

P18

Limerick
House of
Industry

Introduction

The General Registry of Inmates of the House of Industry was donated by Lord Limerick to the Mayor of Limerick in 1989.

The Inmates of the House of Industry consisted of the aged poor, the destitute, the sick and deserted women and children. The House of Industry was established as a consequence of the 1772 Act passed in the Irish House of Commons to establish Poor Houses and Work Houses in every county in Ireland. In 1773, the county and city Grand Juries of Limerick presented £500.00 for the erection of a workhouse in the city and the Protestant Bishop Gore granted the land for the building on the North Strand

Life with the House was rigidly controlled. At nightfall a bell was ring, when all the inmates had to retire to their respective wards, and were locked up until morning. In the morning all of the able- bodied had to work at occupations such as weaving, spinning, opening up hair for upholsters and oakum for ship chandlers. A third of the profit from these labours were given to workers, a quarter to the house steward, and the remainder to the funds of the institution.

Breakfast for the inmates generally consisted of bread and milk, and dinner consisted of potatoes and sour milk. Misconduct was punished by confinement and deprivation of food.

The Sisters of Mercy made visits to the House in order to care for the sick.

The House of Industry closed down in May 1841, and all inmates were transferred to the new Limerick Union Workhouse on Shelbourne Road. The House of Industry building later became known as the Strand Barracks and was used by Limerick Corporation as its main depot and stores.

The General Registry of Inmates (1774-1793) gives an insight into the age, sex, and condition of every inmate in the workhouse during the period, and also there reasons for leaving the House. The volume has been indexed alphabetically and chronologically by Anne Fitzgerald, courtesy of the Limerick Civic Trust (May 1990).

Sources: Lysaght Paddy, *The House of Industry*,
<http://www.limerickcorp.ie/media/Media,3962,en.pdf>, accessed 8 November 2007.

- 1 11 September 1774-9 May 1793 General Registry of the
Poor received into the
House of Industry. Details

are recorded for each inmate under the following headings: name, age, Religion (Roman Catholic, Protestant), occupation, late residence, date admitted, voluntary or compelled, number of bed, condition when received (whether healthy or sickly), disease when received, how disposed of (discharged, died, eloped), condition when discharged (whether healthy or sickly) and observations. 'Observations' includes entries such as 'promised to return home', 'security given not to beg', 'his friends bought his coffin' and 'drove out of town'.

c. 100 ff.

- 2 1774-1793 Typescript transcription of
the General Registry of the
Poor.

- 3 1774-1793 Transcription of the
General Registry of the
Poor, arranged

alphabetically by surname of inmates.