

Belfast 1798 to 1914

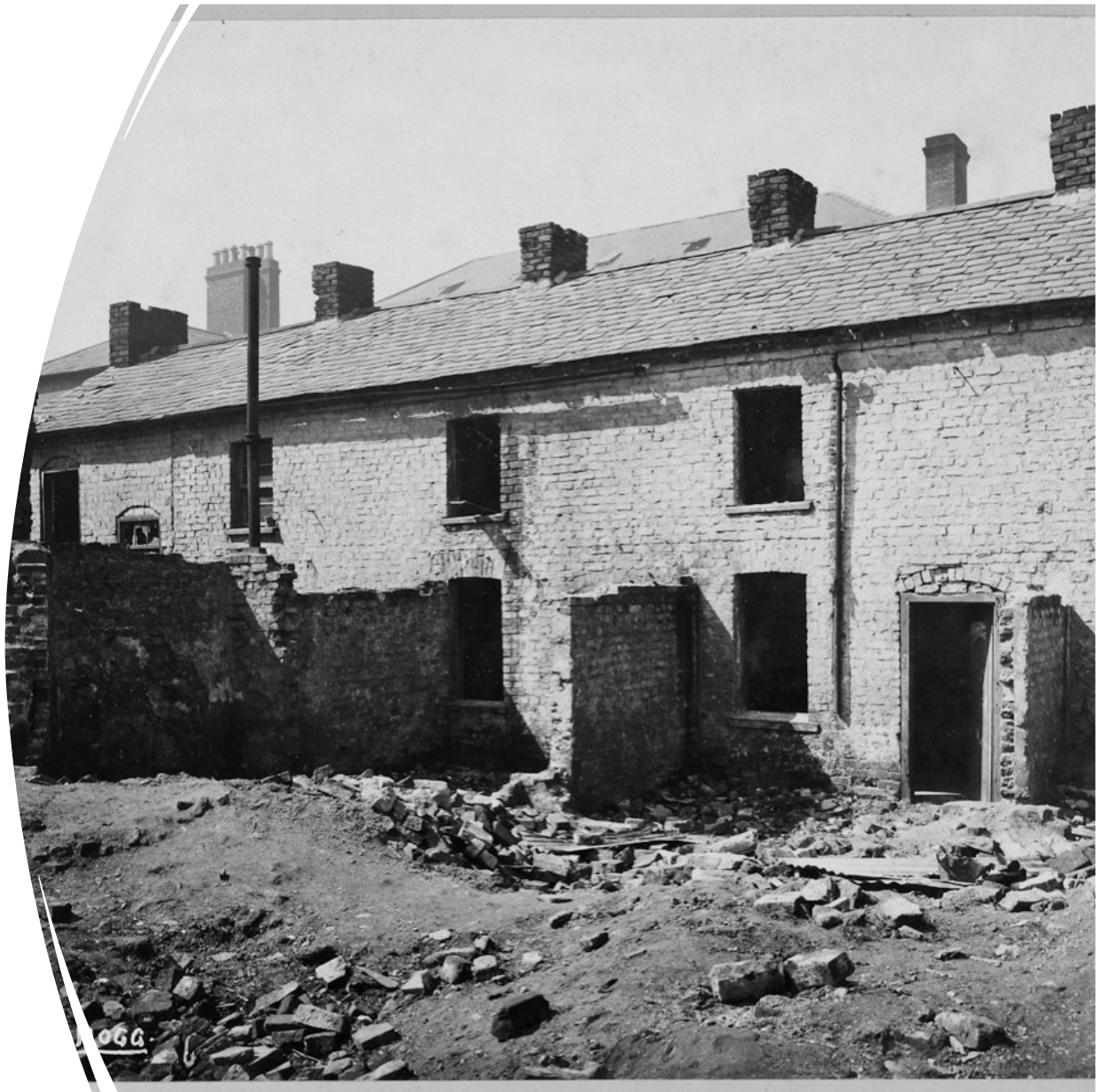
Market town to imperial
city

1 October 2025



Contents

- Overview
 - Welcome
 - Health & Safety and info
 - About me
 - About you
 - Course info
- Belfast: 1798 and 1914



Health and safety

Fire alarms – no drills schedule

Toilets

Accident reporting

General personal safety/security

COVID



HEALTH
— & —
SAFETY

TEACHING ROOM SAFETY GUIDELINES

For the safety and wellbeing of all staff and students, please follow these guidelines when attending face-to-face teaching:



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST



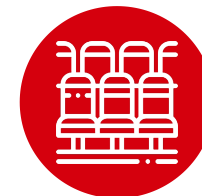
DO NOT attend class if you have symptoms of Covid-19. Book a PCR test and follow the advice of the PHA



Wear a face covering unless you have a PHA-specified exemption



Cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching your face

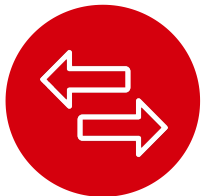


Regularly check the University Covid-19 FAQ information on the University website



SIT WHERE YOU LIKE

Students are not required to socially distance from one another but if there is capacity feel free to spread out in class



Enter and exit the room promptly, adhering to physical distancing and directional signage



Download the StopCOVID NI proximity app



Ensure you are following quarantine restrictions if you have recently arrived from overseas



Use hand sanitiser when entering the room

Teaching rooms are set up with signage and markers so that they can be quickly changed back to 1m+ social distancing if guidelines change later

Fire Action

ON DISCOVERING A FIRE

1. Sound the alarm by operating the nearest fire alarm call point.
2. Dial 2222 to call the Fire and Rescue Service.
3. If possible tackle the fire using the appliances provided. (Do not endanger yourself or others in doing so).

ON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM

4. Leave the building by the nearest exit, closing all doors behind you.

5. Report to the person in charge of the assembly point..

Do not take risks.

Do not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do not use lifts 1 .

Do not re-enter the building for any reason until authorised to do so.

Note 1: If any tutor/student feels that they could not leave the building by stairways

due to a disability or a mobility problem, they should contact the School Disability

Advisor or Disability Services, so that they can be assessed for a PEEP (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)

If someone falls ill or requires medical assistance



The tutor should contact the Security Control on an internal phone 2222 or on a



mobile 028 9097 2222.



Accidents and incidents

- As soon as is practicable after any accident or incident, the tutor must complete an accident report form (AR1). Forms can be obtained from the Open Learning team at the School of Education, 20 College Green. Completed forms should be returned to the Open Learning Team as soon as possible.



About me

- Belfast Green Badge guide
- Local historian & archivist
- Podcaster
- Media pundit
- PhD, King's College London
- Former spin doctor



Podcasts



**Mentioned in
Dispatches
Podcast**



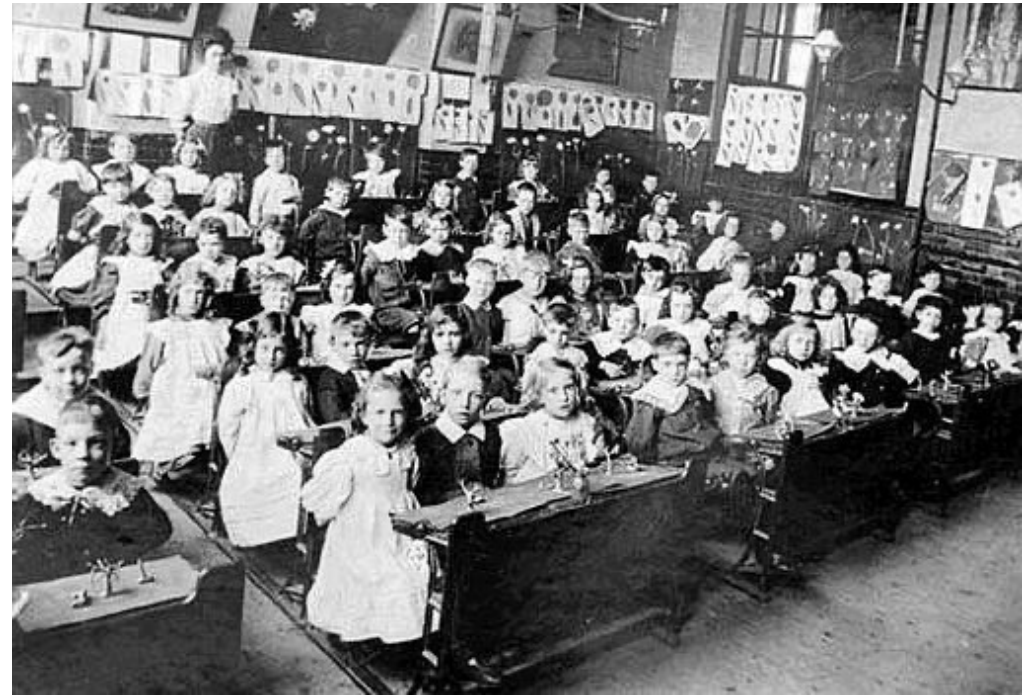
About you

- Who are you?
- Why choose this course?
- What do you want to get out of it?



Learning objectives

- Understand the key events, movements and trends in the social history of modern Belfast (1798–1914) in Irish, British and European contexts.
- Explore how changes in law, economy, population, the built environment and politics shaped the daily lives of Belfast residents during this period.



Key dates



Date	Meeting and Subject
01-Oct-25	1.Intro – Belfast 1798 To 1914
08-Oct-25	2.Crime And Punishment, The Rise of The Police Force And Prisons
15-Oct-25	3.Religion And Church Attendance
22-Oct-25	4.Party Politics, The Expanding Franchise and National Issues
29-Oct-25	5.The World of Work and The Industrial Revolution
05-Nov-25	6.The Rise of The Labour Movement
12-Nov-25	7.Local Government, Public Health and Welfare
19-Nov-25	8.Leisure, Pass Times and Hobbies
26-Nov-25	9.Education, Training and Employment
03-Dec-25	10.Disease, Illness and Public Health

Access to slides

- Slides will be available on my own website and can be downloaded as required.
- These will be posted at <https://kensingtons.org.uk/ole3039/> after each session.
- The web page will be deleted three days after the end of the last session.



Purpose

- Set context for social history in Belfast: the 'state' of Belfast in 1798 and 1914
- Consider broad themes that shape social history through the period:
 - Constitutional question
 - Demography
 - Industrialisation
 - Urbanisation
 - Technology
 - Geopolitical events
 - What did Belfast look like during this time?



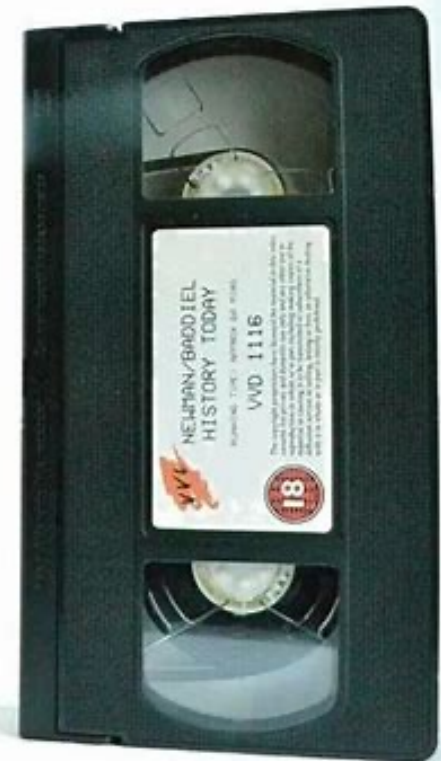
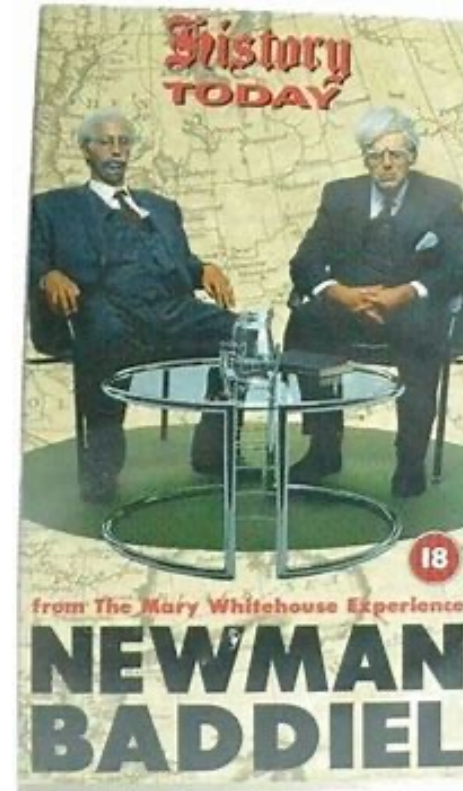
The Passage of time...

Bernard Gorman, 100 years
old in 1899. Died at 103 in
1902.



What is social history?

- Social history is the study of the lived experiences, activities, and behaviours of ordinary people throughout history.
- Focuses on topics such as class, gender, ethnicity, work, family life, and more.
- Unlike political or military history, it prioritises the lives of everyday people, often giving voice to those who were marginalised or overlooked.



Chronological Approach in Social History

Advantages:

- Clear timeline: Offers a structured understanding of historical events and developments.
- Context: Helps in understanding changes and continuity over time.
- Cause and effect: Easier to trace the impact of earlier events on later ones.

Disadvantages:

- Overgeneralisation: Can overlook local variations or specific cultural contexts.
- Complexity: Can become overwhelming when trying to cover long periods.
- Focus on "big" events: May ignore social history aspects by focusing too much on political or economic milestones.

Local Place Approach in Social History

Advantages:

- Rich detail: Allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific geographical area.
- Unique insights: Reveals how national or global trends affected particular communities.
- Tangible connections: Local studies often allow better access to archives, interviews, and community knowledge.

Disadvantages:

- Limited scope: May not capture broader national or global trends.
- Less generalisable: Difficult to apply findings to other regions or time periods.
- Risk of isolation: Focusing too narrowly on one place might ignore its connections with broader networks.

Thematic Approach in Social History

Advantages:

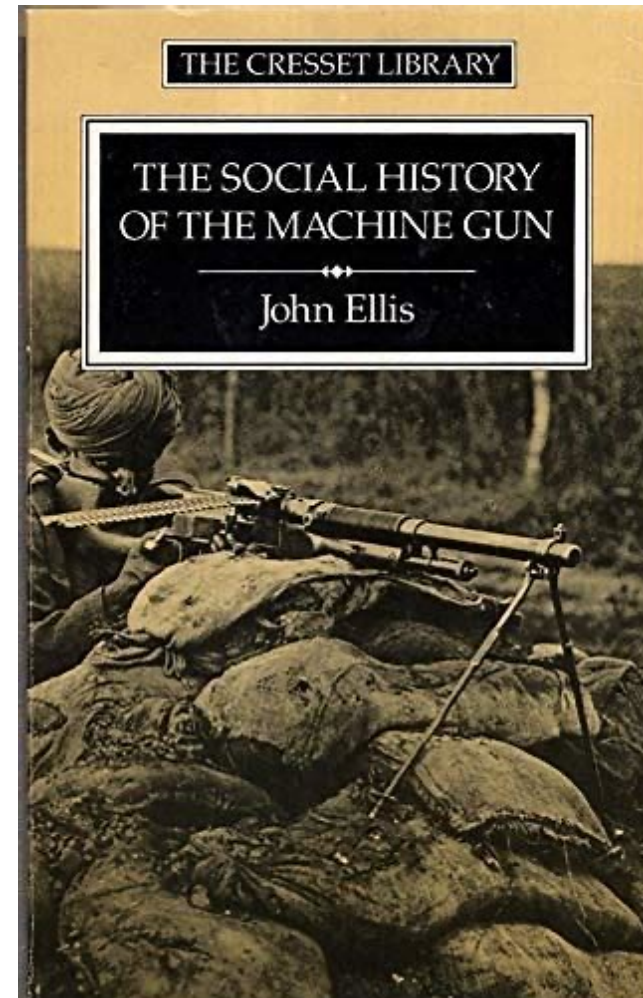
- Focus on key issues: Allows historians to delve deeply into important themes (e.g., crime, work, gender roles).
- Flexibility: Themes can be studied across different periods, locations, or groups.
- Comparisons: Enables analysis of how certain social phenomena evolved across time and space.
- Engaging: Themes like crime or family life often resonate more with contemporary audiences.

Disadvantages:

- Loss of chronology: Harder to see long-term changes in the context of a specific timeline.
- Narrow focus: May neglect the bigger picture or how different themes interact.

Why Choose a Thematic Approach?

- Deeper insights: A thematic approach allows for a thorough exploration of specific issues, leading to a richer understanding of key social phenomena.
- Comparative analysis: By examining a theme across different times and places, we can better understand both common patterns and unique variations.
- Broader relevance: Themes like crime, work, or social mobility can resonate widely, making the study of history more accessible and relatable.
- Interdisciplinary potential: Thematic studies often intersect with fields like sociology, economics, and anthropology, enriching the analysis with multiple perspectives.



THE CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS OF (NORTHERN) IRELAND



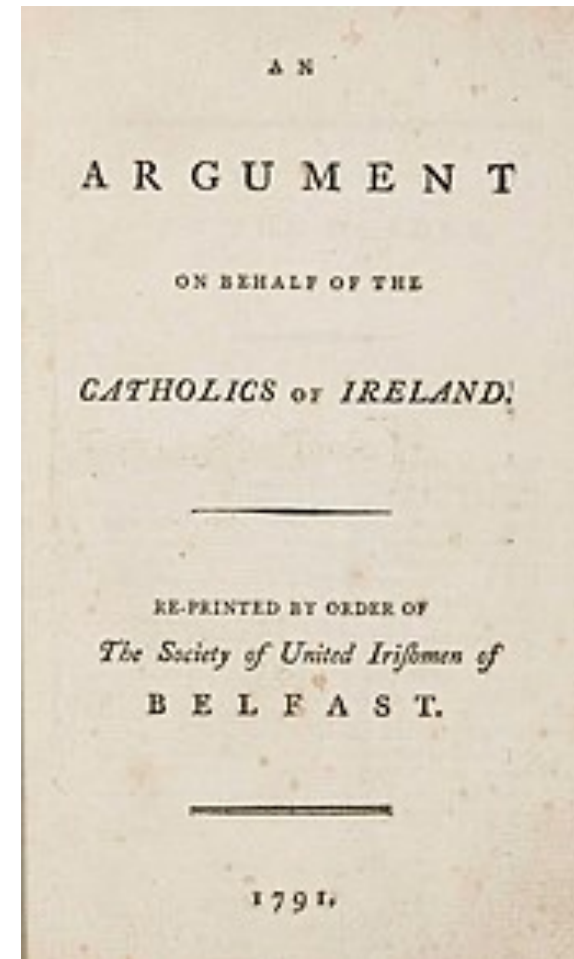
Belfast in the late 18th Century

- Small but growing Catholic community
- St Mary's Church, opened in 1884
- Largely paid for Presbyterian parishioners at 1st, 2nd and 3rd Churches
- Ecumenical spirit in town



United Irishmen

- Founded by Theobald Wolfe Tone, James Napper Tandy and Thomas Russell
- Belfast leaders: Henry Joy McCracken, William Drennan
- Mainly Presbyterian merchants
- Aimed at "principles of civil, political and religious liberty"¹:
 - Catholic emancipation
 - Parliamentary Reform
 - Universal Manhood Suffrage
 - Democratic system



Inspiration

- Enlightenment – new political ideas, Voltaire, Rousseau, Thomas Paine
- US Revolution – created a republic in 1780s via violent revolution
- French Revolution – radicalism establish the Republic, executed the King



Forced underground

- Organisation outlawed by Crown in May 1794
- Violent revolution only way of achieving Irish Republic
- Negotiations with French revolutionary forces for military assistance
- Alliance with Catholic Defenders



The Rebellion

- 6 June 1798, Henry Joy McCracken declared First Year of Liberty
- Battles of Antrim, Ballynahinch and Saintfield all lost against Crown forces.
- Sectarian violence in parts of Ireland

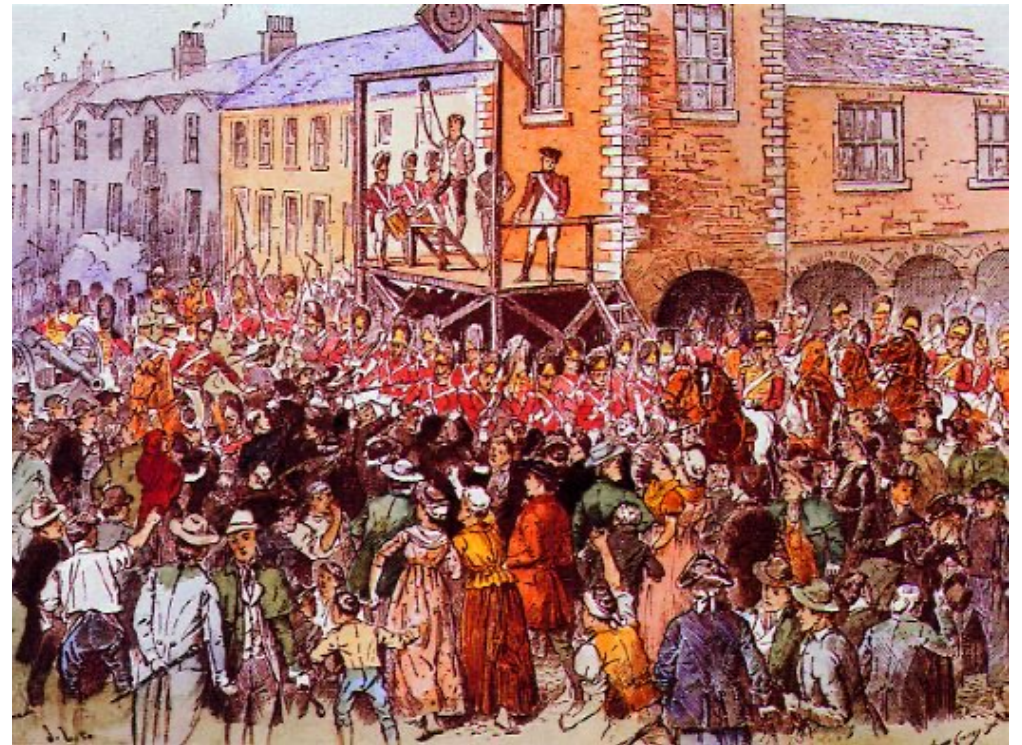


PEEP-OF-DAY BOYS.

