Aspects of Protestant Culture and Society in Mid-Antrim, 1857-67

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This dissertation has been composed by, and is the work of, the undersigned.

Abstract

This study is an inquiry into Ulster Protestant culture from the 1850s to the 1870s. It explores expressions of Ulster Protestant identities by analysing features of the local economy and of social and power structures in the mid-Antrim district, centred on the town of Ballymena. This dissertation shows that a density of the district's social, cultural and commercial institutions was situated in Ballymena. The rural regions of mid-Antrim were areas of high Presbyterian demographic concentration and were central to many important social, economic and cultural developments in the district, including religious revival, reorganisation of the local linen trade and agrarian agitation. The centrality of the rural dimension in local institutions, ideologies and identities is demonstrated through an analysis of the links between Ballymena and rural mid-Antrim. In seeking to understand social and cultural developments in post-Famine Ulster, this study demonstrates the importance of exploring the networks in which dialogues between town and townland were situated.

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All errors and omissions in this study are entirely my own.

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Source: "Ordnance Survey. Index to the General Map of Ireland, 1863" National Library of Scotland Map Library, Edinburgh.

Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Original scale: 1 inch to 27 statute miles (approximately 1: 1,710,720)

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Source: "Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1863", Sheet 20, National Library of Scotland Map Library, Edinburgh.

Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Original Scale: 1 inch to 1 statute mile (approximately 1:63,360)

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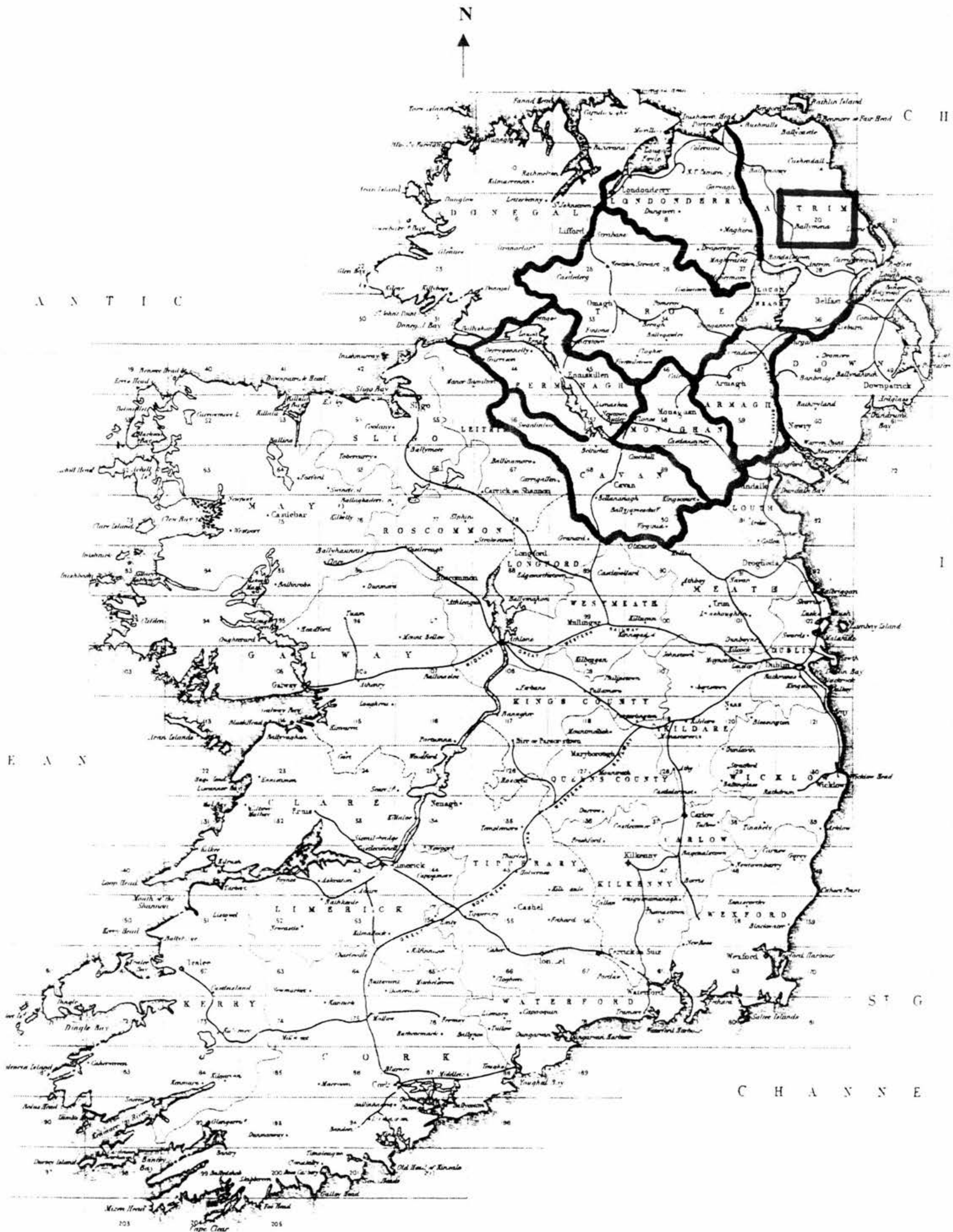
Source: "A General Map of Ireland for the Use of the Commissioners of Public Works Exhibiting the Boundaries of Counties, Baronies, Poor Law Unions and Electoral Divisions with the Principal Physical Features of the County, 1847" National Library of Scotland Map Library, Edinburgh EMS s.21.

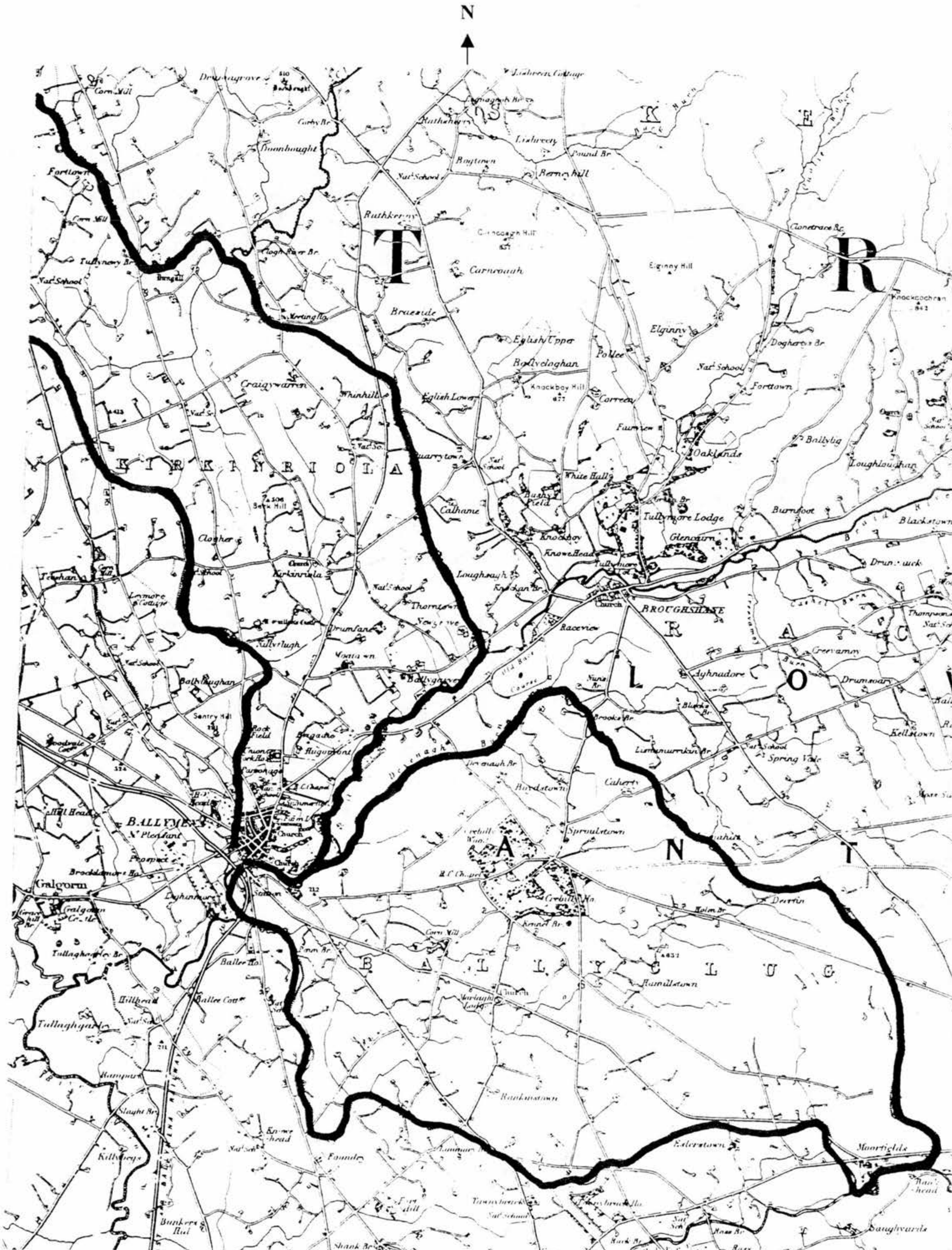
Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

Original Scale: 1 inch to 4 statute miles (approximately 1: 253,440)

Map 1: Map of Ireland Showing the Counties of Ulster and the Mid-Antrim Area (in Box)



Map 2: Map of Mid-Antrim Showing the Borders of Kirkinriola and Ballyclug Parishes



Map 3: Map of Part of North-East Ulster Showing the Border of the Ballymena Poor Law Union

N

Introduction

This study is an inquiry into community formation, urban development and the nature of Ulster Protestant culture from the 1850s to the 1870s. Its principal aim is to develop an analysis of expressions of Ulster Protestant identity by analysing features of the local economy and of social and power structures in the mid-Antrim district. Rural mid-Antrim was an area of Presbyterian demographic concentration in Ulster and was central to many important social, cultural and political developments in the period, including religious revival and agrarian organisation. A density of the district's social, cultural and commercial institutions was situated in the town of Ballymena, which was also a centre of the province's linen trade. The organisation of relationships in this urban milieu forms a central theme of this analysis, which also explores the development and transmission of practices and ideologies between rural and urban sections of mid-Antrim.

From the 1850s to the mid-1880s, Ulster's demographic profile and industrial and commercial networks experienced a range of transformations. Urban space was central to structuring production, commerce and systems of authority within wider rural areas but in some districts of Ulster textile production continued to be based in rural areas through the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Agrarian mobilisation, particularly tenant-right protest, produced strategic alliances between rural and urban interests in which towns became centres for political organisation and contest. In the 1850s, urban structures in mid-Antrim shaped the transmission of rural religious ideology and activity to the district's commercial and administrative centre. The urban and rural worlds were interconnected by these mobilisations, by structures of industry and commerce, by systems of law and local governance and by denominational polities. The dialogues between town and country enacted within these structures

provide historians with opportunities to assess the degree of their interconnectedness and their influence in structuring post-Famine culture and politics.

The ideological and material underpinnings of Protestant Ulster have attracted considerable scholarly interest as historians have sought to locate later-Victorian and Edwardian Unionism within specific cultural expressions and objective social bases. In the 1970s, a number of historical interpretations explored post-Famine unionism in relation to the theory of uneven development and engaged it not as a derivative of British imperialism or Irish nationalism, but as an autonomous ideological construct with objective socio-economic foundations.[1] A central debate among practitioners of this approach to Irish history centres on whether unionism represented an advanced stage of capitalist development, in relation to the chimera of southern Catholic nationalism, or whether republican nationalism offered greater potential for the transformation of class relations. To Peter Gibbon, the emergence of Ulster unionism reflected in part the homogenisation of the social and economic geography of Ulster's textile districts and the convergence of interests around a Belfast-based mercantile elite.[2] Henry Patterson places greater emphasis on Belfast Orangeism as an arena of contest between autonomous groups in the social structure representing different objective interests; this analysis serves as a welcome corrective to studies of unionism which treat it as a monolithic expression of bourgeois manipulation.[3]

Other historians have provided an analysis of the political theology of Protestant unionism which locates it within a distinctive cultural system rooted in a

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[1] Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975); Henry Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism: The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement, 1868-1920* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980).
[2] Gibbon.

biblical "conceptual grid" and in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century intellectual history. These cultural analyses have often pointed to distinctive Presbyterian strains in the development of Ulster unionism, and have variously treated it as an autonomous intellectual tradition which dissolved within the structures and ideology of modern unionism, or as a persistent expression of Presbyterianism's autonomous encounter with processes of modernisation, characterised by a resolute distinctiveness within the intellectual universe of unionism.[4] Invariably, these analyses relate to the social bases which constituted Ulster Presbyterianism—farmer-weavers on mid-sized holdings, Belfast merchants and urban petty capitalists, for example—since the social geography of Ulster settlement and the denominational complexion of its social structure suggest that Ulster Presbyterians were concentrated within specific spatial and socio-economic contexts. Through periods of Ulster plantation, settlement and economic and social development, cultural criteria structured access to resources and became coextensive with privilege and disenfranchisement. In these conditions, Presbyterian settlers and their descendants nurtured a historical memory which, as Alan O'Day has noted, encompassed both the scars and the rights of dominance.[5] The progressive dismantling of privileges and encumbrances enshrined in settlement

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[3] Patterson; Marxist analyses in the nationalist vein include Michael Farrell's *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London: Pluto Press, 1976).

[4] D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1991); I. R. McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism: The Historical Perspective* (Belfast: Athol Books, 1994). David Miller explores the Presbyterian covenanting tradition within unionism in *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978). He provides a creative attempt to develop a structural basis for engaging changing theological perspectives in Ulster Presbyterianism and for exploring the perceived absence of state-based national allegiances in "Presbyterianism and 'Modernisation' in Ulster," *Past and Present* 80 (1978): 66-90. The unique character of Ulster Presbyterian "nationalism" is also interrogated in comparative perspective by Anthony D. Smith in "Ethnic Election and National Destiny: Some Religious Origins of Nationalist Ideals," *Nations and Nationalisms* 5 (1999): 331-55.

[5] Alan O'Day, "Rural Catholic Mobilisation in Ireland," in *Comparative Studies of Governments and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups*, vol. 7, *Roots of Rural Ethnic Mobilisation*, ed. D. Howell (Aldershot:

structures resulted in Ulster Presbyterians increasingly aligning themselves almost exclusively under coincident British, unionist and Protestant identities and projects in the later-nineteenth century. There is an *a priori* acceptance by most historians of the centrality of such settlement structures in the development of social and economic relations in post-Famine Ireland, and in the character and distribution of cultural resources and institutions in Ulster.[6] There is debate, however, over the extent to which Victorian political brokerage systems—and Liberalism in particular—were bound to relations structured in plantation and settlement periods or in fact had the potential to provide autonomous expressions of an alternative community of interests, often through Presbyterian direction or involvement.[7]

These issues can be situated within the wider debate over the evolution of Protestant ideologies in Ulster which combined cultural, political and doctrinal elements.

Social scientists have sought to explore the heterogeneity of cultural perspectives and socio-economic interests encompassed within modern unionism by devising ideological typologies premised on identifying cultural and material resources that influenced the distinctive character and degrees of separateness underpinning several

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Dartmouth Publishing Company, Ltd., 1993), 9-49. For a general discussion of ethnic and rural mobilisation, see Ellen Wiegandt, "Understanding Rural Ethnic Mobilisation," in Howell, 305-19.

[6] For an early and influential analysis in this vein, see A. T. Q. Stewart, *The Narrow Ground: Aspects of Ulster, 1609-1969* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

[7] Frank Wright offers a pessimistic assessment of this possibility in *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics Before Home Rule* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), though his analysis is decidedly more nuanced that Gibbon's rejection of Liberalism as venal (98). Brian M. Walker, in *Ulster Politics: The Formative Years* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1989), suggests that possibilities existed for alternative political brokerage through Liberalism before the constitutional status of Ireland polarised provincial politics. But McBride, in his intellectual history of Irish Presbyterianism, argues against an analysis of coextensive political Liberalism and "genuinely secular nationalism", which he argues has " never struck deep roots in Irish society" (231). The debate over the Independent Orange Order's success in areas of north Antrim in the first decade of the twentieth century also provides a prism for this debate: see J. W. Boyle, "The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10," *Irish Historical Studies* 13 (September 1962): 50: 117-52 and J. R. B. McMinn, "Liberalism in North Antrim," *Irish Historical Studies* 23 (May 1982): 89: 17-29.

Protestant and unionist identities.[8] In rural and urban mid-Antrim, this line of inquiry leads to an examination of Ulster Presbyterianism and to questions about the structure of "Ulster Scots" ethnicity and the conditions and institutions which may have served to propagate a distinctive cultural memory within the community. Some analyses of ethnic persistence have treated the character of ethnic communities as immutable, comprising unitary characteristics which contribute to an enduring socio-cultural homogeneity, including socio-biological characteristics and/or shared symbolic and cultural referents and repertoires.[9] Other analyses see ethno-nationalism constructed in peculiarly modern social, economic and political contexts, as a response to the comparatively recent historical exigency of constructing a set of shared values and traits endowed with apparently timeless qualities.[10] Others have preferred to see ethno-national "revivals" as essentially ephemeral phenomena incidental to the advancement of industrial-capitalism.[11] Presbyterians formed the large majority of the population in rural and urban mid-Antrim; the cultural co-ordinates and institutional foundations of local Presbyterianism are central subjects of this analysis, but the Ulster Scots are difficult to situate within these theoretical schemas. Analyses based on a putative primordial basis of Ulster Scot culture risk ignoring the heterogeneity of Presbyterian traditions in Ulster; the plurality of expressions of Ulster

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[8] Patterson; Frank Wright, "Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster," *European Journal of Sociology* 14 (1973): 213-80; Jennifer Todd, "Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture," *Irish Political Studies* 2 (1987): 1-26.

[9] Clifford Geertz, "Primordial Ties," re-printed in *Ethnicity*, eds. John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 40-45. Anthony D. Smith emphasises the collective cultural and symbolic character of ethnic groups in *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[10] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalisms* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982) and *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1994), 103-8; see also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1983).

[11] Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalisms since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Presbyterianism, many with separate institutional bases, suggests no *a priori* cultural unity outside specific historical contexts. Identifying cultural attributes as persistent ethnic markers is also highly problematic. Many settlers in the Glens of Antrim, for instance, were Roman Catholics of Scottish extraction whose settlement occurred prior to the seventeenth century, and many Remonstrant Presbyterians were critical of, and excluded from, the political and cultural projects of other Ulster Presbyterians in the nineteenth century. Presbyterianism, moreover, was not part of a cultural repertoire "transplanted" by seventeenth-century Scottish Protestant settlers, and had not even assumed a formal structure outside the Episcopalian tradition until the 1640s. The treatment of Ulster Scots ethnicity as a product of a collective encounter with processes of modernisation can fail to incorporate the evolution of institutional infrastructures articulating and supporting Ulster Presbyterian identities from the seventeenth century, which had the potential to provide coherent foundations for subsequent collective organisation; mobilisation around selected collective symbols and identities was built upon these coherent foundations.[12] Historians who argue that the dissolution of ethno-religious collective identities was an inevitable consequence of the advancing organisation of capitalism are faced with the endurance and indeed the hardening character of religious identities in Ulster during the process of industrialisation, during which doctrinal and ideological positions were intertwined in remarkably durable cultural frameworks. This inquiry treats expressions of Ulster Presbyterian ethno-religious identity as part of a cultural repertoire linked specifically to structures of settlement in the seventeenth century and beyond. Borrowing from Clifford Geertz, culture is treated in this study as "an historically transmitted pattern

[12] See Miroslav Hroch, "Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation," in *The State of the Nation:*

of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about life."[13] In the events explored in this study—revivalism and protests by the district's weavers, for example—material conditions and cultural resources particular to the experience of the local community provided co-ordinates for cultural and political expressions in mid-Antrim.

This analysis is particularly interested in relating these expressions to the interplay between rural and urban influences in mid-Antrim's institutions, identities and ideologies. The strength and character of networks linking urban and rural worlds and the structure of contact between urban and rural communities have been identified in many studies as critical variables in the development of political and cultural projects.[14] They can contribute to influencing the form and direction of popular rural protest, the success of urban efforts to influence and organise the countryside, and the relative emphasis on "rural" and "urban" elements in cultural and political discourse. Tom Nairn has criticised Modernist interpretations of nationalism for focussing on the

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Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91-106.

[13] Clifford Geertz, "Religion As a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), 87-125, especially 89.

[14] David R. Goldfield provides a thought-provoking summary of rural influences on American urban centres in "The Urban South: A Regional Framework," *The American Historical Review* 86 (February to December 1981): 1009-34. For a wider theoretical problematique, see Tom Nairn, "The Curse of Rurality: Limits of Modernisation Theory," in Hall, 107-34. In his investigation of the conditions of nationalist expression, David D. Laitin argues that the forms of these expressions are partially dependent on rural social structures; see his article "National Revivals and Violence," *European Journal of Sociology* 36 (1995): 3-43. Sabrina Petra Ramet explores the differing character of urban and rural Serbian nationalist mobilisation in "Nationalism and the 'Idiocy' of the Countryside: The Case of Serbia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19 (January 1996): 1: 70-87. Ramet's analysis is predicated on the intrinsically traditional character of rural society, which she constructs in opposition to the institutions and culture of metropolitan society, focussing on comparative gender roles and the influence of religious institutions. For a case study and assessment of the conditions in which rural interests can influence the direction of state ideology and policy, see Michael Vickery, *Cambodia, 1975-1982* (Sydney: George Allen and Unwin, 1984); Kenneth Minogue offers and important assessment of the rural dimensions of populism in "Populism as a Political Movement," in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, eds. Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner (Letchworth: The Garden City Press, Ltd., 1969), 197-211.

forward momentum of urbanisation and industrialisation at the expense of the potentially powerful and emotive force of rurality in nationalist ideology and mobilisation. He argues that by serving as a repository for the images and symbols of a collective identity—as a "peasantry transmuted into a nation"—the rural world can provide an accessible ideological resource in which land, blood and purity are durably intertwined.[15] The analysis of the 1859 revivals in this study shows how a series of cultural expressions originating in an almost exclusively Presbyterian rural district were transmitted and articulated in an urban environment.

The revivals were part of a range of influences which produced an especially durable local evangelical culture in mid-Antrim upon which social and political identities developed; in the popular imagination of Ulster, Ballymena became a citadel of evangelical Protestant political theology in the twentieth century. But in 1798 it was a theatre for the United Irishmen in Antrim, though whether the largely Presbyterian movement in the county embraced a pluralism which transcended sectional interests is a matter of historiographical debate.[16] The district remained a relatively strong base for Liberalism, and a centre of significant agrarian organisation in the 1870s and early 1880s. But from the 1870s the district episodically embraced forms of political brokerage and expression which were characterised by evangelical Protestantism and militant unionism interwoven with strongly anti-oligarchic critiques of mainline unionist institutions.[17] William Johnston of Ballykilbeg's challenges to

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[15] Nairn, 108.

[16] McBride places his analysis at odds with what he describes as a school propounding "neo-romantic versions of 1798" (231), among whose practitioners he identifies Kevin Whelan; see Whelan's *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity, 1760-1830* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996).

[17] See Henry Patterson, *Class Conflict*; also "Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 80 (1980): 1-27 and Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson, *Northern Ireland, 1921-1996: Political Forces and Social Classes* (London: Serif, 1996), 23-27.

the Party Processions Act and to the Belfast Orange establishment in the late 1860s won wide support from Ballymena's Orangemen, who also celebrated his election victory in 1868.[18] In 1906 an Independent Unionist candidate polled well in mid-Antrim, though falling short of the victory claimed by a colleague in the neighbouring North Antrim constituency.[19] An analysis of the district's institutional and cultural co-ordinates contributes to our understanding of the character and distribution of cultural resources through which the identities which underpinned these expressions were constituted and expressed.

Ballymena was in the estate of the Adair family—landowners from Wigtonshire in Scotland's extreme south-west who had been granted land in Ulster under patent of Charles I. Antrim, like Down, was not one of the escheated plantation counties in Ulster, but from the early sixteenth century it drew increasing numbers of settlers, particularly from Scotland, as landlords—many of them Scottish—developed their holdings in the county. Following phases of heavy Scottish settlement in Ulster, Irish Presbyterianism developed alongside its Scottish counterpart, and in the mid- to late-seventeenth century it assumed the structure of an independent and self-constituted religious polity centred on the north-east of Ulster, with concentrations in mid- and north-Antrim and north-Down.[20]

The farmers in the rural district of mid-Antrim were overwhelmingly Dissenters, and through the nineteenth century, the Ballymena district retained a strong Presbyterian

[18] *Observer*, 25 April 1868, 2 May 1868.

[19] The results of the 1906 general election in mid-Antrim are listed below; they are excerpted from Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 326.

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
Hon. R. T. O'Neill	Unionist	3,367
Col. J. H. Vershoyle	Independent Unionist	2,577

demographic and institutional base. Around one-half of the town's population professed the faith of Knox in its various Ulster strains. The spatial articulation of Ballymena's nineteenth-century agricultural hinterland predominantly reflected the pattern of small-to-medium-sized holdings developed in periods of Scottish settlement.

This local study of social, economic and cultural dynamics in the district explores the institutional structures of Ulster Presbyterianism—its churches and associational culture, the Presbyterian dimension of the 1859 religious revivals and the community's place in the distribution of authority in rural and urban areas of mid-Antrim. It aims to explore, from a local perspective, questions related to the structure of an "urban" community which was shaped by pressures from, and developments in, its rural district: did the rural dimension in the district's structures—the local textile economy, the structure of power and the transmission of popular cultural influences from the countryside—dilute the putatively "urban" character of the community, or did it assume a primacy in defining relationships within the urban centre and between the district and the wider world?[21]

These themes are engaged through an exploration of local economic, social and demographic patterns in the post-Famine era, as well as long-standing features of the district which served as referents in local cultural expressions, particularly in religious revival and commercial protest. The connections between Ballymena's denominational profile, the structure of the economy in the mid-Antrim district and the distribution of power in local institutions created mechanisms through which the cultural initiatives of evangelicalism and rural organisation were conceptualised and

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[20] See Gibbon.

enacted in local society. The first four chapters of this study describe and analytically engage the demographic, economic and institutional features of the district and the functional characteristics of urban and rural areas. Chapter one examines patterns of urban development from the early-nineteenth century and describes some of the structural and cultural co-ordinates which influenced post-Famine development in the area. Chapter two explores structures of authority in the district in order to assess the distribution of power between groups in the local social structure. Chapter three explores the changing structure of the local linen market and the district's textile labour force, which were part of broader processes of post-Famine demographic and institutional developments examined in chapter four. Chapters five and six explore the interplay of these structures and institutions in cultural expressions in the district, situating these developments within the parameters of mid-Antrim's particular economic, demographic and institutional profile and the cultural referents and resources of communities in the district.

This study of mid-Antrim explores economic and social change, systems of local authority and the institutions which underpinned communities in the district. The religious revivals of 1859, which swept through the district, inevitably occupy an important place in this exploration of local development and community formation. Religion furnished important cultural resources and rural evangelicalism formed part of a communal expression deriving legitimacy and social force from a series of interconnected events which constructed and sacralised the folk-memory of the rural area of mid-Antrim and expressed the place of religion at the core of mid-Antrim's identity. This process of cultural mobilisation exhibited the dual tendencies of ethno-

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[21] Goldfield, especially 1012-18.

religious consolidation on one hand, and, on another, the assimilation of predominantly urban-based local Episcopalians in mid-Antrim within the ideological framework of evangelicalism. Historians have been divided over whether the strength of the political theology which emerged from this mobilisation was the consequence of the decay of an Ulster Presbyterian culture which was self-referential and self-constituting or was instead a robust assertion of its strength, by which it gained pre-eminence in the political theology of Victorian Protestant unionism.[22] Evangelical revival was initiated within the structures of rural Presbyterianism and brought to the urban centre of the district by these agencies because Presbyterian congregations maintained a unique position in local society, integrating groups in the district whose relations were at the core of contemporary economic and social transformations. But limiting the scope of this study to the Presbyterians of Ballymena would preclude exploring other numerically and socially important sections of the community. Conflicts and collaborations between and within local religious communities were a feature of town culture and were expressed most ambiguously in the putative pan-denominationalism of evangelical revival. Ballymena's population included sizeable Episcopalian and Roman Catholic communities, a smaller but very active Methodist congregation, a Remonstrant Presbyterian congregation and a number of Baptists and Independents. Together, these groups comprised one-half of Ballymena's population in the post-Famine period. This study assesses and compares the relationships between these groups in a variety of local spaces.

