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by

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*Nineteenth Century Industrial Village:*  
*A Case Study of P O R T L A W County Waterford*

## MAYFIELD MILL

Tonight I'm in a far off country  
But memory bring my eyes to fill  
When my thoughts travel back to Killbunny graveyard  
And to the waterfall of Mayfield Mill.

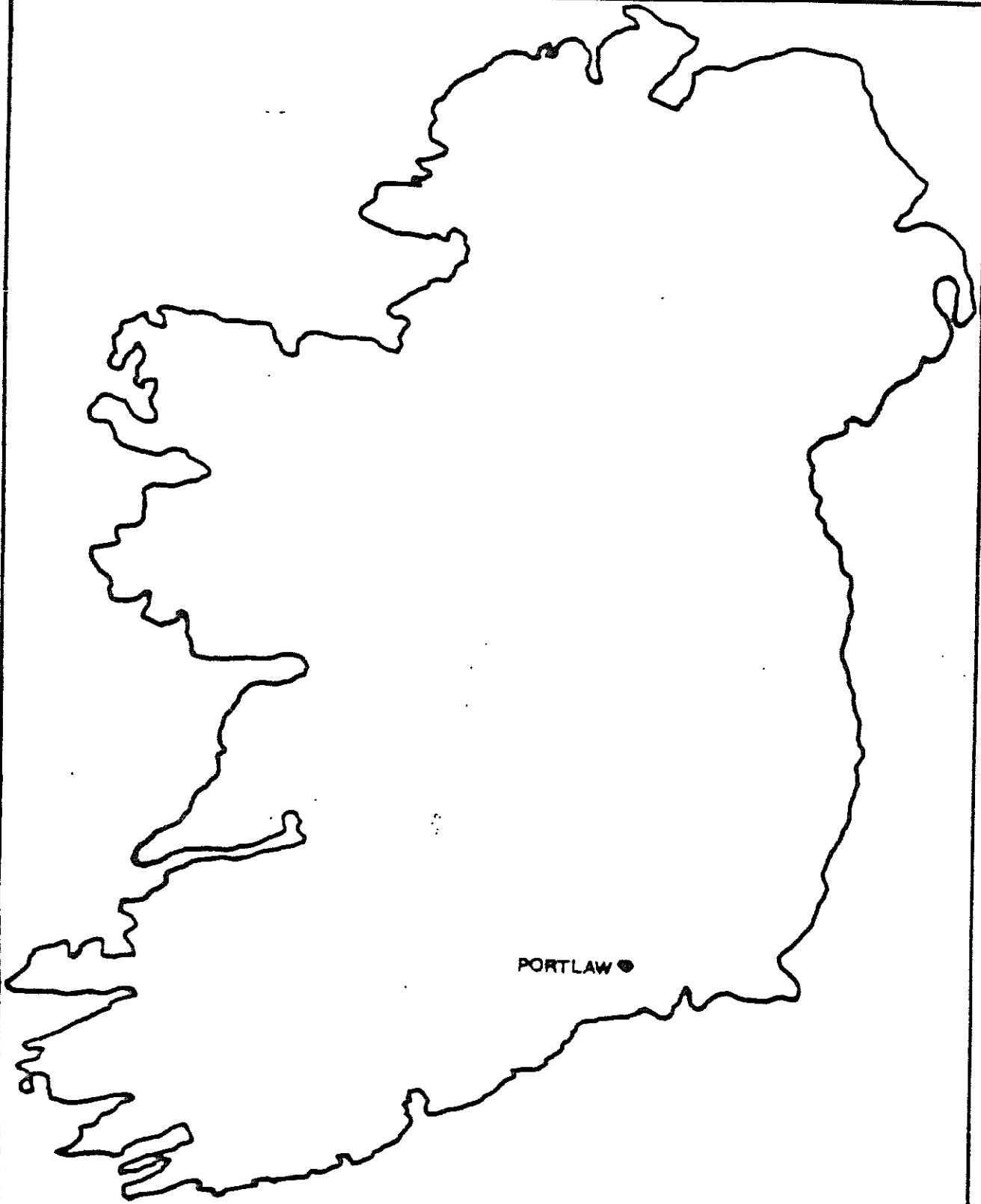
Through Curraghmore woods I used to ramble  
And climb upon the Steeple Hill  
And view the lovely scenes down under  
And the waterfall at Mayfield Mill.

I well remember all those good neighbours  
And all the happy days I saw  
When we were young and the factory working  
And the leather money in sweet Portlaw.

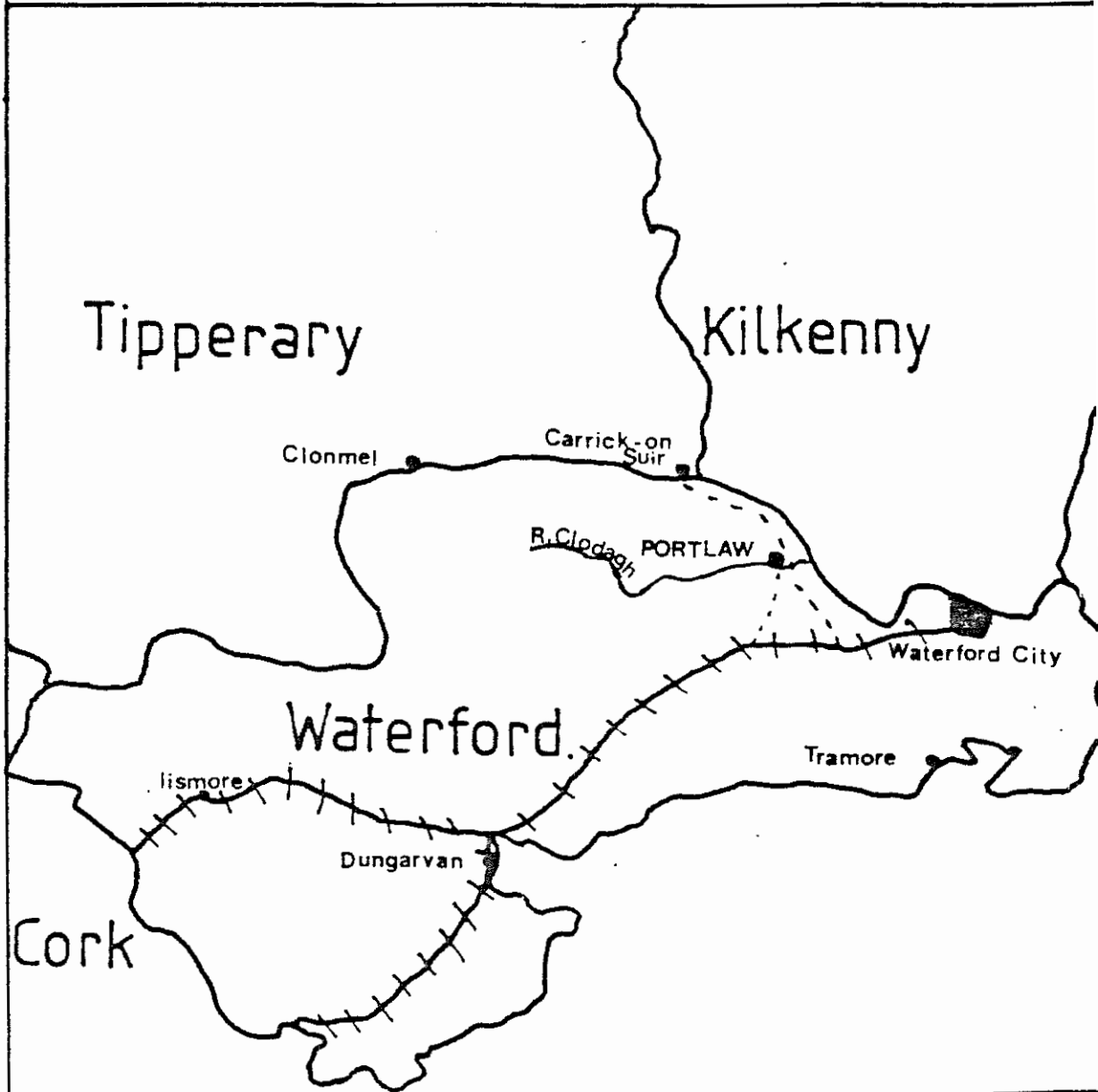
The high green banks of the River Suir  
And other lovely things I saw  
Was Coolfin Lakes with its deep false waters  
And the Copper Lodge in sweet Portlaw.

I'm getting old and my journey is ending  
Still I hope my wish to fill,  
The ivy walk was my favourite ramble  
By the waterfall by Mayfield Hill.




# PORTLAW



# Location Of Portlaw in County Waterford.



## Key

-  3<sup>rd</sup> Class Road
-  1<sup>st</sup> Class Road
-  COUNTY BOUNDARY

## Scale



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## INTRODUCTION

Portlaw today is a quiet peaceful village, situated approximately twelve miles from the city of Waterford. It lies on the river Clodagh - a small tributary of the once vibrant river Suir. To many Portlaw may seem like any other small village of Ireland, lying a stone's throw from Lord Waterford's seat at Curraghmore. To those, however, who know Portlaw and are familiar with it's history, realise that it has much more to offer. It holds a wealth of history, and to it's inhabitants a secure feeling of home. I feel for Portlaw just as any native may, because I am a native of this small, yet beautiful village. Being a native of Portlaw, obviously was the main source of motivation in choosing Portlaw as a study area. Also, inevitably, I had a brief knowledge of it's famous background and it proved quite interesting and fascinating to me.

Any person observing Portlaw today can immediately perceive that it is like so many of Ireland's towns and villages, suffering under the hands of the depression. However, there was a time when it probably was one of the more prosperous towns of Ireland. The origins of this long gone prosperity and Portlaw itself lie in a cotton factory - **Mayfield Mill** - as it was known. The age of this prosperity was back in the nineteenth century. It was a place that rose out of nothing but a few mud cabins, which date back to around 1821. The transformers of the village were the Quaker family of the Malcomsons. It was they who built the few mud cabins into a model township.

In researching Portlaw as an industrial village, one of the most irritating and salient factors that befell me was that I feel - and hope that any reader of these pages will come to realise - that the village of Portlaw has never been given enough recognition as a model industrial village. The most any writers have attributed to it is a parenthetic reference. Portlaw was a thriving, vibrant, self-sufficient community, when other parts of Ireland were decaying under

the ravages of the famine. It was a home and a place of work for thousands. It came to be more than a thriving community however, it turned out to be a model village and it was proceeded by Bessbrook in County Armagh. Ironically many geographers whilst referring to the model townships of the Industrial revolution mention Bessbrook in relation to Ireland, yet fail to recognise that Portlaw was the inspiration behind Bessbrook and it also said that Cadburys, when building their village of Bournville had Portlaw in mind - at least it's layout.

In praising the Malcomson family and their developments in Portlaw, I am not saying that they were unique. There were many more industrialists who like the Malcomsons built model villages for their workers. One could say, that they all contained the germ of the idea which Howard and many other planners were to propagate. All can be regarded as embryonic garden cities. Although Industrial villages and garden cities are clearly two different phenomenon, they both aimed for a combination of working and living in a healthy environment. In my endeavour I have tried to give the reader as concise an insight as possible into the birth and literally death of the village of Portlaw. Portlaw was born out of industrial prosperity and has right up until today continued to be effected by the ebb and flow of this prosperity. Portlaw has contracted in size and population since the fall of the cotton factory and the Malcomson family. Contemporary Portlaw is a reflection of what transpired over one hundred and fifty years ago. Portlaw's layout and structure is a fossil of what once was a landmark of Ireland. The sense of community pride that exists today in Portlaw as regards its history is a living tribute to the family of the Malcomsons, the propagators of village life in Portlaw.

## METHODOLOGY

As shall be submitted in the Literature Review, the main type of research in this work, was researching the majority, if not all, the articles written about Portlaw during the nineteenth century. As the title implies, the study undertaken is a case study. The author was not focusing on just one aspect of the village during the nineteenth century, but many overlapping areas of interest, as is outlined by virtue of the title of each respective chapter. For my study to be somehow original it was quite necessary to go further than researching and editing books, articles etc. In light of this, tables and graphs were devised and compiled by means of information gathered from parliamentary papers in the National Library, Dublin and from Censuses reports ranging from 1821 to 1901. Also Griffith's valuation was a main source of information for original work, and also for supplying information and material not to be found in any book.

Griffith's valuation was used to try and outline some trends occurring in tenement leasorship and rateable value for the period around 1852. Some graphs were compiled from this material which gave interesting results. In compiling the graphs for tenement leasorship, three main Land Leasors at the time were taken into account. Namely the Malcomsons, Medlycotts and Richard Curtis, the other leasors leasing, only a few houses each are classified as "other" on the graph. The total number of houses taken into account were 425, this number was equated as 100% on the graph, therefore showing the percentage leased by the respective leasors as mentioned above. See graph No (1).

Graph No (2) gives the overall percentage of valuation classes, the class value was attributed as follows: five categories were devised in all, the first category being houses with the net annual value ranging from £1 up to but not including £2, and so on up to £6+. As many of the houses above the valuation of £6 spanned quite a large range it was thought that £6+ would be an appropriate category to use



in order to give an overall indication of the percentage of houses above this value.

Later when contrasting house values as attributed by 1901 Census, and by my own categories from the 1852 data, I devised the following categories so as to class the houses (i.e. class as regards quality etc.). The houses in the £1 - £2 category and £2 - £3 category were taken as 3rd class houses and the £3 - £4 and £4 - £5 categories as 2nd class, the last two categories i.e. £5 - £6 and the £6+, being categorised as 1st class. This proved to be quite beneficial as is outlined in Table 6. Here the eye immediately perceives that many of the houses leased by the Malcomsons in 1852 had the same class value in 1901, and houses in the other streets which in 1852 according to my classification are classed as 2nd class, and have a low number leased by the Malcomsons, have changed hands over the intersecting years and dropped to the standard of 3rd class. Graph No (3) is a superimposition in effect of Graph No (1) and No (2), as regards information pertaining to Malcomsons. By virtue of comparison, -the graph allows the percentage valuation classes leased by the Malcomsons to be compared to the overall percentage of the valuation classes.

Data from the Census reports gave a comprehensive division of the male and female labour force in 1871, giving an overall indication of employment structure. Similar but shorter accounts were obtained from the 1821 Census and the numbers of families dependant on various trades is given in the Census of 1841.

Table 4 was again constructed from the Censuses which gave invaluable information as regards number of population, number of houses inhabited, uninhabited. When all the data from the relevant years is compiled and contrasted, trends in the prosperity of the village can be seen, also the general health of the village at that given time can be immediately observed. Taking, for example 1841, here 458 houses were inhabited, none were uninhabited and 31 were being

built, whereas later in 1881 and 1891 a significant decline in inhabited houses is perceived. In 1891 alone 144 houses were uninhabited. Even the Censuses themselves i.e. the reports indicated this decline and gave an explanation for the decline saying:

"The decrease in 1881 was attributed to the closing of a Cotton Factory, and in 1891 to reduced employment in a Spinning Factory" (Report of Census for 1881 and 1891.)

In the Parliamentary papers on various years under Factory Inspector reports, the Portlaw Cotton Factory is mentioned three times, in the 1836, 1839 and 1852 reports. This information allowed the author to compile tables, which outline the numbers employed and their sexes, as well as allowing for comparison with other factories of the time. By mere comparison, how extensive the works in Portlaw were, is easily comprehended and realised.

Trade Directories also proved to be valuable sources of information. In the trade directories the main persons in the village at the time are named and also their occupation. In compiling the graphs the author perceived that a certain Richard Curtis, was leasing a relatively large amount of property in Portlaw at the time of the research done in Griffiths Valuation. However, no one seemed to be able to tell the author who this person was, and what status he held in the village. However, when his name was referred to slaters commercial directory of 1846, he was listed as Coal Merchant, Grocer, Baker and Flour Dealer, thus giving further insights into the social life of the village at that point in time and the main persons there within.

With a compilation of this material and the written literature studied by the author, the various chapters were research and compiled.

Chapter 4 deals with the Malcomsons, their origins, how they acquired their wealth, how they became involved in the cotton trade, and subsequently their eventual arrival in Portlaw.

Chapter 5 follows on from this, dealing with the Cotton factory - the conditions, the number of workers employed, the uniqueness of the engineering of the factory and other such details.

Chapter 6, deals with the main village types in Ireland at the time. This discussion is very general, this being a result of the diversity involved in all these villages. Therefore, only general remarks were made, and a small, yet clear account of Gilford, an industrial village similar to Portlaw, is given.