Actions in Belfast

Henry Joy McCracken
caught and tried for
treason at the
Exchange Buildings

Executed for treason
outside the Market
House (now Dunnes
Store)



Consequences

- Further unrest: Emmet Rebellion 1803 (Thomas Russell, LHL)
- Split the Presbyterian Church in Belfast – Conservative vs Liberal, Subscribing vs non subscribing.
- Act of Union 1800; abolition of the Dublin Parliament
- Legacy of distrust, fear and tension between Protestant and Catholic



Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847)

- O'Connell claimed to have been a United Irishman but member of the Lawyers Artillery Corps.
- Dueled with John D'Esterre and killed him
- Formed Catholic Association 1823; achieved the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829.
- Active causes: Tithe and land reform
- Campaigned for repeal of the Union



Young Irelanders

- A political and cultural movement in the 1840s committed to an all-Ireland struggle for independence and democratic reform.
- Group erected a banner in July, its colours (green for Catholics, orange for Protestants) intended to symbolise the United Irish republican ideal.
- Leaders arrested and revolt collapsed.

And here is a portrait of the Author,



MR. G-O'RILLA, THE YOUNG IRELAND PARTY, EXULTING OVER THE INSULT TO THE BRITISH FLAG. SHOULDN'T HE BE EXTINGUISHED AT ONCE?

Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891)

- MP, 1875-1891.
- Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, 1882-91
- Balance of power in 1885-86
- Issues:
 - Land reform – president of Irish National Land League
 - Home Rule
- Political career ended with revelation of a decade-long secret affair with divorcee Katherine O'Shea.



Home Rule Crisis, 1886-1912

- 1886: First Home Rule Bill
- 1892: Second Home Rule Bill
- 1912: Third Home Rule Bill
- Ulster Crisis, 1912-14
 - Solemn League and Covenant
 - Formation of UVF/Irish Volunteers
 - Near Civil War?

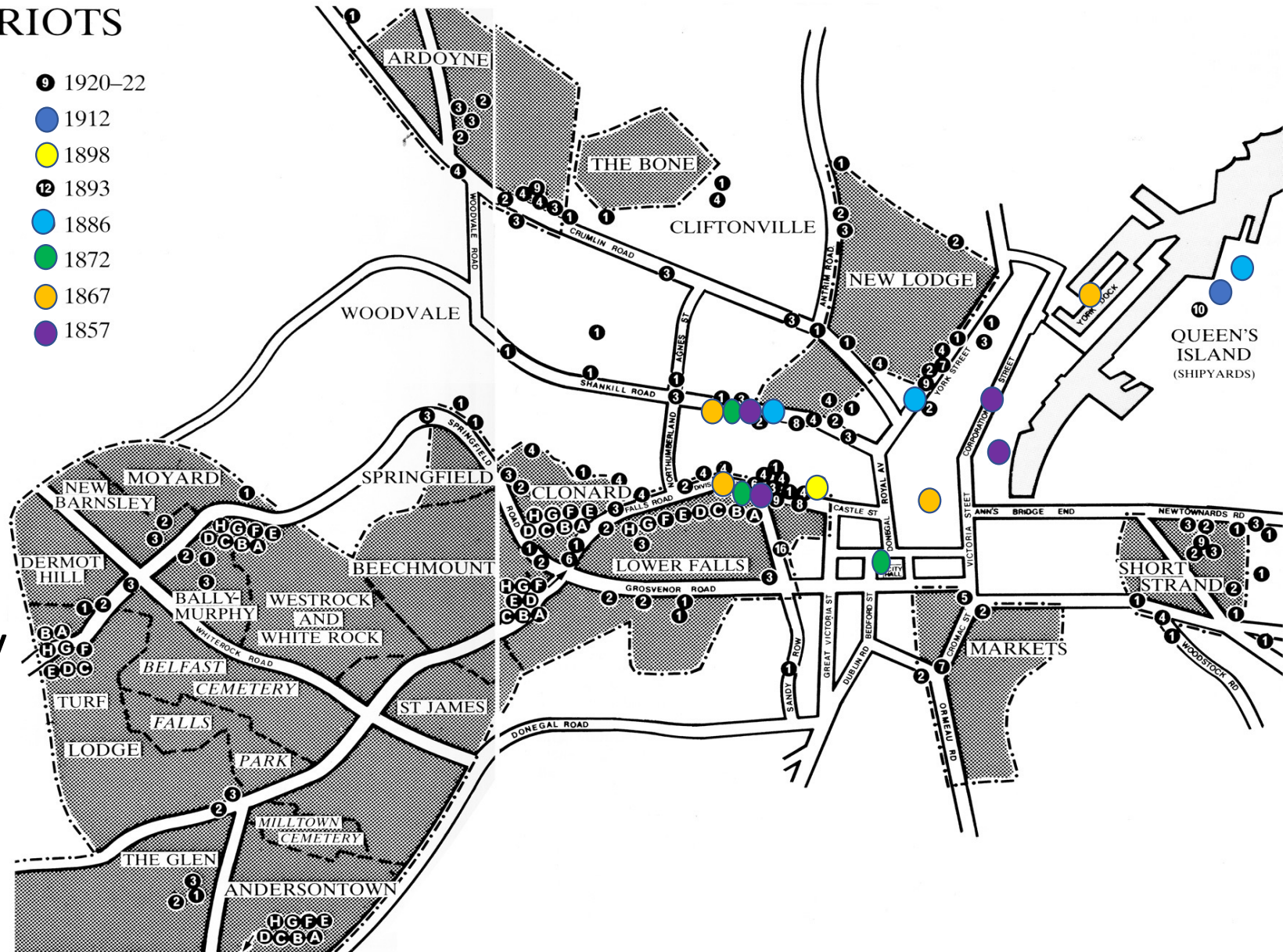


BELFAST RIOTS

- | | | |
|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| A 1980 | 1 1972 | 9 1920–22 |
| B 1979 | 2 1971 | 10 1912 |
| C 1978 | 3 1970 | 11 1898 |
| D 1977 | 4 1969 | 12 1893 |
| E 1976 | 5 1966 | 13 1886 |
| F 1975 | 6 1964 | 14 1872 |
| G 1974 | 7 1935 | 15 1867 |
| H 1973 | 8 1932 | 16 1857 |



Inter-Community
tension



How do political events shape social history?

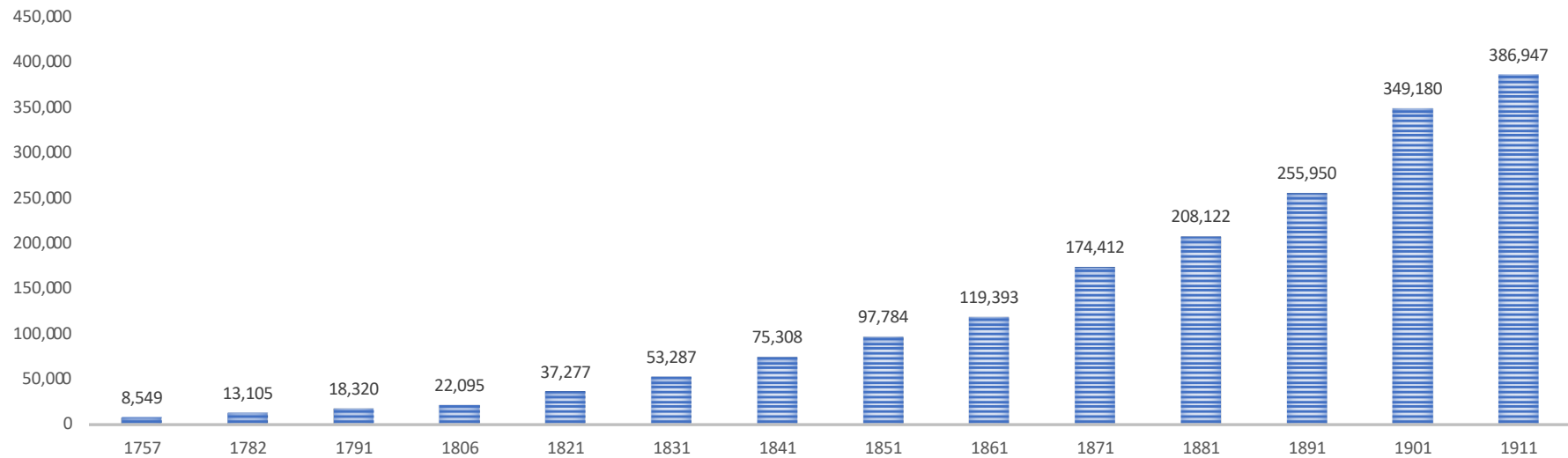
- Cause of division in society that crosses industry, hobbies, jobs and civil disorder.
- Major factor in community organisation and identity.
- Major cause of division in social and political movements: labour movement, suffragettes



DEMOGRAPHY



Belfast population, 1757 to 1911



Overview: religious composition

Table 3: Religious Composition of Belfast Population, 1757-1891

Year	Total Population	No.of Catholics	% of Total
1757	8,549	556	6%
1784	13,000	1,092	8%
1808	25,000	4,000	16%
1834	60,803	19,712	32.4%
1861	119,444	41,237	34.1%
1871	174,412	55,575	28.8%
1881	208,122	59,975	28.8%
1891	255,950	67,378	26.8%

Source: I. Budge and C. O'Leary, *Belfast: Approach to Crisis*, (London, 1973), p. 28, p. 32.

Why migrate to Belfast? Push factors

- Agriculture becoming more efficient – fewer jobs
- Rising rents and absentee landlords
- Sectarian tensions
- Famine and poor harvests



Pull Factors

- Jobs and employment, better than poverty and employment
- Charity and welfare, Poor House and Work House
- Expanding industry needed workers
- Housing, relatives and communities
- Belfast was a port from which people could emigrate to Britain, The Empire or New World.



What was the impact of migration on social history?

- Importing sectarian problems from countryside (e.g. Dolly's Brae conflict, Defenders/Peep O Day Boys, Ribbenmen/Orange men)
- Impact on jobs, economy and employment.
- Major impact on social and community relations



INDUSTRIALISATION

Jennymount factory



Cotton industry

- Cotton is a soft, fluffy staple fiber that grows in a boll, or protective case, around the seeds of the cotton plants of the genus *Gossypium*.
- The fibre is almost pure cellulose.
- The fiber is most often spun into yarn or thread and used to make a soft, breathable textile.



Birth of the cotton industry

- The Poor House introduced cotton spinning for inmates as 'productive labour' in 1777.
- Mills started to be erected in Belfast, both water and steam powered.
- In 1782, 25 looms, 1791, 229, 1806, 600.



Decline of the cotton industry

By 1836, cotton manufacture had almost ceased in the city. Reasons were:

- Belfast manufacturers had no incentive to cut labour costs as wages were very low. Cotton mills in Lancashire could produce cheaper and higher quality cotton than Belfast.
- Parliament had removed the cotton tariff between England/Ireland trade which made imports cheaper.
- Belfast mills had increased costs by importing coal, cotton and other raw materials.
- Linen was much more lucrative than producing cotton.



Linen

- Linen is made from Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*), also known as common flax or linseed, is a member of the genus *Linum* in the family *Linaceae*. It is a food and fiber crop cultivated in cooler regions of the world.
- Linen is very strong and absorbent, and dries faster than cotton. Because of these properties, linen is comfortable to wear in hot weather and is valued for use in garments.



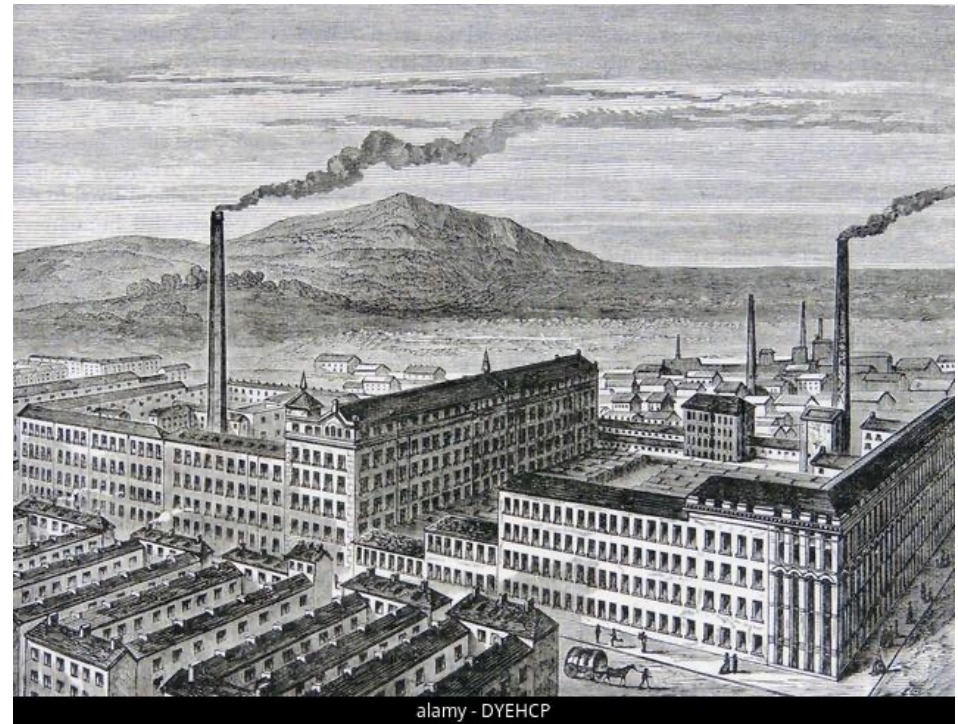
Origins of the linen industry

- In 1699, William III sent Louis Crommelin, a Huguenot to Ireland to stimulate the linen trade. He was based in Lurgan and helped spread the trade to Lurgan and Portadown. Belfast became the main outlet for the finished product.
- 1st Linen Hall was opened in 1739.
- 2nd Linen Hall was opened in 1754 in Linenhall Street (now Donegall street). This was known as the Brown Linenhall.
- 3rd Linen Hall was opened on the site of City Hall in 1785 and was known as the White Linen Hall.
- By the end of the 18th Century, bleach greens were found on the outskirts of Belfast. These were open areas used for spreading cloth on the ground to be purified and whitened by the action of the sunlight.



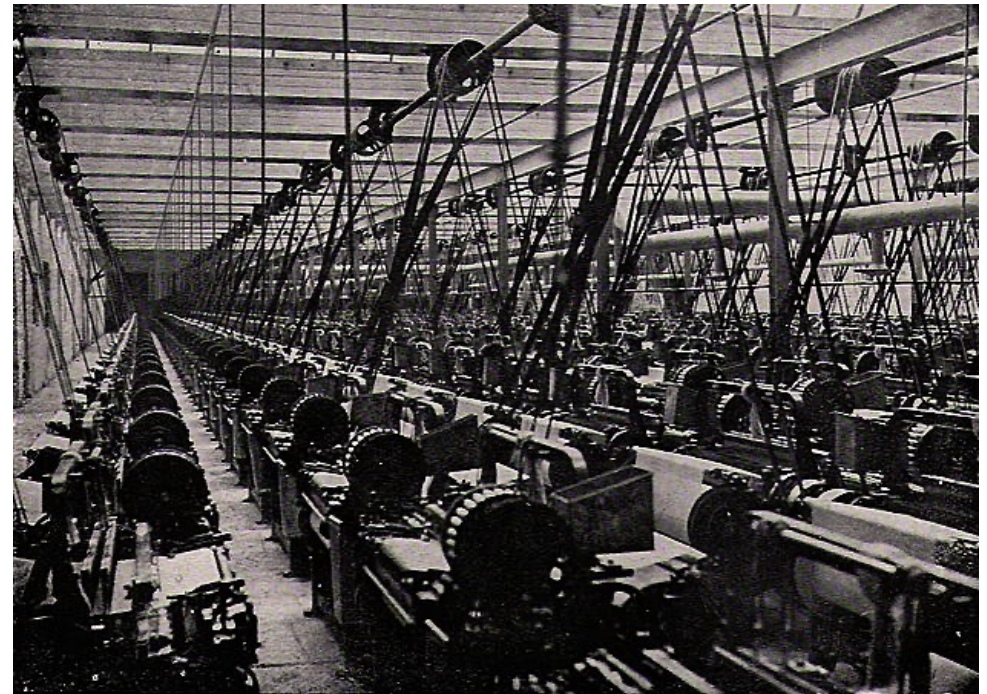
Mulholland York Street

- In 1828, the Mulholland York Street cotton mill burnt down.
- It was rebuilt as a linen mill and the first linen spun in a Belfast Mill by mechanical power in 1830.
- It started with 1,000 spindles in 1830 and had 17,000 by 1846 and 1,000 employees. In 1856, it had 25,000 spindles and was probably the biggest mill in the world.
- In 1830, there were 2 mills making power spun linen yarn, by 1846, there were 24.



Mid century boost to Linen

- In 1862, Belfast linen industry saw a massive boom. The US civil war had disrupted the US cotton supply and linen was the nearest substitute.
- Power looms had increased from 218 in 1853 to 4,900 in 1861.
- By 1867 it was 12,000 looms.
- In 1868, there was a major depression in the industry and 4,000 looms were idle.
- Linen industry remained the biggest employer. In 1871, there were 55k spindles and 69k by 1896.
- Belfast had over 80% of the spindles in the world in 1870.

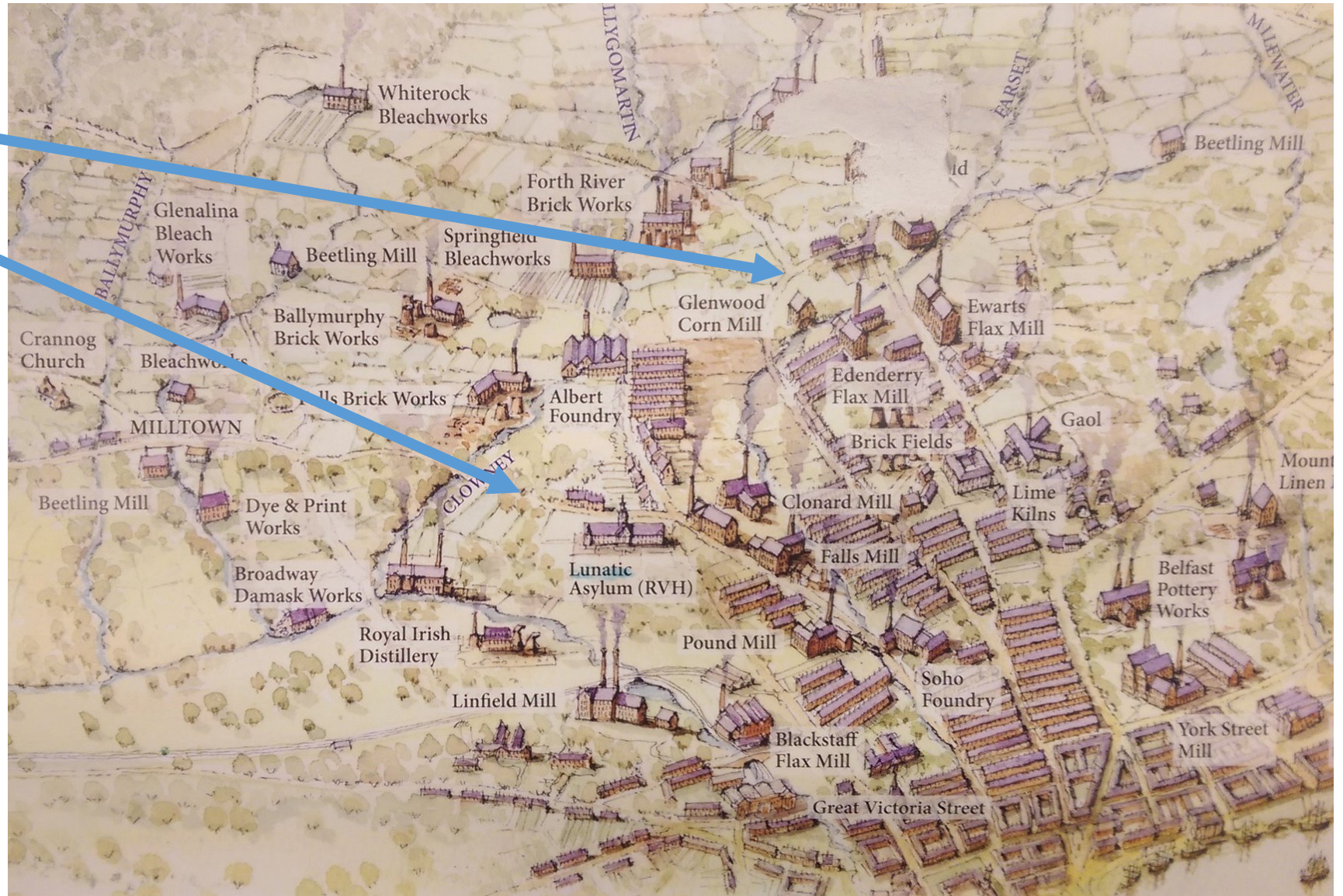




1850

Shankill

Falls Road



Development of ship building

- Cork had been the centre of Irish ship building in the first half of the 19th century but Belfast over took it in the latter half of the century.
- Hugh and William Ritchie were the first people to build ships in Belfast launching the sail boat Hibernian in 1792.
- In 1820, the firm Richie and McLaine built their first steam ship.



