⁰⁸ It was designed to accommodate sixty beds and took two years to complete although this would not be enough comfort the numbers of the poor in the city. Six months after it opened, the governors of the hospital were asked to make it available for the victims of a cholera epidemic (1832) rather than just a general hospital for accidents. Although there are no records available for a clear examination of the role of the hospital, the minute books from St John's hospital remarked on its more efficient facilities and size to cater for the population, and as a result, Barrington's Hospital had become the main hospital within the city to deal with health issues towards the latter end of the nineteenth century. Fever and cholera were still the main causes of deaths within the hospitals. The number of deaths occurring from 1900 onwards within hospitals gradually declined (mainly under 100 deaths per year),⁵⁰⁹ due to improvements in staff training, disease prevention and vaccination and improving hygiene conditions.⁵¹⁰

The construction of this hospital was the first major contribution to health within the city as it provided trained nurses and doctors for the people of Limerick. The patients were mainly the poorest inhabitants of the city.

7.1.4 Bedford Row Lying-In Hospital

Those who have witnessed the sufferings of the wives and mothers of the poor, who meet their hour of trial in a crowded hovel, or dreary cellar, can alone appreciate the benefits of this institution which secures them safety, comfort and quiet, and in many cases provides clothing for both women and children.⁵¹¹

Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital was a charitable institution which opened in 1812 to provide maternity care for the poor women of Limerick city.⁵¹² The hospital was run under the voluntary Ladies Management Committee, who looked after the running of the hospital. The hospital was used by both the poor and the fee-paying from 1868, where doctors attended to the poorer classes who did not pay for medical attention (free patients) and later on in the

⁵⁰⁸ M. Tierney, 'The Origins and Early Years of Barrington's Hospital', in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol. 24 (1988) p. 37.

⁵⁰⁹ Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages for the years 1900-1930.

⁵¹⁰ J., Devane, *A History of St. John's Hospital, Limerick*, (Dublin, 1970) p. 44

⁵¹¹ *57th Annual Report of the Limerick Lying-In Hospital, for the year ending 31st December 1868*, IE/LA/P5

⁵¹² Records from 1812-1868 are missing and records from 1868-1971 are missing.

century also provided medical attention for the wealthier classes who paid fees. The financing of the hospital was through voluntary subscriptions, fundraising activities and also from an annual grant from the corporation.

Valuable, ready and gratuitous services were a benefit to the poor and were provided by the nurses and doctors of the hospital. By 1879, the hospital had treated and discharged 119 patients. It was recorded that many of the poor were received into the hospital without any clothing for their babies and were wearing very little for themselves. The committee was anxious to help the very poor patients in what they needed and commented that they were grateful for any clothing for children or any charitable work provided.⁵¹³

The Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital minute book of 1884⁵¹⁴ recorded that a draft letter was sent to the Ladies Committee setting forth the advantages of training nurses for the benefit of the community at large while also stating that the disadvantages was arising from the absence of facilities for the treatment of women's diseases. By 1895, the medical staff were of the opinion that the hospital premises were not adequate for the requirements of the patients. The building needed to be enlarged to accommodate the patients as there were no bathrooms or any other official sanitary arrangements. Water was carried from the basement by buckets, washing was carried out in the kitchen as there was no laundry area and there was no labour ward or operating room. As a result, operations were carried out in the ward in the midst of the other patients.⁵¹⁵ A total of 277 patients were admitted to the hospital that year to these conditions.

By 1898, the hospital was expanding and commenced training nurses, dispensary services for women and children and also set up a child welfare committee. In this year, the number of patients who recovered from illness had climbed to 373, in comparison to 324 the previous year. The respectable ladies of the city were acknowledged due to the sending baby clothes and old linen to the hospital during the year. 'Respectable women' were also taught practical

⁵¹³ LCA, 69th Annual Report of the Limerick Lying-In Hospital, for the year ending 31st December 1879, IE/LA/P5.

⁵¹⁴ LCA, Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital Minute Book of the proceedings at the meetings of the Visiting Medical Staff of the Limerick Lying-in Hospital, 29th April, 1884, IE/LA/P5.

⁵¹⁵ LCA, Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital Minute Book of the proceedings at the meetings of the Visiting Medical Staff of the Limerick Lying-in Hospital, 19th June, 1895, IE/LA/P5.

midwifery and trained as nurses. Those sent out were reported as giving great satisfaction to the destitute.⁵¹⁶

The dispensary for the treatment of diseases peculiar to women and children had been actively carried out during the year 1898. There were 326 new cases treated during the year with 902 attendances. Even at this time, the committee were taking steps to enlarge the building and to make general improvements.

In May 1922, there was a proposed extension for the hospital to help with its improvement and sanitary arrangements. For the sum of £10,000, the hospital was to get a laundry and drying room, two WC's and a lavatory, an operating room, wards giving ten additional beds, a child welfare ward for infants, accommodation for two additional trained nurses, three probationers and four servants, a small lift for food and clothes, central heating and a bathroom.⁵¹⁷ All these were required to make the hospital more modern and comfortable for patients. By February 1924, conditions had improved but several more improvements were required including lighting and heating for the labour ward and also a suitable drying press. Proper sanitation facilities were also required for the sterilising of instruments.⁵¹⁸

By 1927, the number of patients continued to climb with 484 patients being admitted into the hospital. The Committee had also established a 'clothing fund' to enable them to help the poor mothers by giving them some clothing on leaving the hospital. Due to the high cost of living in the previous years, the committee were obliged to make a special appeal to the generosity of the people of Limerick for the funds to carry out the work of the hospital. During this year, the extern dispensary treated 285 new cases, with 300 attendances.⁵¹⁹

The hospital was intended primarily for the relief of the destitute poor and secondly for those, who, although not destitute, were not in a financial position to pay for treatment either in their own homes or in a nursing home. No charge was made to the destitute poor but those who were insured and whose husbands are employed contribute half their maternity benefit (£1).

⁵¹⁶ LCA, 69th Annual Report of the Limerick Lying-In Hospital, for the year ending 31st December 1879, IE/LA/P5.

⁵¹⁷ LCA, Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital Minute Book of the proceedings at the meetings of the Visiting Medical Staff of the Limerick Lying-in Hospital, 24th May, 1922, IE/LA/P5.

⁵¹⁸ LCA, Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital Minute Book of the proceedings at the meetings of the Visiting Medical Staff of the Limerick Lying-in Hospital, 1st February, 1924, IE/LA/P5.

⁵¹⁹ LCA, 116th Annual Report of the Limerick Lying-In Hospital, for the year ending 31st December 1927, IE/LA/P5.

7.2 Conclusion

The various institutions and hospitals in Limerick played different roles in alleviating the health conditions of the people of Limerick. Although the alleviating of poverty and poor health in the poor law union workhouse was a good idea in theory, it was a failure in practice. The hospitals in Limerick played a large role in alleviating the poor health conditions for the poorer classes of society. All these hospitals were established by Catholic philanthropists who saw the health of the people of Limerick as priority through maternity care, dispensary systems and also through accidents and emergency situations. Many of the poor were treated free of charge due to them having a lack of income and would otherwise have been unable to afford medical care and in many cases required it the most. The location of these hospitals was also in close proximity to St John's and St Mary's parishes which provided easy access for the poor.

7.3 Public/Social⁵²⁰ housing and slum clearance

Public housing schemes were another solution to the housing and health problems in Limerick city from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However, the role of the Corporation in providing public housing was minimal and become more active after 1930 when the large scale housing schemes commenced. Towards the latter end of the nineteenth century, health reformers, such as medical inspectors and local philanthropists, began to play an active role in improving the living conditions of the poorer classes in Limerick by providing housing, food and education. In many cases, local government intervention was required as landlords were neglecting properties and little was being done to remedy the situation in the parishes of St Mary's and St John's where the majority of the population lived and also where the oldest houses in the city were located.

A series of Acts relating to housing contributed to the development of social housing in the urban areas. Housing was primarily linked to poor health conditions from the mid-nineteenth century but a lack of enforcement at a local level did not help to eradicate the issue. For example, several of the special minute books for Limerick commented on the conditions within the city which had continued throughout the nineteenth century although little change occurred until the mid-twentieth century. These issues included damp and decayed houses,

⁵²⁰ The term "social housing" is sometimes limited to housing owned and operated on a non-profit basis by voluntary housing agencies, in contrast to "public housing" which is owned and operated by the state (usually through municipalities or local authorities (T. Fahey (Dublin, 1999) p. 17)

overcrowding in rooms, the unsanitary conditions of the streets and lanes which occurred in numerous areas of the city.

7.3.1. Housing Acts

After the Sanitary Act of 1866,⁵²¹ the local authorities were given permission to intervene in any house or part of a house that was deemed overcrowded or prejudicial to health. This gave the councils power to declare a house unfit for human habitation (which was not well documented in Limerick until the 1930s). In 1868, the *Torrens Act* was passed and was amended again in 1879 for the gradual improvement or demolition of dwellings for working classes, and for the building and maintenance of improved dwellings. Any property acquired by the authorities for improvement or construction was also granted permission for the widening of courts, alleys and laneways which would contribute to overall improvements within the city.⁵²² In 1890, the *Housing of the Working Class Act* was introduced and abolished all previous acts and authorised by local authorities to provide housing for the working classes in urban areas. Housing in Ireland continued to be the main local social issue throughout the nineteenth century although was considered good by international standards when in 1908 the number of housing units built reached 5,000 compared to 2,100 in 1901.⁵²³ The *Small Dwellings Acquisition Act 1899* was the first act introduced which assisted people of limited means and allowed them to acquire ownership of small houses. It enabled local authorities to advance loans to individuals for the purchase of existing houses. *Table 7.2* displays the loans that were advanced by the Commissioner of Public Works for housing purposes in Limerick, a total of £27,500. Dublin's loans during the same years amounted to £207,295 0s 0d and Cork's loans to £33,023 0s 0d,⁵²⁴ which highlighted the variations in the building and provision of houses between these three cities. Although Limerick was grossly overcrowded, the provision of social housing within the city was on a much smaller scale.

⁵²¹ *Sanitary Act (1866) Amendment (Ireland) Act* (36 & 37 Vict.)

⁵²² *Reports of her Majesties Commission for the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes, 1884-1885*, (c.4547) xxxi.

⁵²³ M. Potter, *The Municipal Revolution in Ireland* (Dublin, 2011) p. 209

⁵²⁴ *Loans for Housing Purposes* [Ireland] HMSO, 1914, p. 523.

Table 7.2: Loans for housing purposes in Limerick 1888-1912 (*Loans for Housing Purposes, Ireland, 1914* p. 523)

<i>Amount of Loan</i>	<i>Year of first advance</i>
£2,400 0s 0d	1888
£1,100 0s 0d	1894
£2,000 0s 0d	1895
£5,000 0s 0d	1898
£2,500 0s 0d	1900
£4,000 0s 0d	1911
£10,500 0s 0d	1912
Total: £27,500 0s 0d	-

In 1908 a review of the *Housing of the Working Class Act in 1890* was introduced and was entitled the *Housing of the Working Class Act 1908*, which provided the first subsidy scheme for urban housing. This act also provided a more specific definition of the ‘working classes’ as labourers, tradesmen or self-employed persons whose wages did not exceed thirty shillings a week. Although Limerick was considered second to Dublin in terms of social housing, an article in the *Irish Builder* in 1911 stated that there was nowhere in Ireland ‘with worse slum dwellings than Limerick or where proper houses for the poor are more necessary.’⁵²⁵ A *Housing of the Working Classes Bill* was introduced in 1913 in order to provide better application and enforcement of the Housing of the Working Classes Act and to amend the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899. This allowed the local authorities to carry out housing schemes in ‘slum area’ on the part of local authorities due to financial difficulties. It also allowed the closing or demolition of houses, or for removal or reconstruction schemes.⁵²⁶ The money available for housing in Limerick was increasing as evident from *figure 12* and more schemes had commenced in St John’s Parish.

A Housing and Town Planning Act was introduced in 1919 which obliged local authorities to consider the needs of their area with respect to the provision of houses for the working classes. Under this act, local authorities could submit a scheme that would specify the

⁵²⁵ *Irish Builder*, March 11th, 1911

⁵²⁶ *Report of the departmental committee appointed by the Local Government Board for Ireland to inquire into the housing conditions of the working classes in the city of Dublin.*, 1914 (C.7273) p. 73-78

approximate number and nature of houses to be provided by the local authorities, the approximate quantity of land, the average number of houses per acre and the time required.⁵²⁷ Medical Inspectors were also required to inspect areas before any planning was approved which would ensure the health of the inhabitants and sufficient ventilation.⁵²⁸ There was also a section on local authorities assisting public utility societies whose objects included construction, improvement or management of houses for the working classes.⁵²⁹

Under the 1919 Housing Act, a scheme was introduced, which gave grants to individuals who constructed houses in accordance with prescribed conditions.⁵³⁰ Under the Housing Act 1924, 1925, 1926 and 1929, grants were again made available to people constructing their own dwellings and empowered local authorities to supplement the state grants by further grants or loans, and also cheap or free sites for development work.⁵³¹

7.4 Providing public housing in Limerick

The main reason for providing public housing in urban areas was for the sheer size of population in need of good quality sanitary housing. For example, in 1851, the majority of the population were living in filth, misery and disease ridden slum areas in St Mary's and St John's parishes where the density reached 24 people per acre. In order to deal with this, the dwellings that were provided by the corporation were aimed at 'low-income households at a cost those households could afford',⁵³² in the areas where it was most needed. Later in the nineteenth century however there was a realisation that this policy was not sustainable as materials and labour could only provide housing at approximately £4 a week, therefore aiming at an audience of well-to-do working classes and reducing the chances of the unemployed poorer classes who continued to live in the poorest areas in the unhealthiest of conditions.

Housing schemes of a more charitable nature were noted towards the latter end of the nineteenth century in Limerick and were often carried out by local clergy men and women or by ex officio. Bishop E.T. O' Dwyer was a leading figure in the provision of housing for the poor and took practical steps to cope with destitution. His main contribution was the

⁵²⁷ *Housing, Town Planning, &c, Act, 1919* [9 & 10 GEO. 5. Ch. 35.] pp 5-6

⁵²⁸ *Housing, Town Planning, &c, Act, 1919* [9 & 10 GEO. 5. Ch. 35.] p. 6

⁵²⁹ *Housing, Town Planning, &c, Act, 1919* [9 & 10 GEO. 5. Ch. 35.] p. 16

⁵³⁰ For example, the number of rooms, fitted bathroom, water supply, sewerage facilities etc.

⁵³¹ Limerick City Council, *Assisted Housing Schemes Introduction, 1928-1961*.

⁵³² T. Fahey, *Social Housing in Ireland, A Study of Success, Failure and Lessons Learned* (Dublin, 1999) p. 3

Limerick Artisans' Labourers Dwellings Co. which provided reasonable valued housing for the poorer working classes of Limerick. In April 1881, Bishop O'Dwyer asked permission of the Limerick Harbour Board, a group of wealthy merchants, to address the council as part of his campaign for better housing. Permission was granted and the Bishop gave an exhibition and stated that none of the members of the council or the Harbour Board knew the misery in which their workers were housed. Bishop O'Dwyer called to the house of a poor working man who was employed as a member of the board. His wife and children were shivering in the house from the cold, covered in rags and sitting by the fire while rain was coming through the roof. He was keen to help the working classes by providing adequate shelter. Dwellings were built on Bishop Street, St. Francis Place and St. Peter Street (a total of 56 houses).

Housing schemes in Limerick did not commence until the late nineteenth century where several different small-scale schemes were carried out between 1886 and 1930. These schemes were confined to St Mary's and St John's parishes, spreading to the outskirts of Garryowen and Roxborough, and were often small in scale considering the poverty and misery within the city. The schemes that were undertaken were on streets and lanes where houses were poor in quality and low in value. The people occupying these houses were working classes who did not have the money to better their situation and in some cases neither did the landlords. Houses that were to be demolished were damp and decayed and unfit for habitation and had undergone years of neglect. It would have been more financially efficient to construct new houses under schemes than renovate old houses.

The main areas tackled in the city were mainly St Mary's and St John's parish. In the late nineteenth century, the council began to build houses in available spaces on the streets rather than demolish houses on lanes. No official surveys were carried out by the Corporation to examine the physical conditions of these houses until the 1930s which appeared to be late in comparison to Dublin, highlighting the lazy approach to the housing issue in Limerick. In 1901 there were 526 one roomed tenements within the city, occupied by 2,341 people (a total of 4.45 people per room). In 1911, the total number of one roomed tenement had only been decreased to 515, with 2,321 people occupying these rooms (an overage of 4.50 people per room). By 1926, these figure had risen to 782 one roomed tenements, occupied by 3,444 people (an average of 4.40 people per room).⁵³³ Overcrowding continued in Limerick and there were several families occupying one-family dwellings. Large scale clearances were

⁵³³ M. McGrath, *Annual Reports on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the city of Limerick*, 1925 and 1929.

occurring from the 1930s began to actively tackle the issue of poor quality housing. Examples include White's Lane, Keating's Lane and Flag Lane, amongst others.

The files available in the Limerick City Council archives relate to areas such as Clare Street, John Street, Kileely Road, Nicholas Street, North Circular Road, Rosbrien Road, Roxboro road, Shelbourne Road, South Circular Road, Thomondgate, amongst other places as areas to be built upon during this time. The Limerick Commercial Public Utility Society was formed c. 1924 and received both a loan of £1,800 and a grant of £900 from the Corporation to build 18 houses at Farranshone and 20 houses at Eden Terrace. Houses at Farranshone varied in quality and class.⁵³⁴ Farranshone was located near Thomondgate which was mainly associated with low-value housing. The Public Utility Society allowed for the building of more one-family dwellings at this location to aid in the reduction of overcrowding as the density of the city in 1924 was 16 people per acre, with St Mary's Parish being the highest in terms of population.⁵³⁵

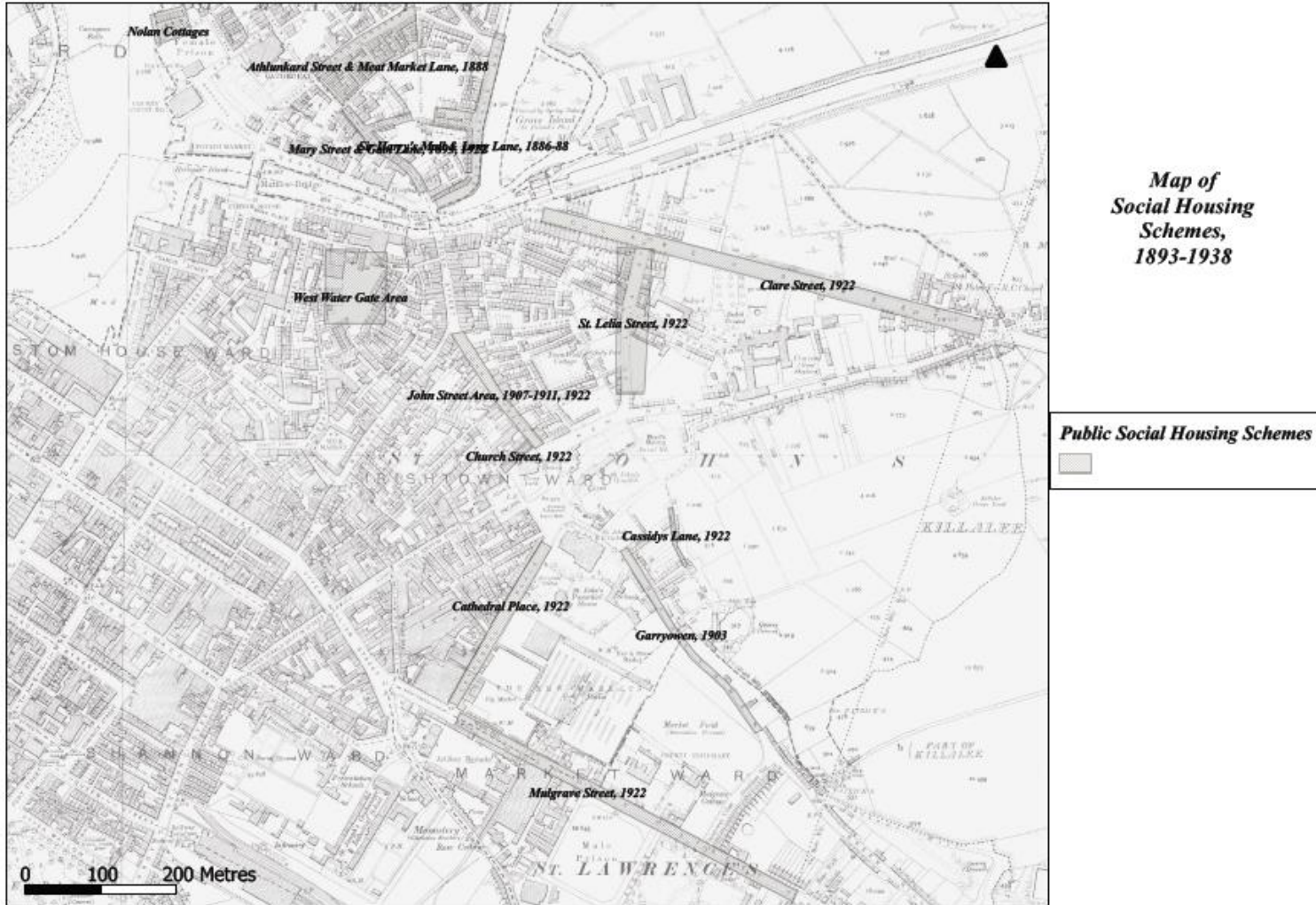
⁵³⁴ Houses were generally first or second in class at the time of the 1911 census. House No.1 contained a family of four, occupying two rooms. The head of the household was a gardener and his wife was a house keeper. The houses were mainly second class and many were subdivided such as housed no.2, no.9, no.11 and no.12.