Chapter 7 is a description of the model village of Portlaw. It discusses the layout and structure of the village. Also it looks at population figures, house inhabitation figures etc. it was in this Chapter that Griffiths Vaulation was analysed.

Chapter 8 looks at the benefits that Portlaw received as a consequence of being an industrial village, and also by the fact that it's benefactors were a Quaker family. Therefore, the chapter also looks at the Malcomsons as philanthropists and their Quaker philosophy.

The conculsion outlines the eventual decline of the factory - the factors conditioning this decline and inevitably the subsequent decline and demise of Portlaw.

As already mentioned, the study undertaken being a case study, had to look at many aspects of the village during the nineteenth centry. Thus prohibiting extensive research and subsequent writings on any one area of village life at the time. Many aspects had to be covered, and hopefully in doing so the author hopes that this was acquired with satisfaction for the reader.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As the title suggests, this work is based firmly in the past, therefore the main type of research involved was the reading of many articles that referred to Portlaw or aspects relating to Ireland in the nineteenth century. This proved to be a somewhat tedious task as the author was soon to find out. However, listed below are some of the most helpful books, articles etc. found by the author. It was necessary to read a few books on each aspect of the study so as to gain verification of data uncovered. In researching Portlaw as an industrial village, the author found that although many books refer in general to the industrial revolution and its consequences, only few gave any beneficial insight into the villages and towns that were the outcome of the revolution. Also another major criticism that the author found with any of these books was that practically all failed to refer to Portlaw as a planned industrial village of the nineteenth century. My sentiments seem to echo those of the Reverend P. Power who, when writing of Portlaw in 1910 says, "It is strange that none of our country historians has gone to the trouble of investigating the story of the great Portlaw industry, one of the most interesting things of its day in Ireland". Whilst Power laments the fact that Portlaw has not been recognised, T.W. Freeman in his book Ireland felt that Ireland was predominantly rural and that the industrial village "is a phenomenon almost unknown to the majority of Irish people outside the North East".

General information regarding industrial villages and model towns was found in various qualities and quantities. Galbraith in his book entitled The Age of Uncertainty (1977) cites the model textile town of New Lanark as an example of enlightened humanitarian experiment. He gives a rather sketchy account of New Lanark as created by David Dale a noted Scottish "Capitalist and Philanthropist" and Robert Owen his son-in-law, who was a "Philosopher, Utopian Socialist, Religious Skeptic and Spiritualist". The case of New Lanark was further explored by Turnock in The Historical Geography of Scotland since 1707 (1982). He explores how

all these planned villages were not all copies of each other, and that each individual village/town, had to be studied according to it's own merits. He also notes the difficulty in the uncertainty of the evolution of the planned village concept. Peter Hall's book Urban and Regional Planning (1982) looks at the planned village not on the end product of philanthropic motives. He dates the planned village beginnings to R. Owen and says how the scale of the industry at that time was throwing up powerful industrialists who saw the advantages of decentralization. He refers to all the noted English planned villages, as well as the Krupps village in Germany, - one which closely resembles Bournville and Port Sunlight. Also he refers to the planned village of Mortman Pullman that was built by Pullman in the United States in 1880. He says of all these towns, "many of them are still functional and highly pleasant towns today". How true this in the case of Portlaw, however he failed to mention it.

Allsopp in 1914 paints a grimmer picture in An Introduction to England's Industrial History he writes of the horrors of industrial life. Rows of houses without proper drainage, sanitation - a far cry from the healthy atmosphere as exhibited in the case of Portlaw. If Hall above saw some of the model villages as being pleasant and functional today Allsopp saw the result of the industrial revolution in a different light. He saw its traces "in the dirty back streets and tortuous slums of our great industrial towns where millions of people live narrow gloomy lives cut off more or less completely from sunlight and fresh air and horribly overcrowded"

Industrial villages of Ulster 1800 - 1900 by D.S. Macniece in the Book Plantation to Partition ed. P. Roebuck (1981) mentions all the model villages listed above, as shall be noted later. He attributed great praise to Bessbrook - a village built with the layout of Portlaw in mind - He deals in depth with Gilford, a model village of Ulster that came in to being around the same time as Portlaw, and as shall be seen in Chapter 6, it compares quite well with Portlaw.

Information about the Irish village type of the time, was acquired from a combined reading of a few books and articles. The main reading being a Chapter from L.M. Cullen's book The Emergence of Modern Ireland 1600 - 1900. In Chapter 4 of his book "Village and Countryside: Landlord and settler" he discusses the Irish planned village, it's evolution, and survival today. He also categorises the planned villages of Ireland into three. This proved quite interesting as I placed Portlaw into one of these categories, and contrasted it with Cullen's village in the relevant category.

Orme's book Ireland (1979) was for me, a breath of fresh air in the fact that of all the books mentioned so far, none of them acknowledged Portlaw as a model village. Orme does, however. Over three chapters he discusses the evolution of the Irish town, Aalen's Man and Landscape in Ireland (1978) also mentions Portlaw, he refers to it as one of the two greatest industrial towns of Ireland. Bessbrook being the second. T.W. Freeman also provided background reading as he had a chapter entitled Irish Towns in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century in a book edited by Butlin The Development of the Irish Town (1977). Also Irish Geography 14, had an article by T. Jones Hughes - village and town in mid nineteenth century Ireland, both articles giving good background reading.

Isabel Grubbs, being a quaker herself supplied reading on the Quakers in Ireland. She looked at items on philanthropists in parts of her book, Quakers in Ireland namely Chapter VII and Chapter VIII - "Light and Shade in the Nineteenth Century and Philanthropy and Education". She speaks of the Quakers as benefactors to Ireland, and mentions how they set up soup kitchens during the famine. In Chapter VIII she makes direct reference to Bessbrook and Portlaw and the good deeds done by the Quakers there.

An article in the Irish Times dated Wednesday April 8th 1959, discusses the Quakers by Arnold Marsh. He speaks of their integrity and earthly riches, and he also makes references

to their acts of philanthropy, and in doing so makes a passing comment about Portlaw. A very brief handout, on the Quaker philosophy was given to me by some Quakers, when I visited Dublin looking for the Society of Friends Library, only to find out that it was in cold storage for the year, however, in return I was given the above literature on the Quakers from a charming and hospitable meeting of some members of the Society of Friends.

A very detailed and most excellent account of the Malcomsons, their origins and their business interests down through the years and including information of Portlaw, was acquired from two articles printed in the Munster Express in 1966 and in 1971. The 1971 Article was a copy of a Speech delivered to the members of the old Waterfords Society on Friday November 26th 1971, by Mrs Phyllis Milton - a great granddaughter of William Malcomson. She goes into great depth about Clonmel, Portlaw, and also the many other industries and interests which the Malcomsons were involved in i.e. Neptune Ironworks and Shipbuilding Industry, Annaholty Peat works, The Shannon Estuary Trade, Clonmel, Thurles, Limerick and Foynes Railways, St. Petersburg Steam Ship Company, Shannon Fishing, Ruhr Coal Mines, among many others. The second article was also a copy of a speech, this time made by Mr. Charles Jacob. Mr Jacob as well as supplying the author with these two articles, also gave her a copy of a memoir compiled by the late Alexander Malcomson, great grandson of David.

Information regarding the "Leather Money" of Portlaw was obtained from an article in the Journal of the Royal Society Antiquaries Ireland (1968). Also additional reading material on this topic was also in the old Waterford Society Decies No. 10 entitled "Tokens issued by Waterford tradesmen".

As already stated, the majority of research for this work lay in procuring any available and relevant information on Portlaw, its conditions of living etc in the nineteenth century. Many of the articles, books etc were repetitions and of no great value. Others only gave

parenthetic references to Portlaw, whilst many articles proceeded to give all in one accounts of the lives of the Malcomson family, hereby incorporating all their business interests and transactions and Portlaw only being included as one of their many business successes. Much information had to be discarded as a consequence of this, and others proved too superficial to be of any relevance to the study. No one article or book gave any comprehensive and detailed account of Portlaw as a nineteenth century industrial village. Of course, the author realises that her work would have been futile if this was the case, and it is her hope that her study now fills in the gap that previously was unfilled.



THE MALCOMSONS - CORN AND COTTON MAGNATES

Inevitably an industrial village is the direct result of industry and also industrialists. It is the industrialist who injects capital and more importantly, ideas into the making of a successful industry and consequently a village, for his workers - as this usually coincides with the birth of the industry. In his entrepreneurial skills and sometimes philanthropic interests, which sets the wheels in motion. Just as the name Owen is synonymous with New Lanark, so is Lever with Port Sunlight, Salt with Saltaire, Cadbury with Bournville, Richardsons with Bessbrook and Malcomsons with Portlaw. Portlaw came in to being with the advent of the Malcomsons to the small village in 1825. Portlaw in effect, was non-existent prior to their arrival. It was they who built Portlaw and placed it on the map of planned industrial villages of the nineteenth century. In light of the importance of the Malcomson family to the village of Portlaw, it is inevitable I feel that consideration should be given over to their economic and social background, prior to their arrival in Portlaw at the start of the nineteenth century.

The first Malcomson traced in Ireland dates back to the seventeenth century, and the arrival of Andrew, a skilled craftsman - a linen weaver - from Scotland. He was a Presbyterian, and it seems he had two sons Joseph and David, who were also engaged in the linen trade. In 1748 Joseph married Rachel Greer, a Quaker, whose family was involved in the linen business. It is important to note here that Rachel was a Quaker because as a result one branch of the Malcomson family can now be traced as Quakers. This in itself is quite important, as the Malcomsons whilst building the model village in Portlaw, were inspired in their design by many Quaker motives, and other Quaker magnates. Also Richard Cropper, a Quaker from England was to be a major influence on the Malcomsons - as shall be seen later. Returning to the family history Joseph and Rachel had eleven children, all of whom were reared as Quakers. In 1774 Joseph died, and two of the children, John aged thirteen and David aged nine were sent to some Quakers in Clonmel. It was here in Clonmel - around

twenty miles from Portlaw - that David, the founder of the family fortune and practically of Portlaw, set out on his industrial career.

David's first job was as a clerk for his cousin Sarah Grubb who was owner of Anner Mills near Clonmel. Soon after leaving her employment, he became Agent to John Bagwell, a property owner in Clonmel at the time. He also spent some time as a distiller in partnership with a man named Simon Sparrow, presumably the Simon Sparrow who owned Suir Islands Mill. A few years later it seems that John - David's brother - who was quite wealthy at the time, bought on behalf of David, Corporation Mills on Suir Island. His experience in the corn trade was gained from various jobs he had held during his youth, especially from his work at Anner Mills and also from John Bagwell.

At this stage, it is necessary to take into consideration the economic climate in Ireland at the time, as this was an important factor as to why David Malcomson bought these mills in the early nineteenth century. Around the beginning of the eighteenth century Ireland was essentially a country dependent upon pastoral farming, beef, butter, pork - all were being exported from the major parts of Ireland at that time - Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Dublin. However, Ireland was still dependent on imports of corn, to overcome this situation and to encourage tillage farming, the Irish Parliament around 1757 had Bounty Acts passed, which subsidised the carriage of wheat from distant counties to Dublin. Clonmel by virtue of its position on the River Suir, was to be able to take advantage of this new opportunity and hence the year 1757, is significant to the foundation of the milling industry and the evolution of tillage farming in the area. Flour became Clonmel's chief commodity and being a bulky commodity, the river Suir was the means by which it was transported to Dublin. An added stimulus was to come in 1815 with the Napoleonic collapse. The landed interest, which at this time controlled Parliament, passed the corn laws which prohibited the importation of foreign grain. "This coupled with the

development of manufacture and growth of population in England gave Irish agriculture an artificial stimulus". (Burke 1907; History of Clonmel pg 181 ). Ireland became England's supplementary granary.

Clonmel, and in particular David Malcomson took advantage of the situation. It was in this the corn trade that David first embarked he manipulated the situation of the time and in doing so became a major supplier of corn in nineteenth century Ireland. "Clonmel now became one of the greatest grain markets of the kingdom" (Burke 1907: pg 182). Sheil in 1828 whilst visiting Clonmel saw parallels between it's groceries and the cotton factories of Lancashire, "Malcomson's Mill is I believe the finest in Ireland. Here half the harvest of the adjoining counties as well as Tipperary is powdered" (Shiel 1855: pg 358).

Clonmel is I feel, important to the development of the cotton industry in Portlaw. Many factors about David Malcomson in Clonmel can be likened to his activities in Portlaw. Here only a few miles from the village, he proved him self a shrewd and wise opportunist, an entrepreneur in all respects. He saw the opening for corn and trusted his luck, which was not to fail him. He used water power to it's best potential in his manipulation of the River Suir. He treated his workers with respect and proved himself a worthy employer, even his own son was put to work in the mills, as he said himself "he will teach others by first practising his business himself".

By 1822, he with his three sons Joseph, Joshua and John had built little Island Mill and had four corn stores. This was not enough however for the enterprising Quaker. In order to accommodate his increasing business he began to expand out from Clonmel, which in turn was to bring him nearer to Portlaw. He leased corn stores in Carrick-on-Suir, and became tenant to Pouldrew Mills in 1824. Here at Pouldrew, just a few miles away from Portlaw, he constructed a canal in order that large boats could load at the mill, something which a few years

later he was to do in Portlaw, making her share of the river navigable also.

Thus we see David Malcomson monopolising the corn trade. At the height of it's prosperity he was not, however, to stop at the corn trade. Even in 1824 whilst being tenant to the Pouldrew Mills his thoughts were elsewhere. In the early months of 1825 he writes to his friend Richard Ussher "We fear we are on the eve of such a change in the corn laws as will be very injurious to this country" (David Malcomson 18.4.1825). It was more than sheer ambition that turned David's thoughts to cotton. The repeal, although it did come, was not heralded until 1846. Evidently David had seen the increase in population in England after the wars, her population was growing quickly and requiring food. Ireland could no longer compete with the other countries, who were opening their corn market to Britain at very cheap rates. "It is clear that for every barrel of foreign corn imported from foreign countries into England, she wants so much less from Ireland" (David Malcomson 18.4.1825)

Foresight, apprehension and shrewdness in business matters caused David Malcomson and Sons to move to new fields of endeavour. They were, however, not to abandon their business enterprises in Clonmel and elsewhere. Why cotton? one may ask. The cotton industry at this point in time was far from flourishing, it had proved fruitful in the south of Ireland to a degree in the 1790's, but in 1824/5 it barely had a foothold in the country. It was though, an expanding business in England, the Continent and the North of Ireland. Many aids had been given to the extension of cotton in Ireland during the seventeen eighties/nineties. Parliament bounties were granted on sales at home in 1783, and a year later on exports. In 1794 a protective tariff was established, all this coupled with the fact that direct trade with the raw material suppliers was opened, gave an added impetus to the initiation of cotton factories in the South. All these stimuli aided cotton manufacturers in these years. However, by the time the Malcomson family

had decided to embark upon the cotton trade, Some of the protective tariffs were gone, and linen was replacing cotton manufacturers in the North. It was not though these tariffs that attracted Malcomson to Portlaw. The key attraction to setting up their factory at Portlaw was cheap water power and cheap labour as well as an overabundance of both. An additional bonus to these being the fact that Portlaw was and is only a few miles from the strategic port of Waterford - as it was in those days. In his letter mentioned previously David Malcomson speaks of having acquired "the most eligible situation" - "with a full command of the river Clodagh" - a tributary of the Suir. David did not forget his Northern origins, as he laid great emphasis on procuring "assistance from Belfast or the other side of the water " (D. Malcomson 18.4.1825).

The main source of inspiration to this line of business came it seems from James Cropper. Malcomson spoke of him as "our mutual friend". Cropper was a Quaker who in 1825 published a pamphlet of fifty nine papers entitled "The Present State of Ireland with a Plan for improving the position of the People". He came to Ireland in November and December of 1824 - note that David Malcomson wrote the letter concerning his initiation of business at Portlaw in 1825 - Cropper came with the hope of increasing Irelands prosperity which, according to him "Irish agricultural products alone could not effect" (K. Charlton 1971 pg 321) He, like Malcomson after him, was to see Ireland's population as her best resource in economic terms. "With regard to the population of Ireland there is not one man too many for the great work they have to perform" (K. Charlton 1971: pg 321). The manufacture of cotton goods was the kernal of Cropper's proposals. He perceived countries such as India and China as the consumers of the product as well as possible suppliers of the raw material. Furthermore, he pointed out that the factories and required housing for the workforce could be chaper to construct than in England. Waterpower potential was another factor he made note of, especially Ireland's untapped abundance.

