

Tipperary town one hundred years ago: the evidence of the 1901 Census

By Denis G. Marnane

Introduction

On the night of 31 March 1901, the 1,070 households in the town of Tipperary were required by law to fill in their census forms. Not all heads of households complied and, because of illiteracy, they had to wait until a local constable came round to collect the forms and with his help the law was satisfied. The information demanded was comprehensive: age, religion, occupational status, place of birth, the relationship between household members and the type of house, together with the number and type of outbuildings.

Through the nineteenth century a census had been conducted at the beginning of each decade; but what sets the 1901 census apart is that the individual census forms survive and provide a huge amount of socio-economic information (as well, of course, as the obvious genealogical data).¹ This under-utilised research source forms the basis of this analysis of an Irish country town in 1900-1901.

Writing about the circumstances of their research on Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, the Canadian scholars Marilyn Silverman and P. H. Gulliver explained why they changed their minds about taking 1901 as the starting point for their study; "1901 did not appear to stand out in any way. It marked no major event or process, and we soon came to think that it was not a good base point". Instead they took 1879, when the land wars began, as the first act of the story of Thomastown.²

For their purpose, they were correct; but for the purpose of this article 1900-1901 has its own value precisely because these years were part of an unexceptional period, a calm between the tumult of the New Tipperary agitation (1889-1891) and the drama of the War of Independence and Civil War. As the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, republican passion appeared spent, intent on commemorating the past rather than shaping the future.

The agenda for change seemed tentative and unexciting, and arose from the changes in local government brought about by the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898. In a town like Tipperary, the most pressing social problem was poor housing, and the newly created urban district council was cautious about the financial implications of an adequate response. If nothing else, the data from the 1901 census of the town provides information about how bad the situation really was.

Sanitation Report

Contributing to the slowness of remedial action, not just with reference to working-class housing but sanitation generally, was a multi-layered bureaucracy, not necessarily made more responsive by the 1898 Act. Through the nineteenth century since its creation in 1837 the Poor Law Unions, run by a mixture of elected and co-opted guardians and by the end of the century overseen by the Local Government Board, had taken on a range of responsibilities relating to sanitation.

In a community like Tipperary with its own urban authority not having charge of such essential aspects of urban life as water supply, the state of the drains, disease prevention and control and even the disposal of the dead, there was a ready-made excuse for inaction, with the cry: "It's the responsibility of the Board of Guardians". The town commissioners had an additional alibi for inertia, the forceful estate management of the Smith-Barry property, which controlled the centre of the town.³

However, the Tipperary Board of Guardians was in charge of an extensive sweep of territory in West Tipperary and East Limerick and so their attention was not concentrated on Tipperary town. In spite of the availability of an excellent water supply in the Galtee lakes, it was not until the 1890s that the guardians ensured that the town had a piped water supply.

An incidental consequence of this lack of a modern water supply was the unsanitary situation in the large military barracks in the town, which in peace-time held 700 to 800 soldiers. As late as 1896, the contents of the "dry-earth" latrines in the officer's quarters had "to be carried downstairs and out by the front door or through the kitchen". For nearly a year in 1898-1899, the barracks was virtually evacuated as major work was carried out.⁴

Apart from creating county councils and urban district councils, the 1898 Local Government Act also created rural district councils. Rather confusingly, rural district councillors also served as members of the Board of Guardians, Tipperary Number One Rural District Council being responsible for West Tipperary. The remit of this body included Tipperary town, a situation the urban council lobbied to change, complaining that Tipperary was the largest town in Ireland not an "urban sanitary authority".⁵

The validity of this demand was recognised and Tipperary UDC was given responsibility for sanitation from 1 April, 1900. During the brief period when the rural district council (Tipperary Number One) was responsible for sanitation in Tipperary town, a Dr. T. J. Browne, on behalf of the Local Government Board, issued a report "on the sanitary circumstances and administration of the Tipperary urban district".⁶ Browne's report was in many respects an indictment of the Tipperary Board of Guardians.

He began with a brief description of the economic structure of the town. Reference was made to the daily butter market (then in severe decline),⁷ the weekly provisions market and monthly fairs. For 1900-1901, the rates were £0.5.2d. in the £ (discussed in more detail below). The principal industry was the Condensed Milk Factory (Cleeve's), employing around 150 people.

With regard to housing, Browne made an analysis on the basis of three locations. Firstly, five principal streets (unnamed) in which were "better class houses", three-quarters of which had a water supply and W.C.s. The remaining houses had "earth-closets", which were not objectionable because there were adequate backyards and drainage. Secondly, there were what he termed "middle-class" houses, situated in six smaller streets. About half of these had W.C.s, the remainder relying on "midden privies", many of which were badly constructed and "kept filthy". His third category, "poorer class of houses", comprised around one-half of the town's housing stock.

These houses were located in "five by-streets and nine lanes, and of these 500 or so dwellings only around 100 had "privies and ashpits", the remainder having no sanitary convenience. Many of these latter houses had no backyards and, where such existed, it was usually undrained. As if this situation was not bad enough, some 50 of these backyards had piggeries. For a century or more the pig had been the poor man's post office saving account, but in this urban setting the animal's manure, added to human waste, both casually disposed of, must have made these back-streets hellish in hot weather.

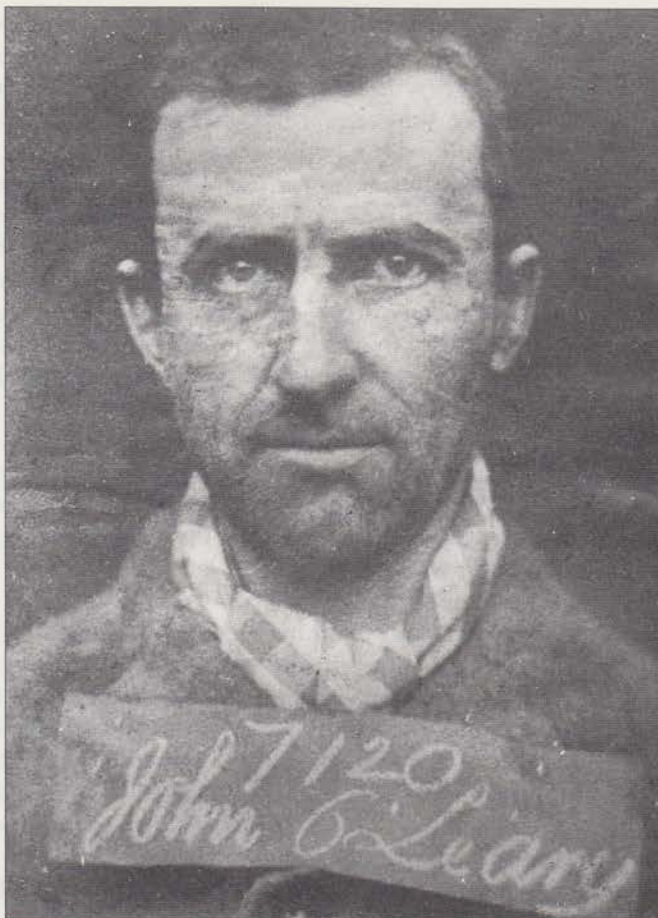
Dr. Browne listed the following as the worst localities: Bansha Road, Cork Street, Old Road,

Cross Lane, Butler Lane, Hannan's Cottages, Limerick Road, Eaton's Cottages, McCarthy's Court, and parts of Knockanrawly Road, Galbally Road and Emly Road. In general, too many of the houses at these locations were one-storied, thatch-roofed, earthen-floored and with inadequate ventilation and light. This litany of poverty was followed by Browne's emphatic statement that the town needed large-scale demolition, followed by an ambitious building programme.

In his report Browne went on to discuss other matters relating to the sanitation of the town. The water supply from the Galtees was capable of supplying 35 gallons per head of population per day, but around half of the houses continued to depend on Church Well and the 35 public fountains (pumps). The increase in the number of W.C.s resulting from the availability of a piped water supply put pressure on the sewers, regarding which, it was noted, no map existed; but he was assured that the system was adequate. This was very much not the case at Longford, where effluent from the large settling tank flowed into the river, described as an "open sewer".