⁵³⁵ *Twenty-third Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1925) p. 7

Table 7.3: Corporation housing schemes for Limerick city from 1886

<i>Year</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Plans and Drawings</i>
1886- 1888	Sir Harry's Mall, Long Lane	Eighteen Housing of the Working Classes Dwellings
1888	Athlunkard Street, Meat Market Lane	Six Houses of the Working Classes Dwellings
1893	Mary Street, Gaol Lane	Seven Houses of the Working Classes Dwellings
1903	Garryowen	Plans for dwellings at Garryowen
1907- 1922	Limerick County Borough Housing Schemes	Model Plans for Labourers Cottages
1907- 1911	John Street Area	Twenty-one Housing of the Working Classes Dwellings
1912	Prospect Hill, Ballinacurra Road, Haymarket Garryowen	Limerick Housing Schemes
1922	Church Street, Nicholas Street, Mary Street, St Lelia Street, Mulgrave Street, Cassidy's Lane, Clare Street and John Street	Limerick County Borough Council Housing Scheme

Figure 7.3: Location of social housing schemes in Limerick, 1893-1938 (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902))



The first municipal housing scheme was small in scale (mainly six to twenty-one houses, insufficient for the size of the population needing housing)⁵³⁶. This scheme included plans and specifications for eighteen houses to be constructed at Sir Harry's Mall and Long Lane and a further six to be constructed on Athlunkard Street⁵³⁷ and Meat Market Lane⁵³⁸, consisting of a total of £2,400. All of these streets and lanes were located in St Mary's Parish. These houses were completed in 1889, and 15 were let at 3/- and 9 were let at 3/6 each per week. In 1893, seven more dwellings were constructed on Mary Street and Gaol Lane though no more were built until 1911. The cottages built on Mary Street were let at 3/6 and those on Gaol Lane at 3/- each per week.

An example of a plan for the dwelling is evident from *figure 5.5 and figure 7.6*. The sanitation facilities were detached from the main building in a separate section of the house for health reasons. Each house was intended to cater for one working class family.

⁵³⁶ According to M. Potter, *The Municipal Revolution in Ireland: Local Government in Cities and Towns since 1800* (Dublin, 2010), the average number of houses built was eighty per year prior to 1908.

⁵³⁷ Houses on Athlunkard Street were all second class houses according to the census of population. The average number of people per room was two, although twelve houses did record overcrowding. The household returns revealed the head of households were employed as pig buyers, accountants, bootmakers, grocers and publicans, painters and cabinet makers. Females were mainly employed as housekeepers or factory workers at Limerick Lace.

⁵³⁸ Meat Market Lane recorded sixteen houses in 1901 as being second class. The average number of rooms per house was two although six houses recorded overcrowding. House No.3 was the only house to record subdivision. The people living in these houses were employed as pedlars, fishermen, grooms, general labourers and house keepers. 63% of the people living in this street were unable to read or write.

Figure 7.4: Plans for houses of the working classes in Limerick, 1886 (LCA, L/HG/HC/1(1))

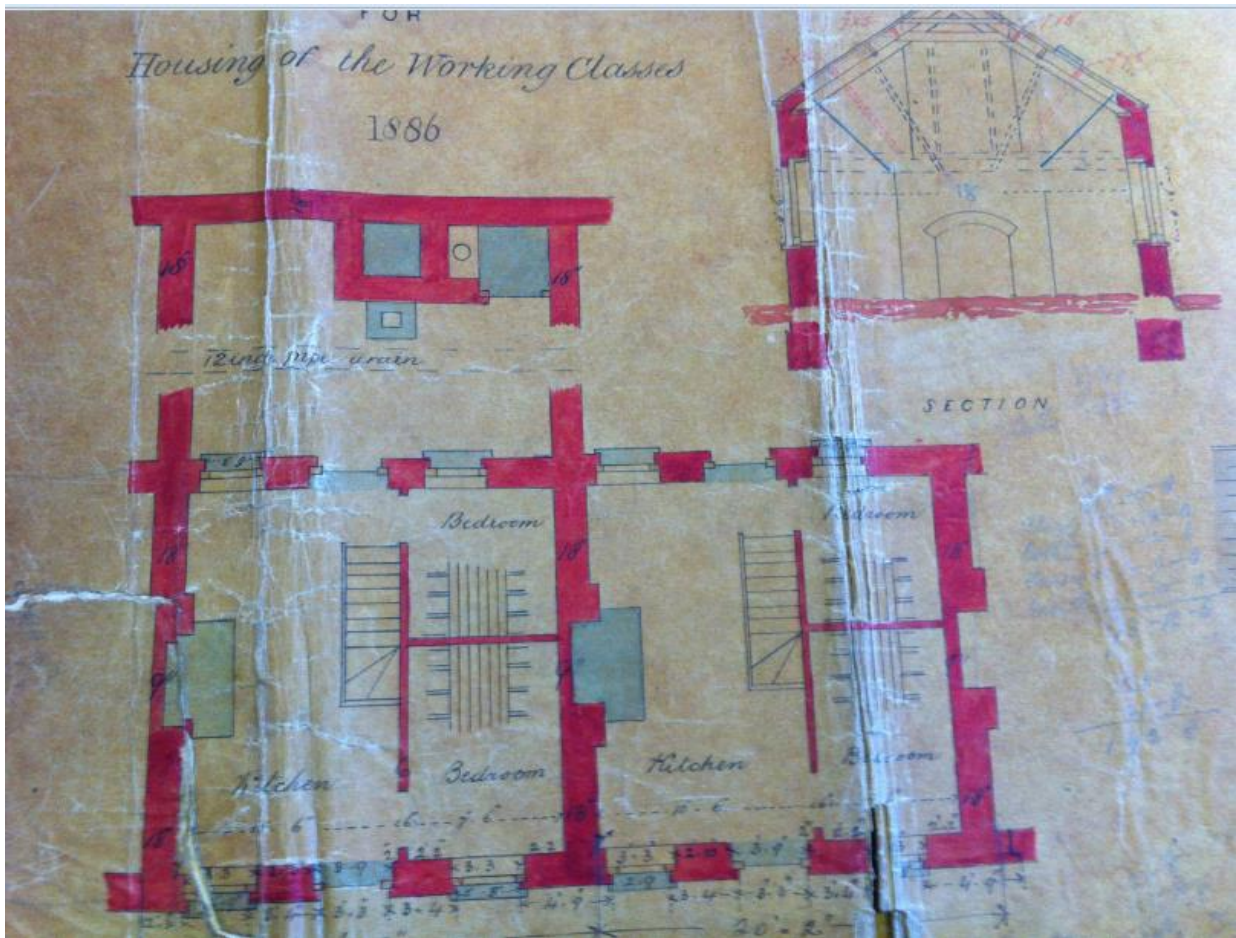
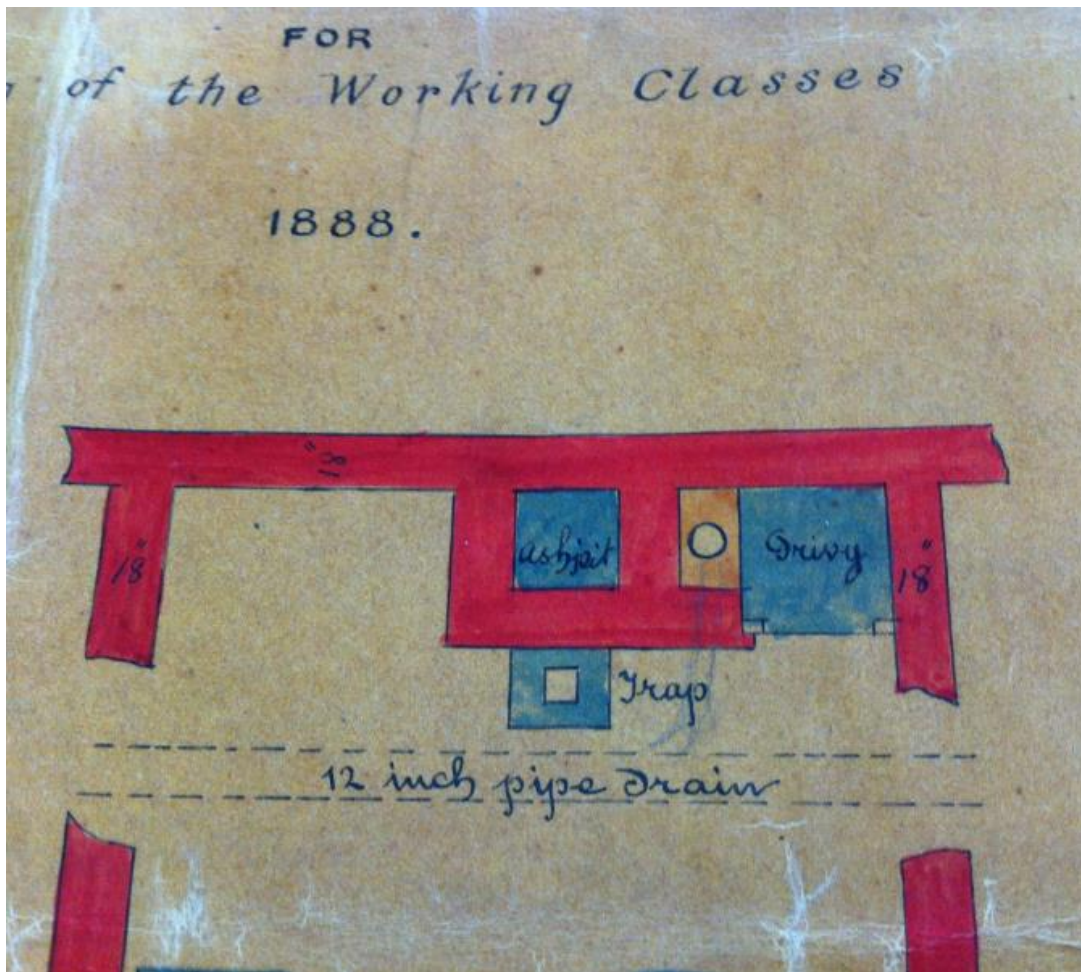


Figure 7.5: Plans for sanitary facilities in houses for the working classes in Limerick, 1888
(LCA, L/HG/HC/1(1))



The pre-existing houses on Sir Harry's Mall were low value houses and 'out of repair' on terms of house quality according to the House Books at the mid-nineteenth century. The pre-existing fourteen houses on Meat Market Lane were second and third class in quality and only contained two rooms in each house.⁵³⁹ The fourteen houses at Sir Harry's Mall were second class and contained an average of four rooms per house. The 1901 census revealed that the people occupying these houses were families, occupied as general labourers, bakers, house keepers and shop assistants. The houses on Gaol Lane were second class and contained between two to six rooms. Only two of these houses were recorded as being subdivided. The people occupying these houses were also general labourers, shop porters, carpenters, factory workers and blacksmiths. The old houses on Mary Street were generally first and second

⁵³⁹ Data extracted from the census of population online for the year 1901.

class, containing two to eight rooms per house according the 1901 and 1911 census returns. The houses numbered 10, 12, 19, 20, 21 all recorded subdivision as these houses were larger and contained more rooms. Some of the occupants were employed as bakers, shop assistants, black smiths, labourers and carpenters.

Figure 7.6: Sir Harry's Mall and Fish Lane, c. 1950



Figure 7.7: Athlunkard Street, c. 1970



Houses were also built on the site of the Newgate Brewery in 1895 to provide houses for working class families. Rent for each of these dwellings was 4/- per week and upper floors of the cottages were allowed be sublet at 2/9 per week.⁵⁴⁰ In 1911, Newgate Lane recorded twelve houses, three of which were subdivided. The houses were all second class, with an average of two to four rooms per house. The people occupying these houses were factory workers, tailors, labourers, dressmakers, housekeepers, coopers and painters. They were mainly families, although in many houses relatives also shared the rooms.

Between 1911 and 1930, construction had commenced by the Corporation after the purchase and clearing of sites in St John's Parish. Plans and drawings were drawn up for twenty-one houses along John Street and Nicholas Street (later Cathedral Place). In 1911, the council built a further seventeen houses on John Street and six on Millers Row, Prospect Hill, Ballinacurra Road and the Haymarket near Garryowen. These schemes again were located in the older parts of the city which were rundown and required assistance due to overcrowding and unsanitary conditions. Development on eight sites commenced in 1922 along Church Street, Nicholas Street, Mary Street, St Lelia Street, Mulgrave Street, Cassidy Lane (*figure 7.10*), Clare Street and John Street, again targeting areas in older parts of the city. In a public health report in 1913, it was noted that the very poor of Limerick City were unable to afford these public houses.⁵⁴¹ The Corporation's intention was to free up overcrowding, by emptying the dwellings of the middle and upper classes⁵⁴² for the poorer classes.⁵⁴³ The Corporation were ineffectively dealing with the situation until the 1930s as this was mainly shifting the problem of overcrowding from one form of accommodation to another.

Figure 7.9 portrays a detailed drawing for block houses on John Street. The comprehensive plans also include new drain pipes (red) and existing sewer pipes (blue) for health and sanitation reasons. This plan highlights the changes that were occurring in planning in the twentieth century.

⁵⁴⁰ M. McGrath, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1914) p. 8.

⁵⁴¹ M. McGrath, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick* (1914) p. 8.

⁵⁴² Who had moved to new houses and to the suburbs

⁵⁴³ M. McGrath, *The Eleventh Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the City of Limerick, 1914*, pp 14-15.

Figure 7.8: Block plan for houses on John Street (LCA, L/HG/HC/1/6(1))

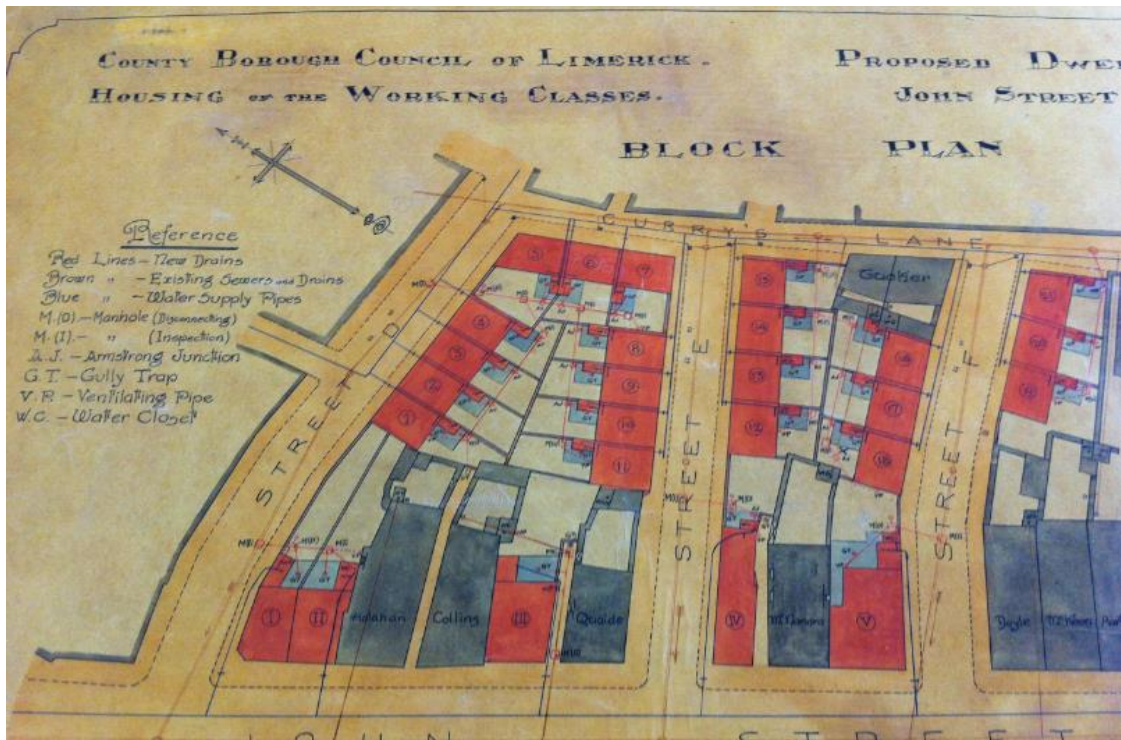
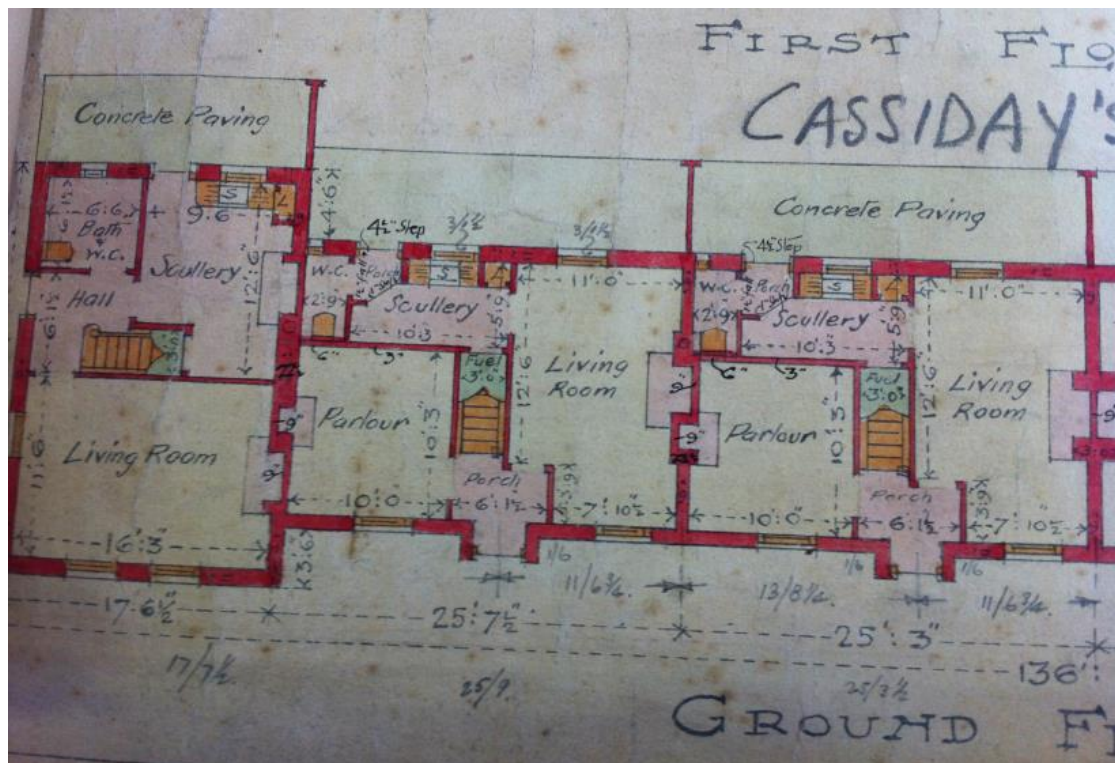


Figure 7.9: Housing Plans for Cassidy's Lane in Limerick (LCA, L/HG/HC/1/11)



Plans for housing on Cassidy's Lane included several rooms within each house, including a scullery, parlour and living all on the ground floor. Bedrooms would have been located on the

second floor. Concrete paving was also designed to be placed outside the houses to ensure hygiene standards as waste could easily be washed away.

7.4.1 Examples of effective clearances

Several lanes underwent profound changes from the early twentieth century. Individual houses and rows of houses on laneways were cleared away following reports⁵⁴⁴ of houses being uninhabitable, mainly in St Mary's and St John's Parishes. Examples included O'Gorman's Lane, White's Lane, Ryan's Lane and Taylor's Row. The Corporation began to take a more active role in the housing of the working classes. This included sending letters to landowners about the state of rented properties and clearance orders.