[22] Akenson propounds the thesis of Presbyterian's increasing influence over aspects of unionist political theology (147-48), while Brooke is a proponent of the "Presbyterian to Protestant" argument, which focuses on the dissolution of the structures of Presbyterian particularism (145-74)

Nineteenth-century towns, cities and regions were arenas in which specifically localised projects and identities were developed.[23] The highly regionalised character of the economies of the constituent parts of the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century implies that instruments of this negotiation varied by town, district and region. Specific localised conditions provided the framework within which collective cultural identities, projects and conflicts were realised and expressed. Developments in Irish urban historiography have included the embrace of this urban world as a theatre for assessing the axes of class, gender and inter-denominational relations, and for exploring the interchange between rural and urban areas.[24] Belfast has been the primary focus of urban historical inquiry in Ulster, as the exemplar of the industrial north-east of Ireland, but other research has focussed attention on towns and industrial villages within the so-called "Linen Triangle" between Dungannon, Lisburn and Newry.[25] These studies have contributed significantly to our understanding of the social impact of the linen industry. The textile industry in Ulster, and in the United

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[23] See Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban-Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 21-26, for a concise discussion of the urban unit as an arena for studying the experience of capitalist transformation and the operation of social groups and structures of authority. Koditschek contrasts Asa Briggs' narrow focus on urban centres (*Victorian Cities* [London: Oldham, 1963]) with the approach of John Foster (*Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early English Capitalism in Three Towns* [London: Methuen, 1977]) and argues for an approach which mediates local and larger national perspectives.

[24] Links between town and country in Ireland have been explored in relation to land agitation by Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) and by Liam Kennedy, "Farmers, Traders and Agricultural Politics in Pre-Independence Ireland," in *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1996), 135-66.

[25] Mary Daly discusses the range of literature on Belfast and contrasts it with a relative paucity of southern urban studies in "Irish Urban History: A Survey," *Urban History Yearbook* (1986): 61-72. Since then, a number of studies have focussed on class and commercial relations in southern urban centres, including Maura Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft? The Politicisation of the Skilled Artisan in Nineteenth-Century Cork* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994) and P. H. Gulliver and Marilyn Silverman, *Merchants and Shopkeepers: An Historical Anthropology of An Irish Market Town, 1200-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995). Among studies of towns within industrial districts of Ulster are E. R. R. Green, *The Lagan Valley, 1800-50: A Local History of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), Marilyn Cohen, *Linen, Family and Community in Tullylish, County Down, 1690-1914* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997) and Francis Xavier McCorry, *Lurgan: An Irish Provincial Town, 1610-1970* (Lurgan: Inglewood Press, 1993).

Kingdom generally, did not develop evenly: the structure of the market in mid-Antrim was decidedly different from that of the Lagan Valley and other parts of the Linen Triangle.[26] Cultural expressions in areas characterised by differentiated market structures in Ulster had specific localised origins and impacts—developments which were fundamental to local encounters with, and responses to, social and economic change.[27] Among defining features of the mid-Antrim district were a distinctive structure of linen production and commerce which created strong links between urban and rural areas, a land profile of mid-sized holdings which was chiefly a vestige of Scottish settlement periods, a highly developed Presbyterian congregational network throughout the district and the urban predominance and overwhelming rural presence of Presbyterians in the population.[28] These features of the economic and social profile of mid-Antrim shaped its encounter with wider developments in Ulster society and provided co-ordinates for the cultural expressions explored in this study.

[26] Jane Gray, "The Irish and Scottish Linen Industries in the Eighteenth Century: An Incorporated Comparison," in *The Warp of Ulster's Past*, ed. Marilyn Cohen (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 39-69.
[27] For a discussion of the differentiated structure of the Ulster linen industry, see W.H. Crawford's critique of Conrad Gill's *The Rise of the Irish Linen Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925) in "The Evolution of the Linen Trade in Ulster Before Industrialisation," *Irish Economic and Social History* 15 (1988): 32-53; the differentiated experience is also the subject of Gibbon's study, as an underpinning to his narrative of homogenisation. A useful study addressing the development of the Scottish linen industry which also describes the regionalised market in that country is Alastair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1979), 24-25.
[28] For a concise exploration of Ulster-Scot society to 1850, see S. J. Connolly, "Ulster Presbyterians: Religion, Culture and Politics," in *Ulster and North America: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Scotch-Irish*, eds. H. Tyler Blethen and Curtis W. Wood Jr. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 24-40. D. H. Akenson also explores structures in a predominantly Presbyterian society in the nineteenth century in *Between Two Revolutions: Islandmagee, 1798-1920* (Port Credit, Ont.: P.D. Meany Co., 1979), but his analysis of the evolution of a local "cosmology" is premised on the self-consistency of an almost exclusively rural Presbyterian culture.

I: Framing the Community: Contexts and Comparisons

This aim of this chapter is to set themes of community formation and institutional development in mid-Antrim within a wider nineteenth-century context. It will explore social and economic features of the Ballymena area, focussing on the changing demographic profile of the community and the structure of the local economy. It also aims to set the town within a spatial context by describing its situation in north-east Ireland and by comparing its development with that of other urban centres in Ulster. This discussion provides a context for the particular patterns of economic, institutional and demographic development explored in subsequent sections of this analysis.

Situated on a bank of the Braid Water two miles above its confluence with the Kells Water and the River Main, the town of Ballymena is at the centre of a basalt plateau; in the Glens of Antrim on the east coast of the county, these black basalt sheets ended in dramatic cliffs.[1] The region had been settled in large numbers by Lowland Scots in the seventeenth century. Relative political stability, population expansion and economic growth in Scotland during this period provided an impetus for migration and capital investment in Ireland.[2] Part of the land which later formed the Ballymena Estate had passed from the proprietorship of Sir Faithful Fortescue to William Adair, Laird of Kinhilt, Wigtonshire in the seventeenth century. The remaining portion of the Ballymena Estate was subsequently acquired through the marriage of Adair's son Robert to a daughter of the neighbouring landlord and the

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[1] F. H. A. Aalen, Kevin Whelan and Mathew Stout, *Atlas of the Rural Irish Landscape* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 11, 15.

[2] Raymond Gillespie provides a detailed account of the motivations for settlement in his study *Colonial Ulster: The Settlement of East Ulster 1600-1641* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1985), 28-46; see also W. Macafee and V. Morgan, "Population in Ulster, 1660-1760," in *Plantation to Partition: Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J. L. McCracken*, ed. Peter Roebuck (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981), 46-63. For a comprehensive treatment of earlier Jacobean settlement, see M. Perceval-Maxwell, *The Scottish Migration to Ulster in the Reign of James I* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

Estate was confirmed to him by patent of Charles I.[3] From the mid-seventeenth century, the town became an important regional commercial and administrative centre for a largely Presbyterian settlement community: a 1630 muster roll listed 126 Scottish males on the Adair Estate and only eleven Englishmen.[4] In a series of leases, the Adairs parcelled out estate land for a range of purposes, chiefly for arable and pastoral farming, as well as mills for corn processing in 1729 and textile finishing in 1709. As well as serving as a nexus of exchange, Ballymena had a limited production and processing economy: the eighteenth century saw the establishment in the area of a paper mill. By the early years of the nineteenth century, Ballymena cemented its role as a major inland market centre organising the commercial activities of its largely Presbyterian agricultural hinterland.

These organising functions brought with them many of the features of other urban commercial centres: professionals, market officers and ancillary businesses, from public houses to inns. Reverend John Dubourdieu, in his *Statistical Survey* of 1812, described the town as "a most thriving place" with a large linen market. "From whatever cause it proceeds," he wrote,

> this is one of the most prosperous places in the county, though so far inland; and, as the markets are much frequented, there are two very comfortable inns. Wherever the linen-drapers regularly attend, decent accommodation at least may be expected. About the centre of the town is the market-house, with a steeple sixty feet high.[5]

The local market, and the market-house, built partly by subscription and partly by the Adair family, were key institutions in the town, and the height of its 1754 tower signalled the centrality of Ballymena's marketplace to the mid-Antrim district.

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[3] *Observer*, 18 February 1865.

[4] Gillespie, 170.

[5] Reverend John Dubourdieu, *Statistical Survey of the County of Antrim* (Dublin: Graisberry Campbell, 1812), 474-75.

A market-house had existed in the town since at least the late-seventeenth century, and through the vagaries of the development of the Irish commercial network—which had seen discrete phases of growth, contraction and consolidation—it served as the principal market for mid-Antrim, briefly becoming both a figurative and literal flash-point for United Irishmen agitation in 1798, when it was set ablaze.[6] During the conflict, which in Ulster was centred on the Presbyterian regions of Down and Antrim, Ballymena was an important area of contest between the forces of the state and supporters of the ill-fated uprising.[7]

The topography of mid-Antrim was described in *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* of County Antrim, compiled in 1832, as "generally undulating": the principal tillage crops were wheat, potatoes and flax.[8] Early in the century, a butter market had been established in the town, as well as in the neighbouring markets of Ballymoney and Broughshane, to provide a nexus of exchange for a commodity of growing importance in the area.[9] In 1824, the market days were recorded as falling on Saturday for linen, Tuesday for pork and Wednesday for grain.[10] Linen was widely credited with the town's growth and it was written in 1824 that "the bleaching business is carried on rather extensively" in the rural area around the town.[11] In 1824, Ballymena's brown (unbleached) linen market was recorded as the tenth-largest in Ulster.

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[6] For a discussion of phases in the development of Ireland's commercial network, see Patrick O'Flanagan, "Markets and Fairs in Ireland, 1600-1800: Index of Economic Development and Regional Growth," *Journal of Historical Geography* 11 (1985): 4: 364-78.
[7] Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1997), 232-33.
[8] Angélique Day, Patrick McWilliams and Nórín Dobson, eds., *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland*, vol. 23, *Parishes of County Antrim VII, 1831-5, 1837-8: Ballymena and West Antrim* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1993) [hereafter referred to as "Ordnance Survey"], 88.
[9] Dubordieu, 425.
[10] *Pigot and Company's City of Dublin and Hibernian Provincial Directory* (London: Pigot and Co.,1824), 339.
[11] Ibid.

Table 1.1
Value of brown linen sold in Ulster markets, 1824

Town	*Value of Brown Linen*		
Armagh	£ 335,260	8s.	4d.
Lurgan	121,455	16s.	8d.
Tandagree	112,083	6s.	8d.
Belfast	90,000	0s.	0d.
Strabane	86,284	0s.	0d.
Dungannon	85,702	6s.	6d.
Londonderry	78,156	0s.	0d.
Banbridge	77,550	0s.	0d.
Coleraine	74,138	2s.	8d.
Ballymena	**73,610**	**18s.**	**10d.**

Source: *Select Committee on the Laws Which Govern the Linen Trade of Ireland*, Appendix to Report (411), HC 1825, vol. V, 185-186.

Alternative estimates of the size of Ballymena's linen market, relative to other urban centres across Ulster, exist. Figures compiled for the Linen Board indicate that weekly sales in Ballymena's brown linen open market equalled those of Belfast, Cootehill, Londonderry and Newry in 1784, and were exceeded in Ulster only by Armagh, Dungannon, Lisburn and Lurgan. In 1816, Ballymena's market had the fifth-highest weekly sales in Ulster, the twelfth-highest in 1820 and the seventh-highest in 1821.[12]

Samuel Lewis claimed that the town owed "its rapid rise and present importance to the linen manufacture" and recorded fourteen bleachgreens within a five-mile radius of the town in his *Topographical Dictionary* of 1837-38.[13] *Slater's Directory* in 1824 also listed fifteen entries under the heading "Linen Merchants and Registered Bleachers"—most located on bleachgreens beside rivers in the townlands of the district, among them Leighenmohr, Lisnafillon, Dunminning and Ballygarvey.

[12] See Conrad Gill, *The Rise of the Irish Linen Industry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 336-38.

Among mills recorded during Sir Richard Griffith's Primary Valuation of Ireland in the post-Famine period were beetling mills—where cloth was finished—and dyeworks in the townlands of Crevilly-valley, Kilgad, Kells and Kildrum and beetling mills in Lisnawhigger belonging to Francis Dinsmore, with others belonging to Daniel Kirk in Tawnybrack.[14] In the barony of Lower Toome, in which Ballymena was situated, flax mills dotted the country landscape, many belonging to men who were also the district's leading merchants and "commercial gentry": William Young, William Gihon, John and William Loughridge and John and Daniel Craig. Alexander Davison had received funds from the Trustees of the parliament-funded Irish Linen Board for the erection of spinning machinery in the townland of Knockboy, neighbouring Ballymena, in 1809, and the Episcopalian Davison family became important figures in the local yarn-spinning industry and in Belfast Conservative politics through the course of the nineteenth century. [15] The influence which accrued to these merchants and manufacturers included commissions of the peace, elective office and influential positions in local voluntary associations; although judicial office was traditionally the preserve of Ireland's Episcopalians, in Ballymena Presbyterians also served on the Bench in significant numbers.[16]

The role of bleachers and landholding merchants in the development of the linen industry in Ulster, and their position in the districts' interconnected urban-rural institutional infrastructure, has attracted the attention of a number of authors, as has the centrality of this occupational group in the early development of the textile

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[13] Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (London: S. Lewis and Co., 1837), 148.
[14] *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland: Union of Ballymena* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons, 1862). Other information is available in William E. Hogg, *The Millers and Mills of Ireland of About 1850* (Dublin: William E. Hogg, 1998), 250-51.
[15] J. Horner, *The Linen Trade of Europe* (Belfast: McCaw, Stevenson and Orr, Ltd., 1920), 186-87.
[16] Eull Dunlop, "Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter in Mid-Antrim: Some Denominational Differences on the Eve of the 1859 Revival" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University of Belfast, 1993), 66.

sector's commercial foundations.[17] Eighteenth-century bleachgreens, where cloth was processed from brown to white linen, were the centres of textile capitalism in the north of Ireland. This task was capital-intensive and time-consuming until the advent of new chemical processes in the early-nineteenth century. Because large tracts of land were required for laying the cloth for bleaching and because water was required in the bleaching process, the greens were located in the countryside: by 1787, there were some 357 greens in Ulster.[18] Bleachgreen proprietors were men of property and significant means—many had invested money in linen processing which had originated in agriculture and urban commercial trades—and their role was paramount in the organisation of the commercial linen industry in the eighteenth century. These linen merchants were not only involved in bleaching, but also in other organised forms of processing flax and linen cloth.[19] The rise of the bleachers was encouraged in part by support provided to the industry by the Trustees of the parliament-financed Irish Linen Board, established in 1711.[20] Improvements in bleaching techniques, and the availability of capital to finance expansion, contributed to the bleachers' enhanced commercial position and local stature. Gradually they came to dominate the purchase of linen in the marketplace, where they vied for cloth with linen drapers, many of whom were shopkeepers and small-scale merchants. Usually purchasing brown linen directly in the open market, bleachers also provided the impetus for the establishment of a number of commercial structures, from linen halls in major towns and cities to a

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[17] See W. H. Crawford's criticism of Conrad Gill's analysis in "The Evolution of the Linen Trade in Ulster Before Industrialisation," *Irish Economic and Social History* 15 (1988): 32-53; see also Marilyn Cohen, *Linen, Family and Community in Tullylish, Co. Down, 1690-1914* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 29-58.
[18] W. A. McCutcheon, *The Industrial Archaeology of Northern Ireland* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press), 250-51.
[19] W. H. Crawford, "Drapers and Bleachers in the Early Ulster Linen Industry," in *Négoce et Industrie en France et en Ireland aux VXIIIe et XIXe Siècles*, eds. L. M. Cullen and P. Butel (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980), 113-119.
[20] Ibid., 115.

national infrastructure of roads and markets. The bleachers also financed the export of cloth abroad, combining commercial activities with textile processing: in the Ballymena area, the accounts of James Young in the 1850s reveal export activity in North and South America and as far away as the Philippines.[21]

The nineteenth century, however, saw the emergence in many parts of Ulster of an intermediate group in the organisation of textile production. "Manufacturers" put-out work to weavers, and sold the webs by private contract to bleachers and merchants. The putative "transition" from a brown linen market to the "putting-out" system has been criticised by W. H. Crawford for suggesting an overly-simplified trajectory of change in the industry. In mid-Antrim, for instance, many of the district's bleachers continued to play a direct role in the marketplace well into mid-century, especially as the open brown linen market retained its independent character in mid-Antrim longer than in other districts of the province. The implication of the bleachers in both linen processing and large-scale commercial activity from an early period in the linen industry's development strengthened links between local rural industry and urban-based commerce in mid-Antrim. Indeed, the very structure of "rural industry"—with its large, organised and highly differentiated rural workforces, meant that local industry and labour forces were substantially developed in the countryside bleachgreens. The bleachers and linen merchants also formed a socially-cohesive status group within the area's merchant and commercial classes, defined by their economic roles, their landed status and their high social profile. They were, for the most part, drawn from a few families who, through inter-marriage and participation in associations and institutions of local governance, constituted an influential section in local rural and urban society.

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[21] Accounts of James Young, Fenaghy, PRONI D/1658/2.

When the compilers of Ulster's *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* passed through the Ballymena district in the 1830s, they commented on the extensive bleachgreens which dominated the rural landscape: in 1835, one observer noted the recent establishment of a large green at Lisnafillon, alongside John Dickey's works at Leighenmohr, which encompassed more than thirteen acres, and those of Robert Young in Hillmount.[22] A green belonging to Daniel Currell was located just under two miles from the town in Ballygarvey and that of Andrew Gihon, nearly twelve acres in size, was contiguous to the town.[23] The links between the bleacher-merchants were significant, and through implication in a number of other enterprises, from railways to spinning factories, they played a central role in financing and directing the emergence of the commercial and industrial infrastructure of the district. In mid-Antrim, many were also leading members of Presbyterian congregations: although his family was involved in the development of the railway system, in July 1858 the Presbyterian linen merchant John Young spoke at a public meeting chaired by the Estate Agent and bleacher John Dickey and proposed a motion that "in the judgement of this meeting, the practice of running railway excursion trains upon the Lord's Day is not only evil in itself, but productive of much evil to the community, and it is our earnest desire that it should be discontinued."[24]

Ties between the linen bleaching families were strong, reflecting their status as a self-constituting and socially cohesive community within the elite structure of the region and the strategies necessary for the maintenance of their principal resources: merchant and landed capital from which their economic activity and status claims derived. Few of the bleacher-merchants were parvenus: indeed several, including the

[22] Ordnance Survey, 2, 13.
[23] Ibid, 12-13, 104.
[24] *Observer*, 24 July 1858.

Young and Patrick families, brought money accrued in professional urban activity in the Ballymena area to the development of the district's rural industry. The Dickey family, by one account, had been the first to erect power-driven greens in Ireland in 1705.[25] The local bleacher-merchants demonstrated a marked propensity towards endogamy. Daniel Currell of the Ballygarvey green married the sister of the bleacher William Gihon of Clonavon. Gihon in turn was married to Rose Brown, whose brother was a wealthy merchant who had emigrated from Ulster to America. One of William and Rose Gihon's daughters married Robert Young, partner in a large linen concern; another daughter married the local "linen lord" John Patrick of Dunminning; a third daughter married William Beggs, manager of the Lisnafillon bleachworks. William and Rose Gihon's son married his cousin, Elizabeth Rose Brown.[26] Through marriage and migration, many of these groups also maintained strong ties in American markets: the Young family had relations in the United States who managed their business across the Atlantic, and the Gihons and other families had personal and extensive commercial links in America. Though these families were tied by blood, some were members of different Dissenting traditions, and played prominent roles in their local congregations. William Gihon was an elder of the Remonstrant Synod congregation in Ballymena, in which both he and members of the Patrick family played a leading role. John Young was a mainline Presbyterian and a significant benefactor of its institutions. As Dissenters, though, many of the local bleachers were distinguished from Episcopalian gentry, including the Adair family.

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[25] H. D. Gribbon, *The History of Water Power in Ulster* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, Ltd., 1969), 83.

[26] For details of these complex family links, see James G. Kenny, "Lore of Linen 'Lords' and Others," *The Glyns* 21 (1993): 58-64 and Alexander Davison, *The Davisons of Knockboy, Broughshane, County Antrim* (Co. Antrim: Black Eagle Press, 1995).

The mills and large bleachgreens erected in Ballymena's hinterland bordered the small- and mid-sized farms which provided linen webs and agricultural produce—oats, potatoes and flax as well as pork, butter and other staples—to the local market. As farmers and as weavers, and often as both, the residents of the Ballymena district related to the market directly as buyers and sellers, a feature that became increasingly distinctive through the nineteenth century.

A report of the Royal Commission on Hand-loom Weavers described the structure of the Irish linen markets in the late 1830s as approximately corresponding to three models: one involving weavers working "on their own account or, as it is technically expressed, for the market, and occupying besides, small holdings of land."[27] This was the pattern of production prevalent throughout Ireland in the late eighteenth century, and it still formed the basis of linen production in and around "the markets of Ballymena, Ballymoney and Coleraine, which are noted for the sale of the finest qualities of linen."[28] The rhythm of production in these areas involved seasonal work at the loom combined with agricultural cultivation on small plots of land. The weavers exchanged their cloths in the open market, bringing their webs to town on market-day and exposing them for sale to bleachers' and merchants' agents who sat upon stools in the marketplace. The agents inspected the cloth for a requisite seal and then negotiated a price for the web. The transaction was completed later in the day at a local inn, where deductions were made by merchants for the rent of a paying-house and the seal-master's fee. The Ulster poet Hugh McWilliams described these activities at Ballymena's yarn and linen web markets in an 1831 poem:

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[27] *Royal Commission on Hand-loom Weavers*, Commissioners' Reports, Pt. III (Yorkshire, West Riding; Ireland) (43-II), HC 1840, vol. XXIII [(hereafter cited as "Hand-loom Weavers"] 709.
[28] Ibid.

Behold the yarn market! look what's there
Of amiable females fine and fair,
With bunches that their arms can scarcely span
And others with few rough dozen run.
The cautious purchaser withholds a while—
Cheap! he exclaims—bad stuff, and gives a smile.

The seller now retaliates again,
No better stuff, or yarn was ever spun.
I've fifteen spangle. And I'll beat a crown
There's not a bunch superior in the town.
In six short weeks, the servant maid and I
Spun what you see, 'twould be a sin to lie.
The bargains closed, he pays without delay
She counts it, puts it past, and turns away.

We'll now proceed to where the cloth is sold—
Behold that throng of people young and old,
With webs in readiness—it strikes the hour,
See how they forward rush with all their power
Towards the merchant, whom they well can tell
The quality of what they have to sell;
He views and turns the plies so quick, and then
Bids them a price, and with his ready pen
Claps on a mark immediately, and
Another's waiting, reaching out his hand...[29]

This system of exchange, conducted in the public marketplace, brought producers and bleacher-merchants together in face-to-face negotiations. The organisation of production and exchange in other areas of the province was significantly different from the one widely in operation in mid- and north-Antrim in the 1830s. "Already advantages of concentrated capital and ingenuity and enterprise, over the isolated efforts of the lowly and industrious weaver are rapidly developing themselves," the Hand-loom Commissioners reported, "and day by day are transplanting the loom from the cabin of the cottier to the factory or weaving-shop of the manufacturer." The factory system was described as prevalent throughout Down, and in parts of Counties Antrim, Londonderry and Armagh in the 1830s. There,

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[29] In John Hewitt, ed., *Rhyming Weavers and Other Country Poets of Antrim and Down* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1974), 25-26.

weavers were employed directly by manufacturers, either on the putting-out system or in hand-loom workshops and factories. Unlike the Ballymena weavers, these weavers were not directly implicated in the marketplace; instead their role was primarily that of employee-producer. Weavers in the Banbridge area, for example, lived near the workshops where they were employed in small cottages built for them and held by their employers.[30]

Not only was the pattern of linen production highly differentiated in pre-Famine Ulster; so too were the linen markets, as W. H. Crawford has demonstrated.[31] In the period just before the introduction of mechanised spinning, in markets in parts of the west of the province, finer-quality webs known as "coleraines" were valued as high as 1s. 6d. in 1820. The bulk of Ballymena's trade, by contrast, was in coarser linens, often woven from tow—short fibres combed out during flax preparation and used for coarser cloth—by the region's farmer-weavers. Ballymena's brown linen market stood in marked contrast to the general pattern of production and commerce in the linen industry in the 1830s. Athough Lurgan was also described as an area in which weavers on land of between four to ten acres grew their own flax, spun their own yarn and wove their own cloth, Ballymena was described as possessing "an important feature that, while all the other brown markets of the kingdom have been rapidly declining, it has been increasing."[32] One correspondent with the Hand-loom Commissioners, the bleacher Thomas M. Birnie of Dunminning, near Ballymena, wrote that the town's linen trade had greatly augmented while other local linen markets had disappeared altogether. He attributed this "to the fact that, in all other parts of Ulster, the trade is much more in the hands of manufacturers." Since the

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[30] Hand-loom Weavers, 638.
[31] W. H. Crawford, "The Evolution of the Linen Trade", 32-53 and *Domestic Industry in Ireland: The Experience of the Linen Industry* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972).

manufacturers sold large quantities of linen to bleachers on credit, they did not trade in the open market. In Ballymena, however, Birnie claimed that "the trade, though to a great extent in the hands of manufacturers, is carried on principally for cash bargains."[33] In addition to this feature of the Ballymena linen market, Birnie noted that the use of mill-spun yarn was on the increase, as was female weaving, especially since the introduction of unions (cloth of cotton warp and linen weft) and the replacement of hand-spinning—a traditionally female task—with wet-spinning. Indeed, while in 1841 females constituted 13 percent of linen weavers and 17 percent of unspecified weavers in Antrim, ten years later they comprised 34 percent of linen and damask weavers in the county and 40 percent of unspecified weavers.[34] At the same time, the number of hand-spinners declined dramatically from 25,523 to 5,032.[35]

The marketplace was a central institution in the town which channelled and distributed resources in the district, contributed to defining status and collective identities and guided local development. The origins of the town were linked to functions of distribution, and as early as the eighteenth century, Ballymena was one of the nine leading linen markets of the province.[36] The area's farms, averaging between twelve and fifteen acres in the 1830s, provided irregular employment for the region's rural cottiers. The district's poorer weavers and labourers inhabited small stone and lime cottages with thatched roofs, and many followed a complex pattern of seasonal migration, especially to Scotland, along with local harvest labour and weaving.[37]

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[32] Hand-loom Weavers, 642.
[33] Ibid., correspondence and testimony of Thomas M. Birnie, 756-58
[34] Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841 [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Aalen, Whelan and Stout, 79.
[37] From testimony printed in the supplement to the *Royal Commission on the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland* [hereafter referred to as "Poor Inquiry"], Appendix E, Baronial Examination Relative to Food, Cottages and Cabins, Clothing and Furniture, Pawnbroking and Savings Banks, Drinking; Supplement [38], HC 1836, vol. XXXII.

Permanent emigration to Britain and North America was also an economic strategy: in the 1830s, the largest emigrant group went to North America and was reported to have comprised farmers' sons, tradesmen, labourers and servants.[38]

Ballymena grew rapidly in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. A 1789 estate map—Map 4—shows a number of outlying townparks and a conglomeration of buildings clustered around a few intersecting streets. A description of the town in 1809 mentions only Bridge Street, Church Street, Castle Street and Mill Street—the number of thoroughfares within the town would grow to twenty-two streets and two lanes recorded in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* and then to over thirty streets by 1850.[39] The *Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* described Ballymena in 1844-45 as "an antiquated and irregular town in the process of transmutation into modern neatness of masonry, and combined spaciousness in order of street arrangement."[40] Neither a planned estate town nor a mediaeval centre of great size, Ballymena's physical adaptation to new demographic, social and economic exigencies was to some extent piecemeal in the period before it came under the provisions of the Town Improvement Act in 1854.

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[38] Ibid.
[39] *Observer*, 10 December 1864.
[40] *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* (Dublin: A. Fullerton and Co., 1846), 184.

Map 4
Estate Map of Ballymena, 1789

Source: Maps of the Ballymena Estate, 1789 and 1849, Public Record Office, Belfast T/1310/3.

Original scale: 1 inch to 20 Irish perches (approximately 1:5,000).

Map 5
Estate Map of Ballymena, 1849

Source: Maps of the Ballymena Estate, 1789 to 1849, Public Record Office, Belfast T/1310/3.

Original scale: 1 inch to 20 statute perches (approximately 1:6,000).

In the nineteenth century, Ballymena's population grew from the 2,500 inhabitants estimated by Durbourdieu in 1812. Table 1.2 shows population returns for the town from the printed census, from 1821 to 1891.[41] The town's most rapid growth, in percentage terms, occurred between 1821 and 1841.