As indicated above, large amounts of human waste never entered this system, being dumped in the streets or in backyards to which there was no separate access except through houses. What was termed "domestic scavaging" (the removal of waste) was left up to householders, who did not bother more than once or twice a year. The cleaning of the streets was done by contract, "road scrapings" being removed to a depot in Brodeen, which Browne considered objectionable because it was a residential area.

Also too close to dwellings were four of the town's five slaughter-houses, and in the context of Browne's report regarding the unsanitary nature of much of the housing, his strictures occasion no surprise. One hundred years ago the people of Tipperary town lived close to nature. Milk was not sold in shops but was delivered directly to customers by "cow-keepers". The sheds in which these cows were milked, situated in the town and visited by Browne, were five in number. All were ruinous, badly drained, filthy, caked in manure and, like the slaughter-houses, close to dwellings.



A photograph of the Fenian leader John O'Leary (a native of Tipperary town) taken in Mountjoy Jail in 1865. The O'Learys were extensive middle landlords in Tipperary town into the twentieth century. – Copyright M. Bourke.

A proper system of inspection was lacking, not just with regard to milk production and sale but also to maintain basic standards in "common lodging houses", of which, the report stated, there were ten. As will be discussed when census returns are analysed, lodgers were kept in some of the most sub-standard houses (more accurately, cabins). Essentially, this society was such that no matter how badly off an individual was, there was always someone else even lower. A sub-text to this concern about lodging-houses was the fear that some of them may have been little better than brothels.⁸ Tipperary was, after all, a garrison town.

Dr. Browne's report about the administration of public health regulations was direct in its condemnation of the way in which the Board of Guardians had neglected its responsibilities. Given the scale of the problems in the town, not enough officials were employed and those with responsibility in this area had too many other duties.

The Medical Officer of Health, Dr. O'Dwyer, had in the previous year furnished over twenty reports to the sanitation authority, each dealing with a very specific problem or, as it was euphemistically termed, "nuisance". Nothing had been done. As mentioned above, until April 1900 the local authority (town commission and after April 1st 1900, urban district council) had no responsibility for sanitation. But after that date the town clerk was also the sanitation officer, and Browne had much to say about the ideal record-keeping, including a "diary" of his (the town clerk's) sanitation work.

Browne concluded by outlining eleven matters that needed immediate attention. Many of these points were implicit in his analysis: no piggeries in residential areas; all premises to be connected to the water supply; modern W.C.s in all dwellings; no pollution of the river; enforcement of health regulations, and so on. But the key to change lay with his first recommendation – the provision of better quality housing for the poor. Any sense of urgency was singularly lacking when this report was discussed by Tipperary Number One RDC in May 1899. Because this RDC still had responsibility for sanitation rather than the UDC, there was little evidence of much concern for conditions in the town. Instead, there was much debate and not a little self-congratulation about the council's role in building rural labourer's cottages.

As one member of the RDC proclaimed: Tipperary PLU was responsible for the third largest number of such cottages in the country.⁹ Some weeks later at a meeting of the town commissioners in Tipperary, these tensions between town and country got another airing, this time the alternative point of view being expressed. Dr. Browne's report was cited as evidence of administrative neglect. The message, of course, was: give us the responsibility and see how matters will improve.¹⁰

The casual attitude of the RDC was illustrated in January 1900, when their clerk reported to a meeting that he had been speaking to the owner of one of the rows of cottages condemned by Browne as unfit for human habitation. What action was this gentleman going to take? He was going to get the cottages lime-washed!¹¹ After April 1900, with the UDC in charge of sanitation in the town, there remained an element of buck-passing, with the county council instead of the RDC. This was probably inevitable given the financial control exercised by the county council. In October 1900, when magistrates complained to that authority about the accumulation of "filth" on the streets of Tipperary, they were informed that it was the business of the UDC. Differing lines were taken on the related issues of how much the UDC had to spend and where it was directed.¹²

Apart from the abstract matter of attitude on the part of the members of the Tipperary UDC, there was the practical matter of cost, should they wish to take some or all of Dr. Browne's recommendations seriously. A comparison with some other towns in the county is of interest and suggests a certain reluctance to burden the Tipperary ratepayers.¹³

TABLE 1

Some Tipperary towns compared with regard to municipal revenue, 1901

Town	Population (1901)	Rate in the £	Revenue (£)
Tipperary	6,281	5/3	4,659
Carrick	5,406	7/0	3,399
Nenagh	4,704	6/8	4,186
Thurles	4,411	6/3	6,085

Only part of Tipperary's revenue (and similarly the other towns') was raised from the rates. There was also a separate poor rate and money was raised from such unlikely sources as the sale of all that manure gathered from the streets. An analysis of how this revenue was spent in Tipperary town indicates priorities and shows that, on existing figures, there was not much scope for the implementation of many of Browne's recommendations.

TABLE 2

Expenditure of Tipperary Town's revenue, 1901

Payment to county council	(£) 1,131
Repayment on borrowed money	878
General improvements to town	740
Paving and street repairs	648
Salaries, rents, etc.	444
Cleaning and watering streets	312
Repairs to sewers and drains	155
Water supply	148
Lighting of town	148

Payment to the county council was with respect to what fell within its remit and was a remainder of that body's superior status. The main liability of the town was the nearly £12,000 borrowed in 1892 to finance the waterworks. Over £10,000 of this was still outstanding, at an annual interest rate of 4.75 per cent. Back in 1880, £3,000 had been borrowed to pay for improved sewerage disposal (not improved enough, according to Dr. Browne). Over half of this capital had been repaid and the interest rate was 3.25 per cent.

With regard to the expenditure on the town over which the UDC had control, the emphasis on lighting and cleansing was a legacy of the limited provisions of earlier legislation. Under a contract with the local gas company, 68 gas lamps illuminated the town at night. But it was a sign of the times that in 1901 the UDC was in discussion with the Amphere Electrical Company with a view to having the town lit by electricity. One criticism of the existing system was that all of the gas lamps were extinguished around midnight. These discussions came to nothing.¹⁴

Irish Land & Labour Association

While this association was mainly interested in promoting the interests of the rural working class, especially the provision of adequate housing, it was also mindful of the urban situation.

The ILLA was founded at a meeting in Limerick Junction in 1894, a key figure being J. J. O'Shea from Carrick-on-Suir, who from 1895 was M.P. for Waterford West. The organization was quite well established in Tipperary, Cork and Limerick and had branches in and around Tipperary town.

Had the nationalist establishment been less emphatic in its middle class and strong farmer credentials, such a working class movement might not have been necessary.¹⁵ The annual convention of the ILLA for 1898 was held in the Forester's Hall, Tipperary.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, some attention was paid to the housing situation in their host town. There was criticism that more advantage had not been taken of recent legislation dealing with working-class housing.

In keeping with the political thrust of the ILLA, the point was made that it was up to the local working class to make the UDC reflect their interest and build houses which would be rented for one to two shillings per week. Again reflecting some of the points Dr. Browne would make in his report, this meeting wanted far more pressure to be put on private owners of working-class housing schemes, to improve sanitation specifically and, generally, the state of repair.

A new UDC was elected in January 1899 and at their first meeting, Louis Dalton (a member of a family at the centre of the town's business and political life and brother of Michael O'Brien Dalton, one of the key figures in the New Tipperary agitation) spoke about the number of houses unfit for human habitation in the town. A sub-committee was set up to investigate.¹⁷ By the following May, some progress appeared to have been made. The problem had certainly been acknowledged and the need to provide some working-class housing in the town was recognised; but obtaining suitable sites was another matter.

William Eaton, an English-born farmer who lived at Sandymount on the road to the Glen of Aherlow, held land on a very long lease at the top of William O'Brien Street. On this land was "Eaton's Cottages", an example of exactly the kind of dire housing that needed to be replaced. The Stafford O'Brien estate, through its agent in Limerick, which owned the land in that part of the town, had reservations, not wanting the sale of a ribbon site, which would render land at its rear uneconomic.