Figure 7.10: Clearance Order between landlord and tenant for St John's parish, Limerick, 1935 (LCA, L/HG/HC/16(2))

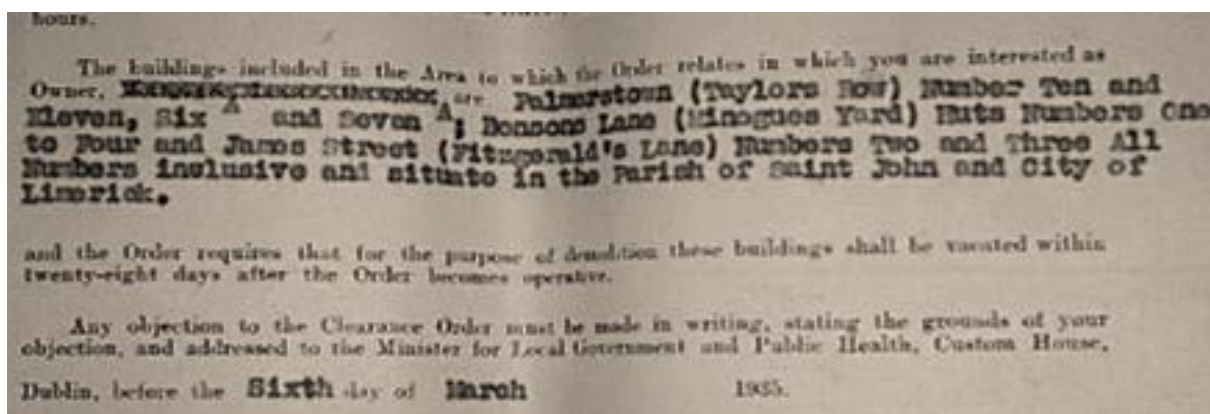


Figure 7.11 displays a clearance order addressed to Margaret Perman (landlady) who resided in Dublin although rented out properties in Limerick. She owned properties in Palmerstown in St John's parish which were being cleared by the Corporation due to their condition which highlighted the neglect of housing on behalf of landowners. Examples in this clearance order included houses on Taylor's Row (number 10 and 11) were reported as 'unsanitary; walls and roof decayed and damp'.⁵⁴⁵ They were small two-storey houses let as tenements, recorded as in a 'bad state of repair'.⁵⁴⁶ The houses were also reported to be bug infested (similar to No.6 Benson Lane). Flies were considered a main way to transport infectious diseases especially in

⁵⁴⁴ LCA, L/HG/HC/16 and Limerick City special minute book, L/HG/HC/6/1-6

⁵⁴⁵ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/6

⁵⁴⁶ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/15(2)

warm weather and swamped in extremely unhealthy areas. These houses on Taylor's Row were also recorded to be 'uninhabitable'.⁵⁴⁷ Houses on Benson's Lane were recorded as having no water closets (only a yard at the rear) and in a 'moderate state of repair'.⁵⁴⁸ These were just some examples of clearances where the Corporation were taking a firm stand on the housing situation in 1935.

Another letter was addressed for Annie McNamara for properties on Flag Lane (numbers 7, 8 and 9) which were described as 'not unfit for habitation or dangerous or injurious to health'.⁵⁴⁹ Properties which were unfit for habitation were ordered to be improved by landowners for the health of the public.

In the 1930s, several of the lanes were being cleared (which were originally low in value and poor in quality according to the Primary Valuation and General Valuation Lists and the House Books). These lanes included Flag Lane, Lady's Lane, Benson Lanes and White's Lane etc. These houses had long been neglected by the inhabitants, Corporation and landlords and some of the houses had been overcrowded as recorded by the Census of Population for both 1901 and 1911.

For example, the houses on O'Gorman's Lane were all substantial stone built houses. The houses themselves were generally 'in a fair state of repair' according to the House Books c. 1850. By 1930, these house still had no water closets although they could have easily have been installed. The roofs in these houses were old but had been repaired (no year provided for this repair) and none of them were leaking. The ground floors in some of the houses were in 'bad repair' and were a few inches below the level of the roadway. The walls were damp and decaying possibly as a result of the floors being below that of the roadway. There were no yards in the rear of these houses. The window spaces were small and as a result lighting and ventilation were poor. It was reported by the Corporation that fixing these houses was not economical and it was reported by Dr. Roche that these houses were unfit for the locality.⁵⁵⁰

In 1935, houses on White's Lane were no different. House No.16 was reported by the corporation to contain four 'good rooms' and the house itself was in good repair. The ground floors were concrete, which could not have provided warmth and comfort for the occupants (and was also unsanitary), although the upper storey contained wooden flooring. The height

⁵⁴⁷ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/6

⁵⁴⁸ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/16 (6)

⁵⁴⁹ LCA, L/HG/HC/12 (2)

⁵⁵⁰ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/2

of the rooms was eight feet, slightly larger than most of the houses in the area. The windows were small but the walls of the rooms were damp and decayed. There was a small open space at the rere of the house. Any necessary repairs were reported to have been easily done at a slight cost. Although the house contained no water closets, it was still considered fit for habitation. A cross examination of the house by Mr. Stenson, the city surveyor, reported that the houses were in bad repair and ‘definitely unfit’ for habitation. Another cross examination by Mr. Liston stated that ‘even if the houses were in good repair it would be unfit. In my opinion none of the houses in this locality were ever fit for human habitation’.⁵⁵¹

Houses on Flag Lane were all two storey houses, containing four rooms. The windows were considered ‘fair’, but under standard requirements and measurements. Flag Lane itself was six feet and six inches wide which provided little room for movement up and down. None of the houses contained a yard or any water closets and due to the size of the lane and the houses, there was no room to install one. Mr Stenson examined the houses and reported that the houses were damp and decayed and that lighting and ventilation were bad. Mr. Liston reported that the walls of these houses could not be cured of dampness. At the end of the report, Dr. Roche Kelly stated that all houses were ‘unfit irrespective of internal condition by reason of situation’.⁵⁵²

⁵⁵¹ LCA, L/HG/HC/6/3

⁵⁵² LCA, L/HG/HC/6/3

Figure 7.11: Unsanitary and uninhabitable houses in St John's parish, Limerick, 1935 (LCA, L/HG/HC/6/6)

ESTATE OF MRS. MARY O'BRYEN AND MRS. PERMAN.

10 and 11, Taylors Row. Let to C. Quilligan
No opposition lodged by Quilligan

Mr. Stenson : Unsanitary ; walls and roof decayed and damp ;
Bug infected.

Cross examined : Could not be made habitable.

Minogues Yard : No opposition.

2 AND 3 Fitzg eralds Lane.

Mr. Stenson : Tenements ; 2 storey ; No W.c., Unsanitary
Yards ; walls damp and decayed ; Air and ventilation
bad ; Repairs bad . Definitely unfit.

Cross examined : Main sewerage near ; installation of W. C. would
not remedy the defects and house would still be unfit.

6 Bensons Lane

Mr. Stenson : No. W.C. Ventilation and air bad. Walls and roofs
bad ; surroundings bad ; yard unsanitary. Bugs.

Dr. Roche Kelly : Corroborated in detail.

*10 Report from Mr. de Conroy re this house. See letter
of instruction 27/3/35. Mr. de Conroy said he had no instructions
Order likely to be comprised in this case*

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Similar results were recorded for Fitzgerald Lane (no.2) which was a tenement building which had no sanitary facilities. The walls were also reported as damp and decayed. The houses on these lanes were low value and poor inn quality and continued to be lived in throughout the nineteenth century.

Lady's Lane recorded having no sanitary facilities in any of the house listed in a report for the Corporation. All the houses had a small yard at the rere of the houses and all the houses were two storeys in height. The weekly rents were high considering the facilities, and some of the houses were sublet.

Table 7.4: Particulars of houses on Lady's Lane, 1935 (LCA, L/HG/HC/6/19(2))

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Rent (Weekly)</i>	<i>Sanitary Accommodation</i>	<i>Yard at rear</i>	<i>Storeys high</i>	<i>State of Repair</i>
7	3/5	No	Yes	2	Fair
8	3/2	No	Yes	2	Fair
9	3/2	No	Yes	2	Fair
10	1/7	No	Yes	2	Fair
11	3/3	No	Yes	2	Fair
12	n/a	No	Yes	2	Fair
13	3/2	No	Yes	2	Fair
14	4/3	No	Yes	2	Fair
15	2/6	No	Yes	2	Fair
4	3/3	No	Yes	2	Fair
5	4/6	No	Yes	2	Fair
6	4/6	No	Yes	2	Fair

7.5 Conclusion

Lack of interest and funding were the main reasons behind the poor approach to the development of sufficient housing for the working classes. The issue of health was being addressed quicker than the housing situation as health affected the public at large as disease was inclined to spread from person to person. The housing situation was viewed differently as the wealthy occupied their good quality houses in a separate part of the city and the poorer working classes lived in run-down houses on the opposite side of the city. Bishop O'Dwyer highlighted in an address to the Corporation in the 1880s that they were unaware of how the merchant workers of the city actually live and that action was required.⁵⁵³

Changes in legislation and the providing of loans help to fund the development of houses for the working classes from the 1900s. This made it easier for people to build houses which were comfortable and caters for the wages of the working classes. The Corporation were slow to deal with the slum clearances, with many of the houses being cleared located on the main thoroughfares of St John's and St Mary's Parish (including John Street, Mary Street, Nicholas Street). It took longer before the Corporation began to effectively tackle the houses in the lanes and alleyways which commenced in the mid-twentieth century such as White's Lane, Benson Lane, Keating's Lane etc. These lanes had lived in a filthy state throughout the nineteenth century and had frequently been reported on by health committee members.

⁵⁵³ J. Rushe, 'Rev. Edward Thomas O'Dwyer and The .Artisans' Dwellings Company; The Election of 1874', *The Old Limerick Journal*, Vol.9, (1981) p. 11

Chapter Eight: Discussion

8. Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to reconstruct and map the changing geography of public health and housing in Limerick City from 1850 to 1930 and to examine their association with poverty. The researcher attempted to examine the causes of poor health and housing and also the changing social geography of residential areas in Limerick over the timeframe under investigation. This thesis also aimed at examining the role of the Corporation and private organisations in alleviating poor health and housing conditions. A spatial correlation did exist between poor public health and housing however some variations did occur in an individual's level of experience. The location, type and quality of a dwelling also impacted on the health experiences of individuals and whole families. Other factors which also impacted on an individual exposure to poor health and housing included proximity to lodging houses and obnoxious activities such as piggeries and slaughter houses.. The researcher classified the varying experiences into six clusters based on key variables such as value, quality, location, proximity to lodging houses or obnoxious activities and single or multiple family occupancy.

8.1 Location of houses associated with poverty

There were several areas in Limerick city which experienced poor health and housing conditions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In some cases it was whole streets or lanes, while in other cases, it was individual houses on streets or lanes. For this study, the researcher has chosen a selection of areas which were overcrowded from the late nineteenth century until the early twentieth century. Once these six clusters were mapped (*figure 8.1*),⁵⁵⁴ it was clear that they were located on the edge of the present city centre (O'Connell Street, formerly Georges Street). Certain lanes were highlighted along the quays in St Mary's parish and in St John's parish. In St Michael's parish, clusters were located near Arthur's Quay (in close proximity to St Mary's parish), further south in the parish along the new docks, and to the east in the parish along Carey's Road (in close proximity to St John's and St Lawrence's parishes).

8.2 Temporal Patterns associated with poverty

It is also important to highlight that some clusters experienced poverty earlier than others. Although the census of population only provides micro data for 1901 and 1911, cases of

⁵⁵⁴ (OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).

poverty and overcrowding did exist in the nineteenth century. In some cases, individual houses on streets and lanes continued to remain overcrowded from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. However, the majority of cases remained static in their location from the nineteenth century⁵⁵⁵, although new types did emerge in the later nineteenth century and were highlighted through the use of the census of population. Examples include George's Quay which was slowly being transformed into tenement buildings as early as the 1840s,⁵⁵⁶ and also Arthur's Quay which had also been transformed into tenement buildings by the time of the 1901 census of population.

8.3 Health conditions associated with houses in Limerick

Poor housing conditions contributed to the poor health of the people of Limerick. Many diseases spread through the city from damp houses, poor sanitation facilities and poorly constructed dwellings. Overcrowding also contributed to the poor health and poverty experienced by people and in turn, those in poverty were also more susceptible to poor health. An examination of house quality also contributed to an understanding of the health standards within the house. Houses which were *old and dilapidated* and even *decayed* were clearly unfit for habitation, and in many cases these houses were overcrowded. As outlined in chapter six, many of these houses were without sanitation facilities which also contributed to poor health. The location of houses in narrow lanes did not help the situation especially if sanitation facilities meant the washing of human waste down cobbled, narrow streets and lanes until the rain washed it away.

8.4 Cluster variables used to determine poverty in Limerick

There were several key determinates used for defining these clusters (*see table 8.1*). These included house value and quality, building function (lodging house) and house occupancy (based on the number of families per house and the number of people per house/room). The type, value and quality of a house were essential to understanding the factors which may have contributed to the poor health of the public. The poorest people lived in the poorest quality houses, cellars or in tenement buildings. An examination of these factors contributed greatly to identifying clusters and associating them with typologies. Typologies were then used to group the clusters by the types of characteristics associated with them.

⁵⁵⁵ Evident from the primary valuation of Ireland and the late rate valuation books at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁵⁵⁶ J. Kemmy, 'Housing and Social Conditions: 1830-1940', in the *Old Limerick Journal, Barringtons' Edition*, Vol. 27, No.2 (1988) p. 71.

Variables also included the nature of the tenancy, for example single or multiple family occupancy (which also contributed to health issues), especially in relation to tenement buildings.⁵⁵⁷ The nature of tenancy is a key variable as in many cases houses were overcrowded and in excess of two people per room. The proximity to and from obnoxious activities was also essential to understanding the surrounding landscape which impacted on the health of the public. The layout of towns became increasingly popular through the work of Edwin Chadwick⁵⁵⁸ and Charles Booth⁵⁵⁹ during the nineteenth century as people began to become aware of the health issues living within confined streets and lanes and also living in close proximity to obnoxious activities. Their work focused on mainly industrial cities with a strong focus on multiple family occupancy and tenement living.

The number of people in a family was also significant as a family was less likely to experience poverty if the household was small⁵⁶⁰ and the chief wage earner employed in labour, than a large household with the chief wage earner employed in labour. The larger the family, the more financial pressure was on the chief wage earner to provide for the family.⁵⁶¹ In many cases, the chief wage earner may have earned less than the poverty line (18shillings - 21shillings) as outlined by Rowntree in his 1901 survey.⁵⁶²

Many families during the nineteenth and twentieth century had wives and children employed in labour.⁵⁶³ In some cases, children were early school leavers and were employed as factory workers or apprentices. As previously outlined in chapter four, children often suffered from poverty from an early age and were therefore denied opportunities from the start (poor education which hinders a productive adult life). In some cases, children were important wage earners, especially for vulnerable families, where their income made a difference between subsistence and starvation. Women were noted as the principle breadwinners in

⁵⁵⁷ J. O'Brien, *Dear, Dirty Dublin, A City in Distress, 1899-1916* (London, 1982); J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, A Study in Urban Geography*, (Dublin, 2000); R. McManus, 'Windows on a hidden world: urban and social evolution as seen from the mews', in *Irish Geography*, Volume 37(1), 2004, pp 37-59.

⁵⁵⁸ E. Chadwick, *Report on the sanitary condition of the labouring population of Great Britain*, 1842

⁵⁵⁹ C. Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 (1889-1891)

⁵⁶⁰ Small family of two adults and maximum of three children - large family of two adults and four or more children.

⁵⁶¹ C. Chinn, *Poverty Amidst Prosperity: The Urban Poor in England, 1834-1914* (Manchester, 2006)

⁵⁶² B.S. Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*, (1901)

⁵⁶³ J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (UK, 1978); R. Lawton & R. Lee, *Urban Population Development in Western Europe from Late-Eighteenth to the Early-Twentieth Century* (Liverpool, 1989).

many of the poor households especially if the male was involved in military service, migration, death or incapacity.

Women were frequently employed as housekeepers and seamstresses, which also contributed to lowering the family status,⁵⁶⁴ but contributed to the family income. The age profile of the people occupying the houses was also significant as it highlighted families which may be more likely to gain employment in comparison to older age groups.

Table 8.1 displays the name and location of each cluster. Some clusters experienced good quality housing (category A in the House Books classification) and low value (under £5), along with single family dwellings while others experienced poor quality housing (houses excluded in the A category of the House Book), high value (over £5) and multiple family dwellings (two families or more). In some cases, houses were also classified as good quality, high value houses, although provided third class accommodation, e.g. tenement buildings. The majority of dwellings were poor quality, low value (under £5) and multiple family dwellings. The clusters were used to highlight these variations and also provided information on the families living in these houses, these were then divided into various typologies based on the variables picked. The location of the clusters was significant as it highlighted the distance from health facilities (lack of access to sufficient health resources for the poor) and distance to the main streets, such as cluster no.1. Although this cluster was located in the wealthy parish of St Michael's, the houses were poor in quality and low in value and the people living in these areas were also marginalised from society as they lived a distance from the main streets (proximity to main streets was also included in the table). In comparison to this, cluster no.2 highlighted high value dwellings, which were originally first class properties built for wealthy classes and were then transformed into third class accommodation for poorer classes. Due to the multiple families residing in these houses, the buildings became 'decayed' and deteriorated by age and exploited in their use as extracted from the House Books. This is significant as it indicated the emergence of the tenement system in certain parts of the city by the 1850s and also the movement of the poorer classes, e.g. George's Quay and Arthur's Quay.

⁵⁶⁴ Status was a terminology used as a social label- 'middle class', 'upper class', 'lower class', which had become common during the 1830s by social commentators. There are understandable differences between 'class' and 'status' which are attached to occupation, income level, education, position in power which are used to determine social ranking. In the nineteenth century, the employment of women and children within a family contributed to the lowering of a family's status (extracted from W.A. Armstrong, 'The use of information about occupation' in *Nineteenth Century Society: Essays in the Use of Quantitative Methods for the Study of Social Data* (Cambridge, 1972) pp 200-1.

Table 8.1: Cluster variables used to measure different levels of poverty in Limerick, c. 1850-1930

Cluster	Street/Lane	Location	House Value, 1850	House Value, 1900	House Quality 1850	Class of House based on census	Single family residence	Multiple family residence	Number of People per house	Number of People per room	Occupation ⁵⁶⁵	Literacy Level ⁵⁶⁶	Lodging house on street	Obnoxious activity on street
1	Barry's Lane	St Michael's	0-£1,0,0	0-£1,0,0	1-3B	100% 2nd Class	Y		5	2	66% unskilled	50% can read and write	X	X
	Hennessy's Lane Or Young's Lane	St Michael's	0-£1,10,0	0-£1,5,0	1B-	100% 2nd Class	Y		4	3	60% unskilled	20% can read and write	Y	X
2	Arthur's Quay	St Michael's	0-£40,0,0	0-£18,0,0	n/a	94% 1st Class		Y	19	2	19% unskilled, 32% semi-skilled 14% skilled 35% miscellaneous	68% can read and write	Y	X
	Michael Street	St Michael's		0-£6,0,0	n/a	40% 2nd Class 10% 1 st Class 10% 3 rd Class The remaining were unlisted	Y		6	3	18% unskilled 29% unemployed, 36% semi-skilled	59% can read and write	X	Y
3	Whitewine Lane	St John's	0-£4,15,0	0-£4,0,0	n/a	57% 2nd Class	Y		6	3	25% unskilled 0.6% unemployed, 22% semi-skilled	44% can read and write	Y	X
	Rosberry Place	St John's	0-£2,8,0	0-£5,0,0	n/a	100% 2nd Class		Y	9	3	64% unskilled	41% can read and write	Y	X
	Forker's Lane	St John's	0-£0,18,0	n/a	n/a	100% 3rd Class	Y		7	4	100% unskilled	100% read only	X	X

⁵⁶⁵ Occupation of the Head of Household.

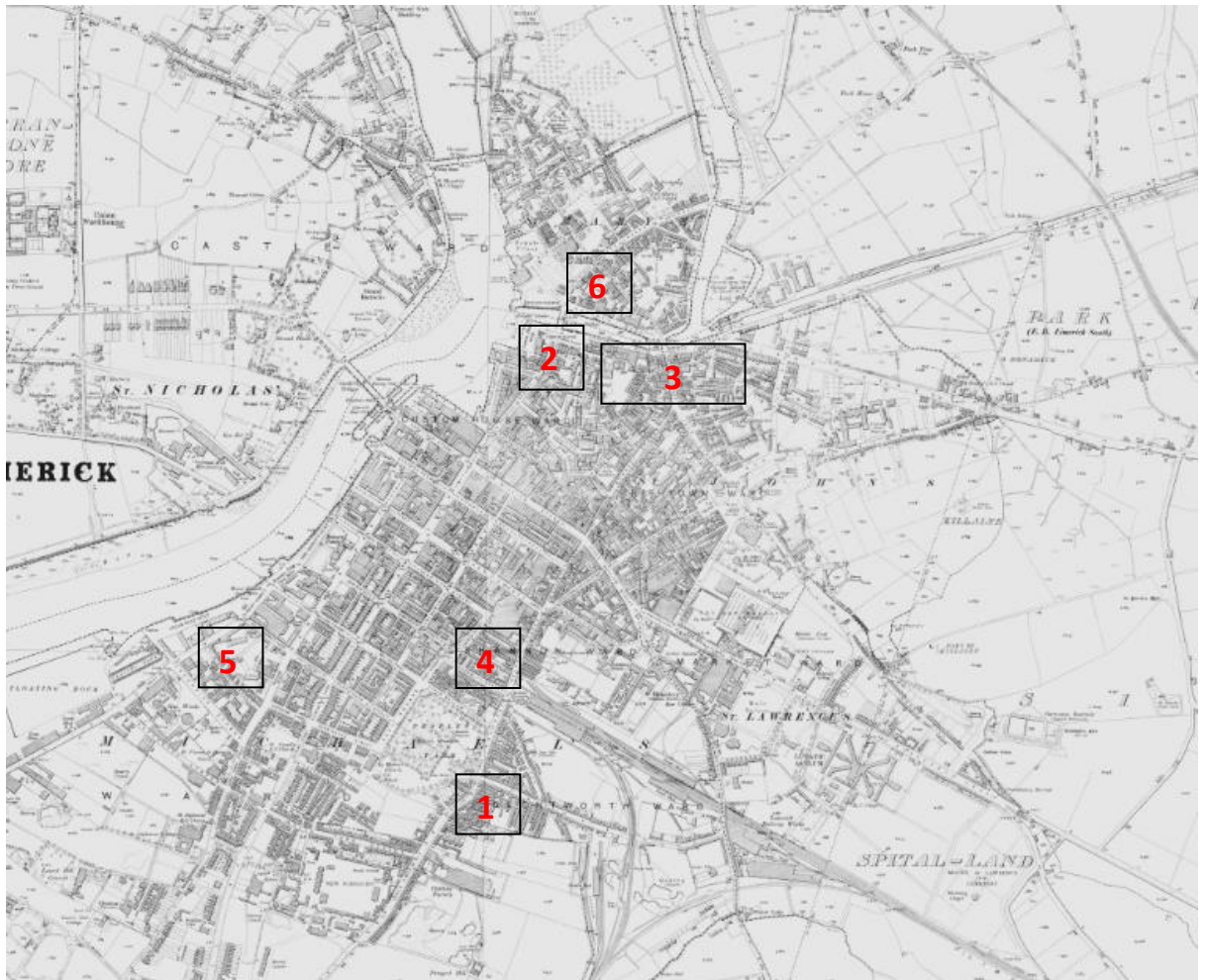
⁵⁶⁶ Excluding children.