Mid-Victorian developments

- From 1851, Belfast ship building started to make iron ships launching 2 iron steam ships, 4 iron sailing boats and a paddle tug.
- Harland and Woolf was established in 1861. In the 1860's they started building compound engines driving screws rather than low pressure engines powering paddles.
- Workman, Clark and Co. established Frank Workman and George Clark in 1880. By 1895 it was the UK's fourth largest shipbuilder.
- In 1882, the global tonnage of steamships equalled the tonnage of sailing ships.



World beating ships

- In 1889, Harland and Wolff launched the *Teutonic* and *Majestic* as twin screwed ships.
- In 1871, *Oceanic* launched and this was the first ship for the White Star Line. It was the biggest ship in the world at the time weighing in at 3,888 tons and 437 feet.
- In 1899, *Oceanic II* was launched at 17,274 tons, then the biggest ship in the world
- In 1910, *Olympic* was launched, the biggest ship in the world. It weighed 45,000 tons.





Workers at
Harland and
Woolf

Whisky - Dunville Distilleries

- By 1900, Belfast was responsible for well over half the total whiskey exports of Ireland
- Many were employed in successful distilleries in the city which included Irish Distillery at Connswater, East Belfast, and Avoneil distillery.
- Dunville Distillery established a plant off Grosvenor Road in 1870, and by 1890, was producing two and a half million gallons of proof spirit.



Belfast Rope Works Company

- Formed in the Queen's Island shipyard in 1873, it rapidly expanded, becoming the world's largest rope works by the turn of the century.
- 1900: employed 3,000 workers and produced rope and twine of all kinds, as well as fishing lines and nets, sash cord, and binder twine for harvesting machines.



Tobacco - Gallaher

- Founded in 1857 by Tom Gallaher
- By 1896, he had opened the largest tobacco factory in the world in Belfast.
- The business was incorporated on 28 March 1896 to "carry on in all their branches the businesses of tobacco, cigar, cigarettes and snuff manufacture".
- Bonded warehouse in Connswater.
- In 1900 Thomas Gallaher wrote a cheque to H M Customs for £142,227, the largest sum they received in one go. Today huge sums of money are still raised by taxing tobacco products.

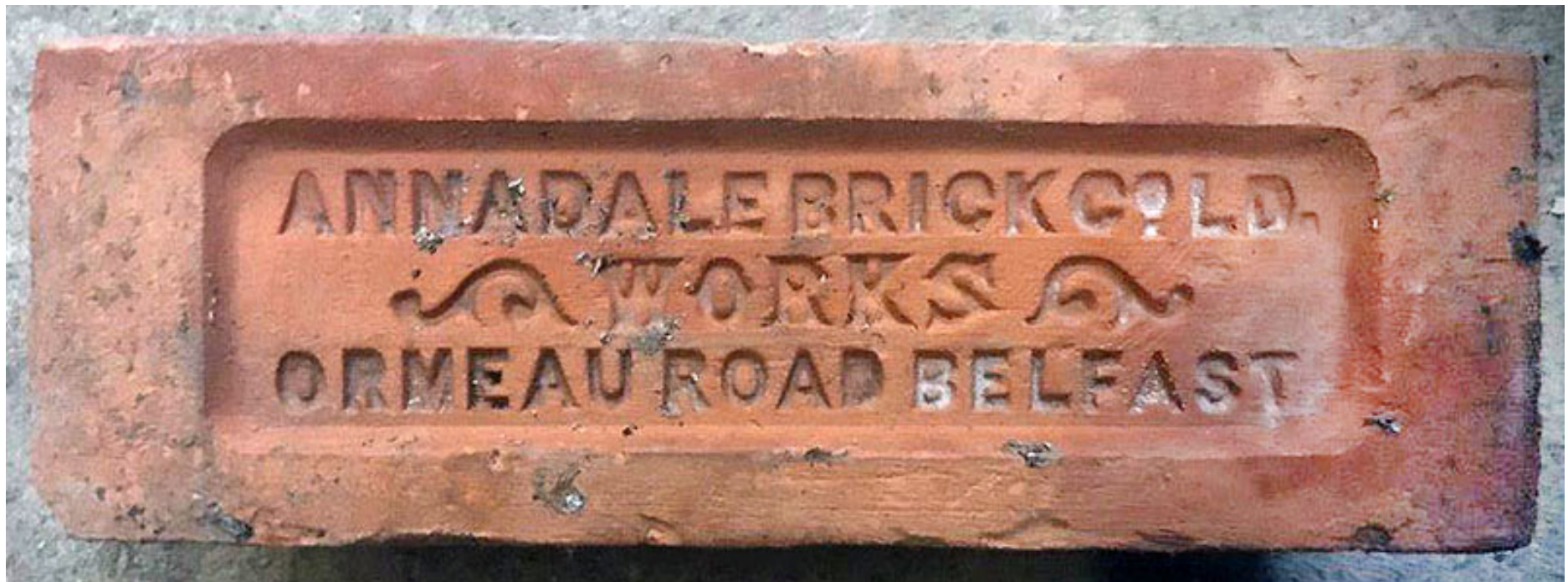


Engineering - Sirocco Works

- Sirocco Works, founded by Samuel Davidson in 1881,
- By the end of the nineteenth century, most of the world's tea drying machinery was produced by the works.
- As well as this, Sirocco Works produced a large proportion of the world's ventilation equipment (e.g. for German submarines)



URBANISATION



1660



BELFAST ABOUT 1660.

The earliest Plan of the Town known to exist.

Facsimile of Map in Tindal's continuation of Rapin's History.

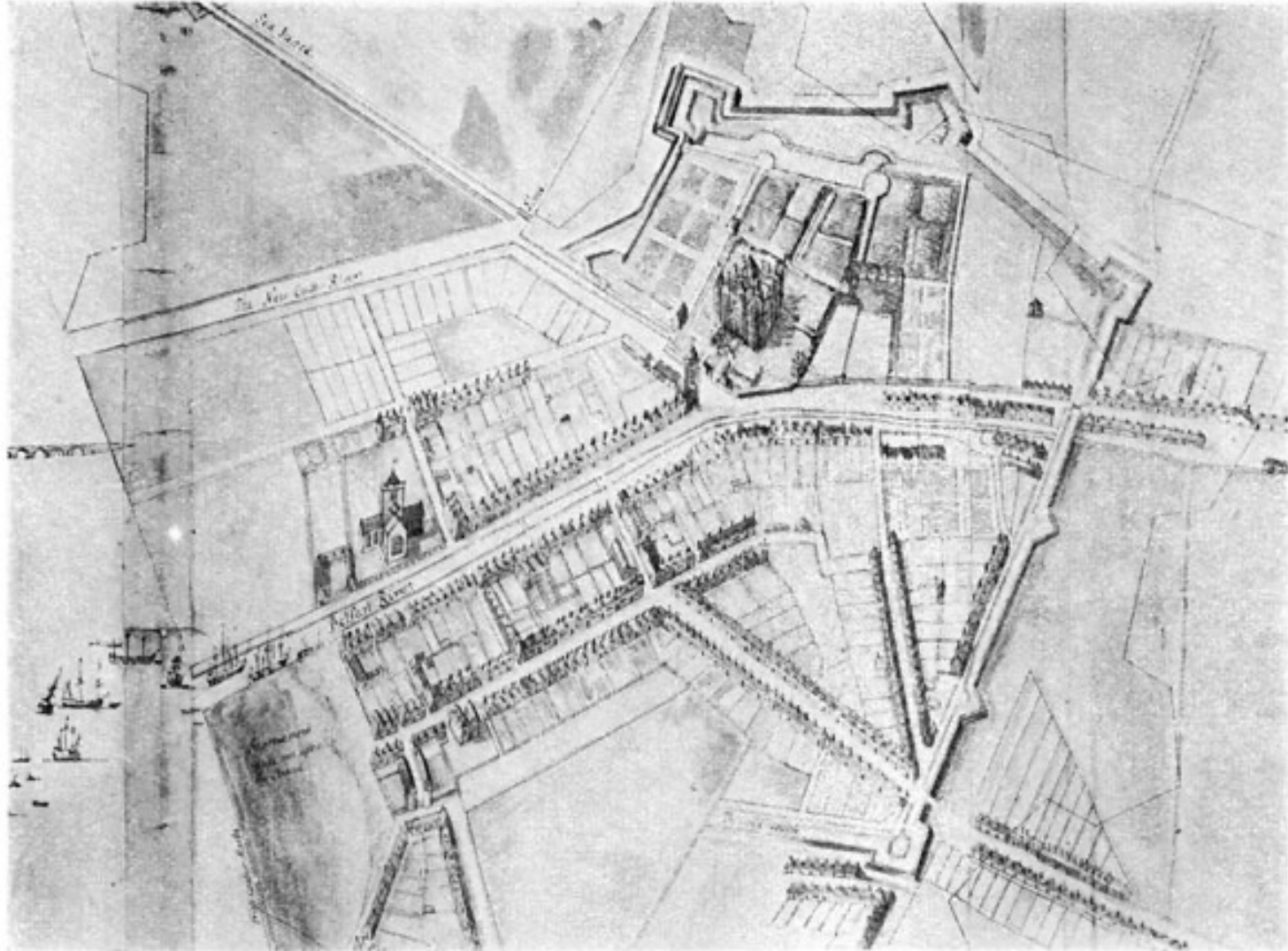
REFERENCE :

A Castle	H Castle Street and Mill Street	Q Church Lane
B Castle gardens	I Castle Place	R William Street South (Police Square)
C Old Parish Church	K Bridge Street	S River Lagan
D Ann Street	L Waring Street	T Ancient outlet of Blackstaff River
E High Street (River of Belfast open in centre)	M Rosemary Street	V Bank or Causeway across Blackstaff River
F The Ramparts	N North Street	
G Corn Market	O Hercules Street	
	P Skipper Street	



1685

North

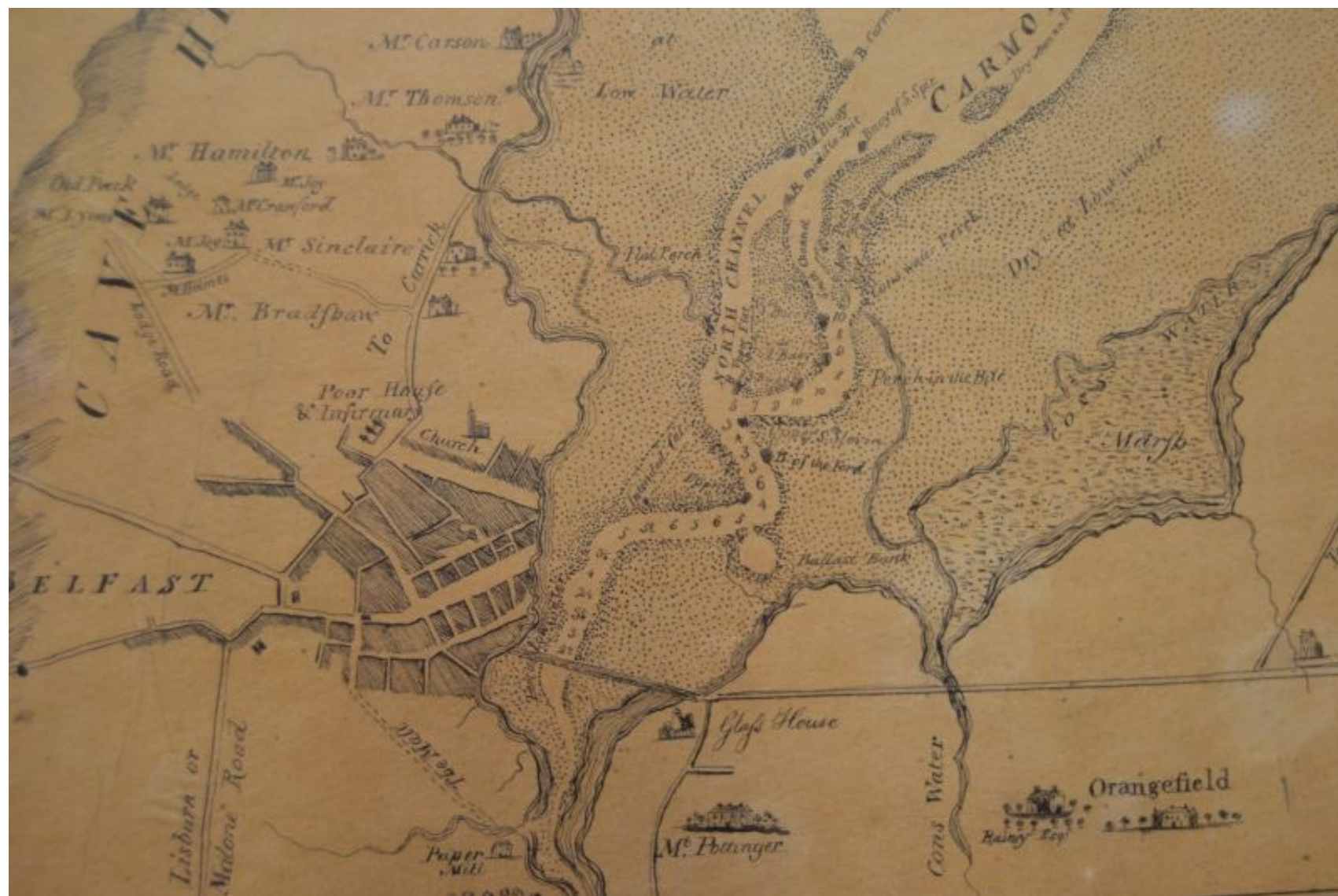


PHILLIPS' MAP, 1685.

