

## Irish Watermarks Identified in the CSO-RP Manuscripts

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The project of conserving many hundreds of manuscripts from an exact period provided a unique opportunity to study watermarks. The correspondence from the years 1818 –1821 were examined in order to gain a picture of the paper used in this collection and to identify if any of the paper had been manufactured in Ireland.

### Watermarks and Countermarks

Watermarks are made from wires soldered to the surface of the wire mesh of the paper mould. The soldered wire is elevated above the surface and during paper making process causes the thinning of the pulp layer. A watermark then becomes visible in the structure of the paper [1]. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Irish papermakers generally followed the English watermarking practice of the time, and based their watermark illustration on European models, such as the post horn (Fig. 1) or fleur-de-lis [2]. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Ireland the practice of smuggling of paper, so that the papermaker could avoid paying tax was very common. In 1798 a legal requirement was introduced which made it mandatory for the date of manufacture to be included in paper made for export [3]. Known as countermarks these were a device associated with, but distinct from, the watermark. The countermark does not usually take the form of an illustration but generally consists of a name, initials or simply a date.

Pollard and Benson [4] note how by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century watermarks had become associated with the size of the sheet. The watermarks denoted the purpose of the paper, and were standardized according to size and weight to be sent by mail. Foolscap paper had a watermark of a Britannia (Fig. 2) or a lion rampant; copy paper had a fleur-de-lis and post paper was identified as having a watermark of a bugle framed in a shield. Post paper was cut in half, folded and trimmed forming quarto post, repeating this and cutting and folding quarto post gives octavo post, commonly termed note paper. Kennedy cites that the post horn was one of the most common watermarks with a countermark of the Irish papermaker [5].



Fig. 1

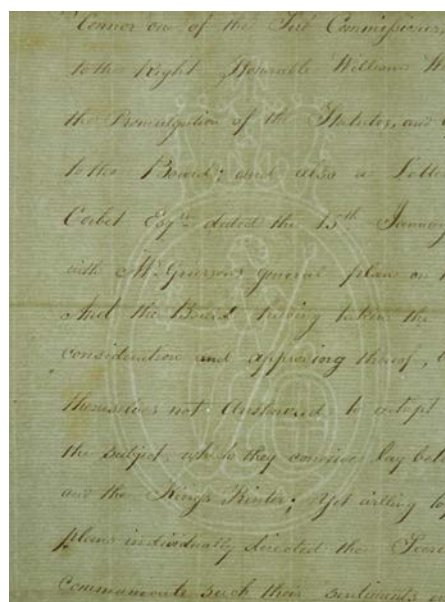


Fig. 2

### Gathering and Sorting

Prior to conservation each document was assessed, during this step each manuscript was examined and it was noted on the conservation report if a watermark and/or a countermark was found. Watermarks were photographed after conservation work had been carried out, using a light box and a digital camera. Images of watermarks can be captured in many ways but the results from a digital camera are quite clear and very quick to take [6]. Considering the quantity of documents that were examined it was the most effective and efficient means available. This process resulted in approximately 2,500 digital images. Watermarks that were identified as being from English paper mills or paper makers were filtered out of the research project.

A spreadsheet was set up to keep track of the watermarks and countermarks, which were thought to be Irish in origin.

### Irish Watermarks identified

There are well-documented records of the long established Irish families in the paper making trade within the few reference texts that have been written specifically about Irish watermarks [7].

The Sullivan family is known to have been producing paper in both Dublin and Cork. Bartholomew Sullivan established the Dripsey Mills in Cork in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century; these mills eventually grew to cover nearly six acres and were a huge employer in the local area. Excellent examples of watermarks from Dripsey mills were found within the collection. There are watermarks from 1810, 1814 and 1816, (Fig. 3) the font of the watermark remains the same; it varies only in size, with the 1810 watermark being the smallest. From 1787 the Dublin branch of the family seems to have been under the stewardship of Jeremiah Sullivan and watermarks of JS, J Sullivan (Fig. 4) and JS under the post horn watermark were located. The earliest date recorded was 1808, with a watermark JS. (Fig. 5)