Cluster	Street/Lane	Location	House Value, 1850	House Value, 1900	House Quality 1850	Class of House based on census	Single family residence	Multiple family residence	Number of People per house	Number of People per room	Occupation⁵⁶⁷	Literacy Level⁵⁶⁸	Lodging house on street	Obnoxious activity on street
4	Flag Lane	St Michael's	0-£2,8,0	0-£2,10,0		80% 2nd Class	Y		5	2	48% unskilled, 17% unemployed	52% can read and write	Y	X
	Lady's Lane	St Michael's	0-£4,0,0	0-£4,5,0		88% 2nd Class		Y	8	2	47% unskilled, 9% unemployed	53% can read and write	Y	X
5	Frederick Street	St Michael's	0-	0-£20,0,0	n/a	72% 2nd Class	Y		5	1	22% skilled, 21% semi-skilled	95% can read and write	X	X
	Windmill Street	St Michael's	0-£7,0,0	0-£10,0,0	n/a	74% 2nd Class		Y	7	2	20% unskilled, 13% semi-skilled	69% can read and write	Y	X
6	Mary's Street	St Mary's	0-£20,0,0	0-£16,0,0		58% 2nd Class		Y	10	2	49% unskilled, 13% semi-skilled	64% can read and write	Y	X

⁵⁶⁷ Occupation of the Head of Household.

⁵⁶⁸ Excludes children.

Figure 8.1: Location of clusters in Limerick (IHTA, map 4, OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902))



A total of six poverty clusters (areas which contained characteristics of poverty) have been identified across the city. It is clear from *figure 8.1* that the clusters were located along the periphery of the city centre.⁵⁶⁹ Some houses were occupied by single families such as Barry's Lane,⁵⁷⁰ who were employed in good jobs and who did not subdivide

⁵⁶⁹ Houses within the city centre, along Georges Street, did not experience levels of overcrowding, poor health and poor housing conditions.

⁵⁷⁰ For example, house No.4 from the *Household Returns* recorded only one family, the Carter family, and also recorded a cousin sharing the same premises. John (aged 31) was a blacksmith (listed as employed). His trade was popular during the nineteenth century but many of Limerick's population were employed as blacksmiths. His wife Mary (30) was a tailoress (wages unknown). Her wages varied with regards to the place she worked and the items she made. If she worked in a factory, her wages would have depended on the amount of items she made a day. It is likely that Mary worked in order to contribute to the household income as they had five children. John (10), Madgie (8) and Henry (6) were all in school, learning to read and

their dwellings. Other houses were sublet as lodging houses and the head of the household was occupied as a housekeeper. In some cases, the rooms in the houses were subdivided into smaller rooms for whole families who may be unemployed or poorly employed (casual or seasonal poorly paid labour, e.g. general labourers).

8.4.1 The grouping of poverty clusters into typologies

From examining the variables, it was possible to then group the poverty clusters into different typologies as not all experiences of poverty and poor health were the same. In some cases there were low value, single family dwellings while in other cases there were high value, multiple family dwellings. Other clusters consisted of lodging houses instead of multiple family occupancy.

Type 1
High value, multiple family residency, street, 1 st class dwellings, 3 rd class accommodation, subdivision of houses, cellar occupancy, semi-skilled occupations, close proximity to lodging houses, women employed in occupations
Type 2
Low value, single family residency, lane, 2 nd class dwellings, 2 nd class accommodation, good quality dwellings, employed in skilled occupations, good literacy levels
Type 3
Low value, multiple family residency, lane, 2 nd /3 rd class dwellings, 3 rd class accommodation, poor quality dwellings, semi-skilled & unskilled occupations, close proximity to obnoxious activities & lodging houses, women employed and poor literacy levels

The above table highlights different levels of experiences based on various characteristics. In some cases, a street may fall under one typology, although in other cases the cluster may fall under two different typologies depending on location and key variables. One example includes cluster two falls under typology one and two. This meant that some streets in cluster two met the characteristics in typology one (such as occupancy, class of house, occupation) while other streets met the characteristics from

write. Catherine was 4 years old and the youngest, Bridget, was not even a year old. Margaret Judge was a cousin of John. She was 22 and worked as a provision store assistant (wages unknown). It is unlikely that the family were experiencing a severe form of poverty as there were three incomes coming into the house.

typology two (such as single family occupancy, smaller houses, lower in class). Some of the key points from this are whether a house is single or multiple in occupancy, the size of the house and the number of rooms available. Variations in literacy are also essential as this highlights certain pockets of poverty and are located in areas which are usually poorer in health.

8.5 Conditions of the poverty clusters

The identification and examination of various clusters was an essential part of this research as it highlighted the areas, types of houses and types of people living within Limerick city. Some clusters included houses which were located in small lanes, while in other cases it involved houses which were located in main or secondary streets. This impacted on the experience of poor health on the public as small, confined lanes allowed the spread of disease more easily in comparison to broader streets, which in many cases were cobbled or covered with concrete. As previously discussed in chapter four, St Mary's and St John's parishes had developed from a medieval layout. Many of the houses located within these parishes dated from the eighteenth century. As a result, the quality of these houses as determined from the *House Books* recorded several of the houses in these clusters as 'old' as many of the buildings had not received attention in previous years, for example cluster 4 and 6. In comparison to this, many houses located in St Michael's parish were newer in structure but had become poor in quality due to misuse and neglect, including cluster 1 and 5.

The use of value and housing type was also a key deterrent in examining health conditions and poverty. Slums have been defined as areas of overcrowded, dilapidated and old housing, occupied by people who can only afford the cheapest housing, often located in unhealthy environments.⁵⁷¹ Chapter six provided essential information on the types of conditions which existed within these areas while the use of the census provided information on the types of people that occupied these houses. House value also provided an indication to the location of a dwelling, as cheaper dwellings were often located in back lanes, and those which fronted main streets were often higher in value. Houses on side streets also tended to be occupied by the poorer classes as renting these houses were cheaper. Using Booth's and Rowntree's concept of poverty lines, a clearer understanding about the levels of poverty can be made in relation to the people

⁵⁷¹ R.J., Johnson et al, *Dictionary of Human Geography* (Oxford, 1994) quoted in J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums, a study in urban geography, 1800-1925* (Dublin, 1998) p. 2.

occupying the houses in the clusters. The use of occupational information provides an indication to whether or not people were comfortable or in chronic want. Cluster 5 provides an example where the head of households were occupying various occupations on Frederick Street, where there were mainly single family occupancies, 16% of women employed and literacy levels are at 95%. In comparison to this, Windmill Street in the same cluster is occupied by a higher proportion of people employed in the labouring classes, multiple family occupancy, 23% of woman employed and literacy levels are at 69%. Cluster no.4 however records similar results where families occupying these back lanes were employed as labourers. There were also 4% to 7% of women employed, with approximately 50% of the head of households being able to read and write. These houses were also in close proximity to lodging houses and were all valued under £5 in value.

The location of obnoxious activities also presented unfavourable conditions for the people living in close proximity. As commented on in chapter five, obnoxious activities usually involved the slaughtering of animals and a lack of sanitary facilities allowed the carcasses of animals to remain in heaps for days. In hot weather, these remains became putrid and led to the transmission of disease through flies. Cluster 2 recorded an obnoxious activity in close proximity to Michael Street, while chapter six also commented on the connection between the proximity to obnoxious activities and the keeping of animals in close proximity to residential dwellings. The proximity to lodging houses also presented unhealthy living conditions as many people were forced to share rooms and tenements. Clusters 1,2,3,4,5 and 6 all recorded as being in close proximity to a lodging house which were almost indistinguishable from tenement buildings. While lodging houses were intended for short-term migrants, 'tenementing – the subdivision of existing houses into separately occupied floors or single rooms – was the most obvious response of owners and tenants to increased pressure on accommodation, and by nature usually informal and unrecorded'.⁵⁷² Although much work remains to be done on lodging houses, the results from the census reveal the level of overcrowding associated with them. These houses also put extra pressure on the local sanitary facilities.

⁵⁷² J. Burnett, *A Social History of Housing 1815-1970* (UK, 1978) p. 64

Single and multiple family tenancy was another key variable. Single and multiple family occupancy both highlight levels of overcrowding as single families dwellings may contain one family but may have over two people per room (based on the Working Class Report for 1908), similar to some dwellings that may contain two families and may also be overcrowded. Examples include cluster 2,3,4,5 and 6 which all recorded multiple family occupancy. When examining overcrowding at the macro scale, levels of overcrowding by room may be concealed so it was important to highlight that internal variations did exist and that some rooms were more overcrowded than others. Whitelaw frequently commented on the conditions experienced by those living in crowding dwellings where residents sleep, eat, bath and work in the one room. Flea ridden bed clothes and poor sanitation contributed to the spread of disease amongst people living in these dwellings. Kearns (2006) also referred to the squalid conditions in which landlords left their properties. These conditions usually continued from the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century and people had no means of improving their situation. Although Limerick did not suffer to the same extent as Dublin in terms of cellar dwellers, the Primary Valuation of Ireland did record that cellar dwellings existed on the main thoroughfares around 1850. Areas such as Arthur's Quay and Mary Street recorded cellars as being valued separately from the main building. In many cases there were whole families living in these dwellings.

The health of the public was considered to be in a disgraceful state.⁵⁷³ However it was the pioneering works of Edwin Chadwick, Charles Booth and John Snow that originally highlighted the connection between poor health, disease and death. The introduction of adequate town planning, vaccination, health reforms and the health system greatly contributed to the health of the public. However this was a slow process and many of the streets and lanes within the clusters highlighted poor health conditions and were areas which returned significant numbers of deaths due to disease. The Mount St Lawrence Burial Registers frequently returned streets and lanes which were occupied by the poorer classes of Limerick. Although not all streets and lanes were mentioned in the clusters, these clusters represent particular areas which appeared more susceptible to poor health and housing conditions. The examples chosen are to offer different expression on the types of poor health and housing available within the city and also its link with poverty.

8.5.1 Cluster one

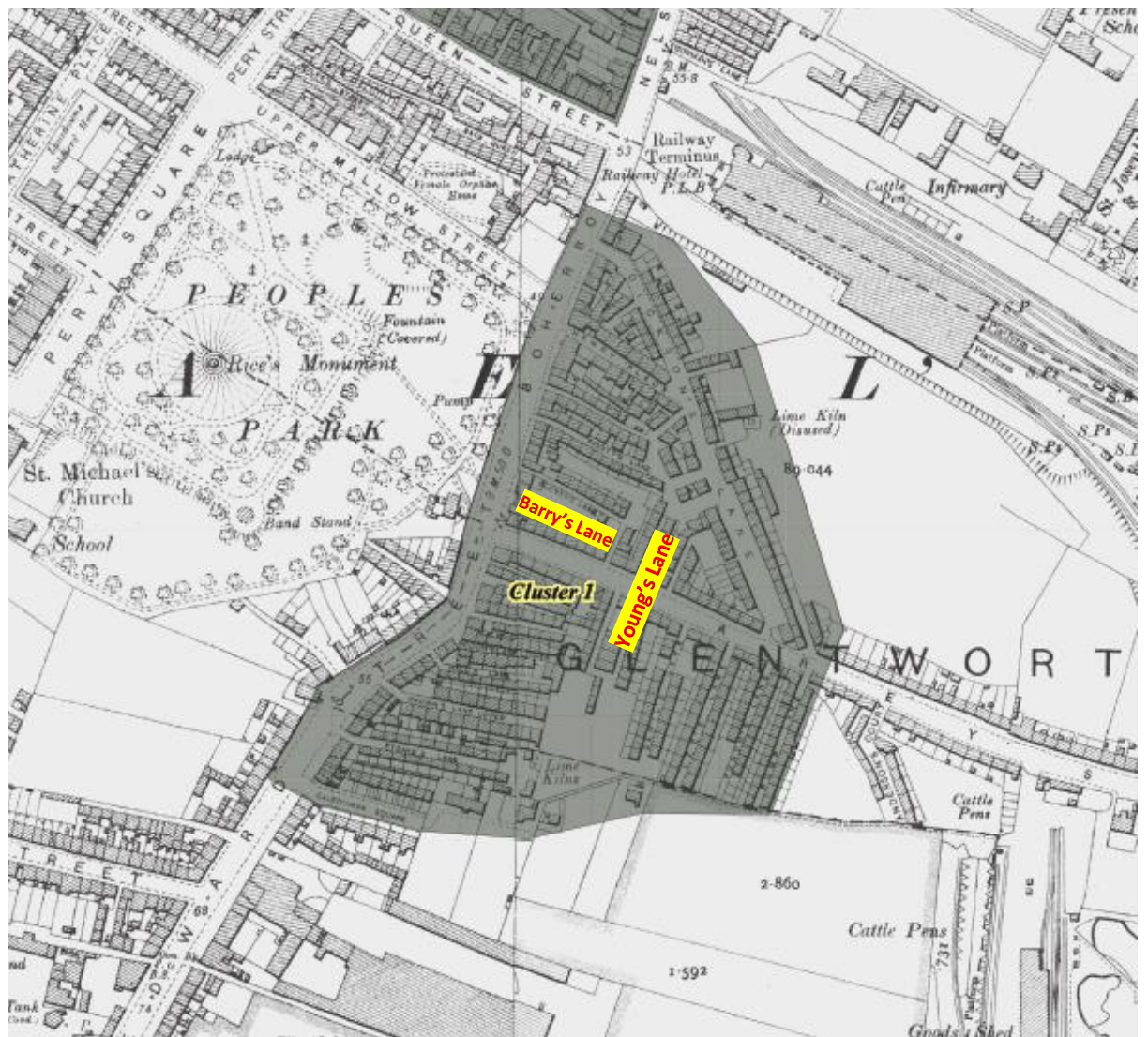
Cluster One was located in St Michael's Parish.⁵⁷⁴ The lanes included were located between Carey's Road, Boherbouy and Edward Street (Barry's Lane, Browns Lane Upper and Lower, Punches Lane, Piggott's Lane, Glovers Lane, Stokes Lane, Henry Place). The location of this cluster meant that the occupants had a distance to travel to the main streets in the city (up to 2.5km). The main characteristics associated with this cluster included houses which contained two to four rooms and located on lanes as opposed to main or secondary streets, mainly 2nd class houses, single family residences (in some cases rooms were shared with relatives) and average literacy levels (approximately 50%, able to read and write⁵⁷⁵). These houses were all under £5 in value from 1850 and 1930.

⁵⁷³ R. A. Cage, 'The Standard of Living Debate: Glasgow, 1800-1850', in the *Journal of Economic History* (1983) Vol. 43, No. 1; J. O'Brien, *Dear, Dirty Dublin, A City in Distress, 1899-1916* (London, 1982); S. Halliday, *The Great Stink of London* (London, 2007); M. Crawford, 'Typhus in the Nineteenth Century in Medicine', *Disease and the State in Ireland, 1650-1940* (Cork, 1999)

⁵⁷⁴ Glentworth DED.

⁵⁷⁵ Figure is based on the head of the household

Figure 8.2: Location of cluster 1(OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster one: Conditions on Barry's Lane

Table 8.2 below displays all the houses on Barry's Lane between 1850 and 1900 as extracted from the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* (1852) and the *General Valuation Lists* (1893-1930) for Limerick city. The seventeenth houses on the street recorded persistent low value dwellings (where all houses were under £5 in value). The *Primary Valuation House Books* recorded that the houses varied in quality (see chapter five) depending on the condition of the house (mainly from the B Category) and ranged from slated housing with brick or lime mortar, to thatched housing. The houses were 'not new', but some were 'in good order' while others were 'out of repair'. Houses which were out of repair and possibly overcrowded would have been hazardous to the public's health. It

was these types of houses which were discussed in chapter seven as being fit for demolition.

Table 8.2: Value of properties on Barry's Lane, 1850-1900

House Number	Description Of Property	Lodging House 1850	Lodging House 1900	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
1	H (House)			1 0 0	N/A ⁵⁷⁶
2	H			1 0 0	
3	H			1 0 0	
4	H			0 18 0	
4	H		Lodging House		1 0 0
5	H		Lodging House	0 18 0	1 0 0
6	H		Lodging House	1 0 0	1 0 0
7	H		Lodging House	1 0 0	1 0 0
8	H			1 0 0	1 0 0
9	H			1 0 0	1 0 0
10	H			1 0 0	
11	Building Ground			0	
12	Building Ground			0	
13	Building Ground			0	
13	H Y (House, Yard)				1 0 0
14	H Y			0 14 0	1 0 0
15	H Y			0 14 0	1 0 0
16	H Y			0 14 0	1 0 0
17	H Y			0 14 0	

⁵⁷⁶ Blank columns indicate that there was no value recorded in the primary source

The *General Valuation Lists* recorded that by 1900, four of the houses had become tenement buildings which were not recorded in the Primary Valuation of 1852.⁵⁷⁷ These houses were numbered 4, 5, 6 and 7. The *House and Building Returns Form* from the census of population recorded that all houses were second class. Only four of the twelve houses on the street were overcrowded, such as house numbers 4, 6,⁵⁷⁸ 7 and 12 (highlighted in the table below). Although each house contained one family, the average number of people in each family varied in size, contributing to overcrowding. The *Household Returns* for 1901 revealed that some houses were sublet, but were occupied by other relatives of the family. 33% of the people were employed as labourers, 8% employed in housekeeping and 25% employed in trades (blacksmith, miller and mason). Only 12% of females were employed on this street and 12% of children were employed under the age of 12 (messengers). The employment of women and children highlighted houses which experienced poverty. In many cases, having women and children employed in the household contributed to alleviating the financial pressure on the head of the household.

⁵⁷⁷ There is a discrepancy between lodging houses and tenement buildings within the primary sources.

⁵⁷⁸ House No.6 on Barry's Lane recorded no subdivision of property in the *House and Building Returns*. The house was occupied by one family, the O'Callaghan family. Michael (52) was a sugar boiler (a master workman in the refining of sugar or else a confectioner). Michael was also a widower. He had to raise five children by himself. Thomas, his eldest son was 13 years old and still in school recorded as able to read only. George (9), Catherine (7) and Anne (5) were also recorded as attending school although were unable to read. Teresa was 3 years old and the youngest in the family. She did not attend school as she was too young. Michael must have found it difficult to raise his children on his own while trying to earn a wage and pay rent. His trade was not a common trade in the nineteenth century and as a result, his wage might have been low. Therefore Michael must have been poor and found it difficult to provide for his family.

Table 8.3: Overcrowding on Barry's Lane, 1901⁵⁷⁹

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1	2	3	1	2	1
2	2	3	1	5	2
3	2	3	1	7	2
4	2	3	1	8	3
5	2	3	1	4	1
6	2	2	1	6	3
7	2	2	1	7	4
8	2	3	1	4	1
9	2	2	1	2	1
10	2	3	1	4	1
11	2	2	1	2	1
12	2	2	1	7	4

Cluster one: Conditions on Hennessy's Lane/Young's Lane

Hennessy's Lane recorded nine houses in the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* in 1852, all of which were under £2 in value (mainly £1, 10s, 0d.). The *House Books c. 1850* recorded that all houses were listed as '1B+', meaning that all houses were slated, built with either stone or brick, were 'not new', but were 'in sound order and good repair'. By 1900, the *General Valuation Lists* recorded that many of the houses on the lane had depreciated in value. By 1900 the number of lodging houses on the street had also increased with an extra five houses becoming lodging houses. The deterioration is only significant with the increase in the number of houses which had become lodging houses which would prove more harmful to the public's health.

⁵⁷⁹ Data extracted from the 1901 census of population.

Table 8.4: Value of properties on Hennessy's Lane, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
1	H Y		Lodging House	1 10 0	1 5 0
2	H Y			1 10 0	1 5 0
3	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 10 0	1 5 0
4	H Y		Lodging House	1 10 0	1 5 0
5	H Y		Lodging House	0 18 0	1 5 0
6	H Y		Lodging House	0 18 0	1 5 0
7	H Y		Lodging House	1 10 0	1 5 0
8	H Y			1 10 0	
9	H Y			1 10 0	

In contrast to the *General Valuation Lists* (1893-1930), the 1901 census recorded that all these houses were occupied by one family and had no lodgers. It is possible that the lodgers may have moved or else may have been rehomed elsewhere or that the census did simply not record the internal divisions. By 1911, houses no.2 & 6 were vacant and house no.4 had become a club house. All houses on this lane were now classified as 2nd class in quality and rent varied from approximately 1 shilling 4 pence - 1 shilling 5 pence per week. The heads of households on this lane were employed as 60% labourers with only 20% being able to read and write while the remaining 40% were employed in other miscellaneous activities.

