

HERITAGE

O'Mara collection brings home the bacon to UL

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A COLLECTION of documents from a prominent business family provides a valuable insight into life in Limerick city during the early 20th century.

The O'Mara Papers comprise predominantly of business and personal records created and generated by Stephen O'Mara Junior (1884-1959) during the course of his life at the centre of a thriving bacon industry in Limerick.

The collection which was presented to the Glucksman Library at the University of Limerick by Stephen O'Mara's granddaughter Clare Hannigan, has been described by UL President Dr Des Fitzgerald as providing a unique insight into life in Limerick city during five significant years of conflict in the early 20th century, from private, public and political perspectives". Unveiled on the 60th anniversary of Stephen O'Mara's death, the business records mainly cover correspondence in O'Mara's capacity as director of O'Mara's Bacon Company and later as director of the Bacon Company of Ireland.

The material gives an insider's view of the bacon industry in early 20th-century Ireland and its gradual decline from the 1930s onwards.

The personal records cover O'Mara's political career, including his three terms as Mayor of Limerick from 1921 to 1923; the second Bond Drive to the United States, his subsequent imprisonment in 1922-1923 and the ensuing court case of 1927; and his later political involvement, particularly his role as a founding director of The Irish Press.

As well as his career as a leading industrial figure, Stephen O'Mara played a prominent role in both local and national affairs. The material in the collection provides unique insights into life in Limerick city both at private and high public levels.



Tom and Clare Hannigan with UL President Des Fitzgerald and Library Director Gobnait O'Riordan with a cutout of Clare's father, Peter O'Mara, at the handover of the O'Mara Papers.

Photo: Brian Arthur

One of the most significant aspects of the collection is material relating to the O'Brien family of Boru House, particularly the private correspondence of the novelist Kate O'Brien with her sisters, brother-in-law and nephew. The letters illuminate O'Brien's method of writing, the creative process behind each of her novels and the difficulties of her career as author.

An extensive photographic record of the O'Mara and O'Brien families, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, forms an important part of the collection.

Other material of note includes

extensive correspondence and architectural drawings relating to Strand House, New Strand House and Ivy Bank House, homes of the O'Mara family.

Speaking at the transfer of the collection, Dr Fitzgerald added that "The papers are in good company in their new home at UL's state of the art Glucksman Library, joining other Limerick collections such as those of the Earls of Dunraven and the Knights of Glin, as well as the Daly papers, another significant collection relating to the War of Independence and Civil War in Limerick.

"The research and teaching

potential of such unique and distinctive collections is unparalleled," the UL president explained.

Stating that a full catalogue of the O'Mara papers is now available online, Dr Fitzgerald added that the Special Collections and Archives department at the Glucksman Library is "committed to open access to its collections, for the benefit of both its students and the wider public, piquing interest in local, national and international history, and increasing engagement with the physical representations of our past".



Your questions

IF YOU have a legal query that you would like answered you can email lawlink@alexoneill.ie or send your query to Alex O'Neill Solicitors, 22 Barrington Street, Limerick. The column is a reader's service and is not intended to replace professional advice. No individual correspondence will be entered. Here, Alex O'Neill Solicitors replies to one of the queries received at lawlink@alexoneill.ie

NEW HOUSE HURDLES

Q: My partner and I purchased a house off the plans about seven months ago. We were told initially that the house would be finished in September. On the strength of that, we handed in notice on our rental accommodation, with a plan to have fully moved for the start of October. The completion date of the house was pushed back again, and again. We are now being told that the property will not be finished until February or March of next year. Our landlord has been very understanding but has already signed a lease for a new tenant for January of next year. We are stuck! What can we do?

A: Firstly, you should speak to your solicitor. Every Contract for Sale and Building Agreement should include a clause confirming when the property is to be completed. However, the vast majority of these agreements allow the developer a significant amount of time to complete the property – usually two years. However, it is worth checking with your solicitor, just in case.

The reality is that if the contracts are signed, there is very little that can be done. You are tied in to purchase the property when it is completed, and the developer usually has a very generous time frame in which to complete construction. They would not be liable for any compensation for the delay or for rental costs etc. You should discuss the matter with your landlord. Perhaps the new tenant might be able to delay their plans, or things may have changed on the meantime. However, in circumstances where you have put in your notice and agreed a date to vacate with the landlord, you might very well be tied into move on the date agreed. It does appear that you might need to try and get some alternative accommodation in the meantime.

You should also check with your solicitor as regards the validity of your loan offer. Usually, loan offers are valid only for a period of six months from the date of issue. If it does not look like you will be able to complete in that time frame, you should speak to your bank as regards an extension. You would be well advised to talk to your solicitor, bank and the developer to see if any resolution can be brought to the matter.



Year	Pigs Killed	Count
1904	Pigs Killed	58,380
1908	"	70,113
1912	"	114,396

"THE BACON that makes Limerick Famous."

AWARDED FIVE GOLD MEDALS

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Far left: Family patriarch Joseph O'Mara

Left: O'Mara Bacon poster

Right: Directors of the O'Mara company in the 1940s

