

Tipperary paupers in the Limerick House of Industry, 1774-94

By John Logan

Introduction

Poverty has always been a problem for the poor. In the early modern period it cruelly reduced their capacity to obtain life's essentials – food, clothing, shelter – and as a consequence could lead to hunger, discontent, sickness, disease and frequently to death. For most paupers, the need to survive was a pervasive preoccupation, a struggle that necessitated the adoption of strategies to enable them to climb from their trap, however briefly. Thus the poor resorted to begging, taking charity as it was offered, pawning their property, prostituting their bodies, resorting to theft and sometimes to revolting against the prevailing order. If an opportunity to ameliorate their condition was not immediately available to them, some paupers might move to a place where it was.¹

The very existence of the impoverished also constituted a problem for the rich. In an era of widespread disease, the sick poor were generally regarded as its principal source and carrier. The discontented poor might be a direct threat to property and its owners, especially when they resorted to theft or to violence. The willingness of the poor to work might effect the size of the labour market and it was assumed that if idleness was not discouraged or went unpunished wage levels might rise. Thus it was in the interest of the rich to regulate the level of poverty, to limit its consequences and in some cases to eliminate its causes. One way or other, the élite could stabilise the existing social order and promote its own security by means of poor relief and if necessary by confining the poor to a particular place or institution.²

The relief of poverty took various forms. For example, at various points in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Irish parliament gave local magistrates the power to license the impotent poor to beg and to punish them if they attempted to move outside their jurisdiction. Christian teaching placed an obligation on the rich to help the poor by giving alms, but sometimes even the most altruistic gesture might be interpreted as an attempt to gain prestige in society or to ensure security in the next life. Some made the giving of alms conditional on the recipient doing work in return while others merely required a prayer or other expression of gratitude. If poverty was pervasive charitably minded people might feel compelled to join together in order to support an initiative otherwise beyond the capacity of a single individual. This was especially so at times of economic crisis or when the number of paupers was increasing rapidly and normal sources of relief were under pressure.³

Houses of industry

One such strategy was the founding of workhouses or houses of industry. These were conceived as places where the able-bodied poor might be confined and where their immediate need of food and shelter might be met. In return the pauper was put to work and by remaining part of the labour force – albeit at one remove – a central principle of contemporary economic doctrine was upheld. Houses of industry acquired a secondary function when they were used to confine

paupers who were unable to work, such as the old, the disabled, the infirm and the mentally ill.⁴ Sometimes when a house of industry could not shelter all those who needed support it might also operate as a depot from which schemes of outdoor relief could be administered.

Perhaps the earliest example of a house of industry is the *Rasphuis* established in Amsterdam in 1596. Other Dutch towns copied that initiative and they in turn were followed by cities in Germany, France, Spain and England.⁵ A house of industry opened in Dublin in 1704 and in 1735 legislation provided for another in Cork. These initiatives gained enthusiastic support and if they did not eliminate poverty they at least appeared to limit it. They also helped to foster a greater sense of security among the rich and they protected genteel sensibilities by keeping some of poverty's most repelling manifestations out of sight. Influential figures advocated the building of houses of industry in other parts of the country and that hope came closer to realisation when the Irish parliament passed an act in 1771 "for badging such poor as shall be found unable to support themselves by labour and otherwise providing for them, and for restraining such as shall be found able to support themselves by labour or industry from begging".⁶ The act empowered county grand juries to raise between £200 and £400 annually and city corporations between £100 and £200 to support houses wherein the poor might be confined and set to work.

The Limerick House of Industry

In 1772 the grand jury for County Limerick and the corporation of the city of Limerick agreed to join forces and to build a house of industry. The Anglican bishop of Limerick, Ardfert and Aghadoe, William Gore, supported the initiative by granting a site on the North Strand at a nominal rent and a handsome design was provided by William Dean Hoare, a curate at St Mary's Cathedral. The whole project was put under a committee of governors formed from local office holders and from those who subscribed to its funds. The foundation stone was solemnly laid on 10 March 1774 and a little over six months later the House admitted its first inmate.⁷ It was designed initially to hold 200 paupers but by 1783 it could take 300.⁸ In the early 1820s it was holding 380 and by 1827, when it was reported that the House was severely overcrowded, it had upwards of 450 inmates.⁹ The House was closed when a new and larger workhouse was built under the provisions of a reform of the poor law in 1838.¹⁰ Subsequently the building was used as a factory, then as an army barracks and later as a depot for Limerick Corporation. In 1991 it passed from public ownership, its yard was built on and what remained was gutted and refashioned to accommodate a number of private dwellings.