Table 8.5: Overcrowding on Hennessy’s Lane, 1901

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1	2	Vacant	vacant	Vacant	Vacant
2	2	2	1	4	2
3	2	Vacant	vacant	Vacant	Vacant
4 ⁵⁸⁰	2	2	1	5	3
5	2	2	1	3	2
6 ⁵⁸¹	2	2	1	10	5
7	2	2	1	8	4

Examples highlight the lack of available space for families in each house as there is an oversupply of people per room. All houses were similar in size and quality but individual experiences differed as some families were larger than others. Three houses recorded overcrowding at the room level. House no.6 recorded a large family although four of the eldest children were recorded as employed and therefore able to contribute to the family income. However, ten people occupying two rooms for eating, sleeping and cooking presented health issues for the family and was highlighted by Whitelaw in chapter four.⁵⁸² As previously outlined, close and dirty living conditions provided the

⁵⁸⁰ House No.4 recorded one family in the 1901 census, the O’Connell family. Mary (40) was the head of the household and was listed as unemployed which might have been due to her poor literacy levels as she was unable to read or write. She was married but her husband was unlisted. Her eldest son Michael (30) was listed as a general labourer. Mary (22) her daughter, was employed as a factory girl and her brother John (18) was also a general labourer like his brother. James (16) was the youngest in the family and recorded as a school boy, although he was also unable to read or write. By 1911, this house was converted to a club house.

⁵⁸¹ House No.6 contained one large family of ten people sharing two rooms, the Murphy family. John (48) was the head of the household and employed as an engine driver. His average wage was approximately 20 – 25 shillings a week. His wife Margaret (45) was unemployed, which meant that John had to support her. They also had eight children. It would be difficult to provide for eight children on the father’s wage. As a result, Denis (21) was employed as a railway labourer, whose wages were approximately 20 shillings a week. Bridget (19), Anni (17) and Marey (15) are also recorded as employed as factory workers. Margaret (13), John (11) Patrick (9) and James (5) are the remaining four children. They were recorded as scholars, still in school, able to read and write. Since the family were larger than most families, it must have been difficult to provide food and clothing for all eight. As a result, the three eldest were forced to work. This alleviated some of the financial pressure off the father and some of the poverty experienced by the family.

⁵⁸² J. Prunty. *Dublin Slums 1800-1925, a study in urban geography* (Dublin, 2000) p. 25

ideal opportunity for the spread of disease and often favoured the lower classes of society.

In comparison to Barry's Lane, Young's Lane recorded a higher number of lodging houses on the street. Young's Lane also recorded a higher number of people per room (average 3 people per room) than Barry's Lane and also recorded a higher percentage of people employed as labourers (60% in comparison to 33%) and poor literacy levels (20%).

8.5.2 Cluster two

Cluster two was also located in St Michael's Parish. The streets included were Arthur's Quay and Michael Street. This cluster was located within close proximity to the city centre (between 160 – 350 metres). The key characteristics associated with this cluster included houses which were mainly 1st class houses (Arthur's Quay) and 2nd class houses (Michael Street), single family residences (in some cases rooms were shared with relatives) and multiple family residences (Arthur's Quay), average literacy levels (approximately 50% - 70%), variations occurred where not all occupants were able to read and write. These houses were mainly over £5 in value and ranged up to £40. Cluster two highlights differences in the key variables. This highlights that not all experiences of poverty and poor health were the same within the city and that variations did occur within the individual experiences within clusters.

Figure 8.3: Location of cluster 2(OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster two: Conditions on Arthur's Quay

In 1852, the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* recorded that houses on Arthur's Quay were valued between £15-25 (high value, above £5). Nine of the houses were recorded as having lodgers living in them (houses 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 16) which highlights the possibility of poor health conditions where single family dwellings were transformed to tenement buildings.

Table 8.6: Value of properties on Arthur's Quay, 1850-1901

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
1	Cellar			4 10 0	
1	H Y		Lodging House		12 0 0
2	H	Lodging House		23 0 0	
4	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	15 0 0	18 0 0
5	H Y		Lodging House		12 0 0
5	Shop, Room, Cellar				5 0 0
6	H Y		Lodging House		15 0 0
7	H Y		Lodging House		18 0 0
8	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	20 0 0	18 0 0
9	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	22 0 0	10 0 0
10	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	20 0 0	10 0 0
11	H (upper part)				7 0 0
11	H O Y	Lodging House		20 0 0	
11	Licd. Shop, Room				8 0 0
12	H Y		Lodging House	20 0 0	10 0 0
13	H (upper part)				7 0 0
13	H O Y	Lodging House		20 0 0	
13	Licd. Shop, Room				7 0 0
15	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	15 0 0	8 0 0
16	H	Lodging House		19 0 0	
16	Shop, Cellar				6 0 0
16	Shop, Room, Cellar				13 0 0
17	Shop, Rooms				10 0 0
18	Cellar				2 0 0
18	H, Cellar		Lodging House		15 0 0
18	Shop, Room				6 0 0

The *House Books* classified these houses as first class in solidity meaning that they were slated, made of brick and that they were ‘*slightly decayed*’, to ‘*old, but in repair*’. The later *General Valuation Lists* recorded that by 1900, a further three houses were subdivided (house number 5, 17 and 18). Houses on Arthur's Quay were larger in size than houses in the older parts of the town in St Mary's and St John's. The 1901 *House and Building Forms* recorded that these houses were classified as first class buildings. This therefore contributed to the value of the properties. According to the House Books, rents were approximately £20 to £30 for the houses (possibly per year). It is clear from

table 8.9 that many of the houses in 1901 were occupied by multiple families and had become tenement buildings. This created several health issues for the residents of these houses and also the sanitary facilities for the surrounding area. Arthur's Quay, as its name indicates, was a quayside location which meant that rat infestation was not unusual. In the special minute books there is mention of the washing down of horses on Arthur's Quay which added to the problem of keeping the place clean.⁵⁸³ The average number of people per house was 19 (with 36 rooms recorded as overcrowded with more than two people per room). This average figure does not mean that all houses contained 19 people per house. In some cases the house may appear overcrowded but not all the rooms may be overcrowded. 19% of head of households were employed as labourers, 11% employed in clothing, 13% employed in the occupations relating to food and the remainder were employed in miscellaneous activities. Of these families, 12% of women were also employed.

⁵⁸³ LCA, L/HG/HC/7/8

Table 8.7: Overcrowding on Arthur's Quay, 1901

No. of House	Class	No. of rooms occupied by each family	No. of families	No. of persons in family	Average person/room
1	1	1	5	1	1
		1 ⁵⁸⁴		1	1
		3 ⁵⁸⁵		5	2
		2		8	4
		2 ⁵⁸⁶		5	3
2	1	8	1 ⁵⁸⁷	25	3
3		Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
4	1	4	7	10	3
		2		7	4
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
		1		6	6

⁵⁸⁴ Margaret Barrett occupied one room in the house. Margaret (50) was employed as a fruiterer. She was a widow who had no children and only had to provide for herself. Margaret was unable to read or write. Another room was occupied by Bridget Cooney. Bridget (59) was like Margaret, she was a widower and occupied as a fruiterer. She had no family to support and lived off her own wage. Bridget was only able to read.

⁵⁸⁵ Three rooms in the house were occupied by the Pirrar family. John (26) was married with three children. He was employed as a labourer, with wages approximately 15 – 20 shillings a week. His wife Mary (24) was unemployed although she was able to read and write. Their three children were Michael (7), Bridget (5) and Christy (2). The older two children were recorded as attending school. It must have been difficult for John to provide for his whole family as he might not have been working. He must have had employment in order to pay rent for three rooms in the house.

⁵⁸⁶ Two rooms were also occupied by the Coonan family. Thomas (72) was the head of the household and was recorded as an army pensioner. His wife Mary (54) was unemployed, but could read and write. His family were no longer children (all over the age of 20) and two of them were employed. The eldest son Joseph (29) was employed as a store man and possibly worked in the stores located around the quay. He was able to both read and write. William (21) was employed as a water man. This type of employment usually referred to people who worked on transferring people across rivers within a city (boatman) or else it could have meant someone who distributed or supplied water for a living. Maggie, the youngest (20), was unemployed although could read and write. Although the family were living in a subdivided house, they had three incomes in the house.

⁵⁸⁷ The head of the household was Jane Hogan (60) who was a widow and employed as a lodging house keeper, able to read and write. She had two sons, Thomas (32) and James (30), both employed. Thomas was a painter and James was a carpenter. Both sons earned approximately 30 – 35 shillings a week, which were considered good wages. By dividing the number of people in the house by the number of available rooms meant that there would be an average of four people per room (overcrowded). The lodging house was full of males, aged between 25 and 40 years of age (with the exception of one female). The profession of those that lived in the lodging house varied from labourers, painters, tailors and bakers. One man was a civil engineer, who earned approximately 25 – 30 shillings a week. The remaining trades were all low class trades, possibly unemployed people who lived in the lodging house as they had no homes.

No. of House	Class	No. of rooms occupied by each family	No. of families	No. of persons in family	Average person/room
		1		1	1
		1		6	6
5	1	12	5	6	1
		2		5	3
		1		2	2
		1		2	2
		1		2	2
6	1	4	6	11	3
		2		3	2
		3		9	3
		2		6	3
		2		4	2
		1		2	2
7	1	2	6	5	3
		2		4	2
		1		3	3
		2		5	3
		2		7	4
		1		2	2
8	1	2	5	5	3
		2		13	7
		1		4	4
		1		1	1
		1		3	3
9	1	2	3	7	4
		2		3	2
		2		7	4
10	1	1	7	2	2
		2		4	2
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
		1		3	3
		2		4	2
		1		1	1
11	1	8	1	11	1
12	1	2	6	7	4

No. of House	Class	No. of rooms occupied by each family	No. of families	No. of persons in family	Average person/room
		1		5	5
		2		6	3
		1		2	2
		1		1	1
		1		1	1
13	1	1	3	5	5
		2		4	2
		2		5	3
14	1	2	3	4	2
		3		7	2
		2		6	3
15	1	2	3	4	2
		1		1	1
		2		7	4
16	1	2	2	4	2
		1		2	2
17	1	2	5	9	5
		1		2	2
		2		7	4
		2		6	3
		2		7	4
18	1	1	6	2	2
		1		2	2
		2		6	3
		1		1	1
		1		4	4
		4		3	1

Some houses contained single families while others contained multiple families. It is also essential to highlight that while some houses may have been deemed overcrowded, individual rooms within these houses may not have been overcrowded. However, 37 rooms were deemed overcrowded on Arthur's Quay. House No.1 was occupied by five families. The number of rooms allocated to each family varied and as a result, determined the level of overcrowding. The levels of experience in house no.1 varied

where some of the residents were unmarried and others had families to cater for. In contrast to this, house no.2 was recorded as a 'shop' in the *House and Building Returns* from the census in 1901, containing one family and twenty-five people in total. The *Household Return* form revealed that this house was a *lodging house* and was also returned in the *General Valuation Lists* as a lodging house. The lodging house on Arthur's Quay recorded 25 people living in 8 rooms, which was an average of 3 people per room. Another experience of poverty and overcrowding was house no. 4 was also subdivided amongst various people and resembled a typical tenement building. One room was occupied by one family, the Booths, a mother-in-law and also four lodgers. Lodgers were often taken in to help subsidise rents and help the head of household make an extra income. The house was also shared by Catherine Tarpey, a mother-in-law and Mary Tarpey, a niece. Another portion of the house was also sublet to four boarders. Five other families also occupied this house sharing rooms which were intended originally for one family.

Cluster two: Conditions on Michael's Street

In 1852, only three houses on Michael Street were recorded as low value (under £5) in the *Primary Valuation of Ireland*, which remained the same in the *General Valuation Lists* around 1900. No lodgers were recorded in the valuation records, although the census *Household Returns* revealed that house no.5 and no.8 were both subdivided. Buildings on Michael Street varied in class of structure according to the 1901 Census of Population *House and Building Forms*. House no.5 was recorded as first class (approximately thirteen rooms), while house number 6, 7, 8, and 10 were all recorded as second in class (approximately two to four rooms) and house number 9 was third class (one room).

Table 8.8: Overcrowding on Michael Street, 1901

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1		Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
2		Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
3		Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
4		Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
5 ⁵⁸⁸	1	1	5	1	1
		1		7	7
		2		3	1.5
		2		3	1.5
		1		1	1
6	2	2	1	7	3.5
7	2	2	1	4	2
8 ⁵⁸⁹	2	2	4	6	3
		1		7	7
		1		3	3
		2		6	3

⁵⁸⁸ Catherine Hannon occupied one room of House No.5 on Michael Street. Catherine (51) was unemployed and could not read or write. She was also a widower which meant that she no longer had a husband to provide for her. Since she could not read or write, this meant that it would be difficult to get employment.

The O'Malley family occupied another portion of the house. Norah (28) is also unemployed although was able to read and write. She was married, but her husband was not listed. Norah had six children to care for. They are all under the age of eight and four of which were in school. It is unknown how Norah provided for her children since she had no job and no husband. Even if Norah had to work, she would have to pay someone to mind the children while she is gone. It is possible that her husband was away at work and sending money home to her.

A third room in the house was occupied by another family. Bridget O'Connor (70) was unemployed, although might be considered too old to work. Her son Michael (40) was employed as a butcher, and therefore it is possible that he supported the family. He was able to read and write and although he was not married, he had one son, John. John (15) was also being trained as an apprentice butcher and able to read and write. Therefore there were two wages coming into the household. Two wages in the household would reduce the chance of poverty although they were subdividing a house. The Dwyer family also occupied a portion of the house. Ellen (60) was the head of this household. She lived with her two sons, Michael (36) and Patrick (30). Michael was employed as a general labourer and it was unlikely that he was earning a good wage as labour work was seasonal. He was able to read and write. Patrick was also employed as a labourer and sheriff bailiff. It is possibly that he was earning good wages since he was an officer of the sheriff. The final subdivision of the house was occupied by Charles O'Brien (40) who was employed as a tobacco spinner. Charles was only able to read and recorded no other family member living with him.

⁵⁸⁹ One room was occupied by the Cantrell family. William (40) was employed as a general labourer. He was able to read and write. His wife Kate (37) was also employed. She was a plain worker (often meant someone who was occupied in needle work). They have four sons ranging from 11 years to 3 years of age. All the children were recorded as scholars, able to read and write. Another subdivision in the house is occupied by the Butler family. This family are wealthier as they have a bigger income in the house. Michael (41) is a store man, who earns approximately 20shillings a week. He is able to read and write, and speak both English and Irish. His wife, Catherine (42) was a home worker (possibly same meaning as housekeeper). Their daughter Maggie (19) was employed in a factory as a worker. Michael (15), Thomas (7) and Christopher (4) were still in school. They shared the house with William Rose who is 70 years of age and was Michael's cousin. He was employed as a tailor and could not read or write.

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
9	3	1	1	1	1
10	2	4	1	7	1.75

At the time of the 1901 and 1911 censuses, only 40% of the houses on Michael Street were second class, with an average of six people per house and three per room, with six rooms being overcrowded in total. 18% of the head of households were employed as labourers, 12% were employed in clothing and 24% were employed in food and 29% were unemployed. There were 24% of women employed and only 59% of the residents were able to read and write which were some of the highest figures for Limerick in terms of unemployment and women employed. Michael Street was also in close proximity to obnoxious activities (slaughter house on Little Ellen Street and St Michael's graveyard off Michael's Lane, see chapter five) which also had an impact on the health of the people but the dumping of waste on the street. House no.5 was a first class house, with seven rooms and was occupied by five families.

House no.8 recorded four subdivisions and four families which means approximately one family per room. However, family size varied with some families being larger than others and as a result, reduced the lack of available space for the occupants. It was also recorded in chapter six that several of the houses on Michael Street recorded having pigs living under the stairs or in close proximity to the house (1911). This also contributed to the poor living conditions as well as overcrowding.

Cluster two also highlights variations between streets where Arthur's Quay recorded 1st class dwellings and Michael Street recorded 2nd class dwellings. Arthur's Quay was mainly tenement buildings occupied by multiple families while Michael Street was mainly single family residences with the exception of two houses. This cluster falls into the typology one and typology two.

8.5.3 Cluster three

Cluster Three was located in St John's Parish. The samples of houses selected were located on Whitewine Lane, Rosberry Place and Forker's Lane. The location of this cluster was approximately 600-700m (NE) from the city centre. All houses were valued under £5. In 1901, 57% of the houses on Whitewine Lane were second class buildings according to the census of population while houses on Rosberry Place were 100% second class. The streets contained a mix of both single and multiple family occupancy.

Figure 8.4: Location of cluster 3 (OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster three: conditions on Whitewine Lane

In 1852, Whitewine Lane contained eleven houses, valued under £3. Seven of these houses contained lodgers according to the *Primary Valuation of Ireland*. According to the *House Books* at this time, these houses were classed as first class in solidity, although were 'old and out of repair'.

Table 8.9: Value of properties on Whitewine Lane, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
2	H Y			1 7 0	2 0 0
3	H			1 7 0	
4	H	Lodging House		1 14 0	2 10 0
5	H	Lodging House		4 15 0	2 0 0
6	H	Lodging House		1 17 0	
7	H	Lodging House		1 17 0	1 5 0
8	H	Lodging House		1 10 0	1 5 0
9	H	Lodging House		2 5 0	
10	H			0 18 0	2 0 0
13	H			2 8 0	
14	H Y			3 10 0	
15	H		Lodging House	3 10 0	1 10 0
16	H (in rere)				0 15 0
17	H (in rere)				0 15 0
18	H				1 15 0
19	H O				3 0 0
21	Stable				0 15 0
28	H				4 0 0
29	H				4 0 0
15A	H		Lodging House		1 10 0
15B	H				0 15 0
15C	H				1 10 0
18A	H				2 0 0
18B	H				1 10 0
18C	H				1 10 0
18D	H				1 10 0
26A	H				1 10 0
9A	H Y				3 10 0
9B	H Y				3 10 0
9C	H (over archway)				1 10 0

By 1900, the *General Valuation Lists* recorded that eleven of the houses on Whitewine Lane were in ‘ruins’ meaning that they were no longer fit for habitation due to their condition and only two houses were now lodging houses. House no.26 was recorded as dilapidated. Values ranged from 15s, to £4. According to the 1901 Census *house and building returns*, houses were second and third class in building quality, with each

house containing roughly two to four rooms. The average number of people per house was 6, with 3 people per room on average. On Whitewine Lane, 25% of the people were employed as labourers, 22% were employed in clothing (tailors etc.) and less than 1% were unemployed (the remainder in miscellaneous activities). Literacy levels were under the average where 44% of the head of households living on this lane were able to read and write. There were 25% of women employed and 3% of children (under the age of 12).

Table 8.10: Overcrowding on Whitewine Lane, 1901

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1 ⁵⁹⁰	2	1	4	1	1
		1		5	5
		1		2	2
		1		3	3
2	2	4	1	2	1
		1		1	1
		1		9	9
		1		7	7
3	2	2	1	6	3
4	2	2	1	6	3
5	2	2	1	11	6

⁵⁹⁰ House No.1 was subdivided amongst four families. One room was occupied by one lady, Mary Cooney. Mary (62) was employed as a charwoman (a woman hired to do day-to-day odd jobs, usually cleaning). Mary had no dependants, and she could not read or write. It is unlikely that Mary had a good income, although since she had no family, so only had herself to care for. Her wage could also have been a contributing factor as to why she lived in a subdivided house. Another room in the house was occupied by the O'Rourke family. Mary (58) was the head of the household. She was widow, employed as a boot closer. Mary might not have received a good income in this profession. She lived with her three children Ellen (29), Teresa (26) and Martin (24). Ellen and Teresa were employed as seamstresses while Martin was employed as a car-driver. Since her children were employed, Mary would not have much financial pressure. John also shared the room, who was Mary's grandson. He was employed as a shop porter at the age of 16. This meant that he might have left school at an early age. The family had to share only one room in the house. Mary Hartigan (65) occupied another room in the house. Mary was a milk-dealer. She was unable to read or write. Mary was a widow but lived with her grandson Henry Long. Henry (15) was also employed as a shop porter and could read and write. The final room in the house was occupied by the Cahill family. Mary (22) was young and was the head of the household. She was employed as a tailoress and could not read. Katie (15), her daughter and John (9), her son, was still in school and both were unable to read. This meant that her children might not have attended school at all. They shared one room in the house and Mary's income might have been low, hence why she and her family shared a house.

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
6 ⁵⁹¹	2	3	1	8	3
7	2	2	1	8	4
8	2	1	3	4	4
		1		6	6
		1		4	4
9	3	2	1	3	2
10					
11	3	1	1	3	3
12	3	2	1	5	3
13	3	1	1	7	7
14	2	1	2	3	3
		1		4	4
15	2	2	1	3	2
16	2	2	1	5	3
17	2	2	2	6	3
		1		2	2
18	3	2	1	5	3
19	3	2	1	4	2
20	3	1	1	7	7
21	3	1	1	6	6
22	3	1	1	3	3
23	2	2	1	5	3
24	2	2	1	2	1
25	2	2	1	3	2
26	2	2	1	3	2
27	2	2	1	3	2
28			Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
29			Vacant	Vacant	Vacant
30			Vacant	Vacant	Vacant

⁵⁹¹ House No.6 on Whitewine Lane was occupied by the Kennedy family. Mary (45) was the head of the household. She was employed as a housekeeper, able to read and write. She had five children to care for, although two were already employed. John (22) and Francis (21) were employed as labourers. Both were able to read and write, although it is unknown whether or not they were employed. Richard (16), Dominick (9) and Bridget (14) were still in school. Since Mary and her two sons were employed in poorly paid labour, two lodgers occupied the same room. William Shire (27) was a pork butcher and Charles McMahon (27) was employed as a dock labourer. Renting out the room to two extra lodgers alleviated the pressure of the rent for Mary although contributed to the overcrowding within the rooms.