The estate offered a site near the bridge on the Galbally Road. A number of meetings of the UDC were held to discuss these and other possible sites. Finally, the UDC agreed to purchase a site from William Eaton, with the intention of building 17 houses.¹⁸

Following this decision the Tipperary branch of the ILLA met to discuss the question of how these new houses would be allocated. Names were taken of members interested in getting one of the houses. It was evident that there was a degree of suspicion with regard to the UDC, and the ILLA knew that the 30 names taken would likely have no standing with the statutory body, criticised also for the choice of site, the opinion being expressed that the Hills, for example, would be a superior and cheaper site.¹⁹ (This was unlikely, as the Smith-Barry estate, which controlled that part of the town, always looked to its own interests before that of the town – though in this case, the town's long-term interests would not have been served by exploiting this site.)

In July the UDC applied to the Local Government Board for a loan of £2,700 to build 17 houses on the Eaton site, for which £120 had been paid. Each house was expected to cost just under £159 and, when built, the proposed weekly rent would be three shillings.²⁰ The design of these houses was basic: parlour, kitchen, hallway, staircase, two bedrooms and garden in the rear.²¹ Neither in design nor in quantity was the UDC being adventurous.

Of the 18 members of the town's local authority, six retired each year, and if they wished offered themselves for re-election. This election was an obvious opportunity for the ILLA to

exert its influence where it mattered. In the election at the beginning of 1900 the six retiring members – five shopkeepers and an MD – stood for re-election. There were eight other candidates, six of whom were backed by the ILLA – a shopkeeper, an auctioneer, a publican, a tailor, a baker and a labourer. Five of these candidates were elected, while the sixth seat also went to a new candidate, a baker and flour merchant who described himself as “Independent Labour”. The turnout was 64 per cent.²²

There is some irony in the fact that the unsuccessful ILLA candidate was a “labourer”, a label usually indicating “unskilled”. The successful candidates, on the other hand, were perhaps judged to be less threatening by a largely conservative electorate. Also, at a time when the new Local Government Act was coming into play, the ILLA may have been able to benefit by being identified with a sense of change, unlike the tired personalities who were replaced.

Another factor may have been the weather. The year 1900 opened with very heavy rain and considerable flooding, so that the low-lying part of the town, near the Arra river, was inundated. The opinion of one local newspaper, that the houses in that locality were a disgrace to civilization and that the flooding made a bad situation intolerable, may very well have been a reflection of general opinion in the community.²³

When the local authority met after this election the out-going chairman Michael Dalton was re-elected unanimously, but he was not unaware of the dissatisfaction with respect to housing in the town. He tried to minimize it by describing it as “some little cavilling latterly”, but he went on to lay stress on the scheme of 17 houses, almost ready for contract. He also thought it worthwhile to explain that, while he was not a member of the ILLA, for the previous 20 years he had always been pro-Labour.²⁴

A few weeks later, the tender of Daniel Leamy, a builder from New Pallas, for £2,516 was accepted.²⁵ This was in February 1900. A year later no progress had been made, prompting the town’s newspaper to print an excoriating editorial headed “Slums”. Tipperary people, the paper declared, were so used to the situation that they did not realize that the approaches to the town were slums. “Thousands of Tipperary people dwell in large irregular lanes of houses, most of which are badly lighted, badly ventilated and badly kept”.

These dwellings were generally built “long ago” by middlemen, rents being so small that there was no margin to re-invest. The progress being made by the UDC was inadequate. Then, appealing perhaps to middle class self-interest, the writer declared that, if people were forced to live in “savage surroundings”, they will develop “savage characteristics”.²⁶

By mid-1901 it was clear that the contractor was in difficulty and the UDC seemed unable to do anything about the situation.²⁷ This inability to act was also manifested when the proprietor of Eaton’s Cottages could claim that, because his property was better provided for with respect to sanitation than other such schemes in the town, his obligations were met.²⁸

Another decade would elapse before the UDC initiated the provision of adequate working class housing.²⁹ In 1901 people had the evidence of their eyes – and more powerfully their noses – with regard to problems of housing and sanitation in Tipperary. One hundred years later a much more detailed and objective source of information is available, the household returns from the 1901 census.

1901 Census Household Returns

The system of house classification used in these returns took into account four elements in the construction of a house. Walls constructed of stone, brick or concrete were allocated one

point per house, while mud or wood construction merited zero. A roof of slate or tiles similarly merited one point, as against zero for thatch or wood. A house of one room received one point; two to four rooms, two points, and so on up to thirteen rooms plus, which were awarded six points. Finally, the number of windows in the front of the house was taken into account. These points were aggregated, producing the following classification:

TABLE 3

House Classification, 1901 Census

1 - 2 points	4th class
3 - 5	3rd class
6 - 11	2nd class
12 plus	1st class

MAIN STREET (including Bank Place)³⁰ – 137 Houses – 125 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 44 (35%), 2nd 75 (60%), 3rd 6 (5%).

Number of Persons:	705
Family Members	475
Domestic Servants	75
Shop Assistants	111
Lodgers	44

The fact that all but a handful of these houses were first or second class is no surprise in the primary business area of the town. Most of the third class houses were in Bank Place. The worst circumstanced family had one room in which a husband and wife, both in their twenties and both illiterate, lived. His occupation was given as "musician" and they had one child, three years old.³¹

There was an acute contrast between this household and that of the agent (manager) of the Bank of Ireland, a very short distance away. His premises had 16 rooms (including those for bank business), and this unmarried individual was looked after by a cook and a maid.

The great surprise about the figures above is the sheer density of population, a total contrast with the situation a century later. Very many households had at least one domestic servant, living in, invariably unmarried girls or women. Even more numerous were shop assistants (including individuals designated as apprentices), all of whom, listed above, also lived in.

One obvious and frequently used means of supplementing family income was to take in lodgers, a practice more availed of elsewhere in the town; but even in Main Street there were 44 lodgers. It was not unusual for even the poorer households to keep lodgers. (The economic incentive is obvious, but the logistics of accommodation very often is not.) For example, a third class, two rooms household which had a husband, wife, 17-year-old son also had a 19-year-old male lodger whose occupation was "labourer".

From the information in these census returns it is clear that there was a considerable inflow of "outsiders" to the town, at every economic level, something that can only have been stimulating. The returns indicated where individuals were born, and, of course, most people gave "Tipperary", generally not specifying where in the county. The information below is from a sample of 40 households in Main Street.

TABLE 4

Place of Birth, Sample of 40 Households, Main St., Tipperary, 1901 Census³²

Place of Birth:	
Householders – Tipperary (31), Limerick (4), Wexford (3), Roscommon (1), Meath (1).	
Domestic Servants – Tipperary (32), Cork (2), Limerick (1), England (1), Wexford (1).	
Shop Assistants – Tipperary (47), Limerick (10), Cork (1), Carlow (1), Waterford (1), Tyrone (1), Laois (1).	
Lodgers – Dublin (3), Tipperary (1).	

Given the closeness of the town to the Limerick border, there is no surprise in the number of individuals from that county who settled in Tipperary at different levels on the economic ladder. With reference to domestic servants, from a subjective over-view of the entire returns for the town, the percentage born in Limerick in the above sample is a good deal lower than was the situation generally.

The impact of persons from Limerick on the town is clear when the return from the Irish House on Main Street is examined. This drapery business was one of the largest in Tipperary, and living in were 19 assistants and two domestics. With respect to these 21 individuals, 13 were males aged between 15 and 30, of whom eight were from Limerick and eight were females, aged between 16 and 35, of whom one was from Cork. Twelve therefore were from County Tipperary.