Table 1.2
Population change, Ballymena, 1821-91

Year	**Population** *(N.)*	**Change** *(%)*
1821	2,740	----
1831	4,319	57.63
1841	5,549	28.48
1851	6,133	10.52
1861	6,769	10.37
1871	7,931[1]	N/A
1881	8,883	12.00
1891	8,655	-2.57

[1] From 1871, the geographic "township" unit was employed.
Sources: "Abstract of Answers and Returns Pursuant to the Act for Taking Account of the Population of Ireland" (577, 1823), HC 1824, vol. XXII; "Return of the Population of the Counties of Ireland" (254), HC 1833, vol. XXXIX; "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Enumeration Abstracts of the Number of Inhabitants in Ireland, 1841,1851 and 1861; Religious Professions, 1861; Number of Houses and Families, 1841, 1851 and 1861 [2865], HC 1861, vol. L; *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1; *Census of Ireland, 1881*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religions and Education, Province of Ulster [C.3204], HC 1882 vol. LXXVIII; *Census of Ireland, 1891*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religion and Education [C.6685], vol. XCII.

Although, in percentage terms, the town's growth slowed in mid-century, from 1841 to 1861, Ballymena's share of County Antrim's civic population increased, to over 32 percent of all residents in towns with over 2,000 inhabitants.

[41] Local population returns must be treated cautiously, as conflicting returns are found throughout the printed census. In 1821 no return was made for Harryville; from 1831 to 1861, its population was returned separately from that of Ballymena. In 1871 it was included in a new geographic entity—"Ballymena township," the population of which is given in the population table; the township area was not congruent with the previous "town" unit. Except where explicit comparisons are being made between Ballymena and Harryville, the data for both of these two places are combined in this study.

Table 1.3
Population of Ballymena as a proportion of County Antrim's[1] civic[2] population, 1841-61

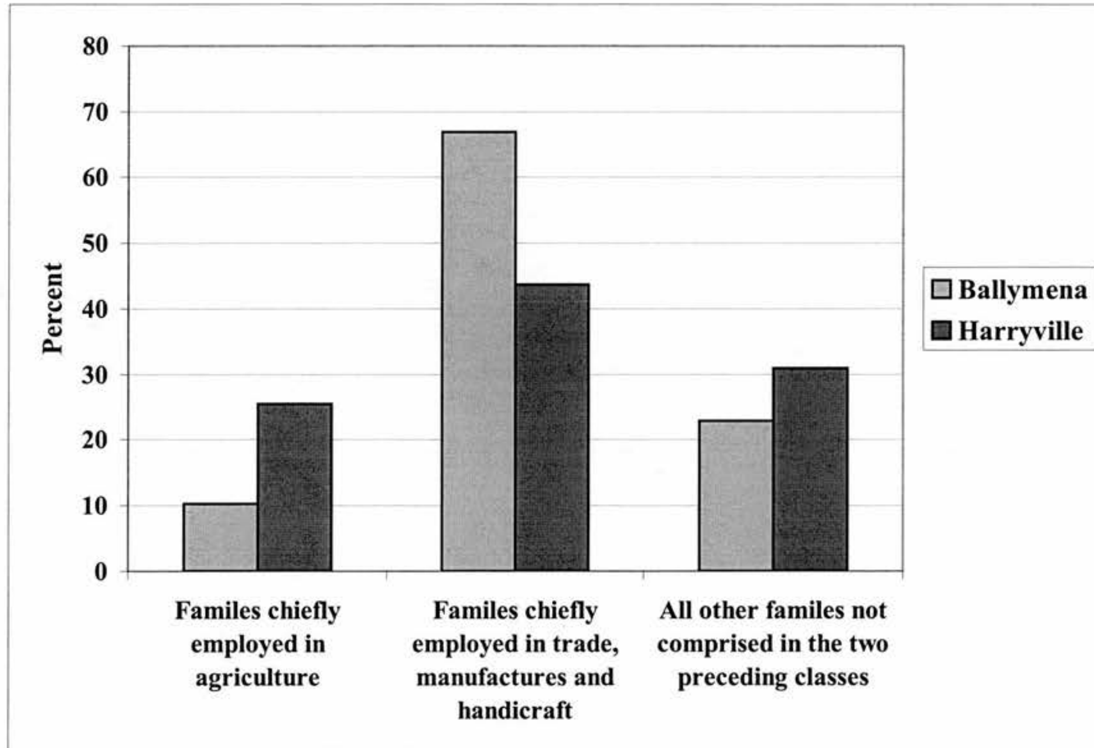
Year	*Ballymena Population (N.)*	*County Antrim Civic Population (N.)*	*Ballymena's Proportion of County. Antrim's Civic Population (%)*
1841	5,549	19,836	27.97
1851	6,133	22,860	26.83
1861	6,769	20,971	32.28

[1]Excluding Belfast and Carrickfergus.
[2] In the Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland (1841 [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV), it was reported that enumerators employed the term "town" to describe a "an assemblage of contiguous houses, instead of town, village, and hamlet, as formerly used…we have adopted 20 as the minimum number of houses constituting a town in that sense" (vi). The "civic" population comprised inhabitants of towns of over 2,000 residents (viii).
Sources: "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Enumeration Abstracts of the Number of Inhabitants in Ireland, 1841,1851 and 1861; Religious Professions, 1861; Number of Houses and Families, 1841, 1851 and 1861 [2865], HC 1861, vol. L.

As the population of the town increased and the number of streets expanded, Ballymena absorbed the neighbouring village of Harryville, which lay across the River Braid Water in the parish of Ballyclug, on the Kart estate of the O'Hara family. The village was described in *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* in 1835 as "two little streets at right angles to one another, and containing fifty-five one-story and seven two-storey cottages."[42] The incorporation of Harryville within the town of Ballymena, however, did not obscure fundamental differences in the structure of the two places. Separate returns for the town of Ballymena and the village of Harryville were recorded in the printed census from 1831 until 1861 and the occupational structure of the two communities in 1831 suggests significant differences in composition, with Harryville displaying greater ties to agriculture and a significantly lower proportion of urban trades and manufacturers.

[42] Ordnance Survey, 54.

Figure 1.1
Comparative occupational profile of Ballymena and Harryville, 1831



Source: "Abstract of Population Returns for Ireland, 1831" (634), HC 1833, vol. XXXIX.

Ballymena's growing population in the first four decades of the nineteenth century was supported by a range of professional and commercial concerns in the town. In 1824, *Pigot's Directory* listed four attorneys, a physician and six surgeons and apothecaries.[43] The town's commercial concerns included a range of grocers and spirit merchants. A parliamentary inquiry into Ireland's poor heard that Ballymena was also the site of seventy-four public houses and spirit stores—many patronised by the district's farmers on market-days. Other important centres of exchange included Ballymena's three pawnshops, which were central to the income strategies of the district's labourers: these shops were described as being patronised by the poor and

[43] *Pigot and Company's City of Dublin and Hibernian Provincial Directory* (London: Pigot and Co., 1824), 338-40.

the "very lowest class."[44] Small-scale producers in the town included boot and shoemakers, cabinetmakers, tailors, watchmakers, saddlers and smiths, along with a number of reed makers, nailers and other artisans. The distributive role of the town also attracted commercial institutions. By the 1840s, branches of the Belfast Banking Company, the Ulster Banking Company, the Provincial Bank of Ireland and the Northern Banking Company were located in the town. Officers at Ballymena's Linen Hall included an Inspector, Seal Master and Yarn Gauger and the 1831 census recorded seventy-three "capitalists, bankers, professionals and other educated men" residing in Ballymena.[45]

This growing population was also served by an institutional matrix of churches, schools and voluntary societies. The parish church of Kirkinriola was located in the town, and although the rights to tithes had been purchased by the Adair family early in the nineteenth century from the Earl of Mountcashel, the Earl retained the right to nominate the parochial incumbent. A new Episcopal Church was erected and consecrated in Ballymena in 1855. The largest number of townspeople, however, were Dissenters, as Table 1.4 reveals.

Table 1.4
Denominational profile of Ballymena (not including Harryville), 1834

Denomination	*N.*	*%*
Presbyterian	2,500	61.53
Roman Catholic	757	18.63
Episcopalian	700	17.23
Other Dissenters	66	1.62
Unknown	40	0.98

Source: Ordnance Survey, 97.

[44] From testimony printed in Poor Inquiry, supplement to Appendix E.
[45] "Abstract of Population Returns for Ireland, 1831" (634), HC 1833, vol. XXXIX.

This analysis of community development in mid-Antrim draws links between the religious complexion of the community and patterns of local population growth. It demonstrates how urban growth in the post-Famine period was concentrated in areas within the town and affected the balance of denominational groups in the community. Presbyterians remained the largest single religious population in the town throughout the century. In the wider context of nineteenth-century local demographic change, the parish of Kirkinriola's Presbyterian population decreased from over 70 percent in 1831 to under 60 percent by 1891. Table 1.5 shows that while the Roman Catholic proportion of the population remained relatively stable, the proportional strength of Episcopalians and adherents of other denominations increased between 1831 and 1891.

Table 1.5
Religious profile of Kirkinriola Parish, 1831-91

Year	*Population (N.)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
1831	7,297	70.73	16.86	11.10	[1]	1.32
1834	8,005	70.01	17.29	11.39	[2]	1.31
1861	9,214	62.03	16.96	15.74	2.11	3.17
1871	9,407	62.30	15.13	16.35	1.33	4.89
1881	9,232	58.91	17.50	17.31	1.23	5.04[3]
1891	8,532	59.74	16.24	16.58	1.36	6.07

[1] Methodists were not enumerated separately in this return.
[2] See above note.
[3] Includes 17 residents who refused to give an affiliation.
Sources: *Royal Commission on the State of Religious and Other Public Instruction in Ireland*, First Report, Appendices [45] [46], HC 1835, vol. XXXIII; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Enumeration Abstracts of the Number of Inhabitants in Ireland, 1841,1851 and 1861; Religious Professions, 1861; *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1; *Census of Ireland, 1881*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religions and Education, Province of Ulster [C.3204], HC 1882 vol. LXXVIII; *Census of Ireland, 1891*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religion and Education [C.6685], vol. XCII.

In contrast with their co-religionists in Kirkinriola parish, Presbyterians in Ballyclug parish, which included Harryville, increased from 53.98 percent of the parish's population to 61.98 percent from 1831 to 1891, as Table 1.6 illustrates. This study explores how this pattern of growth was part of a wider process of urbanisation in the parish, as Harryville became a site for post-Famine population growth in Ballymena. The Roman Catholic proportion of the population fell continuously from the 1830s, from 41.96 percent in 1831 to under 20 percent by 1891, while Episcopalians and other denominations increased their share of the parish's population. Tables 1.5 and 1.6 show that the two parishes in which Ballymena was situated experienced different patterns of demographic change, but that overall the Roman Catholic population in the area declined in proportion to other groups. This trend underscores important developments during the course of the nineteenth century which are engaged more specifically in the post-Famine period later in this study.

Table 1.6
Religious profile of Ballyclug parish 1831-91

Year	*Population (N.)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
1831	3,692	53.98	41.96	4.06	[1]	0.00
1834	3,877	53.99	41.97	4.05	[2]	0.00
1861	4,591	56.89	31.56	8.73	1.22	1.59
1871	5,009	59.17	25.93	10.36	0.96	3.57
1881	5,515	59.62	22.47	13.15	1.07	3.70[3]
1891	4,721	61.98	19.89	13.51	0.78	3.83

[1] Methodists were not enumerated separately in this return.
[2] See above note.
[3] Includes 28 residents who refused to give an affiliation.
Sources: *Royal Commission on the State of Religious and Other Public Instruction in Ireland*, First Report, Appendices [45] [46], HC 1835, vol. XXXIII; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Enumeration Abstracts of the Number of Inhabitants in Ireland, 1841,1851 and 1861; Religious Professions, 1861; *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1; *Census of Ireland, 1881*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religions and Education, Province of Ulster [C.3204], HC 1882 vol. LXXVIII; *Census of Ireland, 1891*: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religion and Education [C.6685], vol. XCII.

The complexion of the town's large Presbyterian community reflected the diversity of Presbyterian opinion in nineteenth-century Ulster. Presbyterian clergy had ministered to the community since the mid-seventeenth century and the first local congregation dated from that period.[46] Another congregation was established in connection with the Anti-Burgher Secession Synod in the eighteenth century, and was based in the countryside until the early decades of the nineteenth century, when it moved into the town. In 1840, with the union of the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod, it became Ballymena's Second Presbyterian congregation. In the 1820s, the West Presbyterian Church was established and in 1845 several figures connected with the Remonstrant Synod founded a small congregation—comprising several leading merchant families—in Ballymena's High Street.[47] A small Methodist Church was established in Castle Street in 1816 and a Roman Catholic chapel in 1829, previous to which the nearest Catholic church had been in Crebilly, a more heavily Roman Catholic area on the Harryville side of the Braid Water, two miles from the town. Not only was Ballymena a centre for organising trade and commercial exchange: with its range of churches, the town was also an important centre of the social infrastructure of the countryside.

Ordnance Survey Memoirs described the region surrounding Harryville as peopled principally by weavers, and as less prosperous than other areas in the district.[48] The high concentration of Roman Catholics in Crebilly made it the main site for religious conflict in the district and its annual fair occasioned frequent party conflicts. The other principal contested place in the district was the small village of Portglenone, whose significant linen market was eclipsed and then subsumed by that

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[46] See Reverend Aston Robinson, *The Presbytery of Ballymena, 1745-1945* (1945; reprint Ballymena: Mid-Antrim Historical Society, 1995).
[47] Ordnance Survey, 90; Dunlop, vi.

of Ballymena. With a large Catholic population, it too was a sectarian interface. Conflict between local groups resulted in the prolonged and severe disruption of village trade and troops were deployed to quell unrest in 1833.[49] In July 1834, 3,000 Orangemen assembled in the village; by contrast, commemorations at Ballymena, which had nine Orange Lodges in its district, were much smaller.[50]

Schools were numerous and in 1835, when the national system of education was in its infancy, there were five publicly-endowed schools recorded in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*. The most prominent educational institution was Guy's Free School, which had been established in 1821 and was funded by a bequest from the late John Guy comprising rents from three of his properties in Church Street. The funds were placed in the hands of the school's trustees, including a local Presbyterian minister. Approximately 24 percent of its students were recorded as Roman Catholics in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*, another 17 percent were Episcopalians, and the remainder Presbyterians.[51] Other schools included a Town Free School established in 1832, a female National School, a London Hibernian School, the Diocesan School and several private institutions catering to the town's commercial and professional classes: the Classical and Mercantile School, the Mathematical and Mercantile School and two female day schools.[52] In a letter of 23 September 1846, a government figure placed the number of local private schools at half a dozen; he also listed ten national schools within a ten-mile radius of the town.[53]

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[48] Ordnance Survey, 58-59.
[49] *Select Committee on Orange Lodges, Associations and Societies in Ireland*, Third Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendices (476), vol. XVI, testimony of J. G. Jones, q. 8422, q. 8450.
[50] Ibid., testimony of Captain David Duff, q. 8105. Ballymena was not a traditional centre for Orangeism; Frank Wright maps the distribution of Orange Lodges in 1835 in *Two Lands on One Soil: Ulster Politics Before Home Rule* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1996), 57.
[51] Ordnance Survey, 113
[52] Ordnance Survey, 113-14.
[53] *Reports from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Primary Education (Ireland), Education Census*, XXVII, part V (Dublin: Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons) 1871.

The only local charitable institution enumerated in 1835 was a Mendicity Society to aid the poor, but two years later the Ballymena Protestant Society was established with the objective of defending the institutions of the British Constitution and claiming leading local landholders among its members.[54] The Society drew on a Constitutionalist tradition which had also been expressed in 1828, at the height of Emancipation agitation, with the establishment of a Ballymena Brunswick Club patronised by local clergy and Justices of the Peace.[55] By the 1840s, Ballymena also boasted a newsroom and an Agricultural Improvement Society.[56] The town's administrative role combined the operation of ancient manorial courts alongside the administration of justice in Petty Sessions, Quarter Sessions and, with the establishment of the Irish Poor Law in 1837, the activities of the Ballymena Poor Law Union, which was declared in May 1840.[57] With the Union's establishment, the town became an increasingly important administrative centre for the agricultural district.

The spatial configuration of the Ballymena Estate articulated the dynamics of capital and power within the district. A valuation of the Ballymena Estate undertaken for Sir Robert Shafto Adair in 1845 showed that glebe lands, from which the parish church partially drew its income, comprised ten acres, one rood and ten perches of estate land.[58] William Gihon, a prominent bleacher, owned forty-three acres and twelve roods of land in the outlying area of Hill-head in perpetuity, with large amounts of arable land and a long approach to his dwelling house with a porter's

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[54] Ordnance Survey, 98.

[55] Notice of the formation of the Ballymena Brunswick Constitutional Club, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast (hereafter cited as "PRONI") D/1364/M/13.

[56] *Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of the Law and Practice in Relation to the Occupation of Land in Ireland*, Minutes of Evidence, Pt. I [606], HC 1845, vol. XIX, testimony of Robert Brown, q. 15; *Slater's National Commercial Directory of Ireland* (London: I. Slater, 1846), 358.

[57] *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, 184.

[58] Survey and Valuation of the Ballymenagh Estate, the property of Sir Robert Shafto Adair Bart. in the County of Antrim by Robert Montgomery, 1845 [*sic*], PRONI T/1310/1A.

lodge on the property. Many of the leading bleachers of the area inhabited large homes which graced the countryside surrounding Ballymena; these residences testified to the bleachers' status as large landholders and key capitalists in the development of the district's linen industry. The architecture of power in the rural district was articulated through these handsome homes. Andrew Currell's "Ballygarvey," for example, was an imposing home of stone and stucco built on land which also housed his bleachworks, beetling mills, and labourers' accommodation.[59] Dr. William Young, whose family was involved in the linen bleaching and export trade, purchased the magnificent seventeenth-century Galgorm Castle in the Encumbered Estates Court in 1850 from the Earl of Mount Cashell, becoming a landlord in the process.

Most of the arable land on the Ballymena Estate was let in 1845 at a valuation of 40s. to 50s. per acre, depending on its quality. The demesne encompassed 121 acres, two roods and thirty-one perches of mixed-use land—of a Ballymena total of 452 acres, one rood and twenty-one perches. The town centre comprised a few hundred dwelling houses, most with gardens and yards held by lease. Public facilities included a weighhouse and shambles, both held "in hands," and the Ballymena Fair Hill. Remnants of larger-scale activity which had formerly taken place within the town centre were enumerated, including the town's "old distillery" and Robert Bell's "Old Bleach Green," on property which encompassed over four acres. Ongoing large-scale concerns included those of Andrew Gihon, who leased over eleven acres of the estate on which he had arable property, beetling engines and residences. Around the town, cloth-finishing concerns multiplied along the Kells Water to the South, the

[59] C. E. B. Brett, *Buildings of County Antrim* (Belfast: Ulster Architectural Heritage Foundation and Ulster Historical Foundation, 1996), 112.

Braid Water running north-east, and the River Main running north-west.[60] The organising role of the town in the structure of rural textile production expanded in the early 1850s, with the erection of a spacious new Linen Hall, on the site of the former Shambles Street—which was re-christened "Linenhall Street."

Three years after the 1845 valuation of the estate, the railway arrived in Ballymena. Situated on the main artery linking the expanding town of Belfast to Coleraine and Londonderry, Ballymena's strategic position guaranteed it early consideration for a railway link to Belfast. Plans for a line linking the towns had been advocated in 1836 by the Davisons of Raceview and they were realised a decade later under the aegis of landed and industrial figures who included the Mulhollands of Belfast and the tenth Viscount Masserene.[61] Representations to the House of Commons stated that £23,000 was issued on a weekly basis by Ballymena banks at the local market and that thirty linen beetling and bleaching concerns were located within the district: nine on the Braid Water, ten on the Kells Water and eleven on the River Main.[62]

The development of the local market provided a stimulus for town growth and a rationale for large-scale schemes such as the Belfast and Ballymena railway line. The rhythm of the market was celebrated by observers and local figures, and, in the Railway Age, the imperative of market development became increasingly acute as Belfast's commercial hegemony gained pace. The poet John Gallagher, in a narrative of the town written in 1850, described the throngs who assembled on market-day:

> On Saturday morning all is bustle and din,
> With jaunting-cars, phaetons and carts driving in.

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[60] McCutcheon, 254.
[61] McCutcheon, 120 and J. R. L. Currie, *The Northern Counties Railway,* vol. 1, *Beginnings and Development, 1845-1903* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973).
[62] Quoted in "Elevation and Plans, Hotel, Ballymenagh C. Antrim" [*sic*], PRONI, D/929/HA12/F4/114.

> And great preparations are made for the day;
> All are eager and willing their goods to display!
> And the train's long, loud whistle is heard through the town
> At ten, when the brave Belfast merchants come down;
> And the country drapers, good luck to them all,
> They keep up the trade in our great linen hall.
> And the yarn-stores are all prepared for the weavers,
> My brave country-fellows, that do their endeavours…[63]

Although Ballymena's market provided an organising mechanism for the exchange of produce from its agricultural hinterland, linen played a pre-eminent role in the town's marketplace. The transition to a new organisation of production and exchange in the linen industry—examined later in this study—would be in part conditioned by the unique structure of the market in the pre-Famine era. Other factors, including the town's religious and occupational profile, created conditions unique to Ballymena's experience of industrial consolidation.

Ballymena's development can be placed in comparative perspective by assessing the occupational and religious profiles of several other Ulster towns. These include important urban centres in the "Linen Triangle": Lisburn, Portadown, Banbridge and Lurgan. These towns experienced high levels of industrialisation and urbanisation, significantly altering the demographic profiles of the communities and partly accounting for the development of urban enclaves of workers without "stable sectarian boundaries."[64] The development of these towns was shaped by differentiated settlement patterns, demographic profiles and political statuses. Carrickfergus was a parliamentary borough and an administrative centre for the county; it is included as a comparator to gauge the extent to which borough status may have contributed to locally differentiated development. Armagh was another borough and an important administrative and ecclesiastical centre of the province; it was also the site in the

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[63] Excerpted from *John Gallagher's "Old Ballymena"* (Ballymena: Mid-Antrim Historical Group, 1995).

early-nineteenth century of a large market in coarse linen which had declined, along with the town's population, in the post-Famine period. The borough of Coleraine and the town of Ballymoney, the latter a much smaller urban centre than Ballymena, were identified in 1845 by the Hand-loom Commissioners as sharing similarities in market structure with Ballymena. Ballymoney, in north-Antrim, experienced the same general pattern of Scottish settlement as Ballymena and was to be a centre of agrarian and independent Protestant protest in the late-Victorian and early-Edwardian periods. Coleraine, owned by the Honourable Irish Society, which had been responsible for the plantation of wide areas of County Londonderry, also had a large Presbyterian community and became a centre of shirt-making as the importance of that industry grew in parts of Counties Londonderry and Tyrone in the post-Famine period. Monaghan, a county town in the south of the province with a markedly different denominational profile and important administrative functions, and Strabane, a regional market town in west Tyrone which was a centre of the pre-industrial western Ulster linen region, are also included as comparators.

This comparative analysis draws on printed census material. Historians have emphasised the centrality of heuristic considerations in the exploration of census material; the accuracy of the printed Irish censuses of the nineteenth century has been examined thoughtfully and critically.[65] Most census manuscripts for nineteenth-century Ireland were destroyed; only a few fragments survive. Interrogations of

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[64] Wright, 405.

[65] Among many thoughtful analyses of population interrogation, see Kris Inwood and Richard Reid, "Introduction: The Use of Census Manuscript Data for Historical Research," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* (November 1995): 56: 301-31; also Catherine Hakim, "Census Reports As Documentary Evidence: The Census Commentaries, 1801-1951," *Sociological Review*, 28 (1980): 3: 551-79. For a detailed discussion of the Irish census and population calculations, see Joseph Lee, "On the Accuracy of Pre-Famine Censuses," in *Irish Population, Economy and Society: Essays in Honour of K. H. Connell*, eds. Max Goldstrom and L. A. Clarkson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 37-56. Frank Geary also provides on overview of the challenges involved in comparing nineteenth-century printed

occupational and religious features of the population varied by census year, as did local geographic units of analysis. With these qualifications in mind, the printed census provides many useful descriptions of urban areas, and the comparative social structure of towns can be profitably interrogated based on a number of demographic indicators relating to population size, religious profile and occupational structure. In 1841, only 14 percent of the Irish population lived in towns of over 2,000 people, but, like Ballymena, towns in Ulster were becoming important centres of production, distribution and population movement.[66] Table 1.7 shows Ulster's ten largest towns by population in 1841.

Table 1.7
Ten most populous towns in Ulster, 1841

Town	*Population (N.)*
Belfast	75,308
Londonderry	15,196
Newry	11,972
Armagh	10,245
Newtownards	7,621
Lisburn	6,284
Coleraine	6,255
Enniskillen	5,686
Ballymena	**5,549**
Strabane	5,456

Source: "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV.

Table 1.8 shows the populations of the selected towns in 1841 and 1851. Ballymena's population growth in this period, which included the Famine, is exceptional among

census material in "Regional Industrial Structure and Labour Force Decline in Ireland Between 1841 and 1851," *Irish Historical Studies* 30 (November 1996): 118: 167-94.

[66] Aalen, Whelan and Stout provide a comprehensive overview of proto-industrialisation, agriculture, linen and the Irish landscape (67-103).

the towns: only Ballymoney and, more dramatically, the industrialising textile town and railway centre of Portadown, experienced any growth, while the old administrative centres of Armagh and Monaghan experienced significant population losses. The population loss in the Ballymena Poor Law Union, comprising many of the townlands—historic units of land in Ireland—in Ballymena's rural hinterland, was slight, at under 4 percent, and the parish in which most of the town of Ballymena was situated—Kirkinriola—actually saw its population rise by over 400 to 9,265 people.[67] The parish comprising Harryville, where weaving predominated, fell from 4,307 to 3,913 as the rural population decreased and the number of villagers increased dramatically.

Table 1.8
Population change in selected towns, 1841-51

Town	*1841 (N.)*	*1851 (N.)*	*Change (%)*
Portadown	2,505	3,527	40.80
Ballymena	**5,549**	**6,133**	**10.52**
Ballymoney	2,490	2,578	3.53
Banbridge	3,324	3,301	-0.69
Lisburn	6,284	6,097	-2.98
Coleraine	6,255	5,920	-5.36
Strabane	4,704	4,324	-8.08
Carrickfergus	3,885	3,543	-8.80
Lurgan	4,677	4,205	-10.09
Armagh	10,245	8,578	-16.27
Monaghan	4,130	3,328	-19.42

Sources: "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI.

[67] "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI.

The results of this population analysis are consistent with studies which have emphasised the unevenness of the Famine-effect[68], but the statistical appearance of stability masks significant changes in local population characteristics. High levels of literacy characterised the populations of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus and Coleraine, and distinguished these communities from other towns in 1841. In 1861, residents of these towns still had the lowest levels of illiteracy, as well as high proportions of Presbyterians. Over the course of the Famine and into the 1860s, Ballymena's illiteracy rate dropped steadily, alongside those of other predominantly Presbyterian towns, while the rates in other towns declined less significantly over the period and in some cases increased, as workers came from surrounding rural areas in search of work. Ballymena's high literacy level corresponded with the high rates among Ulster Presbyterians generally, and suggests that the town did not experience the rapid change in its demographic profile which altered the population profiles of other communities. Significantly, three of the four towns with the lowest levels of illiteracy—Ballymena, Ballymoney and Coleraine—were also areas in which rural textile production persisted longest. Among those towns which experienced different patterns of literacy were the struggling market towns of Monaghan and Strabane and the rapidly industrialising towns of Portadown and Lurgan, the latter two of which were attracting Roman Catholics and Episcopalians in large numbers.

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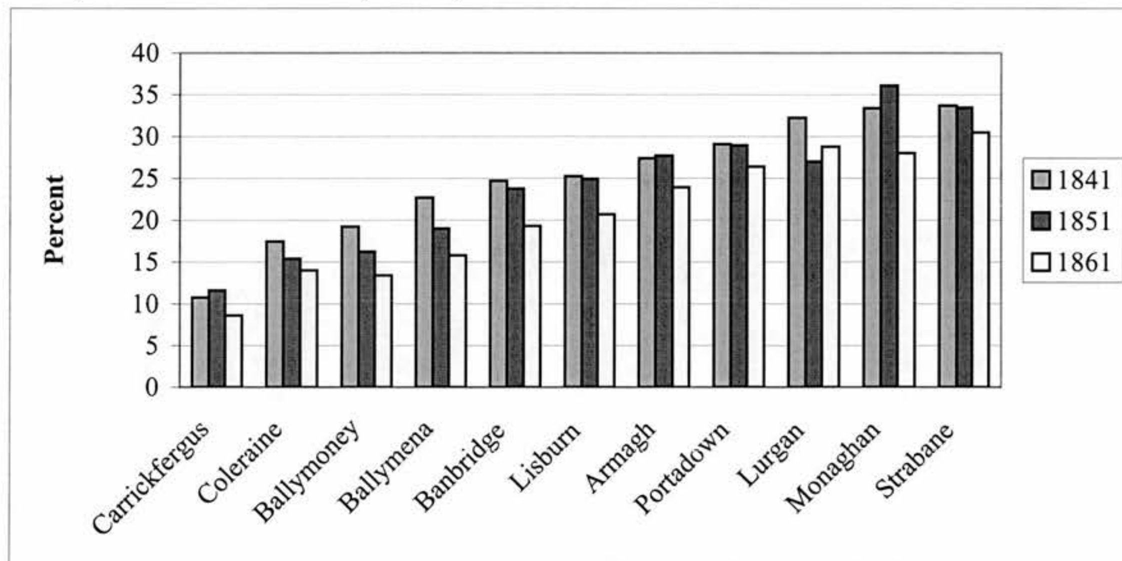
[68] See L. Kennedy et al., *Mapping the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), 26-35.