Rosberry Place

In 1850, the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* for Rosberry Place recorded nine houses, ranging from £1-3 in value which had increased to up to £4/5 by 1900 according to the *General Valuation Lists*.

Table 8.11: Value of properties on Rosberry Place, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description. Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
1	H Y			1 0 0	1 0 0
2	H Y			1 0 0	1 0 0
3	H Y			1 0 0	1 0 0
4	H Y			1 0 0	1 0 0
5	H				1 10 0
6	H Y	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 10 0	3 0 0
7	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 10 0	3 0 0
8	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	4 0 0
9	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 14 0	2 0 0
10	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 10 0	5 0 0
5A	H				1 10 0
5B	H				1 0 0

House numbers 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were occupied by *lodgers* which continued to remain lodging houses into the twentieth century, unlike Whitewine Lane. The *House Books* revealed that houses no.1 – 4 were thatched and classified as ‘*old and dilapidated*’, and some even ‘*scarcely habitable*’. Rents were approximately 1s 3d per week. The rest of the houses on the lane were slated and were classified as old and scarcely habitable. The *General Valuation Lists* recorded the same values and houses numbered 6 –10 still contained lodgers. The 1901 census recorded that these houses were all second class (100%).

Table 8.12: Overcrowding on Rosberry Place, 1901

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1	2	2	1	4	2
2 ⁵⁹²	2	2	1	8	4
3	2	2	1	2	1
4	2	2	1	5	2.5
5	2	2	1	6	3
6	2	2	1	5	2.5
7	2	4	1	4	1
		1		7	7
		1		4	4
		1		3	3
8	2	1	4	6	6
		1		8	8
		1		4	4
		1		3	3
9	2	1	2	2	2
		1		6	6
10	2	1	3	6	6
		1		7	7
		1		2	2
11	2	2	1	6	3
12	2	1	2	6	6
		1		4	4

On average, Rosberry Place had nine people per house with an average of three people per room with multiple family residences. Only 41% of the head of households were

⁵⁹² House No.2 in Rosberry Place was occupied by only one family, the Wards. Each family had one room. Patrick (50) was the head of the household. He was employed as a dock labourer. His wife Catherine (46) was unemployed. Their eldest daughter Bridget (18) and son Daniel (14) were both employed as tailors/tailoress at a young age. Stephen (12), Ellen (10), Lena (6) and Norah (7) are all still in school, able to read and write. Due to the large family size, it was unlikely that Patrick would have been able to support his family without his eldest children working. In contrast to the Ward family, house No.7 was subdivided and contained four families. One room was occupied by the Kennedy family. Thomas (53) was employed as a dock labourer. His wife Mary (50) was unemployed. John (13), their eldest son and Ellen (10) were both listed as attending school. Although the family was small in size, two of the children were in school and the mother was unemployed. Thomas's wage was approximately 15 shillings a week if he was employed and he had a family to support. This might be why the family shared a house. The Spights lived in another room. Edward (29) was young and employed as a house painter. His wife Mary (29) was unemployed and they had four children. John (9), Alphonsus (7) and Mary (5) were still in school and the family relied on the father for food and rent. Similar findings were recorded for the two remaining rooms in the house.

able to read and write. 64% of the head of households were employed as labourers, and 32% of women were employed while the rest were employed in miscellaneous activities. In 1850, the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* for Rosberry Place recorded nine houses, ranging from £1-3 in value.

Cluster three: Conditions on Forker’s Lane

In the *Primary Valuation of Ireland* in 1852, Forker’s Lane contained fourteen houses, all of which were valued at 18 shillings. The only house to contain lodgers was house no.4.⁵⁹³ Houses no’s 1 – 4 were all valued at £3 10s and were owned by the *Corporation of Limerick*. This may have been due to the Corporation buildings houses on this lane and letting them to the working classes.

Table 8.13: Value of properties on Forker’s Lane, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	<i>1850 £ s. d.</i>	<i>1900 £ s. d.</i>
1	H			0 10 0	3 10 0
2	H Y			0 15 0	3 10 0
3	H			0 18 0	3 10 0
4	H	Lodgers		0 18 0	3 10 0
5	H			0 18 0	
6	H			0 18 0	
7	H			0 18 0	
8	H			0 18 0	
9	H			0 18 0	
10	H			0 18 0	
11	H			0 18 0	
12	H			0 18 0	
13	H			0 18 0	
14	H			0 18 0	

⁵⁹³ The street was unnamed by 1900 until 2008 when it was renamed Davitt Street. It was also listed in the *General Valuation Lists* as Davitt Street

Table 8.14: Overcrowding on Forker's Lane, 1901

Street/Lane	No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
Forkers Lane	1 ⁵⁹⁴	3	2	1	7	3.5

The 1901 *House and Building Form* recorded only one house remaining on this street which was third class. The remaining house was occupied by the Fitzgerald family. In this family, the head of household, the mother and a son were all employed, meaning that there were three wages coming into the household but the family continued to live in overcrowded conditions. The head of the household was a labourer and was also to read only. As a result of the key variables, this clusters falls under typology two and three.

8.5.4 Cluster four

Cluster four was located in St Michael's Parish and bordered St John's parish and two lanes were chosen as examples, Flag Lane and Lady's Lane. The location of this cluster meant that the occupants had approximately 600m distance to travel to the main streets in the city. The main characteristics associated with this cluster included houses which contained two to four rooms, mainly 2nd class houses, single family residences (in some cases rooms were shared with relatives) and average literacy levels (approximately 50%, variations occurred where not all occupants were able to read and write). These houses ranged in quality and were all under £5 in value from 1850 and 1930.

Both these lanes were relatively small and narrow which as previously outlined in chapter 4 and chapter 6 contributed to unsanitary conditions for the people living in these lanes. 80-88% of the houses on the lanes were 2nd class houses and were returned as single family residences. 44% of the residents were employed as labourers, 13%

⁵⁹⁴ Michael (40) was the head of the household. He was employed as a dock labourer. His wife Margaret (42) was a washerwoman (washing clothes). They had five children, Richard (14), John (9), Mary (11), Michael (2) and Bridget (5). The eldest son, Richard, was employed as a shop porter. He might have left school early in order to help earn an income for the family. His father would earn approximately 15 shillings a week. The wages of the mother are unknown but it is unlikely that they were not good. The remaining four children are still in school and relied on the income of the parents. With only two rooms in the house, the family were crowded into the rooms with an average of 4 people per room.

unemployed, 6% employed in clothing and the remainder in miscellaneous activities. Of these people, only 29% were able to read and write and 12% of women were employed.

Figure 8.5: Location of cluster 4 (OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster four: Conditions on Flag Lane

The *Primary Valuation of Ireland* recorded that in 1852, Flag Lane contained 23 houses valued at under £3. Nine of the twenty-three houses on the lane contained *lodgers*. There were approximately 48% of head of households employed in general labour and 17% were returned as unemployed. Of these head of households, only 52% were able to read and write and 4% of women were employed.

Table 8.15: Value of properties on Flag Lane, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	<i>1850 £ s. d.</i>	<i>1900 £ s. d.</i>
1	H		Lodging House	1 14 0	1 10 0
2	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
3	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
4	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
5	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
6	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 4 0	2 0 0
8	H			1 14 0	
9	H			1 0 0	1 0 0
10	H			0 18 0	0 15 0
11	H			0 18 0	0 15 0
12	H		Lodging House	0 18 0	0 15 0
15	H		Lodging House	2 0 0	2 0 0
16	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
17	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
18	H		Lodging House	2 8 0	2 0 0
19	H		Lodging House	1 4 0	2 0 0
20	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	1 2 0	1 0 0
21	H		Lodging House	0 14 0	2 10 0
22	H		Lodging House	0 18 0	2 10 0
23	H			1 0 0	

The quality of these houses according to the *House Books* was classified as first class in solidity, meaning that they were all slated and built with stone or brick. These houses were recorded as being of ‘*sound order and good repair*’, as classified by the House Books, while some of the houses were ‘*deteriorated by age*’ meaning that they required work due to damage in previous years. Two of the houses on the lane, no.21 and no.22, were thatched houses, but were also ‘*in good repair*’. The values of these two properties were under £1. The *House and Building Returns* from the 1901 census revealed that the houses on Flag Lane were 2nd class in structure (with the exception of houses 10 and 11), and all contained approximately two to four rooms per house. The rent of the houses on Flag Lane varied from 1 shilling to 2 shillings 6 pence per house according to the House Books. It is clear that the number of lodging houses recorded in the later

General Valuation Lists from 1893-1900 recorded an increase in the number of lodging houses than previously recorded in 1852. The increase in lodging houses possibly contributed to a reduction in the value of the properties on the street.

Table 8.16: Overcrowding on Flag Lane, 1901

No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
1	2	3	1	7	2
2	2	3	1	2	1
3	2	3	1	3	1
4		?	?	?	?
5	2	4	1	3	1
6 ⁵⁹⁵	2	2	2	10	5
		2		3	2
7	2	2	2	2	1
		2		2	1
8	2	2	1	2	1
9	2	2	1	5	3
10	3	1	1	2	2
11	2	1	1	2	2

⁵⁹⁵ House No.6 on Flag Lane was subdivided amongst two families according to the census of population. One portion of the house was occupied by the Neville family who had two rooms. Thomas (40) was employed as a general labourer. He was unable to read or write. His wife Mary (37) was unemployed. They had eight children (aged between 1 and 13) to provide for on very low wages, or possibly no wages at all. All the children are listed as scholars, with the exception of Laurence who is only 1 year old. The second portion of this house is occupied by the Flynn family, who also had two rooms. James (26) was a father, employed as a general labourer. He is able to read and write. His wife, Anne (24), was unemployed and stayed at home to mind her new born son. Although Anne was not employed and it was possible that James was not, they do not seem to be experiencing the poverty that the Nevilles were experiencing due to a smaller family size as they only had one child to mind and the Nevilles had eight. A large family size can contribute to the financial pressure of the chief wage earner. House No.16 was also subdivided and occupied by three families. One room in the house was occupied by the McGrath family. Daniel (21) was the head of the household. He was employed as a general labourer. He was able to read and write. His wife Eliza (25) was unemployed. They had no children. Another room was occupied by Ellen Hogan. Ellen (30) was a seamstress from Co. Clare. She was able to read and write and was not married and had no children to depend on her. The final portion of the house was occupied by two families, the Venners and three boarders, the Dwyers. Thomas (25) was the head of the household and was also young. He was employed as a general labourer. His wife, Ellen (21) was unemployed. They had three children, aged between 1 and 4 years of age. Thomas had taken in three boarders to live with them. Theresa Dwyer was the main boarder. She was 35 years of age and had two children, who were also boarders, living with her and the Dwyers. There was a machinist in a factory, and her two children, Mary (10) and Joseph (12), were both in school.

12	2	2	2	7	4
No. of House	Class of House	No. of Rooms occupied by each family	No. Families	No. of People in family	Average person/room
		2		5	3
13	2	2	2	2	1
		2		5	3
14	2	2	2	3	2
		2		2	1
15	2	2	1	6	3
16	2	1	3	2	2
		1		1	1
		2		8	4
17	2	2	1	6	3

The lane contained a mix of both families and single residents who may have shared rooms with relatives. In some cases, family sizes were large (like the Neville family with eight children) which contributed to the financial pressure of the family. In other cases, residents had no one to provide for.

Cluster four: conditions on Lady's Lane

Lady's Lane was similar to Flag Lane. House values in 1850 ranged from 18s (house numbers 12 and 13, as they were in the rear of other houses) to £4, according to the *Primary Valuation of Ireland*. Seven of the seventeen houses on this lane contained lodgers.

Table 8.17: Value of properties on Lady's Lane, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	<i>1850 £ s. d.</i>	<i>1900 £ s. d.</i>
1	H Y		Lodgers	2 10 0	2 5 0
2	H Y		Lodgers	2 10 0	2 5 0
3	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
4	H O Y		Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
5	H Y		Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
6	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
7	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
8	H Y		Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
9	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	2 8 0	2 5 0
10	H Y		Lodgers	4 0 0	2 5 0
11	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	3 10 0	3 10 0
12	H (in rere)		Ruins	0 18 0	0
13	H (in rere)		Ruins	0 18 0	0
14	H O Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	14 10 0	4 5 0
15	H Y		Lodgers	4 0 0	4 0 0
16	H Y	Lodgers	Lodgers	4 0 0	4 0 0
17	H Y		Lodgers	1 17 0	1 15 0

The *House Books* classified almost all the houses as first class in solidity, i.e. slated and built of brick and stone. The only two exceptions were house numbers 12 and 13 which were thatched (which accounts for the low values also), which by 1900 had become classified as ruins in the *General Valuation Lists* from 1893-1900. The houses were in 'good order and sound repair'. The *General Valuation Lists* recorded that by 1900, houses numbered 1-6, 12, 15-22, were all occupied by lodgers and all values had dropped to approximately £2. The 1901 census revealed that houses number 1- 11 (£2,5,0) and 14 – 16 (£4,0,0) were all occupied by lodgers, while houses numbered 12 and 13 were classified as 'ruins'. The average rent for Lady's Lane was 1 shilling to £5 depending on the size and quality of the house. 88% of the houses on this lane were second class with some houses recording multiple family residences. 41% of the head of households were employed as labourers, 6% employed as housekeepers and 9% were unemployed. Only 53% could read and write and 7% of females were employed.

Table 8.18: Overcrowding on Lady's Lane, 1901

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
1 ⁵⁹⁶	2	6	1	8	1
2	3	2	1	2	1
3	2	2	2	3	2
		2		6	3
4	2	4	1	5	1
5	2	2	2	6	3
		2		2	1
6	2	2	2	3	2
		2		2	1
7	2	4	1	7	2
8	2	2	2	3	2
		2		3	2
9	2	2	2	4	2
		2		2	1
10	2	2	2	3	2
		2		5	3
11	3	2	1	2	1
12	2	2	3	6	3
		1		3	3
		2		6	3
13	2	1	3	5	5
		1		3	3
		2		3	2
14 ⁵⁹⁷	2	1	4	7	7
		1		4	4
		1		3	3

⁵⁹⁶ House No.1 on Lady's Lane was occupied by Margaret Griffin. Margaret had sublet her house to lodgers. Margaret (70) was listed as a housekeeper. She was not married and had no recorded children. She had seven lodgers renting rooms within her house, all of whom were employed. Two of the lodgers were male, the remaining five were female. The occupations of the lodgers included a painter, cook, waiter and four servants. Although Margaret is subletting her house, she is not experiencing poverty as she was earning an income from the seven lodgers.

⁵⁹⁷ House No.14 recorded four subdivisions in the *House and Building Returns*. One room was occupied by the Conway family. Martin (30) was the head of the household and was employed as a general labourer. His wife, Bridget (28) was unemployed. They had four children, Thomas (7), Joseph (4), Mary Ellen (3) and Patrick (1). Three of the children were in school. Martin must have found it difficult to provide for his family as his wage was low and he might not have been working. As a result, an aunt, Ellen McDonnell, was sharing the room with the family. Ellen was employed. She was a widow. The Galvin family lived in the next room. Bridget (38) was the head of the household. She was unemployed and had three children to care for. Her husband was not listed. Her eldest children, Francis (13) and Christine (11), were in school. The youngest was only 3 years of age. Similar results to this were found in the remaining two rooms in the house amongst the Whelan and the O'Connor family.

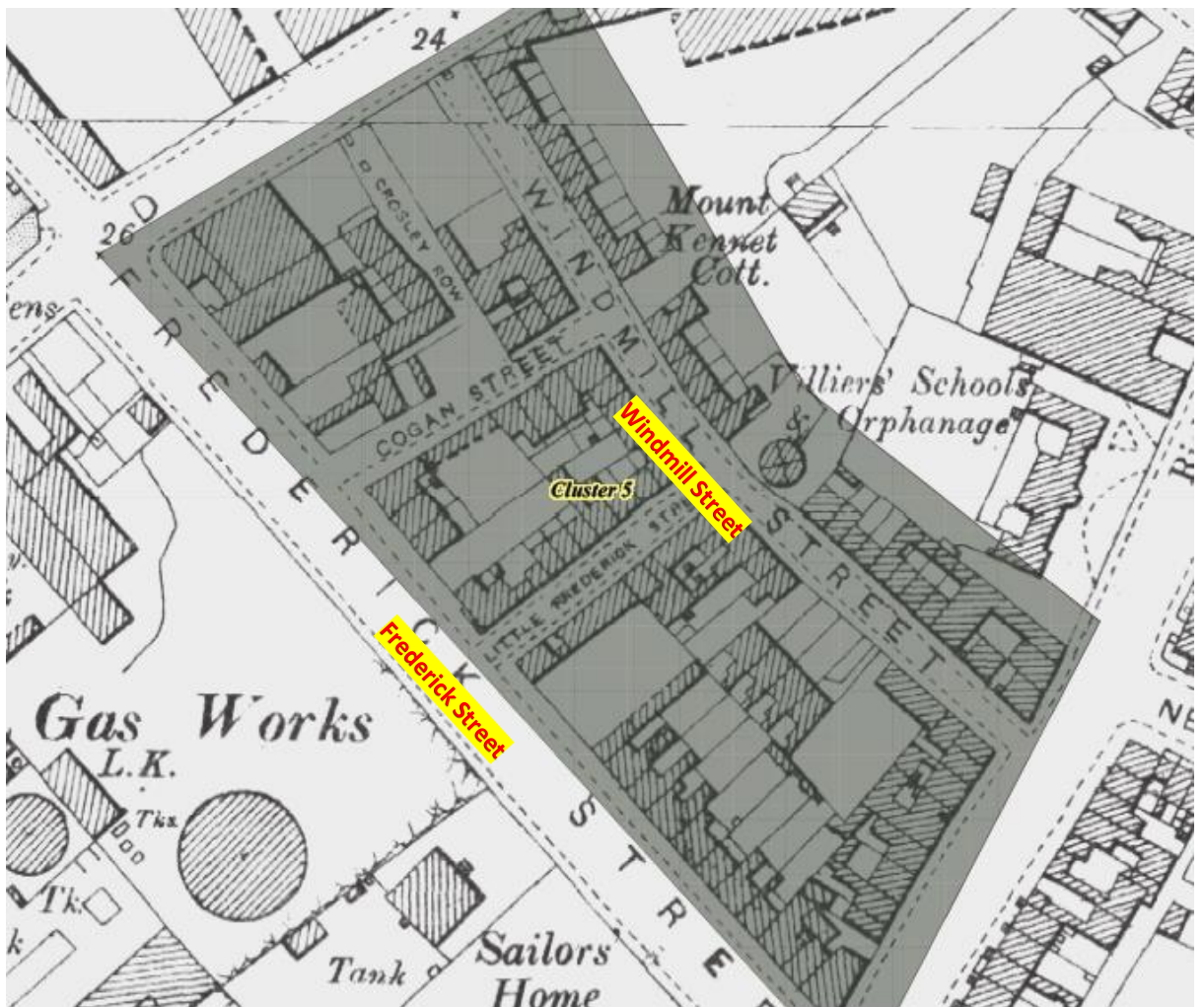
<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
		1		3	3
15	2	2	4	4	2
		2		5	3
		2		3	2
		2		5	3
16	2	2	1	4	2

The majority of the houses on this street contained two or more families with fourteen of the rooms containing more than two people. The majority of families were still employed in unskilled occupations (labourers etc.). This cluster falls primarily under typology two.

8.5.5 Cluster five

Cluster five was located in St Michael's Parish. The streets included were located along the docks. Both Frederick Street and Windmill Street were located approximately 1km from the city centre. Nearly 70% of the houses on these streets were 2nd class, some with single families and others with multiple families. It is possible that these houses were subdivided due to the people working on the docks. Limerick special minute books commented on some of the sanitary conditions which existed around this area and recorded close proximity to lodging houses. The docks continued to develop during the nineteenth century due to the industrial revolution and in many cases provided labour to the people. Therefore it is not surprising that the majority of men occupying the houses in close proximity to the docks were employed in trades.

Figure 8.7: Location of cluster 6(OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster five: conditions on Frederick Street

The *Primary Valuation* for Frederick Street in 1852 recorded that five of the houses were valued under £5 and the rest recorded no value.

Table 8.19: Value of properties on Frederick Street, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
9	H (in rere)			1 17 0	
10	H (in rere)			1 17 0	
11	H Y			3 10 0	
12	H Y			3 10 0	
13	H Y			3 10 0	
17	H Y				4 0 0
18	H Y				4 0 0
19	H Y				4 0 0
20	H Y				4 0 0
21	H Y				4 0 0
22	H Y				4 0 0
23	H Y				4 0 0
24	H Y				4 0 0
25	H Y				4 0 0
26	H Y				4 0 0
27	H Y				4 0 0
28	H Y				4 0 0
29	H Y				4 0 0
30	H Y				4 0 0
31	H Y				4 0 0

There were seventeen houses in total, three of which were classified as ‘building grounds’ which meant that new houses were under construction or that the sites were vacant and could be built upon. By 1900, the *General Valuation Lists* recorded that house values still ranged between £7 – 20. The names of the occupiers had constantly changed over various years showing movement of the people that were renting the houses and highlighting that there were not permanent residents. Examples include Frederick Street house numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8 and 9. These houses changed lodgers for the years 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907, 1909 and 1910. The 1901 census classified that 72% of the houses were second class in structure, containing approximately five to nine rooms per house (highlighting a contrast in the types of houses occupied in St John’s and St Mary’s Parish). Houses numbered 1, 10, 12 and 16 were all recorded as subdivided. 11% of the head of households were returned as agents, 11% were

employed in the army and only 21% were employed in shipping industry. 95% were able to read and write. 16% of females were also employed.