Although enterprise played a large part in the setting up of David Malcomson's wealth in Clonmel and subsequently in Portlaw, the role of the Irish and Ireland itself must not be overlooked. Ireland supplied for the capitalist an overabundance of cheap labour, also land was inexpensive. Added to this, Ireland also had many canals and waterways, important ingredients for the success of industry in those days. Capital and a shrewd entrepreneur were needed for a successful industry, however, so also was a cheap workforce, and relatively free infrastructure. All these essentials combined together brought about a profitable industry, for without the workers there is no industry.

Parallels are self evident between what cropper advocated and what David Malcomson proposed. David Malcomson and Sons came to Portlaw with a wealth of knowledge in the corn trade. They had gained invaluable experience in the entrapments of businessmanship in Clonmel. In 1825 they were to bring all this experience and much more to County Waterford. Their past life, previous to their arrival in Portlaw is important, their future in Portlaw was shaped by many forces from the past, only in Portlaw they were to do much more. David Malcomson was to set up more than a cotton industry, he was to build a model village, which today still holds remnants of what transpired over a hundred and fifty years ago.

THE PORTLAW COTTON FACTORY

"Few who now see this immense establishment in full work can imagine the amount of care, forethought and energy required and exercised to bring it to it's present state" (Maguire 1852: pg 164)

The above was written by John Francis Maguire in 1853 whilst praising the merits and splendour of the Portlaw Cotton Factory, nearly thirty years after it's inauguration. He was not the only person to praise the Malcomson empire. Many travellers such as Inglis, Hall and Lewis, wrote of the imposing edifice and it's flourishing existance, and in turn the benefits derived by the local population as a consequence of it's establishment. In light of this I feel the factory itself warrants some mention, as it alone without even reference to the village of Portlaw, manifested the initiative and imaginative scope of the Malcomsons.

It was in 1825 then, that David Malcomson and Sons leased from John Medlycott - a local landholder - Mayfield House Portlaw with around sixteen acres of land. There was a small mill on the land, and it was here that the Malcomsons were to construct their cotton factory. This construction was the first task which befell the family. The mill on the site was an old corn mill, which had previously burnt down. T.W. Freeman speaks of canals as being the "acme of modernity in the late eighteenth century" (Freeman 1969: pg 106). The canal was for the Malcomsons their acme of modernity and perfection. The river Clodagh on which the mill was situated joined the river Suir a mile downstream from the factory. However, this river at various times was quite shallow, therefore the Malcomsons excavated a canal which enabled the raw materials from America and elsewhere to be brought up the Suir to the canal and then carried up the canal by lighters to the factory. It was not raw materials alone which were transported this way but coal and machinery also. The most interesting point about the canal was the fact that instead

of it stopping at the factory it went inside, as it ran right in underneath the receiving house. The finished product was taken by the same means to Waterford harbour and exported all over the world. The Clodagh was put to further use in providing efficient steam power for the running of the factory. Three large water wheels were placed near the factory and waterpower was utilised also. The inside of the factory was unique, it was said that at that time the factory contained the largest single space building in the world - 260 x 40 feet. The raw cotton did not come directly from America but through Liverpool. The factory required about 150 bales per week and the weekly output of the manufactured product was about forty tons.

The Portlaw factory was not a small insignificant factory operating in Ireland. It could be said that the Malcomsons and their factory at Portlaw served as ambassadors of Ireland. The factory proved that "there is no doubt that energy and industry applied to the natural resources of Ireland, may enable the Irish manufacturer to enter the market and compete with the manufacturers of England" (Hall 1841: pg 309). At the height of their prosperity the Malcomsons were exporting world wide, they were known and beared a high repute according to Maguire in 1853 in "the markets of the eastern archipelago, on the main lands of Hindostan and China, in the torrid regions of Mexico, the West Indies and Brazil, and on the west coast from Cape Horn to Oregon" (pg 164). These were the manufacturers who wrote in 1825 "we consider the attempt a very serious matter and all about us being strangers to the business" (D. Malcomson 18.4.1825). Strangers they may have been but in the space of a few years they had proved themselves experts in their field of endeavour.

The industrial revolution conjures up for many, the idea of inhumane working conditions, long working hours, poor pay, bad housing, health problems and poor sanitation. Henry Allsopp in his book An Introduction to English Industrial history vividly describes some of the conditions



experienced by the workers. He tells how "many of the buildings were unsuitable, unhealthy and dangerous, the hours of labour were often as long as sixteen per day and the wages .... were far too low" (pg 121). The conditions of the workers portrayed here and in further passages contrasts quite markedly with the conditions experienced in Portlaw. The Portlaw workers probably worked the same hours as their Clonmel counterparts. In winter the hours of work were 7.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. and summer 6.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m., with forty five minutes free for breakfast at 9.00 a.m. and one hour for dinner at 2.00 p.m. Wages in Portlaw at that time were 2/6 to 7/ - for boys and girls and a pound a week for adults. To many today these conditions may seem severe enough. However, in light of the context of nineteenth century Ireland and the approaching cataclysm - the famine - Portlaw was a paradise.

As Maguire says "one glance at the exterior of the village and the great establishment would have been enough to put to flight the miserable nonsense that some people nurse in their brain, as to the unhappy condition of those who are employed in mills and factories" (pg 162). Apart from pay and wages the welfare of the workers was always seen to. The cotton factory had 365 windows, thus ensuring ample light for the workers. Special arrangements were made for the ventilation of rooms, all impurities were removed by large revolving fans, and the temperature of the rooms was always carefully regulated. In case of fire, a large reservoir of water was maintained on the roof of the factory, as well as there being firescapes outside the factory. A provident society was established to care for workers when they were ill. Each week the workers contributed a certain amount of their wages to the society, and then if they became ill, it was seen to that his family were properly cared for, during the duration of his illness. The Malcomsons were shrewd and wise men, and believed in proper administration of their workers. So much so that one of the rules of the provident society stipulated that if a member had "brought illness or accident

on himself by drunkenness, debauchery, rioting, quarrelling or playing at unlawful games on the sabbath, they shall direct his allowance money to be suspended"! It appears as if the Malcomsons were trying to establish an ideal society, this shall be further exemplified in Chapter 8, where they seemingly tried to impose victorian attitudes of behaviour upon an Irish peasant society. In effect they were creating virtues and perhaps dismantling and transforming this peasant society.

As is quite obvious the factory was not built overnight, neither was Portlaw transformed from a sleeping village to a vibrant one in the same time period. On the Malcomsons arrival in Portlaw the population totalled 395, there were only 80 families and 72 houses. Out of the 395 persons only 94 were occupied, the main categories of occupation being - 29 employed in agriculture and 43 in trades, manufacturing and handicrafts. How then it may be asked did David Malcomson and Sons get people to come and work in Portlaw? It must be admitted that the conditions alone in the factory may evince why people would come to work in Portlaw. Also as shall be seen in Chapter 7, the housing and living conditions of the workers were quite excellent. Due to lack of evidence it is difficult to pinpoint the origins of the first generation of workers recruited. Some written material makes reference to English artisans coming to Portlaw to initiate work in the factory. These primary workers were mainly brought over to train the indigenous population in the many trades practised within the walls of the factory. These qualified persons were certainly needed at the start, as the table (see over) shows the many various trades practised in 1852.

Evidently there was no shortage of Irish workers themselves. Ireland at this point in time had an abundance of population, also she had possessed in the late eighteenth century, a flourishing cotton trade. This, however, was not very strong in the middle of the nineteenth century. Therefore, it could be presumed that Ireland supplied many of the skilled and unskilled hands, as people may have

Table 1 Trades and Numbers of Artisans employed in 1852

OCCUPATION	NUMBER EMPLOYED
Carding and preparation	150
Spinners and reelers	350
Weavers, beamers and sizers	590
Mechanics and carpenters.	160
Bleachers and dyers	100
Handyhands, clerks etc.	90
Labourers about	60
 TOTAL	 1,500

migrated to Portlaw for work. David Malcomson relates to Shiel in his travels in 1855, the origins of his workers. "He originally employed Englishmen, but he found that the Irish, on being properly instructed were just as expert. The English had intermarried with the families in the vicinity and a perfectly good understanding prevailed" (Sheil 1855: pg 355).

Now that the conditions of the workers and their origins have been discussed, the following tables will give an indication as to why the Portlaw factory was such a renowned one, and by virtue of comparison one is able to see how extensive and immense the works at Portlaw were.

Table 2 Cotton Factory Employment Figures for 1836

LOCATION	NUMBER OF MILLS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Portlaw	1	266	468	734
Cork	1	18	25	43
Dublin	6	157	302	459
Kildare	2	93	127	220
Wexford	1	39	53	92

Source: Parliamentary Papers No. 138 Vol. XLV

Table 2.1 Cotton Factory Employment Figures for 1839

LOCATION	NUMBER OF MILLS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Portlaw	1	516	495	1,011
Cork	1	19	36	45
Dublin	3	90	252	342
Kildare	1	93	154	247
Wexford	1	43	48	91
Mayo	1	2	27	29

Source: Parliamentary Papers No. 41 Vol. XL11

Table 2.2 Cotton Factory Employment Figures for 1850

LOCATION	NUMBER OF MILLS	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
Portlaw	1	598	764	1,362
Dublin	2	80	263	343
Kildare	1	50	130	180
Louth	1	63	102	165
Wexford	1	47	59	106

Source: Parliamentary Papers No. 145 Vol XL11

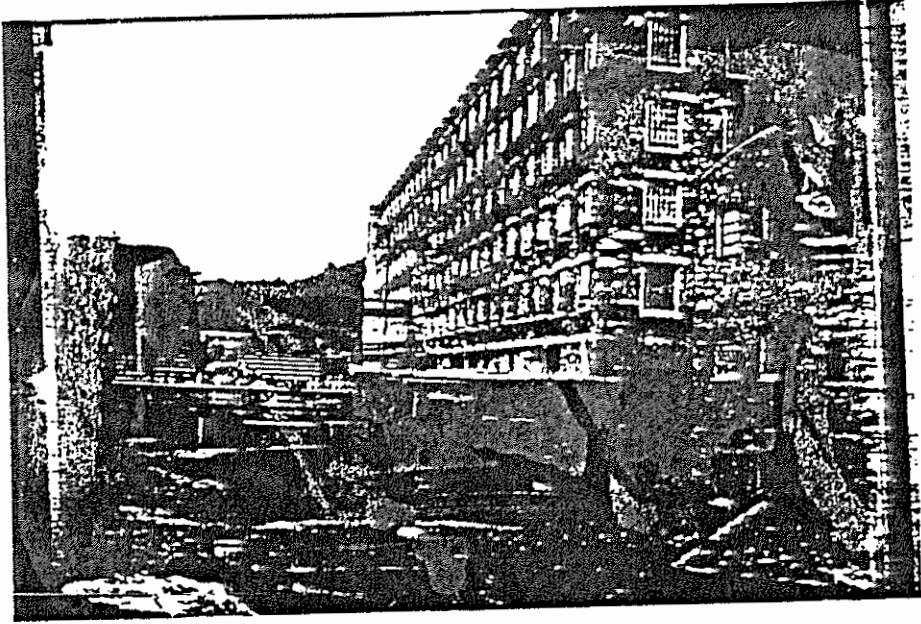
By mere comparison between Table 2 and Table 2.1, one is given a good indication to the relative expansion of the Portlaw factory. In the space of three years its workforce increased by 277. Also in 1839 and 1850 Portlaw is shown as employing more than all the other factories listed. In 1836, apart from one factory in Belfast Portlaw was employing the largest amount of persons in the country, more numbers than similar factories in Armagh and Down. It must also be noted that the numbers of females employed in Portlaw and in the other factories is significantly high. This is not an unusual occurrence, female employment numbers were also significantly high in England at the time. Females traditionally had always played a part in the cotton industry, and the time of the industrial revolution was no exception. They moved to the factories when it was no longer profitable to spin at home.

Female labour was required for spinning, carding, reeling etc. all these trades in a cotton factory were traditionally ones to be filled by the females. Also it must be remembered that it was cheaper to employ females versus males, and also the males were required for the more heavier work in the factories. The industrial revolution was a very important factor in regarding the part women came to play in industry. During the revolution work came to be centralized on the factory versus the home. This in turn required large amounts of capital expenditure on the part of the Capitalists. Competition was high between various industrialists and all tried to minimise costs, this many did by employing females. Also in places, the men were needed to work on the farms and to produce the agricultural products required by the community. Portlaw was no exception, inevitably women would be employed in the factory.

The population of Portlaw, as already stated, at the time of the arrival of the Malcomsons was 395, yet in the space of ten years the factory alone was employing approximately twice that figure. It is only with this in mind that one can fully understand why the Malcomsons are called the builders of

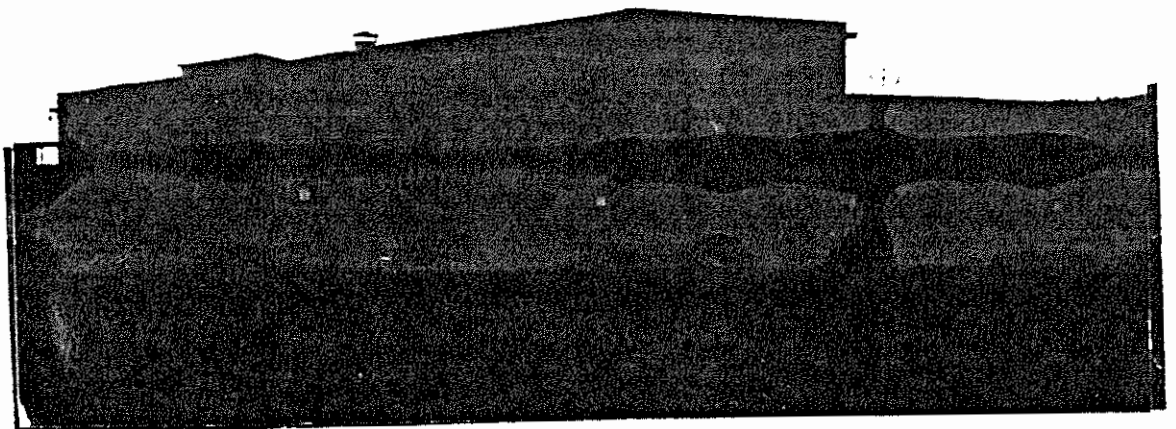
Portlaw. They were the force that brought literally thousands to the small village in search of work in the nineteenth century. The onus, therefore, was upon them to house and care for their workers. This, they did without any shortage of expense. They built out of nothing a model village. A model village which was to be copied in part by the Richardson family of Bessbrook, and it is said that the Cadbury's in building Bournville had the style and layout of Portlaw in mind.

Francis Maguire in 1852, speaks of the village and it's environs as the "loveliest landscape that ever realised the dream of a poet" (pg. 162). He notes unhappily that what Portlaw was experiencing at the time of his visit "is not often to be witnessed in the small towns and villages of the country" (pg 162). He carries on to say "how the rags of beggary nor the distressing whine of the craver of alms" (pg 162) are to be seen or heard in the district. To finish he asks the rhetorical question "In what pastoral village in Ireland could there be witnessed greater cleanliness, greater comfort, or greater cheerfulness?" (pg 162). One may feel that these passages are very idealistic and romantic, however, many writers were to praise Portlaw and speak of it, in the same light as Mr Maguire does in 1852. It must be remembered though that the conditions in the factory were only one element in the making of this model village. The Malcomsons were creating a society, and transforming an old one. They did not pick Portlaw for purely aesthetic reasons, they capitalised on its advantages, they built a factory, and adapted the environment for their benefit. In doing so, however, many others were also to benefit as shall be seen in later chapters.



above Cotton Factory with large water wheels to the left

below Modern picture of disused Cotton Factory



VILLAGE TYPES - INSPIRATIONS FOR PORTLAW

As noted in Chapter 5 the Portlaw that the Malcomsons arrived at in 1825 consisted of a small cluster of houses, - totalling 72 in all, situated not where the modern Portlaw is today but on green island. Portlaw in effect as a town was non existant - or even any sort of planned village. However, with the advent of the Malcomsons the village was to experience a vast growth in size and population. One of the tasks that befell the industrialists on their arrival was to methodically replan the village so as to accommodate their ever increasing workforce. What they created turned out to be a new colony, because they built a new village - a planned industrial village. It is necessary to discuss then at some length both the Irish and British type village of the time, so as to be able to understand the joint input of the two in the creation of the Malcomson - Portlaw planned village of 1825.