URBANISATION

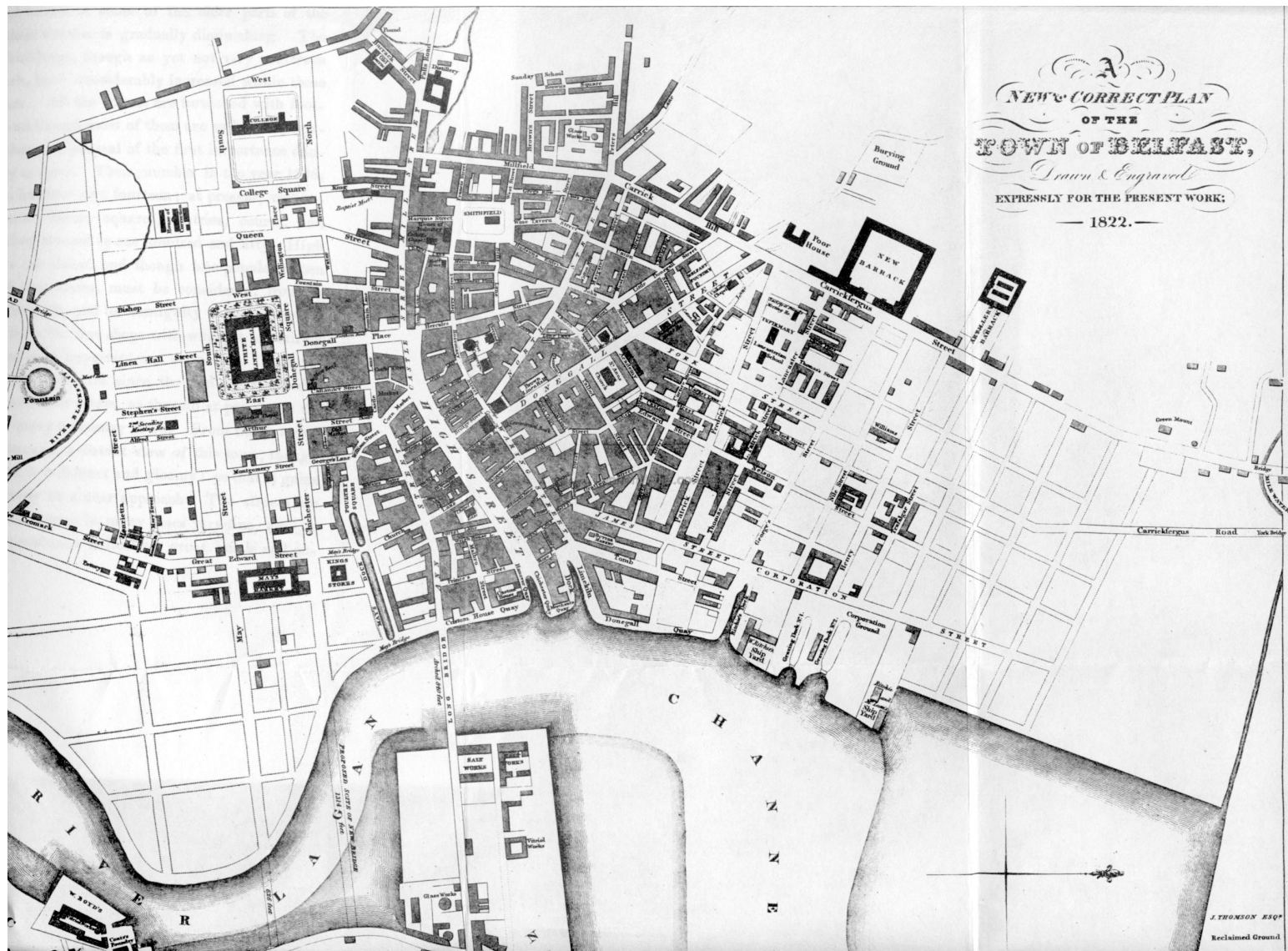
1790S







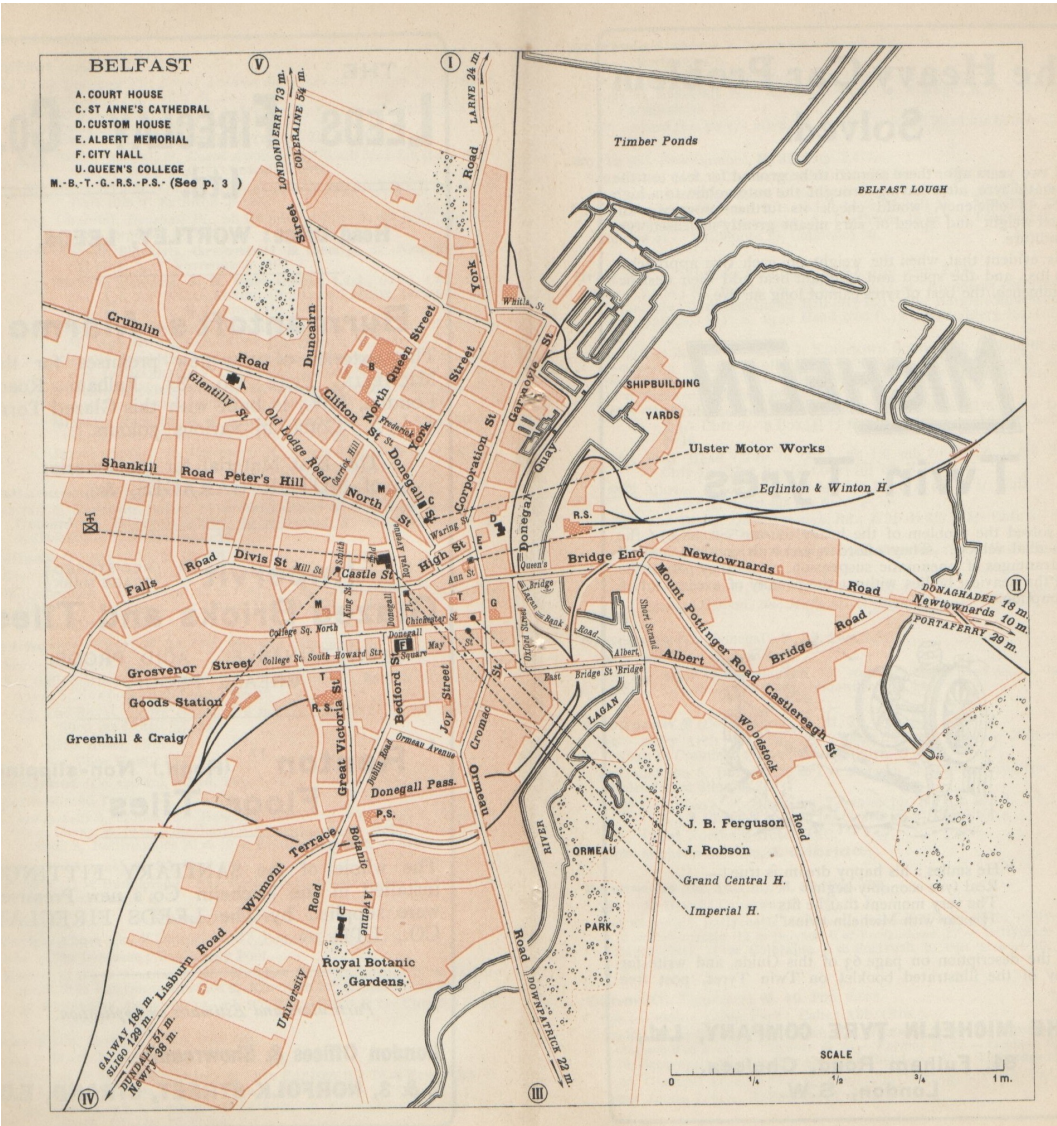
1822



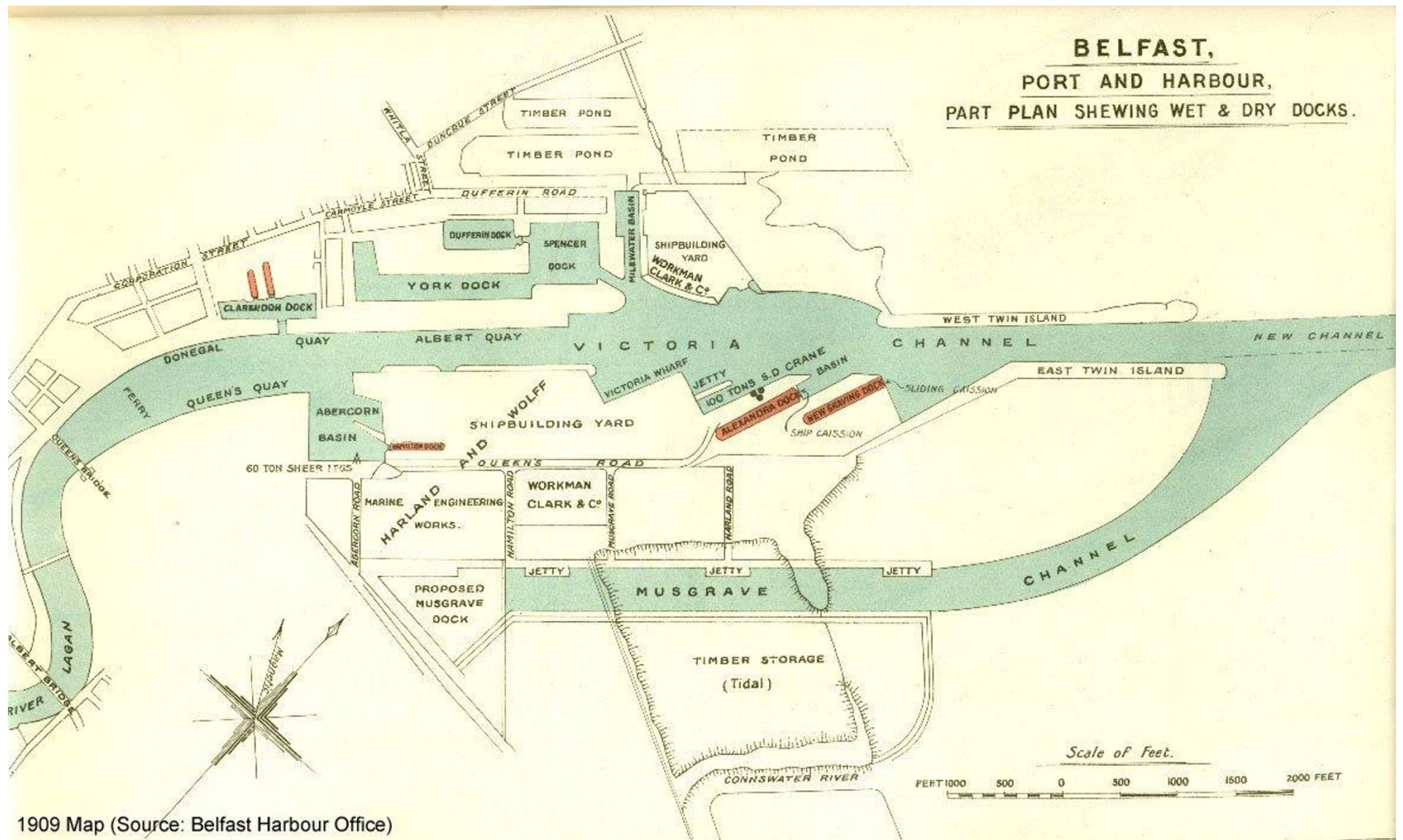
1830?



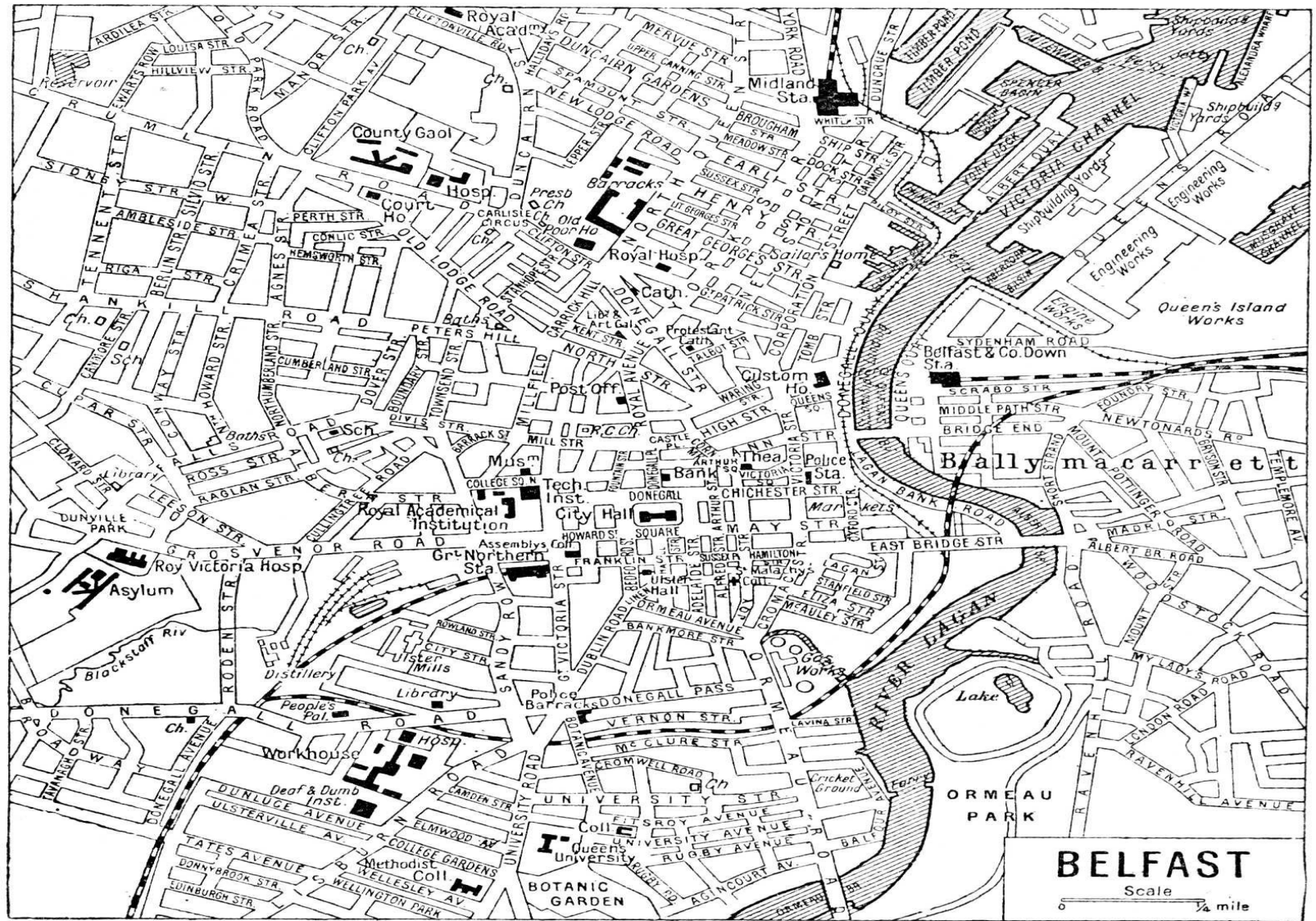
1850?



1909



1922

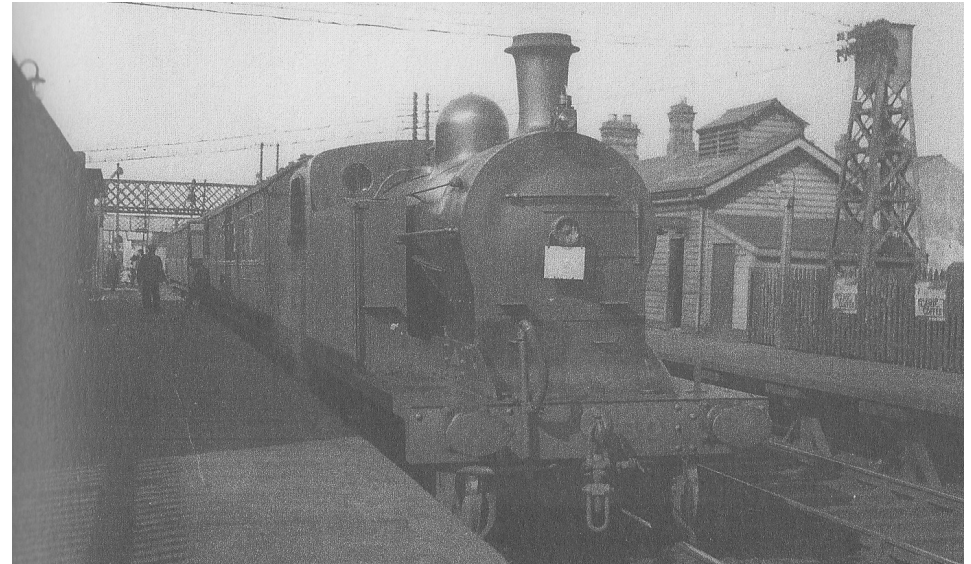


TECHNOLOGY

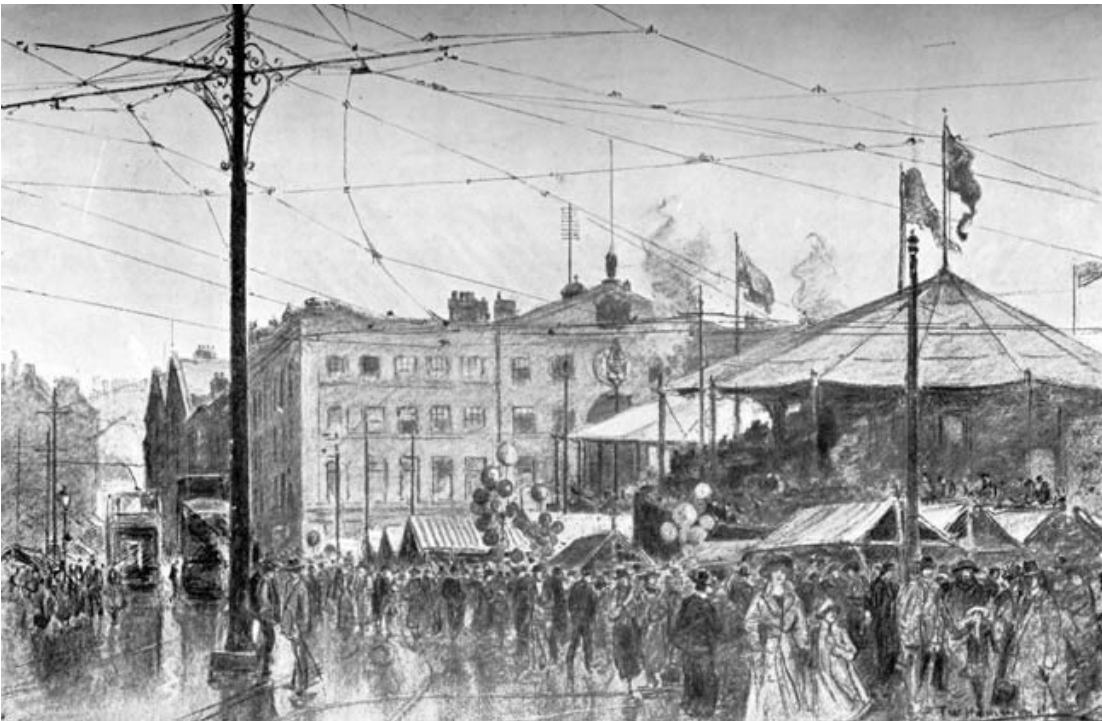


Transportation

- Personal transport: Horse, bicycle, motor car
- Ships: Sail, coal power, oil fired
- Moving goods: stage coach, canal, railway
- Aerial flight: balloon to monoplane



Technological revolution - communications



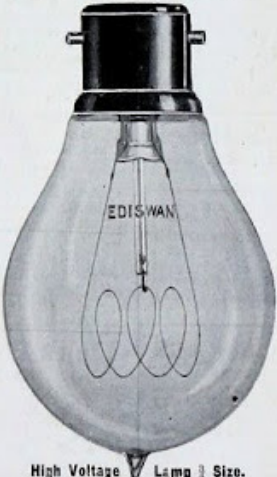
Domestic lighting and heating



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THE
END.

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Works { **Ponder's End, Middlesex.** | **Selborne Works, Walsall.**
Broadheath, Manchester. | **South Benwell, Newcastle-on-Tyne.**

GEOPOLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Rise of the British Empire
- Creation of the USA, Germany, Italy and other countries
- Rise of democracy
- Industrial labour movement
- Literacy, mass communications and education
- Rise of new political ideas – women's rights, Marxism, nationalism



BELFAST IN 1798



Belfast in 1791



© De Luan/Alamy

clifton house, queen street, belfast city
built 1774

54°36'22.98 n 5°55'59.54 w elev 13m





LINEN HALL

Opened
1785

BELFAST

Removed
1896



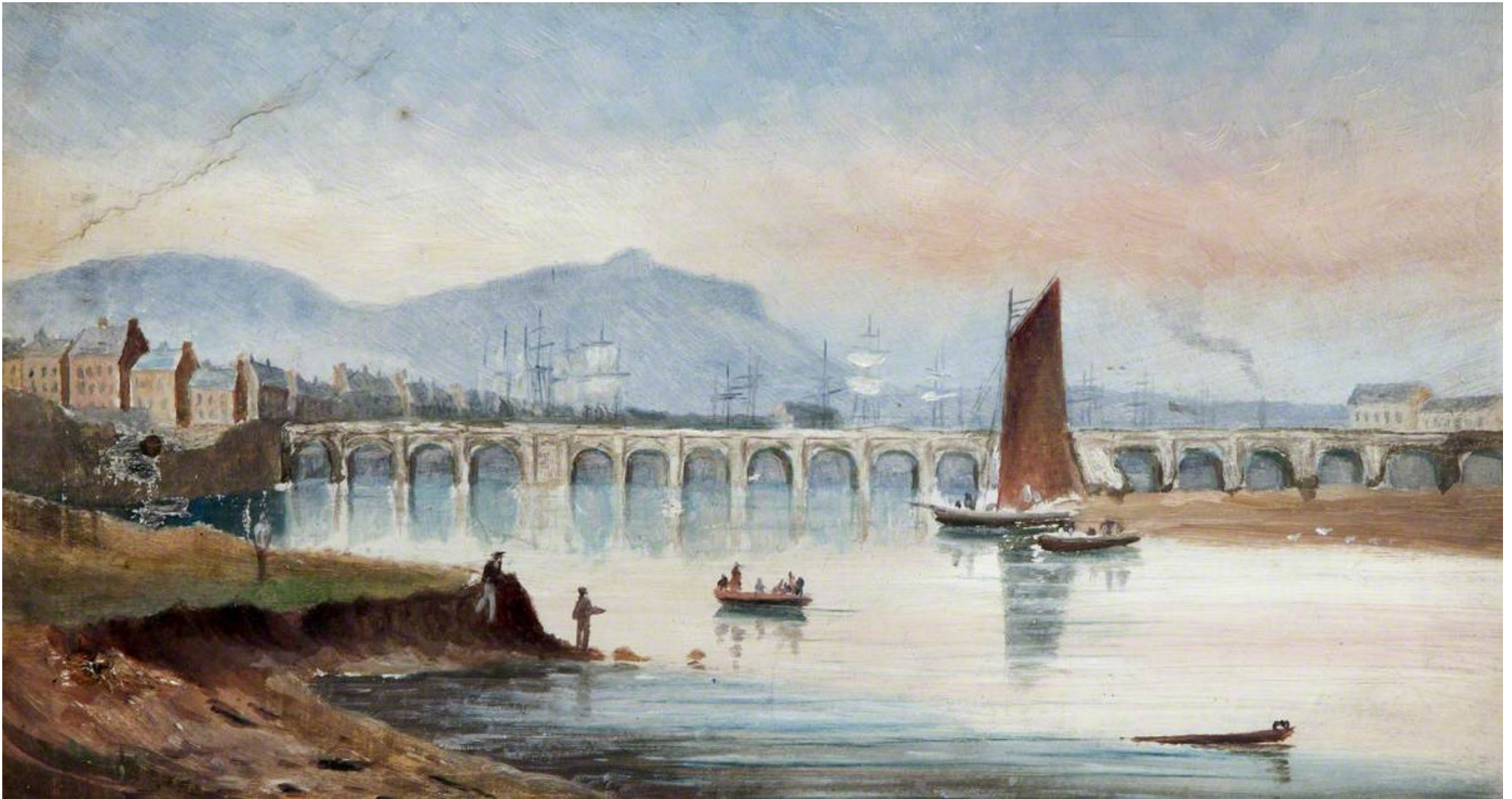


LINEN HALL BELFAST. RW.27.





Prospect of
Belfast 1820
Hugh Frazer
(1795–1865)



The Long Bridge, Belfast Nicols
NI_NMNI_BELUM_P85_1917-001



Review of the Belfast
Yeomanry by the Lord
Lieutenant, The Earl
Hardwicke, 27 August
1804 by Thomas
Romney Robinson
(1756–1810)





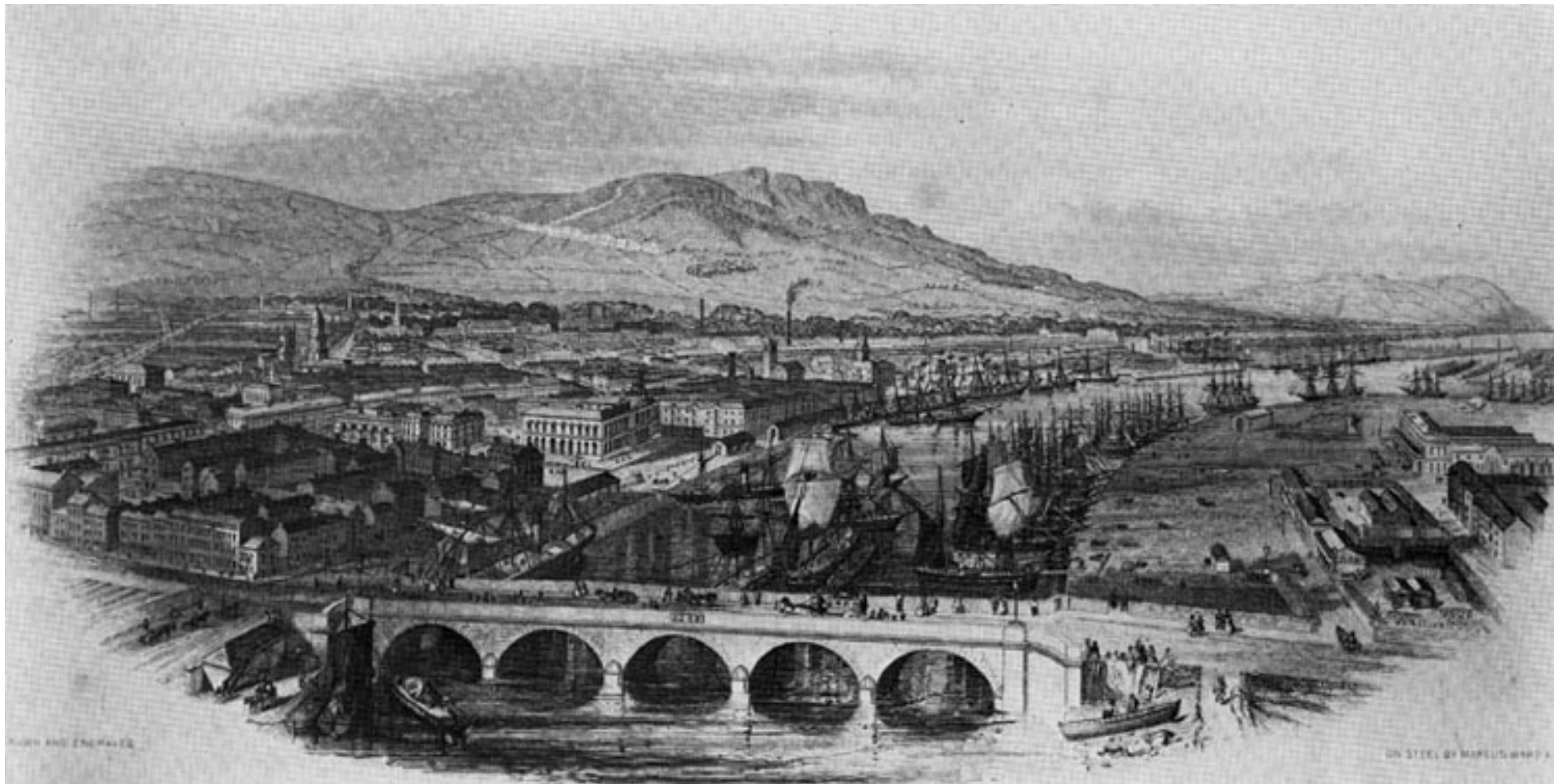
The Old Lagan
Bridge William
Henry Maguire
(active c.1820–
1840) (after)



