

P60

Mattersons Papers

The name of Mattersons was synonymous with the world famous Limerick Bacon and Pork products. Mattersons were at the forefront of the establishment of the Bacon Industry in Limerick. Sometime around 1820, John Russell a native of Cumberland, England arrived in the city. Russell had adapted a bacon curing method, which he saw practised in Berwick upon Tweed. Russell was often credit with curing the first of the renowned Limerick Hams. Russell went into business with Joseph Mattersons. The new business rapidly expanded and soon the company which was known as Mattersons owned an extensive premises on Parnell Street. Mattersons was soon exporting out of Ireland and the company exported its hams abroad on 'the Limerick Liners'. These ships were owned by a co-operative of Limerick merchants. During the Famine the company suffered as the pig population collapsed due to the shortage of potatoes- the staple at the time of the pig. Under Messrs Joseph and William Matterson, the sons of the founder of the company, they introduced modern techniques into their Limerick bacon curing factory. In particular the introduction of the ice process enabled the curing to be carried on in the hottest summer. By the 1890s, Mattersons moved their bacon curing factory to Roches Street. Mattersons, along with other Munster Bacon Factories encouraged farmers to breed a better quality of pigs in the region. This was to ensure that bacon produced by curers in the region was of the highest standard. By 1900 this emphasis on quality had paid rich dividends and Mattersons was a household name and they were exporting bacon and other products to Britain, Europe, India, South Africa and India. In the early years of the century Mattersons added a cannery to their Bacon Curing business. They also owned a bacon curing factory in Waterford. This canned cold, such as the famous Limerick brawn and vegetables such as peas, which were sourced locally. The sauces, canned goods and meats produced at the Limerick Cannery were a great success.

Mattersons like other food producers did well during the First World War. However, the company suffered with other local industries after Independence as cheap imports and falling demand threatened the survival of many Limerick firms. The introduction of tariffs on imported Bacon probably saved the local industry in 1932. Mattersons had to contend with growing regulation of the Bacon industry by the government, after the election of Fianna Fail in 1932. Mattersons like other bacon curers had to endure tough times during the 'Emergency' and post war period as shortages in pig feed led to a collapse in the Irish pig population. However, the Limerick bacon industry survived and continued to be hugely popular in Ireland and Britain. The Mattersons family continued to be very active in the running of the company and many members of the extended family owned shares in the company. By 1960 Mattersons were a successful firm, employing 300 in its bacon curing and canning facilities. It was known for its high standards and excellent products-the company had good industrial relations. However, rising costs in the 1960s and strained industrial relations was beginning to have a negative impact upon the plant. The location of Mattersons in Roches Street meant that the company could not expand and introduce new technology due to modern planning laws. In 1966, Mattersons was affected by a national strike and this along with problems in the supply of pigs due to a collapse in their price led to the collapse of Mattersons. The bacon curing side of the business was wound down and the cannery section was eventually taken over by the semi-state conglomerate Green Isle. The cannery continued to operate for many years, producing Matterson brand tinned goods, but ceased operations in 1985.

P60 2 **Minutes Book of the Shareholders and Directors of Mattersons meetings, including the Annual General Meetings. Issues regarding the day to day running of the bacon factory and cannery are recorded, as well as financial issues such as share dividends.. There is also notes relating to government regulation of the Bacon Industry in Ireland- ‘no canning of beef until permission is granted from government under the Slaughter of Cattle and Sheep Act’ (18th September 1934). There are also loose letters relating to the killing of pigs, employee salaries and general company business within the Journal.**

1 Jan 1932-21 May 1963

460 pp.

P60 6 **Customer Ledger. Ledger deals with the accounts of Mattersons customers in the Greater London Area- such as Francis and Son Ltd of Brixton.**

1 October 1890-31 December 1901

500 pp.

P60 13 **Sales Book Monthly accounts. Monthly accounts of all the Mattersons product sold and their value. It gives details of the sausages, cooked hams, puddings and cold meats sold each month by the bacon factory and cannery.**

July 1964-Oct 1970

180 pp.

P60 9 **A Journal with the accounts of William Mattersons and Co Ltd. It gives the company’s profit and loss accounts and details of the company’s expenses and income.**

1 Jan 1902-12 May 1967

440 pp.

P60 10 **Mattersons Cash Payment Book. Give expenses incurred by Mattersons on a weekly or a daily basis and paid by the Company in cash. There are payments of ‘pig insurance, freight charges, and for a ‘jobbers ledger’. A jobber was a dealer in pigs.**

1 June 1966 24 April 1970

240 pp

P60 11 Mattersons Cash Payment Book. Give expenses incurred by Mattersons on a weekly or a daily basis and paid by the Company in cash.