As is quite obvious, the Malcomsons were not the originators of the planned industrial village. More than likely they obtained many of their ideas from other villages and towns of the time in Northern Ireland. The impact of industrialization is expressed quite vividly in the townscapes of many areas in Northern Ireland. In Belfast today the present urban landscape is a consequence of the industrial revolution. "Belfast is par excellence a product of the industrial revolution, having once shared the worst evils of the factory system and the squalid, overcrowded tenements with similar cities in Britain" (Orme 1970: pg 179). Although conditions at the start of the revolution were bad, by the year 1840, by-laws had been introduced trying to regularise housing, by prohibiting certain types and insisting on others. These by-laws ensured to a certain degree a standardisation of housing. So much so that today many of the industrial cities of the North and of Britain obtained an identity - an identity which they still hold today - row upon row of industrial terraced housing. Over time and space, standards have varied and not all areas of industrialisation at this time period were the same. In considering places such as Belfast in the North and Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham



Liverpool etc, in Britain, their size and density cannot be overlooked as contributory factors in their development.

Most likely it was the planned industrial villages that emerged in England and Northern Ireland in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century, that influenced the Malcomsons. Robert Owen, one could say initiated the trend in 1799 with the building of the model textile town of New Lanark. It was here for the first time that proof was shown that "industry could have a humane face" (Galbrawth 1979: pg 36). From hence forth the planned village became a landmark of English industrial society. In Ulster "the tradition of housing workers reached back to the eighteenth century" (D.S. Macniece 1981: pg 173) Macniece makes reference to the coulsons of Lisburn housing, their workers in 1764, and many others such as Murlands of Annsborough, and John Barbour of Paisley - to mention but two. He makes, however, particular reference to the village of Gilford, as was developed by Dunbar and McMaster and Company of Dunbarton.

Gilford proves an interesting comparison to Portlaw, as it came into being around the same time as Portlaw, and many aspects regarding the village, parallels much about Portlaw. Before it experienced expansion under it's patrons, it had only 100 houses. By 1851, just around twenty years after the development of the mill it had a population of 2,184, and a total of 359 houses. Just as the Malcomsons built houses to attract the workers so also did Dunbar McMaster and Company.

They also provided many other incentives to their workforce. They built schools, provided heated and lighted reading rooms for adults, they operated their own gas works for the lighting of the village. Pumps were strategically placed in the village in order to provide a fresh water supply. A mill co-operative store was built to serve the community and children working in the factory were required to spend half their time at school, thus they, as the children of Portlaw were also to - become known as half-timers. As shall be seen in the next chapter, Portlaw was provided with these

facilities also and much more.

Gilford is not an isolated example, however, as Macneice said "this impressive list of paternalistic involvement which could be repeated with minor amendments elsewhere in other villages gives some indication of the degree of the moral and spiritual framework which shaped the character of many of these communities" (Macneice 1981: pg 177). These other communities most likely refer to towns such as Bessbrook in South Armagh and elsewhere in England at the time, i.e. Portsunlight, Halifax, Saltaire, Bournville etc. Many of these famous towns preceded the building of Portlaw. Macneice speaks highly of the Richardson Development at Bessbrook. It must be remembered though that it was Portlaw which influenced Bessbrook and not vice versa, as William Malcomson was James Richardson's father-in-law. In light of this, the praise that was afforded to Bessbrook can be also given to Portlaw, as it was Bessbrook's predecessor. "Bessbrook provides an excellent example of a model village consciously planned with a blend of Quaker zeal and architectural skill, to provide a garden village community for it's workers. Far from the evils and squalor of Belfast" (Macneice 1981: pg 174). Portlaw was to borrow from the North and England, just as they would later do likewise from Portlaw.

T.W. Freeman, in his book Ireland speaks of the industrial village being utilitarian rather than beautiful, and also that "it is a phenomenon almost unknown to the majority of Irish people outside the Northeast" (Freeman 1972: pg 201) Evidently the Malcomsons obtained the kernal of the plans from towns and villages in the North, as Ireland at this time did not have many industrial vilages. However, it must be remembered that Portlaw was essentially late in it's development, and by 1825 the majority of Irish towns were fully developed, and many of these were just as their counterparts in the North were, planned. L.M. Cullen writes of the village being one of the hallmarks of Irish society and he maintains that "a very high proportion of them were to a greater or lesser degree planned" (L.M. Cullen 1981: pg 61).

Orme categorises the smaller Irish towns into three development periods - Medieval, Plantation or Georgian (Orme 1970: pg 209). As would be expected each type has its own development characteristics. He attributes narrow, irregular streets to the medieval period, followed by the more orderly compactness of the plantation settlements, proceeded by the broad street grids and formal squares of the Georgian era. It was, however, "during the later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries that formal town planning reached it's zenith" (Orme 1970: pg 212). It was during this period that many towns came to be known as landlord towns or villages, also many others grew up around the market square. Stokestown in Roscommon is an excellent example of the early nineteenth century estate town, with a wide - 147 foot - main street leading to the gates of the demesne owned by the landlord and the Episcopalian Church at the other end. Birr is also a landlord designed town, so also is Mitchelstown, and here the classical market square is also incorporated. As Cullen points out in his work "hardly any of rural village before the era of factory employment post 1780 were in fact able to survive without the sustained patronage employment and succour offered by a resident landowner" (Cullen 1981: pg 62).

He goes on to outline three types of a planned village - settlement village, functionally planned village and the redeveloped village. If Portlaw was to be categorised into one of the above three categories, the village type attributed to it, would be without doubt, the functionally planned one. This type of village as the name suggests was functionally and consciously planned, Portlaw was indeed planned in this way also, however Portlaw differed from this village and so many others of the time, in one main ingredient, - it did not grow up around the landlords demesne. Portlaw, unlike so many other functionally planned villages grew up around a factory, despite differences in functions, similarities are evident in layout. As already referred to, the landlord's town usually had large wide streets, and a square - central in location. Just as the landlord villages of Castleisland and Tralee County Kerry, Dunmanway, Bantry County Cork, and several others were

to exhibit such characteristics, so also was Portlaw, but it grew up under the patronage of an Industrialist rather than a Landlord. As Cullen observed "industrial villages themselves even if modest in standard of housing were frequently ambitious in planning ... while the purposes of industrial village and of market village were slightly different, there was no clear difference in planning" (Cullen 1981: pg 76/77).

It is only now with a brief knowledge of the English Industrial village and the Irish planned village as given above that it is possible to look at the development of Portlaw as a fusion of both. Many elements, characteristic of the above can be identified in Portlaw. However, Portlaw was different in the respect that it lies at the gates of Lord Waterford's demesne, yet it never developed as an estate village. It was, and still is today, purely industrial.

As can be seen in the next chapter, it was a model industrial village, Aalen in his book Man and the Landscape quotes Portlaw as one of the two major examples of a model industrial village, found in Ireland in the nineteenth century. "The first was Portlaw in County Waterford, built by the Quaker cotton-spinning firm of Malcomson in the 1820's" (Aalen, 1978: pg 284). He cites Bessbrook as the second major example and also notes that it was probably influenced by Portlaw. Portlaw, therefore is not just another village of nineteenth century Ireland, it was a place that was thriving whilst parts of Ireland were economically weak. It reaped the benefits of being late in development, as it served to prosper from the experience of other villages. it became a village typical of the experience of New Lanark and it's like, however, it also was to send ripples out, it was one of the many forces working in the nineteenth century to change the face of industrial society, - it served to give industry a humane face, and to discard the many notions associated with the industrial townscape. Portlaw being an industrial village came to be effected by the ebb and flow of industrial

prosperity, the cotton industry and the Malcomsons were it's lifestream, when they prospered, Portlaw prospered, and when they fell Portlaw was to fall, as time has unfolded.

## CHAPTER 7

THE MODEL VILLAGE OF PORTLAW

Many myths have originated as to how Portlaw acquired it's distinct layout, which is still intact and evident today. As can be observed from the 1901 map, it consists of a central square from which radiates a web of five streets, converging to form three distinct triangles. Among the most popular myth is the story that David Malcomson on sitting down to plan the village laid his hands upon the table, and decided to build Portlaw in the shape of a hand, with the palm signifying the square and the four main streets, the four fingers. Another myth was that the streets represented the rays of the sun. However, as mentioned previously, the industrial village is utilitarian rather than beautiful, and this was the case in Portlaw. It was a functionally, practically built village. Portlaw was built for the betterment of the workers and it was shaped by the characters of it's originators. That is, the Malcomsons were practical business people and therefore in designing Portlaw it was laid out with practicality in mind.

The main purpose of it's layout was to serve the outpourings of the people from the factory. Therefore the village layout was admirably suited to the particular needs of the community. The roads of the streets were 40 feet wide and the pavement 12 feet wide. It is said than on a wet day some workers arrived home dry, due to the crowds of people all converging on the square after work had finished. At the height of the factory's prosperity, it was employing well over 1,000 people. In order to accommodate these people, emerging out of the one building at the same time practicality was required and therefore implemented in the case of Portlaw. Credence must be given to the myths to a certain degree. However, it must be acknowledged, if the layout was not practical and beneficial it would have been discarded. Aesthetically speaking, the village was quite pleasant, with three major buildings forming the pivot of each triangle.

Although the above layout is the shape of Portlaw that

is known and referred to in any literature on Portlaw, nobody has mentioned previously the map of 1841. As can be seen from this map the layout is quite different to the present one! However, it has always been assumed that the web pattern was the original layout, evidently this is not so. The Malcomsons arrived in Portlaw in 1825, and it cannot be said that perhaps they had not begun to develop the village by 1841, because at this point the population was 3,647 and there were 458 houses in comparison to the 71 inhabited in 1821, previous to the Malcomsons. Also in 1841 according to the census, 31 houses were being built.

Unquestionably Portlaw was not built in a day, therefore the 1841 layout must have been a stage in the development. Streets identifiable in the 1841 edition, appear to be Brown Street, Main Street, Bridge Street and several other small streets. Interestingly enough in Griffith's valuation of 1852 the Malcomsons appear to be only immediate lessors of a few houses in those streets, and as shall be seen in 1852 they were major lessors in other streets which apparently were not developed in 1841. By 1901, they were ground landlord to the majority, if not all the houses, in the streets listed above. Also by 1901 the web layout was intact. I feel, therefore, that one can only presume that as time progressed and the factory employed more persons, the Malcomsons on building more houses redeveloped the village. This redevelopment must have taken place between 1841 and 1871, as these twenty years were the post productive for the Malcomsons.

It must be acknowledged that the Malcomson family were not the only people to benefit from their cotton factory, there being many others who were laymen to the prosperous Portlaw. That is people who moved to Portlaw with the advent of the Malcomsons, to serve the growing population. Many people extracted wealth from Portlaw as a consequence of the Malcomsons establishing a flourishing economy in the little village. Trade directories give ample proof of this. Take for example, Slaters directory of 1846, he describes Portlaw

as a "thriving little village", and carries on to say that "twenty years ago there was scarcely a cabin to be seen on the spot which is now the site of a flourishing colony, busy and joyous with the hum of remunerated industry" (Slater 1846: pg 303). Much more practical and interesting is the lists he gives of public house owners, shopkeepers and traders. In all he recorded 31 shopkeepers and traders as well as 7 public house owners.

Table 3 Various Trades as listed by Slaters and Pigots Commercial Directory

	CARPENTERS	GROCCERS	DRAPERS	BAKERS	VININERS	COAL MERCHANTS	FLOUR MERCHANTS	GLASS DEALER	ODD TRADES
1846	3	12	5	2	-	-	-	1	3
1886	-	9	4	4	4	22	3	1	2
1893	-	5	4	3	8	3	3	3	1

Source: Slaters and Pigots Trade Directories 1846, 1886, 1893

As the table above shows Portlaw over time became a well supplied village. The high numbers of groccers, drapers, bakers vintners etc, all prove as indicators to the prosperity of the traders as well as the people. Evidently enough the only reason there is such an array of trades is because of the need of them by the inhabitants. Also it must be mentioned that because vintners, coal merchants etc are not mentioned in 1846 does not necessarily mean that they were not established in the village, as the 1846 data is taken from a different directory to the 1886 and 1893 one.

These trade directories also proved to be beneficial in another way. Many of the traders named in the directories, reappear as immediate lessors of property and housing in Griffiths valuation of 1852. Evidently the Malcomsons could not build enough houses for their employees. Also houses had to be built for the many others who came to Portlaw during the nineteenth century, but who were not employed in the factory e.g. farmhands, limeburners, builders etc. It may be presumed therefore that many people built houses to accommodate the growing population, thus accounting for the



large number of houses not leased by the Malcomsons in 1852. The table below indicates this necessity for housing by virtue of the increase in population between 1821 and 1871.

Table 4 Housing and Population in Portlaw ( 1821 - 1891)

DATE	POPULATION	HOUSES (INHABITED)	HOUSES (UNINHABITED)	HOUSES BEING BUILT
1821	395	71	1	-
1831	1,618	No information available		
1841	3,647	458	-	31
1851	4,351	541	16	3
1861	3,852	609	No information available	
1871	3,774	580	1	-
1881	1,891	517	No information available	
1891	1,394	308	144	-

Source: Reports on Censuses Data 1821 - 1891

Evidently the factory had a multiplier effect. If in 1850 it was employing 1,362 people, they obviously had to be fed and clothed, thus providing many spinoff industries. However, the traders and merchants were not the only people to profit from the factory. Many lay unskilled labourers were required, as well as servants and domestic staff. Also quite a large number were required in the neighbouring countryside to man the farms and help in the production of produce consumed in the town itself. In 1841 out of a total of 677 families, 323 were dependent on agriculture and 276 on manufactures and trade. A more detailed account is given in the tables below taken from data in the 1871 census.

Table 5 Male Occupation Class 1871

CLASS CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF JOB	NUMBERS OCCUPIED
I	Teachers, Guards, Army Navy, Local Government	18
11	Pub, Boarding House Owner etc	28
111	Commerical Clerks, Merchants	65
IV	Agricultural Labourers	31
V	Skilled craftsmen, Carpenters, Masons, Weavers etc	285
VI	General and factory Labourers	410

Source: Report on 1871 Census Data

Table 5.1 Female Occupation Class 1871

CLASS CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION OF JOB	NUMBERS OCCUPIED AND AGE GROUP	
		- 20	20+
1	Wife of Innkeeper, Shopkeeper, Farmer Butcher, Shoemaker	None	30
11	Domestic Servant	14	46
	Housekeeper	4	96
	Shopkeeper	None	11
111	Cotton Manufacturers	101	134
	Weavers	110	91
	Factory Labourers	82	79

Source: Report on 1871 Census Data

Both tables above show clearly where the population not employed in the factory were working. I thought it most peculiar that in the male classification, the agricultural labourers were attributed a higher class category than the skilled craftsmen in the factory. Seemingly class categories and social classes were an intrinsic part of the industrial revolution. This is evident enough in the table above, which shows that the skilled craftsman, although given a lower class category than the agricultural labourer, is in turn attributed

a higher one than his unskilled partner in the factory. Also in the female classification, the woman was given a higher status if the wife of a shopkeeper rather than being a shopkeeper herself, or working in the factory. It is interesting to note here, how the women in the factory were not just unskilled labourers, in fact there were fewer unskilled female labourers in the factory than males. By comparison it is observed that the females made a higher number of skilled labourers than the males, the males in fact were largely employed as unskilled labourers.

As the above information shows, Portlaw had a large spectrum of workers to cater for, all requiring basic facilities such as housing. Also as shown, many were not factory employees. Therefore, a large number of people served to profit from Portlaw as a prosperous town in the nineteenth century. The graphs at the end of this chapter - based on data taken from Griffiths Valuation - give some insights into the social stratification and tenement ownership of the time. Richard Griffith was the Commissioner of Valuation in 1838, and he created a system for building an agricultural valuation assessment. This assessment was based on "an estimate of the intrinsic or absolute value modified by the circumstances which govern house lettings" (Griffith 1853). In determining the valuation of the building many factors were taken into account, such as age, state of repair etc. All this aside, the most important thing to realise about the valuation is that the immediate lessor may have been himself leasing the land from another landholder, and in turn subletting it. The streets taken into account in the graphs are as follows: Bridge Street, Queen Street, Brown Street, Ivy Walk, English Row, Green Island, Market Square, Main Street, Curtis Street, Thomas Street, Mulgrave Street and Shamrock Street. The total number of houses being 425.