Table 8.20: Overcrowding on Frederick Street, 1901

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
1 ⁵⁹⁸	2	9	1	9	1
2					
3	2	6	1	3	1
4	2	8	1	7	1
5					
6	2	7	1	12	2
7	2	8	1	4	1
8	2	9	1	12	1
9	2	9	1	5	1
10	2	6	2	4	1
		2		2	1
11	2	7	1	6	1

⁵⁹⁸ House No.1 was subdivided amongst two families, the Hall family and the Wright family. Thomas (61) was the head of the household. He was a tea merchant agent and publican. He was able to read and write and was also a Methodist. His wife, Margaret (56) was a house keeper. Thomas's brother, William (73), also lived in the house. William was a retired engineer. He was also a widower. Alice Wright was John's daughter. Alice (33) was unemployed and was married. Her husband was unlisted. Mary Elizabeth (22) was also John's daughter and was unemployed and unmarried. William (19) was the only son and was employed as a fitter at works. He was able to read and write. John had two granddaughters, Margaret (2) and Ester (under one year). The family also recorded having a servant living in the house, Mary Anne O'Shea (20), who did daily jobs around the house. House No.16 was also subdivided amongst four families. The Hanrahan family occupied one portion of the house. Thomas (27) was the head of the household and was employed as a storekeeper (clerk). He was able to read and write. Joseph (12) was his younger brother and was still attending school. He was able to read and write and speak both English and Irish. Ellen (23) was Thomas's sister. She was unemployed, similar to Elizabeth (18). Mary (21) was the only sister employed, working in the biscuit factory. The Edmond family lived in the next room. Walter (30) was a Sergeant in the Royal Garrison Artillery. He was able to read and write. He was also Wesleyan. His wife, Rachael (28) was unemployed. She had two young children, Mabel (7) and Walter (5), both of whom were in school and sharing a room in the house. Catherine Scales occupied one room in the house. Catherine (52) was unemployed and looking for work as a cook or domestic servant. She was able to read and write and was not married. She had no dependant family. She did not share her room and it is likely that she was employed in a house nearby. Mary Anne Conlan (50) also lived in the house. She was employed as a general servant. She was married, but her husband was unlisted. Alice (21), her daughter also shared the room with her and was employed as a dress maker. Both females were employed and had two incomes in the household. The wages might have only been enough to rent one room between the two females.

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
12	2	5	2	7	1
		1		4	4
13	2	6	1	11	2
14	1	9	1	10	1
15	2	5	1	7	1
16	1	5	4	5	1
		2		4	2
		2		2	1
		1		1	1
17	2	7	1	3	0
18	1	11	1	6	1

Cluster five: conditions on Windmill Street

The *Primary Valuation of Ireland* recorded sixty-five houses on Windmill Street in 1852. All the houses were valued under £12 and houses numbered 29 – 36 were occupied by *lodgers*. By 1900, housing value showed variations as it increased and decreased. 74% of the houses were recorded as 2nd class, with several houses also returning multiple family occupancy.

Table 8.21: Value of properties on Windmill Street, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
3	H Y G		Lodging House		7 0 0
5	H Y			2 0 0	
6	H Y G		Lodging House	2 0 0	7 0 0
7	H Y			2 0 0	
11	H Y			3 10 0	3 0 0
12	H O Y			3 10 0	2 10 0
13	H Y			3 10 0	
14	H		Lodging House	3 10 0	3 10 0
15	H G			4 0 0	4 0 0
16	H O		Lodging House	3 15 0	4 0 0
18	H Y			2 15 0	

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	1850 £ s. d.	1900 £ s. d.
19	H		Lodging House	2 5 0	7 0 0
20	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
21	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
22	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
23	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
24	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
25	H Y			2 5 0	2 0 0
26	H Y		Lodging House		2 0 0
27	H Y				2 5 0
28	H Y				2 5 0
29	H	Lodging House	Lodging House	6 5 0	2 5 0
30	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House	Lodging House	6 5 0	3 10 0
31	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House	Lodging House	6 5 0	3 10 0
32	H (in rere)	Lodging House		7 0 0	
33	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House		8 0 0	3 10 0
34	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House		1 17 0	3 10 0
35	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House		1 17 0	3 10 0
36	H Y (in rere)	Lodging House		1 17 0	3 10 0
37	H (in rere)			2 15 0	
38	H (in rere)			2 0 0	
39	H O (in rere)			2 10 0	2 0 0
40	H (in rere)			2 0 0	2 0 0
41	H (in rere)			2 0 0	
42	H (in rere)			2 0 0	2 0 0
43	H O			4 0 0	
44	H G			4 0 0	
45	H			3 15 0	
46	H Y			3 10 0	
47	H Y			2 15 0	
48	H (in rere)			2 15 0	
49	H Y (in rere)			2 15 0	
50	H O Y (in rere)			2 15 0	
51	H Y (in rere)			2 15 0	
53	H Y (in rere)			3 10 0	
54	H Y (in rere)			3 10 0	
55	H			3 0 0	
56	H			3 0 0	

By 1900, the *General Valuation Lists* revealed that the number of lodging houses had increased, Houses numbered 3, 6, 14, 16, 18, 19, 26, 29, 30 and 31 all contained lodgers. All the values remained under £12. 6% of the head of households were employed as housekeepers, 14% employed as labourers and 13% were employed in clothing. 69% were able to read and write and 49% of women were employed in comparison to the women that were employed on Frederick Street and the higher literacy levels.

Table 8.22: Overcrowding on Windmill Street, 1901

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
1 ⁵⁹⁹	2	3	4	3	1
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
		1		4	4
2	2	3	4	4	1
		1		4	4
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
3	2	4	2	8	2
		1		4	4
4	2	2	3	4	2
		1		1	1
		2		11	6
5	2	5	1	4	1
6	2	3	3	9	3
		1		4	4

⁵⁹⁹ House No.1 was subdivided amongst three families, sharing five rooms. The Collins occupied one portion of the house (three rooms). Patrick (54) was the head of the household. He was a mattress maker. He was able to read and write. He was married to Ellen (50). Ellen was unemployed, although could read and write and speak both English and Irish. The daughter Margaret (23) was also employed as a dressmaker. The family must have been comfortable since they occupied three rooms in the house and the daughter brought an extra income into the household. Louisa Shepard (24) occupied one room in the house. Louisa was employed as a machinist in a factory. She was able to read and write. She was not married and had no children to support. The final room in the house was occupied by the Flox family. Thomas (40) was the head of the household. He was employed as a carpenter, able to read and write. His wife, Mary (30), was also employed. She was a dressmaker. They had two children, Patrick (4) and Margaret (under one year of age). Patrick was recorded as a scholar, still in school. Since Thomas and Mary were both employed, it is unknown as to who minded the children while the parents were at work. It is possible that Mary worked from home making clothes for other women.

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
		2		3	2
7	2	4	2	9	2
		2		2	1
8	2	3	2	4	1
		2		5	3
9	2	4	2	3	1
		2		6	3
10	2	5	1	8	2
11	2	2	2	3	2
		2		1	1
12	2	4	1	6	2
13	2	7	1	6	1
14 ⁶⁰⁰	2	2	4	6	3
		1		1	1
		1		2	2
		2		3	2
15	2	2	5	8	4
		1		5	5
		1		5	5
		1		4	4
		1		1	1
16	2	2	3	5	3
		2		1	1
		2		1	1
17	2	6	1	7	1

⁶⁰⁰ House No.14 also recorded subdivision. The house recorded four families living within six rooms. Two rooms were occupied by the Long family. Thomas (53) was the head of the household. He was an able seaman and could read and write. His wife Annie (33) was unemployed. They had four children to provide for. John (8), Edward (7), Thomas (5) and Mary (4) were all in school learning to read and write. It is likely at the children all shared one room at night. One room in the house was occupied by William Marshall. William (36) was a dock labourer. He earned approximately 15 shillings a week, if he was working which is likely since he worked on the docks. He had no dependant family. Another room was occupied by Ellen Hourigan. Ellen (61) was still employed and working as seamstress (plain worker). She was able to read and write. She also shared the room with her companion, Mary Lewis. Mary (58) was also employed as a seamstress, able to read and write. The final portion of the house was occupied by Gleeson family. They occupied two rooms in the house. Mary (58) was the head of the household. She was a widow and was unemployed. She had poor literacy levels and could not read. She shared these two rooms with Patrick (22), her eldest child and Kate (18). Patrick was employed as a labourer in a bacon store. He was able to read and write. Kate was also employed. She was a domestic servant, also able to read and write. It is likely that they supported their mother.

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
18	2	6	1	9	2
19	1	4	6	4	1
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
		1		1	1
		2		2	1
		1		1	1
20	3	2	1	5	3
21	3	2	1	6	3
22	3	3	1	6	2
23	3	3	1	3	1
24	3	3	1	4	1
25	3	3	1	6	2
26	3	3	1	2	1
27	3	2	1	3	2
28	3	2	1	1	1
29	3				
30	2	3	2	7	2
		1		2	2
31	2	4	1	10	3
32	2	6	1	3	1
33	2	3	1	3	1
34	2	2	2	4	2
		2		4	2
35	2	2	2	8	4
		2		2	1
36	2	3	1	2	1
37	2	6	1	5	1
38	2	4	1	13	3
39	3	2	1	7	4
40	3	2	1	2	1
41	3	3	1	2	1
42	2	5	1	8	2
43	2	2	2	4	2
		2		6	3
44	2	3	2	4	1

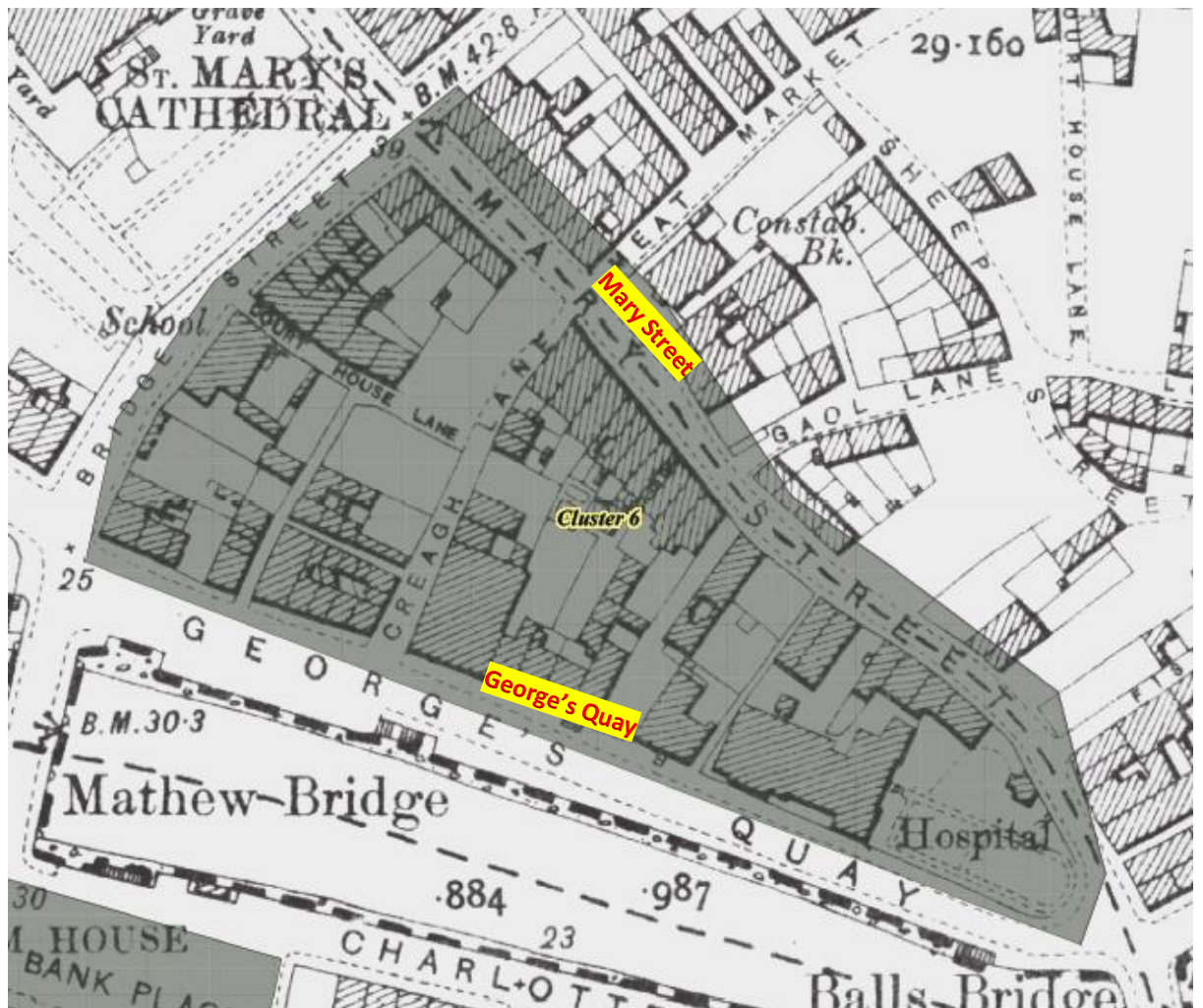
<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
		1		3	3
45	2	4	1	9	2
46	2	4	1	9	2
47	2	2	2	4	2
		2		10	5
48	2	1	4	1	1
		1		1	1
		1		3	3
		1		5	5
49	2	3	1	5	2
50	2	2	3	5	3
		2		1	1
		2		3	2
51	2	6	1	7	1
52	2	4	1	8	2
53	2	2	1	2	1
54	2	4	1	6	2
55	2	4	1	4	1
56	2	2	2	5	3
		2		3	2
57	2	2	1	3	2
58	1	7	1	4	1

Variations did exist between Frederick Street and Windmill Street although both streets were secondary streets. Both streets were occupied by 2nd class houses although Windmill Street contained more multiple family residences. There was a larger number of occupations recorded for Frederick Street, with fewer females employed and literacy levels remaining higher than Windmill Street. This cluster was a mix between typology one and three.

8.5.6 Cluster six

Cluster six was located in St Mary's Parish/Abbey and Castle DED. The streets included were Mary Street and George's Quay. The location of this cluster meant that the occupants had to cross the Abbey River to get to the city centre. The main characteristics associated with this cluster included houses which contained two to four rooms, mainly 2nd class houses, single family residences (in some cases rooms were shared with relatives) and average literacy levels (approximately 50%, variations occurred where not all occupants were able to read and write). These houses ranged in quality and were all under £5 in value from 1850 and 1930.

Figure 8.7: Location of cluster 6 (OS 1:2500, County Limerick, sheets V.10, 11, 14, 15, surveyed 1900 (printed 1902)).



Cluster six: conditions on Mary Street

The *Primary Valuation of Ireland* recorded fifty-four houses on Mary Street in 1850. Twenty-one of these houses contained *lodgers*. Only six houses were recorded as being lodging houses in 1900, according to the *General Valuation Lists*. 18% of the head of household occupying these houses were employed as labourers, 15% were employed in trades, 16% were employed in housekeeping and 13% employed as shopkeepers and 64% of the head of households could read and write.

Table 8.23: Value of properties on Mary Street, 1850-1900

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	<i>1850 £ s. d.</i>	<i>1900 £ s. d.</i>
5	H Y		Lodging House		9 0 0
7	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		6 5 0	
8	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		4 0 0	
9	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		6 15 0	
10	H Y		Lodging House		10 0 0
11	H Y		Lodging House		4 0 0
11	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		5 5 0	
12	H Y		Lodging House		4 0 0
12	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		6 0 0	
13	H Y		Lodging House		4 10 0
14	H Y		Lodging House		4 10 0
15	Cellar				1 0 0
15	Rooms, Cellar				2 0 0
15	Shop, Room				2 10 0
18	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		4 15 0	
19	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		4 15 0	
20	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		4 15 0	
21	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		8 10 0	
22	H Y				4 10 0
23	H Y				4 10 0
24	H O Y	Lodging House		11 0 0	
24	H Y				4 10 0
28	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		13 0 0	
29	Cellars under house	Lodging House		3 15 0	
31	Room and Cellar	Lodging House		10 0 0	
32	Cellars under house			2 15 0	
33	Cellars under house			1 14 0	
35	Cellars under house			1 14 0	
35	Rooms	Lodging House		5 10 0	
36	Cellars			1 4 0	
36	Cellars			1 4 0	
36	Rooms (in rere)	Lodging House		9 0 0	
36	Shop			3 0 0	
36	Shop			3 0 0	
37	Cellar under house			2 5 0	

<i>House Number</i>	<i>Description Of Property</i>	<i>Lodging House 1850</i>	<i>Lodging House 1900</i>	<i>1850 £ s. d.</i>	<i>1900 £ s. d.</i>
37	Room				1 0 0
37	Rooms	Lodging House		5 15 0	
37	Shop			4 15 0	
37	Shop and Room				2 10 0
38	Cellar			2 0 0	
38	Rooms	Lodging House		4 0 0	
38	Shop			4 10 0	
39	Cellars and Rooms	Lodging House		10 0 0	
39	H Y				3 10 0
39	Shop			3 10 0	
39	Shop			4 0 0	
40	H Y				3 10 0
41	H Y				3 10 0
42	H Y				3 10 0
44	H Y	Lodging House		8 10 0	
47	H Y	Lodging House		8 10 0	
47	H Y				4 0 0
51	House (in rere)			0 13 0	
53	H			4 0 0	
54	Rooms and Cellar	Lodging House		7 10 0	
15, 16	Shop, Room, Cellar				4 0 0

All houses on Mary Street were valued at over £5 in the 1850s although some had shown decreases by the time of the Later *General Valuation Lists*. The only exceptions were houses which had become subdivided and therefore the individual units within these houses were valued under £5. There were a total of twenty houses subdivided into tenement buildings on Mary Street. Houses numbered 3, 26 and 50 were classified as *building grounds*, with no value. The *General Valuation Lists* recorded that houses number 28 – 58 were now classified as ‘*ruins*’, with no value and highlighting the poor condition of the houses. Houses numbered 43, 44 and 45 were now *building grounds* in c. 1900 and houses numbered 1 – 8, 20 and 21 were now ‘*ruins*’. The *House and Building Returns* for 1901 recorded that these buildings varied from first to third class in structure (58% second class), containing two to nine rooms (some contained twelve).

Several houses were occupied by multiple families while others were single family residences.

It is clear that Mary Street contained a large number of houses which were subdivided into rooms and cellar dwellings. Cellar dwellings were perhaps the unhealthiest of environments to live in due to their small and confined space, poor ventilation and lighting and also due to the sanitary arrangements. Mary Street and Arthur's Quay were two of the main streets which recorded cellar dwellings.

Table 8.24: Overcrowding on Mary Street, 1901

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
1	2	5	1	1	0
2	2	4	1	5	1
3	2	4	1	8	2
4	2	3	5	3	1
		1		5	5
		1		1	1
		1		2	2
		1		2	2
5	2	2	4	8	4
		1		2	2
		1		2	2
		1		1	1
6					
7	1	2	5	2	1
		1		8	8
		1		2	2
		1		6	6
		1		6	6
8	2	4	1	9	2
9	2	3	1	8	3
10					
11	1	3	7	11	4
		1		2	2
		1		1	1
		1		2	2
		1		1	1
		1		1	1
		1		1	1
12	2	5	2	5	1
		1		3	3

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
13	2	5	2	5	1
		2		3	2
14	2	3	2	6	2
		2		2	1
15	2	4	2	5	1
		3		4	1
16	2	5	2	9	2
		2		4	2
17	2	5	1	3	1
18	2	5	1	12	2
19	2	5	1	8	2
20					
21	3	2	1	2	1
22	2	6	2	9	1
		1		1	1
23 ⁶⁰¹	2	1	9	4	4
		1		3	3
		1		4	4
		1		1	1
		1		1	1

⁶⁰¹ House No.23 recorded nine families. There were nine rooms in the house which meant that each room contained one family. Lizzie Kelly occupied one room in the house. Lizzie (60) was a widow. She was employed as a lodging house keeper. She could not read or write. She shared the room with her daughter, Mary Hanlon. Mary (23) was a widow and was employed as a domestic servant. She could not read. Mary had two daughters, Lizzie (5) and Mary (2), who also shared this room. Both daughters were unable to read. Lizzie rented out the house as a lodging house. The people that live in the house were all families, except for three single women. Although they shared a room, Lizzie and her family must have been comfortable due to the rents being paid from the lodgers. One room was occupied by William Buckley and his family. William (38) was employed as a general labourer. He could read only. His wife, Mary (35), also shared the room with him. She was unemployed although could read and write. They had one son, John (9), who lived with them. John was still in school learning to read and write. It is likely the family shared one room in a lodging house as John could not find work. Three others in the house were occupied by single women. They were all employed (apple woman, housekeeper and lace worker) and had no dependant family. They only have to look after themselves and pay their rent. The Moloney family occupied another room. There were six in the family. All six were sharing one room. Patrick (34) was the head of the household. He was employed as a plasterer. Patrick was able to both read and write. His wife, Kate (40), was employed as a housekeeper. She was able to read and write and was adding extra income to the house. They had four children. Bridget (12) was the eldest. Bridget was in school and able to both read and write. Martin (6) was also in school. He was able to read only. Jane (4) and Mary (1) were the youngest in the family. Jane was attending school also, but was unable to read and write. The Burnham family occupied the final room in the house. Thomas (39) was the head of the household. He was unable to read. His wife, Ellen (30), was a housekeeper. She was also unable to read. They had two children, Mary (10) and Annie (8), both of whom are in school, learning to read and write.