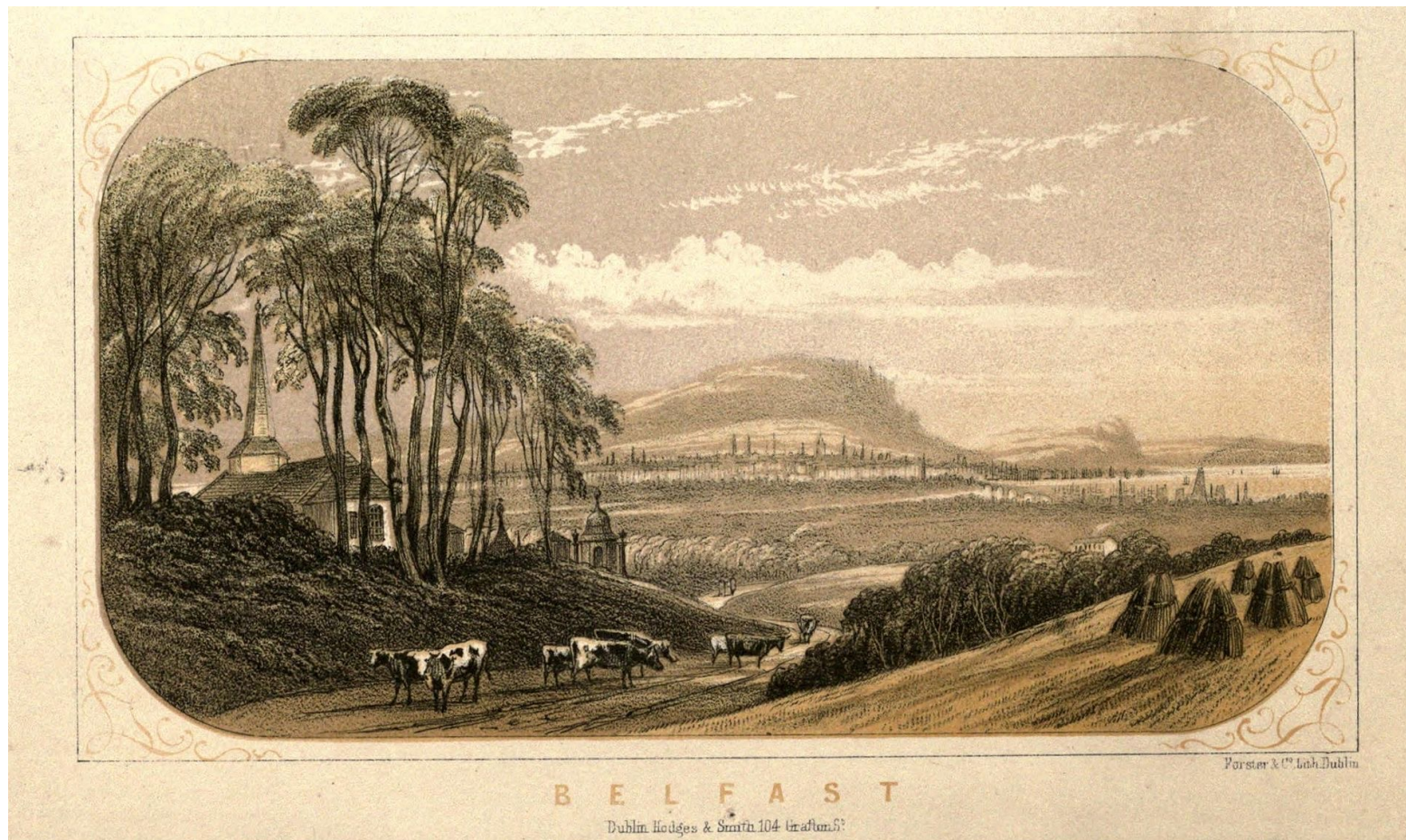
Prospect of Queens Bridge,
The Harbour and Timber
Pond, Belfast James Howard
Burgess (c.1810–1890)



Prospect of Queens
Bridge, The Harbour
and Timber Pond,
Belfast James Howard
Burgess (c.1810–
1890)

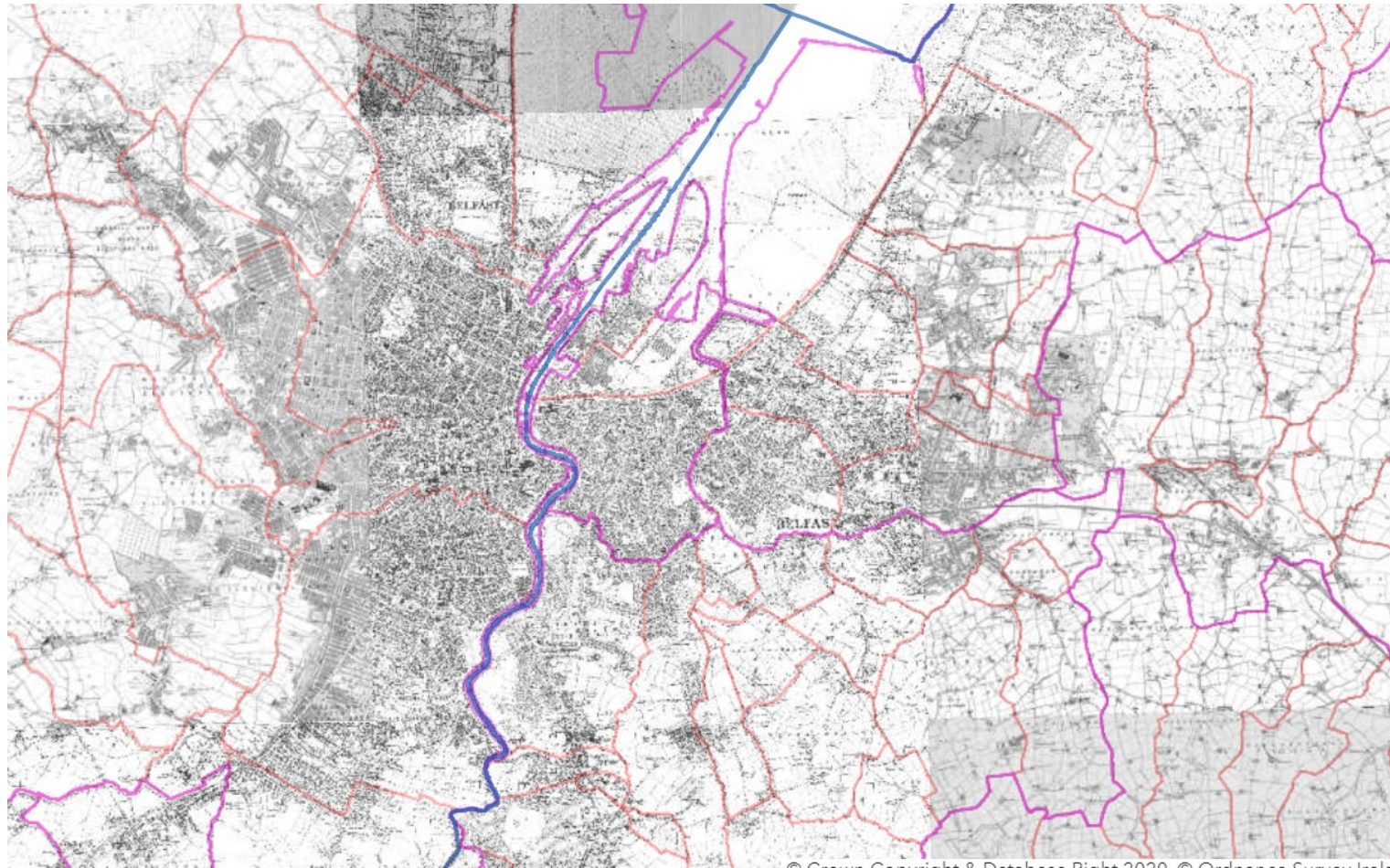


Belfast, 1860



Belfast viewed from the hills in 1852. The new Queen's Bridge across the Lagan can be seen to the right.

BELFAST IN 1914



Belfast in 1919





Royal Avenue at
North St Belfast,
1900



High Street



July 1914



Royal Avenue, 1900

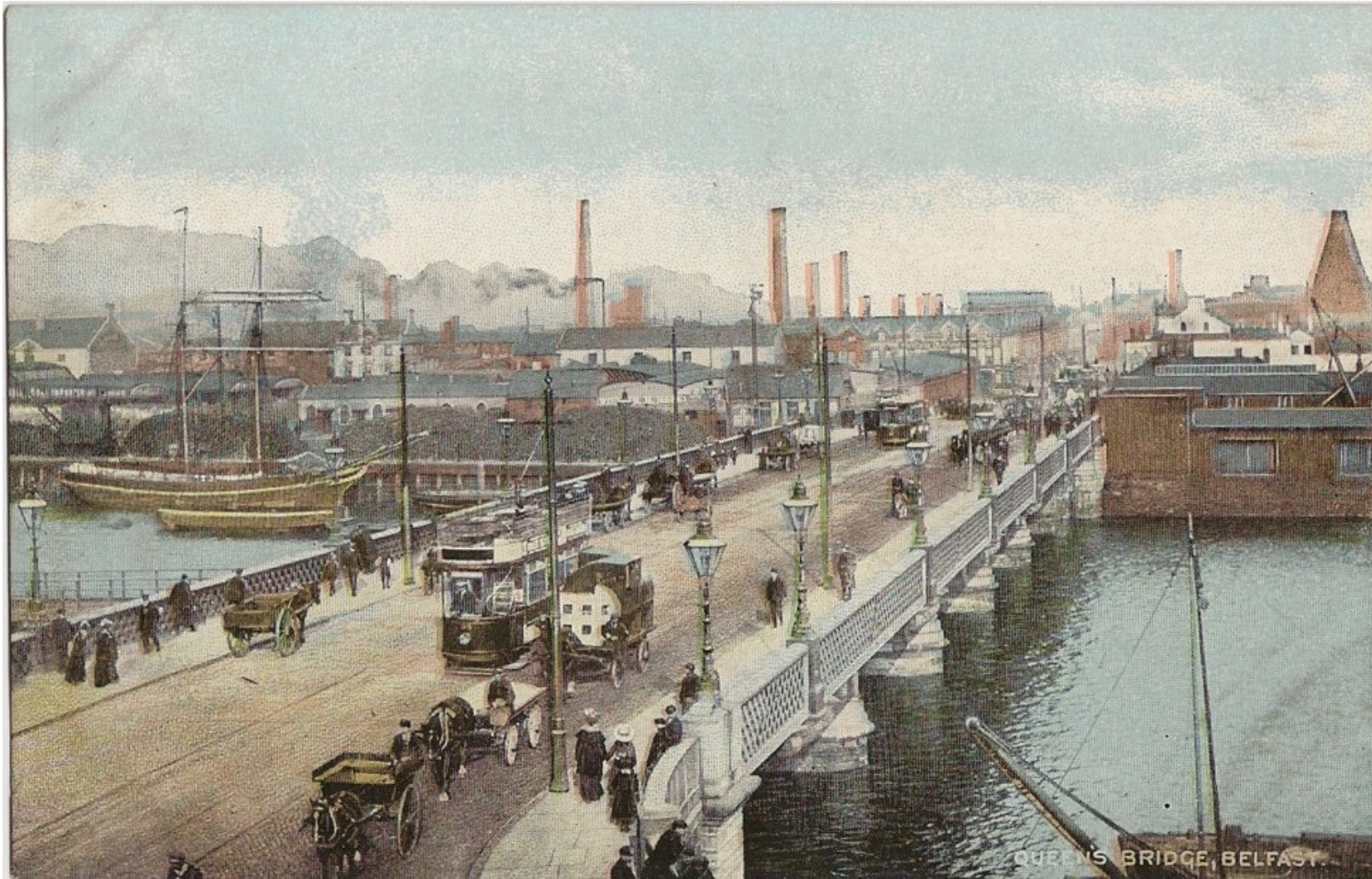
Royal Avenue, 1890s



Royal Avenue, 1900

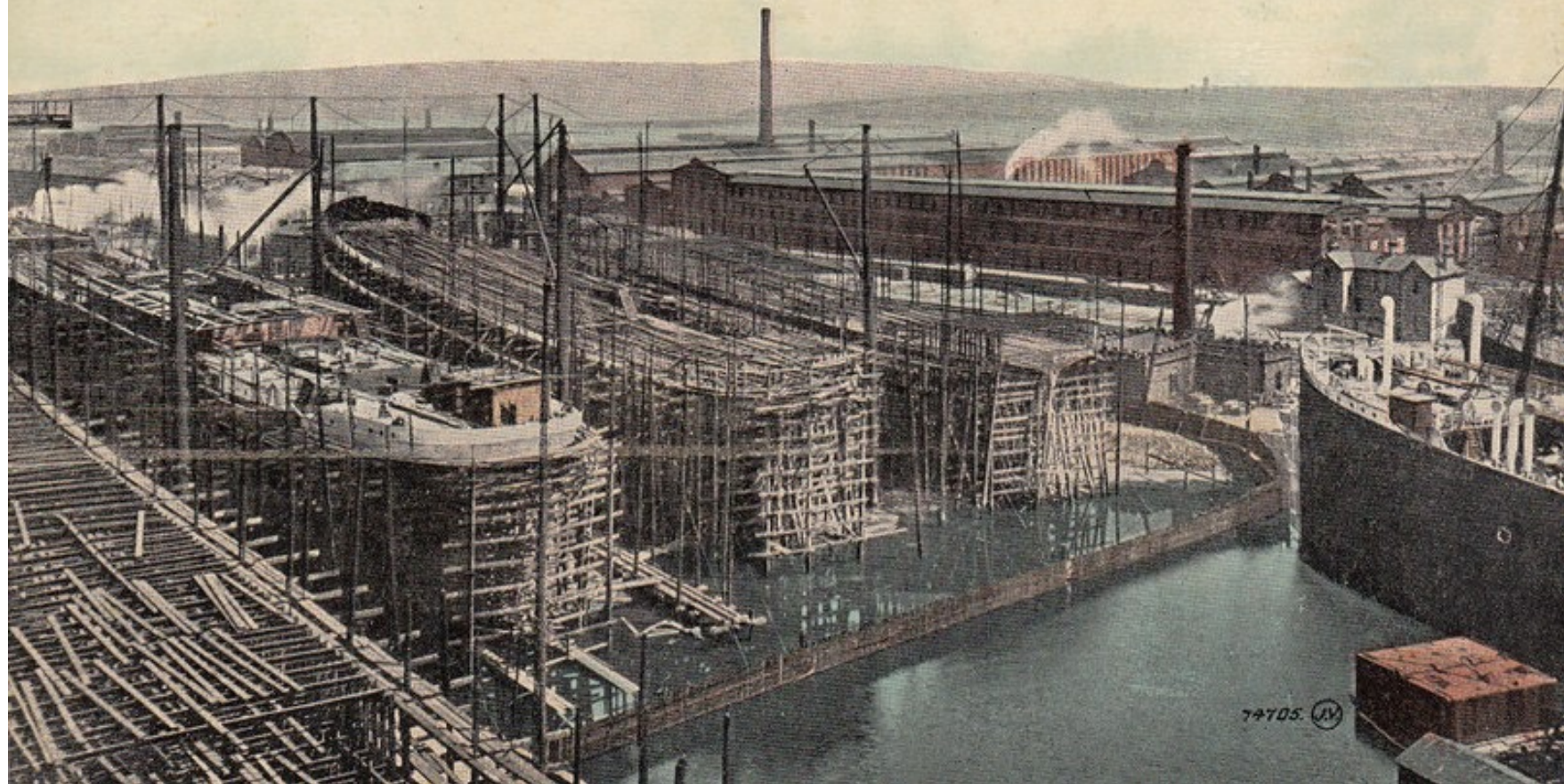


Queen's Bridge,
1880s?



Queen's Bridge

HARLAND AND WOLFF'S SOUTH YARD, BELFAST





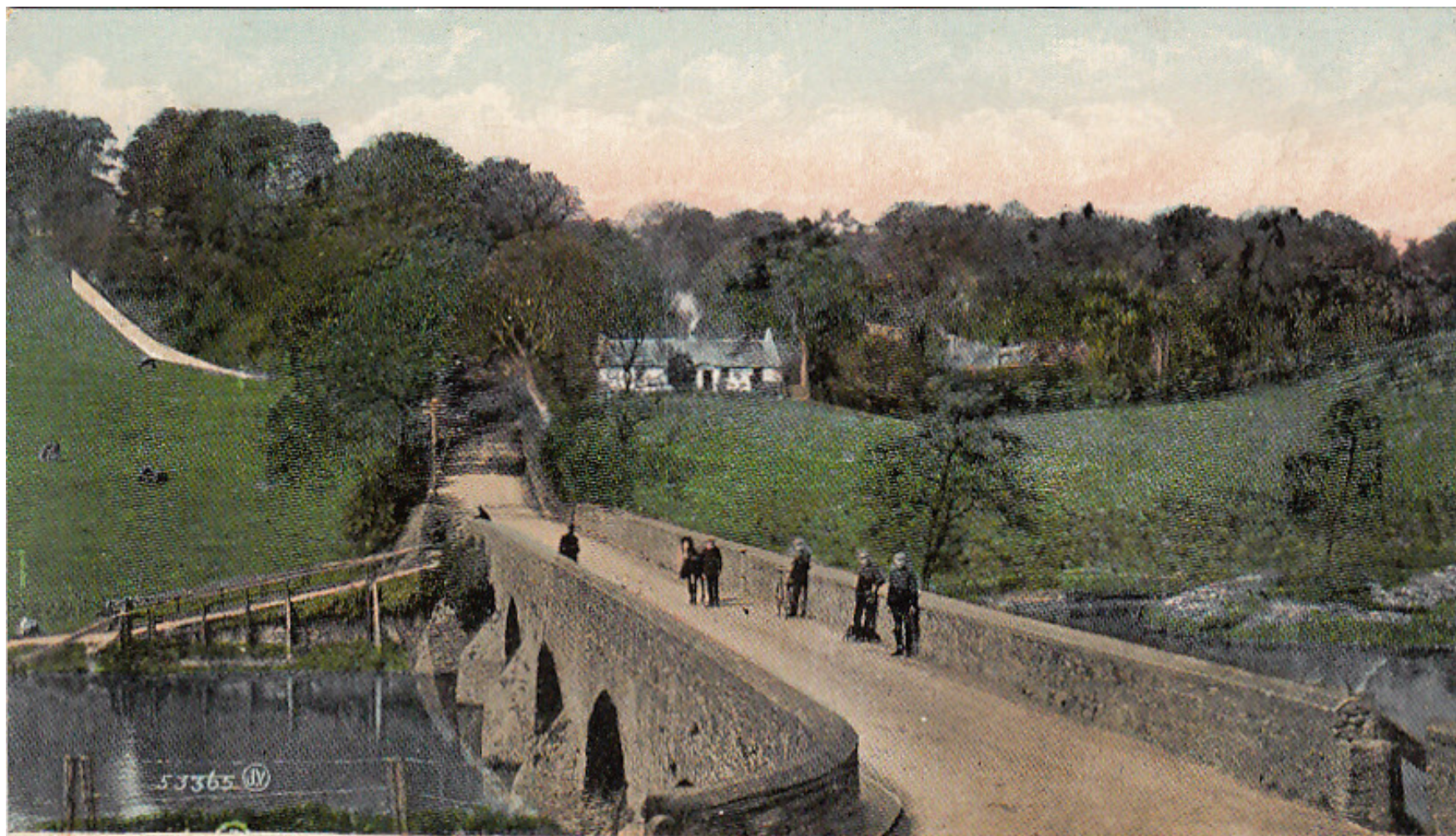
Belfast Lough, 1895



Belfast Harbour, 1902







Shaw's Bridge, Belfast. Well known to all frequenters of the beautiful Lagan walks.









North Belfast, 1905-1914?



SANDY ROW, BELFAST.



BELFAST CASTLE

*I've sent paper's to mother, hope
 you are not in a hurry for them - I wait in / room
 lowly. simply Roasted alive. Hope you are feeling better
 Jm. C.*

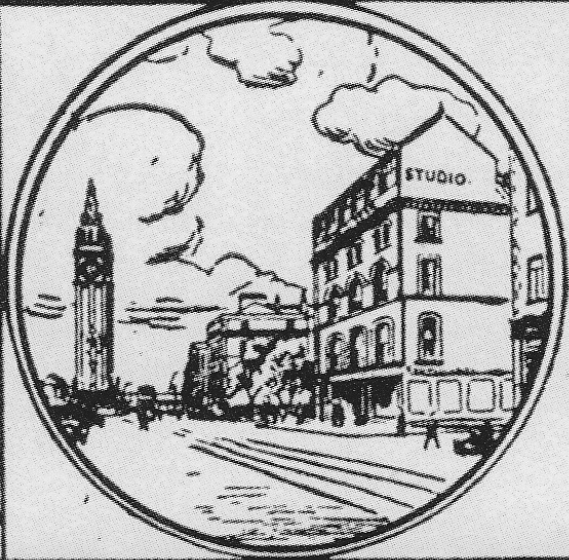
*June
 6th
 1900*



BELFAST CASTLE. Co. ANTRIM. 2375.W.L.