Graph No (1) shows the percentage leased by the Malcomsons Richard Curtis, Medlycotts and others. As the graph shows, the Malcomsons were leasing 57% of the housing in 1852. This 57% was approximately 243 houses in total. Graph No (2) gives

the percentage of houses in each valuation category. As is obvious the largest valuation class is the £1 - £2 and £2 - £3 category. This information proves more beneficial when compared to graph No (3) In graph No (3) the overall percentage valuation class is contrasted to the overall percentage leased by the Malcomsons. Also this category of £1 - £2 and £2 - £3, was attributed as 3rd class in the class categories attributed by the author. Griffiths Valuation was in 1852, by 1901, some of the streets had disappeared, others were to be renamed. The data below enables the reader to see how the Malcomsons came to be lessors of property in 1901, which they were not lessors of in 1852, and also class category is outlined. The 1901 class categories being derived from census material and the 1852 from the authors categories as outlined in Methodology.

**Table 6** Number of Houses leased by Malcomsons, and their Class Categories for the years 1852 and 1901

(1852)Street	Number of Houses	Number leased by Malcomsons	Class
Main St.	27	8	1st
Brown St	80	6	2nd
Shamrock St	46	45	3rd
Mulgrave St.	48	42	3rd
Queen St.	36	21	2nd & 3rd
<b>(1901)Street</b>			
Main St.	20	19	3rd
Brown St.	91	50	2nd
William St	64	54	3rd (25 uninhabited)
George St.	55	55	3rd (44 uninhabited)
Queen St.	47	47	3rd (13 uninhabited)

Note: William St. = Shamrock St: George St. = New Mulgrave St.

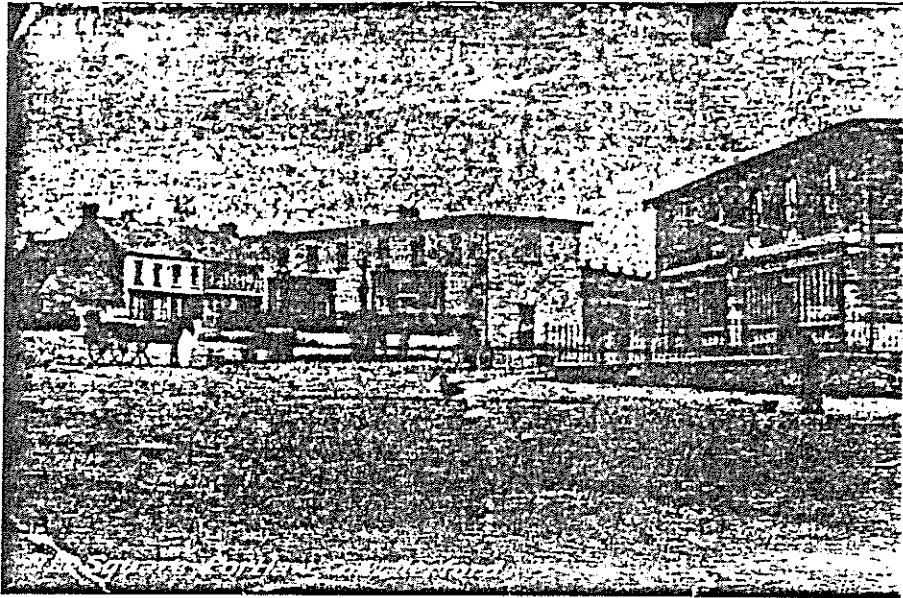
Source: Griffiths Valuation and 1901 Census

General information from the 1841 Census tells how 313 out of 458 houses were 3rd class. Also the majority of houses in 1901 are 3rd class houses, however a 3rd class house had walls made of stone or brick or concrete. They also had roofs of wood or thatch and the majority had two, three or four rooms. The general standard of the housing aside, it must be acknowledged that although the Malcomsons were building and supplying these houses for their workforce, they were also profiting in a big way, as they obviously were receiving rents from over a hundred plus houses each week. The Malcomson houses, however, were quite comfortable. If practicality was implemented in the layout of the street pattern, it also prevailed in the building of the workers houses.

The Malcomson houses were very distinctive and they were let at a cheaper rate than other houses in the village - 30% cheaper. They were of single storey design, the roof was semi-flat with a one inch by one inch of lattice timber truss, this in turn was covered by calico - a kind of cotton cloth - manufactured in the factory, and then covered with tar. These type of roofs were unique to Portlaw and became known as "Portlaw roofs". These roofs were very durable and still are to be seen today, as many of the flat roofs in Brown Street, William Street and Bridge Street are "Portlaw roofs". The house itself consisted of a front and back door, and also a small yard to the back. It also contained a passage hall and initially branching from this hall, two rooms. Each room had a fireplace making the rooms very warm and cosy, as the fireplace in each house lay back to back the fireplace in the next, thus each house benefited from the heat of four fires. In summer though, a sense of space and airyness was afforded by the twelve foot high ceilings.

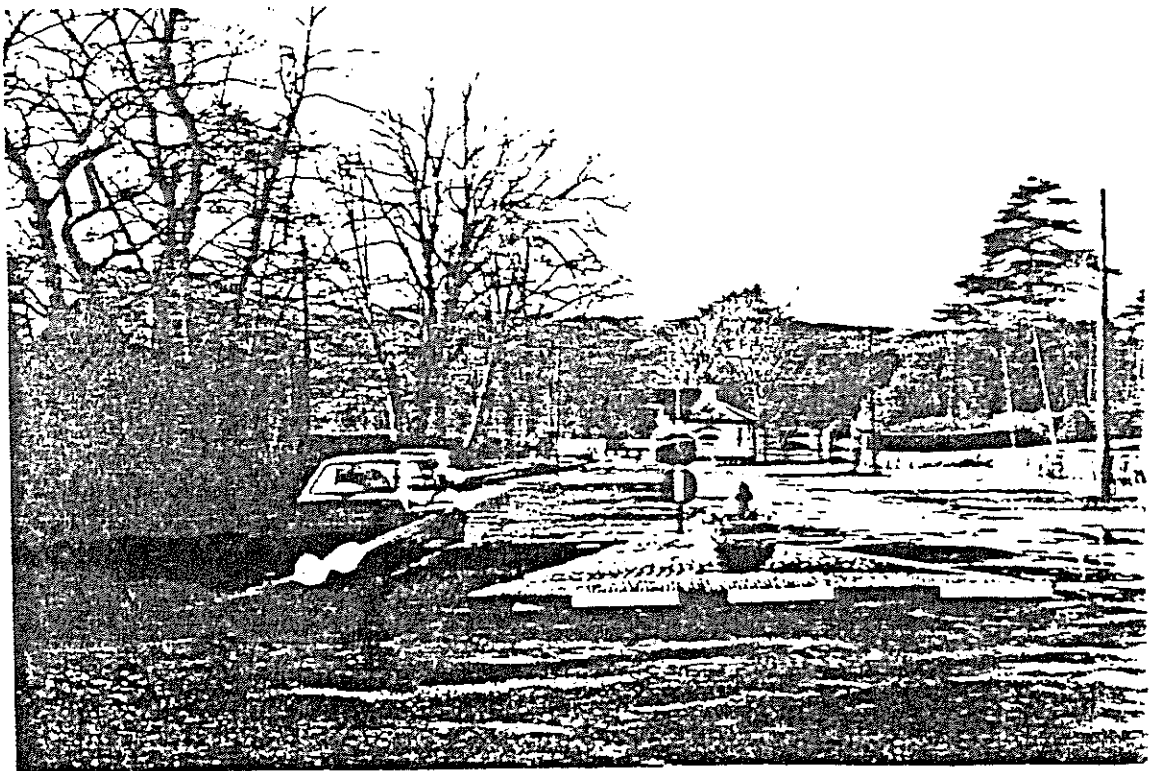
It is only now I feel that one may understand why the Malcomsons are called the makers of Portlaw. They built a factory which with hindsight is perceived as being in the nineteenth century, a hundred years ahead of its time. They also constructed a model village in which they housed their

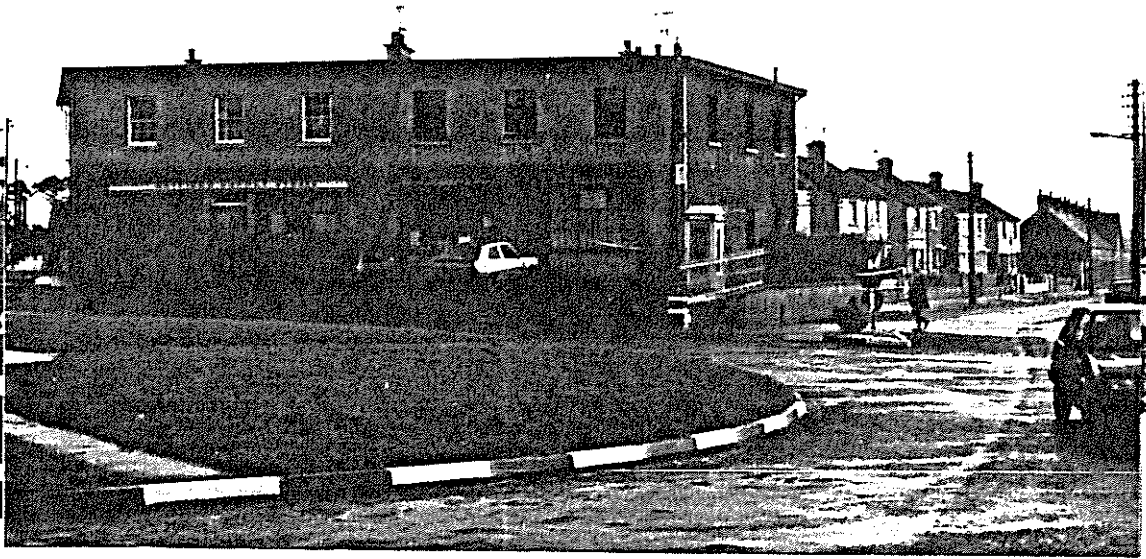
workers, and as outlined, these houses were comfortable and practical, never ostentatious. They still did, however, serve the needs of their inhabitants, and were certainly appealing to the eye in structure and shape. However, the Malcomsons did not stop developing after building the houses, they simultaneously tried to maintain a high standard of living for their workers. As shall be outlined in the next chapter they set high standards for the workers to pursue, as well as seeing to their wellbeing, their comforts and necessities. Unquestionably they remained always benefactors of the village.



Above: The Square Portlaw, observable from picture is Mayfield Supply Stores to the right and the present day dispensary to the left. These two buildings built by the Malcomsons as part of the design of Portlaw, have "Portlaw roofs".

Below: One of the very-wide roads developed by Malcomsons. This is Factory Road, leading up to the entrance of the factory.





Above: Mayfield Stores "one of the main buildings contributing to the unique web design. William Street is to the right and George Street to the left.

Below: House built by the Malcomsons, also one of the three main buildings contributing to the design. Brown Street is to the left and George Street to the right.







Above: The third building contributing to the overall design of the square and village. William Street is to the left and Main Street to the right.

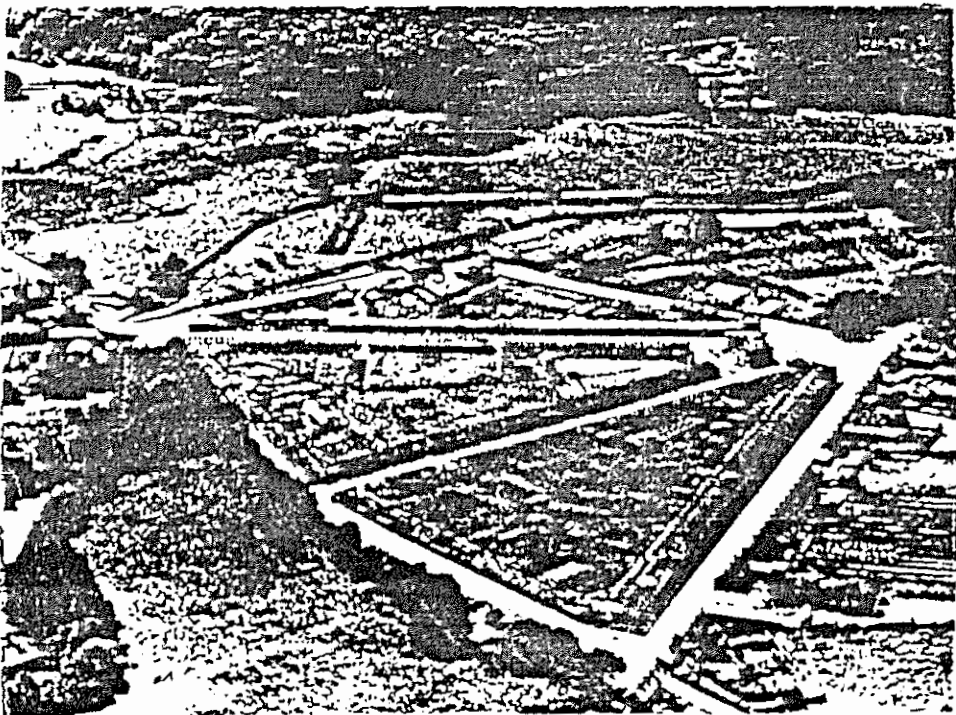
Below: View from canal, built by Malcomson. To the left the flat roofed workers houses built by the Malcomsons are observable.





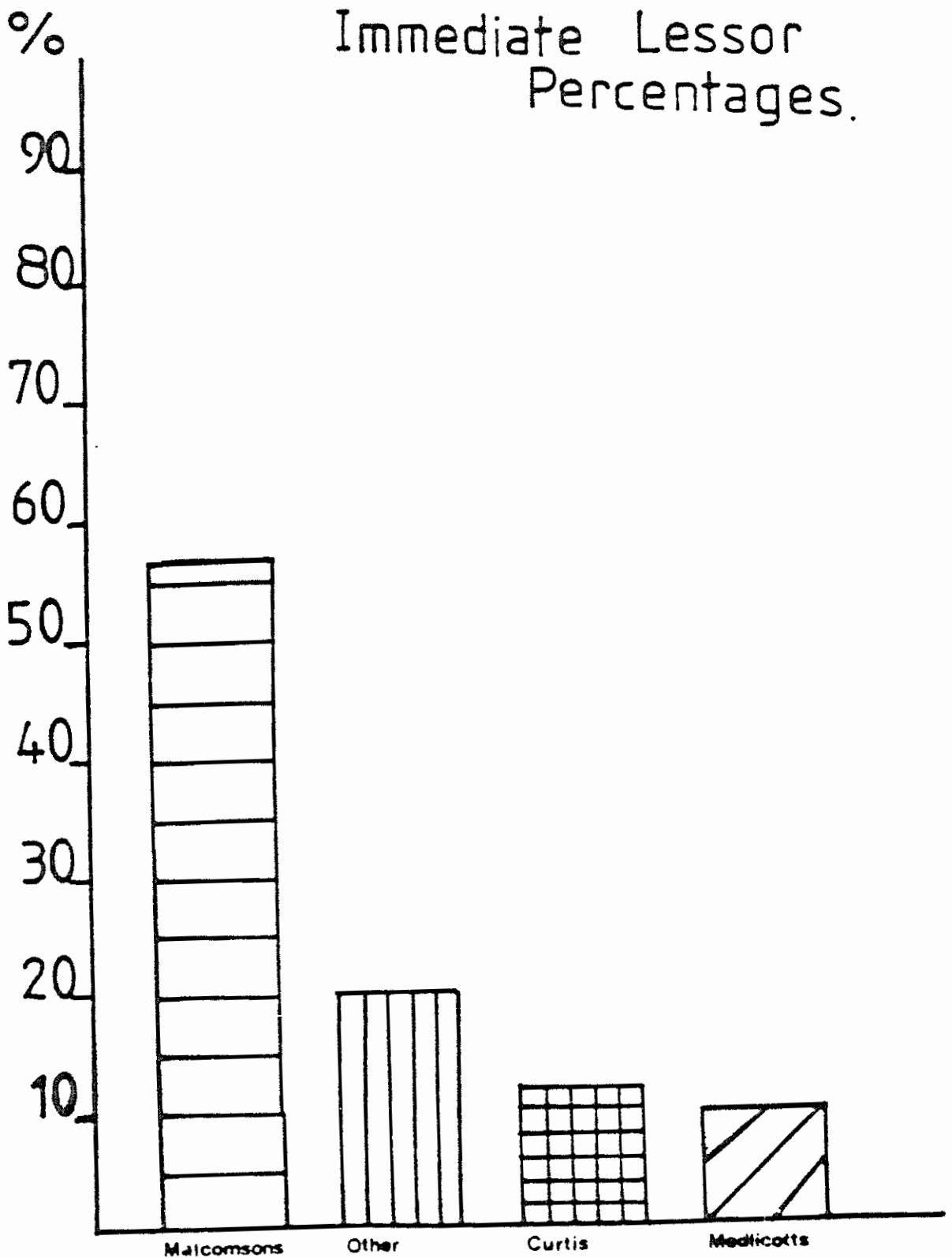
Above: View facing up Brown Street from Square. Although much of Brown Street has been rebuilt, the very wide road is part of the Malcomson's development.