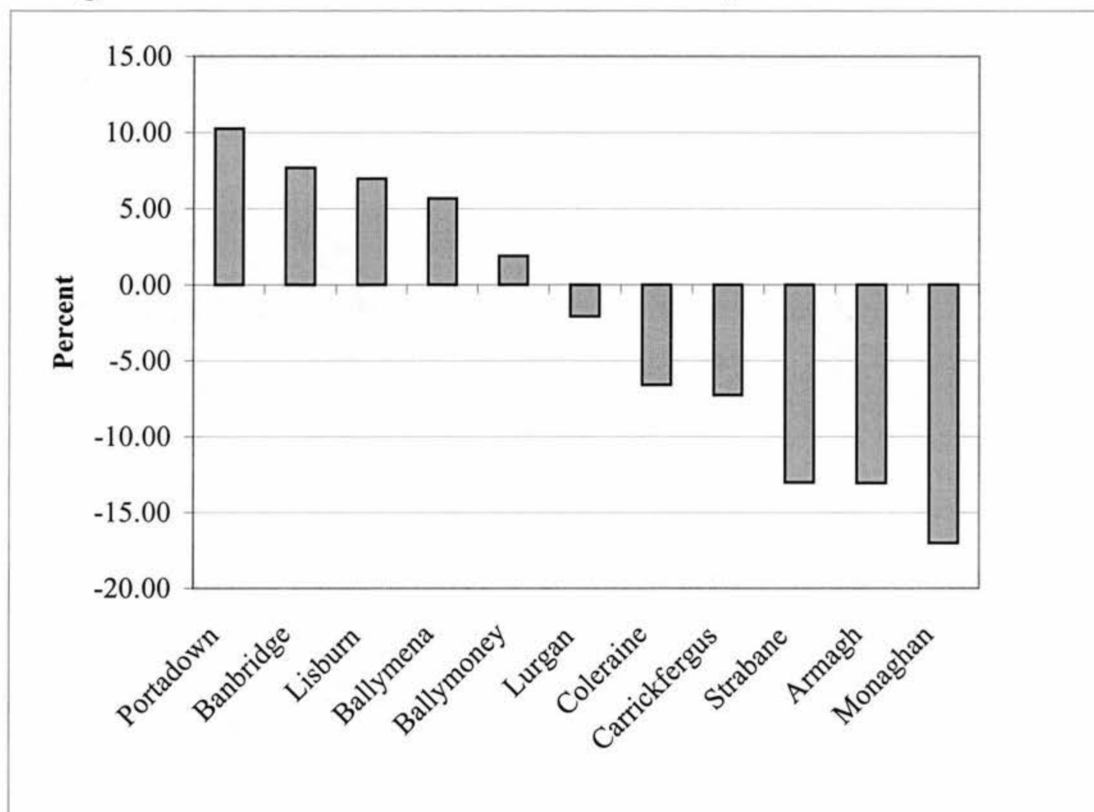
Figure 1.2
Percentage of the population over five years of age who cannot read or write, in selected towns, 1841, 1851 and 1861



Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI.

Ballymena, Ballymoney and the industrialising towns of Lisburn, Banbridge and Portadown saw an increase in inhabited houses between 1841 and 1851, as Figure 1.3 illustrates. Those urban centres which did experience increases were all towns which had either experienced population growth or very slight decline over the course of the Famine.

Figure 1.3
Changes in inhabited houses in selected towns, 1841-51



Sources: "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI.

Significantly, most of the towns which experienced an increase in inhabited houses were on main railway lines in the province, connecting Belfast to Dublin and Londonderry. Proximity to the growing railway network, the evolution of the structure of the linen industry and the profile of rural hinterlands all contributed to urban growth and decline in the 1840s and 1850s.[69] Lisburn, Banbridge and Portadown were sites of large-scale textile manufacturing, which accounted for an increasing proportion of the Ulster textile labour force in 1851.[70] In a decade which had seen dramatic decreases in populations throughout the country—decreases which

[69] T. W. Freeman argues that Armagh might have experienced the "pulsating growth" of Portadown had it been on the main rail line linking Belfast and Dublin; he provides a useful overview of these and other towns in "Irish Towns in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in *The Development of the Irish Town*, ed. R. A. Butlin (London: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1977), 101-38.
[70] Geary, 183.

had varied widely by region—many towns in the Linen Triangle increased in size. The period even gave birth to the linen manufacturing town of Gilford, in Armagh, whose population increased from 643 to 2,814 between 1841 and 1851.

Just as the organisation of linen production was highly regionalised within Ulster, so too were the structures of linen processing. Bleachgreens were sites of the principal organised industry in the rural districts of mid-Antrim, and their employment structure was critical to the nature of urban and rural transformation. Female employment in the emerging factory system of the province was concentrated in spinning factories and in bleaching concerns where Irish cambrics or muslins were produced—mainly in the Lisburn and Belfast areas. Women in these concerns worked in stove-fired drying rooms, attending to frames on which cloth was spread. A commission inquiring into the bleaching industry reported in the 1854-55 parliamentary session that three greens in the Ballymena area employed very few women, and none of these concerns had stove-fired drying rooms. Thus while Messrs. Richardson and Company in Lambeg employed 136 women in their 365-strong workforce, and the Ballyclare muslin concern of John Bell employed 100 women in a workforce of 150 employees, the three bleachgreens belonging to "Mr. Dickey," "Messrs Gihon and Sons" and "Mr. Young" in the Ballymena area employed two, three, and no women respectively.[71] The relative lack of work for women in the Ballymena area's bleachgreens, like the profile of the markets in the Hand-loom Commissioners' reports, betokened the uneven structure of the Ulster linen industry and suggest caution in extrapolating structural features of local industry to a province-wide analysis.

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[71] *Royal Commission to Inquire How Far to Extend the Provisions of Acts for the Better Regulation of Mills and Factories to Bleaching Works in the U.K.* [1943] HC 1854-55, vol. XVIII, 79-81.

As the mid-1850s drew nearer, Ballymena was placed both within and outside the experience of other Ulster towns. As in several other linen centres, the decade between 1841 and 1851 did not see a dramatic decline in Ballymena's population. The employment structure of the linen industry changed significantly in County Antrim, with women making inroads into the traditionally male weaving sector, as well as in textile factory work, but, in 1854, mid-Antrim's bleaching sector contrasted sharply with that of Lisburn and Banbridge, where women were drawn into these factories on a much larger scale.

Census inquiries varied, and just as the 1841 and 1851 censuses can be used to compare changes in local population and occupational structures, the two subsequent printed censuses provide the basis for a number of other comparisons. Notably, religious affiliations for communities at the local level appeared in the 1861 printed census. The religious profile of Ballymena was predominantly Presbyterian in 1861, but a majority of its inhabitants professed other faiths. In contrast with the strongly Episcopalian towns of Lisburn and Lurgan, Ballymena's Episcopalian population, like that of Coleraine and Ballymoney, was roughly equal to the provincial proportion at 21.13 percent. Roman Catholics—who accounted for over one-half of the diminished population of Armagh, Monaghan and Strabane, and one-third of the population of industrialising Portadown and Lurgan—were 24.45 percent of Ballymena's population in 1861. Methodists, at 3.62 percent, and other groups, at 3.78 percent, completed the profile. Proportionally, Ballymena resembled Carrickfergus, the north-Antrim town of Ballymoney and Coleraine in County Londonderry.

Table 1.9
Denominational profile of selected towns, 1861

Town	*Unit*	*N.*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
Armagh	Town	8,969	32.11	54.80	10.26	1.83	1.00
Ballymena	**Town**	**6,769**	**21.13**	**24.45**	**47.02**	**3.62**	**3.78**
Ballymoney	Town	2,600	19.04	30.54	44.96	2.42	3.04
Banbridge	Town	4,033	29.63	25.24	40.74	1.74	2.65
Carrickfergus	Town	4,028	26.04	14.75	51.81	3.40	4.00
Coleraine	Town	5,631	27.76	25.84	37.61	3.66	5.13
Lisburn	Town	7,462	45.03	26.82	21.37	5.84	0.94
Lurgan	Town	7,772	42.23	35.41	17.16	4.45	0.75
Monaghan	Town	3,799	20.40	70.20	8.08	1.16	0.16
Portadown	Town	5,528	39.51	33.59	12.43	13.68	0.80
Strabane	Town	4,318	20.38	60.84	17.79	0.97	0.02

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI, 364-365.

The 1871 Census of Ireland employed local geographic units which often differed in size from the 1861 units, impeding direct comparison between the two returns. The 1871 data, however, confirm the predominance of Presbyterians in Ballymena township. Many other areas had lower proportions of Presbyterian residents, with Episcopalians in proportionally greater numbers than Ballymena in all towns except heavily Catholic Strabane.

Table 1.10
Denominational profile of selected towns, 1871

Town	*Unit*	*N.*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
Armagh	Borough and city	8,946	33.76	52.44	10.26	2.57	0.97
Ballymena	**T'ship**	**7,931**	**19.62**	**21.86**	**51.76**	**2.13**	**4.63**
Ballymoney	T'ship	2,930	20.99	27.51	48.60	1.02	1.88
Banbridge	T'ship	5,600	34.43	22.48	34.23	1.88	6.98
Carrickfergus	Municipal t'ship	4,212	24.95	13.46	48.81	4.32	8.45
Coleraine	T'ship	6,082	34.51	21.85	34.92	3.67	5.05
Lisburn	Town	7,876	49.54	24.56	19.07	4.55	2.29
Lurgan	T'ship	10,632	44.32	36.59	14.94	2.87	1.29
Monaghan	Town	3,632	22.85	67.37	8.29	1.16	0.33
Portadown	T'ship	6,735	46.73	28.69	12.72	10.62	1.25
Strabane	Town	4,309	18.98	62.08	16.50	1.51	0.93

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1., table XXXII.

An exploration of the occupational structure of Ulster towns requires a discussion of the intersections of work and religion, which had contributed to structuring Ulster society since the earliest periods of Protestant settlement. Several historians have examined census material to underscore the highly denominationalised structure of employment in Ulster generally, and in Belfast in particular, although these latter studies draw principally from early-twentieth-century manuscript census sources.[72] The 1861 printed census provides a breakdown of religious concentrations in a range of occupations on a provincial basis. Besides long-

[72] S. J. Connolly comments on the comparative position of Roman Catholics within the occupational structure of post-Famine Ireland in "Catholicism in Ulster, 1800-1850," in Roebuck, 24-40. A. C. Hepburn has authored a number of works based on an analysis of religion and occupational structures in Belfast, including "Work, Class and Religion in Belfast, 1871-1911," *Irish Economic and Social History*, 10 (1983): 33-50; several of his writings are re-printed in *A Past Apart: Studies in the History of Catholic Belfast, 1850-1950* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1996).

standing Protestant concentrations in the upper end of the provincial social structure—landowners, for instance, were overwhelmingly Episcopalian (an imbalance generally reproduced throughout the professions)—other denominational groups were also concentrated in specific occupations, reflecting historically differentiated access to capital, uneven geographic distribution linked to settlement and migration patterns and other factors. In Ulster, many commercial occupations in the textile sector were disproportionately Presbyterian, especially linen drapers and merchants. Episcopalians were represented in these categories in approximate proportion to their share of the general provincial population, but Roman Catholics were significantly under-represented. These "Presbyterian" occupational categories—along with tea merchants, shopkeepers and grocers—were also notable for a high concentration of Methodists and members of other religious groups—Independents, Baptists, Quakers and others—suggesting a possible correlation between concentrations of Presbyterians and Non-conformists in specific economic activities. This reflected the stronger Quaker and Methodist presence in areas of Ulster where Presbyterians were less numerous and where occupational "space" not historically occupied by Episcopalians or Roman Catholics was open to them.[73]

[73] In other respects, notably literacy, the Presbyterians also resembled these smaller Dissenting groups; for a discussion of the leading role of Quakers in the linen industry of County Down, see Marilyn Cohen, *Linen, Family and Community in Tullylish, County Down, 1690-1914* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 44-54.

Table 1.11
Selected professions in Ulster, by denomination, 1861

Occupation	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
Bankers & managers	66.32	1.05	26.32	3.16	3.16
Physicians	42.17	17.59	35.66	0.96	3.61
Surgeons	40.98	17.29	37.22	1.50	3.01
Attorneys & solicitors	59.85	11.68	25.18	0.00	3.28
Total population (Ulster)	**20.44**	**50.50**	**26.32**	**1.67**	**1.07**

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.

Table 1.12
Selected commercial occupations in Ulster relating to textiles, by denomination, 1861

Occupation	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
Linen merchants	30.38	6.15	43.08	10.00	10.38
Linen drapers	22.98	16.15	48.45	4.97	7.45
Drapers (Unspecified)	20.85	27.51	39.87	8.49	3.29
Total population (Ulster)	**20.44**	**50.50**	**26.32**	**1.67**	**1.07**

Source: As preceding table.

Table 1.13
Selected retail occupations in Ulster, by denomination, 1861

Occupation	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Methodist (%)*	*Other (%)*
Wine & spirit merchants	23.40	44.68	29.79	1.06	1.06
Vintners & publicans	14.57	56.39	27.35	0.66	1.02
Grocers & apprentices	19.58	30.52	40.35	4.28	2.68
Tea merchants & dealers	24.07	24.07	35.19	12.96	3.70
Shopkeepers & apprentices	20.92	37.64	34.10	5.07	2.27
Total population (Ulster)	**20.44**	**50.50**	**26.32**	**1.67**	**1.07**

Source: As preceding table.

Although by 1871 Ballymena had developed a factory-based linen industry, its occupational profile differed from several other "linen towns" in which production was more centred in urban factories. In Lisburn, over 19 percent of females were listed as factory workers, and there were high concentrations of female weavers and factory workers in Lurgan. Ballymena's female employment structure more closely resembled that of towns in which centralised, factory-based production was less established, with women employed mainly in the township as milliners, shirt-makers and in domestic service. The following tables illustrate divergences in male and female employment patterns in the towns, using occupational indices associated with large-scale urban textile production and other factory work. They suggest that Ballymena did not share many of the characteristics of other linen factory towns, despite the introduction in the 1860s of a large, steam-powered spinning factory and the presence of several small-scale weaving shops in the town.

Table 1.14
Male "Flax, Linen—Manufacturers" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Lurgan	13.21
Portadown	8.65
Lisburn	5.58
Ballymoney	4.07
Banbridge	4.04
Armagh	2.69
Strabane	1.82
Ballymena	**1.76**
Carrickfergus	1.54
Coleraine	1.07
Monaghan	0.69

Source: Derived from Occupational Tables in *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1.

Table 1.15
Male "Weavers (not otherwise described)" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Lurgan	12.17
Lisburn	4.46
Portadown	4.45
Banbridge	1.76
Armagh	0.91
Ballymoney	0.90
Carrickfergus	0.75
Ballymena	**0.70**
Coleraine	0.66
Monaghan	0.06
Strabane	0.00

Source: As preceding table.

Table 1.16
Male "Factory Labourers (Branch undefined)" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Lisburn	10.51
Portadown	3.82
Banbridge	3.09
Carrickfergus	2.83
Lurgan	2.18
Coleraine	1.47
Strabane	0.81
Ballymena	**0.62**
Armagh	0.48
Ballymoney	0.15
Monaghan	0.00

Source: As preceding table.

The absence of large proportions of male linen manufacturers, weavers and factory labourers from the town did not obscure the centrality of linen production to Ballymena's economy. Data derived from the 1871 census and based on returns from the Ballymena Superintendent Registrar's District, which, at over 8,282 acres,

encompassed sections of the mid-Antrim countryside, suggest that large numbers of weavers resided in the town's rural environs.

Table 1.17
Selected occupations of males and females in the Ballymena Superintendent Registrar's District of the Ballymena Poor Law Union, 1871

Occupation	*Sex*	*N.*	*Proportion of Male or Female Population (%)*
"Flax, Linen—Manufacturers"	Male	2,410	14.55
	Female	1,691	8.48
"Weavers (not otherwise described)"	Male	1,127	6.81
	Female	1,139	5.71

Source: As preceding table.

The presence of male and female linen manufacturers in the town and countryside in roughly equal proportions confirms the changing gendered structure of textile production and also the continuing importance of rural manufacture in the mid-Antrim district. The lower concentrations of urban weavers and factory labourers reflected Ballymena's primary functions as a commercial centre for its hinterland.

Table 1.18
Female "Flax, Linen—Manufacturers" as a percentage of the total female population, 1871

Portadown	5.19
Lurgan	4.82
Ballymoney	2.19
Banbridge	1.35
Carrickfergus	1.33
Lisburn	1.02
Ballymena	**0.95**
Armagh	0.53
Coleraine	0.36
Strabane	0.21
Monaghan	0.00

Source: As preceding table.

Table 1.19
Female "Weavers (not otherwise described)" as a percentage of the total female population, 1871

Lurgan	7.59
Banbridge	3.77
Portadown	3.62
Carrickfergus	3.56
Coleraine	3.04
Lisburn	2.28
Ballymena	**1.73**
Ballymoney	0.94
Armagh	0.88
Strabane	0.26
Monaghan	0.21

Source: As preceding table.

Table 1.20
Female "Factory Labourers (Branch undefined)" as a percentage of the total female population, 1871

Lisburn	19.09
Carrickfergus	8.43
Banbridge	8.04
Lurgan	7.43
Portadown	4.99
Coleraine	3.87
Ballymena	**3.57**
Strabane	3.35
Armagh	1.26
Ballymoney	0.38
Monaghan	0.00

Source: As preceding table.

Ballymena's male and female occupational profiles were less markedly concentrated in categories of urban textile production than those of Portadown, Banbridge, Lurgan and Lisburn, all of which had higher proportions of urban weavers, linen manufacturers and factory labourers than Ballymena. Ballymena's

numbers were comparatively low even in the category of male "general labourers," which might have included some of the factory workers not enumerated under the other categories and which might suggest a mass of workers present in the town.

Table 1.21
Male "General Labourers" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Strabane	12.94
Monaghan	9.60
Coleraine	9.55
Carrickfergus	8.16
Banbridge	7.97
Armagh	7.08
Ballymena	**7.02**
Lurgan	6.91
Ballymoney	6.63
Lisburn	5.63
Portadown	4.36

Source: As preceding table.

The centrality of the distributive aspect of the textile trade to Ballymena's economy, however, was confirmed by an important feature of the town's occupational structure: a comparatively high proportion of drapers and mercers.

Table 1.22
Male "Drapers, Linen Drapers, Mercers" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Ballymena	**1.92**
Monaghan	1.56
Banbridge	1.34
Strabane	1.11
Coleraine	1.07
Ballymoney	0.98
Portadown	0.95
Lurgan	0.79
Armagh	0.79
Lisburn	0.76
Carrickfergus	0.49

Source: As preceding table.

This concentration intersects with the religious profile of the town. Data in 1861 at the provincial level reveals that Presbyterians were significantly over-represented among drapers and linen merchants, while Episcopalians remained highly over-represented in liberal professions. In a heavily Presbyterian town such as Ballymena, serving and partly organising trade in a predominantly Presbyterian rural district, the numerical strength of linen drapers testifies to the importance of the town as a nexus of exchange. In 1871, Ballymena had a level of retailers and provisioners—shopkeepers, grocers and tea merchants, wine and spirit merchants—commensurate with average values among its comparators, and the second-highest number of hotelkeepers, innkeepers and publicans among the towns. Ballymena also had one of the highest numbers of publicans per capita of any town in Ireland.

Table 1.23
Public houses and other establishments licensed for the sale of liquor, per 100 of the total population, 1871

Ballymena	**1.25**
Strabane	1.15
Monaghan	1.06
Ballymoney	1.03
Banbridge	0.84
Coleraine	0.80
Armagh	0.79
Carrickfergus	0.71
Portadown	0.57
Lisburn	0.44
Lurgan	0.37

Source: "Return of Houses Licensed for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor in Ireland" (434), HC 1872, vol. XLVII.

Table 1.24
Male and female "Shopkeepers (Branch undefined), General Dealers" as a percentage of the total population, 1871

Coleraine	1.53
Banbridge	1.48
Ballymena	**1.36**
Armagh	1.31
Strabane	1.11
Ballymoney	1.06
Lurgan	0.87
Portadown	0.76
Lisburn	0.70
Monaghan	0.69
Carrickfergus	0.34

Source: Derived from Occupational Tables in *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1.

Table 1.25
Male "Innkeepers, Hotelkeepers, Publicans" as a percentage of the total male population, 1871

Banbridge	1.64
Strabane	1.31
Ballymoney	1.20
Ballymena	**1.11**
Coleraine	0.99
Armagh	0.76
Lisburn	0.73
Monaghan	0.52
Portadown	0.44
Lurgan	0.44
Carrickfergus	0.23

Source: As preceding table.

The profile of Ballymena between 1861 and 1871 is that of a predominantly Protestant and expanding urban area in which distribution, retailing and the commercial organisation of the countryside remained central features of the local economy. The surrounding rural district supported a diversified agricultural sector and a significant level of textile production. The profile of Ballymena in 1871 suggests that in spite of the introduction of factory work to the town, its structure was in many respects that of a commercial centre, with a preponderance of petty capitalist drapers, shopkeepers and publicans. The chimney of a steam-powered spinning mill erected in the 1860s may have dwarfed all the buildings surrounding it, but it did not displace the central distributive features of the town's economy—features that were amplified by the development in the 1870s of a transport infrastructure to facilitate the mining of iron-ore deposits in the north-east coast of the county.[74] This analysis has also

[74] For a discussion of the narrow-gauge rail lines emanating from Ballymena into areas of iron-ore deposits in the 1870s, see Edward M. Patterson, *The Ballymena Lines: A History of the Narrow-Gauge Railways of North East Ireland* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, Ltd., 1968).

suggested the persistence of rural textile manufacture in mid-Antrim. The employment structure of the town in 1871 did not mirror that of industrial linen centres such as Banbridge, Lisburn, Portadown and Lurgan, where large sections of the population, male and female, fell under single occupational categories as weavers, linen manufacturers and factory labourers. Although professionals were well-represented in Ballymena, the town was not a county administrative or political centre, and among middle-class groups, linen drapers enjoyed a numerical predominance and influence unique to most Ulster towns. Similarly, shopkeepers were in a position of numerical strength in comparison to other communities. The nature of industry in surrounding townlands, the religious profile of the community and Ballymena's historic role as a regional distributive centre created a network of institutions in which structures of the rural countryside intersected with those of the urban centre through production as well as through commerce. At the axis of this commercial structure were linen drapers and merchants. The conditions in which Ballymena developed were specific to this economic and social profile. The participation of urban and rural sections of mid-Antrim society in a number of local events from 1857, and their contact in a range of institutions, will be examined in chapter two in order to assess the manner in which power was enacted within the boundaries of the town and within the wider rural district. The structure of commercial and social relations in and between these two areas had important consequences for forms of local urban and rural cultural expressions

II: The Structure and Practice of Local Authority

This chapter explores the distribution of personal and institutional authority within Ballymena and its surrounding regions. Local government has been identified by historians as a central institution in the elaboration of national and sub-national identities in the nineteenth-century United Kingdom, and as an important arena for contesting, negotiating and exercising authority.[1] Studies have demonstrated the importance of analysing participation by specific social groups in local government in order to explore the strategies and ideologies of urban "improvement" and to identify and analyse the composition of local elites.[2] Relations between local elites and farmers and the rural peasantry have also been identified as critical factors in the development of rural protest movements[3]; an inquiry into the channels in which power was distributed in mid-Antrim situates subsequent analyses of cultural and political mobilisation in the district within these relations. This chapter delineates the structure of authority within mid-Antrim, describing institutions in urban and district governance in order to provide a context for subsequent analyses of economic and cultural developments in the town and wider district. It examines the structure and composition of several local bodies—the Estate, the Board of Guardians of the Ballymena Poor Law Union, the County Grand Jury, the district's Justices of the

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[1]For a study of the role of urban government in civil society and in the elaboration of Scottish national identities in the nineteenth century, see Graeme Morton, *Unionist Nationalism* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1999). For approaches to social-group analysis, see R. J. Morris, *Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class, Leeds, 1820-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban-Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), John Garrard, *Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution: Early English Capitalism in Three Towns* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974). All these studies demonstrate the importance of analysing the presence of specific socio-economic groups in urban government.

[2] See in particular Richard H. Trainor, *Black Country Elites: The Exercise of Authority in an Industrialised Area* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 231-84 and R. J. Morris, "The Middle Classes and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution," in *The Pursuit of Urban History*, eds.Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe (London: Edward Arnold, 1985), 286-306.

[3] Eric R. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971); Ellen Wiegandt, David Howell and Gert von Pistohlkors, introduction to *Comparative Studies of*

Peace and Ballymena's Town Commissioners. It then explores two debates—over water and gas provision—which demonstrate dynamics of contested urban power. The previous chapter outlined Ballymena's growth in the nineteenth century and the evolving structure of the textile trade in mid-Antrim: the continuing processes of urbanisation and commercial development—which are central themes in this study—were shaped by individuals and institutions explored in this chapter.

Ballymena brought together in agencies of local administration figures from a wide range of middle-class and gentry groups: the landlord family and institutions of estate management, other resident landowners, bleachers and textile merchants, farmers, retailers and artisans. The powers delegated to a range of institutions of local government frequently overlapped, necessitating collaboration, and occasionally creating conflict, between the bodies: the Grand Jury, for instance, was responsible for major roads, while the Town Commissioners had powers to pave and curb streets within the town boundaries. Both Town Commissioners and Poor Law Union Guardians were responsible for aspects of public health, and Justices of the Peace adjudicated cases brought before them under the Town Improvement Act. The development and enforcement of weights and measurements legislation and other market reforms involved the Petty Sessions Bench, the Town Commissioners and the Ballymena Estate as proprietor of the local market.

Governments and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups, vol. 7, *Roots of Rural Ethnic Mobilisation*, ed. D. Howell (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, Ltd., 1993), 1-7.

Table 2.1
Comparative size of units of local and district administration, c. 1871

Unit of Administration	*Size (acres, roods and perches)*	*Population (N.)*
Ballymena Town[1]	466 a. 2 r. 17 p.	7,931
Adair Estate[2]	6,546 a. 2r. 30 p.	not available
Ballymena Petty Sessions District[3]	91,314 a. 0r. 0 p.	38,133
Ballymena Poor Law Union[3]	161,161 a. 2r. 19 p.	71,466

Sources:
[1] *Royal Commission to Inquire into Local Government and Taxation of Towns in Ireland*, Appendix IV [C.1686], HC 1877, vol. XXXIX. This area denotes the area within the "municipal boundary."
[2] This data was collected in the early 1870s and published in 1876 in *Land Owners in Ireland: Return of Owners of Land in Ireland in the Several Counties, Counties of Cities and Counties of Towns in Ireland* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1876).
[3] *Census of Ireland, 1871*: Pt. I: Area, Population and Number of Houses; Occupations, Religious and Education, Vol. III: Province of Ulster [C.964], HC 1874, vol. LXXIV, pt.1.

Conflict occasionally arose from this distribution of local authority, revealing breaches between groups in the district's power structure: on one hand, a Whiggish landlord promoted interventions funded by local ratepayers; at the same time, Town Commissioners, concerned with the level of rates and internally divided over the extent of local participation in improvement schemes, enacted their power in ways designed to underscore their authority, improve local infrastructure, limit the scope and cost of their interventions and raise revenue through prosecutions under the Town Improvement Act. Merchant-bleachers, many of whom served as J.P.s in the Ballymena Petty Sessions District, joined farmers, urban retailers and craftsmen in the management of the local Poor Law Union, which was responsible for the enactment of social administration in the wider district.