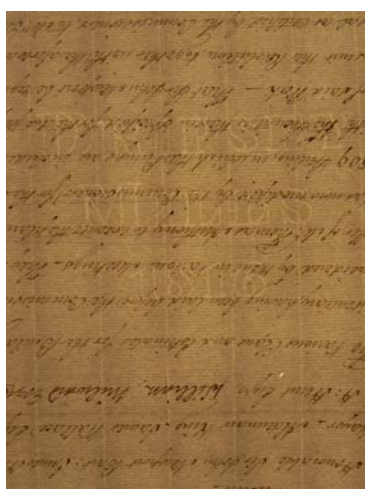


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

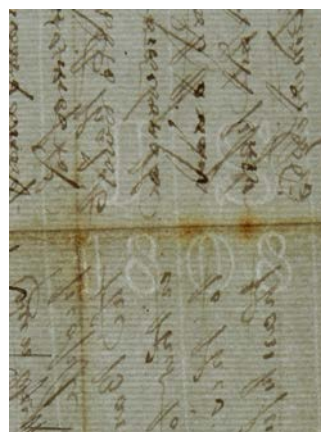


Fig. 5

The McDonnell family span two hundred years of papermaking and were one of the most prolific families of master papermakers in Ireland, starting with Michael McDaniel who had a mill in Tallaght in 1749. Confusion arises over the spelling of the surname; Daniel, McDaniel, McDonnell and McDonnell are all noted by both Phillips [8] and Pollard & Benson as being linked to the same catholic family. These authors cite the possibility of religious bias at the time responsible for the variation in the spelling of the surname. The McDonnell's are recorded as having mills at Saggart, Templeogue, Tallaght and Clondalkin, although there is no indication of which family member was in charge of which mill. There were up to six Mc Donnells listed in the Wilson's Dublin Directory from the years 1810-1821 [9]. Examples of watermarks from both Christopher and William McDonnell have been found in the CSO registered papers. Variations include cursive overlapping initials (Fig. 6), capital initials (Fig. 7), name in full along, post horn and overlapping cursive initials underneath (Fig.8) and the Royal coat of Arms of the United Kingdom containing the Irish Hibernian harp in the lower left hand corner (Fig. 9).

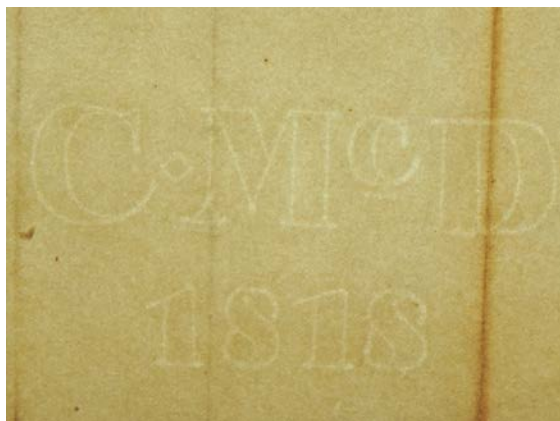


Fig. 6

Fig. 7

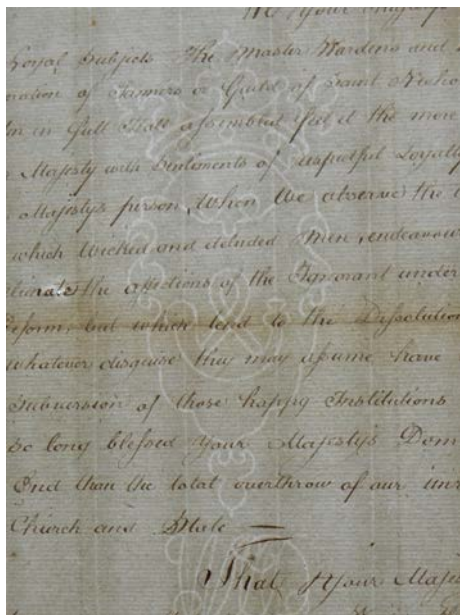


Fig. 8

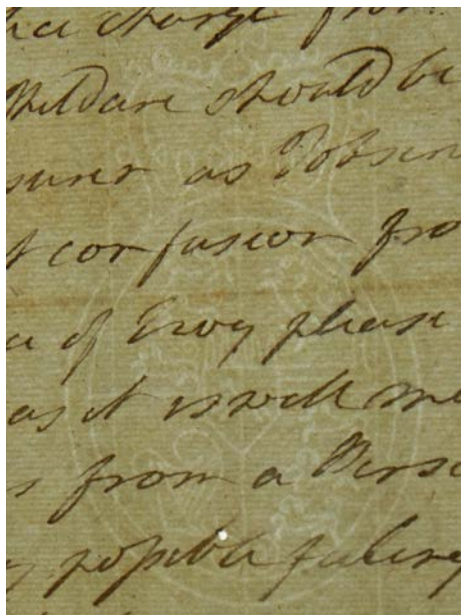


Fig. 9

The Wilson Dublin Directory was published from 1751 –1837 and which contained a comprehensive list of paper merchants and traders; the editions from 1810-1821 were referenced for this research. A list of 24 papermakers and manufacturers who were operating during that period in Dublin city centre was compiled [10]. Phillips in a footnote noted that the city centre “ addresses may indicate paper factors rather than practising papermakers” and gave in his list not only dates of known production but the location of the paper mill as well as warehouse or distribution point.

