

lecting a Canadian passage — a steerage passenger could travel from Limerick to Quebec for between £2.10 to £2.25 whereas the trip to New York cost from £3.25 to £3.50.

1831 emigrants were advised to take 4st. of meal; 4st. of cuttings for gruel; 4st. of biscuits; 1/2st. of sugar; 1/2lb. of tea; 4st. of butter; 20st. of potatoes; "a few dozen eggs, which should be well greased, to exclude the air, and consequently preserve them fresh"; and a quart or two of whiskey for emergencies on the voyage. On 23 June 1841, 300 vessels were waiting for the ice to break up in the St. Lawrence River before sailing for Canada from here.

THE LIMERICK HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS was a new title applied to the former Limerick Bridge Commissioners under an act passed in Parliament on 9 July, 1847, which allowed them to borrow up to £50,000 for the construction of new harbour works, including a wet dock.

THE WET DOCK, built of native limestone, covers an eight-acre area, and was built for a total cost of £54,000, £39,000 for labour and £15,000 for materials. The foundation stones were laid by Mayor John Boyce on 26 September 1849, and the dock was formally opened by Earl St. Germans, Lord Lieutenant General, and General Governor of Ireland, on 13 September 1853. The depth of water within the dock is 20 feet at neap tide and 25 feet at spring tide. The entrance is 70 feet wide to admit vessels, and the dock measures 1,385 feet in length by a width of 463 feet. Between 10,000-80,000 tons of shipping can be accommodated here, while cranes are available for the loading and unloading of cargoes. Other vessels, of up to 1,000 tons, can berth at the quays where there is a depth of up to 16 feet of water at ordinary tides. Work on a repair dock began in November 1867. On 17 February, 1868, there was a one-day strike. Despite labour unrest throughout the entire project the repair, or improvement, dock was formally opened by Earl St. Germans, the Lord Lieutenant, on 13 May 1868. Despite modifications and renovations during the intervening period the docks remain substantially unchanged since Victorian times. The Harbour Commissioners still control the docks and are responsible for the docks and the 1,385 feet length of quays. An article in the *Limerick Press* on 17 December, 1987, referred to Captain John "Chalkie" White, a native of Cornwall, as the longest-serving person ever coming into the port. For the previous twenty-six years he had brought refined oil from Milford Haven and Stanlow, in England, to Limerick City. Despite his experience of the Shannon waters, which he knows intimately, he would not negotiate the entrance of the dock without the aid of a Shannon pilot.

THE RIVER PILOTS contribution to the development of Limerick port cannot be overestimated. Pilots boarded from yawls, usually ketch-rigged, or currachs which were known as canoes until motor boats came into use. The Western Pilot Division was based in Cappa. County Clare, opposite Scatterry Island and the Eastern Division maintained a base on Cain's Island opposite Bunratty. Until World War II erupted the Western Pilots usually brought vessels only as far as Grass Island where they relinquished control to the Eastern Pilots.

MICHAEL JOYCE, Squarerigger, Pilot, Harbour Commissioner, Alderman, Member of Parliament, Mayor of Limerick, President of the U.K. Pilot's Association, and a founder and first Chairman of Garryowen Rugby Club, was the most remarkable of the Shannon pilots. He became involved in politics when he was elected to the Corporation in 1899. The following year he was elected M.P. for Limerick for the Irish Parliamentary Party and retained the seat until 1918. His nautical background was valued highly in Westminster and he was one of the principal architects of the Pilotage Act of 1913 which still governs pilotage in Ireland. Michael was shipwrecked four times. The last occasion was while he was an M.P. travelling on the *S.S. Leinster* when she was torpedoed in the Irish Sea in 1918. His marine background enabled him to take charge of a lifeboat. He died at his home, The Moorings, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick in 1941 in his 90th year.

THE EXPORT AND IMPORT OF GRAIN was one of the most important functions of the harbour. In the 1890s Bannatyne's Mill (later Ranks) employed a special floating grain elevator to discharge large cargoes. The author of *The Cape Horn Breed* whose fully-rigged ship *British Isles* brought a cargo of grain from Tacoma in 1909 was impressed enough to write: "The cargo was discharged by shore labour with an up-to-date labour-saving technique which was proof of the progressive spirit of the local flour millers who imported large quantities of grain from overseas, and sold flour, pollard and bran, not only throughout Ireland, but also for export to Britain and the Continent of Europe". His remarks about the city are interesting "The berth resembled a promenade rather than a wharf, as there was a bandstand and gardens, and many people strolling to and fro along the river bank which formed one side of the dock. The City of Limerick, with its castle and cathedral, its cobbled streets, and busy market place where cattle and pigs are sold directly by the farmers, its bacon factories, butter-factories and flour mills, and its people light-hearted and witty, and friendly to strangers,

was a pleasant place in springtime when we arrived there on 18th April 1909".

LIMERICK STEAMSHIP COMPANY, dated from 1893 but its roots were in the London & Limerick Steamship Company dating from the 1850s. The Limerick Steamship Company served the west and south-west ports of Ireland for six decades, trading mainly to the U.K. and near continent with general goods, livestock, coal and fertilizers. At one time they had "puffers" on the estuary trade and large seagoing vessels on world-wide trading. During World War II the Limerick Steamship Company was appointed with the Wexford Steamship Co. and Palgrave Murphys as managers of the new Irish Shipping Ltd. In addition to their own seven vessels they were assigned the *Irish Popular*, the *Irish Pine* and the *Irish Oak*. The *Irish Pine* was torpedoed in the Atlantic in 1942 with the loss of all 33 hands, the *Irish Oak* was torpedoed in 1943. Of their own vessels the *Maigue* and the *Rynanna* were both lost in January 1940. In September of the same year, the *Luimneach* was sunk by U-boat gunfire. The *Clonlara* was torpedoed in August 1941 in Biscay. February 1943 saw the loss of the *Kyleclare* with all 18 hands. After the war the company built up its fleet again. The familiar red and white banded funnels were seen again in Liverpool, Rotterdam, Antwerp and the Irish West Coast ports. In May 1969 the Limerick Steamship Company amalgamated with the Palgrave Murphys to form Hibernian Transport. It was an unfortunate move. By the end of 1970 the new company was in liquidation and a colourful chapter of Limerick port history was closed. Fortunately an enthusiastic local marine historian, Mr. Dick Scott has recorded the full story of the Limerick Steamship Company for posterity.

THE CARGO throughput in Limerick did not vary greatly up to the late 1960s. It was based entirely on the Wet Dock and Quays at Limerick with an occasional grain vessel lightened at Blagh Castle anchorage. The most common cargoes were grain, loose timber, coal, fertilizers, petroleum and general cargoes. 350 independent casual dockers busied themselves sorting and culling timber, charging recklessly about with general goods on handcarts and even bagging coal in the hold. "Car men" with their horse drawn drays transported most of the cargoes. Loose timber covered seven or eight acres of the docks and often stretched along the quays as well. Oil tanker movements were confined to daylight hours and the greatest attraction for the curious onlookers was the swinging of partly laden 10,000 ton grain vessels supervised by the late Captain Carlo Hanrahan with whistle and booming voice. Two significant events