One consequence of so many shop assistants living in was the obvious difficulty putting pressure on their employers. For example, a few years after 1901, a branch of the Irish Drapers Assistants Association was formed in the town and in 1912, when there was a statutory requirement for a half-day holiday, some employers tried to make up their loss by lengthening the working day. On this occasion, the employees had the law on their side.³³

ST. MICHAEL'S STREET³⁴ – 69 Premises – 58 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 19 (33%), 2nd 39 (67%)

Number of Persons:	249
Family Members	202
Domestic Servants	25
Shop Assistants	7
Lodgers	15

The name of this street was changed from Nelson Street to St. Michael's Street in 1881 and the fact that 20 years later members of the UDC were complaining about the persistent use of the old name is an indication of the establishment nature of this address.³⁵ No more than 33 of the 58 households were private dwellings, the remainder being businesses of various kinds, including five public houses. Situated in this street were the Roman Catholic church, the male and female national schools, the courthouse and bridewell, the Smith-Barry estate office, the residence of the parish priest and the homes of several MDs and solicitors.

Attracted to this street also were a disproportionate number of the town's protestant population, mainly of course Church of Ireland but also seven Presbyterians. The percentage of protestants in the county was about six; in St. Michael's Street just under 15% of the residents

were non-catholic. For example, in one house lived four Sadleir sisters, two widows and two unmarried ladies, grand-daughters of the famous Rev. Marshal Clarke and sisters to one of the policemen in Australia responsible for ending the reign of the infamous Kelly gang.

Another resident in this street with well-known relatives was Margaret O'Leary, a widow, and sister-in-law to John and Ellen O'Leary. A feature of this part of the town was the spaciousness of the grounds attached to many of the properties. A total of 28 stables and 19 coach houses constituted the most substantial buildings in an aggregate of 140 out-offices.

DAVIS STREET³⁶ – 40 Premises – 36 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 11 (31%), 2nd 25 (69%)

Number of Persons:	197
Family Members	151
Domestic Servants	16
Shop Assistants	13
Lodgers	17

The most unusual "household" was the RIC barracks, which on the night of the census contained 23 persons. There were nine constables, all but one Roman Catholic. In keeping with the policy of assigning men away from their home districts, they came from the following counties: Kerry, Longford, Donegal, Kilkenny, Clare and two each from Cork and Wexford. Three of the constables were married. On the night in question, there was one man in custody, a native of Galway, a deserter from the army.

This street, like others in the centre of the town with the exception of Main Street, had a mixture of business premises and private dwellings. On the east side alone of this street there were eight public houses, some of which were also grocery stores. Apart from the proprietors, ten jobs depended on these businesses.

BRIDGE STREET³⁷ – 17 Premises – 14 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 8 (57%), 2nd 6 (43%)

Number of Persons:	69
Family Members	50
Domestic Servants	8
Shop Assistants	4
Lodgers	6

The most substantial premises on this street, with 20 rooms, was the Royal Hotel, whose proprietor was Patrick Carroll, a native of Limerick. The hotel had four servants, two males and two females and, on census night, had only one guest. There was a marked difference in house classification between the east and west sides of this street. On the east side, two of the houses were first class, while on the opposite side six of the seven premises were first class.

Development of the west side of the street was due to William Scully, who held a building lease from the Smith-Barry estate from 1801, which expired in 1880.³⁸ On both sides of this street, buildings close to Main Street are regarded as part of that street.

ABBEY STREET³⁹ – 10 Premises – 10 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 2 (20%), 2nd 8 (80%)

Number of Persons:	51
Family Members	36
Domestic Servants	2
Shop Assistants	0
Lodgers	13

In 1903 this street was popular with members of the RIC. Two serving and two retired members were householders. This, together with the fact that six of the houses had lodgers, accounts for 20 of the 51 inhabitants of the street coming from outside the county and also that 20% were members of the Church of Ireland. With respect to the number of lodgers or boarders in this street and indeed elsewhere in the town, it was not uncommon that relatives were returned in the census forms, who may have been paying for their keep. For the purpose of this study, all relatives are returned as "family members".

There appears to have been an official distinction between the casual keeping of boarders and houses where it was a primary occupation. One of the Abbey Street houses was returned as a "lodging house". It had four boarders. However, another house, with three boarders, was not so designated.

One of the houses in Abbey Street was occupied by an employee of the Tipperary Poor Law Union and also served as a dispensary. Three of the premises were returned as shops, though only one, run by a saddler, is given in contemporary commercial directories. None of these householders owned their home. In spite of the street's very central location, it was too close to the Arra river; so there was no question of the site being developed until flooding was less likely.

Finally, in the 1870s various business people in the town were prepared to sign building leases with the Smith-Barry estate. But even then a full row of houses was not completed, leaving two sides of the central block of buildings in the town uncompleted to this day. Up to the 1870s this area facing the river was known as the Quay. Then it became New Street. The "Abbey Street" name was originally attached to the street perpendicular to it but towards the end of the century, this name, as it were, moved down the hill!⁴⁰

JAMES STREET⁴¹ – 21 Premises – 22 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 5 (26%), 2nd 14 (74%)

Number of Persons:	121
Family Members	103
Domestic Servants	5
Shop Assistants	6
Lodgers	7

Nineteen buildings in this street were inhabited and two of the houses had more than one household each. The street was largely residential, but there were eight business premises. In comparison with streets looked at earlier, households here (64%) were family units without

servants, shop assistants or lodgers as part of the household. As with Abbey Street but a few years earlier, much of James Street was developed by local investors, chief of whom was Richard Dalton (father of Michael O'Brien Dalton, New Tipperary leader, who died in 1875 aged 61).

Dalton built eight houses, including the four around the corner in John Street.⁴² James Street, from a socio-economic perspective, had an interesting mix of people – householders ranging from the Kerry-born draper with three live-in assistants and one female domestic, in a first class house of ten rooms, to an RIC pensioner, his wife and two children in accommodation of four rooms.

With regard to John Street at the time of the 1901 census, only the house beside the protestant church St. Mary's and graveyard was occupied. This house was owned by the Church of Ireland and was shared between the sexton and his family and the female teacher in the Church of Ireland primary school, which was also in this building.⁴³ The other houses in the street, built by Richard Dalton as mentioned above, were unoccupied due to a dispute with the Smith-Barry estate arising from the involvement of the Dalton family in the New Tipperary agitation.

While their property in James and John Streets were restored to the Daltons in 1897, looking back many years after these events, Walter Dalton wrote: "In the six years from the ending of the Plan of Campaign until the Dalton family got terms, good tenants had all settled elsewhere. The long desertion also had caused the streets to fall away, and no desirable tenants wanted a house there. The streets are still fallen away".⁴⁴

GRATTAN STREET⁴⁵ – 7 Premises – 6 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 6 (100%)

Number of Persons:	30
Family Members	28
Domestic Servants	1
Shop Assistants	0
Lodgers	1

Three of these premises, including the one uninhabited, were shops. The functioning shops dealt in watches and china respectively. The point about streets like Grattan, James and John Streets being the locations of shops is that the reality by the turn of the century marked a failure with regard to the developers' original hopes, which envisaged these streets as having a much more vibrant mix of business and residential. For example, the Dalton family had to give up on their plans for some of their houses (referred to above) and convert them from business to residential use. The fact that in a town replete with public houses, there was a startling paucity in this area, is its own comment.

CHURCH STREET⁴⁶ – 38 Premises – 33 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 6 (18%), 2nd 26 (79%), 3rd 1 (3%)

Number of Persons:	184
Family Members	151
Domestic Servants	14
Shop Assistants	9
Lodgers	10

In contrast to the streets discussed above, Church Street had at least eight public houses, and 21 of the 33 inhabited houses (74%) were business premises. Because of the Butter Market, one side of this street had only five occupied premises but accounted for half of the first class houses. One of the houses was a private dwelling but was a better-class boarding house (two bank clerks and an insurance agent). One female domestic was employed to look after five people.