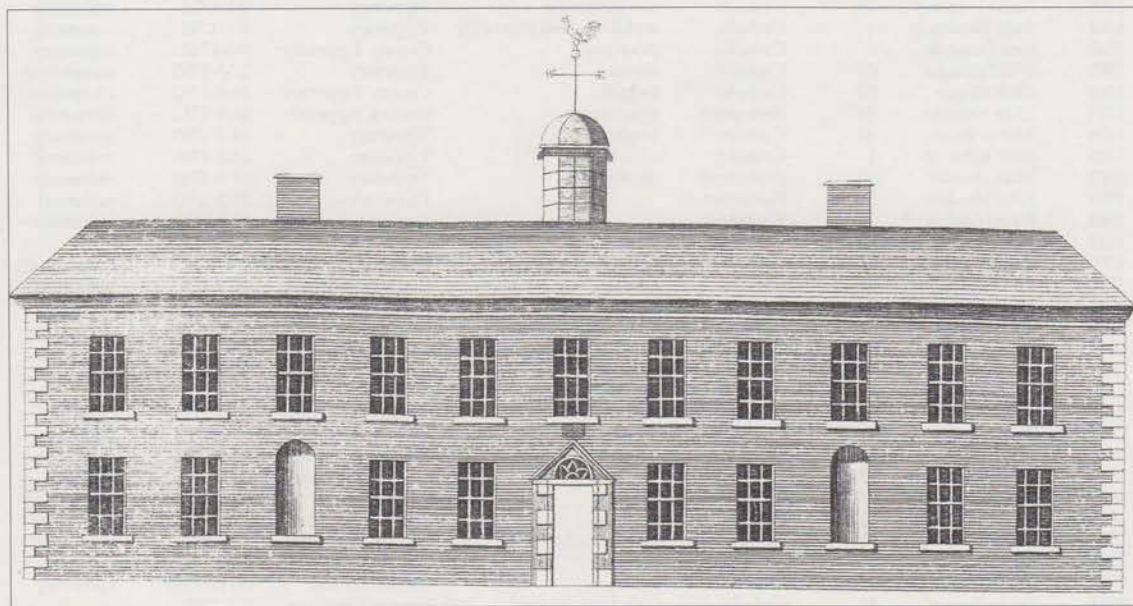
The effective administration of the House depended on various instruments. These included a register in which, on admission, each pauper's name and other details were recorded. The entry was completed when the date of departure and its circumstances were noted. Thus a series of terse miniatures of people whose history would have otherwise remained secret was sketched. The register for the period 1774 to 1794, containing details under thirteen headings of 2,745 admissions, has survived and is preserved in the Limerick Regional Archive.¹¹ Not surprisingly most of those listed in it were from Limerick, but 29 per cent were from elsewhere and of these a total of 67 (2.4 per cent) gave Tipperary as their former residence. The data on these Tipperary paupers have been extracted from the register and tabulated below, generally as originally recorded. However, in making this transcription the term 'do' – the abbreviation of 'ditto' – indicating the repetition of a word or phrase, is not adhered to; spelling has been modernised except in the case of personal names and the eighteenth century practice of using a capital for most nouns has been eliminated.

Classification and characteristics of inmates

The first column in the register, headed "current number," recorded the unique number allotted to a pauper on admission. If, following discharge, a pauper was readmitted, he or she was given a new number. The register did not distinguish such cases and there is no entirely satisfactory means of establishing the extent of re-admissions. However, a linking of personal names and other data, particularly age, suggest that 5 of the 67 Tipperary inmates – Mary Fitzgerald, Eliza Headen, Mary Kennedy, Peg Walsh, Mary Walsh – had been admitted twice and that three others – Ellinor Walsh, James Walsh, William Smithis – had each been admitted three times. Thus it was probable that the total of individual Tipperary paupers was 56.