Below: Aerial photograph of web design (Source Orme 1970: pg 162)

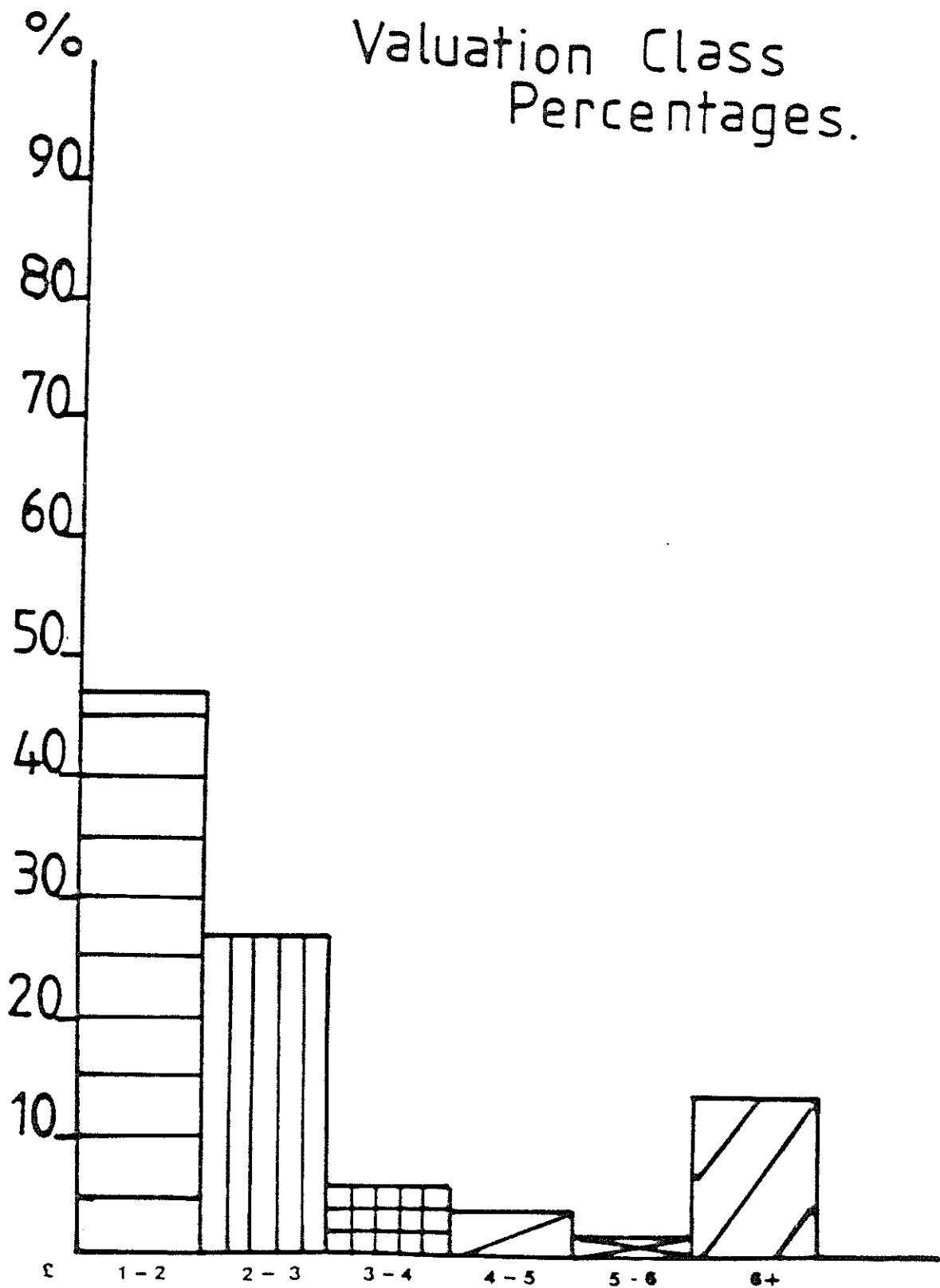


13. Potters, County Waterford

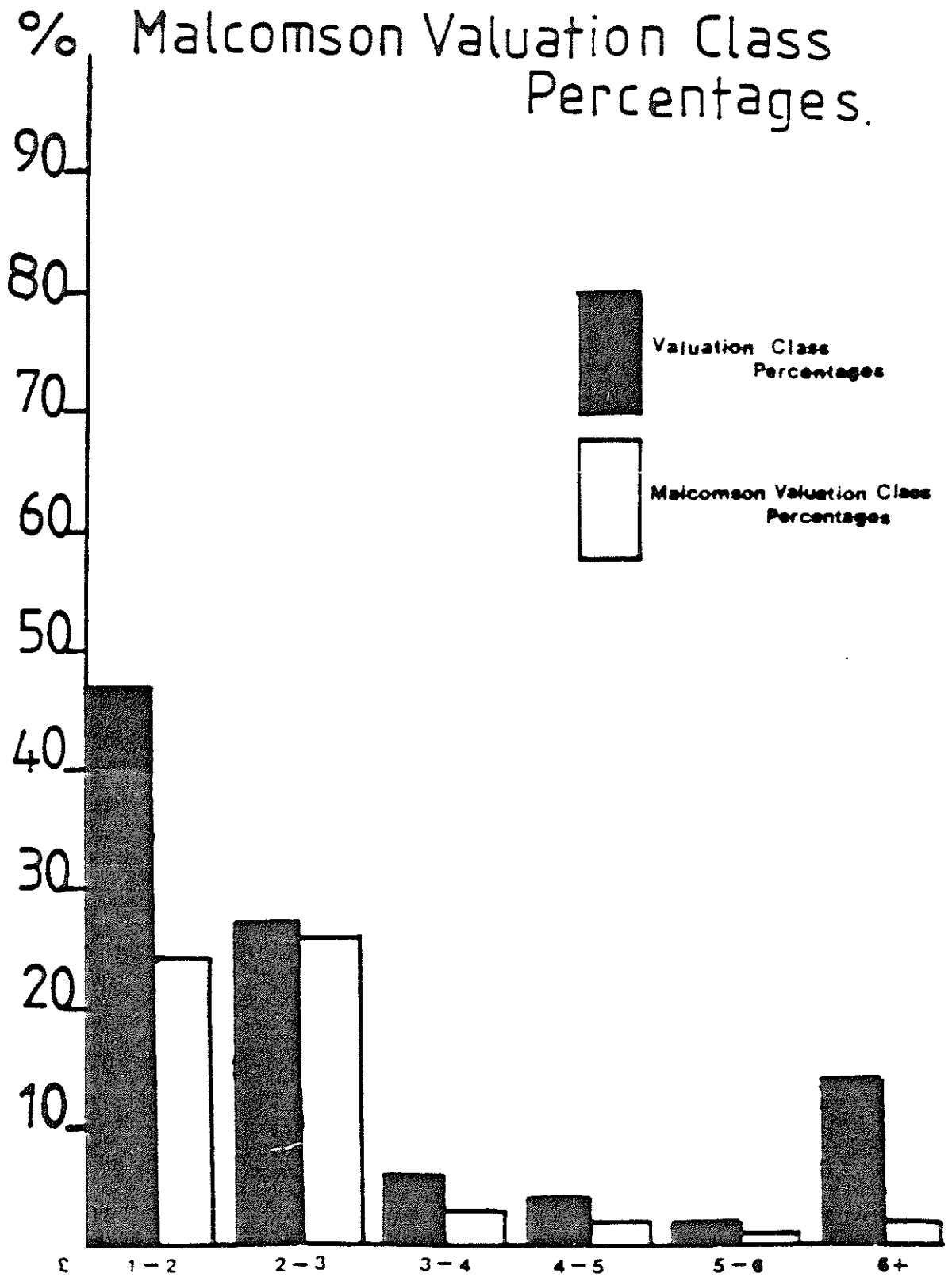
A model industrial village built by the Quaker Malcomson family in the 1820s for the 1,000 or more workers of their large cotton-spinning mills (1825-1804, converted to wax spinning in later nineteenth century). The web of streets lined with single-storey terrace dwellings centres on the small market square from which a short factory road



Graph no.(1)



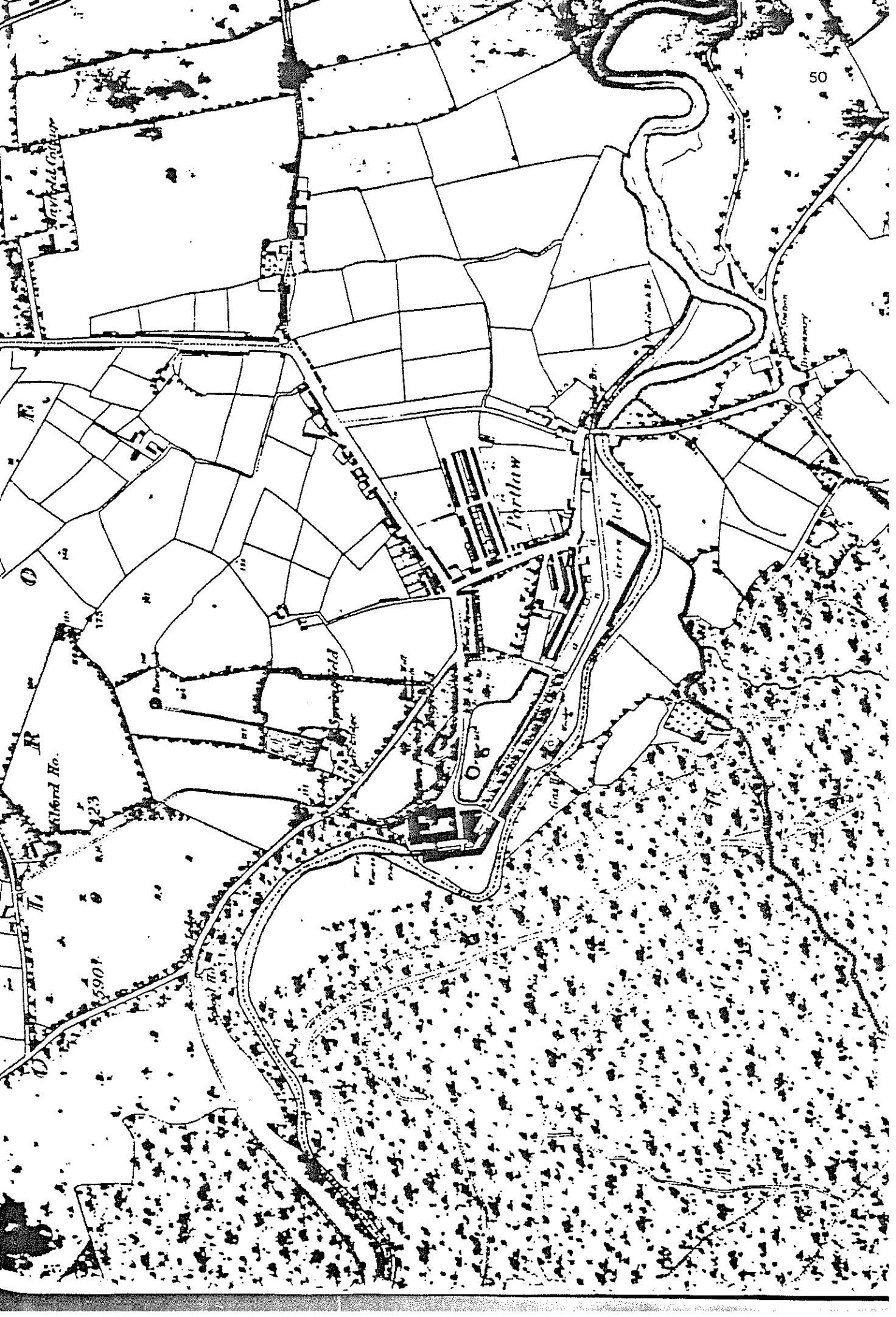
Graph no.(2)

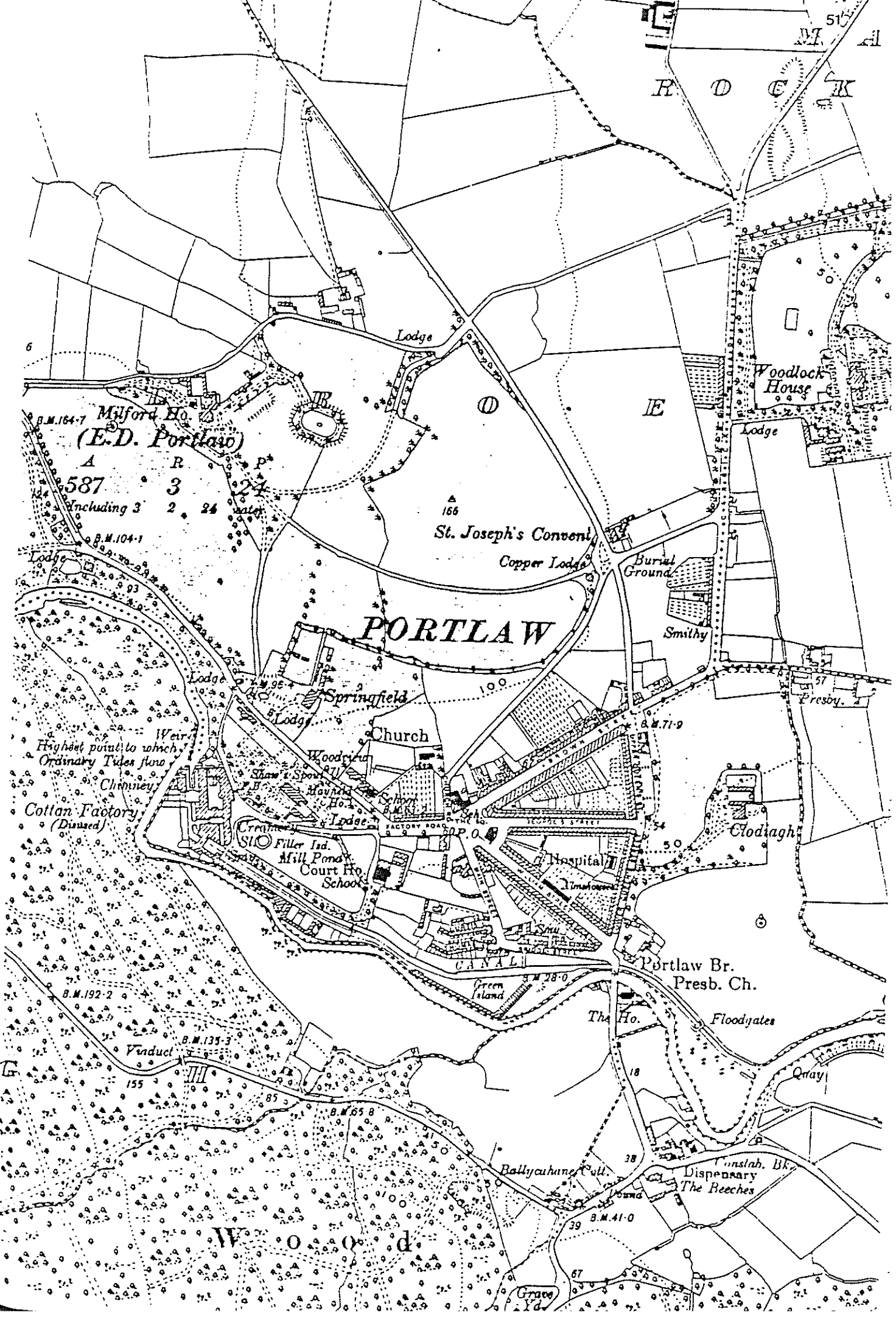


Graph no. (3)