28 April 1970-25 February 1977

240 pp.

P60 7 Creditors Ledger- accounts of suppliers and creditors of Mattersons from garages to Irish Glass Co.

Jan 1949- Jan 1962

400 pp.

P60 4 Mattersons General Ledger. This gives various accounts relating to the business such as the its overheads the Electricity Accounts- its business in Ireland and England and its products the Sausage and Lard Accounts. There are also two loose letters relating to insurance issues.

January 1947- December 1961

666 pp

P60 3 Mattersons Minute Book of the Directors Committee and shareholders meetings-mainly concerning financial affairs, such as the returns of audited accounts and investments of the company.

1 August 1902-1 July 1965

440 pp.

P 60 `5 The Private Ledger of Mattersons, it holds various accounts of the firm. There is a handwritten contents page. It gives tax returns, the accounts of private investors and those of the Matterson Family. There are also bank account details, capital accounts and dividend payments. There are profit and loss accounts on pp 110-133, 205 and the yearly Balance Sheets are on page 457 – 518.

1902-1965

520 pp

P60 1 The Mattersons Minute Book of the Directors Committee and shareholders meetings. The first meeting of the new Mattersons Company in London and its registering of the company in Ireland (31 October 1895) are recorded. The Minutes deal with many financial issues such as the raising of new shares ‘Prospectus to be issued from Cork’ (31 October 1895). There are also issues dealing with the day to day running of the business in Limerick and its offices in Ireland and Liverpool. There are also references to the Bacon Factory ‘

it was agreed to have the hanging house fitted out with brass'. There are also references to employees pay and to accident reports.

1 October 1895- 23 February

1932

480 pp.

P60 8. The Mattersons 'Jobbers' and Growers Ledger, giving the accounts of the Farmers Pigs Account, this details the payments made to pig suppliers. There is also a 'Growers' account. These give the name and address of the farmers who supplied Mattersons Cannery with peas. In the inside cover is a list of growers giving the page with their account.

October 1960-January 1971

260 pp.

P60 15 Mattersons return of stocks for inventory purposes. There are also inventory of Buildings, machinery and plant fittings for the Limerick premises. This gives the value of equipment and machinery in the extensive Mattersons premises on Roches Street and elsewhere- it gives details of the Cannery, Engine Room, Chill Room, 'Sausage House' and stables, for 1932 only.

1932- 1967

200 pp.

P60 4 Mattersons Salary Account Book, in which are the names and the salaries of the Mattersons management.

31 August 1909-30 June 1925

120 pp

P60 17 The Mattersons Monthly Subscription Book, possibly records subscription to a Sports and Social Club. It gives the names and department of all those who subscribed. It lists the names of all those 'beef butchers' store women' and office staff.

Jan 1951- March 1965

150 pp.

P60 19 A note book from the Mattersons Cannery. It lists all the products of the cannery, their ingredients and their cost. There are also weekly wages accounts for the cannery and costs of labelling and despatch. It also gives the amount produced and estimates of 'unproductive labour' in the cannery on a weekly basis.

11 November 1953-31 December 1954

130 pp.

P60 22. The Mattersons Killing and Products Analysis Book. This gives numbers of pigs slaughtered and production levels of Bacon, Suasage and Cannery Departments.

July 1965- Oct 1969

220 pp

P60 23 A Mattersons Calendar with a print of King John's Castle Limerick. It has the Mattersons logo and lists the company's products. It is made out of tin.

N/D

1 item.

P60 21 Pig Killing Returns Book, this lists the number of pigs killed in factories in Limerick, Cork and Waterford and gives totals for each factory, including Mattersons, Denny's and Shaws. There are handwritten notes to a 'General Pool' and a 'Berwick Pool'. There are also handwritten notes on pigs killed their number and if the number killed were 'over' or short. These handwritten notes could be references to an informal agreement between Munster Bacon Producers in relation to the common purchasing of pigs and distribution amongst the factories.

3 May 1890-1 December 1893

120 pp.

P60 20 A notebook on the killing and sales of pigs and bacon, which are recorded in tables. There are also an assortment of handwritten notes on the production of bacon and pork by products. There is a section on 'Bacon Curing', in which the process whereby bacon is cured by 'resting, stunning, scalding, sprayed, cooling and chilling' is noted-along with tips such as on the 'purity of the salt'. There are also some recipes for the production for puddings and sausages from 1923 and 1932.

1940?

100 pp.

P60 24 A pamphlet entitled 'Limerick Bacon'. It contains a potted history of Limerick Bacon and in particular of Mattersons and has images of Mattesons and two advertisements for the company.

c. 1960

8 pp.