In general the register did not record family status, and a linking of names and other personal data also facilitates an attempt to establish the extent to which related individuals and families were admitted. For example, the admission of Ellinor Walsh, a 36-year-old housekeeper, on three separate occasions in 1781 and the admission of three children Peg, Mary and James Walsh, on two of those occasions and James Walsh again on the third, suggests that these were all members of the same family. On 31 March 1783 Elizabeth Headen, a 35-year-old seamstress, was admitted at the same time as two children John Headen and Edward Headen. The coincidence of surname, religion and discharge date for all three points to the likelihood that they were members of one and the same family. Less ambiguous is the case of Judy Hennessy admitted on 9 January 1782 and described as the child of Nell Hennessy who was admitted on the same day.

The second column, headed "name," recorded each pauper's name. The surnames are, in general, those of families long associated with Tipperary. With the exception of Fish, Daw and Smithis, each is to be found to a greater or lesser extent among the landholders listed in the tithe applotment books for the county compiled in the 1820s and early 1830s and in the landholders listed in the primary valuation of the county in the late 1840s.¹²



The Limerick House of Industry, engraved by John Duff from a drawing by Arthur Denmead in John Ferrar, History of Limerick, ecclesiastical civil and military from the earliest records to the year 1787 (Limerick, 1787) p. 223.