However, in the next house, a drapery, two domestics looked after a husband, wife and one daughter, together with a male shop assistant. This generous ratio, more social statement than economic necessity perhaps, also obtained in a neighbouring business, a grocery/public house. In all, 14 of the people living in these five houses were not family members (41%), six domestic servants, five shop assistants and three boarders. This aspect of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Irish life is very under-researched.⁴⁷

The social gradations between proprietor, shop assistant, shop apprentice, domestic staff variously designated "housekeeper", "nurse", or "maid", was as acutely observed as at the Manchu court in Peking. Many of the male shop assistants, especially in the grocery/public house trade, were from farming backgrounds and followed a well-trodden route to owning their own businesses. On the other hand, the domestics, which even the lower middle class could afford, were from working class families, rural being preferred to urban because considered less spoiled.⁴⁸

Houses and economic circumstances on the other side of this street were much more varied and ranged between a first class house, a grocery/public house, with nine rooms, in which two persons lived and a third class house in which a farm labourer, his wife and five children lived in two rooms. Unusually in this central part of the town, two householders were illiterate, a male of 17 and a female 50 years of age. He worked as a butcher and she sold milk. One of the houses in Church Street was designated as a "lodging house". The householder, a native of Cork, was a tailor and with his wife, kept six male lodgers, ranging in age between 17 and 7, five of whom were farm labourers. These eight people shared four rooms.

EMMET STREET⁴⁹ – 22 Premises – 26 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 22 (100%)

Number of Persons:	110
Family Members	107
Domestic Servants	1
Lodgers	2

Both this and the neighbouring Dillon Street were not much more than a decade in existence when the census was taken. The streets owed their creation to the struggle against the Smith-Barry estate, in the context of the Plan of Campaign. This group of 58 houses constituted the core of New Tipperary.⁵⁰ This history, together with the uncertainty about the legal status of the owners, which carried through to the occupiers, accounts for the unusual mix of people in the street.

TABLE 5

Householder Occupations, Emmet Street, New Tipperary, 1901 Census

Cattle Dealer (2)	Widow (2)	Coach Builder (2)
Gardener	Blacksmith	Irish Teacher
Soldier	Tinsmith	Tailor
Postman (3)	Cabinet Maker	Housekeeper
Sergeant RIC	Retired Grocer (2)	Jockey
Pensioner Inspector	Chemist	Commercial Representative
Street Inspector	Newspaper Proprietor	

The most exotic resident in the street was the chemist (not a pharmacist), who was German and had a PhD and probably worked for the local casein company. His family, wife and two children had a domestic servant to look after them. Also unusual was the jockey, born in India. He was 23 and apart from his wife and child, his two younger brothers, also jockeys, lived with him.

The newspaper proprietor was the widow of John McCormack, founder of the *Tipperary People*, which flourished from 1875 to 1921. Given the circumstances of the building of these houses, there was some irony in the presence of two gentlemen of the RIC. In each of four of these houses, there were two households.

DILLON STREET⁵¹ – 40 Premises – 4 Uninhabited – 37 Families**Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 36 (100%)**

Number of Persons: 202

All but three of these premises were private dwellings. While William O'Brien, the tenant leader and MP, had facilitated (with his wife's money) the setting up of local trustees to look after New Tipperary, a decade on from the agitation there was still a great deal of dissatisfaction. In October 1900, while electioneering, O'Brien declared in a speech: "I had no more to do with the founding of New Tipperary than I had to do with the discovery of America".

Speeches like this focused attention again on New Tipperary and prompted the Tipperary UDC to question the bona fides of the trustees and press their own claims to administer the property.⁵² All of this was very unsettling for people living in Emmet and Dillon Streets.

WILLIAM O'BRIEN STREET⁵³ – 78 Premises – 8 Uninhabited – 70 Families**Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 15 (21%), 2nd 49 (70%), 3rd 6 (9%)**

Number of Persons: 348
 Family Members 305
 Domestic Servants 16
 Shop Assistants 12
 Lodgers 15

In the context of William O'Brien's disclaimer just referred to, it was perhaps ironic that this street was named in his honour because of his key role in the New Tipperary agitation. About half of the houses in this street were business premises, some of them quite substantial. In a town where there was a public house for every 60 inhabitants, this street, with 23 licensed premises, had far more than its fair share.⁵⁴

With regard to the live-in domestic servants in the street, in the case of live-in shop assistants, seven were from Tipperary, three from Limerick and one each from Cork and Carlow. At a time when very few people had access to third level education, and especially not girls, two girls living in this street were listed as undergraduates of the Royal University of Ireland (an examining body created in 1879, one of its features being that its degrees were open to women).

These girls were the daughters of Eliza Hurley, a widow whose husband William had died in November 1899. He had been a butter merchant, one of the business elite of the town, for many years chairman of the town commissioners and a man whose politics were markedly republican.⁵⁵ A feature of O'Brien Street was the number and type of out-buildings, 148 in total, ranging from 55 stables and (for the better-off) three coach houses to ten workshops and three forges. Unlike the situation in the poorer parts of town, there were only five piggeries.

MURGASTY⁵⁶ – 22 Premises – 1 Uninhabited – 21 Households

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 2 (10%), 2nd 19 (90%)

Number of Persons:	109
Family Members	103
Domestic Servants	6

A feature of this under-developed area of Tipperary town was the number of members of the RIC; five serving and two retired policemen had their homes in Murgasty. Three were from Limerick, two from Wexford and one each from Cavan and Kerry. The two first class premises were the Church of Ireland rectory and the Christian Brothers monastery.

The rector was the Rev. Dr. Denis Hanan, aged 61 and a native of Waterford. On the night of the census, his household consisted of his wife, two daughters in their twenties, a 15-year-old son, a female visitor and two female domestics (incidentally, both catholics). In the old fever hospital in the Tipperary Hills, home to the Christian Brothers since the 1860s, there were seven members of that order in residence, led by 48-year-old Wexford-born Brother Curran.

This institutional population, seven people, was very small, but there were several other such larger institutional centres of population in the town. The largest was the military barracks in the townland of Collegeland.⁵⁷ Stationed in Tipperary during the 1901 census was the 2nd Battalion of the Shropshire Light Infantry, comprising 548 soldiers (17 officers included). Only 51 of these were Roman Catholics.

Also in this townland was the Erasmus Smith Grammar School, in which lived the headmaster Richard Flynn, a 59-year-old unmarried native of Dublin, his unmarried sister, three unmarried teachers and eight servants, two of whom were male. There were 31 boarders aged between ten and seventeen, all members of the Church of Ireland except for one Baptist and one Unitarian.

TABLE 6

Birth place of pupils, Erasmus Smith Grammar School, Tipperary, 1901 Census

Tipperary	Galway	Roscommon
Cork (4)	Dublin (7)	Laois
Tyrone	Meath	Limerick (5)
Clare (4)	Kerry	Australia (2)
Longford	Kilkenny	

Because of the military barracks and the grammar school, the townland of Collegeland (owned by the governors of the Erasmus Smith Educational Endowment) was totally different from the rest of the town with respect to religion. Of the townland population of 682, 556 were Anglican, 97 were Roman Catholic, 26 were Methodist, and there were one Baptist, one Unitarian and one Presbyterian.

This number was a powerful reinforcement of the indigenous protestant community and also exerted considerable influence on organized sports in the town – golf, rugby, tennis and soccer. This townland also had a complete imbalance with respect to gender. A mere 54 persons (8%) were female.

Very close to the military barracks but in a different townland (Garryskillane) was the workhouse that serviced the Tipperary Poor Law Union stretching across the West Tipperary-East Limerick region.⁵⁸ The number of pauper inmates on the night of 31 March 1901 was 224 males and 204 females, a total of 428 individuals. Incidentally, the workhouse census returns do not give the names of these inmates, just their initials.

Fifty-one inmates were, in the direct language of the day, returned as “Lunatics and Idiots”. Staff in the workhouse included a master and matron (husband and wife), five nurses, an attendant, a porter, a cook and a community of seven Sisters of Mercy. The workhouse also had a national school and the inspection carried out five days before the census was taken noted that 33 male pupils were examined, the general proficiency being “fairly satisfactory”. A particular point was made that the teacher “should aim at cultivating a more deliberate and distinct style of speech among the pupils”.⁵⁹

Dr. Browne’s sanitation report for the Local Government Board (earlier mentioned) was scathing with reference to housing conditions, especially on the outskirts of the town – an assortment of lanes and roads where slum conditions obtained. Browne, together with the local press and public representatives, could do no more than generalise. However, they had the evidence of their eyes and noses.