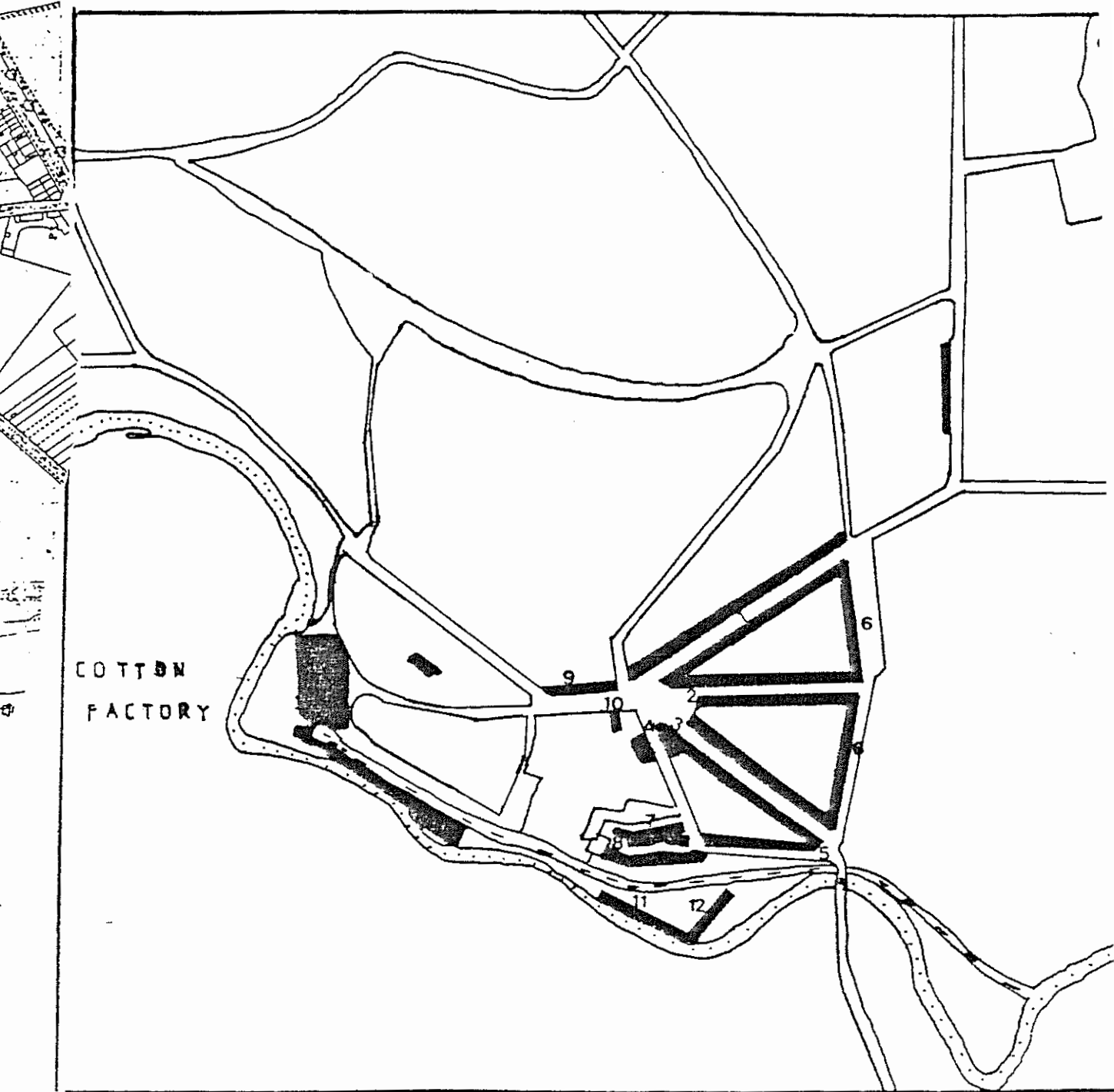
## M A P S

- Map (1) = 1841 Ordnance Survey Map. 6" to 1 mile  
Village of Portlaw before redevelopment
- Map (2) = 1901 Ordnance Survey map. 6" to 1 mile  
Redeveloped Portlaw
- Map (3) = 1908 Ordnance Survey Map. 6" to 1 mile  
(Enlarged)
- Map (4) = Map showing streets used by Author for  
analysis of Griffiths Valuation (1852)







P O R T L A W

1 = Brown Street, 2 = Mulgrave Street, 3 = Shamrock Street,  
 4 = Main Street, 5 = Bridge Street, 6 = Queen Street,  
 7 = Curtis Street, 8 = Thomas Street, 9 = Ivy Walk, 10 = Market  
 Square, 11 = Green Island, 12 = English Row.

ENTREPRENEURS AND PHILANTHROPISTS - VICTORIAN VIRTUES AND SOCIAL CONTROL

"There is an air of improvement in everything that appertains to them" (Hall 1840: pg. 310). This is Mrs Hall's verdict about the state of the people of Portlaw as a consequence of the Malcomsons. As outlined in the previous chapter there were many people who shared the prosperity of the Malcomsons, and this group did not include employees only. In building houses for their workers, they did not forget the basic infrastructure of an inhabited town. As well as building the houses for the workers, they also kept them in repair. They were, however, to do much more.

One of the very first things the Malcomsons did, was build a school. The majority of the students were known as "half timers" - a concept in operation elsewhere at the time! These "half timers" or "part timers" were young girls and boys employed by the Malcomsons. Unless they attended school for the full number of hours required each week they did not receive their wages. Education was also offered to the adults in the village. In the central part of the school house there was a large room - 60 feet by 30 feet - this was used as a room for evening classes for adults and it was also used for discussions among the workers and employers. Other events were also hosted here. David Malcomson told Shiel of his school, he boasted of it saying "no sectarian animosities, no quarrels about the bible are allowed to prevail. Here all the children of the factory are instructed in reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic, and no sort of interference with their religion is attempted" (Shiel 1828: pg 358). The school flourished whilst the Malcomsons remained in Portlaw and later on an infant school was added.

The year 1838 saw the formation of what must have been the earliest in this country - a temperance society - Its object was to promote temperance and the habit of saving. It was called the Portlaw tontine Club. At one point in time it had a membership of five hundred persons. Coinciding

with this Society, there was also a Thrift Society which was initiated to encourage the workers to save. The Malcomsons were doing their ultimate to discard the notion of the drunken Irish man unfit to do anything but dig. At all times they tried to enforce law and order in an attempt to keep the village one of high regard. Mr Malcomson was the local Magistrate and a district court was held each week. In the Census of 1841, only two males were listed as administering to Justice. No employee was allowed smoke in the presence of their employer and "the strictest morality was prevailed, it being a rule to dismiss any girl who was guilty of the slightest impropriety" (Shiel 1828: pg 358). Evidently the Malcomsons were trying to impose social control on the people, without a doubt the industrialist did serve to profit from a sober workforce and a contented one.

The Malcomsons, although keeping a vigilant eye on the behaviour of their workers, they did not overlook their need for recreation and comforts. They provided a billiards room, handball court, concert hall and set up a brass band, as well as shopping facilities. The Malcomsons were perfectionists, this alone was exemplified in the room occupied for billiard playing. So as to allow unrestricted play, recesses were scooped out in the corner of the room so the player would not be encumbered by hitting against the wall! In accordance with referring to the comforts they bestowed upon their employees, it must be mentioned that each female employee was given a brush and comb in order to keep herself well groomed, and upon marriage received from her employers a gift of bed linen. These may appear to be trivial matters, but they all prove as indicators of the type of life that existed in the industrial village of Portlaw in the nineteenth century. As well as trying to impose social control on the people, it also appears as if the Malcomsons were trying to transform the village socially as well. It may be presumed that not many other villages in Ireland at the time had the same strict controls on drinking, smoking, behaviour and also even personal grooming. Seemingly the Malcomsons were instilling into the people virtues which were not inherently Irish but perhaps more like

those existing in victorian England.

As mentioned in Chapter 5, a providence Society was inaugurated for the welfare of the workers. As early as 1837, the Malcomsons appointed a resident surgeon to the factory - Dr James Martin. The Martin hospital which is still in operation today was built in his memory. They were also responsible for providing the village with fresh water and light. A large settling pond was built within the factory gates, the water of the Clodagh flowed through here and proceeded through a filter bed and accordingly was pumped to tanks on higher ground. Each street was then served by this fresh water, as pumps were strategically placed at the top of the streets.

The factory never stopped, the wheels revolved for twenty four hours, huge lamps at night were used to light up the factory and the village. To enable this to be possible, a gasworks was established near the canal. Each night it is said that a gas lightman employed by the factory would go around the village lighting all the lamps. In the center square of the village in later years, a fountain was erected in memory of an employee. This fountain was made of cast-iron and it was constructed in the Mayfield Foundry. The Company also erected a townclock, and each morning it was the duty of the watchman to go out and ring this bell in order to waken the workers. Portlaw was certainly true to its name - a Model Township. The Malcomsons supplied their workers with everything from housing to education whilst not overlooking their need for recreation. As Lewis pointed out in his travels "the health, education and morals of this newly created colony have been strictly adhered to by it's patrons" (Lewis 1837: pg 466).

In saying that the Malcomsons supplied their workers with everything, one may say that this is a slight exaggeration. However, this is not so, Portlaw under the Malcomsons became a self sufficient community, and no reference to Portlaw is

complete without mentioning the infamous "Leather Money". This "leather money" as it came to be known was in fact only cardboard. These tokens were issued to the employees in pence and halfpence. Considering the amount of workers employed by the factory, this method of payment rendered it possible and safe to pay all workers. It was only by choice that the workers received these tokens, instead of cash. The tokens, however, were not limited to Portlaw, they had a tender of twenty miles and were freely accepted in all shops in the city of Waterford. "The firm enjoyed a reputation for stability and solvency and their tokens were freely accepted as cash by the tradespeople in the district and for a radius of twenty miles around" (Went 1968: pg 75). Many criticisms were made concerning these tokens as Mayfield Stores, one of the main shops in the village accepted these tokens, and this shop was owned by the Malcomsons. However, it must be acknowledged that this shop supplied groceries and drapery here at a cheaper rate than the rest of the shops in Portlaw. In 1844, an action for libel was taken against the newspapers "Warden" and "Statesman" by the Malcomson Brothers. They attacked the factory as follows "we are informed one factory in this country, of which the Quakers are proprietors, where no money at all passes from the tyrant to the slaves, but where small tokens of stamped leather procure goods at the shops of the tyrants, which on this trick system they impose at their own profit on their miserable slaves. This, we believe, to be entirely illegal and it certainly is wholly unconscientious" (Munster Express 1971: pg 19).

The Malcomsons won the case. However, it is I suppose up to each individual to decide whether they believe that this was a tyrant/slave situation, or just one of the many new elements introduced by the Malcomsons into the village. I personally believe that the very last thing they were was unconscientious. They had built Portlaw for the betterment of their workers. Admittedly any industrialist serves to profit from a happy and contented workforce, and therefore,

this was presumably the reasoning behind the Malcomsons supplying their workers with all the conditions as already listed. Although it may appear that the workers were totally under the control of the Malcomsons - inside and outside work - there were adverse situations elsewhere. Macniece says of these industrialists who cared for their workers that despite reaping the benefits of a sober and industrious workforce, many entrepreneurs were aware of "the growing pains of social awareness" and "many entrepreneurs were stimulated by genuine religious and social motives to improve the lot of their workers" (Macniece 1981: pg 174).

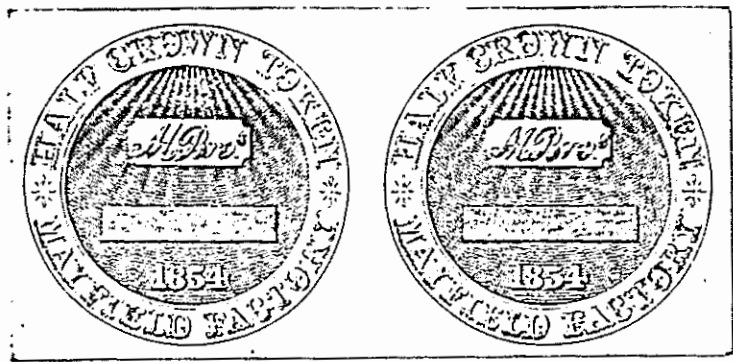
This is true of the Malcomsons, I feel that it is only now after viewing what they achieved in Portlaoighaire that one can appreciate their Quaker philosophy. Shiel speaks of David Malcomson, in high tones of acclamation. He attributes great praise to the work he did in Clonmel. He says of David Malcomson "he evidently felt that best of all luxuries, the consciousness of being the creator of felicity" (Shiel 1829 pg 359). The Lord Lieutenant of this same period, viewed the factory in Portlaoighaire as well as the village and proceeded to call David Malcomson a benefactor of Ireland. Isabel Grubb in her book entitled Quakers in Ireland starts her book with a quote which says "by their fruits ye shall know them". She was speaking of the Quakers. The Malcomsons were known by their "fruits", they lived according to their Quaker philosophy.

The Quaker belief and philosophy is one of equality. They aim for simplicity and integrity, however they are not puritannical. "we enjoy material blessings but try to resist materialistic attitudes, believing that earthy possessions are held in trust" (Quakers belief pamphlet). Many great business men were and are Quakers. They excelled themselves in matters of finance and industry. In the nineteenth century, the Malcomsons were not the only exponents of sobriety and industry. Many Quakers such as W.R. Jacob of Waterford, Richardsons of Bessbrook, Goodbodys of Clara - all became industrial magnates. The same is true of England, the Cadbury

Fry, Rowntree families, all were Quakers. Apart from a perceivable trend in industry matters among these families, all were benefactors to certain towns and villages. If they accumulated wealth in an area, they never forgot their source of wealth. It took more than capital, intuition, land and entrepreneurial skills to make an industry, it also required an indigenous population for without the workers there was no industry and subsequently no wealth to be derived. Therefore, the least these industrialists owed their workers were good working and living conditions. Just as Robert Owen, a Quaker was to build a model village, the Malcomsons were to follow him, and proceeding the Malcomsons were the Richardsons and Cadburys.

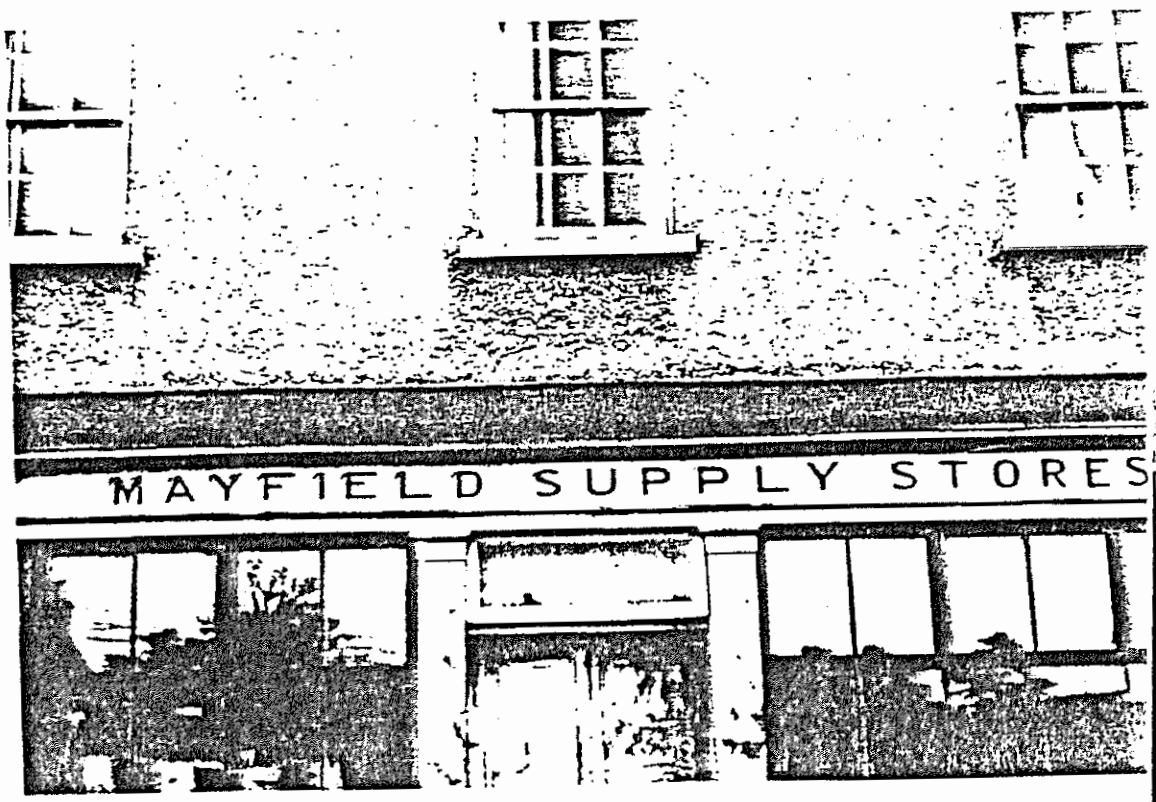
The preceding chapters prove the Malcomsons to be much more than entrepreneurs, they were philanthropists also. Although the virtues they did impose on the village were somewhat puritan, the village was presumably a healthier and safer place to live as a result. The Malcomsons gave to many a place of work and a home to live in. They were entrepreneurs and very shrewd businessmen and their Quaker belief and way of life helped them accumulate their wealth. Isabel Grubb in referring to the good deeds done by the Quaker families of the Malcomsons and Richardsons says of both: "perhaps Quakers have done more successful work for their fellowmen as kindly landlords and founders and directors of large firms than they have done through definite organisations for philanthropy" (Grubb 1927: pg 143).