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
		1		1	1
		1		2	2
		1		6	6
		1		4	4
24	3	2	1	1	1
25	3	3	1	5	2
26	1	1	2	8	8
27	3	1	1	2	2
28	1	4	3	6	2
		1		2	2
		2		2	1
		4		8	2
29	2	2	2	3	2
		2		4	2
30	1	2	10	5	3
		1		4	4
		1		6	6
		1		3	3
		1		1	1
		1		4	4
		1		2	2
		1		1	1
		1		3	3
31					
32	3	2	1	3	2
33	2	5	1	3	1
34	1	10	1	6	1
35	2	3	1	3	1
36	2	2	5	4	2
		2		5	3
		1		7	7
		2		8	4
		1		3	3
37	2	2	3	5	3
		1		1	1
		2		3	2
38	2	6	1	3	1
39	1	2	4	3	2
		2		5	3
		2		4	2
		2		2	1

<i>No. of House</i>	<i>Class of House</i>	<i>No. of Rooms occupied by each family</i>	<i>No. Families</i>	<i>No. of People in family</i>	<i>Average person/room</i>
40 ⁶⁰²	2	4	1	12	3
41	2	4	1	9	2
42	2	5	1	9	2
43	2	5	1	9	2
44	2	5	1	4	1
45	2	6	2	2	0
		2		3	2
46	2	3	2	2	1
		3		2	1
47	2	3	1	8	3
48					
49					
50					
51	2	3	1	5	2
52	1	7	7	8	1
		2		4	2
		2		3	2
		2		1	1
		1		4	4
		1		3	3
		1		4	4
53	1	5	1	2	0
54	1	10	1	5	1
55	1	7	1	5	1

Cluster six highlighted the decline from what was once a main street to a secondary street of tenement buildings which contributed to poor health within the area. The street was once prosperous as it was originally the centre of the city and was also in close proximity to the city courthouse, gaol and market place. By the time of the 1901 census, it was clear that the buildings had become shabby with 58% of the buildings being second class and occupied by labourers and tradesmen. The poor literacy levels also highlighted the poverty within the area. This cluster is both a mix of typology one and three at the turn of the twentieth century.

⁶⁰² House No.40 was also a lodging house. The house contained only four rooms and contained one family and nine lodgers. Thomas Brinn (60) was the head of the household. Thomas was employed as a lodging house keeper. He was able to read and write and was married to Margaret. Margaret (60) was a housekeeper. She was also able to read and write and had one son, Edward. Edward (28) was employed as a general labourer, able to read and write. The nine lodgers were all male, aged between 11 – 60 years of age. Three of the males were widows and the rest were all unmarried. All the lodgers were employed in trades such as general labourers, bootmakers and tanyard labourers.

8.6 Conclusion

After reconstructing the changing residential geography of Limerick city, it is clear that there is a connection between the types of houses, the people living in them and the types of health conditions associated with the clusters identified. An analysis of key variables aided in our understanding of the types of conditions within these clusters. It is important to highlight that not all clusters were the same, similarly not all experiences of poor health and poverty were the same. Several factors were examined in order to reconstruct the health and housing conditions and identify key typologies. In some cases, one typology represented a cluster, however, in other cases, two typologies were present. For example, typology one was present in St Michael's Parish on Arthur's Quay (cluster two) and also in St Mary's Parish along Mary Street (cluster six). This highlights that a street may be classified as a multiple family dwelling street, although some houses on these streets may be occupied by single families. It is clear that typology two and three are mainly associated within St Mary's and St John's parishes, while typology one is located in St Michael's Parish. The houses located in St Michael's Parish (cluster two) were located in close proximity to an obnoxious activity which may have affected the health of the people in the area. From analysing the various clusters, it was clear that typology two was the most dominant cluster in the city. The key indicators for typology two were low value, 2nd class dwellings with mainly single family residency. The people occupying these houses were living mainly in 2nd class accommodation (good quality dwellings) employed in skilled occupations.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

9.1 Findings

The primary aim of this thesis was to reconstruct and map the changing geography of public health and housing in Limerick City from 1850 to 1935. Three core objectives were investigated in order to address the central aim. These included firstly, an examination of the causes and consequences of poor health and housing, secondly, the role of public and private bodies in alleviating poverty and thirdly, the changing residential geography of Limerick city.

In the early nineteenth century, poverty and disease in Limerick were reported to have arisen out of scarcity (food) and other causes such as unemployment. This led to an increase in various types of disease as people were becoming malnourished and susceptible to the cold and damp as they did not have the money to improve their situation. One of the reasons for the unusual frequency of disease, especially fever, which was reported as early as 1819, was

...partly attributable to the peculiar circumstances of some parts of the city, crowded to excess with a population miserable in the extreme, dwelling in lanes filthy and neglected, and so narrow that of some of them, it may be said without exaggeration, their breathe does not exceed eight or ten feet, that fresh and pure air can scarcely ever find access to them, as nuisance of the most offensive kind seemed everywhere to abound.⁶⁰³

These conditions had not improved by the mid-nineteenth century, when Limerick was described as being one of the worst affected areas in terms of contracting diseases.⁶⁰⁴ An analysis of the primary sources enabled the researcher to examine the key diseases present within the city that were associated with poverty and decipher how these diseases occurred. It was found that the health and housing standards in Limerick were a major cause for concern as many people continued to die from diseases like scarlatina, measles, dysentery, diphtheria and fever throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. All of these diseases were mainly due to poor hygiene standards and also the unsanitary living conditions. Records from the public health committee diary

⁶⁰³ *First Report from the Select Committee on the State of Disease and the Condition of the Labouring Poor in Ireland*, 1819 (314) viii, p. 21

⁶⁰⁴ W., MacArthur, 'Medical History of the Famine', in R., Dudley Edwards, *The Great Famine* (Dublin, 1856) p. 286

book and the public health committee special minute books continued to highlight the poor living conditions which existed in Limerick where houses were subdivided and many were kept in a 'filthy' condition.

By 1884-85, the state of Limerick was described as being as bad as possible and a former mayor and sheriff commented that matters 'could not be much worse anywhere in the world'.⁶⁰⁵ Very few changes had occurred in the nineteenth century with regards to the health care provided to the poor, although little information remains from the St John's Fever Hospital records and Barrington's Hospital records which makes it difficult to assess the health facilities and conditions. The number of deaths continued to occur within the workhouse which highlighted the level of poverty within Limerick city and also the poor health care facilities provided.

It was found throughout this thesis that the housing situation in Limerick was one of the main contributors to the poor health of the people in the city. The majority of houses were second class dwellings, although many were classified as third class in terms of accommodation with a total of 6,387 families occupying second or third class accommodation according to the 1911 census of population. From the latter part of the nineteenth century, many of the tenement buildings had no back yard and none of them had water closets. Cellar dwellings were still inhabited to some extent by the 1880s, although many had been cleaned out following sanitary and public health acts which were introduced from the 1840s. These acts were enforced to combat unsanitary conditions within the city with regards to living conditions in tenements and cellars. Very little was done to combat the tenement situation which continued right up until the 1950s. One of the reasons for this was due to the fact that many of the tenement houses were owned by the members of the corporation.⁶⁰⁶ This meant that if members of the corporation owned these houses, sublet them, and gained profit from the rents paid on these properties, that they were less likely to improve their social conditions.

Sanitation facilities were also found to be a disgrace to society as many areas went without facilities in the early twentieth century, areas such as Garryowen, Pennywell

⁶⁰⁵ *Limerick Chronicle*, August 6th, 1885

⁶⁰⁶ *Reports of her Majesties Commission for the Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes, 1884-1885*, (c.4547) xxxi.p. 9

and Park Road. Many parts of the city were without water supply, while Dublin, Cork and Waterford had all received their supply much earlier. Water supply samples were provided from many locations in Limerick from the latter end of the nineteenth century, such as businesses and institutions and also from the River Shannon itself, and in many cases, samples were found to be contaminated which were recorded in the special minute books. The sanitary conditions of the dwellings were well documented in Limerick and it was no wonder people were dying from contagious diseases.

The role and effectiveness of local government in alleviating the poor health and housing conditions was also examined. It was found that its role was minimal in the nineteenth century and many issues relating to health and housing were neglected. Streets were lined with filth and in many cases waste was not collected by the Corporation. Landlords had left their houses in shabby conditions with the Corporation doing little to intervene. These houses were located in St Mary's and St John's, which continued to contain houses of the lowest value and of the poorest conditions. The local authorities were slow to provide alternative housing for the poor in Limerick therefore many areas of the city continued to experience overcrowding into the twentieth century. The local authorities were also slow to enforce legislation in Limerick as many of the houses were recorded to have been in a state of 'decay'. Although Limerick was not as bad as the housing situation in Dublin, it was behind Belfast, Cork and Waterford with only small scale housing schemes occurring from the 1880s in Limerick. The poorer classes of the city were living in filth and the local authorities did little to enforce any real procedures to curb the sanitation of the dwellings. 'Pools of filth' were recorded out the back of houses and pigs were kept in small confined yards or in dwellings.

Private bodies were more effective in dealing with the poorer classes through the hospitals such as Barringtons and Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital. The wealthier women in Limerick often donated clothing to mothers with new born babies and many doctors provided free care to the poorer classes.⁶⁰⁷ Even the church provided relief to the poor through the Bishop Street Thomond Artisans' Dwellings which were built in St Mary's parish. Bishop O'Dwyer also promoted a campaign against the conditions of the

⁶⁰⁷ Evidence extracted from the Barrington Hospital Collections.

poorer classes for the people of Limerick all of which were occurring from the second half of the nineteenth century.

Spatial variations existed within city in terms of types of houses available and their condition, which in many cases were dependent on the age of the building stock present. It is clear that the parts of the city which suffered intensively included St John's and St Mary's parishes where housing often dated to the eighteenth century and were recorded in the House Books of the mid nineteenth century as '*old and dilapidated*'. This is evident from clusters examined in chapter eight, such as cluster three and six. These houses were in areas which were reported as requiring clearances or demolition and many were continuously reported in the special minute books due to their '*poor state*'. Housing schemes became more intense from the 1930s when tenement buildings on George's Quay collapsed due to their poor condition. This forced the central government to increase housing subsidies which provided money to local authorities to build new houses.⁶⁰⁸

9.2 Causes and consequence

This thesis highlighted the causes and consequences of poor health and housing in Limerick city through an examination of housing value, housing type and housing conditions. It was found that particular areas in the city experienced poor health due to the presence of poor housing stock, overcrowded living conditions and the close proximity of obnoxious activities. It was also highlighted that several streets and lanes in Limerick city experienced poverty in relation to various socio-economic profiles. This was determined by the way people lived and worked. Larger families relied on a larger income which may not be provided if the head of the household was employed in unskilled labour. As a result of small incomes and a large family, indicators such as poor literacy (unable to read and write) may be evident in children. This was examined through the census of population where the researcher was able to examine the types of people living within certain areas and whether or not there were common trends such as poor literacy levels or common types of occupations associated with particular people and places.

⁶⁰⁸ E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historical Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 10

Limerick was found to be a neglected city in comparison to Dublin, Cork or Belfast. Although Dublin was considered to have the worst housing conditions in Ireland, very little was done by the local government in Limerick to alleviate the conditions for the people until the 1930s. Limerick was smaller in size than both Dublin and Cork although contained a larger number of lower and middle classes. There were contrasts within the urban landscape between the rich and the poor, where the majority of the poor were living in 'filth' and marginalised to the parishes of St John's and St Mary's, or the outer parts of St Michael's parish. In the case of Limerick, poverty was largely due to economic conditions, especially after the famine years where large portions of the rural population began to relocate in the city and its environs. As a result, the influx of people coming into the city was in surplus of the available accommodation. As a result, there was overcrowding of houses and the introduction of the tenement system. Unlike Dublin, not all the middle and upper classes left the city centre of Limerick. The only tenement buildings to arise out of the Georgian buildings in St Michael's parish were those located in close proximity to the older parishes and were also confined to the quays.

Unlike Dublin and Cork, Limerick's small industrial and manufacturing base was declining in the latter end of the nineteenth century and therefore contributed to the unemployment of many of its citizens. The 1901 census returns revealed that a large proportion of population were unemployed, occupied as labourers (seasonal and poorly paid employment) and housekeepers who could not find employment. As a result, they lived in small, poor quality dwellings in the unhealthiest of conditions. These areas were mainly secondary streets and narrow lanes, areas with old dilapidated buildings and little or no sanitary facilities. Many of these conditions continued up until the mid-twentieth century.

Major changes did begin to occur in Limerick after the emergence of the Irish Free State for both health and housing conditions. The health conditions began to improve after 1922 where there was a reduction in the number of deaths occurring in hospitals and public institutions which may have been from the general improvements in living conditions and advances in medicine. The number of people relying on the workhouse system had dramatically declined from 1917 and continued to do so after the Irish Free State and it was converted into a home for the elderly in 1923. More people were could

receive medical attention from their homes and the number of deaths occurring at home was greatly declining from 1923. Improvements in health care through Barrington's Hospital and the Bedford Row Lying-in Hospital also contributed to the reduction in the number of deaths. Both hospitals had expanded to cater for the number of patients and training was also provided to nurses which contributed to the numbers of deaths. Following the 1930s, the local authorities began to seriously address the issues of poor housing and demolition and became stricter in enforcing housing acts and regulations regarding the housing situation in Limerick and also regarding the health of the city. The special minute books began to record more data on the cleaning up and regulating of obnoxious activities in Limerick city and also on the providing of water supplies to local businesses and the people. Improving the living conditions and the unsanitary state of the city aided in reducing the number of people dying from the spread of disease. Smallpox had become eradicated, while measles, scarlatina and enteric fever continued to decline. Diseases such as bronchitis, pneumonia and tuberculosis had also been greatly reduced which reflected the changes in living conditions within the city.

9.3 Conclusion

Limerick underwent a profound transformation from medieval origins to a twenty first city landscape. It has witnessed a transition from the medieval settlement pattern to the eighteenth century landscape which changed the architecture in Limerick, and continued to expand throughout the nineteenth century. Major changes occurred in the city between the 1840s and the 1900s as the city underwent major expansion. Following the network of roads which developed outwards from the nineteenth century, Limerick continued to expand in an effort to fix the housing situation which was 'notoriously bad' and comparable to Dublin.⁶⁰⁹ It was in the twentieth century that Limerick began to benefit from changes in health and housing with the introduction of housing schemes that lined the outskirts of the city centre. Limerick is unique to be able to boast three cities in one which continues to remain visible on the landscape. Towards the twenty-first century, Limerick still contained a high level of socio-economic polarisation which was present in the nineteenth century.⁶¹⁰ Although areas of poverty are not always static, the characteristics remain the same (such as unemployment, poor family planning, poor literacy levels etc.).

⁶⁰⁹ E. O'Flaherty, *Irish Historical Towns Atlas, No.21, Limerick* (Dublin, 2010) p. 10

⁶¹⁰ D. McCafferty, *Limerick: a profile of a changing city* (Limerick, 2005) p. 96

However, very few towns can offer the variety of historical geography that Limerick had to offer in its struggle to become a modern city. Today, Limerick is undergoing urban renewal and also aims to protect its heritage and culture as people are becoming more aware of the importance of the past landscapes. Estyn Evans once wrote ‘in a larger sense the past never wholly dies: it lives on buried in the minds of men and in the landscapes they have fashioned.’⁶¹¹ It is the hope that this research has contributed to illuminating the historical geography of Limerick city in terms of its health and housing conditions.

9.4 Future work

Future work for this thesis could lead to an extended examination of the work of the reformed Limerick City Corporation on housing matters. Severe changes began to occur in the mid-twentieth century with the introduction of large-scale housing schemes and loans which were made available for people to build or buy new homes. Available maps from this timeframe also highlight the specifications for housing type, room sizes and location of sanitary facilities all of which were raised as concerns during the nineteenth century.

Future work may also include the examination of poverty on education and location and the effect this would have on the education of children and their future employment. It was highlighted in the early nineteenth century in London that the London School Board was the first institution to associate a poverty line with those who received free education at the discretion of the board.

⁶¹¹ E.E. Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London, 1957) p. 306

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Map 2, 1840, 1:2500

Map 4, 1900, OS 1:5000

Map 8, Speed, 1610

Map 9, Pacata Hibernia, 1633,

Map 15, Eyres Plan, 1752

Map 18, Colles, Limerick 1769

Map 19, Sauthier, 1786

Map 25, Valuation, 1850

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Appendix A

Appendix A – Overcrowded Streets, 1901 & 1911

Table 11: Overcrowded Streets in 1901, based on average of two people per room

Ward	Street	No. of Houses	No. of Rooms	No. of Families	No. of People	Average person / house Ward	Average number of rooms / Houses	Average Families / House	Average person / House	Average person / Room
Shannon	Thomas Street	20	19	19	116	7	1	1	6	6
Glentworth	Lees Lane	20	19	19	108	6	1	1	5	6
Dock	Barrack Lane	2	2	2	9	6	1	1	5	5
Dock	Barrack Hill	18	201	63	883	6	11	4	49	4
Castle	Halloran's Lane	10	20	12	81	6	2	1	8	4
Castle	Halpin's Lane	6	12	9	48	6	2	2	8	4
Shannon	Barry's Bow	7	4	3	15	7	1	0	2	4
Dock	Maddens Lane	13	23	15	84	6	2	1	6	4
Abbey	Convent Street	19	46	21	162	6	2	1	5	4
Irishtown	Forker's Lane	1	2	1	7	7	2	1	7	4
Irishtown	Rosberry Place	12	32	19	108	7	3	2	9	3
Irishtown	Campbell's Lane	3	7	5	23	7	2	2	8	3
Castle	Hastings Lane	6	12	7	38	6	2	1	6	3
Abbey	Moore's Alley	4	8	4	24	6	2	1	6	3
Castle	Little Dominick Street	8	14	15	42	6	2	2	5	3
Glentworth	Hells Lane	14	14	9	42	6	1	1	3	3
Glentworth	Young's Lane	7	10	5	30	6	1	1	4	3
Irishtown	Walshe's Lane	5	5	5	15	7	1	1	3	3
Castle	Cashe's Lane	16	26	13	77	6	2	1	5	3
Castle	Kings Lane	70	196	113	576	6	3	2	8	3
Castle	Conway's Bow	8	31	25	91	6	4	3	11	3
Custom House	Bank Place	7	42	22	123	10	6	3	18	3

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Ward	Street	No. of Houses	No. of Rooms	No. of Families	No. of People	Average person / house Ward	Average number of rooms / Houses	Average Families / House	Average person / House	Average person / Room
Irishtown	Whitewine Lane	30	57	33	165	7	2	1	6	3
Castle	Old Dominick Street	6	26	17	75	6	4	3	13	3
Shannon	Lane off Catherine Street	3	8	4	23	7	3	1	8	3
Irishtown	Ryan's Lane	11	22	11	62	7	2	1	6	3
Dock	Walshe's Lane	15	35	23	97	6	2	2	6	3
Castle	Abbey Court Row	8	16	8	43	6	2	1	5	3
Abbey	Sheep Street	14	31	17	83	6	2	1	7	3
Abbey	Custom House	4	9	4	24	6	2	1	6	3
Irishtown	Josses Lane	19	41	21	109	7	2	1	6	3
Abbey	Rhebogue	9	19	9	50	6	2	1	6	3
Abbey	Hassett's Bow	5	8	4	21	6	2	1	5	3
Shannon	Ryan's Lane	5	13	10	34	10	3	2	7	3
Dock	Stokes Lane	21	42	21	109	6	2	1	5	3
Irishtown	Halls Bow	7	17	9	44	7	2	1	6	3
Irishtown	Hills Lane	7	19	12	49	7	3	2	7	3
Custom House	Michael Street	10	22	13	56	10	2	1	6	3
Irishtown	Blackbull Lane	6	23	14	58	7	4	2	10	3
Abbey	Coady's Bow	2	4	2	10	6	2	1	5	3
Abbey	The Abbey	14	46	25	115	6	3	2	10	3
Irishtown	Beltavern Lane	3	4	2	10	7	1	1	3	3
Irishtown	Dowd's Lane	2	6	2	15	7	3	1	8	3

Appendix A – Overcrowded Streets, 1901 & 1911

Ward	Street	No. of Houses	No. of Rooms	No. of Families	No. of People	Average person / house / Ward	Average number of rooms / Houses	Average Families / House	Average person / House	Average person / Room
Abbey	Peter's Street	14	29	16	73	5	2	1	5	3
Castle	Hasting's Lane	6	12	6	30	5	2	1	5	3
Castle	Love Lane	4	6	4	15	5	2	1	4	3
Shannon	Myle's Lane	10	16	10	40	6	2	1	4	3

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