The Camera of Alexander Hogg

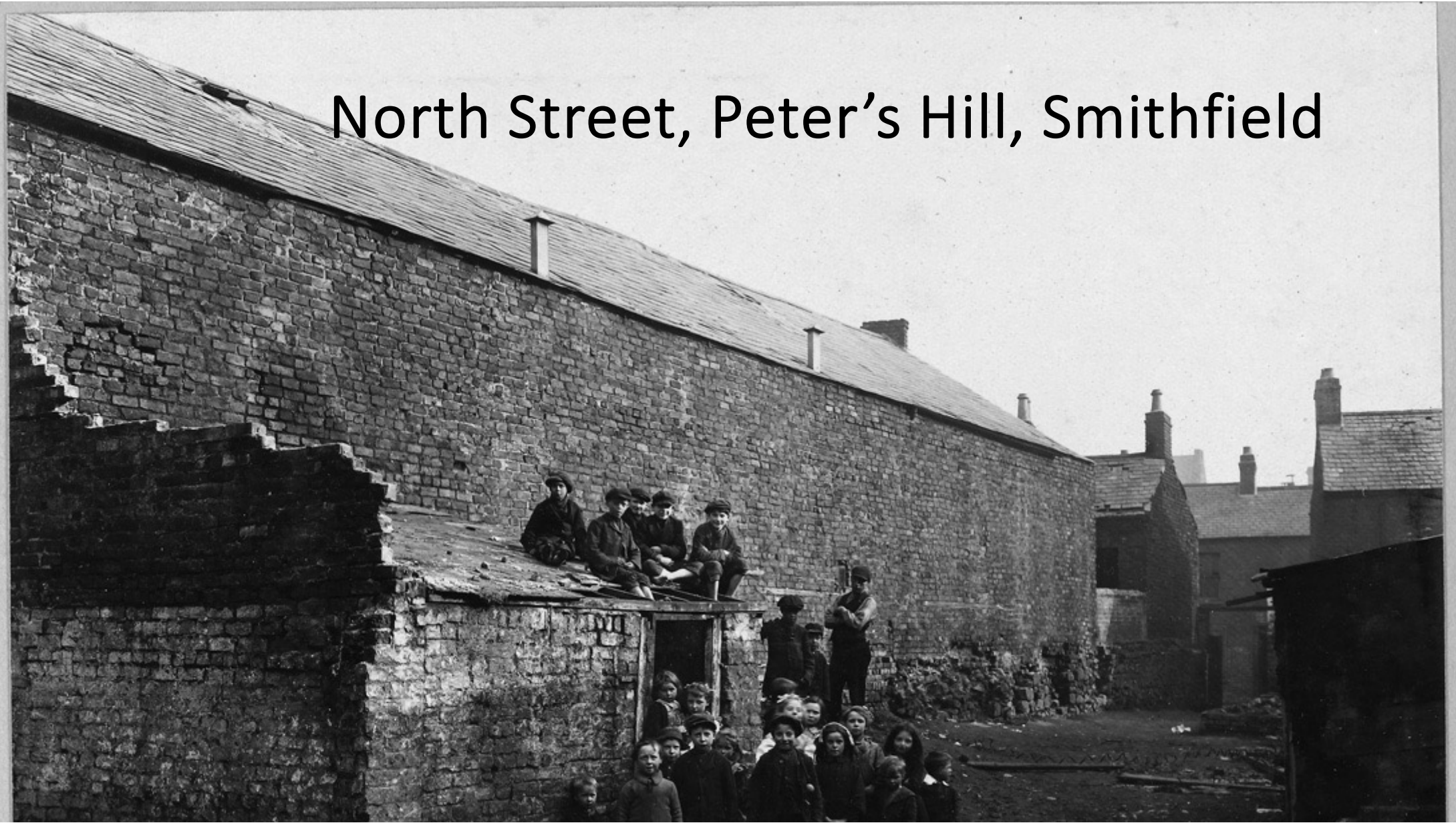
**ARCHITECTURAL · ENGINEERING · LEGAL ·
TECHNICAL & INDUSTRIAL PHOTOGRAPHY**



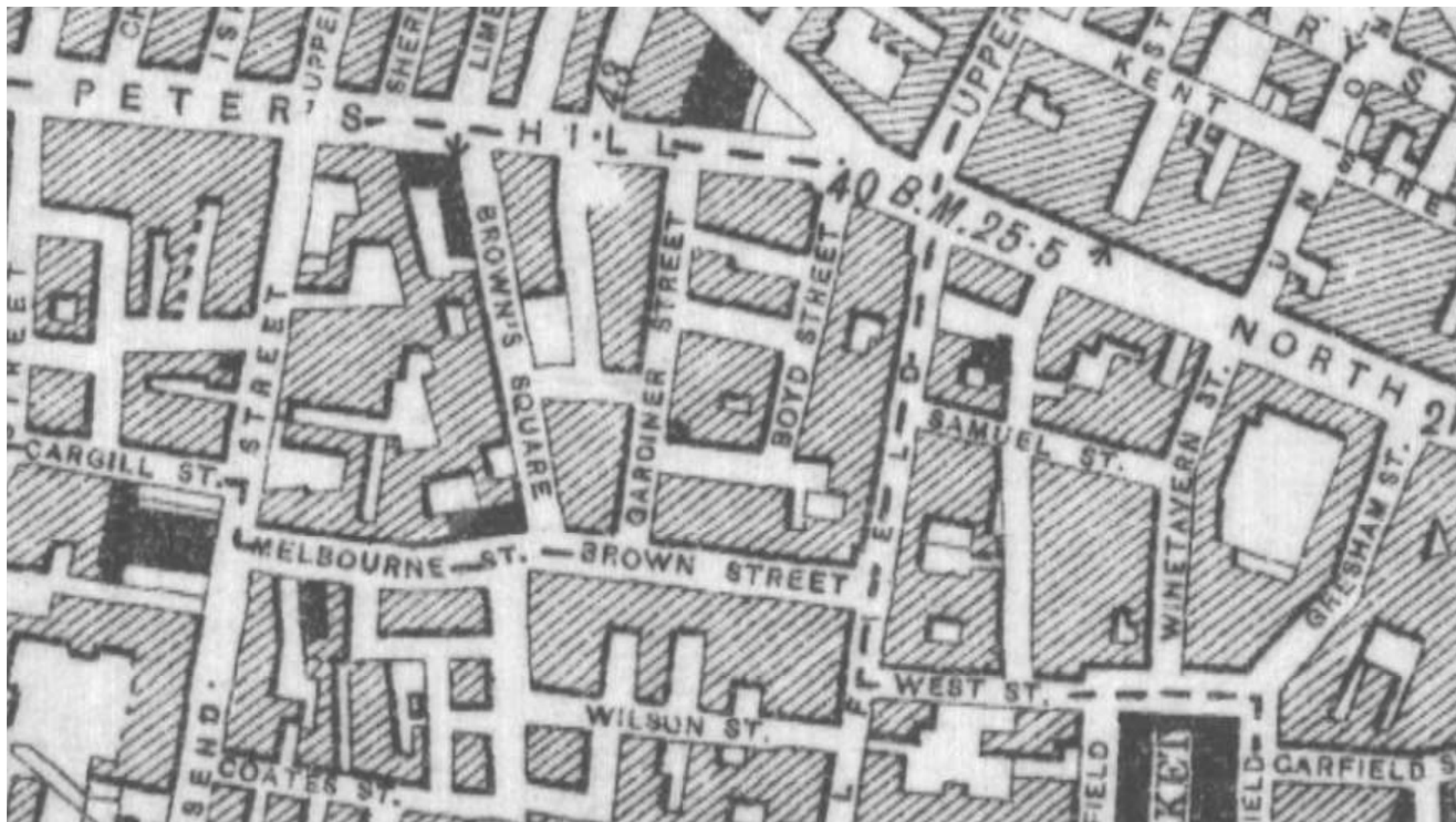
· A · R · HOGG ·
Photographic
· Specialist ·
81 High Street,
· BELFAST ·
Telephone 2204

**· · LANTERN SLIDES FOR LECTURES · ·
PHOTOGRAPHS ENLARGED · LECTURES ILLUSTRATED**

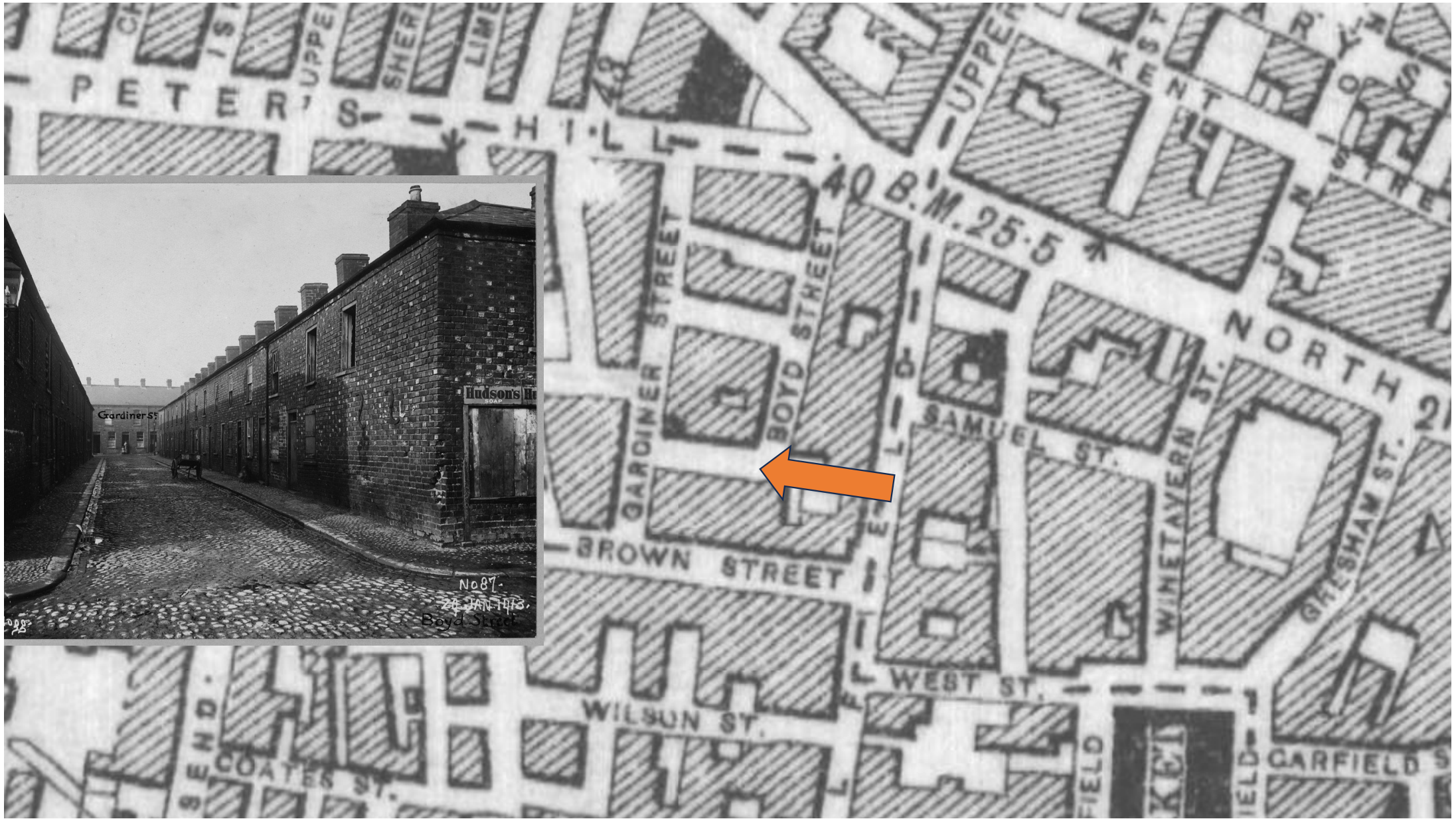
North Street, Peter's Hill, Smithfield







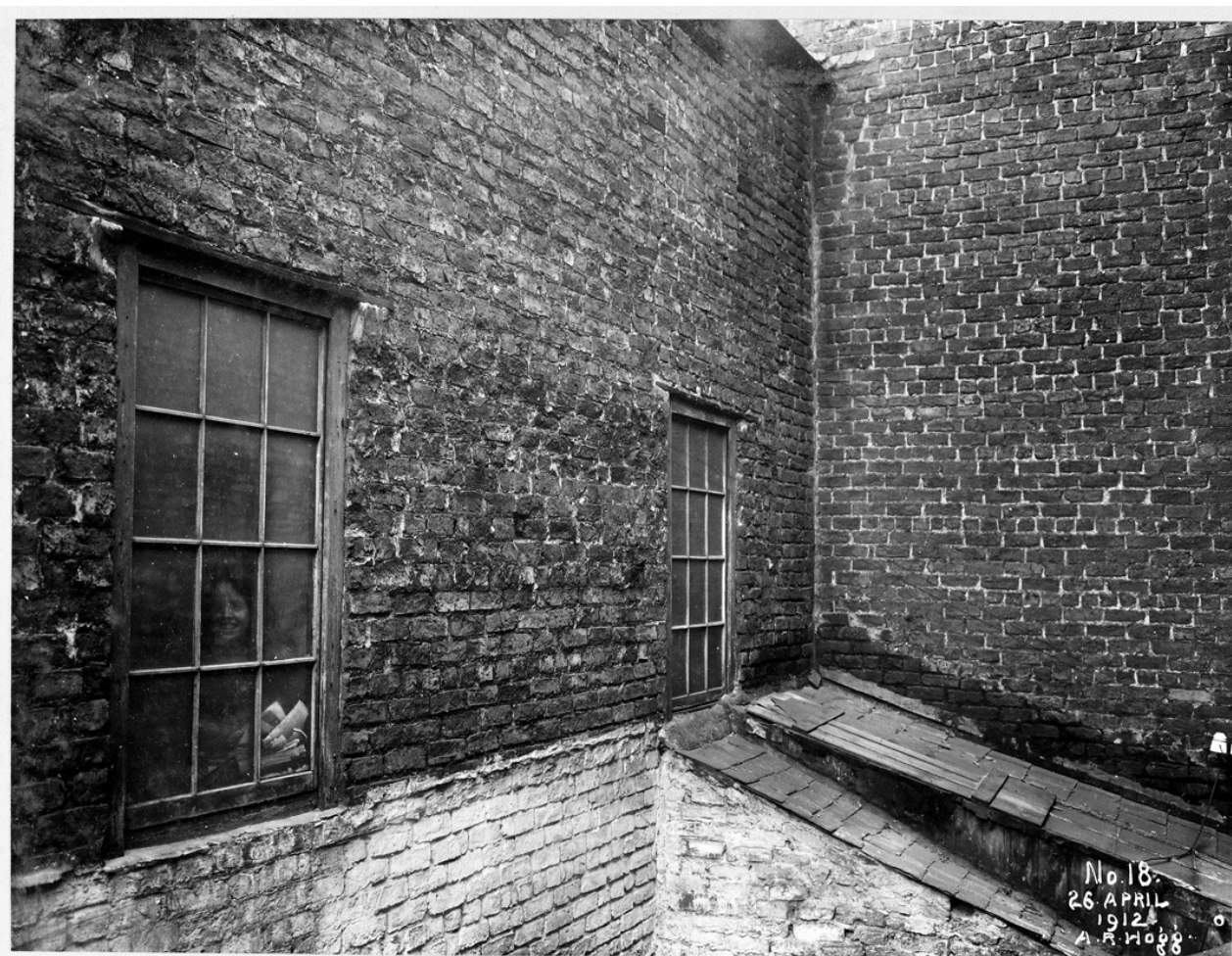


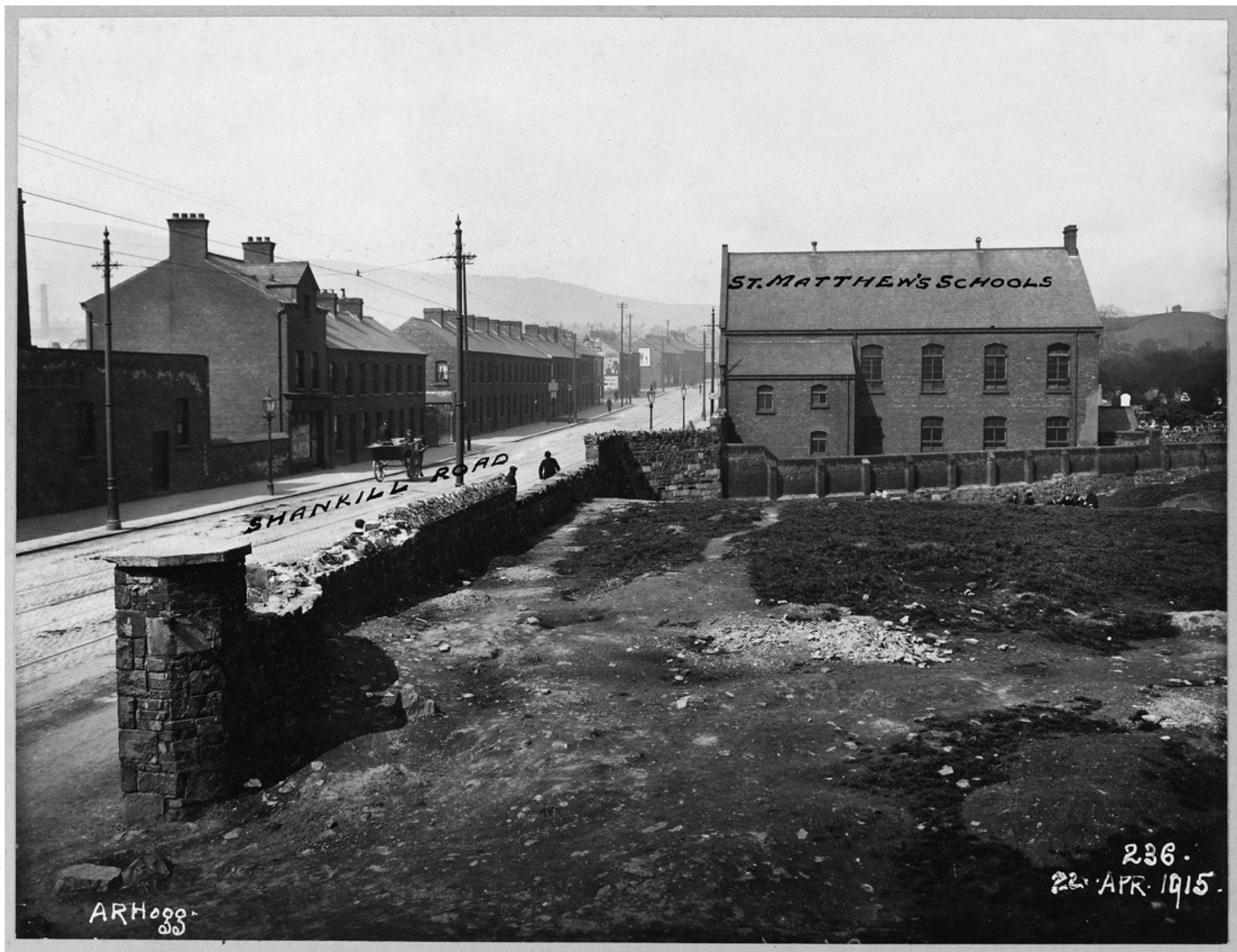




Boundry St area,
Crozier's Row from
Duffy's place

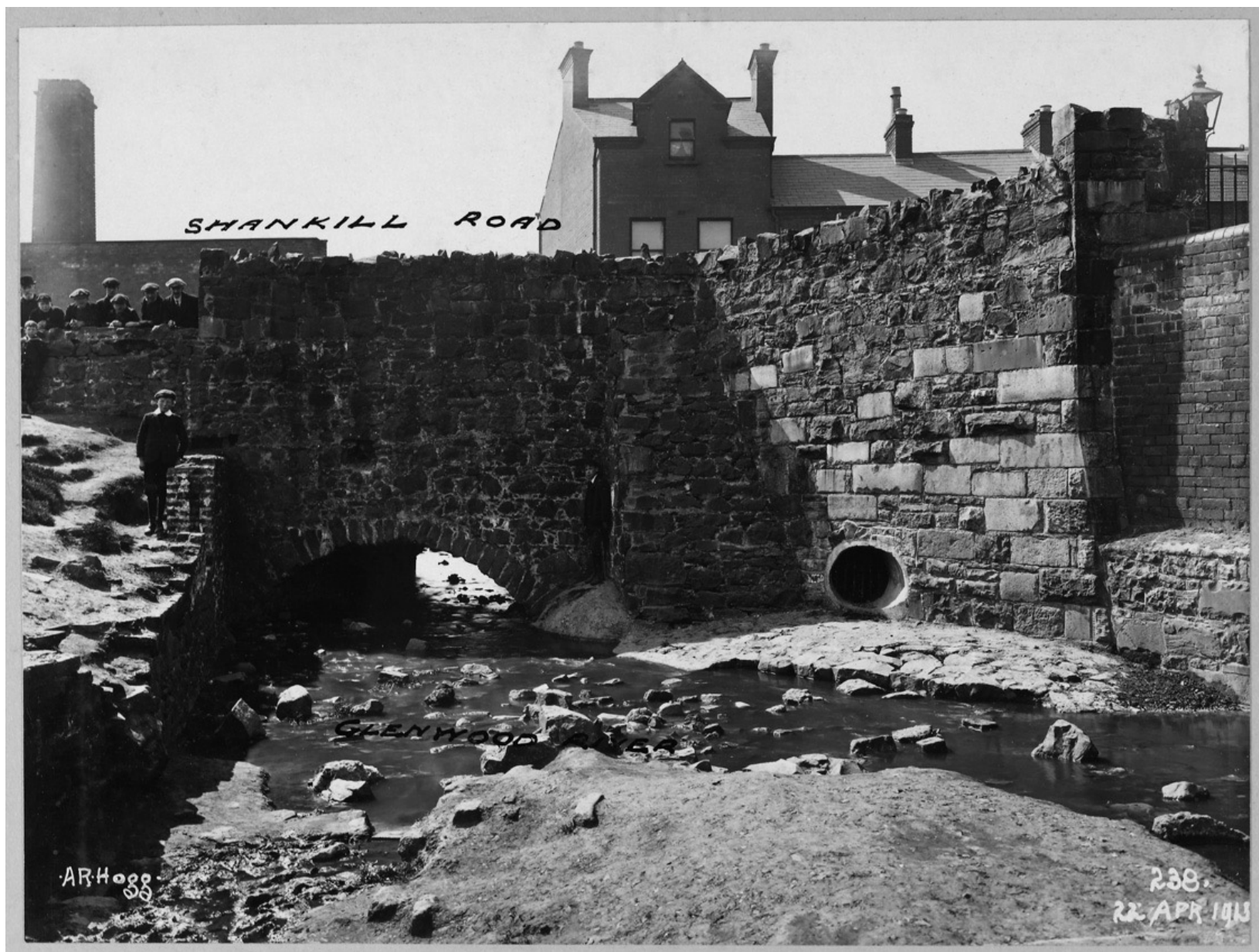






ARHogg

236.
22 APR. 1915.