The Structure of Power I: Landlord and Estate

Unlike many parts of the county and province, mid-Antrim's land-holdings were distributed among a number of gentry and commercial figures. The town of

Ballymena, however, fell within the boundaries of the Adair Estate, and the Adair family enjoyed considerable influence which extended beyond the boundaries of the town. The relationship between the Estate and other local institutions, and motivations for landlord intervention in town development, were complex and changing.[4] Developments in Irish historiography have, in the last thirty years, comprehensively displaced earlier interpretations of landlord power which did not satisfactorily explore the constraints placed on aristocratic authority and the varied dimensions of estate management strategies. Recent analyses detail a varied and nuanced range of strategies by which local proprietors sought to extend and enact their authority in the face of many impediments to their local hegemony.[5]

By the nineteenth century, the Adair family were absentee landlords, spending most of their time at homes in Audley Square, London, and at their seat at Flixton Manor, Suffolk. A baronetcy had been conferred upon Robert Shafto Adair in 1838 and in the 1840s he became titular head of the Ballymena Estate, though its management fell to his son, Alexander Shafto Adair.[6] Shafto Adair was a Lieutenant Colonel in the East Suffolk Military Artillery and a Liberal M.P. for Cambridge from 1847 to 1852 and 1854 to 1857. His interests and honours extended to Ireland, however: he was High Sheriff of County Antrim in 1853, an unsuccessful Liberal candidate for County Antrim in 1869, and president of the central Ulster tenant-right

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[4] Lindsay Proudfoot emphasises the varied motivations for, and effects of, landlord intervention in *Property Ownership and Urban and Village Improvement in Provincial Ireland* (Edinburgh: Historical Geography Research Series, 1997); see also Proudfoot, "Landlord Motivation and Urban Improvement on the Duke of Devonshire's Irish Estates, c. 1792-1832," *Irish Economic and Social History* 18 (1991), 5-23. Themes in this latter article are elaborated in Proudfoot, *Urban Patronage and Social Authority: the Management of the Duke of Devonshire's Towns in Ireland, 1764-1891* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995).

[5] See Barbra Solow, *The Land Question and the Irish Economy, 1870-1903* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971); W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[6] Alexander Shafto Adair is referred to hereafter as "Shafto Adair."

group and the Ulster Reform Club in the 1880s.[7] Shafto Adair was named a member of the Royal Commission on the Established Church, of which he was an adherent, and he was an active pamphleteer on tenant-right, Irish governmental reform and disestablishment of the Episcopal Church. In 1873, in recognition of his political contributions to the United Kingdom and to the Liberal Party, he was created the first Baron Waveney and later named Lord Lieutenant of County Antrim.

"It is only on Irish ground that the Irish people can be studied," Adair wrote in his 1866 pamphlet *Ireland and Her Servile War*.[8] He removed to Ballymena in the mid-1860s, several years before inheriting the Estate and baronetcy, and erected a large Scottish baronial mansion on the Ballymena demesne in the 1860s, replacing an ancestral home which had fallen derelict. Adair's decision to reside on his family's Irish demesne reflected his determination to promote the interests of the Estate in a direct and personal manner, and also suggested ambitions to broker national politics for the Liberals in Ulster. His real power in the town, however, was circumscribed by a number of factors. One constraint was the relative security enjoyed by Adair's tenants: an 1866-67 estate valuation shows that most tenants held leases averaging fifty years.[9] These constraints were counter-balanced by the landlord's high local profile derived in part from Estate representation among Town Commissioners, from Shafto Adair's titular leadership of a number of voluntary organisations, from his direct involvement in local commerce and Irish political life, and from acts of public philanthropy. During the Famine crisis, Shafto Adair advocated an expanded role for Poor Law Union Boards of Guardians in promoting emigration as a solution to the

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[7] Brian M. Walker, *Ulster Politics: The Formative Years* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1989), 118.
[8] This is reprinted along with a later publication in Col. Adair, *The Established Church of Ireland, Past and Future* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Foster, 1869).
[9] Ballymena Estate Rental, 1866-67, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast [hereafter cited as "PRONI"] D/1143/55.

sub-division of land. He was warmly supportive of the local voluntary response to the Famine and, as a long-standing critic of the Irish land system, he opposed perpetual leases, which he saw as injurious to a stable land structure. In calling for an expanded state role during periods of economic hardship, Adair explicitly called on central government bodies to alleviate social distress when Poor Law Unions and local landlords were unable or unwilling to assume responsibility for the growing burden of costs associated with local relief. This strategy was buttressed by his schemes for mass emigration, which would remove the poor from Ireland and families from Union relief rolls.[10]

Shafto Adair also identified himself with the "town interest" through patronage of local voluntary associations: he filled honorary leadership positions in many of Ballymena's local institutions, as sometime churchwarden of Kirkinriola parish, as president of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Ballymena Literary and Scientific Society, and as the leading officer in the Ballymena Fire Brigade.[11] By serving as titular head of this associational network, Adair drew on the resources of his landed status and was able to enhance his local profile, which was a useful springboard in his unsuccessful efforts to gain elective office in the county. In a strategy integral to estate management, Adair also enhanced his social capital through selective acts of local magnanimity. He was a prominent subscriber to congregational and voluntary associations, and the Ballymena Estate granted land for the erection of many of the town's churches at nominal rents. In response to calls for a public recreation ground in the town, Adair opened part of the Estate for public use in

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[10] A. Shafto Adair, *The Winter of 1846-47 in Antrim, with Remarks on Out-door Relief and Colonization* (London: James, Ridgway, Piccadilly, 1847).
[11] *Observer*, 27 November 1858, 15 January 1859.

1864—an overture extended in the early 1870s, when he became benefactor of the town's vaunted "People's Park."[12]

In devising a strategy for market development, the Adair family experimented with leasing local market rights in the early-nineteenth century, before regaining them again in mid-century. Ballymena's market tolls were the right of the Estate, confirmed by a patent authorising a weekly Saturday market. A patent for two annual fairs had also been granted to the Estate in the seventeenth century.[13] By the mid-nineteenth century, additional markets, without patents, were held on Tuesday for pork and on Wednesday for corn. In 1813, the marketplace, along with other property, was leased by the Estate to a private company comprising five local figures, including several linen merchants, for ninety-one years. Control and development of markets in other Ulster towns was frequently leased to individuals or vested in Town Commissioners as successors to other civic bodies: in Portadown, for instance, the Duke of Manchester's markets were vested in trustees on an 1845 lease of £40 per year. In the same town, the meat market crane was the property of a Market Company formed in 1829 for the erection of shambles.[14] Such companies were also found in the registers of joint-stock companies throughout the 1850s and 1860s: a Newtonlimavady Market Company was listed in 1859, its duties being described as the "construction and maintenance of markets," and similar bodies were registered in 1861 in Antrim and Larne.[15] In Ballymoney, Lord Antrim leased the market to private individuals in 1840 and the tolls and market of Armagh were leased to a committee of inhabitants by the

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[12]*Observer*, 18 June 1864.

[13]*Royal Commission to Inquire into the State of Fairs and Markets in Ireland*, Part II, Minutes of Evidence [1910], HC 1854-55, vol. XIX [hereafter cited as "Fairs and Markets"], testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9839.

[14]Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Obins Woodhouse, q. 7776, q. 7780, q. 7784, q. 7785.

[15]"Returns of Names, Places of Registration, Date of Registration, Nominal Capital and Number of Shareholders of Joint Stock Companies… to May 1864" (452), HC 1864, vol. LVIII.

Primate of Armagh in 1821.[16] Town Commissioners maintained control over markets in several towns: in Coleraine, this control derived from their status as successors to the corporation in which patents were vested, and in Monaghan they were held by the Town Commissioners on a lease from Lord Rossmore at £50 per year.[17] In 1845, Shafto Adair regained control of the Ballymena markets by purchasing, for £111 per annum, the residual period of the market lease from Dr. Young, who had gained the interest of other lessors.[18] Adair's successful efforts to regain control of the markets cemented the Estate's authority over one of Ballymena's primary institutions. In the subsequent decade, the Estate undertook a number of measures aimed at extensive market improvement, including the erection of a new Linen Hall on the site of the former butchers' shambles and the erection of a new hotel, the Adair Arms. The efforts at market reform described in chapter six of this study will demonstrate the centrality of the Estate in market management and in efforts to develop mechanisms to promote co-operation between local institutions and commercial interests.

The landlord's authority was expressed in institutions of local government, but outside the politics enacted in bodies of urban and district governance, many landowners engaged in formal parliamentary politics. Shafto Adair and other local landlords differed in political allegiances, and County Antrim elections often revealed cleavages between local landlords and suggested the extent of the political influence they exercised over their tenantry. In 1857, Henry O'Hara, the landlord of the Kart estate, contested a Westminster election for County Antrim as a Liberal and was soundly defeated. He angrily attributed his defeat to the exertions of Tory landlords

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[16] Fairs and Markets, testimony of James Cramsey, q. 10039, q. 10040, q. 10041, q. 10042, q. 10043; testimony of Thomas Dobbin, q. 7991, q. 7992.

[17] Fairs and Markets, testimony of Charles James Knox, q. 10144; testimony of James Alexander Ross, q. 11971, q. 11984.

[18] Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9859.

on their tenantry, but the Conservative *News-Letter* made similar charges against the Liberal Lord Masserene.[19] Nonetheless, O'Hara's vote was highest in the Ballymena district, and his opponent fared extraordinarily well in districts where the influence of Tory landlords held sway.[20] Through coercion or not, localised voting was clearly a feature of parliamentary polls and reflected the political brokerage potential of landowners.

Table 2.2
General election results, County Antrim, 16 April 1857

Polling District	*Lt. Col. T. H. Pakenham (Conservative)*	*George Maccartney (Conservative)*	*H. H. H. O'Hara (Liberal)*
Antrim	2,389	2,066	379
Ballymena	**859**	**790**	**553**
Ballymoney	1,290	1,367	521
Total	**4,538**	**4,223**	**1,453**

Source: *Observer*, 2 August 1869.

In 1859, *The Times* carried a report in which it cautioned O'Hara against considering a second candidacy in forthcoming national elections, noting that Reverend Robert W. Rowan, a landlord in neighbouring Ahoghill, had warned his tenantry to consult him before casting their votes.[21] The County Antrim seat remained uncontested from 1857 until 1869, when Shafto Adair declared his candidacy at a by-election occasioned by the death of the County's Conservative M.P, Rear-admiral G. H. Seymour of the Hertford family. Like O'Hara, Adair was comprehensively defeated, facing another

[19] *News-Letter*, 17 April 1857.
[20] Following are the official results of the poll, recorded in Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 248 ("C" refers to the Conservative Party and "L" refers to the Liberal Party).

Candidate	Affiliation	Votes
Lt. Col. T. H. Pakenham	C	4 686
George Macartney	C	4 341
H. H. H. O'Hara	L	1 533

[21] *The Times*, 25 April 1859.

Conservative opponent from the Seymour family, owners of County Antrim's largest estate. The Conservative candidate was also supported by the O'Neill family, owners of County Antrim's second-largest estate and relatives of its other Conservative M.P.[22] As a former Liberal M.P. and perennial candidate in England, Adair was well-placed as a broker between Ulster and British Liberalism. He faced a hostile, if respectful, local press in the Tory *Observer*, and faced organised opposition from larger Conservative landed interests in the county. Nonetheless, localism influenced county voting patterns, and the Ballymena polling district was proportionally more favourable to Adair's candidacy than the Seymour heartland of Lisburn, where Adair polled a derisory fourteen votes and his supporters' homes were set upon and their windows broken.[23]

Table 2.3
County Antrim by-election results, 21 August 1869

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
Captain H. de Grey Seymour	C	5,588	X
Sir R. S. Adair	L	2,294	

Source: Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 248.

[22] Walker, *Ulster Politics*, 74-79.
[23] *The Scotsman*, 20 August 1869.

Table 2.4
Estimated results of 1869 County Antrim by-election by polling districts[24]

Polling District	*Seymour*	*Adair*
Antrim	1,085	253
Belfast	1,204	563
Ballymena	**1,079**	**845**
Ballymoney	1,401	664
Lisburn	826	14
Total	**5,595**	**2,339**

Source: *The Banner of Ulster*, 21 August 1869.

If landlords represented an important element in the structure of political brokerage in the region, the distribution of power through Estate offices also privileged other local figures. Shafto Adair was resident in England through most of the 1850s and early 1860s; the daily management of the Ballymena Estate was entrusted to a local agent and this position was occupied successively in the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s by John Dickey, a leading local bleacher who resided in the country outside the town, and his brother Andrew Todd Dickey, who was also a bleacher. Before them the position was held by another bleacher, William Gihon. As the local representative of the lord of the soil, the Estate Agent was responsible for rent collection and market oversight, and he served as an intermediary between the absentee landlord and his tenantry. The Agent also had wide discretion in influencing

[24] The number of votes deviates from the official total, and the newspaper warned of the provisional status of these results. The *News-Letter* on 20 August 1869 reported similar results:

District	Seymour	Adair
Antrim	1,085	253
Belfast	1,279	601
Ballymena	**1,079**	**845**
Ballymoney	1,401	664
Lisburn	926	14
Total	**5,770**	**2,377**

estate management strategies. Testifying before a Royal Commission inquiring into the state of markets and fairs in Ireland in the early 1850s, John Dickey testified that in 1845, when he had been named Estate Agent, he had "pressed upon" Adair "very strongly the advantage it would be to the town and neighbourhood to get it [the market]" into his own hands.[25] Direct control over local markets was an important dimension of Estate participation in local governance, given the centrality of the marketplace to the town's development. This study will show that this aspect of landlord power would continue to have important consequences for commercial development in Ballymena.

Estate Agent Andrew Todd Dickey also served until his death in 1864 as sometime Chairman of the Town Commissioners, and Shafto Adair was elected a Town Commissioner in 1856, though he was not resident in the town. In September 1857 he was struck off as a Commissioner for non-attendance but was re-elected one month later.[26] Again in 1861 he was disqualified on the grounds on non-attendance, but his election, and that of his agent, as Town Commissioners reflected the influence claimed by Estate interests in the direction of town government. The articulation of landlord interests by socially prominent men from the bleachgreens of the Ballymena countryside placed direct limits on the Adair's family's political influence—it was reported as late as 1885 that the Liberal Adair's estate officials were canvassing for Conservative candidates[27]—and provided instruments by which that landed and commercial group, whose income derived from rural industry, exercised influence in the town and countryside. They were also present in another important local body—the Poor Law Board of Guardians.

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[25] Fairs and Markets, testimony of Mr. John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9859.

[26] Minutes of the Ballymena Town Commissioners, PRONI LA/14/2B/1 [hereafter cited as "Town Commissioners"].

The Structure of Power II: The Union Board of Guardians

The system of Irish Poor Law unions was established by legislation of 1837 and was modelled closely on the English system. The governance of the Union combined the principle of propertied franchise (with votes allocated in proportion to the size of property holdings) with a non-elected element of *ex-officio* members, comprising the Unions' qualified Justices of the Peace, to a maximum of one-third of the total Board. In the 1840s, when other elements of the franchise were changed and landowners assumed a greater burden of Union finances, the *ex-officio* element was increased to one-half of the Board, thereby potentially enhancing the authority of local landed interests over a central agency of local government. In order to effect this equilibrium, Unions were permitted to co-opt non-resident J.P.s as Board members. In theory, these large landholders and bleacher-merchants could collectively exercise considerable influence over Union policy. In practice, however, Figure 2.1 reveals that few *ex-officio* Guardians attended meetings with great regularity; in the year ending in March 1858, for example, six of the Union's eleven resident J.P.s attended no Union meetings and, of seventeen non-resident J.P.s, only Shafto Adair attended any meetings—and then only four.[28] The average qualification for representation on the Board was set by the Union, and rates varied by each electoral district which returned Guardians to the Union Board. In addition to responsibilities for managing the Union workhouse, the Board's remit expanded through the post-Famine period to include duties under the Vagrant Act of 1847, the dispensary system in 1851, burial

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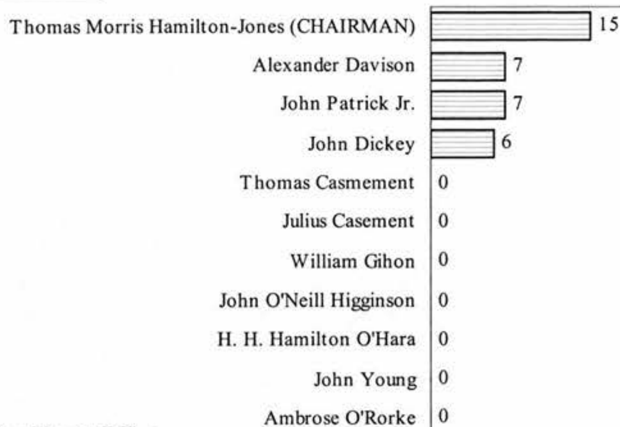
[27] *Northern Whig*, 4 December 1885.
[28] *Observer*, 10 April 1858.

Figure 2.1 Attendance, Ballymena Union Poor Law Guardians, 1857-58

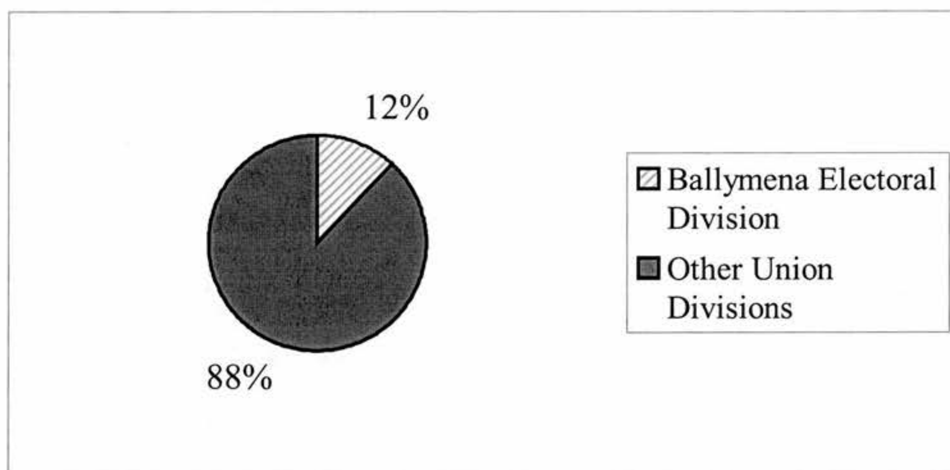


Source: *Observer*, 10 April, 1858.

boards and a range of other public-health-related issues.[29] In parts of counties not served by Town Commissioners, Boards also assumed responsibility for sewerage.

The Ballymena Union encompassed over 161,161 acres and its population stood at 74,109 in 1841.[30] An area contiguous to the town served as the site for the Union workhouse, and the electoral division of Ballymena returned three of the Union's twenty-eight elected Guardians. Although its electoral Guardians attended Union meetings with greater frequency than other representatives, the Ballymena division's proportional vote on the Union Board was lower than its share of the Union's valuation, its population, or its share of workhouse residents charged to the local division.

Figure 2.2
Residence of Ballymena Union's 3,130 occupiers rated at £10 and above



Source: "Return of Name and Valuation of Each Electoral Division, and Poundage Rates in Each Poor Law Union in Ireland, 1857-59" (259), HC 1860, vol. LV.

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[29] These are enumerated at length in the "Special Report to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in Pursuance of the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, July 1877, on Local Government and Taxation of Towns in Ireland", Report, Minutes of Evidence, Appendices, Pt. I [C.1965], HC 1878, vol. XXIII. The Report also provides a detailed overview of the institutions of local and district government.

[30] *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. I: Area, Population, and Number of Houses, by Townlands and Electoral Divisions, Province of Ulster [3204], HC 1863, vol. LV.

Table 2.5
Some comparisons of poor law administration in the Ballymena Union and Ballymena Electoral Division

Category	*Ballymena Union*	*Ballymena Electoral Division*	*Ballymena Division's Proportion of Union Total (%)*
Population (1861)	73, 597	8,365	11.37
Number on relief (1865)	420	91[1]	21.67
Total Valuation (1865)	£ 118,720 0s. 0d.	£ 17,760 0s. 0d.	14.96
Total Expenditure (1865)	£ 5, 668 6s. 8d.	£ 1,047 11s. 3d.	18.48

[1]This number represents the total number of persons on relief charged to the Ballymena electoral division; 247 people were charged to other divisions.
Source: "Return of Name and Valuation of Each Electoral Division, and Poundage Rates in Each Poor Law Union in Ireland, 1861-64" (351), HC 1866, vol. LXII.

Union Rates were set by electoral divisions and could vary widely year-by-year. In September 1867, for instance, the Ballymena district's rate was set at 22d. in the pound, a relatively higher charge than other areas, whose average rating was under 11d.[31] This placed pressure on Guardians, especially from urban ratepayers, to keep rates at a minimal level throughout the Union.

Ballymena's elected representatives were drawn from the ranks of the town's commercial sector: the representatives in 1859 were John Watson, a woollendraper, John Strahan, one of the town's most prominent merchants and chandlers, and the woollen- and linen draper Patrick McVickar.[32] The death of John Watson in 1863 occasioned an election in which the linen merchant and haberdasher James B. Killen faced the butter merchant William York and the publican John Buchanan; after

[31] *Observer*, 21 September 1867.
[32] *Observer*, 16 April 1859.

Buchanan's withdrawal, Killen was elected with 318 votes to 219 for York.[33] Textile merchants such as Killen formed a leading status group in the urban middle class; with this group sitting alongside the district's gentry in the Board of Guardians, the structure of Union governance provided an arena for expressing the interests of large propertied and commercial figures, rural farmers and traders in the urban electoral districts. The relationship of the Board of Guardians to the town's commercial sector was direct and important. The Union was a large contractor for goods and services within the town, and their minutes were replete with orders from local merchants, chandlers and spirit sellers. The minutes of the Union on 2 July 1859, for instance, included a payment of £22 12s. 8d. to William Herbison for meat and potatoes, £90 to a local merchant for coals, and £22 5s. 3d. to another dealer in beef.[34]

As well as generating business for dealers, merchants and farmers in the district, and thereby reserving potentially lucrative powers of patronage, the Union generated a layer of bureaucracy and a range of local administrative positions—dispensary doctors and clerks, teachers, carpenters, porters and other administrative staff—as its role expanded. The Clerk of the Union throughout the 1860s was a member of this local administrative group: in local newspapers, Frederick A. Mathews was listed variously as County Cess Officer, agent for Lancashire and Patriotic Life, Norfolk Farmers', Alliance and Crown Life Assurance Companies. He also served as Secretary to the Ballymena and Harryville Gas Light Company, Postmaster, and Superintendent Registrar.

In common with the Town Commissioners, and in view of the lack of direct town representation in Parliament, the Union Guardians often contrived to enhance

[33] *Observer*, 19 December 1863.
[34] Minutes of the Board of Guardians of the Ballymena Union, PRONI BG4/A/7, 2 July 1859.

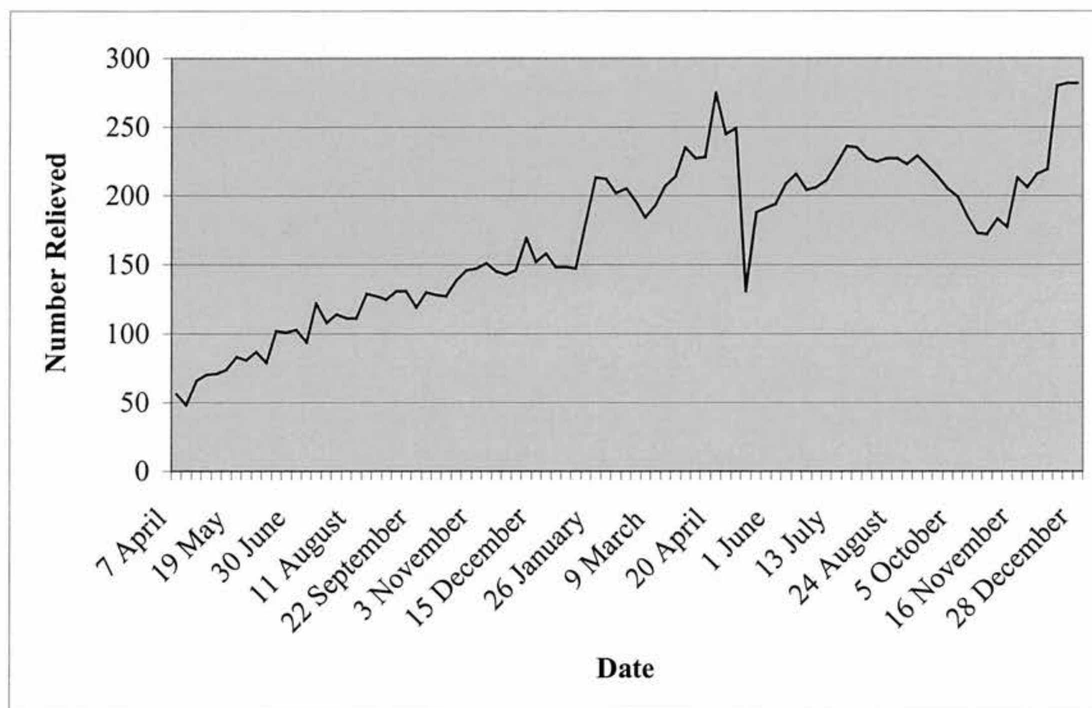
their intermediate position and articulate the "local interest" through memoranda to national authorities. In 1863, for example, they complied with a request from local residents to forward a petition to Parliament asking that provisions of Sunday public house closing legislation be extended to Ireland.[35] The role of the Board of Guardians as a generator of contracts, professional and administrative occupations, and as the articulator of local grievances, made it an important institution integrating Ballymena and its surrounding countryside.

The ideology informing decisions by the Ballymena Board of Guardians strongly privileged cost reduction, and the Union's efforts to control expenses were manifested in a strategy it employed from the mid-1860s to favour outdoor relief, which was far less costly than indoor relief and less frequently practised in other rural districts of Ireland. From 1864 to 1866, the total Union expenditure on outdoor relief rose from £25 10s. 8d. to £337 15s. 10d.—the fourth highest total outdoor expenditure of Ulster's forty-four Unions.[36] In the first quarter of 1867, Ballymena Union's outdoor expenditure, at £135 9s. 6d., was the highest in Ulster, relieving 183 people, with 537 in the workhouse.[37] In part, this policy reflected the structure of textile production in the district, which increasingly combined agricultural labour with cottier-weaving on the putting-out system. Outdoor relief facilitated the temporary extension of assistance to this section of the community, with minimal disruption to their productive capacity in the medium-term, which partly explains its popularity with the Union's agricultural and commercial figures. By embracing outdoor relief as an approach to poor relief, the Board of Guardians demonstrated a strong disposition

[35] Ibid., 4 April 1863.
[36] "Return of the Number of People Relieved in Workhouses in Ireland, January—March 1867" (572), HC 1867, vol. LX.
[37] Ibid.

towards developing an administrative strategy consonant with the labour cycle of rural agriculture and textile production.

Figure 2.3
Outdoor relief, Ballymena Union Workhouse, 7 April 1866 to 28 December 1867



Source: Minutes of the Board of Guardians of the Ballymena Union, PRONI BG4/A/10. Numbers relieved are calculated from the Minutes on a weekly basis.

The Board of Guardians was an important body in the governance of the district, with significant responsibilities related to the development of a district-wide social-service infrastructure—with important consequences for commercial and labour practices in town and country. Other elements of infrastructural expenditure were the responsibility of the Grand Jury.

The Structure of Power III: The Grand Jury

If the Board of Guardians comprised representatives of urban and rural interests, Grand Jury records reflect the character of landed wealth in the district, with strong foundations in agriculture and rural industry. The Grand Jury was one of the

longest-established institutions of local government in Ireland. Its early duties were largely confined to considering presentments for road and bridge construction and repair, although additional infrastructural responsibilities were added in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. As an important arbiter of contracts for the construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure, the Grand Jury played a central role in the development of Ulster's early road network. Through the nineteenth century, the Grand Juries remained important bodies responsible for the development and maintenance of counties' infrastructure: of County Antrim presentaments of £58,027 9s. 0d. made in 1858, 49.19 percent were for "repair of roads, bridges, pipes, gullets or walls," while 11.06 percent were for "new roads, bridges, pipes, gullets, quay walls or cutting down hills or filling up hollows and ditches."[38]

The County Grand Jury was selected by the County High Sheriff from leading landowners, who supported the Jury through the payment of an annual cess levied on qualified property. Reforms which aimed to promote the participation of cess-payers in the adjudications of the Grand Juries led to the publication at assizes of lists of the highest cess-payers in each Irish barony: these men were accorded a consultative role at the assizes, which were conducted in towns, including Ballymena, by members of the landed elite. Each list excluded cess-payers from the previous assizes, as well as one-half of the names of the previous cess-list. The lists do not, therefore, enumerate the twelve wealthiest individuals in the barony, but as a measure of wealth, they reflect the structure of landed capital in the district and the centrality of farming and rural industry—notably bleaching—in that structure. The tables below show the occupations of these selected cess-payers for the baronies of Lower Toome and Lower

[38] "Abstract of the Accounts of Presentaments Made by the Grand Juries…in Ireland in the Year 1867" (425), HC 1867-68, vol. LVIII.