TIPPERARY PAUPERS ADMITTED TO LIMERICK HO

Number	Name	Age	Religion	Occupation	Late residence	Admitted		Condition
142	Sarah Ryan	70	Catholic	knitter	County Tipperary	29-9-1775	compulsory	sickly
262	Egmond Ryan	70	Catholic	stay-maker	County Tipperary	29-7-1776	voluntary	sickly
266	Ignatious Ryan	70	Catholic	stay-maker	County Tipperary	15-8-1776	voluntary	sickly
324	John Commens	60	Protestant	labourer	County Tipperary	10-2-1777	voluntary	
346	Jos Dallehuny	66	Catholic	selor	County Tipperary	12-5-1777	voluntary	
417	Edm Bannen	20	Catholic	servant	County Tipperary	2-9-1777	voluntary	
439	Elen Fish	48	Protestant	servant	Tipperary	6-12-1777	voluntary	healthy
544	Jn Power	19	Catholic	servant	County Tipperary	26-6-1778	compulsory	
552	Mary Manser	14	Protestant	servant	County Tipperary	30-6-1778	voluntary	
558	Pat Pendergast	60	Catholic	labourer	County Tipperary	20-7-1778	voluntary	
612	Epp Pender	74	Protestant	cordwainer	County Tipperary	7-10-1778	voluntary	
677	Mary Fzgerald	60	Protestant	servant	County Tipperary	26-2-1779	compulsory	
689	Rich Butler	72	Catholic	stroller	County Tipperary	29-3-1779	compulsory	healthy
694	Mary Fzgerald	60	Protestant	servant	County Tipperary	1-4-1779	compulsory	healthy
709	W Cornwell	44	Catholic	labourer	County Tipperary	5-5-1779	voluntary	sickly
710	Mat Daw	88	Catholic	stroller	County Tipperary	5-5-1779	compulsory	
731	John Duhy	8	Catholic	stroller	Cashel	28-5-1779	compulsory	
823	Eliz Curry	60	Catholic	servant	County Tipperary	30-1-1780	voluntary	sickly
872	Cath Molony	22	Catholic	reduced	County Tipperary	3-6-1780	voluntary	
904	Em Fitzgerald	62	Catholic	joiner	Tipperary	12-9-1780	voluntary	
965	Mary White	42	Catholic	reduced housekeeper	County Tipperary	12-1-1781	compulsory	
1059	Ellinor Walsh	36	Catholic	reduced housekeeper	Nenagh	23-5-1781	voluntary	healthy
1060	Peg Walsh	8	Catholic		Nenagh	23-5-1781	voluntary	
1061	Mary Walsh	3	Catholic		Nenagh	23-5-1781	voluntary	
1062	James Walsh	1	Catholic		Nenagh	23-5-1781	voluntary	
1067	Patt English	39	Catholic	servant	Tipperary	30-5-1781	voluntary	sickly
1068	Ellinor Walsh	36		reduced housekeeper	Nenagh	3-5-1781	voluntary	
1069	Peg Walsh	8		child	Nenagh	3-5-1781	voluntary	
1070	Mary Walsh	3			Nenagh	3-6-1781	voluntary	
1071	James Walsh	1			Nenagh	3-6-1781	voluntary	
1115	Will Clark	50	Protestant	linen weaver	County Tipperary	31-7-1781	voluntary	sickly
1142	Ellinor Walsh	37	Catholic	reduced housekeeper	Nenagh	29-8-1781	voluntary	healthy
1143	James Walsh	1	Catholic	child	Nenagh	29-8-1781	voluntary	
1200	Nell Hennessy	29	Catholic	sawyer's wife	Tipperary	9-1-1782	voluntary	
1204	Judy Hennessy	1	Catholic	a child to Nell Hennessy	Tipperary	9-1-1782	voluntary	
1261	Geo Dundon	8	Catholic	poor boy	County Tipperary	9-4-1782	voluntary	
1291	Will Sallinger	60	Catholic	stroller	Tipperary	17-5-1782	compulsory	
1300	Cath Hogan	50	Catholic	beggar	County Tipperary	18-5-1782	compulsory	
1374	Eliza Heden	34	Protestant	seamstress	County Tipperary	26-9-1782	voluntary	healthy
1474	Ellinor Brien	30	Catholic	servant	Tipperary	14-2-1783	voluntary	
1475	John Brien	1	Catholic		Tipperary	14-2-1783	voluntary	
1502	Eliza Headen	35	Protestant	seamstress	Tipperary	31-3-1783	voluntary	
1503	John Headen	5	Protestant		Tipperary	31-3-1782	voluntary	
1504	Edw Headen	1	Protestant		Tipperary	31-3-1782	voluntary	
1612	John Karney	50	Catholic	carpenter	Cashel	8-5-1785		
1700	Patrick Toohey	65	Catholic	tanner	County Tipperary	6-4-1786	compulsory	
1715	Patt Fogarty	56	Catholic	stroller	County Tipperary	14-4-1786	compulsory	
1757	Mary Connors	20	Catholic	poor girl	Nenagh	24-8-1786	voluntary	
1930	Nich Whealon	50	Protestant	servant	Clonmel	28-9-1787		
2056	Madge Kelly	80	Catholic		County Tipperary	27-8-1788		
2077	Allice Corbitt	44		beggar	County Tipperary	31-10-1788		
2143	Mary Kennedy	35	Catholic	button maker	Clonmel	25-10-1789		
2428	William Smithis	66	Protestant	farmer	County Tipperary	22-3-1791	voluntary	
2445	Ann Lynch	26	Catholic	servant	Roscrea	11-5-1791	voluntary	
2446	Mary Ryan	33	Protestant	beggar	County Tipperary	18-5-1791	compulsory	
2447	Mary Shouldice	30	Protestant	servant	County Tipperary	18-5-1791	compulsory	
2480	Mary Considine	42	Catholic	beggar	Cashel	31-7-1791	compulsory	
2513	Hon Commins	33	Catholic	harlot	County Tipperary	15-10-1791	compulsory	
2525	Mary Kennedy	38	Catholic	button maker	County Tipperary	8-11-1791	voluntary	
2527	Mary Jont	30	Protestant	servant	County Tipperary	9-11-1791	voluntary	sickly
2551	Thom Butler	20	Protestant	sealor	Carrick on Suir	28-12-1791	voluntary	sickly
2552	Bridg Dwyer	40	Catholic	poor housekeeper	County Tipperary	4-1-1792		
2572	Mic Kelaher	60	Catholic	labourer	County Tipperary	14-2-1792	compulsory	sick and infirm
2576	Will Smithis	70	Protestant	farmer	County Tipperary	22-2-1792	voluntary	
2694	Cath Hewse	33	Catholic	servant	Cashel	23-8-1792		
2709	Will Smiths	70	Protestant	farmer	County Tipperary	29-9-1792		
2739	Elinor Callanane	60	Catholic	housekeeper	Clonmel	12-11-1792		infirm

