

Commissioners for the Improvement of St. Michael's Parish

L/MP

Contents

	Page
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Minute Books (1819-1844)</u>	2
<u>Account Books (1813-1851)</u>	2
<u>Rate Books (1810-1846)</u>	2
<u>Night Watch (1837-1849)</u>	4
<u>Night Watch Report Books (1838-1849)</u>	4
<u>Inspector's Visits Report Book (1837-1838)</u>	5

Introduction

Newtown Pery experienced a great development in the last third of the eighteenth century and the incapacity of Limerick Corporation to provide all the services required for the expanding city, led to the appointment of improvement commissioners. The result was the creation of the Commissioners for the Improvement of St Michael's Parish by the Newtown Act of 1807, "an act for paving, cleaning, lighting and watching the parish of St Michael, in the liberties of the city of Limerick, and adjoining the said city, and for preventing and removing nuisances therein".

The minute books that survive illustrate that the Commissioners were extremely efficient in the delivery and administration of their functions, (L/MP/1/1-3). The collection also includes some account books, (L/MP/2/1-4) and rate books (L/MP/3/1-76), which document the manner in which the administration raised finance and managed expenditure.

From their establishment in 1807 the Commissioners of St. Michael's Parish also provided a night watch service, which through nightly patrols of the parish was responsible for the security of property and preservation of order. The number of men employed varied from 30 initially to 32 and later 22, with a panel of substitutes, known as supernumeraries, to fill vacancies. Each man patrolled a small area of two to three blocks. They wore a top coat and hat, and carried a watchman's pole. See L/MP/4/3-11, (1838-1849). This service was absorbed into Limerick Corporation Night Watch service in 1853. See L/NW/3-43 (1861-1920)

The Commissioners for the Improvement of St Michael's Parish were abolished by the Limerick Improvement Act of 1853 and their property, staff and powers to pave, clean, light and watch were transferred to Limerick Corporation.

St. Michael's Parish (1819-1851)

Minute Books (1819 – 1844)

Minute book of St. Michael's Parish Commissioners Minute Books entitled 'Proceedings & Resolutions of the Commissioners for Improving St. Michael's Parish'. Meetings include details of the setting of rates, payments made and services provided including scavenging, nuisance prevention, street sweeping and the lighting of street lamps. Includes a list of Commissioners.

3 volumes

1/1	12 April 1819 – 8 April 1833	160 pp.
1/2	9 April 1833 – 19 October 1838	175 pp.
1/3	26 October 1838 – 19 April 1844	222 pp.

[1/4-5]

1/6	2 October 1835-5 August 1836	Rough Minute Book of St. Micheals' Parish Commissioners. Includes details of commissioners present, resolutions passed, and correspondence received. Meetings also recorded in L/MP/1/2.
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c.70 pp

Account Books (1813 – 1851)

Ledger of accounts paid entitled 'Waste Book of the Accounts of the Commissioners for Improving of the Parish of St. Michael'. Includes details of services rendered, payments made and to whom paid.

Items detailed include, street lighting, street sweeping, night watchmen, sewer maintenance, surveying, rate collecting and the sale of various surplus parish items including manure.

3 volumes

2/1	18 December 1813 – 25 March 1820	181 pp.
2/2	13 November 1822 – 6 December 1825	258 pp.
[2/3]		
2/4	8 July 1842 – 1 October 1851	260 pp

Rate Books (1810 – 1846)

Rate Books of St. Michael's Parish. Some volumes include the statement of intent. "We the Commissioners for improving the Parish of S. Michael in the Liberties of the said City of Limerick and adjoining the said city, by authority of the Act of Parliament for that purpose, do hereby order, direct and require ... forthwith to collect and receive the general and respective sums of money expressed and contained in the aforesaid assessments from the several and respective persons chargeable with the same, which for the half year commencing .. and ending ... amounts given into my hands this Signed by St. Michael's Parish Commissioners".