Antrim, comprising Ballymena and Harryville respectively, in 1859 and 1867. The tables for Lower Toome reflect the role of the town as a commercial centre and the importance of textile processing in the rural economy. The "linen merchants" listed in 1859 comprised several leading bleachers, as did the 1867 list, which included the bleachers Andrew Currell, Hugh Wallace and George Beggs. The more agricultural character of Lower Antrim, in which fewer bleachgreens were situated, and whose commercial centre was Ballymena in the contiguous barony, is reflected in the high number of farmers in the lists. These lists underscore the overwhelming importance of the commercial linen sector in defining the resources of Ballymena's leading landed proprietors; they also illustrate the importance of the agrarian interest in the capitalisation of the district. Together, these two groups influenced high levels of infrastructural expenditure.

Table 2.6
Occupations of leading cess-payers, Lower Toome barony, Spring Assizes, 1859

Occupation	*N.*
Linen merchant	6
Farmer	3
Land agent & c.	1
Gentleman	1

Source: *County of Antrim Grand Warrant, Spring Assizes, 1859* (Belfast: James Reed, 1859).

Table 2.7
Occupations of leading cess-payers, Lower Antrim barony, Spring Assizes, 1859

Occupation	*N.*
Farmer	8
Linen merchant	2
Gentleman	2

Source: As previous table.

Table 2.8
Occupations of leading cess-payers, Lower Toome barony, Spring Assizes, 1867

Occupation	*N.*
Linen merchant	6
Gentleman	2
Solicitor	1
Miller	1
Hotelkeeper	1
Haberdasher	1

Source: *County of Antrim Grand Warrant, Spring Assizes, 1867* (Belfast: James Reed, 1867).

Table 2.9
Occupations of leading cess-payers, Lower Antrim barony, Spring Assizes, 1867

Occupation	*N.*
Farmer	6
Linen merchant	3
Gentleman	2
Miller	1

Source: As previous table.

Chapter one explored the centrality of linen merchants in the district's economy, the characteristics of this important social and commercial group, and the merchants' place in the structure of the local textile trade; cess lists confirm their prominence in the landed capitalisation of the district. Additionally, these "gentlemen bleachers" provided capital to finance Ballymena's industrialisation, as succeeding chapters in this study will explore. They also participated and predominated in a range of institutions which defined and enhanced their status and authority in Ballymena and its environs, including the local administration of justice.

The Structure of Power IV: Judicial Institutions

As Justices of the Peace, not only were the bleacher-merchants qualified to serve as *ex-officio* Union Guardians; they also played an important role adjudicating cases in areas of summary jurisdiction in the Ballymena Petty Sessions District. With the protracted absences of the resident magistrate, Charles Hunt (who served until 1864), and another J.P., Shafto Adair, the bleacher-merchants were critical agents of legal authority at the local level. A list of J.P.s from the 1856 *Slater's Directory* reveals a high concentration of large landholders—bleachers and other landlords—on the local Petty Sessions Bench.

Table 2.10
Justices of the Peace in Ballymena listed in Slater's 1856 Directory

Name	*Occupation*
John Dickey	Bleacher & Estate Agent
John Patrick	Bleacher & linen merchant
John Young	Bleacher & linen merchant
Andrew Gihon	Bleacher
William Gihon	Bleacher
Alexander Shafto Adair	Gentry
Thomas Casement	Gentry
John Rowan	Gentry
Robert W. Rowan	Gentry
Alexander Davison	Linen yarn manufacturer & spinner
John Davison	Linen yarn manufacturer & spinner

Source: *National Commercial Directory of Ireland* (Manchester: I. Slater, 1856).

The presence in the district's legal and administrative echelons of leading figures—many of them Presbyterian—connected to rural industry had implications for the administration of justice in the town and extended the influence of rural industrialists in the development of legal practices sympathetic to rural interests. In

particular, the County Inspector of Fisheries found his efforts to prosecute farmers frequently stymied during the September flax season, when flax was steeped in dammed-off watercourses to prepare it for processing. On many occasions, the Inspector found the Petty Sessions Bench unwilling to impose more than nominal fines on local farmers, and in some cases he faced the Bench's outright hostility. In September 1861, the bleachgreen proprietors John Dickey and William Gihon, on the Petty Sessions Bench, expressed open sympathy with farmers who were charged with improperly steeping their flax, and the two J.P.s were warned by the Inspector that they did not have the authority to reduce penalties laid out by law.[39] On 14 September 1861, the *Observer* reported that the previous week's Petty Sessions had seen a number of farmers charged with allowing discharge to flow from their dams into the common mill-race. The response of the J.P.s was forgiving of the farmers and critical of the prosecutor: "Mr. Gihon said that the act imposes a very serious hardship upon farmers, they have not had anything like sufficient notice of its provisions; Mr. Hunt said that these prosecutions have placed the Bench in a position of very considerable difficulty." On 21 August 1863, in a piece entitled "The Police and the People," the *Observer* lambasted the local police, describing their prosecutions of "the agricultural community, now so busily engaged in the important business of preparing the crop for the public markets," as pestering inspired by the "petty surveillance of police spies, peeping into drains with a keen eye to 'flax dripping' for their smelling bottles, and hounding the ditches with distended nostrils in scent of the informer's fee." In October 1862, with bleachers Andrew Todd Dickey and John Young on the Bench, charges of allowing poisonous liquid to escape from a bleachgreen were brought by the Inspector of Fisheries against Messrs. Wallace and Magill, proprietors of the large

[39] *Observer*, 15 September 1860.

Leighenmohr bleachgreen. The charges were dismissed when the concern's foreman testified that the noxious substance had been released accidentally.[40]

The J.P.s were also responsible for judicial supervision of the district's rural linen weavers, and they provided surveillance over the increasing practice of putting-out mill-spun yarn to contracted weavers. Weavers were frequently brought before the Bench charged the theft and embezzlement of webs.[41] But the structure of the putting-out system also made many weavers and "sewers" vulnerable, and J.P.s were occasionally asked to provide redress to rural textile workers: one muslin sewer was reported to have walked several times between Ballymena and Dunloy to be paid wages owed to her by the agent of a Glasgow-based firm and, in 1859, a number of women in and around Ballymena brought Lewis Park, in the sewed muslin trade of Belfast, before J.P.s in order to receive payment for work which they had returned to his local agent, Maria Farrel, who had then absconded with their webs.[42] Theft was also a problem at the local bleachgreens and J.P.s enacted judicial authority in punishing offenders. In December 1857, the *Observer* reported that bleached linen worth £50 had been stolen from the firm of William Gihon and Sons by several members of the firm's lapping (finishing) department: the case went before Quarter Sessions in January 1858 when Francis Gorman was indicted for stealing a bag and thirty pieces of bleached cloth.[43]

Because of their wide range of commercial and processing activities, many J.P.s were placed in the position of adjudicating cases in which they were directly implicated; occasionally they were accused of partiality. In 1858, J.P.s were accused of favouritism when the owner of Ballymena's largest flour mill, Robert Morton, was

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[40] *Observer*, 11 October 1862.
[41] *Observer*, 24 August 1858, 4 December 1858.
[42] *Observer*, 16 January 1858, 30 April 1859.

fined only 1s. for having his carts in use without having first affixed his name to them; others had been charged as much as 5s. for like offences.[44] On another occasion, the bleacher William Gihon refused to rule against a group of weavers charged with embezzlement when he heard that the linen manufacturer Joseph Thompson had entrusted them with £4 worth of yarn. Gihon chastised Thompson for having placed such valuable amounts of yarn in their care.[45] In another case, however, to preserve impartiality, Alexander Davison left the Bench when an employee at his Raceview Spinning Factory was charged with leaving her employment without notice.[46] And in 1862, with John Young, Andrew Todd Dickey and Thomas Casement on the Bench, the foreman of the Leighenmohr bleach works was fined 40s. for persistently trespassing with other workers upon ground occupied by the Northern Counties Railway.[47]

The linen merchants' authority and their status as legal arbiters were complemented by their prominence in local society and by the honorary positions they held within the framework of the state. John Young served as a High Sheriff of the County. The patriarch of the Gihon family, William, played a role in the local manorial court as seneschal until the abolition of the manorial court system in 1860. And in addition to their status as landholders and manufacturers, several men also played leading roles in local commerce, with the linen merchants James and Robert Young serving as directors of the Northern Bank, and John Patrick Junior as a director of the Belfast Bank. The "linen lords" were not immune from financial difficulties, and their illiquid landed capital base could not be easily drawn on at time of economic

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[43] *Observer*, 5 December 1857, 2 January 1858.
[44] *Observer*, 3 September 1858.
[45] *Observer*, 7 July 1860.
[46] *Observer*, 9 March 1861.
[47] *Observer*, 26 April 1862.

distress: William Gihon and Sons' works were closed for a period in 1858 due to heavy losses and much of their property was subsequently disposed of in bankruptcy proceedings.[48] When the nonagenarian William Gihon died in 1864, his probated will declared net effects valued at less than £20; his son, who had died a few months earlier, left net effects valued at under £50.

While bleacher-merchants were at the pinnacle of the region's commercial hierarchy, the capitalisation of other social groups is evident from records of wills and letters of administration. The following tables list the occupations of individuals in the Ballymena district[49] whose wills were probated or for whom letters of administration were granted between 1858 and 1867. Abstracts of these wills and letters of administration provide an estimated net value of effects, expressed as being "below" a fixed sum, and generally excluded landed property. As a guide to the full value of estate, their utility is therefore limited, but they generally confirm the centrality of the textile trade in the structure of wealth in the region. They also suggest the important position of the region's professional, agricultural and smaller-scale producers and retailers. The capitalisation of the countryside reflected the importance of agriculture and rural industry in the district: linen merchants and farmers both had economic ties to the rural world and related to market institutions in the district's urban centre.

[48] *Observer*, 6 February 1858.

[49] See Appendix B for a list of places included in this sample.

Table 2.11
Probated wills and letters of administration for Ballymena-area professionals, 1858-67

1) Wills

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Lieutenant in the Royal Navy	£ 6,000
Clerk in holy orders	1,500
Doctor of medicine	1,500
Surgeon	100

2) Letters of Administration

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Surgeon	£1,000
Solicitor	300
Solicitor	100
Moravian minister & widower	100
Medical doctor, bachelor	100

Source: *Abstracts of Wills and Letters of Administration, 1858-67* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons, various dates, 1860-1868).

Table 2.12
Probated wills and letters of administration for Ballymena-area linen and other merchants and manufacturers, 1858-67

1) Wills

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Merchant	£ 16,000
Merchant	6,000
Woollendraper	4,000
Merchant	3,000
Linen buyer	2,000
Linen merchant	1,500
Linen manufacturer	1,500
Yarn merchant	200

2) Letters of Administration

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Linen manufacturer, grocer & farmer	£ 5,000
Merchant	800
Linen lapper	600
Linen lapper	200
Linen lapper	100
Merchant	50

Source: As previous table.

Table 2.13
Probated wills and letters of administration for Ballymena-area farmers, 1858-67

1) Wills

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Farmer	£1,000
Farmer	300
Farmer	200
Farmer	200
Farmer	200
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	50
Farmer	20

2) Letters of Administration

Occupation	*Net Personal Effects Under*
Farmer	£ 1,000
Farmer	800
Brewer & farmer	300
Farmer	300
Farmer	200
Farmer	200
Farmer	200
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	100
Farmer	50
Farmer	50

Source: As previous table.

The importance of the farming interest in the capitalisation of the countryside demonstrates the balance of commercial and political power in the region and the potential power of arbiters between the urban-rural network. Given the implication of bleacher-merchants in many local associations and their centrality in phases of linen market reorganisation described in the following chapter, an exploration of the structure of their businesses yields insight into the patronal dynamics underpinning rural industry.

In the era preceding large-scale, factory-organised textile production, the bleachgreens which formed the backbone of rural industry were the largest single employers in districts of rural textile production. A report published in the 1854-55 parliamentary session by commissioners investigating bleachworks in the United Kingdom reported that both the Ballymena-area Dickey and Young family bleachworks employed fifty people, while the Gihons' greens at Lisnafillon employed 100 workers.[50] In 1865 it was reported that Wallace and Magill's green at Leighenmohr employed some 180 workers.[51] The labour forces in the bleachgreens were highly structured, with foremen supervising workers in a number of departments, including lapping and finishing and dyeing. But the complexity of large-scale labour organisation in bleaching was underpinned by paternalism which cemented strong links between rural industrialists and their workers. In August 1865, for instance, the workers of the Lisnafillon and Leighenmohr bleachworks were entertained by their employers with a day's railway excursion to Londonderry on the

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[50] *Royal Commission to Inquire How Far to Extend the Provisions of Acts for the Better Regulation of Mills and Factories to Bleaching Works in the U.K.* [1943] HC 1854-55, vol. XVIII, 79-81.
[51] *Observer*, 19 August 1865.

anniversary of the "relief of the maiden city."[52] The following year, the Leighenmohr workers were treated to a coach visit to the Glens of Antrim.[53]

The prominence of linen lords in Ballymena's town and countryside, their patronal role in the rural world and their central position in the marketplace, had implications for the enactment of surveillance and oversight of the linen industry in mid-Antrim as well as for the operation of town institutions. For many years the bleachers were part of a market system in which they came into direct contact with rural weavers, from whom they purchased webs in Ballymena's brown linen market. Although this system of production and exchange persisted in the Ballymena district longer than in other markets—the Hand-loom Commissioners remarked on the persistence of independent production there as late as the 1830s—two decades later it was almost extinct in mid-Antrim. John Dickey, testifying before a Parliamentary Commission on Fairs and Markets in 1853, confirmed that the structure of the local linen market was being transformed. "The trade has changed very much lately," he remarked:

> The weaver used to purchase the yarn himself and then sell the linen; now that is altogether extinct. The manufacturers now purchase a quantity of yarn and give it out to the weavers, who weave it at their own houses and bring it back. They get so much for weaving it, and the manufacturer sells it unbleached in the market here…
> [The buyer] bleaches and exports it himself. In former times, the weaver used to come in and sell to the bleacher himself and he had to lie out of his money, and to find capital which is now found for him [*sic*].[54]

Asked if the weaver benefited from this new arrangement, Dickey replied that "The manufacturer now will sell 500 pieces with the aid of one clerk, which in former times might take from 300 to 500 persons to sell."[55] In the transition to this new system of

[52] *Observer*, 19 August 1865.
[53] *Observer*, 2 September 1866.
[54] Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 98882, q. 9883.
[55] Ibid, q. 9884.

production and exchange, the bleacher-merchants played an important role. They sat alongside the local landed gentry on the Petty Sessions Bench and occupied positions of local authority acquired through their status as major landowners. Through their direction of rural industry, they had influence over large rural labour forces and maintained strong commercial links between the greens in the countryside and the markets of Ballymena and Belfast. As the decade progressed, two of the leading linen families of the area—the Youngs and the Patricks—became principals in the Braid Water Spinning Company—Ballymena's large urban mill established in the mid-1860s. The rurally-based bleacher-merchants played a critical role in the interchange between town and countryside: the bleachgreens were an intersection between the highly-organised structures of an emerging industrial world and the rural foundations of textile commerce in Ulster. The bleachers, in their commercial capacities, and on the Board of Guardians and the Bench, were intermediaries between these two sections of the mid-Antrim district, and between the landed proprietors of mid-Antrim estates and the manufacturers, dealers and artisans of the town who articulated their interests through specifically urban bodies.

The Structure of Power V: The Town Commissioners and Urban Government

In the period immediately following the Union of 1801, instruments of local urban administration could be granted to towns by two means: by municipal incorporation or by private acts of parliament.[56] More extensive legislation was passed in 1828, under which nine to twenty-nine Town Commissioners could be elected in urban areas. These Commissioners were granted powers to levy rates on

property valued at £5 or more in order to provide a limited range of services, which could be selectively adopted by the town's ratepayers. The Town Improvement Act (Ireland) of 1854 extended many of the provisions of 1847 legislation for England and Wales, establishing the franchise in towns which elected Town Commissioners and outlining their powers.[57] The Act recognised the importance of towns as commercial centres and provided for the enfranchisement of a number of large countryside landholders who resided within a prescribed distance from the town. It exempted them, however, from local rates. If exemption from the town rates was a defining feature of "rural" industry, it was a principle which was jealously guarded: the Leighenmohr bleachgreen bordering the town resisted efforts at the extension of Ballymena's boundaries through the 1870s, and a partner in the concern and the Chairman of the Town Commissioners both acknowledged that advantages derived from the green's proximity to an urban centre were matched by the benefits Ballymena dealers enjoyed by having a large workforce in their vicinity.[58] The decision to adopt the provisions of the 1854 Act could be made following the application of twenty-one or more £8 ratepayers residing within the town; a meeting could then be convened of tenants, owners and immediate lessors of property rated at £8 or above in the town along with the immediate lessors of land valued at £50 or more and within five miles of the town. Provisions of the Act could be selectively adopted at this meeting, and if a vote was recorded in favour of its provisions, Town Commissioners were subsequently elected by tenants, owners and occupiers of

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[56] Virginia Crossman, *Local Government in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994), 65.
[57] "An Act to Make Better Provision for the Paving, Lighting, Draining, Cleansing, Supplying with Water, and Regulation of Towns in Ireland, 17&18 Vict. Cap. 103," in *A Collection of the Public General Statutes Passed in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 1854* (London: George Edward Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1854), 537-83.

property rated at £4 and above within the town and immediate lessors of property valued at £50 or more within a five mile radius.

The infrastructural powers delegated to the Town Commissioners under the Act included the provision of sewerage, water supplies and street paving, cleaning and lighting. It also conferred a wide range of responsibilities on them related to urban regulation and surveillance, including powers to remove street obstructions, inspect and remove ruinous buildings, license hackney carriages and regulate lodging houses. Market and commercial surveillance was also a central element of the legislation: the Town Commissioners were granted authority to appoint an Inspector of Nuisances who was empowered to inspect slaughterhouses and to ensure the sale of unadulterated butter, meal, bread and other articles of food. The Inspector was also empowered to regulate so-called "offensive trades," including blood-boilers and soap-boilers. The legislation prescribed fines to be levied against gas-works and individuals who interfered with public water supplies. The Act's seventy-second clause enumerated a host of other powers, from assessing penalties for reckless driving to fines for kite-flying and riotous and indecent behaviour. Town rates were limited to a maximum of 1s. in the pound, rising to 1s. 6d. for towns which elected to take up the Act's water clauses.

In December 1854, a number of Ballymena's leading merchants met "for the purposes of making the necessary declarations" under the Town Improvement Act[59]; the first Town Commissioners included several professionals, alongside local textile merchants and Shafto Adair. The Chairman of the Town Commissioners, and the

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[58] *Royal Commission to Inquire into Boundaries and Municipal Areas of Cities and Towns in Ireland*, Pt. III: Minutes of Evidence [C.3089], HC 1881, vol. L, testimony of Robert Simpson, q. 179, q. 185; testimony of Joseph Gilmore, q. 220 and q. 221.
[59] Town Commissioners, 11 December 1854.

Commissioner with the highest rating, was Andrew Gihon, whose bleachworks lay within the town boundaries.

Table 2.14
Ballymena Town Commissioners, 1854-55

Name	*Rating*	*Occupation*
Andrew Gihon (Chairman)	£ 240 0s. 0d.	Linen merchant
Lt. Col. Alexander Shafto Adair	65 0s. 0d.	D.L., J.P., M.P.
Andrew Dickey	125 0s. 0d.	Linen merchant
James Kinnear	26 10s.0d.	Linen & yarn merchant
Patrick McVickar	40 0s. 0d.	Woollendraper
John Baird	125 0s. 0d	Woollen & silk merchant
Stephen Wilson McNeale	45 0s. 0d.	Solicitor
William Black	27 0s. 0d.	Surgeon
George White	25 0s. 0d.	Bookseller; NP; Registrar

Source: "Return of Towns in Ireland that have Elected Town Commissioners under the Town Improvement Act, Ireland" (416), HC 1854-55, vol. XLVIII.

Returns for other towns taking up provisions of the Act were also lodged with Parliament, including lists for the Ulster towns of Portadown in County Armagh and Newtonlimavady in County Londonderry. In Newtonlimavady, a smaller town between the larger commercial and production centres of Londonderry and Coleraine, Town Commissioners were largely drawn from commercial and professional sectors, but in Portadown, a town of increasing importance in the provincial linen industry, the fifteen Town Commissioners represented a broad spectrum of industry, commerce and professions.

Table 2.15
Newtonlimivady Town Commissioners, 1854-55

Name	*Rating*	*Occupation*
Henry Tyler, esquire	£ 41 10s. 0d.	Justice of the Peace
Robert Allison	30 0s. 0d.	Woollendraper
George R. Wilson	28 0s. 0d.	Woollendraper
Andrew Jackson	23 0s. 0d.	Grocer
Arthur Sandford	20 0s. 0d.	Grocer & spirit dealer
William Lane	43 12s. 6d.	Doctor of medicine
Hugh Lane	52 2s. 6d.	Solicitor
George Proctor	26 0s. 0d.	Solicitor
Samuel Mercer	30 0s. 0d.	Innkeeper

Source: As previous table.

Table 2.16
Portadown Town Commissioners, 1854-55

Name	*Age*	*Rating*	*Occupation*
John Obins Woodhouse	50	£ 59 0s. 0d.	Seneschal; Solicitor; Landed proprietor
Thomas Avill Shillington	52	243 0s. 0d.	Merchant; Bank director
Thomas H. Carlton	60	52 0s. 0d.	Manager, Ulster Bank; Land agent, etc
William Paul	60	80 10s. 0d.	Wollendraper & c.
William Montgomery	30	55 0s. 0d.	Linen, yarn & flax merchant
David Ferguson	40	16 0s. 0d.	Linen manufacturer
John Wilson	50	46 10s. 0d.	Maltster & brewer
D.W. Irwin	40	142 0s. 0d.	Merchant & millowner
John Watson	48	13 10s. 0d.	Merchant; House & land proprietor
John J. Marlay	54	82 0s. 0d.	Grain merchant; House & land proprietor
William Langtry	46	219 10s. 0d.	Grain merchant; Flour & corn miller; Master Extraordinary & Commisioner of Oaths
David Thornton	30	60 0s. 0d.	Grocer & provision merchant
John Kernan	53	18 0s. 0d.	Grocer; leather & shoemaker
James O'Hanlon	50	28 0s. 0d.	Ironmonger & grocer
William J. Dawson	37	36 0s. 0d.	Innkeeper, grocer & c.

Source: As previous table.

In contrast with Portadown, fewer of Ballymena's Town Commissioners were drawn from food-related processing and distributive sectors of the local economy, with five of nine implicated in the textile trade. Commissioners from other towns in the south of Ireland included more grocers, shopkeepers and innkeepers than Ballymena, with eleven of Athlone's commissioners identified as "shopkeepers" in parliamentary returns.[60] Ballymena's urban government reflected the predominance of

[60] "Return of Towns in Ireland that have Elected Town Commissioners under the Town Improvement Act, Ireland" (416), HC 1854-55, vol. XLVIII.

linen drapers within the town's upper-middling social structure. The occupational profile of ratepayers influenced the composition of their elected representatives. In 1865, the *Observer* stated that 268 people in the town were qualified ratepayers. That year, a petition for a boundary extension addressed to the Lord-Lieutenant was published in the newspaper. The petition was signed by ninety-two of the ratepayers. The signatories may have been self-selected supporters of the boundary extension, and therefore representative of specific groupings within the town's ratepayers, but it is the most comprehensive list available for the period and reveals characteristics of the urban rate-paying cohort. The names, linked with street directories and then coded, are presented in Table 2.17.

Table 2.17
Ratepayer list linked to 1865-66 town directories

1) Occupational Status

Occupational Status	*N.*	*%*
Dealer	28	30.43
Craft	18	19.57
Publican	12	13.04
Professional	3	3.26
Merchant	3	3.26
Hotelier	3	3.26
Government	3	3.26
Clergy	3	3.26
Manufacturer	2	2.17
Gentleman	1	1.09
Multiple Matches	6	6.52
None	10	10.87
Total	**92**	**100.00**

Sources: *Observer*, 25 March 1865; Business *Directory of Belfast and Principal Towns in the Province of Ulster for 1865-66* (Belfast: R.W. Wynne, 1865); *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory, 1865-66* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1865).
For details of occupational categories, see Appendix A.

2) Production Status

Production Status	*N.*	*%*
Drink	14	15.22
Food	14	15.22
Textiles & clothing	11	11.96
Clothing	9	9.78
Leather	3	3.26
Religion	3	3.26
Furniture	3	3.26
Accommodation	3	3.26
Government	3	3.26
Medicine	2	2.17
Transport	2	2.17
Print	1	1.09
Timber	1	1.09
Law	1	1.09
Miscellaneous services	4	4.35
Miscellaneous retail	1	1.09
Multiple matches	6	6.52
None[1]	11	11.96
Total	**92**	**100.00**

Sources: As previous table.
For details of occupational categories, see Appendix A.
[1] Includes "Gentleman"

This list of the occupational- and production-statuses of the urban electorate reveals a high proportion of grocers, spirit sellers and drapers among the ratepayers of the town: a structure which reflected Ballymena's importance as a market and commercial centre. The local franchise to elect Town Commissioners was the province of small-scale urban producers, processors and retailers, including some local women. They formed a more heterogeneous and numerous group than the

district's bleacher-merchants, who held prominent positions in district-wide bodies of local administration, but were also represented among Town Commissioners. More than one-third of the sample was involved in businesses which combined retail activities with some aspect of processing or manufacturing, including linen drapers and merchant tailors. This combination of production and processing with distributive functions was a feature of many nineteenth-century urban occupational structures, and of nineteenth-century retailing generally. The more exclusively retail concerns were almost entirely grocers' and spirit sellers' establishments, and some clothiers and outfitters.[61] The profile of the Town Commissioners whom this group elected persisted through the 1860s, as the Tables 2.18 and 2.19 illustrate.

Table 2.18
Town Commissioners named in the *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory*, 1858-59, along with other identified occupations

Name	*Occupation*
Andrew Todd Dickey (chairman)	Bleacher
Alexander S. Adair	Gentry
James Kinnear	Linen merchant
Alexander Robinson	Woollen & Manchester house merchant
John Strahan	Grocer & chandler
John Callaghan	Publican
John Christie	Cabinetmaker
Hugh Davison	Rope & twine maker
John Jellett	Coroner

Source: *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1858-59* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1858).

[61] For a detailed analysis of the structure of retailing in the nineteenth century which discusses the intersection of processing, craft and distributive functions, see David Alexander, *Retailing in England During the Industrial Revolution* (London: The Athlone Press, 1970). See also the studies of Geoffrey Crossick, especially his introduction to *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd, 1984), 3-31, in which he argues that shopkeepers and master artisans constituted a distinctive group within the nineteenth-century European class structure as leading members of the petty bourgeoisie: a group defined by a livelihood "derived from both its capital and its own labour" (9), by shared experiences of work, community and sociability (18-21) and, at certain moments, by political dispositions.

Table 2.19
Town Commissioners named in the *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory*, 1868, along with other identified occupations

Name	*Occupation*
James B. Patrick (chairman)	Linen merchant
Thomas Staples Magill	Bleacher & linen merchant
William Anderson	Linen yarn merchant
John McVicker	Linen & woollendraper
John Strahan	Grocer & chandler
Joseph McAuley	Coachmaker & housebuilder
Joseph Stewart	Baker
Hugh Davison	Rope & twine Maker
Alexander Caruth	Solicitor

Source: *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1868* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1868).

Urban residents were not disconnected from the surrounding rural district. Many leading members of the urban shopocracy held townparks in land immediately adjacent to the town. Martin Dowling has suggested that the parks, originally parcelled out for small-scale arable cultivation and pastoral farming by urban tenants, reflected the "rural character" of many of Ulster's towns.[62] The Ballymena Estate holdings of Hugh Rainey, a leading dealer in the town, reflect the considerable element of townpark holdings commonly held by urban professionals, dealers and merchants.

[62] Martin W. Dowling, *Tenant Right and Agrarian Society in Ulster, 1600-1870* (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1999), 135-36.

Table 2.20
Ballymena Estate holdings and rentals of Hugh Rainey for the year ended 18 November 1867

Holding	*Rent*
Townpark	£ 19 19s 2d.
Townpark	13 1s 8d.
Church St. tenement[1]	11 10s 0d.
Church St. tenement[1]	4 12s. 10d.
Total	**£ 49 3s. 8d.**

Source: Ballymena Estate Rental Book, PRONI D/1143/55.
[1]Hugh Rainey is listed as holding two separate tenements in Church Street.