One hundred years later we can use a source not available then. The 1901 census returns quantify this misery and present a portrait of the town totally unfamiliar to its inhabitants a century later.

LIMERICK ROAD⁶⁰ – 112 Houses – 4 Uninhabited – 110 Families – 499 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 1st 1 (1%), 2nd 55 (51%), 3rd 50 (46%), 4th 2 (2%)

This was a different world, mainly private dwellings, 35 of which had thatched roofs. There were a few public houses and fewer shops. Not surprisingly, the single first class building was

a public house. This was not a location for live-in domestic servants (of whom there were only three) or shop assistants. The presence of fourth class dwellings was an indictment of the community. It was not unexpected that the householders in question were female. In one case one woman had a dwelling of one room and in the other instance, four persons shared a similar dwelling. Each had a thatched roof and no front windows.

The housing situation was in fact worse than the 2% fourth class dwellings suggests. Some of the third class dwellings had only one room, but with at least a window in front. In one instance, a family of six lived in such a dwelling: a 50-year-old illiterate labourer, his wife whose occupation was given as "agricultural labourer", two sons of 15 and 16 who were labourers in the creamery and two daughters of eight and twelve.

Three of the houses in Limerick Road were designated as "lodging houses". For example, a husband and wife in their early sixties, his occupation given as "huckster" (pedlar) kept six lodgers: a married couple, the husband 93 and born in India, the wife 70 and four men aged between 40 and 60, all but one illiterate; one whose occupation was "labourer" and the other three listed as "mendicants", which was officialese for beggars. These eight people shared four rooms.

Apart from recognised lodging houses, other families kept lodgers, a total of 41 in the road. While all of these had occupations, this does not mean that they were in employment. Most were labourers. Others had more skilled occupations such as tin smith, plumber, cattle dealer, shop porter. The most eye-catching occupation was that listed for a 30-year-old unmarried son in one household. He gave his occupation as "racing gambler". A final note about this road: there were 25 piggeries.

EMLY ROAD⁶¹ – 32 Houses – 4 Uninhabited – 29 Families – 140 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 13 (45%), 3rd 16 (55%)

Most of the houses in this road, just over half, were two-room dwellings with thatched roofs. Eleven heads of household were illiterate. An example of the chronic over-crowding was the two-room dwelling occupied by a husband and wife in their thirties and their seven children aged between one and nine. The householder was a labourer, which at best meant that employment was occasional. Eight of the houses had piggeries, a much valued source of income, whatever about the sanitation problems.

GALBALLY ROAD⁶² – 45 Houses – 46 Families – 178 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 17 (38%), 3rd 26 (58%), 4th 2 (4%)

Twenty of these houses had thatched roofs, and seven had mud walls. Seventeen householders were illiterate and 17 were women (not necessarily the same people). What is surprising perhaps is that (only) 14 householders were labourers. The remainder (excluding "housekeepers") followed a range of callings.

TABLE 5

Householder Occupations, Galbally Road, Tipperary, 1901 Census

Cooper (1)	Carpenter (1)	Labourer (14)
Tailor (2)	Victualler (1)	RIC Constable (2)
Retired NS Teacher (1)	Manager Machinery Business (1)	Tin Smith (1)
NS Teacher (1)	Domestic Servant (3)	Railway Ganger (1)
Pump Maker (1)	Mendicants (2)	Dressmaker (1)
Carter (1)	Journalist (1)	Milk Woman (1)
Shoemaker (1)	Farmer (1)	(Women at home) (8)

This last category was that of "housekeeper", but this does not mean that they were employed in that capacity elsewhere. One dwelling had two separate households: an RIC constable heading a family of four shared four rooms, and a Kerry-born retired national school teacher, a widow, who occupied just one room.

BOHERCROW STREET (*sic*)⁶³ – 77 Houses – 77 Families – 292 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 8 (10%), 3rd 65 (85%), 4th 4 (5%)

This was a particularly disadvantaged part of the town. Thirty-nine families had dwellings of one room each and 30 families were twice as well off with two rooms each. The family of James Laurence, a 37-year-old "agricultural labourer", consisting of himself, his 28-year-old wife whose occupation was given as "mendicant"; their three sons and two daughters aged between one and ten years, occupied a mud-walled thatched roof dwelling of one room with no front windows. This mud cabin was of a type very plentiful in the period before the Great Famine and would not have been different from the dwellings known to have been in Bohercrow in the mid-seventeenth century.

In another instance, a one-room dwelling was occupied by a husband and wife, together with their three sons and three daughters, aged between three and 23 years. One of the sons was a "plasterer's apprentice" and two of the daughters were "creamery workers". Twenty-six householders were illiterate and, judging by the occupations of most of the householders, employment was likely to have been at best irregular. As there were but 13 piggeries, most families were denied such advantage as this gave.

Fifty years earlier there were 94 households in Bohercrow Street (*sic*), and from the evidence of *Griffith's Valuation*, while Stafford O'Brien was the head landlord, very few of the dwellings were held directly from him. It was not uncommon to have two or three intermediate lessors between the actual occupier and the head landlord.

LANE NORTH OF O'BRIEN STREET⁶⁴ – 27 Houses – 27 Families – 102 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 20 (74%), 3rd 7 (26%)

This lane was certainly in existence long enough to have been given an official name. Griffith's *Valuation* referred to it as "Lane (North of Henry Street)". However, it may be presumed that there was a local name, probably Hannon's Cottages. At the time the census was

taken 17 houses were under construction, a development that would become O'Connell Road. All of the dwellings in this lane had from one to two rooms; nine householders were illiterate and over half the total in the lane were unskilled labourers.

EATON'S COTTAGES⁶⁵ – 36 Houses – 36 Families – 148 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 36 (100%)

Apart from anything else, this collection of back-to-back cottages indicates just how wide was the classification "second class house". Eaton's Cottages were basically miserable two-room dwellings but were given a "respectable" classification because they were not mud and thatch constructions and because each cottage had two front windows. Account was not taken of the fact that none of the cottages had any kind of out-offices.

The conditions in which the family occupying Number 24 lived, a husband and wife, together with their six children aged between four and sixteen years, was nothing but miserable. Just a few months after the census was taken, the landlord William Eaton told the UDC that he had done all he considered necessary to improve the sanitary facilities of his cottages and proclaimed that his cottages were better provided for than similar dwellings in the town. One earth-closet was available for the 36 families.

William Eaton (1846-1911), a native of Derbyshire, lived in a farm house outside the town of Tipperary (at Sandymount) with his wife and four household and farm servants. The house had nine rooms. In his will he left an estate valued at just under £6,000 (perhaps £300,000 in today's terms).⁶⁶

ALBERT PLACE (*sic*)⁶⁷ – 7 Houses – 7 Families – 38 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 7 (100%)

An incidental point about these good-quality dwellings is that surprisingly in republican Tipperary, the memory of the much-lamented Prince Consort (who died in 1861) is still apparently cherished. Each house had five rooms, and out-buildings comprised five stables and two piggeries. Most of the householders (five) were skilled.

BLIND STREET⁶⁸ – 17 Houses – 17 Families – 90 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 17 (100%)

The evidence from the 1901 census so far discussed paints a picture with respect to housing in Tipperary town of the lack of remedial attention. The problem was generally acknowledged and discussed, but nothing happened. An instance of estate intervention for the better relates to this street. In the mid-nineteenth century there were 45 hovels on this site, rent being paid to a local middleman who held the property on lease from the Smith-Barry estate.

When this lease expired in 1868 the estate agent had the hovels demolished and fewer more substantial houses erected in their place.⁶⁹ All of these houses, with one exception, had three rooms. The exception had five rooms and, as there were 14 people in the house on the night of the census, this was hardly luxury. This household comprised a husband and wife, five sons aged from eleven to 23 years, four daughters aged from six to 13 years, the husband's sister, a

lodger and a visitor. The husband and two sons were stone masons, while two other sons worked for the Post Office.