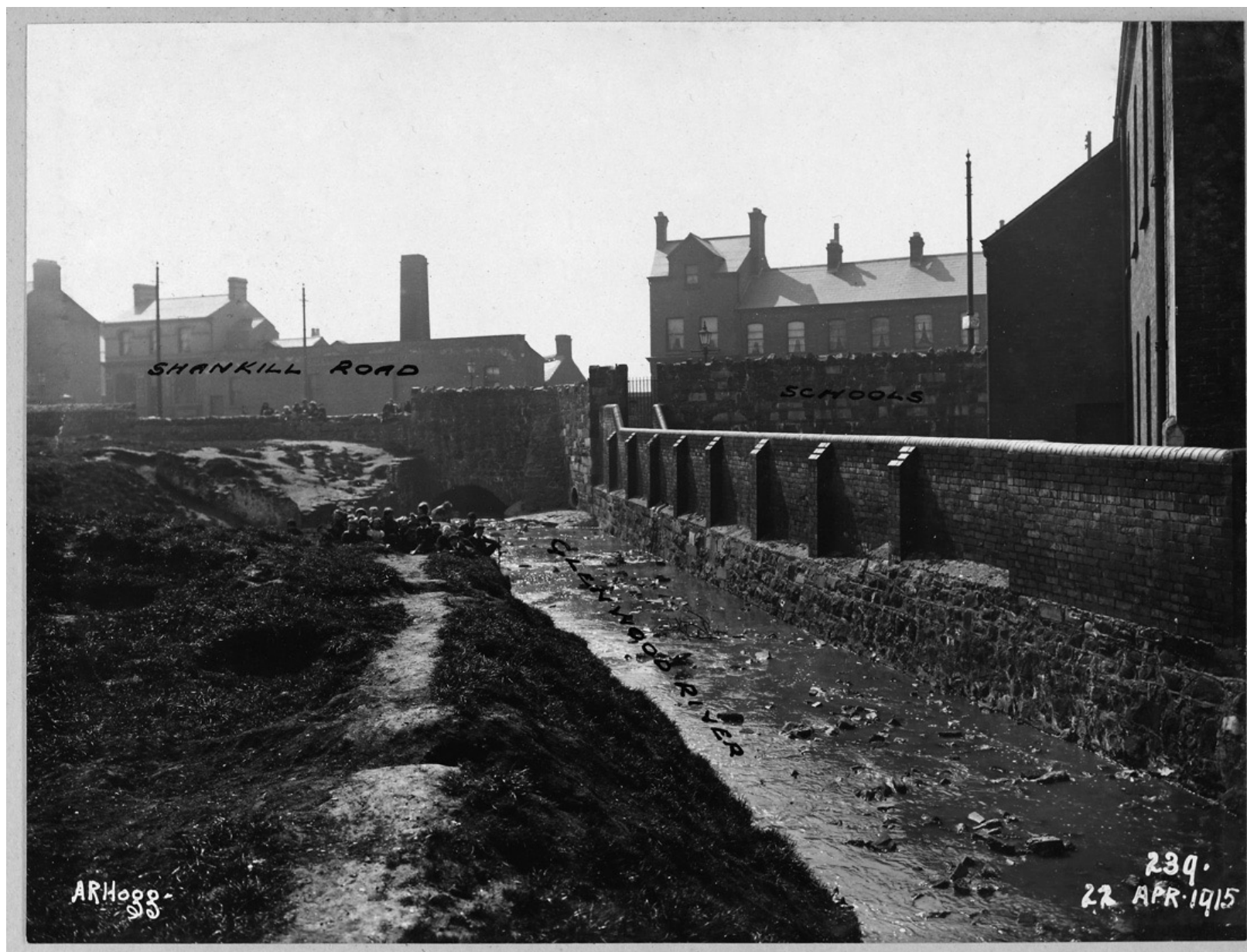


SHANKILL ROAD

GLENWOOD

ARHogg

238.
22 APR 1913



SHANKILL ROAD

SCHOOLS

GLASSBORO RIVER

ARHogg-93

239.
22 APR. 1915

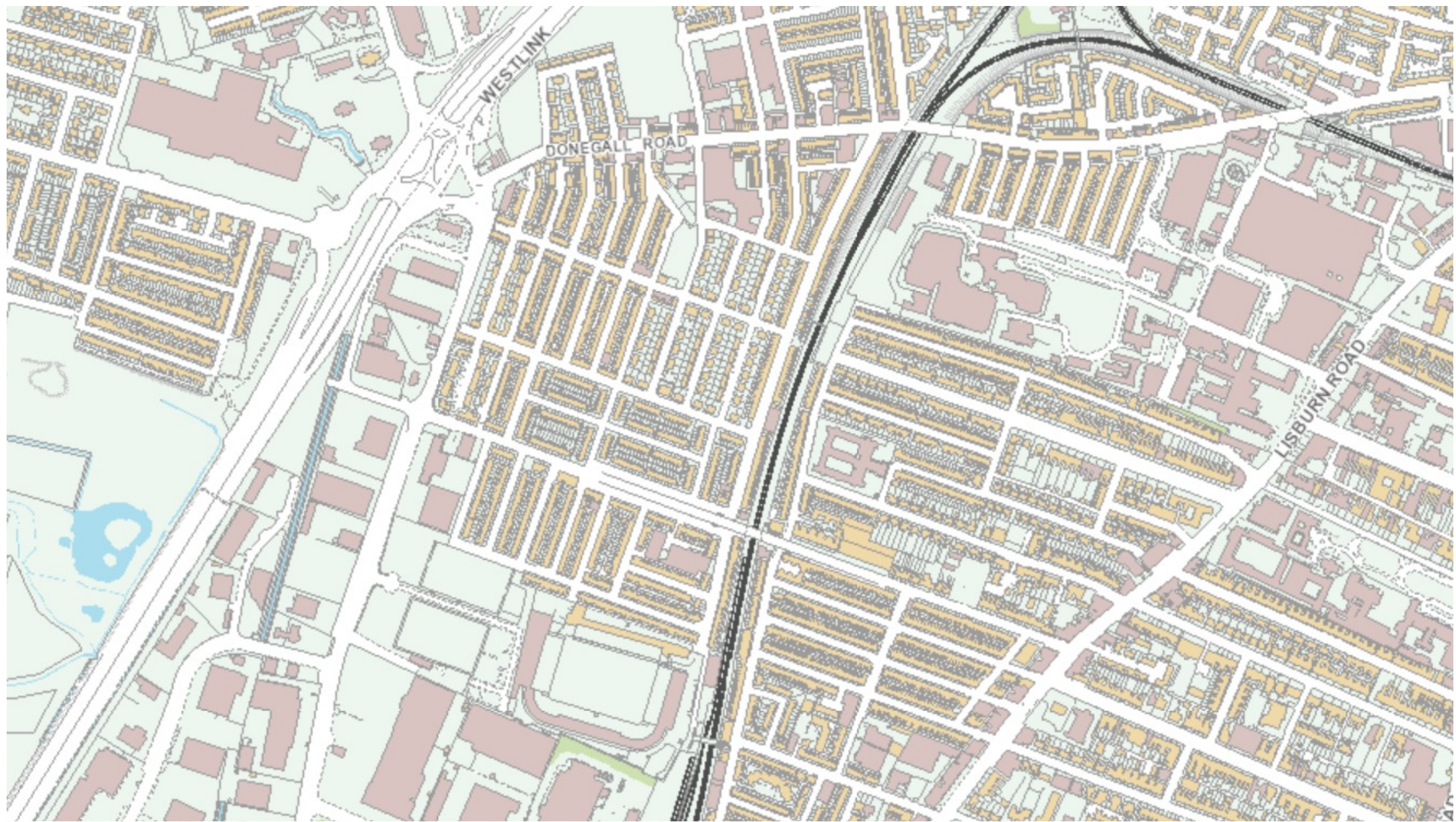


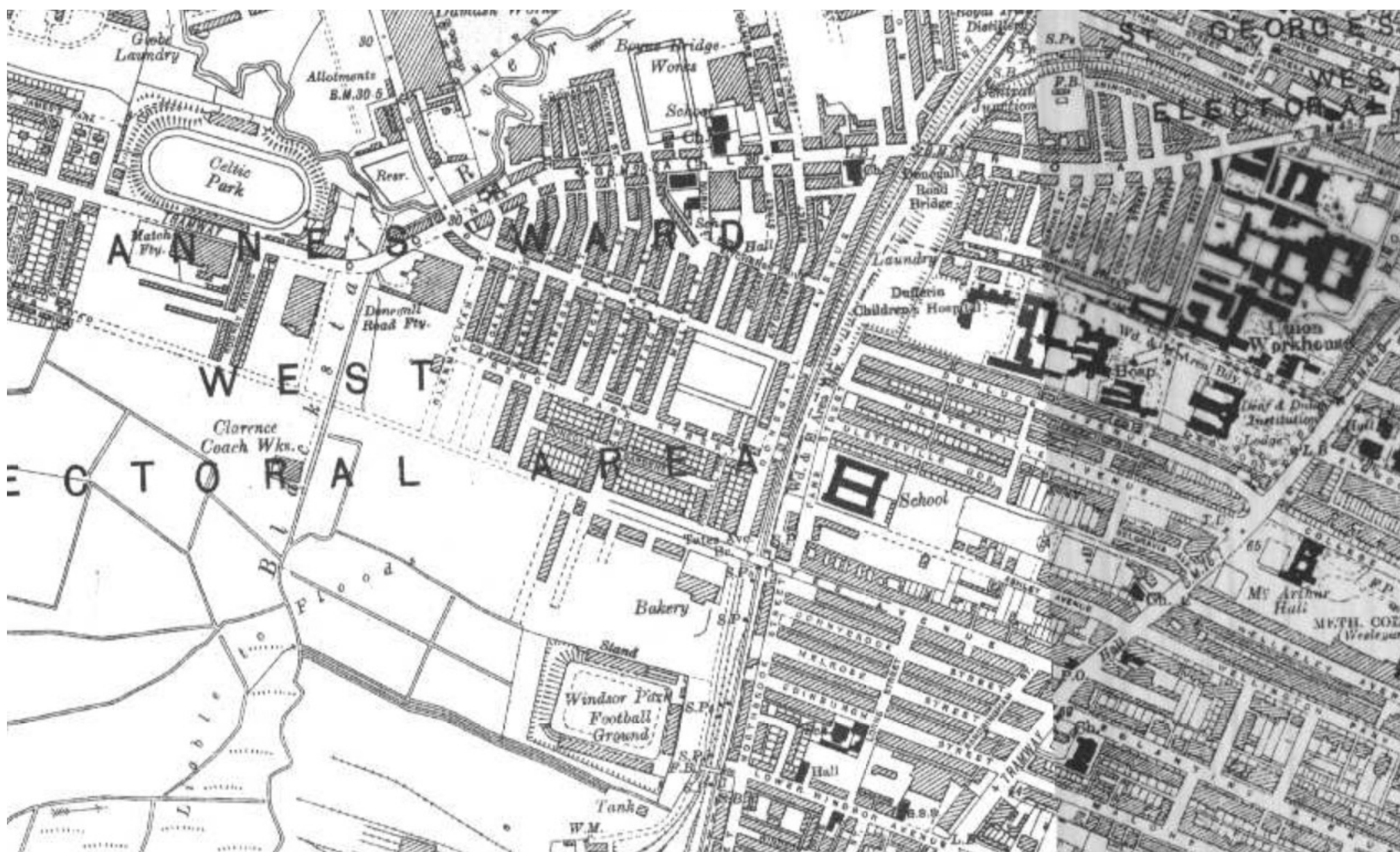


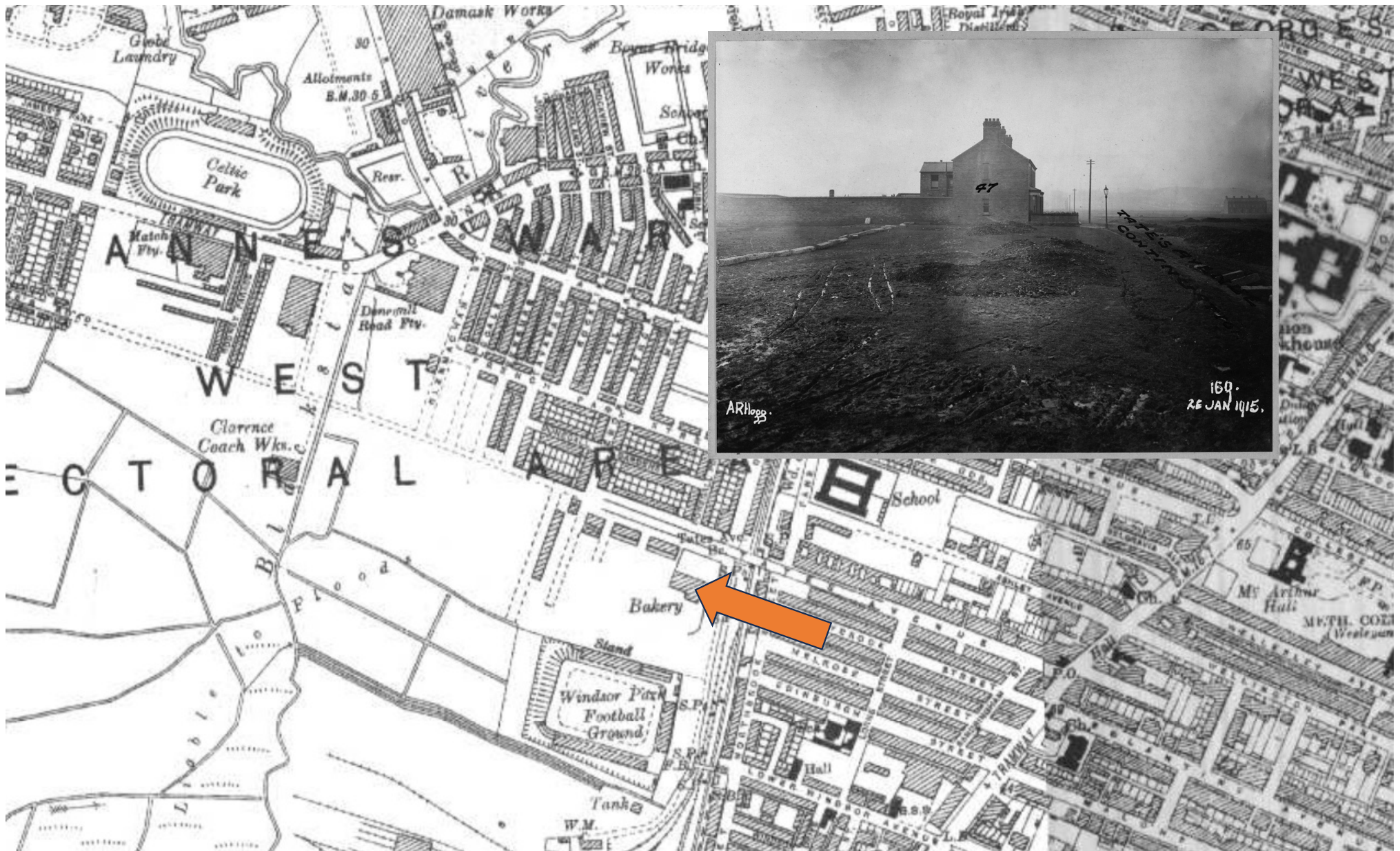
View from Shankill
Graveyard.

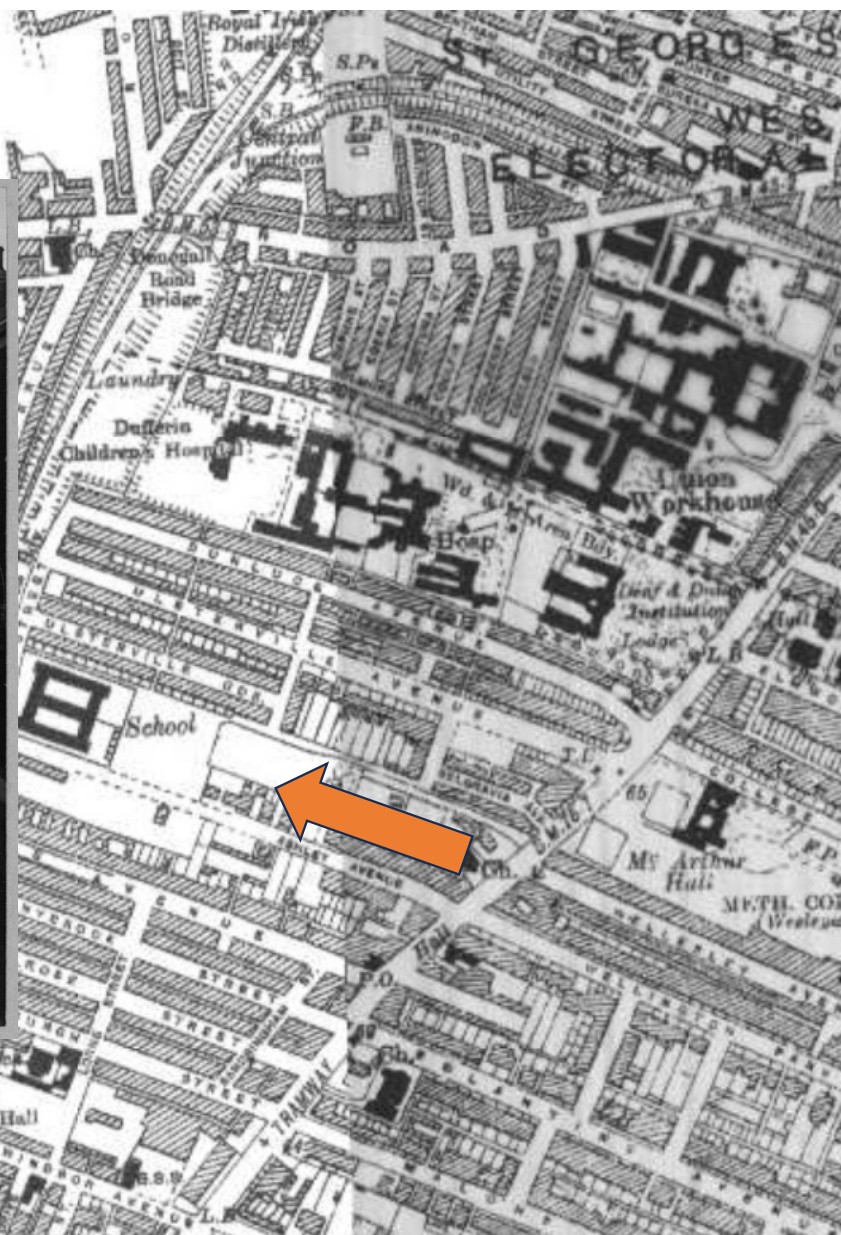
Tates' Avenue, Lisburn Road



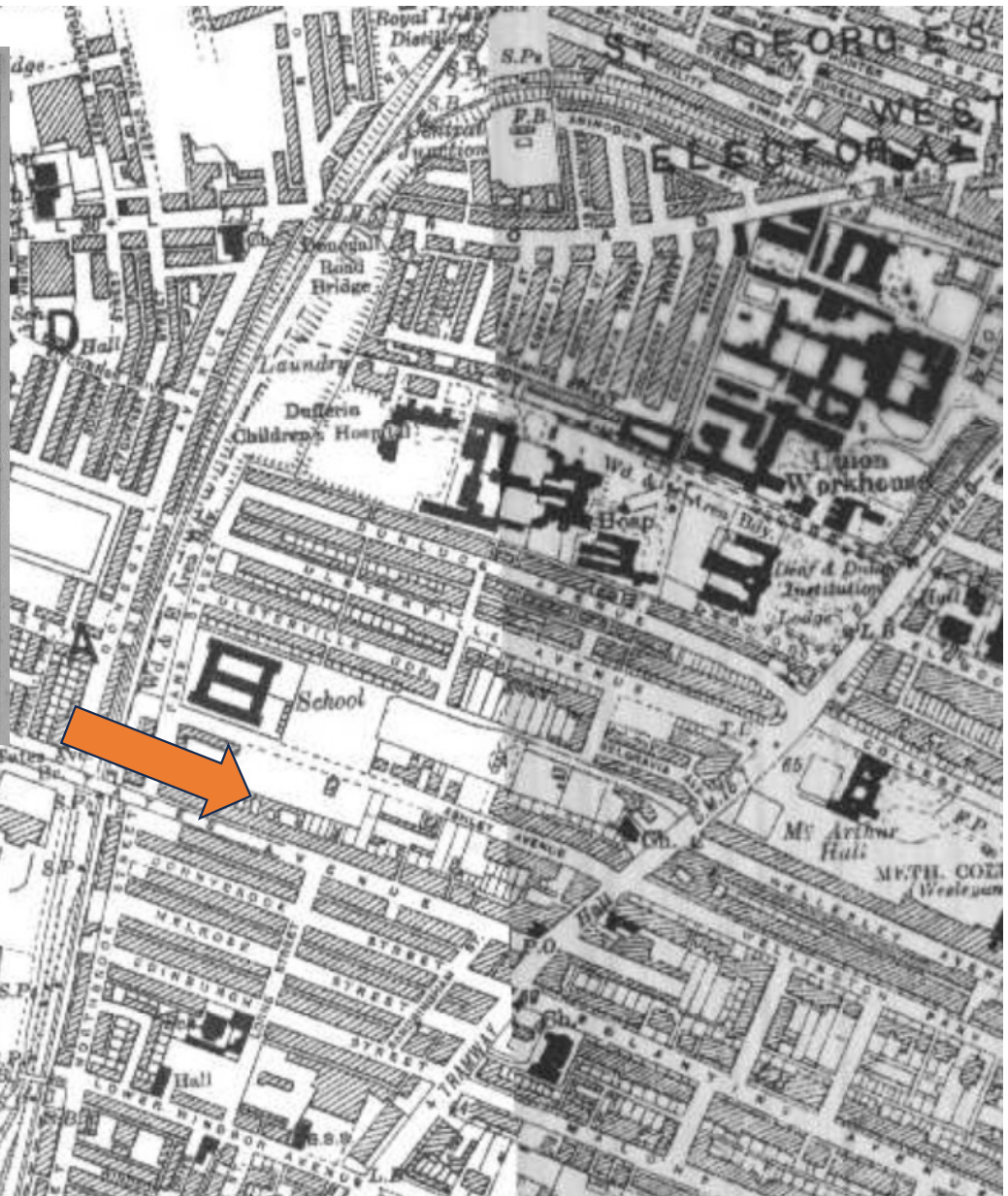














TATE'S AVENUE

ARHogg.