Proximity to the local market made townparks valuable property as Ballymena's commercial importance grew: by 1879, a local resident reported before a parliamentary commission that Shafto Adair (now Lord Waveney) realised rents of £2 per acre in adjacent townparks, four times the rate of rent realised on land three miles from the town.[63] But townparks were also seen as functionally different from farm holdings, as "conveniences" for small-scale agricultural use by urban tenants, not intended "to compete with farms at a distance."[64] As appurtenances to urban holdings, townparks were also treated separately from farms when the Ballymena Town Commissioners considered expanding the boundaries of the town; significantly, the enlarged boundaries would take in a bleachgreen, some of the residences of local gentry and leading commercial figures, and several townparks. The Chairman of the Town Commissioners testified in 1879 that no farmers' residences would be taken within the proposed new boundaries, but stated that a tenant "nearly always gets a

[63] *Royal Commission to Inquire into Boundaries and Municipal Areas of Cities and Towns in Ireland*, Pt. III: Minutes of Evidence [C.3089], HC 1881, vol. L [hereafter cited as "Boundaries and Municipal Areas"], testimony of Samuel McKay, q. 217.

better price for his crops when he is near the market, and has that market at his door."[65] Others alluded to the profits derived by occupiers of local townparks and expressed a desire to have rates extended both to the outlying parks in the Union electoral division and to residences of the rural gentry living on the borders of the town.[66] Townparks also occupied a distinctive place in the local tenurial structure: when Hugh Rainey challenged Shafto Adair in 1873 over the right to realise tenant-right on his parks adjacent to the town, the case was dismissed.[67] Although urban commercial figures were not entirely disconnected from arable and pastoral activity, much of it took place within the context of townpark agriculture, with specific spatial, functional, legal, and ideological dimensions which differentiated it from rural farming.

Despite these holdings on the town's outskirts, the urban commercial classes made the space within the boundaries of the town the primary locus of their political activity; for many of them, town holdings also provided sources of income derived through the rental of urban property. Unlike Ballymena's large commercial thoroughfares, the town's smaller courts and lanes were inhabited by the humbler section of the community and were often owned by one or two members of the town's middle classes: in the 1862 Union valuation, for instance, the builder and architect Blayney Adair was listed as the sole proprietor of the seven dwelling-houses in Mitchell's Lane and the reedmaker Henry McNiece owned the eight properties comprising McNiece's Lane.[68] Both the residents and property-owners in these humbler residential districts were the focus of surveillance by local bodies. A

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[64] Nicholas Ellis, in Dowling, 134-35.
[65] Boundaries and Municipal Areas, testimony of Robert Simpson, q. 124, q. 131.
[66] Ibid., testimony of Alexander Caruth, q. 195, testimony of Samuel McKay, q. 217.
[67] *Northern Whig*, 5 April 1873.

correspondent to the *Observer* in 1864 called upon Ballymena's Town Commissioners to visit Coach Entry to ensure that the lane was cleared of filth and had a "free circulation of air throughout." A similar inspection of "other lanes and alleys in the town" was also recommended to check the spread of disease.[69] Sydney Lane, behind High Street, was the most notorious of the town's back streets, alleys and lanes: a profile of the lane in the *Observer* in September 1866 described it as a "notorious locality" and:

> a pestilent plague spot—a pandemonium of contaminating vice and every species of criminality. Successive gangs of thieves, swindlers and harlots have haunted or had their habitations in it during a considerable portion of the present century. And most disreputable scenes of riot, drunkenness and immorality are of almost daily occurrence amongst its denizens. It was stated from the magisterial bench of this town on Monday last that "the peoples of Sydney Lane would require a police station and a petty sessions for themselves"...A reader unacquainted with the locality would be apt to suppose that the street alluded to is some dark, narrow, filthy, unventilated and densely populated district of this town. It is no such thing. It is a short and comparatively wide thoroughfare in the rear of High Street.[70]

The newspaper noted that lane's tenements were let on a weekly basis, and advanced a proposal to sweep every "householder of questionable character" out of the lane, and rename it "The Arcade."

As the town's population swelled through the 1860s, and as Harryville became the primary area of urban residential development, Ballymena's Town Commissioners attempted to compel the owners of tenements in small lanes and courts to comply with building and sanitary legislation; their attention was focussed on areas such as Bryan Street, the condition of which was decried by the *Observer* in 1865 for its lack of backdoors, yards, ash-pits and privies.[71] In 1861 and again in 1865, the

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[68] *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland: Union of Ballymena* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons, 1862).
[69] *Observer*, 19 November 1864.
[70] *Observer*, 8 September 1866.
[71] *Observer*, 27 May 1865.

Commissioners ordered proprietors of property in Bryan Street to erect privies for their tenants.[72] In enforcement of the regulations, the Commissioners were frequently compelled to identify leading townspeople with property investments in decrepit streets: in January 1864, for instance, they declared that the Presbyterian minister William Campbell had erected houses in a lane off Broughshane Street without their permission and they ordered him to provide improved drainage to his tenants.[73] The concentration of the town's population growth in Harryville made properties there a particular focus of surveillance: in 1866 notices were served on Dr. Arthur Ross, a surgeon and medical officer in the Ballymena District Dispensary, to erect privies for occupiers of his Harryville tenements.[74] Similar orders were made to George Graham, another large Harryville property owner.[75]

The Town Commissioners took up some powers under the Town Improvement Act with vigour; significantly, however, the electors chose not adopt the water clauses of the Act when the first Commissioners were elected. This decision was to be a source of bitter contention for many years. In their first year of operation, the Commissioners projected total expenses of £547 3s. 0d., and levied a rate of 1s. in the pound. The largest single expense was for lighting the town with gas, at £156 10s. 0d., watching at £80, cleaning the town at £50, and erecting twelve new lamps and posts, at a cost of £36. Duties of surveillance, which bore fewer costs than those associated with local infrastructural development, and which, if successfully prosecuted, could bring revenues to town coffers, were realised in part through the employment of a town constable on wages of 10s. per month, and the registration of all of Ballymena's lodging houses and hackney carriages—this latter move meeting with protest from

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[72] Town Commissioners, 7 January 1861, 2 October 1865.
[73] Ibid., 4 January 1864.
[74] Ibid., 13 August 1866.

local carriage owners. In 1856, efforts at curbing and paving accounted for a larger share of the budget and were accompanied by an extension of the Commissioners' market-regulating powers through the registration of Ballymena's slaughter-houses. These town improvement efforts reflected strategies to develop the town's infrastructure and increase the value of property while keeping rates at a relatively low level. This was seen as part of a series of initiatives required to secure and develop the town's commercial core, which was of central importance to both the Estate and local retailers and artisans who predominated in town government. To place the funds disbursed by district bodies in comparative perspective, the expenditure of the Town Commissioners in 1865 is compared with Poor Law expenditures and Grand Jury presentments in 1865 in Table 2.21. Figure 2.4 shows comparative elements in the Town Commissioners' budgets from 1855 to 1868.

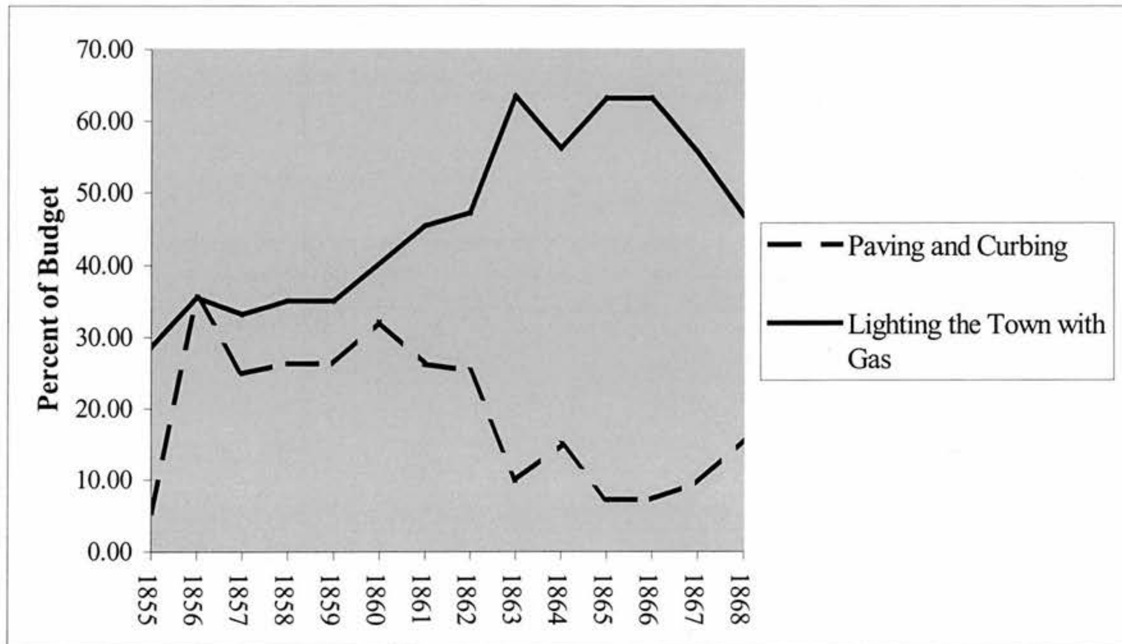
Table 2.21
Comparative expenditures of local government bodies, 1865

Local Body and Period of Expenditure	*Expenditure*
Poor Law Union Expenditure for Year Ended 29 September 1865[1]	£ 5,668 6s. 8d.
Value of Presentments Made at the Spring Assizes, Lower Toome, 1865[2]	1,711 11s. 11d.
Estimated Expenditures of Town Commissioners for 1865[3]	554 0s. 0d.

Sources:
[1]*County of Antrim Grand Warrant for Spring Assizes, 1865* (Belfast: James Reed, 1865)
[2] Minutes of the Ballymena Town Commissioners, PRONI, LA/14/2B/1, 14 November 1864
[3] "Return of Name and Valuation of Each Electoral Division, and Poundage Rates in Each Poor Law Union in Ireland, 1861-64" (351), HC 1866, vol. LXII.

[75] Town Commissioners, 13 August 1866, 15 October 1866.

Figure 2.4
Paving and curbing and town lighting as a percentage of projected annual budgets, Ballymena Town Commissioners, 1855-68

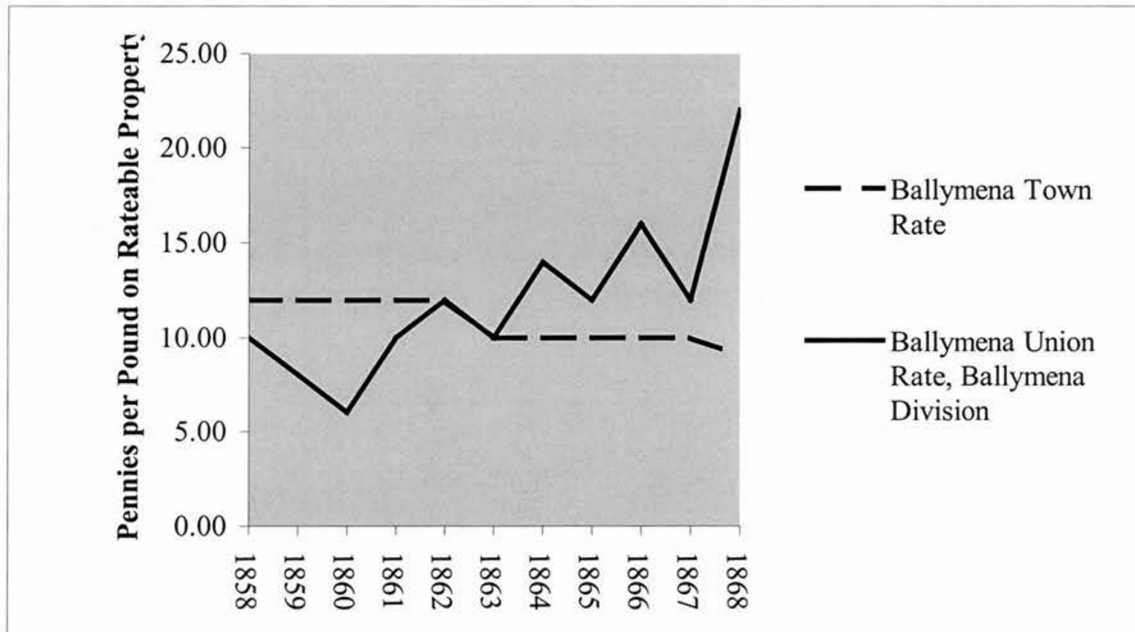


Source: Minutes of the Ballymena Town Commissioners, PRONI, LA/14/2B/1.

Cess and Union costs placed pressure on Town Commissioners to keep town rates low. In part, the importance attached to low rates was also derived from unequal status-relationships within members of the rate-paying community. This reflected the vulnerability of the commercial sector in times of general economic distress. Ballymena's Town Commissioners did not attempt to expand the remit of their duties as physical improvement initiatives were completed and, as a consequence, by the middle of the 1860s, they were able to reduce the town rate to 10d. from 1s. in the pound, a move which only partially offset a dramatic escalation in the Ballymena division's Poor Law rates. The high local Union rates were a cause of concern to the Town Commissioners, who proposed a resolution at a 1866 meeting in favour of the

English rating system, under which a uniform rate applied throughout the Poor Law Union electoral divisions.[76]

Figure 2.5
Ballymena Town and Union (Ballymena Elective Division) rates, 1858-68



Source: *Observer*, 1857-67.

The urban shopkeepers and producer-distributors were not a uniformly prosperous group: many were liable to bankruptcy in periods of depressed economic activity: in 1861, for example, amid a particularly severe economic downturn precipitated by a linen industry crisis, newspaper notices advertised the bankruptcies of the grocers Francis Logan and Richard Blackley, the grocer and baker John Jamieson, and the grocer, baker and spirit dealer Robert James Ballentine.[77] The same year saw the bankruptcy of Robert Dill and Son, millwrights in the town, the carpenter and builder James McKillen, and, most spectacularly, the timber and coal merchant William McPeake.[78] While the craft and commercial sectors were highly

[76] Town Commissioners, 7 May 1866.
[77] *Observer*, 13 April 1861, 25 May 1861, 5 October 1861, 12 October 1861.
[78] *Observer*, 19 January 1861, 1 June 1861, 22 June 1861.

unstable, higher status groups within the local middle class could become a source of commercial credit: in July 1858, for example, a deed was registered between the painter and glazier George McErlean and the druggist James Beatty in which Beatty advanced McErlean £37 7s. 2d. for goods sold and delivered, upon which McErlean mortgaged property in the district which he held on a ninety-nine year lease.[79] This highly differentiated social structure was an important feature of the town's shopocracy and was to have consequences for the development of local urban improvement initiatives. The vulnerability of sections of the rate-paying community contributes to explaining why, on occasion, they were prepared to defy measures which had the support of local landlords and clergy, as the debate over the extension of the Town Improvement Act's water clauses will reveal. It also underpinned a local improvement strategy in which the Commissioners concerned themselves at first with infrastructural improvements, which could have a positive effect on commercial property values, and then with the practice of local power through less expensive means, primarily through market surveillance. In providing oversight of commercial and processing institutions located within the town boundaries, the Town Commissioners played a role in policing central points of contact between rural and urban mid-Antrim.

In common with several other large towns in Ulster, Ballymena did not enjoy borough status and therefore did not have a Member of Parliament in its own right through whom matters of local concern could be expressed directly in institutions of national government. Indeed, an 1866 return to Parliament ranked Ballymena as the third-largest "unrepresented town" in Ulster, based on population returns from the 1861 census:

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[79] PRONI Registry of Deed records, deed 829, p. 595.

Table 2.22
Eleven most populous unrepresented towns in Ulster by the 1861 census

Town	*Population (N.)*
Newtownards	9,543
Lurgan	7,772
Ballymena	**6,774**
Portadown	5,528
Strabane	4,863
Banbridge	4,033
Monaghan	3,910
Omagh	3,662
Cookstown	3,257
Cavan	3,209
Ballyshannon	3,197

Source: "Return of Unrepresented Towns in Ireland Having (by the Census of 1861) a Population Exceeding 3,000" (250), HC 1866, vol. LVII.

The activities of the Town Commissioners began to include interventions on behalf of the "town interest" which were expressed directly to national government bodies. In June 1861, Andrew Dickey presided over a meeting in the Commissioners' offices at which a resolution was prepared to County Antrim representatives expressing opposition to the government's cancellation of a postal subsidy to the Royal Atlantic Steam Navigation Company.[80] The Company's Galway transatlantic service had allowed businesses in Ireland to receive the post from America at a considerably expedited speed and the loss of this service was seen as a blow to the local commercial sector. The Town Commissioners also unanimously adopted a resolution in 1860 complaining of the "unsatisfactory management of fairs and markets in this Kingdom" and in 1864 they expressed strong opposition to the

government's proposals for a stamp tax on fire insurance, arguing that this additional expense would dissuade owners and occupiers from taking the precaution of insuring their property.[81] The lack of direct parliamentary representation for the expanding town thus created local political dynamics in which town and district bodies claimed roles as interlocutors in wider political arenas. This feature of political and cultural brokerage contributed to structuring local politics and forms of protest in the 1860s and 1870s which are examined in subsequent sections of this study.

As the Town Commissioners became more active in articulating and promoting the "local interest," they found themselves at loggerheads with other institutions. In 1862, for instance, a delegation of town residents waited on the Commissioners to request that they consider taking up the provisions of the Town Improvement Act which authorised them to purchase, rent or otherwise provide a place of public recreation.[82] The *Observer*, noting that the heaviest items of town expenditure connected with curbing and paving had been completed, supported the petitioners, but the Town Commissioners replied that they were "doubtful as to the means at their command" and suggested that a memorial be forwarded to Shafto Adair.[83] The Town Commissioners were also reluctant to put in force provisions of the Act in order to establish a cemetery for the town. In 1857, Shafto Adair, chairman of the "Burial Committee of the Ballymena Union" reported that "the Town Commissioners do not purpose to put in force so much of the Act as enabled them to establish a separate cemetery."[84] Indeed, a decade later the situation was so serious that local families were reported by Adair to have been buried many miles away from

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[80] *Observer*, 1 June 1866.
[81] *Observer*, 2 April 1864.
[82] Town Commissioners, 2 August 1862.
[83] *Observer*, 2 August, 1862.

the town, and he announced that, as a Churchwarden, he had entered into negotiations with representatives of a deceased landholder in Kirkinriola for the purposes of cemetery enlargement; but he again urged action on the part of the Town Commissioners, who eventually purchased a plot of land for that purpose.[85] The Ballymena Town Commissioners also faced pressures to expand the remit of their activities from other quarters, as explorations of two debates—over the extension of the water clauses of the Town Improvement Act and the operation of the local private gas-light company—reveal.

The Practice of Urban Power I: The Water Clause Debates

Debates over the extension of the water clauses of the Town Improvement Act became battlegrounds for advocates and opponents of the expansion of the discourses of local improvement and the remit of Ballymena's Town Commissioners. No figure became more identified with the crusade for the adoption of the water clauses than the Ballymena butter merchant William York. York was of an evangelical disposition—he was a leading supporter of the full suppression of liquor sales on Sundays—and he launched public challenges to the Town Commissioners in lengthy diatribes recorded in the *Observer* throughout 1861.[86] Rhetorically, at least, he placed his advocacy of the water clauses within a specifically religious discourse, calling upon "the inhabitants of Ballymena, known throughout the Christian world in connexion with the late religious revival." York reminded them that "the great head of the Church, whilst on earth, left the poor as a legacy to the rich," and called for the expulsion from office of:

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[84] Report of the Burial Committee of the Ballymena Union, 8 January 1857, PRONI D/929/HA/12/F4/11/5.
[85] *Observer*, 15 June 1867.

> the nine self-elected guardians of the public health, three by three, as their time of office expires...The legislature in passing the Town Improvement Act made no distinction between the peer and peasant, the millionaire or pauper. Rates are to be levied upon all persons liable to pay them, within the limits of the town, and similar impartiality is to be observed in the necessary draining, paving, lighting & c. of poor localities, as well as about the mansions in aristocratic districts. If the reader only takes a passing glance at the commissioners' shop doors, or the neighbourhood where either themselves or friends have an interest, he will no doubt agree with me in thinking that it is to be lamented Broughshane Street has not been honoured with the residence of a couple of these gentlemen...[87]

In August 1861, at a meeting to elect Town Commissioners, one of the newly-elected members condemned York, "a person who was comparatively a stranger in the town," for having caused "needless excitement."[88] Although a move to extend the water clauses necessitated an extension of the Commissioners' taxation powers, this extension, York argued, would allow the Town Commissioners to provide adequate drainage throughout the town.[89] William York's proposal enjoyed the support of Shafto Adair, but, among ratepayers, he encountered strong opposition. In a letter to the *Observer* on 17 May 1862, he accused a Town Commissioner of "punishing" him for his activism. At a public meeting from which York was absent, his name had been put forward for the onerous duty of aplotting the county cess for the second year in a row. York continued to deplore the "stagnant water and filth" of Ballymena's streets, and he called upon Shafto Adair to compare the state of his town with the cleanliness of Carnlough—on the estate of Lord Antrim—and Glenarm, the property of the Marchioness of Londonderry. Unsuccessful in his efforts to seek elective office as a Union Guardian in December 1863, York took up a new crusade: the provision of public drinking fountains in Ballymena. As secretary to a committee established for

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[86] *Observer*, 11 April 1863.
[87] *Observer*, 22 September 1861.
[88] *Observer*, 26 August 1861.

that purpose and with the commitment of Shafto Adair to provide £20 of the estimated £50 cost of the project, York energetically campaigned for adoption of the water clauses of the Town Improvement Act by Ballymena's ratepayers, expecting that no more than one penny would be levied on rateable property in the town and townparks, with a view to reducing the levy to one-half penny in the pound in short order.[90] This expenditure would help to finance the operation and maintenance of pumps that were being sunk throughout the town, funded by voluntary public subscription. On 19 December 1864, the Town Commissioners assembled to consider York's request. The physician Dr. Black, armed with a petition signed by fifty-five ratepayers, objected to the proposals, and the Commissioners agreed, citing legal restrictions on their remit.[91] Another meeting was convened on 3 April 1865, at which Shafto Adair argued strongly in favour of adopting the water clauses, and at which the Presbyterian minister S. M. Dill also spoke in support of the measure. But when the proposal was put to a vote, it was defeated by seventy-six votes to thirty-two, with 108 of the town's 268 qualified ratepayers in attendance. The following week, York wrote to the *Observer*, which had been a strong proponent of adoption, announcing that the pumps' handles would be removed.[92] The decision adopted at the meeting of ratepayers not to authorise the Town Commissioners to take up the water clauses underscored the limits placed by ratepayers on the Commissioners' improvement projects, and on a more expansive ideology of improvement. It also revealed how a number of town institutions—the Estate, the local newspaper, York and a small group of his ratepayer supporters—faced strong opposition from the shopkeepers and artisans who comprised a significant element of the local ratepayers, over the scope of

[89] *Observer*, 19 October 1861.
[90] *Observer*, 11 June 1864, 18 June 1864, 10 December 1864.
[91] *Observer*, 24 December 1864.

urban improvement. The expenditures of local government were first directed towards infrastructural improvement; with the completion of paving and curbing, local rates had been reduced. Most members of the rate-paying community were unwilling to develop a new focus for expenditure on the public provision of water, targeted particularly at poorer sections of the community, instead preferring rate reductions heralded by the diminishing scale and cost of their Town Commissioners' initiatives.

The Practice of Urban Power II: The Gas Company Debates

Another frequent source of conflict concerned the provision of gas by the private Ballymena and Harryville Gas Light Company, established in 1842. The company had been added to the register of joint-stock companies in 1863, with eighteen recorded shareholders and nominal capital of £6,000.[93] Many of the shareholders were local figures, and in 1858 the Company's Managing Committee, chaired by the local surgeon William Black, included Thomas Casement—a J.P. and member of the local gentry—and the Ballymena merchant James Graham, who also owned large sections of Harryville. In the year ended 10 May 1858, the Company realised profits of £150 on revenue of £1,556 15s. 8d. Its principal assets were its building and premises on Bridge Street, near the crossing over the Braid Water to Harryville, and its income was derived principally from the provision of gas to private consumers.

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[92] *Observer*, 15 April 1865.
[93] "Returns of Names, Places of Registration, Date of Registration, Nominal Capital and Number of Shareholders of Joint Stock Companies… to May 1864" (452), HC 1864, vol. LVIII.

Table 2.23
Abstract of the accounts of the Ballymena and Harryville Gas Light Company for the year ended 10 May 1858

Total Receipts		£ 1,556 15s. 8d.	
	Total Receipts From:		
	Private Lights (after bad debt)	81.24 %	
	Public Lights	11.90 %	
	Meter Rents	4.83 %	
	Other	2.03 %	
Total Expenditures			£ 1,256 11s. 8d.
Depreciation on Premises and Meters			£ 150 4s. 0d.
Net Profit		**£ 150 0s. 0d.**	
Capital in Paid-up Stock		**£ 3,000 0s. 0d.**	

Source: *Observer*, 19 June 1858.

The Company faced frequent criticism from gas consumers. Complainants often sought recourse through the Town Commissioners, whom they called upon to hold the privately-held Gas Company to account. As Figure 2.5 illustrated, the costs of gas lighting increased as a proportion of the annual budgets of the Town Commissioners through the 1860s, making gas prices a subject of considerable discussion among the Commissioners themselves. At a meeting of the Town Commissioners reported in the *Observer* on 12 September 1857, a motion was put to the floor by the draper Patrick McVickar, seconded by the coroner John Jellett, which requested that the Commissioners, at their next meeting, "take into consideration the powers vested in them with respect to the borrowing of a sum of money with a view

to its expenditure on the erection of gas-works for the supplying of the public-lamps and the inhabitants of the town." The privately-owned Gas Company was perceived by some traders to be injurious to the town's commerce and development, and leading figures in Ballymena were frequently brought into public conflict with the Company.

The Company had given local bleachers on the town's perimeter cause for grievance: on one occasion, Thomas Casement and others representing the Company were ordered to pay John Dickey £500 and costs for damage done to linens on Dickey's bleachgreen caused by tar which had escaped from the gas-works into their shared mill-race.[94] A similar case in 1864, involving Messrs. Wallace and Magill of the Leighenmohr bleachworks, resulted in charges being laid against John Hale, the Gas Company manager, for trespass.[95] Complaints about the quality of light in the public lamps were frequently made by local businesses, although Hale insisted that claims of inadequate lighting were unfounded.[96] On 8 January 1859, the *Observer* reported that a deputation of town inhabitants had waited on the Town Commissioners and petitioned them to "adopt such measures, in exercise of the powers vested in them, as may remedy the evil of the inferior quality of gas now supplied." The following week, a deputation from the Company met with the Commissioners to deny "the right of the Commissioners to interfere between the Gas Company and the private consumers."[97] Thomas Casement was reported to have challenged the authority of the Commissioners to erect works for any purpose other than to provide for the public lights. In March 1859, the Commissioners decided against establishing public gas-works, but in December they met into order to consider adopting provisions of the 1854 Town Improvement Act "for the regulation of measures used

[94] *Observer*, 26 June 1858.
[95] *Observer*, 3 December 1864.
[96] *Observer*, 22 December 1860.

in the sale of gas," which would allow them to appropriate meters formerly under the control of gas owners, and appoint an Inspector responsible for approving and stamping each meter as a functioning apparatus.[98]

Against a backdrop of complaints, in 1861 the Gas Company reduced the price of gas, initially from 7s. 6d. per thousand feet to 6s. 8d., after an intervention by shareholders James and George Graham.[99] In an act of gratitude, thirty townsmen entertained the Grahams at a dinner at Mrs. Eggleson's Hotel, expressing satisfaction that the two men "had given satisfactory evidence of their contentment with a reasonable amount of profit upon their capital."[100] Indeed, they had reportedly expressed themselves content with a profit of 5 percent—the same proportion of profit upon capital recorded by the Company in 1858, after deductions of £150 were made for depreciation of fixed assets. Although the Grahams' move endeared them to many members of the town's merchant classes, another Gas Company Committee member, Dr. William Black, refuted their claim that the reduction had been agreed unanimously, insisting that both he and Thomas Casement considered a reduction to be "hostile" to the interests of the Company.[101] In response, James Graham wrote a letter to the *Observer* which appeared on 2 March 1861 challenging Black's claims, and alleging that the Company had already offered a reduction of 15 percent to one consumer "in order to prevent him from destroying the monopoly of the Company by erecting a gas works of his own." In 1862, the Company undertook to provide gas lighting to Galgorm and Gracehill through a supply line under the main line of

[97] *Observer*, 15 January 1859.
[98] *Observer*, 19 November 1859.
[99] *Observer*, 16 February 1861.
[100] *Observer*, 16 February 1861.
[101] *Observer*, 23 February 1861.

road.[102] Later that year, though, a correspondent to the *Observer*, in an open letter to the Town Commissioners, wrote that the Company had advised a number of consumers that bills left unpaid within the month they were furnished were liable to an additional penalty of one-eighth of the total charge:

> ...on many occasions, you and your predecessors, have had serious disagreements with the Gas Company of Ballymena in matters connected with the price of and supply of light for the public lamps. In most cases, if not in every case, you have been obliged to submit to their conditions, just because they have a monopoly on the supply...will the people of Ballymena longer submit to pay 30% more for gas than it could be manufactured from their own funds...I believe that the community are now paying about £700 a year for paving, lighting and cleansing the town, the gas-lamps, lamp-posts and fixtures are their own property, vested in you their trustees. The paving and curbing of the town is now almost complete; and the time has arrived at which you would be fully warranted in undertaking the erection of gas-works for the public benefit...[103]

In the winter of 1866, the Company was called upon to explain why bills were greater than in the corresponding period of 1865.[104] The *Observer* described a meeting of 12 February 1866 between "some of the principal gas owners" and the Town Commissioners at which annual increases of up to 90 percent were interrogated. The meeting debated a resolution for the establishment of a joint-stock company, but resolved instead to send a deputation to meet with the Gas Company directors.[105] Subsequently, a petition dated 7 March 1866 was presented to the Town Commissioners, signed by many of Ballymena's leading merchants, requesting a public meeting, which was held on 15 March at noon. At the meeting, a committee comprising many of the largest merchants, and chaired by Dr. Black, who was no longer a Gas Company Committee member, was struck to inquire into the possibility

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[102] *Observer*, 27 June 1862.
[103] *Observer*, 27 December 1862.
[104] *Observer*, 10 February 1866.

of erecting gas-works of their own.[106] Gas prices were reduced again in an announcement published on 30 June 1866, but the Company, its charges and its operations remained subjects of acrimonious debate. It was no coincidence that in 1866, twenty-three of the town's drapers and merchants announced that they were to commence early closing at 6 o'clock in the evening from 1 May [107]; the *Observer* noted that they would thereby "save a considerable sum in the expenditure on gas light." But, like the debate over local water provision, the debate over gas provision reflected the advancement of perceived economic interests by local ratepayers. It also reflected a degree of unease over the infrastructural development of urban space by private institutions outside ratepayer control and disagreement over the scope of local bodies' authority to intervene on behalf of local commercial interests. This was a concern expressed less frequently in the water clause debate, in which the main beneficiaries of the proposal were seen to be the town's poorer residents. The Town Commissioners had been drawn into these debates as arbiters of the urban interest, which some defined as the protection of the local commercial community—largely effected through intervention in support of selected infrastructural projects in the town. The limits of the practical operation of the improvement ethic, however, reflected the parameters of the ideology to which the town's ratepayers subscribed: additional projects would not be adopted up at the risk of higher rates, even if the local landlord, newspaper and prominent sections of the town were proponents of an enlargement of the scope of the Commissioners' activities.