However, there was an instance of much greater over-crowding in another of the houses. Sharing three rooms were parents, seven daughters and four sons, 13 persons. The occupations of householders were as follows: wool weaver, laundress, shoe maker, agricultural labourer, plumber, labourer (4), harness maker, gamekeeper, gardener, watch maker, groom, widow, painter and stone mason. Both the laundress and gamekeeper were unemployed. Seven of the householders came from counties other than Tipperary, for example Wexford and Westmeath.

GAS HOUSE LANE⁷⁰ – 3 Houses – 3 Households – 15 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 2 (67%), 3rd 1 (33%)

The householders living here were employed by the Tipperary Gas Company, managed by a Liverpool-born Presbyterian who lived in one of the houses. The second household was that of the clerk, whose family of eight persons had to share one room, even though there were nine out-offices attached to his dwelling. The third household was that of a labourer employed by the company.

CLONMEL ROAD⁷¹ – 75 Houses – 3 Uninhabited – 74 Families – 347 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 16 (22%), 3rd 54 (75%), 4th 2 (3%)

Part of this road, also known as Bansha Road, had some of the worst housing in Tipperary, not least because of the district being subject to repeated flooding. Because of this flooding, the housing here was cited frequently as a public disgrace, not that any action followed prior to 1901.⁷² With one exception, the shop of a shoemaker, all of the houses in this road were private dwellings.

Examples of over-crowding in dire conditions have earlier been cited, but the most extraordinary example comes from this road – so extraordinary that one has to wonder about the correctness of the return. But each return was checked and collected by a member of the RIC.

In one of the fourth class houses, a thatched roof one-room dwelling with no front windows and no out-buildings, the following persons lived: the householder who was a 56-year-old wool weaver, his wife, his 21-year-old married daughter with the latter's one-month old baby, born in England. Her husband was not in the house when the census was taken.

In addition, there were ten (*yes*, TEN) "boarders" in three family units: a mother and her three children; a man, his wife and three children – he was a "cutler" (knife sharpener) born in Sligo, and probably itinerant; and finally a widow of 70. The second fourth class house, which adjoined the one above, was almost empty by comparison – just seven persons. The householder was an illiterate labourer in his thirties and he and his wife had two small children. As boarders, they had another couple and their infant son.

There was a particular concentration of the unskilled in this road, 40% of householders being described as "labourers". About 15% of householders were women (in many instances wives of soldiers) and if these are excluded, then an even larger proportion of householders depended on selling their strength in an over-crowded market. From anecdotal evidence, bread and tea were the chief sustenance of many of these families.

At this level of poverty, though it has to be said that generalization is problematic, one might have expected a great number of three-generation families. There were ten instances. Comparing households where its heads were respectively "master tailor" and "labourer", the expected could be subverted if the former was unemployed, while the latter had an ongoing relationship with a fair employer.

A striking feature of this road was the graphic contrast between 14 persons in a one-room dwelling and the widow in a probably comfortable home, with one of the road's few domestic servants to see to her comfort. Over 30% of householders were illiterate. A feature of this road, of economic though not of aesthetic advantage, was the number of out-buildings: 32 piggeries, eleven fowl houses, six stables and even one cow house.

SPITAL STREET⁷³ – 78 Houses – 79 Families – 361 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 62 (79%), 3rd 16 (21%)

In general terms, this street was similar to the contiguous Clonmel Road, though it has no example of over-crowding comparable to the extreme instance cited above. The street was more lavishly endowed with piggeries, around 50, for which (if even most rather than all were in use as intended) a great deal of effluent was produced, a malodorous addition to the waste produced by the 700 people living in these two streets.

Some 25% of householders were illiterate, less than in Clonmel Road. A feature of the houses in this street and in Brodeen (see below) is that most of these householders held directly from the Smith-Barry estate rather than from middlemen. This was unusual and may be explained by the fact that up to 1860 this townland of Spital Land (26 acres) was part of the estate of the Duke of Devonshire and several dozen tenants were paying weekly rents for tiny portions of land. For example, Ellen Dwyer paid four-and-a-half pennies per week for two perches on which her dwelling was thrown up.⁷⁴

BRODEEN⁷⁵ – 12 Houses – 1 Uninhabited – 11 Families – 50 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 11 (100%)

As mentioned with respect to Spital Street, these houses were held directly from the Smith-Barry estate and seem to have been superior to the generality of working-class housing. Each house had a piggery and the largest family, ten persons, shared four rooms.

CORK STREET⁷⁶ – 16 Houses – 4 Uninhabited – 13 Families – 55 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 3rd 12 (100%)

This street, long since disappeared, was among the more miserable addresses in the town. From its location, it is unlikely that its name had anything to do with the county of that name; perhaps there was a link with the brewing industry in the town? One of the houses was used as a bandroom.

One of these two-room dwellings was shared by two families and, continuing the theme of over-crowding, another such house was occupied by twelve people: a husband and wife in their thirties, their nine children aged between two and 18 years and in addition, a boarder, a

16-year-old grocer's porter. There were very few out-buildings – just two piggeries. Most tellingly, a majority of heads of households were illiterate.

GOAT'S LANE⁷⁷ – 42 Houses – 3 Uninhabited – 40 Families – 184 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 18 (46%), 3rd 20 (51%), 4th 1 (3%)

This location, noted in the census returns as "Goat Lane" but known popularly as Goat's Lane, attracted adverse official notice in 1900.⁷⁸ Three of the houses, condemned as unsanitary and dangerous by the Medical Officer, were recommended for demolition.

However, as two other houses had earlier been specified for demolition and nothing had happened, plus the fact that the UDC in discussing the Medical Officer's report adjourned making a decision, it appeared that the matter lacked urgency. Underlying the dilatoriness of the UDC may have been a view that homelessness was worse.

Viewed from the outside, what seemed to distinguish these houses from each other was the fact that one had no front windows, 17 houses had one front window each, while the remainder had two such windows each. A married couple, he an illiterate labourer, lived in the fourth class dwelling. With regard to the single room houses, the highest density was nine people.

Overall, the average number of persons per house in this lane, 4.7, was less than the average in Main Street, where because of the number of live-in servants, assistants and lodgers, the figure was 5.6. The level of illiteracy among householders in Goat's Lane was exceptionally high, as was the absence of skilled occupations.

BUTLER LANE⁷⁹ – 4 Houses – 4 Families – 13 Persons

Classification of inhabited houses: 2nd 4 (100%)

This lane, long since gone, was in the vicinity of the Gas Works. Each of the dwellings had two rooms and there were no out-houses. Two householders were illiterate and the householder occupations were car driver (2), labourer and night watchman.

Conclusion

With respect to the lay-out of Tipperary town, the pivot is the east-west axis of Main Street, with Bank Place, the Spital and Cashel Road at its eastern extremity and at its western end, the roads to Limerick or Cork. As discussed above, what should have been a solid block of buildings, south of Main Street towards the river, was never properly developed because of the river. The primary developments therefore of both commercial and residential property was along two streets north and perpendicular to Main Street, namely Nelson (St. Michael's) Street and Meeting (David) Street.

Geographically, Meeting Street was better positioned for development, being part of the north-south axis of the town, but its exploitation was retarded by the Church of Ireland rectory and its grounds, together with a lack of enterprise on the part of the middlemen who held land along this artery.

In this analysis of the 1901 census returns, no reference was made to either St. Michael's Road or Market Street, streets parallel to Main Street and connecting Meeting and Nelson Streets.

These connecting streets were only exploited as residential areas in the years immediately after 1901.⁸⁰

With regard to residential streets in 1901, the existence of even one fourth class house was a disgrace. The location and percentage of such houses was as follows: Bohercrow Street (5%), Galbally Road (4%), Clonmel Road (3%), Goat's Lane (3%), Limerick Road (2%).

There was not a lot to chose between these houses and some third class dwellings; a window could make the difference. As Dr. Browne did not base his categorisation of houses in the town on detailed analysis of individual houses, the table below is a more accurate account of the lie at the heart of the trite expression: "the good old days".

