

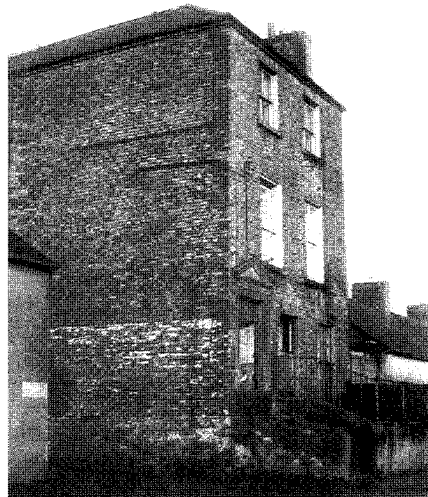
John Ferrar's Limerick City Directory - 1788

John Ferrar had a printing business situated on Quay Lane. He also ran a bookshop at the same address and in 1787 produced a history of Limerick. A study of his Limerick City Directory for 1788 reveals many interesting details of life during the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Almost all businesses were situated in the old medieval part of the town. For example, a man named Henry Pierce Carroll was an attorney-at-law in Mungret Street, while James Cauldfield had a china and glass warehouse in Mary Street. Richard Clark combined an unusual assortment of professions; he was a cabinet-maker and auctioneer in Nicholas Street. The visitors to the city were catered for at inns which had rather surprising names. Mortimer Egan, vintner, ran the Blackswan in Thomondgate while Nicholas Fitzgerald was landlord at the rather fiercely titled Green Dragon, in John Street. Animal names predominated in the titles for inns; John Prestly ran the Black Horse Inn, Thomondgate. A more humble establishment for the sale of alcohol was run by William Hogg, who had a punch-house and porter-room at Broad Street.

Newtown Pery was being developed at this time and a very limited number of businesses had moved into this new part of the city. Dennis Duffy was a woollen manufacturer here and Patrick Field owned a livery stable at the Square, Newtown Pery. A man named Gubbins and a Nicholas Kirby were both listed as coachmakers and the address given was 'outside the Square'. It is assumed that the square referred to was John's Square. There was no other square in Limerick in 1788. Limerick City Museum has a map of the city drawn by Christopher Colles in 1769, which refers to this square as New Square. Limerick was not short of coachmakers; Thomas Lenham also engaged in this business at Mungret Street.

While it is difficult to state with certainty that people sharing the same surname constituted families of business people, there can be little doubt that the Unthinks were all of one family, as the name is so uncommon. John Unthank was a spirit-merchant in Mary Street, Robert was a woollen-draper and manufacturer in Mungret Street, Benjamin was a merchant and stone-blue manufacturer in Creagh Lane, Joshua was a woollen-manufacturer and dyer in Mungret Street and George was a brush maker also in Mungret Street. Pinchin was another unusual name and Michael Senior, who was a manufacturer of fine broad stuffs, serges and bayes at

by Charlotte Murphy



"Ferrar's house", Sir Harry's Mall, c.1930
Photo by Ernest Bennis. (Limerick Museum)

John Street and Michael Junior, who was a clothier and serge manufacturer in Palmerstown, are undoubtedly father and son. Rochfords also had a Michael Senior, who was a merchant in Mary Street and a Michael Junior, who was a brewer in Pump Lane. Three men with the surname of Holland were attorneys-at-law. William and Joseph both had an address at Bridge Street and were probably father and son, while another William had an office at Mary Street.

Some official occupations appear in the Directory. Richard Evans was a gauger, who lived at Francis Street. He was employed by the Revenue Office to assess the amount of excise to be paid on merchandise coming in through the port. Thomas Powell was a gunsmith and a jailer at what is referred to as the City Marshalsea. In the eighteenth century, debtors were committed to a prison, which was called the Marshalsea, until their debts were cleared. In the Directory, the address of the Marshalsea is given as Merchant's Quay. This indicates that it was on or near the site upon which the new city jail was built in the early nineteenth century. One of the most important institutions, for both social and business life, was the post. Exham Vincent, was the postmaster and his office was situated at Nicholas Street. Another unusual, but unofficial, occupation was that of Harman Poe, who was proprietor of the bleach-green, at Singland. The fact that a bleach-green existed indicates that flax was grown and linen manufactured near the city. Hats and gloves were also produced locally, in the eighteenth cent-

ury. A Mrs. Lettsom was a hatter in Mary Street; John McGregor was a hatter in Nicholas Street and John McDonnell was a glover on Charlotte's Quay and Grace Lambert was a milliner in Mary Street. Houses were built on Baal's Bridge. At this time at least three of the inhabitants of the bridge specialized in the making of boots and shoes. Edward and Thomas Worrell, also probably father and son, worked here, as did James Walsh. However, this business was not exclusive to the bridge; William and John Worrell also made boots and shoes at John Street. Five Worrells are listed in the Directory. While four were in the boot and shoe industry, the fifth refers to Worrell and Company, at what is called Tanner's Abbey.

The crafts of the gold and silver smith were to be found in Limerick and give an indication of the wealth of the city. Daniel Lysaght was a goldsmith in Mary Street; Samuel Johns also had a shop in this street and is described as a silversmith. A man named Downes was also a goldsmith in nearby Bridge Street.

The Directory did not confine itself exclusively to trade and manufacture. It also dealt with the Corporation. There were thirty aldermen and fifty-nine members of the Common Council. The Mayor was John Creagh, James Russell was Clerk of the Market and Francis Turton was Coroner. There were four barristers-at-law working in the city, one of whom was Henry D'Esterre, who had an office at Charlotte's Quay. The family of D'Esterre are forever associated with Daniel O'Connell and the duel he fought and won. Two of the Unthank family were physicians and had offices at Mungret Street. Sylvester O'Halloran, perhaps the most famous of Ireland's eighteenth century surgeons, had his rooms in Merchant's Quay. Education was given a passing mention; one James Irwin was described as 'teacher of the Mathematics' at the English and Mathematical Academy, Back Lane.

The Directory provides a glimpse into a moment of time in the life of Limerick and we are able to see how different it was from the city of today. It was very small, when compared to that of the twenty-first century, yet was extremely self-sufficient, making its own gloves, cloth, beer, hats and even carriages. All of the necessities of life were to be found within it; there were physicians, apothecaries, barristers, attorneys, goldsmiths, bakers, glaziers, wine merchants and sellers of snuff and tobacco. It had inns and porter shops, soap-boilers and even one nursery and seedsman.