Details are listed under the following columns; street name, inhabitants, yearly value of premises, rates payable', 'when paid' and 'insolvencies'.

Some volumes are incomplete.

Streets mentioned in volumes include: Ann(e) Street, Arthur's Quay, Baker Place, Bank Place, Barrington Street, Bedford Row, Brunswick Street, Carr Street, Catherine Place, Catherine Street, Cecil Street, Cecil Street Upper Charlotte Quay, Charlotte Quay, Lane rear of Corn Market Row, Cornwallis Street, Custom House Place, Denmark Street, Denmark Street Upper, Dominick Street, Ellen Street, Francis Street, George Street, Glentworth Street, Griffiths Row, Hartstonge Street, Henry Street, High Street, Honans Quay, Mallow Street, Market Ally, Meads Quay, Michael Street, Murnanes Place, Nelson Street, Newenham Street, Old Hay market, Old Play House lane, Patrick Street, Pery Square, Pery Square- East Side, Pery Square - Tontine Houses, Pery Street, Pikes Lane, Queen Street, Quinlan Street, Richmond Place, Robert Street, Roches Street, Rutland Street, Sexton Street, Shannon Street, Studdarts Lane, Taylors Street, Thomas Street, Watergate Lane, Windmill Street, Wickam Street, William Street, William Street Little, William Street, Upper. As the area grew more streets and premises were included over time. Individual house numbers are only included within the first two volumes.

September 1810 – March 1846

18 volumes

[3/1-3/2]

3/3	September 1810 – March 1811 Loose sheets	2 pp
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[4-10]

3/11	September 1814 – March 1815	21 pp
3/12	March 1815 – September 1815	20 pp

[13-21]

3/22	September 1819 – March 1820	11 pp
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[23-29]

3/30	September 1823 – March 1824	11 pp
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[31-39]

3/40	September 1828 – March 1829	12 pp
[41]		
3/42	September 1829 – March 1830	12 pp
[43]		
3/44	September 1830 – March 1831	12 pp
3/45	March 1831 – September 1831	12 pp
[46-53]		
3/54	September 1835 – March 1836 Index included	33 pp
[55-57]		
3/58	September 1837 – March 1838 Index included	33 pp
3/59	March 1838 – September 1838 Rates kept in an ‘exercise book’	17 pp
[60-62]		
3/63	March 1840 – September 1840	34 pp
[64]		
3/65	March 1841 – September 1841	32 pp
3/66	September 1841 – March 1842	35 pp
3/67	March 1842 – September 1842	36 pp
[68-70]		
3/71	March 1844 – September 1844	36 pp
[72-75]		
3/76	September 1846 – March 1847 Loose sheet	1 p

Night Watch Report Books (1838-1849)

Reports of the Night Watch service for St. Michael’s parish, detailing the number of men on duty each night and whether they were permanent or supernumerary staff (‘Morgan in place of Barry in Robert Street’, 18 July 1845, L/MP/4/7). Includes details of incidents that occurred throughout each night (‘At half past four, McMahon reports Catherine

Shines back door open in Little William Street', 14 December 1844, L/MP/4/7). Each volume includes a weekly watchmen pay list, detailing names of watchmen and wages paid.

4 volumes

[1-2]

4/3 8 June 1838 – 27 December 1838 c. 220 pp

[4-6]

4/7 9 October 1844 – 14 November 1845 c. 280 pp

[8]

4/9 9 November 1847 – 13 August 1848 c. 240 pp

[10]

4/11 12 June 1849 – 5 November 1849 c. 180 pp

Inspector's Visits Report Book (1837-1838)

4/12 6 October 1837 – 7 August 1838 Inspectors Visits
Report Book containing details of
the Night Watch Inspectors
nightly inspection of the nightwatch men on duty detailing each inspector's
name and incidences, if any ('Mr Kelly commenced his first visit at two. Returned
at three and found all correct'. 'Mr Kerin could not perform his visits in
consequence of not finding himself well').
Each inspector used to make two or three visits per night.

c. 90 pp

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