Along with papermakers from the Sullivan and McDonnell families some other papermakers were identified in the collection. These marks include:

Edward Burroughs- who learnt his trade as an apprentice to Thomas Slator of Templeogue (Fig.10), Clement Taylor whose history Pollard gives as coming from England to Ireland in 1794 to join the firm Nun Taylor and Graham and she surmises that Taylor may have brought some of his own moulds to Dublin. Other watermarks found on papers in the collection related to paper merchants, such as George Cuppaidge of 2 College Green who was a paper mould maker who had been in business since 1777 (Fig.11).Pollard notes how Cuppaidge must have supplied many moulds as he amassed a large fortune and therefore it could be surmised that he supplied the moulds for stationers and businesses such as Chambers and Hallagan, a printing company, and Abraham Bradley King.

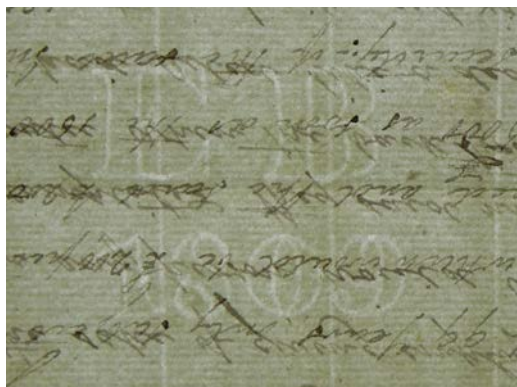


Fig. 10



Fig. 11

**Abraham Bradley King**

Abraham Bradley King had been granted a royal patent in 1780 to supply all government offices with stationary. A man of influence he had progressed from businessman to alderman to Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1821. At that time Wilson Dublin Directory lists him as having the expensive address of 12 Upper Merrion Square. In parliamentary questions in the House of Commons June of that year there is reference to both his anti catholic sentiments and to him supplying inferior quality paper to the excise office whilst charging for the very best quality papers[11]. Over the next few years there were many charges of poor quality paper being supplied and in 1832 on the awarding of sizeable pension A B King relinquished his patent rights.

In the correspondence from 1818 and 1821 there are examples of sheets bearing Abraham Bradley King's watermark. One is a simple ABK 1810 (Fig. 12) the other are more elaborate. It is a large circle with a crown on top surrounding another two circles with the words *AB King His Majesty's Stationer Stamp Office Dublin W1815H* (Fig. 13).



Fig. 12



Fig. 13

### Conclusion

Working on this collection and exploring the history of paper has brought to life the work of those long forgotten papermakers, it is noteworthy that papermaking in Ireland had a strong tradition of being a family business and spanned generations. It should also be pointed out that it was acceptable for the female members of the family to be involved most noted is Elizabeth Archbold, wife of John who continued the business when he died in 1789. John had inherited the mill from his father Pierce Archbold of Tallaght who has established the mill there in 1761; unfortunately no watermark for Archbold has been located yet.

Gathering information has been a challenge, as there is no comprehensive Irish watermark database, and whilst other standard references text and databases were checked, these resulted in little or no matches. This research on Irish watermarks is preliminary but hopefully the information, which has been recorded to date, has created a base where a more in-depth research project could be carried out.

### Endnotes

1. Hunter Dard, *Papermaking, the History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*, Dover Publications Inc.1978
2. Bower Peter, *Irish Watermarks: Hibernia Marks*, BAPH, The Quarterly 31, August 1999
3. O'Neill Thomas P., *Irish Papermakers and Excise Duty on Paper, 1798-1861*, The Papermaker, Vol 71,1962 No. 2.
4. Pollard, M. and Benson, C. *The Rags of Ireland are by no means the same: Irish Paper used in the Statutes at Large*, The Long Room, Autumn/Winter, Trinity College Press, 1970
5. Kennedy, D. and MacLoclainn, A. *The Hibernia Watermark*, The Papermaker, Wilmington, Delaware, Vol.30, No.2, 1961
6. Different ways of capturing watermarks also include beta radiography and tracing.

7. Shorter, A.H., *Studies on the History of Papermaking in Britain*. Edited by Richard L Hills, Variorum Collected Studies Series: CS42
8. Phillips, J.W. *Trial list of Irish papermakers 1690-1800* The Library, V, xiii 1958, 59-62  
[http://library.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf\\_extract/s5-XIII/1/59](http://library.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf_extract/s5-XIII/1/59)
9. Wilson's Dublin Directory was the first trade directory published by Peter Wilson; it was compiled 1751-1837 and consisted of an alphabetical list of merchants and traders, detailing name, address and occupation.
10. The table of papermakers compiled from Wilson Dublin Directories is available on request from the author.
11. <http://hansard.millbanksystem.com/sittings/1821/jun/19>

### **List of illustrations**

1. CSO/RP/1820/32/3
2. CSO/RP/1821/sc/12
3. CSO/RP/1821/183
4. CSO/RP/1818/452/2
5. CSO/RP/1821/726
6. CSO/RP/1820/1328/2
7. CSO/RP/1820/1684/32
8. CSO/RP/1820/1251/A
9. CSO/RP/1818/361
10. CSO/RP/1821/1
11. CSO/RP/1820/1008/614
12. CSO/RP/1820/124/2/A
13. CSO/RP/1820/561/2