180.
24 JAN. 1915.

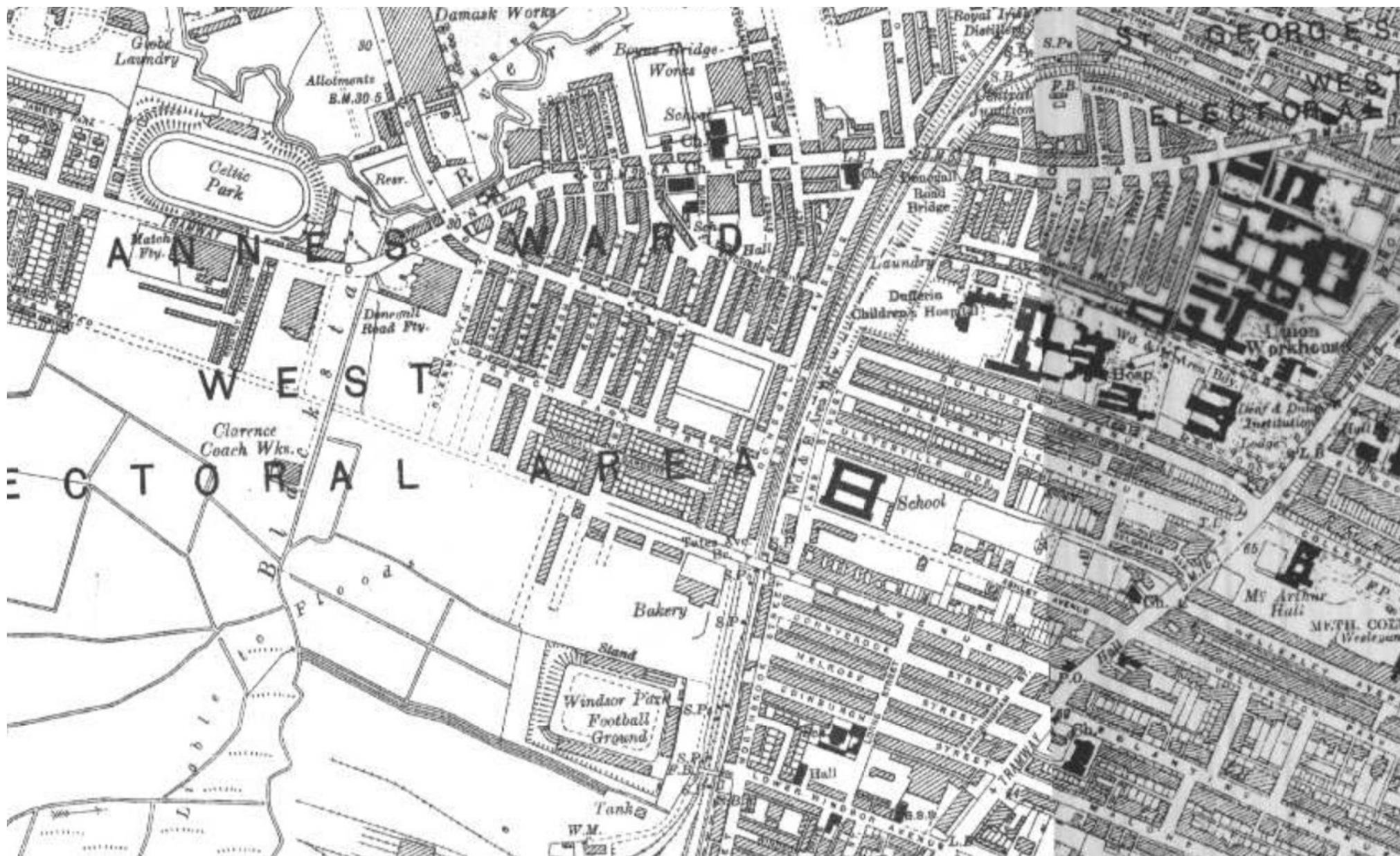






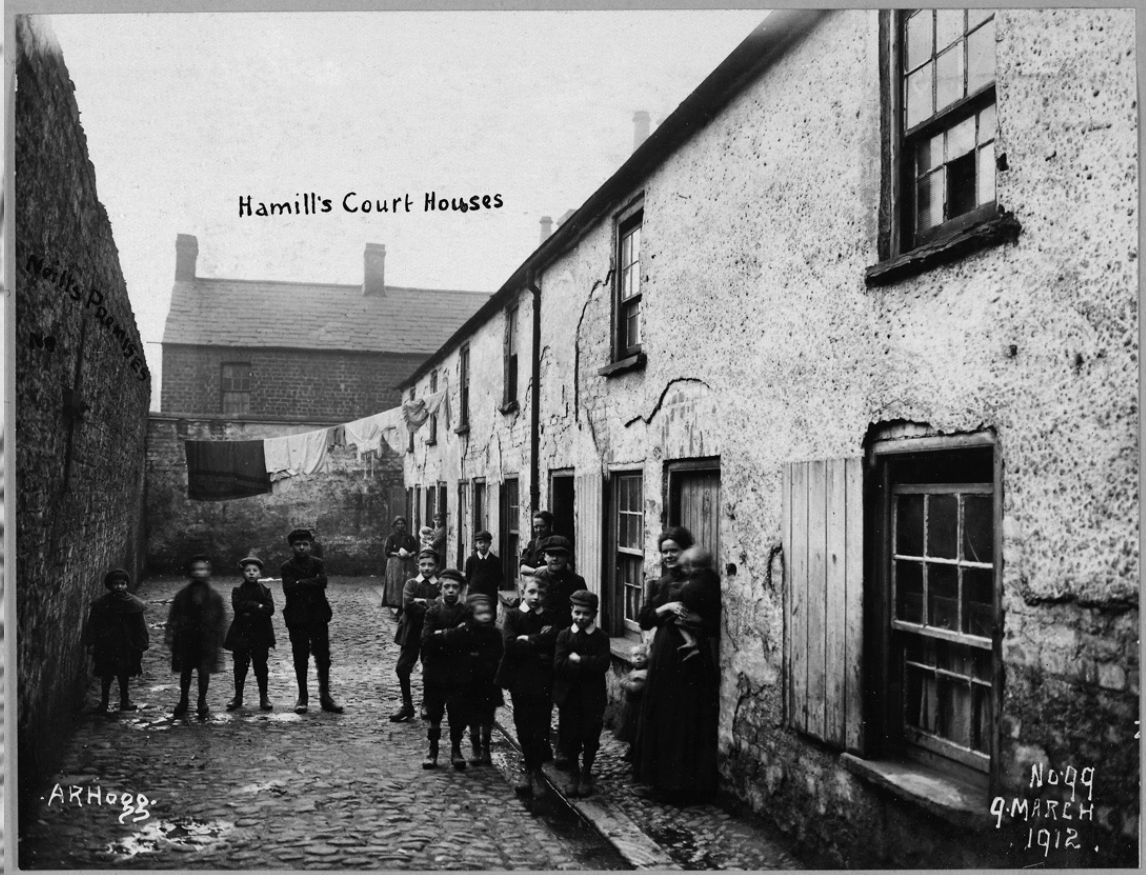
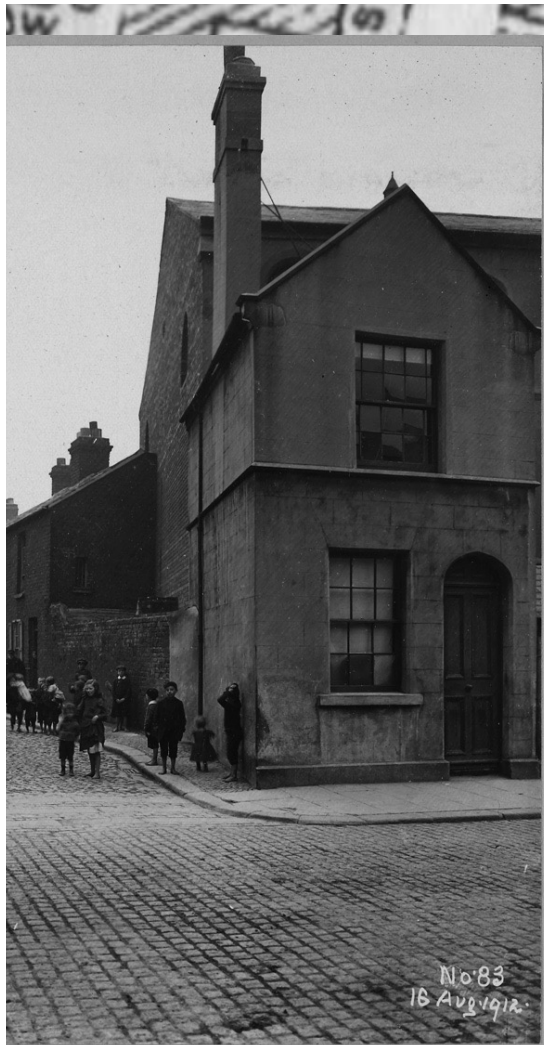


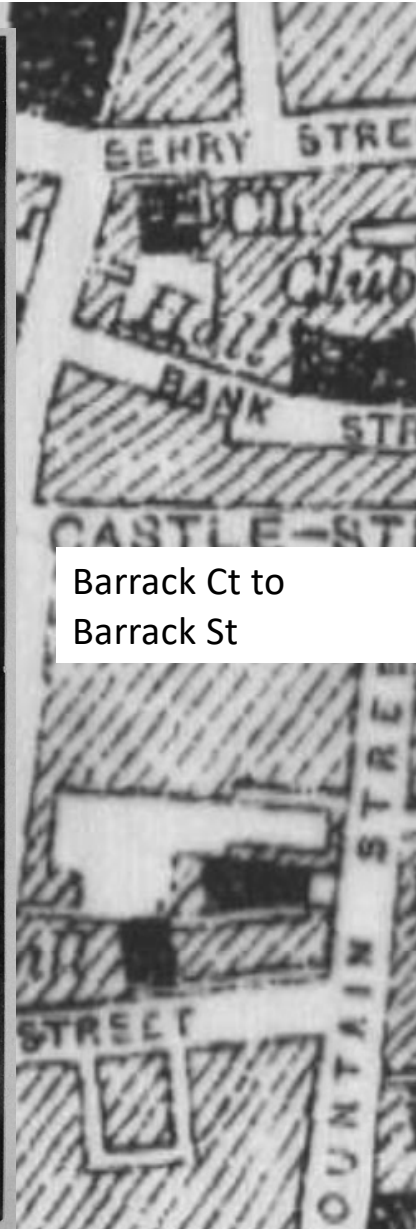


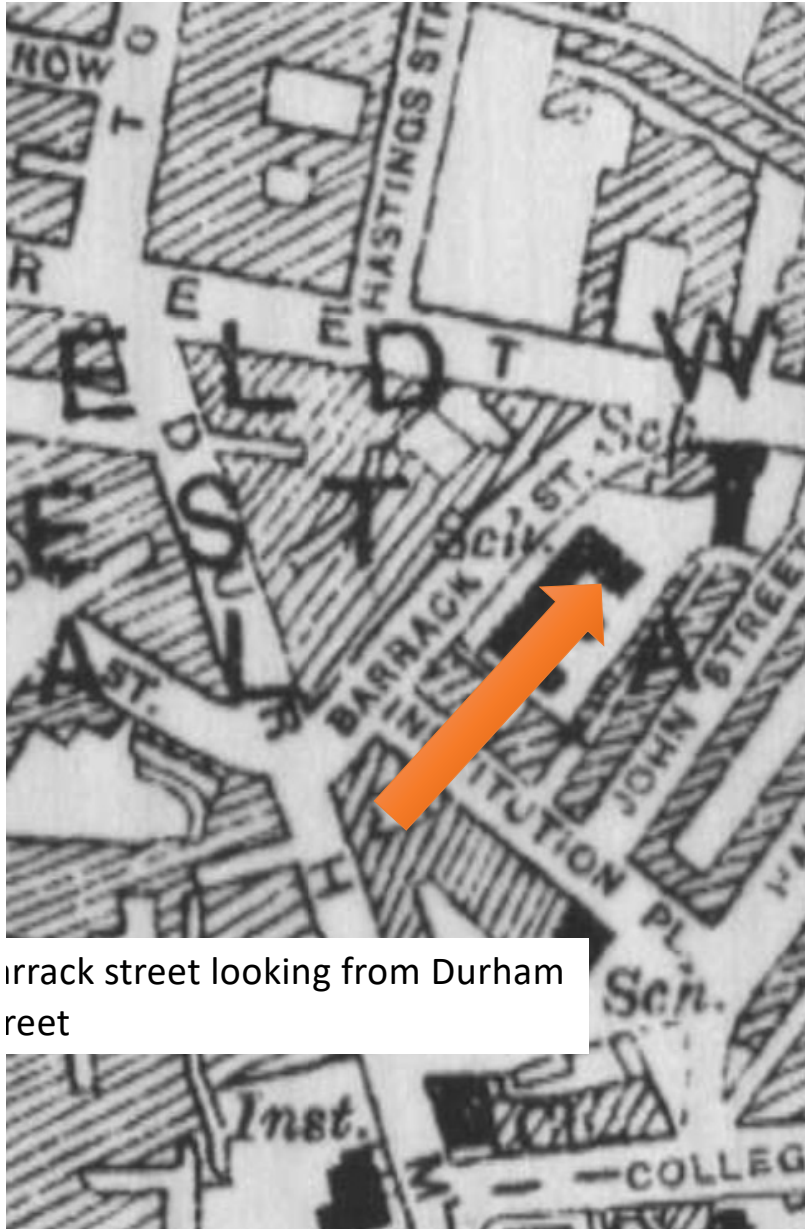


Castle Street, Divis Street, College Street







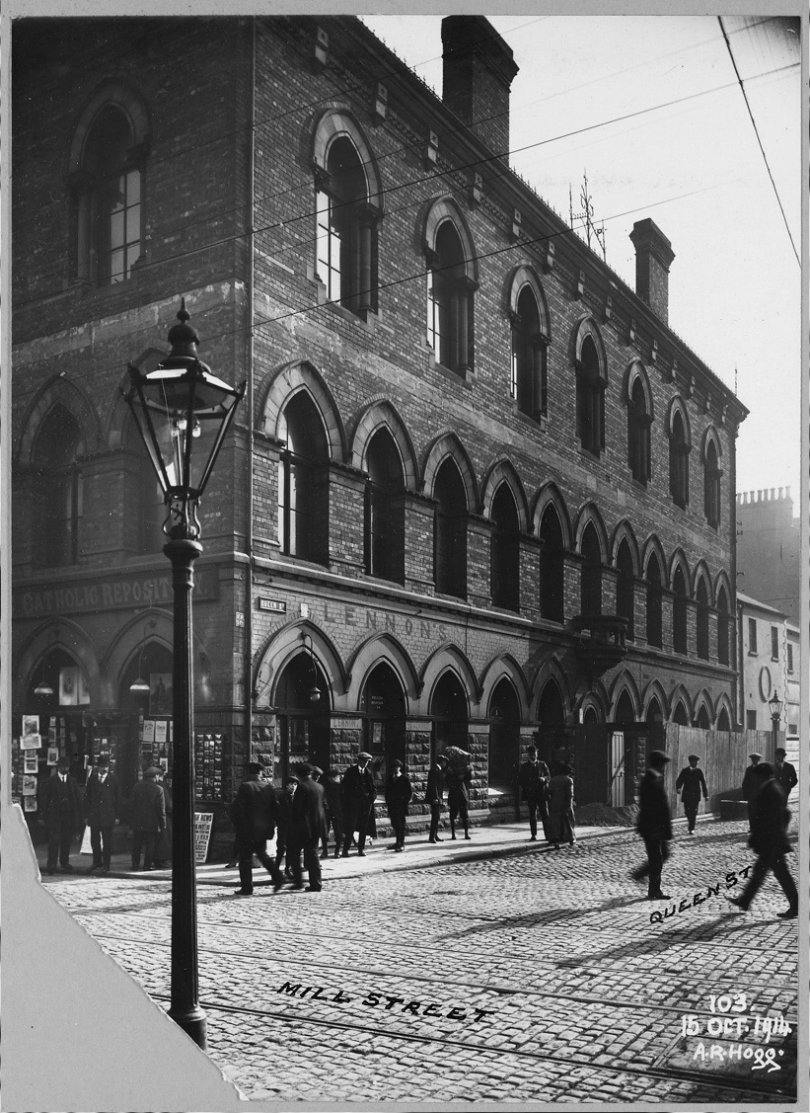


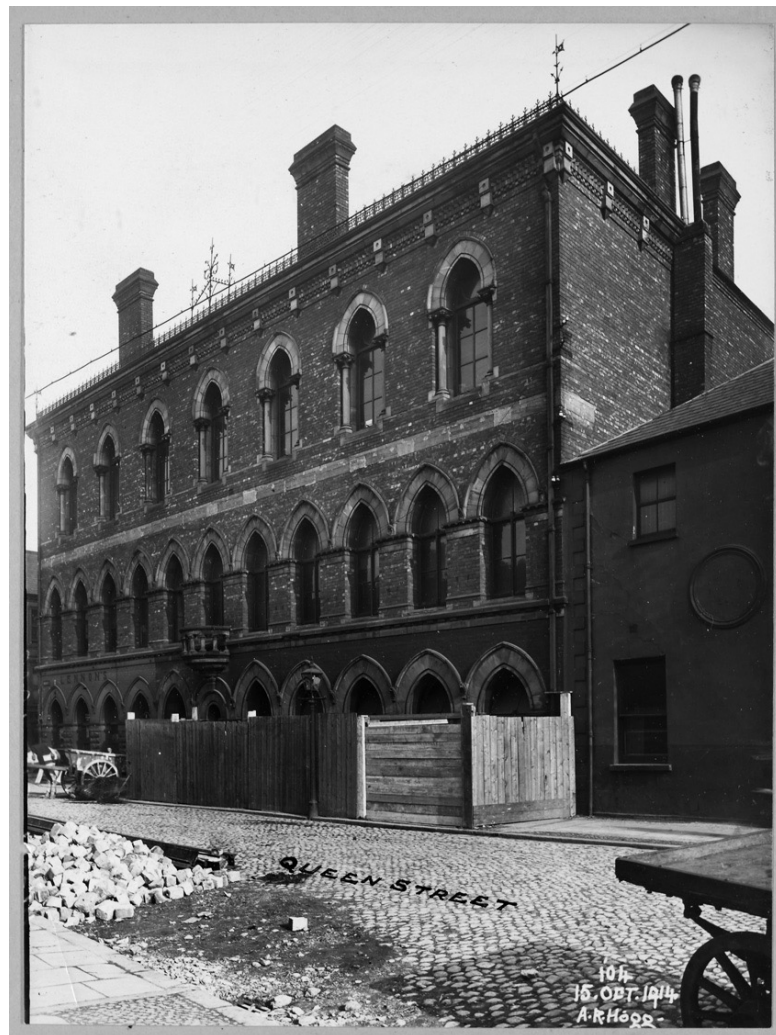
Barrack street looking from Durham Street





















Questions?