

Limerick City Council

Limerick Corporation (pre-reform)

L/OC

Contents

	Page
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Freemen of Limerick (1719-1890)</u>	3
<u>Applicants for Freemen Status under the Court of Claims (1823-1905)</u>	3
<u>Corporation Administration: Oath Book, Minute Book and Financial Matters (1769-1890)</u>	4
<u>Tholsel Court (1773-1795)</u>	6
<u>Court of Conscience (1895-1917)</u>	6
<u>Bibliography and Secondary Sources</u>	6

Introduction

Limerick Corporation (pre-reform of 1841)

Limerick Corporation was constituted under royal charter in 1197 and under subsequent charters and statutes throughout the medieval and early modern period, it gained increasing autonomy and privileges, including the right to collect revenue, to elect a mayor and city council, administer local justice and the local economy, maintain roads, bridges, city walls, streets and public buildings. Limerick Corporation was reformed in 1841 under the Municipal Reform Act of that year. Very few records survive prior to this period. The surviving material relates to the Freeman of Limerick, the administration of local justice through the Tholsel Court and the Court of Conscience and the general administration of the Corporation. The records that survive for this period are listed under L/OC/.

The collection includes a number of volumes relating to the admission to the status of Freeman of Limerick including an index to Freeman admitted (L/OC/1), and a list of applicants for Freeman Status. These records extend from the pre reform to the post reform period as a running series and all the material has therefore been listed with the pre- reform material. The three traditional qualifying rights to freedom were; being the eldest son of a freeman, being married to the daughter of a freeman and serving an apprenticeship of seven years with a freeman; in addition, the right to the freedom could be granted as a gift of the Common Council and it was possible to purchase the right. The status of Freeman brought with it exemption from the payment of tolls and was widely abused in the pre reform 'Corrupt Corporation'. Later in the nineteenth century the title became an honorary one.

An Oath Book, transcript Minute Book and financial material provides an insight into city administration. (L/OC/3-5)

The collection includes material related to the administration of justice in the City. Two volumes relate to the daily transaction of business in the Tholsel Court. (L/OC/ 6/1-2) This operated as the chief civil court -its authority derived from the charter of Henry V (1413). It dealt mainly with the recovery of debts and breach of contract. It was constituted by the Mayor and two sheriffs and met week.

The collection also includes a Court of Conscience Decree Book (L/OC/7). This tribunal, in which the Mayor was the sole judge, had competence in disputes involving sums of £2 or less and sat once a week. The 1840 Municipal Corporations Act abolished the role of the corporation in judicial matters, but the Court of Conscience, continued to operate into the twentieth century, as a remnant of the powerful judicial privileges once enjoyed by Limerick municipality.

Bibliography and Secondary Sources:

Municipal Corporations of Ireland: Report on the County of the City of Limerick made by the Irish Corporation Commissioners following an Inquiry held in limerick from 26th September to 11 October 1833. Reprinted November 1969, Corporation of Limerick, Town Hall, Limerick

Potter Matthew Dr. . A History of Limerick City Council

Limerick Corporation (pre-reform)

Freemen of Limerick (1719-1817)

- 1 20 August 1719 – 6 May 1817 Alphabetical index by surname of
Freemen of Limerick. Listing trade
or occupation and date of admission
as Freemen. Includes loose sheet detailing names, dates and amounts of payments.
48 pp

Applicants for Freemen Status under the Court of Claims (1823-1905)

- 2/1 16 October 1823 – 11 October 1841 Register listing details of applicants
for Freeman status under the
following headings: Call of
Appearance, Proof of Claimant Bonafides, and Decisions Made. Criteria for
eligibility for election to Freeman status. Includes an index by surname and seven
loose sheets also listing claimants for Freemen status.
132 pp.
- 2/2 29 August 1823 – 12 October 1841 Register of applicants for freeman
status listing under the following
headings, Name,
Profession/Occupation, Residence, Date of Admission, Reason of Election, When
Sworn', By Whom and Signature of Freeman and witness.
8 pp.
- 2/3 5 October 1847 – 6 May 1905 Register of applicants for freemen
including an index by surname.
Some entries also include notes on
the criteria for eligibility for election.
63 pp

Corporation Administration :Oath Book, Minute Books and Financial Matters
(1769-1890)