Disease	How disposed of	Date when discharged	Condition	Observations
fits and lame	discharged	5-10-1775	sickly	Security not to beg
	discharged	30-7-1776	sickly	Without fees
	eloped	7-7-1777		
asthmatic	discharged	15-3-1777		Discharged without fees
	discharged	11-8-1778		To go to the infirmary
	discharged	2-10-1777		By order of Mr. Widenham to go to his own county
blind	discharged	11-1-1778		
	discharged	7-1-1778		Without fees
	discharged	26-9-1778		By order of a committee
cripple	eloped	24-5-1780		And robbed John Cain of a loose coat
	discharged	18-11-1778		And gone to his own home
	discharged	2-3-1779		By order and paying 1 10
his chin and chest tied together pain in leg big with child deaf	discharged	25-8-1779		Discharged paying 16 3
	died	22-6-1779		
	discharged	9-4-1779		By order of a committee to quit the town
headache	died	8-5-1779		
	discharged	28-5-1779		By order of the mayor
	discharged	15-3-1780		By a committee
ague dead drunk	discharged	15-12-1780		By Captain Hill Esq.
	discharged	4-10-1781		By order of Captain Hill Esq.
	eloped	17-1-1781		By breaking the window and taking out her child
came in drunk	discharged	30-5-1781		By Lady Hartstonge
	discharged	30-5-1781		By Lady Hartstonge
	discharged	30-5-1781		By Lady Hartstonge
nose eat off	discharged	30-5-1781		By Lady Hartstonge
	eloped	4-6-1781		He had nothing belonging to the House
	discharged	24-8-1781		By three governors
insane	discharged	24-8-1781		
	discharged	24-8-1781		
	discharged	24-8-1781		
sore breast	eloped	23-9-1781		With his mother by a committee
	discharged	25-12-1781		By going out he having leave to go out from the doctor
	discharged	25-12-1781		She came in drunk & was turned out being in labour
insane	discharged	10-4-1782		By a committee
	discharged	10-4-1782		By a committee
	eloped	6-5-1783		
insane	discharged	19-5-1782		By a committee
	discharged	29-6-1782		On paying 1/1
	discharged	28-12-1783		By the doctor, she having the bad disorder
insane	discharged	12-3-1783		By a committee
	discharged	12-3-1783		By a committee
	discharged	29-4-1782		By a committee
insane	discharged	29-4-1782		She got a month to stay & Sir Harry was to pay for it
	discharged	29-4-1782		
	died	23-11-1785		In the cells
insane	discharged	31-5-1786		By Captain Hill Esq.
	discharged	22-7-1788		By order of committee
	discharged	4-9-1788		By order of the mayor
insane	discharged	11-11-1788		By order of the mayor
	eloped	22-8-1791		She went out for water eloped
	discharged	22-5-1791		By order of Mr Andrew Watson
insane	discharged	30-6-1791		By George Evans Bruce Esq.
	eloped	6-8-1791		She went out the necessary house eloped
	discharged	7-11-1791		By order of Mr Andrew Watson
infirm	died	5-1-1792		Her friends bought her coffin
	died	6-1-1791		The House bought his coffin
dropsy	died	1-10-1792		The House bought her coffin

Unlike many similar listings the register did not record an individual's sex. Consequently, the first name is the principal way of establishing that, though the use of an initial or an abbreviation, as in one instance 'Jn.' and in another 'Epp.', sometimes precludes such a deduction. Within the House the categorisation by sex was important as it determined where inmates might eat or sleep or the sort of work that they might be allocated. Men were generally put to breaking stones, road-making or weaving; women were put to spinning, preparing hair for use by upholsterers or sorting fibre for use as waterproofing in boat building.¹³ For the historian gender classification is important as it facilitates an identification of levels of poverty amongst the sexes and a consideration of the extent to which a person's sex might have determined his or her income.