The Malcomsons were entrepreneurs and philanthropists; the mixture of both was what brought them their meritorious success.



Above: "Leather Money" issued by Malcomsons to their employees.

Below: "Mayfield Supply Stores" shop owned by Malcomsons where the above tokens were exchanged for goods.

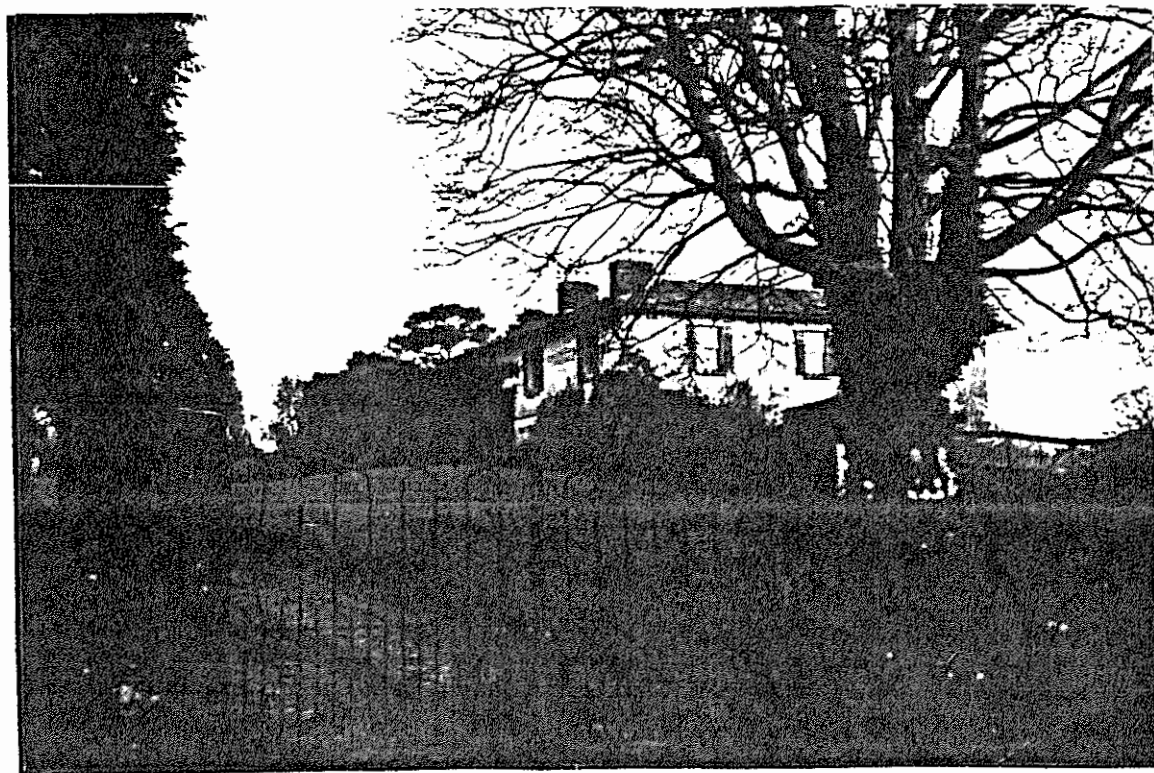




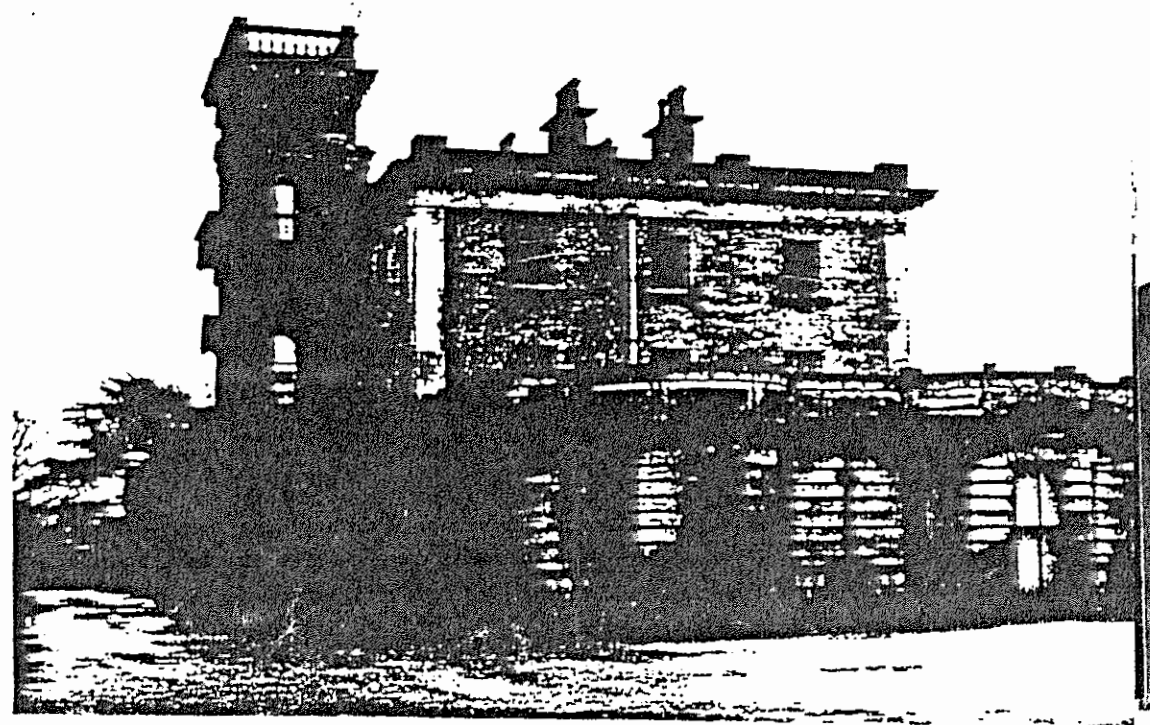


Above: "Clodagh House" - one of the five mansions built and inhabited by the Malcomsons whilst living in Portlaw. All the houses are fine examples of Victorian Architecture.

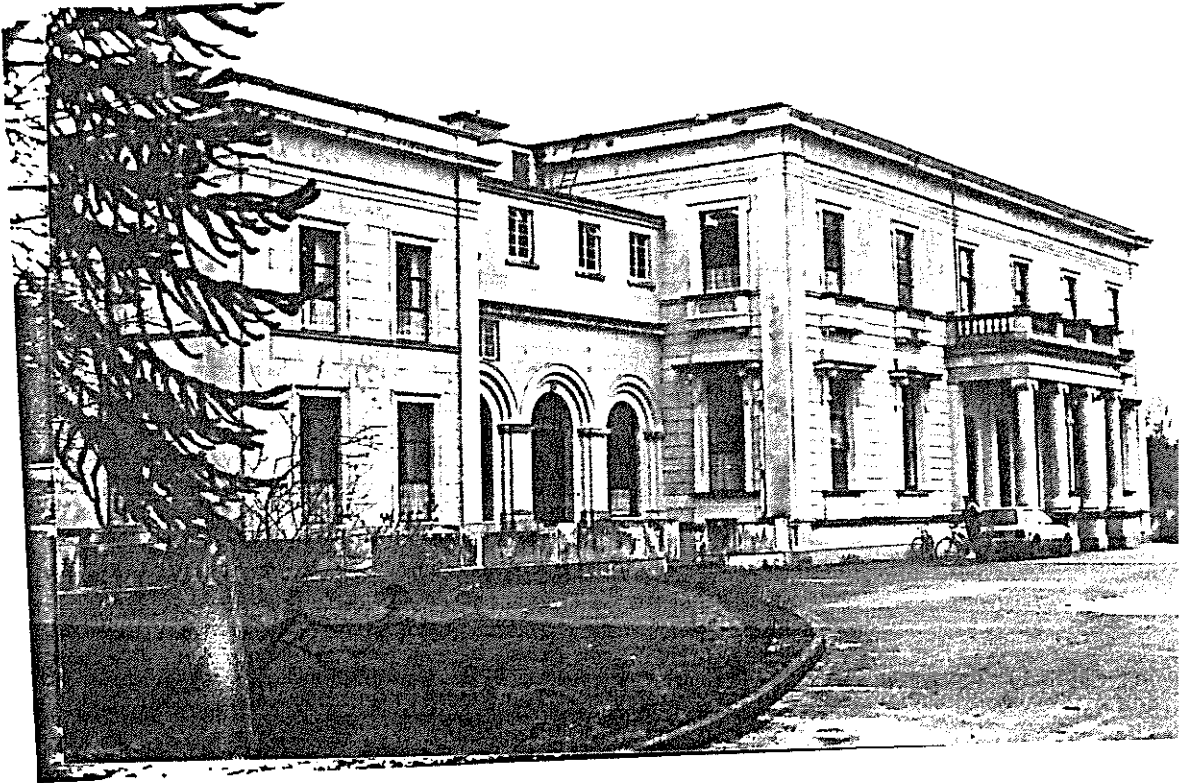
Below: House built by the Malcomsons for their Manager.



Below: Two side views of "Mayfield" - once the residence of Joseph Malcomson, presently used as Tannery offices.



Below: Rear and side view of Woodlock House, Portlaw. Woodlock was the residence of George Pim Malcomson, it was bequeathed to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny, on the death of George's wife.



Below: View of interior of Woodlock houses showing how beautiful and exquisite these houses are.



CONCLUSION

"The merry shuttle's song is replaced by the bough of the wind through tenantless streets" (Power 1910: pg 61)

Portlaw as a village came to be effected by the ebb and flow of industrial life, this was true in the nineteenth century and still is true today. The demise of the cotton factory in Portlaw inevitably brought about the demise of Portlaw itself. In 1871 the population for the town itself was 3,774, and by 1881 this had fallen to 1,891 and by 1891 it had dropped to 1,394. The village had lost in the space of twenty years over half it's population. This demise alone is exemplified by the number of houses uninhabited in 1891, 144 in total, with only 308 inhabited. By 1901 from a numistic point of view, it was more depressing with some streets like George Street for example, had out of a total of 55 houses, 11 inhabited. Just as many writers were to refer in their works to the success of Portlaw, they were also to paint graphic and detailed pictures of the village as it reclined and died. The Malcomsons in setting up their cotton factory had injected vitality into the small village, and now more than fifty to eighty years later, it was reverting to its old position - destitute and deserted. One newspaper in 1904 referred to it as "one of the severest industrial viscissitudes that ever befell a community".

What caused this downfall? Many interrelated factors contributed to the failure of the cotton factory and subsequently to the demise of the village. The severest blow to the industry was the American Civil War. President Lincoln enforced a naval blockade but the Malcomsons ran the blockade and supplied large amounts of cotton goods to the south. However, it was the losing side that they backed and when the war came to an end around 1874, the bills due to the Malcomsons became valueless, and as a result they owed large amounts of money to the banks. The Portlaw factory was not the only one to suffer. W.O. Henderson, when speaking of the cotton famine on the Continent, mentions how Napoleon alarmed at the shortage of cotton urged his country to abolish the blockade and recognise the south.

This, however, was only one blow which befell the industry in the 1870's. Joseph Malcomson died in 1858. This became a double tragedy as his wife withdrew her share. Subsequently Joseph's son David died at an early age, leaving only one child, and his wife began court proceedings to have her sons' share withdrawn. Also one of the banks that the Malcomsons did business with crashed in 1866. As mentioned already water transport was an essential ingredient in the success of the Malcomsons project and consequently the factory. With the advent of the twentieth century, the development of railway transport destroyed the profitability of the river as speed became significant. Also subsequent improved transport facilities opened up the Suir valley to competition from Britain, coinciding with this, Britain at that time, was benefiting from up to date mills and new technology. All these factors combined together led to the inevitable failure of the cotton industry in Portlaw.

The Malcomsons did not, however, depart Portlaw as soon as their business interests failed. Just as they had built homes for their employees, they also had built many large mansions for themselves in Portlaw and they were not in a position to just leave their homes. Also they did not desert their workers. They found alternative employment for many in mills in England and Scotland and some even went to America. The factory was then reorganised into the Portlaw Spinning Company. This offered limited employment to a number of persons. However, disaster was also to strike this industry. In 1897 it failed due to the introduction of the Mackinley tariff. This tariff raised the import duty on cotton goods into America from 35% to 55%. Weaving as a result was abandoned and then nine years later in 1904 spinning was abandoned. "The last bobbin ceased to revolve in 1904" (Power 1910: pg 64)

After this, a large portion of the factory was converted into Mayfield Dairy Company. The houses on Green Island, which at this point in time were deserted, were converted into piggeries. As one writer put it

"Alas! it's sun has set, it's glory in decay gone down!  
It's rows of fine houses are turned to piggeries for the hogs, a thousand odd that are being fattened in the Mayfield Dairy Company" (Power 1910: pg 62). With the start of World War in 1914, this was also to close. It was the end, wholesale depression struck Portlaw, as one newspaper said in 1937, it was avoided like the very devil. Portlaw became known to many as "the lost city". Then in 1932, life came back to Portlaw, it was decided to utilise the disused factory as a tan yard. A factory was the cause of Portlaw's notoriety, it's despair and destitution and now over fifty years later a factory was to bring back prosperity in the form of Irish Tanners Limited. Once again Portlaw was to be reborn and once again it's association and landmark was industry. Just as the cotton factory failed, so did the Tannery. Today Portlaw's population is falling once more. The factory still affords limited employment to a small number by means of the International Hide and Skin group.

Portlaw's glory has certainly gone and all that remains is a shadow of what once was a vibrant living place. Today it serves more as a commuter town to nearby Waterford city, than anything else. Portlaw is in essence an industrial village, it was built to serve the needs of an industrial populace. Settlement in the village is not centered around a church or a landlord's domain. It is orientated towards the square, which in turn leads to the gates of a disused dead factory.

# Portlaw paradise for the elderly

THE village of Portlaw, in Co. Waterford, which has been crippled by massive unemployment since the closure of Irish Leathers, is set to become the location for an up-market leisure complex for wealthy retired people.

Although a wall of silence surrounds the project, which is earmarked for the largely derelict 40-acre Irish Leathers site, it is known that a representative of a UK business interest flew into Waterford to look over the property.

It has been reliably learned the representative, 'Mr. Shaw', has engaged the services of auctioneers Shee & Hawe, in Carrick-on-Suir, with a view to the purchase of the property from Mr. Raymond Lannen, managing director of the International Hide & Skin Group.

According to an informed source, the contract for the purchase of Mayfield House and its adjoining land is to be signed within the two weeks.

Yesterday, Mr. John Shelly of Shee & Hawe declined to comment on the proposed development beyond saying that nothing had been signed and it would be another two weeks before there was an announcement.

The same English principal is also understood to be interested in 'a development' at Waterford's Regional Airport and a number of proposals have already been made which would upgrade the current facility and thereby attract a large number of visitors to the Waterford area.

Mr. Dan Hurley, Co. Manager, said that he was aware of rumours circulating regarding a development in both Portlaw and at the Regional Airport. However, no official communication had been made with the County Council regarding plans but Mr. Hurley said that he would welcome a meeting with the interested parties.

How ironic and desperate Portlaw's situation is today, is evinced by the above caption alone. It was obtained from the Cork Examiner, October 22nd, 1987. It reads "Portlaw Paradise for the Elderly". The solution of Portlaw's depravity - an upmarket leisure complex for wealthy retired people, situated on the forty acre derelict site of the factory and Mayfield House. What an epithat to a once highly industrial society. Where once the merry shuttle was heard and thousands of fingers went nimbly about their work.

Portlaw's partial fame and wealth lie buried in the nineteenth century. Today all that remains is the imposing edifice of a disused factory and a unique web of streets. A living memory to what once upon a time was a famous model industrial village in its own right, and which for too long has gone unnoticed as an important industrial village of the nineteenth century.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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