TABLE 8

Location and percentage of third class houses, Tipperary town, 1901 Census			
Cork Street	100%	Gas House Lane	33%
Bohercrow Street	85	Lane (O'Brien Street)	26
Clonmel Road	75	Spittal Street	21
Galbally Road	58	O'Brien Street	9
Emly Road	55	Main Street (Bank Place)	5
Goat's Lane	51	Church Street	3
Limerick Road	46		

This examination of an Irish provincial town in 1901, with emphasis on its housing and concomitant poverty, is partial in two respects. The date of the census, 31 March, was a specific moment in time and allows a different perspective to the more usual sweep of years within which economic and social change is viewed. Standing on an embankment, a train sweeps by in a blur of carriages and occupants and, for a brief moment, by focusing, some little information is gained with respect to the occupants of one carriage.

The second limitation to the utilization of this source as deployed in this article is the concentration of poverty. Tipperary town was at the centre of a prosperous farming community, and while the butter trade had changed, no longer the preserve of a widely middlemen elite, there was a flourishing business community, indicated by the number of shop assistants and apprentices returned in the census.

As the discussion above makes clear, there was an awareness that something had to be done with regard to the housing crisis; but improvement came slowly. At least a decade passed before there was a substantial working class housing scheme.

While this article has tried to expose something of the workings of Tipperary town and its local government just at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were individuals and groups, not in the least interested in the state of the drains or the quality of housing. What mattered for these people was the issue of identity: what was the nature of Irishness and how should it best find expression? This will be explored in a future article.

FOOTNOTES

1. Not a great deal of use appears to have been made of this source in published work with reference to rural Ireland. For a general discussion see B. Collins, *The Analysis of Census Returns: the 1901*

- Census of Ireland in *Ulster Local Studies*, xv (1993), pp 38-46. For a summary report of the 1901 census for County Tipperary, see *Parliamentary Papers*, 1902, cxxv.
2. M. Silverman and P. H. Gulliver, *Historical Anthropology and the Ethnographic Tradition: a personal, historical and intellectual account* in Silver & Gulliver (eds), *Approaching the Past – Historical Anthropology Through Irish Case Studies* (New York, Oxford, 1992), pp 5-6.
 3. See relevant chapters in Denis G. Marnane, 'A Lamp Kindled' – *The Sisters of Mercy and Tipperary Town* (Tipperary, 2000) for a discussion on the relationship between the Smith-Barry estate and the local authority with respect to housing, poverty and unemployment.
 4. *Army medical department, report for 1896, 1897* (c 8559), liv; also *Report for 1899, 1902* (Cd 521), xxxix.
 5. *Minutes Tipperary Town Commissioners* (MITC), 22 June 1899 (Dan Breen House, Tipperary); see J. Muldoon & G. McSweeney, *A Guide to Irish Local Government* (Dublin, 1898) and a recent account V. Crossman, *Local Government in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994).
 6. *Report on the sanitary circumstances and administration of the Tipperary Urban District by Dr. T. J. Browne*, supplement to the 29th report of the Local Government Board 1900-1901, 1902, xxxvii, pp 236-40.
 7. *Tipperary People* (T.P.), 1 May 1896. This newspaper was published in Tipperary town.
 8. See for example, MITC, 13 Nov. 1879.
 9. T.P., 26 May, 2 June 1899.
 10. T.P., 1 Sept. 1899.
 11. T.P., 26 Jan. 1900.
 12. T.P., 5 Oct. 1900.
 13. T.P., 4 Aug. 1899; *Returns of local taxation in Ireland for 1900-1901, 1902* (Cd 1382), lxxxviii; *Returns for 1901-1902, 1903* (Cd 1694), lix.
 14. T.P., 23 Aug., 1 Nov. 1901; MTUDC, 28 Oct. 1902.
 15. D. Bradley, *Farm Labourers: Irish Struggle 1900-1976* (Belfast, 1988), pp 26-28; D. D. Sheehan, *Ireland Since Parnell* (London, 1921), pp 67, 174-178. Sheehan was a Nationalist M.P. for a Cork constituency whose son Pádraig Ó Síocháin, SC, became a well known criminal lawyer.
 16. T.P., 19 Aug. 1898.
 17. T.P., 27 Jan. 1899.
 18. 19, 26 May, 2 June 1899.
 19. T.P., 2 June 1899.
 20. MTUDC, 28 July 1899.
 21. T.P., 4 Aug 1899.
 22. *Clonmel Chronicle*, 6, 17 Jan. 1900.
 23. *Nationalist* (Clonmel), 6 Jan. 1900.
 24. T.P., 26 Jan. 1900.
 25. C.C., 24 Feb. 1900.
 26. T.P., 1 March 1902.
 27. T.P., 14 June 1901.
 28. T.P., 16 Aug. 1901.
 29. Marnane, 'A Lamp Kindled', pp 85-94.
 30. The original census returns for 1901 (and 1911) are in the National Archives, Dublin, and individual family returns may be consulted. The specific call numbers are given in these footnotes with the omission of the county and year designation: 170/6, 170/17, 171/22, 171/23. Incidentally, Bank Place appears to have been so designated from 1895.
 31. For obvious reasons, families have not been identified in most cases.
 32. This sample is based on householders in East Main Street.
 33. T.P., 9 Aug. 1912.
 34. 170/19.
 35. MITC, 5 Dec. 1881; T.P., 30 Nov. 1900.
 36. 170/15, 171/11.
 37. 170/12, 171/8.

38. Smith-Barry estate records (in the writer's possession).
39. 170/10.
40. Smith-Barry estate records. *MITC*, 5 Oct. 1894.
41. 171/18.
42. Barrymore Estate Act, 1905 (5 Edw. VII, Ch. 1).
43. Rev. B. C. de Boinville to G. Townshend, 1 Jan. 1915 (copy in writer's possession).
44. "Losses incurred by Walter Dalton in connection with the Tipperary Plan of Campaign – statement of personal losses at date 1 May 1925" (copy in writer's possession).
45. 171/17.
46. 171/9, 171/10.
47. See for example, M. Hearn, Life for domestic servants in Dublin, 1880-1920 in M. Luddy & C. Murphy (eds), *Women Surviving* (Dublin, 1990), p 148-79. Also the same writer's *Below Stairs: Domestic Service Remembered in Dublin and Beyond, 1880-1922* (Dublin, 1993).
48. An unusual take on these social norms may be found in Frank O'Connor's *An Only Child*, where he describes how his mother, who worked as a maid for eight years, passed up the opportunity to marry a shopkeeper whose business was near his mother's place of work.
49. 171/15.
50. For an account of the building of these houses see, D. G. Marnane, Fr. David Humphreys and New Tipperary in W. Nolan (ed.), *Tipperary: History and Society* (Dublin, 1985), pp 367-78.
51. 171/12.
52. *T.P.*, 5, 12 Oct. 1900.
53. 171/25.
54. *T.P.*, 4 Nov. 1898.
55. *T.P.*, 1 Dec. 1899.
56. 171/24.
57. 170/2.
58. 171/2.
59. 'Observations and Suggestions of District Inspector's Book', *Tipperary Workhouse Male National School, 1856-1914* (in the writer's possession).
60. 171/21.
61. 171/14.
62. 171/16.
63. 171/6.
64. 171/20.
65. 171/13.
66. *T.P.*, 16 Aug. 1901; Eaton's census return for 1901, 169/21/1 and probate of his will, 11 Oct. 1911.
67. 171/4.
68. 170/11.
69. Smith-Barry estate records (in the writer's possession).
70. 170/16.
71. 170/1.
72. For example, *C.C.*, 23 Nov. 1892.
73. 170/7, 170/20.
74. Conveyance Duke of Devonshire to Mrs. Eliza Smith-Barry, 26 April 1860 (Damer Papers, unsorted, NLI).
75. 170/8.
76. 170/3. Cork Street/Lane led off the Clonmel Road.
77. 170/4.
78. *T.P.*, 7 Dec. 1900.
79. 170/13.
80. Smith-Barry estate records.