Of those admitted to the House during the twenty years covered by the register, 52 per cent were male and 48 per cent were female. The Tipperary paupers almost mirrored that balance with 51 per cent male and 49 per cent female. The absence of contemporary data makes it difficult to judge how representative of the general population were these distributions. The nearest national data, those collected for the census of population in 1821, reveal a ratio of 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female and the other nineteenth century censuses reveal a similarly even distribution.¹⁴ On the assumption that the sex ratio was similar in the late eighteenth century, it would appear that men were slightly over represented in the House but less so amongst the Tipperary paupers.

The third column was headed "age". A computation of the ages of all inmates shows that those aged 19 or under accounted for 27 per cent of the total, those aged between 20 and 39 accounted for 20 per cent, those between 40 and 59 accounted for 20 per cent and those aged between 60 to 80 accounted for 26 per cent. Unlike the general population, whose pyramid-like structure had fewer and fewer older people as it narrowed towards its peak, that of the House of Industry had an over-representation of the old. The over-representation of the old is particularly noticeable amongst the 67 Tipperary inmates, eighteen of whom were aged 60 or over. This is not surprising: the old, especially those who were infirm, satisfied contemporary notions of what constituted deservedness and thus eligibility for relief.

An examination of the ages of the Tipperary paupers reveals that 25 of them (37 per cent) fell on the tenth year of a decade. Such clustering, what demographers refer to as age-heaping, is particularly noticeable amongst the entries for the older inmates: out of 26 paupers aged 50 and above, the ages of 18 were recorded as falling on the tenth year of a decade. This pattern is representative of the register as a whole and is similar to that in other contemporary listings of age. Except in the unlikely event of a policy of admitting paupers thus aged, it would be reasonable to expect that each year of a decade would be evenly represented. However, there is not a single case of a Tipperary pauper whose age fell on the first year of a decade and only two whose ages fell on the ninth year. This suggests that ages – especially those of older paupers – were either rounded upwards or downwards, though whether that reflected the assessment made by the paupers themselves or the impatient guessing of an official is unclear. What is revealed, however, is a culture where an exact specification of age was not yet important and one, perhaps, where simple numeracy skills were far from widespread.

The fourth and fifth columns recorded religious affiliation under a general heading "religion", each of the two denominations "Roman Catholic" and "Protestant" being given separate columns. It was assumed that anyone seeking admission would fall into one or other category and that it was not necessary to record whether a Protestant was a member of the established church or one of the dissenting churches. Of the total admitted, 72 per cent were described as Roman Catholic and 17 per cent as Protestant while the disposition of a further 11

per cent was not stated. If these are excluded the proportion is 81 per cent Catholic and 19 per cent Protestant. Among the Tipperary paupers the proportions were 68 per cent Catholic and 32 per cent Protestant. The extent to which these distributions were representative of the region from which the inmates were drawn is not easily decided. A comparison with an estimate of countrywide religious affiliation based on data collected in the 1730s – 76 per cent Catholic and 24 per cent Protestant – suggests that in the 1770s and 1780s Catholics may have been slightly over-represented in the House but under-represented amongst the Tipperary paupers.¹⁵

The sixth column was headed "occupation." It provides clues to the former economic circumstances of each pauper and thereby reveals a grudging hierarchy amongst this marginal population. On its lowest rung were those whose physical characteristics served to exclude them from the labour market and to make them economically dependent on others. These included the very young, the old and the infirm. Many of these were women and other contemporary accounts suggest that amongst older women especially widowhood and its economic uncertainties may have been prevalent.¹⁶ Those on the next rung may have been physically more able and independent, but a designation as "beggar" or "stroller" indicates an economic status often determined by the absence of specific occupational skills. These too depended wholly on charity and in the case of the strollers found it by tramping from place to place.