- 3/1 1797 – 1890 Oath Book containing the oaths of office for city officials including the mayor, sheriffs, recorders, town clerks, justices, alderman's, burgess, receivers, freeman, petty constables, high constable, market juror, weigh master of hydes and skins, and inspector of hydes and skins. Includes the oaths of allegiance to the established church and monarch to be taken by mayor, sheriff, recorder, town clerk including an "Oath for the Swearing of Allegiance to the Crown of those who have been misled and taken the Oath of the United [Free?] Men". Includes details of Thosel Court of Limerick business-"At the Adjournment of the Great Quarter Session of Peace held at the Thosel of the City of Limerick in and for the County of said City, Oaths taken". Includes signatures of mayor, sheriffs, recorders, town clerk, justices and high constables.
- 75 pp.
- 3/2 1 December 1870-30 December 1874 (1921) Oath Book containing signature of alderman, town councillors, borough auditors, and assessors, and ward assessors who took an oath of allegiance to the crown. Also recorded is the date which oath was taken, the ward the individual comes from, description of their title such as 'town councillor' and 'grocer, alderman'. Opposite the signature of the oath taker, is the signature of magistrates whom witnessed the taking of the oath. The rear of the volume consists of material relating to the presentation of the Freedom of the City to President Eamonn De Valera and Alderman Mrs. Thomas Clarke, 5 December 1921. Includes programme of events, copy of city council minutes, and transcript of certificate presented to Eamonn De Valera..
- c. 10 pp.
- 4/1 3 June 1769 – 10 February 1796 Transcript minute book of the Common Council of the Corporation of Limerick. Copy.

An inscription on the inside cover states; 'I certify that the following transcript is a full and true copy of the original Council Book deposited amongst the records of the Corporation of Limerick in the present state and condition, and the said original Book is much mutilated by neglect and decay, and was so mutilated when it first came into my procession as Town Clark of the Borough of Limerick'. Dated this tenth day of March 1846. Signed J. F. Raleigh, Town Clark. Limerick. Some entries therefore incomplete.

Includes accounts from 13 April 1763 to 29 September 1776 and an incomplete index by surname at the back of the volume.

117 pp.

- 4/2 12 October 1807-13 February 1809 Minutes of the
Common Council of
the Corporation of
Limerick. Unbound loose pages of a number of meetings dated 12 October 1807, 10 October 1808, 27 June 1808, 25 June 1808, 25 June 1808 and 13 February 1809. Minutes are signed by all those attending. Includes a resolution that the Freedom of the City should be presented to Captain Michael Seymour 'in a heart of oak box, accentuated with gold'.

12pp

- 4/3 4 January 1841-12 October 1841 Rough minutes of
meetings of the
Common Council of
Limerick Corporation. Meetings are dated 4 January 1841, 28 February 1841, 12 October 1841.

11pp

Note: An additional Minute book of this administration (1672-1680) survives in the British Library.

- 5 1 October 1777 – 1 July 1801 Paying Orders of Council of Limerick Corporation, listing amounts paid for annuities, salaries and expenses.

101 pp

Tholsel Court (1773-1795)

Volumes recording details of Tholsel Court business, including details of plaintiffs and defendants.

2 volumes

- 6/1 22 July 1773 – 7 January 1786 39 items
Includes an alphabetical index and a file of loose material, relating to Tholsel business.
- 6/2 25 January 1786 – 29 June 1795 205 pp
- [3-4]
- 6/5 19 April 1811-30 October 1833 Volume recording details of cases brought before the Tholsel court.
Details recorded include names of plaintiffs and defendants, names of their attorney, dates of appearances at court, name of judge attending, judgement or outcome of appearance. Includes entries such as ‘1811 October 3, plaintiff declared by Jackson. October 4 a day is given. October 18 defendant appeared by Fitzgerald...1812 January 31 by consent of attorneys for plaintiff and defendant this cause is left to the arbitration pf John Norris Russell and Richard Thomas Murray, Esquires, with liberty to call un an umpire, said award to be made on or before 14 February...’ (Daniel Jones, assignee of Daniel Geary, bankrupt, plaintiff –v- Martin Moloney, defendant; page two). Includes also index to names and reference to cases in previous Tholsel court volumes. Includes also list of certificates of attorneys, passed by the Tholsel Court of Limerick.
Fragile handle with care.

594 pp

Court of Conscience (1895-1917)

Court of Conscience Decree Book. Details are entered under the following headings; Date of Decree, Plaintiff, Defendant, Amount of Decree in Full, Mode of Payment, Date Decree Issued and to whom, Paid on Foot of Decree and Date of payment, Received by and Signature of Plaintiff or his Representative.

- 7/1 25 April 1895 – 20 July 1899 240 pp

L/OC/

[2-4]

7/5 1 March 1909-15 November 1917 c. 200 ff