On the next rung were those whose elementary manual skills formerly gave them a place in the lowest reaches of the waged economy. Described as either "servants" or "labourers", they were usually dependent on casual employment and were highly susceptible to cyclical and seasonal economic changes. The highest rung of the economic ladder was occupied by those who had formerly operated in the labour market through possession of a specific occupational skill and together these classifications are a vivid indicator of the diversity in the region's economic activity. Amongst the female paupers there were four housekeepers, a seamstress, a knitter and a button maker and amongst the male paupers there were two staymakers, two sailors, a carpenter, a cordwinder or shoemaker, a joiner, a tanner, a farmer and a linen weaver. The changing personal circumstances of these people or the changes in the broader economy that led each to become the object of charity must remain, as yet, a matter for speculation.

The seventh column recorded an inmate's "late residence". Such information was required by those responsible for enforcing the law, which enshrined the principle that the House's main responsibility was for the indigenous poor of the city and county. The likelihood is that the register recorded the place where a person lived prior to coming to the city, and not necessarily place of birth or upbringing. Of the 67 Tipperary paupers, 36 gave "County Tipperary", another 11 "Tipperary" – whether the county or the town is not stated. Of the remaining 20, 4 were recorded as being from Cashel, 11 from Nenagh, 3 from Clonmel, 1 from Roscrea and 1 from Carrick-on-Suir. The small number of specific locations recorded requires that caution should be used in drawing conclusions from these data. With that *caveat* it might be noted that there was a tendency for the Tipperary paupers to be from those parts of the county – specifically the Nenagh area and perhaps Tipperary town – that were close to Limerick city.

The eight column, headed "admitted," gives the date of admission and is followed by the ninth and tenth columns, headed "voluntary" and "compelled" respectively, which record the circumstances under which a pauper was admitted. This information was not recorded in the case of 13 inmates. Of the remainder, 37 were admitted voluntarily on their own application or that of a governor or other influential citizen and 17 were compelled to enter the house under provisions that allowed for their forcible detention. The eleventh column headed "number of bed" was intended to be a record of the bed to which an inmate was allocated on admission.

For whatever reason the keeping of this record had ceased within a few weeks of the House's opening and long before the House admitted any Tipperary pauper.

The twelfth and thirteenth columns, under the general heading of "condition when received," recorded whether on admission a pauper was "healthy" or "sickly". Of the 15 whose condition was noted, 8 were recorded as sickly and 7 as healthy. Further data on the health of 22 inmates were recorded in the fourteenth column headed "disease when received". The term disease was used loosely for a range of physical and medical conditions which amongst the Tipperary paupers included blindness, deafness, drunkenness, insanity, lameness and pregnancy. The intention was that an inmate's medical history would be completed in the eighteenth and nineteenth columns where under the general heading "condition when disposed" would be noted whether a departing inmate was "healthy" or "sickly." Unfortunately this practice was discontinued at an early state of the house's operation and is available in the case of only 2 of the Tipperary paupers.

Under the general heading, "how disposed of", columns fifteen, sixteen and seventeen recorded the date of departure and whether an inmate had been "discharged", "died", or "eloped". Entries were made in the case of 57 Tipperary paupers, of whom 43 were discharged, 8 eloped and 6 died. The 10 inmates for whom no date of departure was recorded were presumably still in the house when the register ceased to be used: the date of their eventual departure may have been recorded in another register no longer available. The information in these "departure" columns complements the information on the date of admission recorded in column eight. Taken together they facilitate a computing of the length of each inmate's stay. Most of those admitted remained for a month or less, a quarter remained for between one and three months and the remainder – mainly the oldest inmates and those confined to the lunatic cells – stayed for over three months. The Tipperary paupers adhered closely enough to that pattern: 42 per cent stayed for a month or less, 37 per cent stayed between one month and three and 31 per cent were there for longer periods.

The twentieth and final column, headed "observations," was designed to record the circumstances in which a pauper departed the House. Of the 43 recorded as having been discharged, 22 left by order of either a committee or by order of an individual governor. A discharge was more readily granted if governors believed that a pauper on release would no longer be a nuisance or a burden on the city. Thus the column noted that a departing pauper had given "security not to beg"; another had gone "to his own county", another "to his own home", while others were discharged on payment of a fee. Of the 8 who eloped, one took her chance having gone to fetch water, another while visiting the "necessary house" or lavatory and another when absent with the leave of the doctor. Two eloping inmates compounded their offence, one by stealing the coat of a fellow inmate, the other by breaking a window. The circumstances under which three others eloped are not recorded.

Six of the Tipperary paupers died in the House. Some were buried at the expense of the House; a few had their coffin bought by their friends. Like thousands of others who died in an institution their graves were unmarked and quickly forgotten, but now the names, at least, of these six can be recorded. Mary Jont was sickly when admitted on 9 December 1791 and she died less than two months later. Thomas Butler, a 20 year old sailor from Carrick-on-Suir, was admitted "sick and infirm" on 28 December 1791 and he died ten days later. Catherine Hewse, afflicted with dropsy, was admitted on 23 August 1792 and she died seven weeks later. John Kearney, a former carpenter, was confined as a lunatic to a cell where he died on 23 December 1785. Nothing is recorded of the circumstances of the death of crippled Mary Fitzgerald, who died on 22 June 1779 just four months after her first admission, or those of the death of the

stroller, Mat Daw, who died on 8 May 1779 aged 88, having spent his final three days in the House.

Conclusion

Paupers who satisfied contemporary criteria of eligibility and deservedness, whether they were young or old, male or female, sick or healthy, Catholic or Protestant were all admitted to Limerick's House of Industry between 1774 and 1794. Many of them had previously been part of the labour force where they had experienced security, status and comfort, but changed circumstances had forced them to accept relief, however temporary, in the House. Other inmates were without occupational skills and when times got bad they had been the first to suffer. This was especially so in the case of the old and those suffering from physical or mental disability.

While in the House paupers lived a life whose discipline and social routines differed sharply from that of the outside world. Their own world was largely hidden behind the "gorgeous mask" of an increasingly prosperous and splendid city. The Tipperary paupers in the Limerick House of Industry were in most respects no different from their fellow inmates, but unlike most of their fellows they were also had to cope with being strangers, not just in the city to which they had come to seek work or charity but also within its House of Industry.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stuart Woolf, *The poor in Western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (London, 1986).
2. Marco H. D. van Leeuwen, "Logic of charity: poor relief in pre-industrial Europe", in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxiv: 4 (Spring 1994) pp. 589-613.
3. David Dickson, 'In search of the old Irish poor law' in Rosalind Michinson and Peter Roebuck (ed.) *Economy and society in Scotland and Ireland 1500-1939* (Edinburgh, 1988) pp. 149-59.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
5. Abram de Swaan, *In care of the state: health care, education and welfare in Europe and the USA in the modern era* (New York, 1988), p. 46.
6. 11 and 12 Geo. III c. 30.
7. P. Fitzgerald and J.J. M'Gregor, *The history topography and antiquities of the county and city of Limerick: with a preliminary view of the history and antiquities of Ireland*, ii (Dublin, 1827), p. 597.
8. *Limerick Chronicle*, 14 April 1783.
9. Samuel Lewis, *A topography dictionary of Ireland*, ii (London, 1837), p. 597.
10. 1 and 2 Vict., c. 56.
11. Limerick Regional Archive, Ms D 18. The author wishes to thank the archivist Dr. C. O'Mahony for drawing his attention to his source and for his generous support and advice. This article is part of a more extensive project on the Limerick House of Industry.
12. National Library of Ireland, *An index of surnames of householders in Griffith's primary valuation and tithe applotment books: County Tipperary*, i and ii (Dublin, 1962).
13. Fitzgerald and M'Gregor, *History*, p. 225.
14. W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), p. 3.
15. S. J. Connolly, *Priests and people in pre-Famine Ireland* (Dublin, 1982) pp.
16. L. A. Clarkson and E. M. Crawford, "Life after death: widows in Carrick on Suir, 1799" in Margaret MacCurtain and Mary O'Dowd (ed.) *Women in early modern Ireland* (Dublin, 1991) pp. 236-54.