The range of institutions which made up the fabric of local government in Ireland comprised bodies with a range of overlapping tasks and interests. In mid-

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[105]*Observer*, 7 February 1866.
[106] *Observer*, 17 March 1866.
[107]*Observer*, 21 April 1866.

Antrim, the practice of these powers involved a range of independent and interconnected interests, some focussed on urban development and others on the interconnected rural-urban network. The Adair family, concerned with the development of the town's markets in order to realise increasing revenue from them, was a proponent of expanding urban improvement schemes, but Shafto Adair's local authority was circumscribed by urban rate-payers and by other powerful institutions such as the Petty Sessions Bench, on which bleachers and other mercantile interests were also represented. The Board of Guardians, responsible for an increasing range of health-related matters, combined the authority of *ex-officio* propertied interests with the elected representatives of rural and urban districts. Propertied interests, comprising both farmers and the linen merchants who directed rural industry, were also predominant in the Grand Jury, which shared some responsibilities for the district's infrastructural development with local Town Commissioners.

This chapter has explored the framework of local authority in which links within and between rural and urban areas of mid-Antrim were structured; this framework set parameters for forms of political and cultural mobilisation and expression. The structure of authority in the town comprised Town Commissioners, Estate representatives, judicial officers and other figures. The Commissioners were concerned primarily with the development of urban space, but the town's prosperity hinged on its local market—which was an interface between urban and rural interests. In the wider district, authority was enacted by commercial gentry figures with strong ties to the countryside as landholders, as rural industrialists and as J.P.s. As central figures in the urban-rural network, the district's Poor Law Guardians developed strategies for management of local poor relief which complemented the exigencies of rural labour markets. This dense administrative and political network expressed the

inter-relatedness of town and countryside, as well as the functional foundations of mid-Antrim's "urban" and "rural" worlds. The analyses of economic, social and cultural developments in mid-Antrim which follow, and the commercial changes in the local textile market which are explored in the next chapter of this study, involved individuals, groups and institutions examined in this chapter acting within the parameters of these networks.

III: Changing Dimensions of Textile Production in Mid-Antrim

The two decades following the Famine witnessed significant changes in the organisation of the local linen industry, with the eclipse of the pre-Famine structure of independent, family-based production. The mid-Antrim district remained a centre of rural hand-loom weaving, but production became widely based on the putting-out system, whereby mill-spun yarn was provided to rural households on a contractual basis for the production of cloth. Weaving was combined with agricultural work and, for many families, labour in rural household units retained a highly seasonal pattern, though women and children were increasingly drawn into factory spinning and domestic weaving in place of domestic yarn production. These changes did not transform Ballymena from a market town into an industrial centre, but principles of local textile production and exchange which underpinned the linen market changed, as part of a series of related changes in market practices and the organisation of rural production and urban exchange. The belated development of new systems of organisation in the mid-Antrim district resulted in a powerful discourse of rural autonomy which later became the basis for mobilisation and protest by the district's weavers. It also created conditions in which divisions within the community expressed in local institutions—and religious ideas transmitted from rural areas—became powerful mobilising and organising principles in local society.

The market, as an institution of exchange and as a site in which sections of local society made contested claims to define and re-define practices and structures of production and exchange, was of central importance to the mid-Antrim district. Efforts to articulate new precepts of market culture had significant effects on Ballymena's commercial structures as the textile industry underwent changes at local and provincial levels. The growing dominance of Belfast, and of its commercial

sector, exercised enormous influence over localised market structures and practices.[1] In mid-Antrim, the impact of these exogenous pressures was acute. Changes in the organisation of linen yarn and cloth production contributed to creating new labour forces and market relationships which in turn reoriented gender roles, family structures, and the character and range of contacts between local producers, processors, distributors and merchants. In Ballymena, these layers of change produced a varied system of textile production which comprised rural hand-loom weaving in domestic units, urban hand-loom manufactories and, from the mid-1860s, large-scale, steam-powered spinning and weaving factories. These developments were linked to the emergence in mid-Antrim of a textile labour force with new characteristics and new sets of relationships to the market. These changes were to have significant impacts on the demographic and institutional bases of the town and district, and on the development of forms of cultural and political expression which are explored in subsequent sections of this study. This chapter analyses the evolving structure of the linen industry, the local market and the local labour force in order to provide a context within which these cultural developments may be situated.

While linen production and trade had been prevalent in Ireland for centuries, the removal of import tariffs on Irish linens to England in 1696 provided an impetus for the expansion of the industry throughout Ireland, particularly in Ulster. The eighteenth century saw the rise of linen drapers, many of whom entered the textile trade as a complement to other forms of commercial activity. Gradually, through the course of the century, these commercial figures, using capital accrued through a range of activities, including farming, began processing linen in bleachgreens in the

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[1] These changes in local commercial structures are explored in chapter six of this study.

province.[2] Chapter one explored the organisation of textile production in pre-Famine mid-Antrim, which was centred on independent, domestic-based labour by weavers and their families. Weavers came into contact with drapers to exchange webs and cash in the local market: this system contrasted with the structure of the Scottish linen industry, which was organised on a putting-out basis from the eighteenth century.[3] Production of cloth was centred on gender- and age-specific organisation within the family unit, with women and children largely involved in flax-spinning and men engaged in weaving cloth from the yarn. This system of production faced reorganisation in the early-nineteenth century with the establishment of the cotton industry in Ireland, and later, in the 1820s and 1830s, with the rapid spread of wet-spinning techniques which centralised flax-spinning in mills.[4] The development of the wet-spinning process in the mid-1820s revolutionised yarn production. In the space of a decade, several large-scale, steam-powered spinning mills were established in Ulster—among the most famous was the York Street Mill of Thomas and Henry Mulholland in Belfast, a cotton-spinning establishment which was converted to flax-spinning after a fire in 1828.[5] By 1839, there were forty such mills in Ireland, thirty-five of them in Ulster.

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[2]W. H. Crawford, "The Origins of the Linen Industry," *Ulster Folklife* 17 (1971): 42-51 and E. R. R. Green, *The Lagan Valley, 1800-50: A Local History of the Industrial Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1979), 60-61.

[3] Alastair J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1979), 55-59 and Jane Gray, "Rural Industry and Uneven Development," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 20 (July 1993), 4: 598.

[4] For a detailed account of the evolution of the Irish linen industry, see Emily Joan Boyle, "The Economic Development of the Irish Linen Industry" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University of Belfast, 1977).

[5]W. A. McCutcheon, *The Industrial Archeology of Northern Ireland* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 296-97.

Table 3.1
Flax mills and mill employees in Ulster, 1839-71

Year	*Type of Mill*	*Mills (N.)*	*Employees (N.)*
1839	Spinning	35	7,758
1850	Spinning	61	18,500
	Spinning & Weaving	1	545
1857	Spinning	77	18,299
	Spinning & Weaving	8	5,965
1862	Spinning	53	15,252
	Spinning & Weaving	17	12,045
1868	Spinning	60	25,958
	Spinning & Weaving	22	19,757
1871	Spinning	58	23,820
	Spinning & Weaving	20	19,580

Source: H. D. Gribbon, *The History of Water Power in Ulster* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, Ltd.,1969), 97.

Participation in Ulster's emerging factory labour force was highly conditioned by gender and age, with women and youth drawn disproportionately into factories. As early as 1835, returns showed that between 60 and 70 percent of flax mill employees in Ulster were females, and a large majority was under the age of twenty-one.

Table 3.2
Employment structure in flax mills in Ulster, 1835

County	*Mills (N.)*	*Employees (N.)*	*Female Employees (%)*	*Employees Under 21 (%)*
Antrim	14	2,581	71.83	77.92
Armagh	5	416	80.29	69.47
Down	1	206	68.93	82.52
Monaghan	1	44	88.64	81.82

Source: "Return of Persons Employed in the Cotton, Worsted, Flax and Silk Factories of the United Kingdom" (138), HC 1836, vol. XLV.

Commissioners investigating the condition of hand-loom weavers in the United Kingdom in the 1830s heard that in addition to work in spinning mills, women were

increasingly employed in hand-loom weaving, which they described as "a new feature in the history of Irish weaving."[6] This was partly due to the displacement of hand-spinning, which had been a female preserve in the proto-industrial household unit of production. The impact of wet-spinning on the sexual division of labour in domestic production was dramatic: the number and proportion of female weavers in Antrim rose sharply and the number of spinners declined dramatically. These changes, and the gravitation towards domestic making-up activities, were cited by contemporary observers as consequences of the mechanisation and centralisation of spinning.[7] A report to the Hand-loom Commissioners suggested that hand-spinners' earnings had declined with the introduction of mill-spun yarn from 6d. per day to 1d. to 2d. per day: increasingly women looked to spinning factories for employment.[8]

As industrialisation gained pace in the spinning and weaving mills of Ireland, between 1841 and 1851 the number of factory workers "ministering to clothing" rose by 134 percent. The structure of employment reflected a disproportionate share of female labour, at more than two-thirds of workers in 1850, 1856 and 1862, as Table 3.5 reveals.

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[6] *Royal Commission on Hand-loom Weavers*, Commissioners' Reports, Pt. III (Yorkshire, West Riding; Ireland) (43-II), HC 1840, vol. XXIII [hereafter cited as Hand-loom Weavers], report of R.M. Muggeridge.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

Table 3.3
Selected occupations in County Antrim, by sex, 1841

Occupation	*N.*	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*
Linen Weavers	4,486	87.23	12.77
Unspecified Weavers	12,526	83.43	16.57
Spinners of Flax	5,958	0.39	99.61
Unspecified Spinners	19,565	0.05	99.95
Clothing Factory Workers	1,839	29.58	70.42

Source: "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV.

Table 3.4
Selected occupations in County Antrim, by sex, 1851

Occupation	*N.*	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*
Damask & Linen Weavers	19,959	65.82	34.18
Unspecified Weavers	4,322	59.83	40.17
Spinners of Flax	1,622	1.66	98.34
Unspecified Spinners	3,410	13.26	86.74
Factory Workers & Overseers (Clothing)	4,310	31.37	68.63

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI.

Table 3.5
Employment at spinning, weaving and miscellaneous flax mills in Ireland in 1850, 1856 and 1862

Year	*N.*	*Children (%)*	*Adolescent & Adult Males (%)*	*Adolescent & Adult Females (%)*
1850	21,159	0.18	32.61	67.21
1856	28,871	0.41	31.00	68.59
1862	34,193	1.95	29.11	68.94

The age categories in the above table are those employed by the Inspector, Robert Baker.
Source: "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1862" [3076], HC 1863, vol. XVIII, Report of Robert Baker.

The Famine's impact on the organisation of cloth production was significant, as the supply of labour decreased, the cost of labour increased, and weaving gradually came to be centred in power-loom factories.[9]

Table 3.6
Linen mills in Ireland in 1850, 1856 and 1862

Year	*Spinning Mills (N.)*	*Spindles (N.)*	*Weaving Mills (N.)*	*Power Looms (N.)*	*Spinning & Weaving Mills (N.)*
1850	67	396,338	1	58	1
1856	85	567,980	13	1,691	9
1862	60	592,981	15	4,666	19

Source: "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1850" [1304], HC 1851, vol. XXIII.

The introduction of mill-spinning and, after the Famine, power-loom weaving, also increased labour differentiation within the production process. Where the factory system was strongest, it often occasioned protests by employees. In some hand-loom shops, protests over the repeal of the Corn Laws and sectarian conflicts were described in the Hand-loom Commissioners reports published in 1840.[10] The Commissioners heard weavers complain that pay rates were low and working conditions intolerable, but one Commissioner, C. G. Otway, wrote that although the weavers he encountered expressed a "dislike of factories," he nonetheless welcomed the new system of labour because it introduced discipline to the organisation of production.[11] By the mid-1860s, the reports of the Inspectors of Factories also described "small strikes for wages" throughout the spinning industry, and reported

[9] Philip Ollerenshaw, "Industry, 1820-1914," *An Economic History of Ulster,1820-1940*, eds. Liam Kennedy and Philip Ollerenshaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 62-108, especially 73-74.
[10] Hand-Loom Weavers, Report of C. G. Otway, 'Kilkeel'.
[11] Hand-Loom Weavers, Report of C. G. Otway.

that spinners' wages had doubled from 4s. and 4s. 6d. per week to 8s. and 9s. per week.[12]

Protest at the transformations being effected in the linen industry were expressed in verse by the "rhyming weavers" of Counties Antrim and Down, who lamented the passing of the former system of organisation and wrote nostalgically of a pre-industrial Arcadia in which weavers were independent of the putative tyranny of factories and the putting-out system and enjoyed an autonomous position in the open market.[13] Mid-Antrim produced several of these predominantly Presbyterian poets, including David Herbison, a farmer at Laymore, in the vicinity of Ballymena, who had been born in the town.[14] Drawing on a print culture strongly associated with regions of Scottish settlement and a political tradition of social critique which stretched back to poets' sympathies with United Irishmen, Herbison's poem "The Auld Wife's Lament for her Teapot" recorded the gendered experience of industrialisation.

> ...For ah! I'm sure I'll never see
> Such joys as charm'd my youthful e'e—
> The days are past when folks like me
> Could earn their bread,
> My auld wheel now sits silently
> Aboon the bed.

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[12] "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1865" [3622], HC 1866, vol. XXIV, Report of Robert Baker.

[13] Peter Gibbon has argued that the decline of the independent status of hand-loom weaving was paralleled by a decline of the status and activities of rhyming-weavers themselves. He identifies these two processes as reflecting the erosion of the independent culture of the mid-Antrim weaving district in *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975), 55. D. H. Akenson and W. H. Crawford demonstrate the utility of Ulster-Scots' "folk" poetry to historians in *Local Poets and Social History: James Orr, Bard of Ballycarry* (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1977). Comparisons may be made between the experience of Irish and Scottish hand-loom weavers during the period of mechanisation; see Norman Murray, *The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1978), 168-72.

[14] Prominent female poets from the district included Elizabeth Willoughby Treacy of Brigadee and Ida White, wife of the editor of the *Observer*; John Hewitt also counts James Given, a local schoolmaster, among local poets in his study *Rhyming Weavers and Other Country Poets of Antrim and Down* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1974).

And well may Erin weep and wail
The day the wheels began to fail,
Our tradesman now can scarce get kail
Betimes to eat,
In shipfuls they are doomed to sail
In quest of meat.

For that machine that spins the yarn,
Left is unfit our bread to earn,
O Erin! will you ne'er turn stern
Against your foe,
When every auld wife can discern
Your overthrow![15]

Changes in the organisation of linen production also affected the system of local commercial organisation. The 1825 report of a parliamentary committee heard conflicting evidence concerning the advantages of the direct purchase of webs in the marketplace by buyers—the practice then prevailing in the Ballymena market. John Marshall of Leeds, a leading English industrialist, spoke in favour of an alternative system in which weavers brought webs directly to the bleachers of their choice, while John Stevenson Ferguson of Belfast expressed scepticism towards the putting-out system, arguing that intermediate agents in yarn buying militated against effective surveillance of cloth quality.[16] Nonetheless, the increasing number of female weavers was only one dimension of the changing organisation of production, with an increasing number of weavers working in mills or on the putting-out system. Fragments from the 1851 census show that rural weaving still predominated in the parish of Craigs, in rural mid-Antrim: sixty-year-old Robert Caulfield, for example, wove along with his wife, Mary, five daughters aged seventeen to twenty-four, and a son aged sixteen. Their household also included another daughter, aged twelve, and a

[15] David Herbison, "The Auld Wife's Lament for Her Teapot" in Hewitt, 120-22.
[16] *Select Committee on the Laws Which Govern the Linen Trade of Ireland*, Appendix to Report (411), HC 1825, vol. V, testimony of John Stevenson Ferguson, 74-93 and testimony of John Marshall 41-58, especially 50-51.

five year-old grandchild.[17] In another household, fifty-year-old Jane Steel and three of her sons were enumerated as weavers.[18] Putting-out significantly changed the role of the local market as a site of contact between rural cloth producers and textile merchants and bleachers. As one observer noted: "There are many weavers now working for manufacturers who formerly wove for the market."[19] Although the pace and structure of putting-out was highly regionalised, the Hand-loom Commissioners reported that:

> …manufacturers with large capital and extensive connections now give out webs to the weavers ready to be put on the loom, and pay by the yard for the weaving of the piece. Mill spun…yarn is now generally used and the numerous class which formerly grew their own flax, spun their own yarn, and sold it in the brown markets, is now passing away.[20]

Hand-loom weavers were engaged in the country's least profitable trade, but on earnings of 9d. to 1s. per day, the Commissioners reported that they were generally more prosperous than Ireland's agricultural labourers.[21] The growth of putting-out, however, led the "Bard of Dunclug," David Herbison, to lament the diminished autonomy of rural textile producers. His verses articulated a restorative vision tied to a constructed ideal of pre-industrial independence and prosperity.

> We then had nae drapers the poor to oppress;
> We wove our ain wab and we drank our ain glass,
> And aye had a shilling to spend or to spare,
> The heart to mak' glad that seemed weary wi' care;
> Contented we were when we had in our bag
> A very fine score, or a six hundred rag;
> Our sweethearts aye met us wi' joy in their face,
> Mirth reigned in their pride, and made happy ilk place;
> Our coats were hame spun, and our sarks were the same,

[17] Manuscript Census Returns from the Parish of Craigs, County Antrim, 1851, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast [hereafter cited as "PRONI"] MIC/5A/15.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Hand-loom Weavers, testimony of Thomas M. Birnie, q. 13.
[20] Ibid., 597
[21] Ibid., 600.

And warmly we welcomed a frien' whan he came;
Our rent was aye paid whan the rent day came roun'
When I was a boy in my ain native toun.
....
Oh had I the power the past to restore,
The reel wad still crack and the spinning-wheel snore,
Mill-yarn wad sink doun as it never had been,
Trade flourish as fair as it ever was seen;
Distress and oppression flee far frae our view,
Our hamlets rejoice and their beauties renew;
The profligate band that brought want to our door
Should labour or starve on a far foreign shore;
A wab in a steamloom should never appear,
Our country to steep in affliction and fear;
Peace, pleasure and plenty, and happy hearts roun',
And times would revive in my ain native toun.[22]

Herbison's poem expressed protest at the diminished status of independent hand-loom weavers in all but a few sections of the trade. By the 1850s, the earnings of hand-loom weavers working with coarse cloth had fallen dramatically; they were at a general earnings disadvantage compared to steam-loom weavers, only realising a premium at the hand-loom for production of the finest-quality cloths.

Table 3.7
Average daily wages of hand- and steam-loom weavers, Belfast and neighbourhood, 1855, 1856, 1857, 1860

Weavers	*Cloth*	*1855*	*1856*	*1857*	*1860*
Hand-loom Weavers	Coarse	9d. to 1s.	9d. to 1s.	6d. to 9d.	6d. to 9d.
	Medium	1s. to 1s.6d.	9d. to 1s.2d.	9d. to 1s.2d.	10d. to 1s.4d.
	Fine/ Superfine	1s.6d. to 2s.6d.	1s.3d. to 2s.	1s.3d. to 2s.	1s.6d. to 2s.
Steam-loom Weavers	Coarse	1s. to 1s.6d.	1s. to 1s.d.	1s. to 1s.3d.	10d. to 2s.
	Medium	"	"	"	"
	Fine/ Superfine	"	"	"	"

Source: "Return of Wages Published Between 1830-1886 (Industrial Workers in the United Kingdom)" [C.5172], HC 1887, vol. LXXXIX.

[22] D. Herbison, "My Ain Native Town" in Hewitt, 122-124.

The development of a system of production premised on contractual putting-out had implications for the rural social structure. From an early period of organised trade in Ulster linens, rural textile production in mid-Antrim was combined with seasonal agricultural cultivation by farmer-weavers. By the late 1850s and 1860s, before the urban factory system accentuated the differentiation of these two activities in a spatially marked way, independent farming and waged agricultural and textile labour in the Ballymena district appeared to emerge as differentiated rural activities characterised by population cohorts with distinctive features. Changes in the rural social structure of post-Famine Ireland have received wide attention, and the relative status of farmers and the declining agricultural workforce has been the subject of considerable historiographical debate.[23] Historians agree, however, that the agricultural labouring population declined significantly throughout Ireland from 1841.[24] In mid-Antrim, an interrogation of the rural social structure inevitably encounters the limitations imposed on occupational classification by the seasonal pattern of combined agricultural and textile labour. In 1880, however, John Young of Galgorm, a local merchant and landlord, testified to the Irish Land Commission that while a few small farmers were engaged in seasonal weaving, rural cloth production was primarily undertaken by cottier-weavers who were also employed in seasonal

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[23] Samuel Clark, *Social Origins of the Land War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and David Fitzpatrick, "The Disappearance of the Irish Agricultural Labourer," *Irish Economic and Social History* 7 (1980): 66-92. The decline of rural labourers is also discussion by Liam Kennedy, "The Rural Economy, 1820-1914," in Kennedy and Ollerenshaw, 1-61 and by John W. Boyle, "A Marginal Figure: The Irish Rural Labourer," in *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1780-1914*, eds. Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr. (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), 311-38.

[24] By David Fitzpatrick's estimation, the relative decline in the ratio of farm workers to farmers between 1841 and 1911 was least pronounced in County Antrim, not so much because of the persistence of agricultural labourers, but due to the significant decline in farmers in that same period (see table IV in Fitzpatrick, 90).

waged agricultural labour.[25] Several dimensions of rural differentiation are suggested by records from two local Presbyterian congregations—the High Church and First Presbyterian Church—in the 1850s and 1860s. Independent structural characteristics of groups in the rural social structure are suggested by the occupational claims[26] in the records, reflected in rates of literacy and endogamy, which suggest a logic to the underlying schema which guided how occupations were recorded. The first differentiating characteristic was illiteracy: weavers and labourers were more likely not to have signed their names on marriage registers, suggesting lower levels of education compared to the farmers.

Table 3.8
Illiteracy rates by selected occupations from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage registers, 1857-67

Groom's Occupation	*N.*	*Illiterate* (%)
Labourer	49	48.98
Weaver	86	43.02
Farmer	89	15.73

Source: PRONI MIC/1P/114/1.

[25] *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Working of Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Acts*, Minutes of Evidence [C.2779-II], HC 1881, vol. XIX, testimony of John Young, q. 5917, q. 5918, q. 5961, q. 5962.
[26] It is unclear in these records, as in many other documents, the degree to which occupational statuses were claimed or attributed.

Table 3.9
Illiteracy rates by selected occupations from High Church, Ballymena marriage registers, 1857-67

Groom's Occupation	*N.*	*Illiterate (%)*
Labourer	14	64.29
Weaver	38	44.74
Farmer	26	23.08

Source: PRONI MIC/1P/204/1.

Those recorded as farmers were the most likely group to marry within their cohort: well over two-thirds of farmer-grooms married the daughters of farmers in local Presbyterian congregations. Weavers displayed a less marked propensity towards endogamy, while labourers showed a very limited tendency towards endogamy.

Table 3.10
Occupations of grooms and brides' fathers, First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage registers, 1857-67

		Bride's Father's Occupation		
Groom	*N.*	*Farmer (%)*	*Labourer (%)*	*Weaver (%)*
Farmer	89	71.91	1.12	12.36
Labourer	49	32.65	26.53	32.65
Weaver	86	25.58	15.12	50.00

Source: PRONI MIC/1P/114/1.

Table 3.11
Occupations of grooms and brides' fathers, High Church, Ballymena marriage registers, 1857-67

		Bride's Father's Occupation		
Groom	*N.*	*Farmer (%)*	*Labourer (%)*	*Weaver (%)*
Farmer	23	88.46	0.00	11.54
Labourer	14	21.43	35.71	35.71
Weaver	38	34.21	13.16	42.11

Source: PRONI MIC/1P/204/1.

The imperative of preserving landed capital guided farmers' marriage decisions and reinforced endogamy within the farming cohort. Farmers' daughters, on the other hand, were less likely than farmers' sons to marry within their cohort, reflecting gendered principles guiding marriage decision-making and the avenues of social mobility available to females, which were less predicated on the inheritance of their fathers' land. The daughters of weavers and labourers were more likely to marry tradesmen and into each others' occupational groupings, reflecting the interconnectedness of these occupations, which were converging in terms of their waged status, with the removal of independent weavers from the marketplace and with wage dependence introduced by the putting-out system.

Table 3.12
Occupations of brides' fathers and grooms, in percentages, from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena Marriage Registers, 1857-67

		Groom's Occupation												
Bride's Father's Occupation	*N.*	Craft	Dealer	Farmer	Gardener	Laboruer	Merchant	Weaver	Police	Soldier	Transport	Teacher	Other	None/Unclear
Farmer	129	12.40	3.10	49.61	0.78	12.40	1.55	17.05	0.78	0.00	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.00
Labourer	39	20.51	0.00	2.56	5.13	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	2.56	0.00	2.56	0.00	0.00
Weaver	89	14.61	0.00	12.36	1.12	17.98	0.00	48.31	0.00	1.12	1.12	1.12	0.00	2.25

Source: PRONI, MIC/1P/114.
For details of occupational categories, see Appendix A.

Differentiated patterns of literacy, endogamy and wage dependence underpinned groups in the rural social structure. Another pattern which can be gauged from marriage registers relates to intergenerational mobility, analysed here in terms of the occupational statuses claimed by a father and his son. When the occupational claims of farmers' sons are examined, it is evident that although few claimed to be labourers, over 35 percent made a claim other than that of farmer, suggesting that the life-cycle was an intervening factor as farmers' sons were compelled to enter waged labour, either temporarily or, in the case of many children, permanently, as a requirement for avoiding the sub-division of holdings.

Table 3.13
Occupations of farmers' sons, from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage records, 1857-67

Occupational Category	*N.*	*%*
Farmer	85	64.39
Weaver	15	11.36
Labourer	9	6.82
Craft	8	6.06
Dealer	4	3.03
Merchant	2	1.52
Teacher	2	1.52
Gardener	1	0.76
Police	1	0.76
Publican	1	0.76
Transport	1	0.76
Other	1	0.76
None/Unclear	2	1.52
Total	**132**	**100.00**

Source: PRONI MIC/1P/114/1.

Weavers' sons, on the other hand, were overwhelmingly weavers themselves, with a significant proportion recorded as labourers. Large proportions of labourers' sons may have worked in both urban and rural settings, as tradesmen and weavers. Unlike farmers, life-cycle-influenced work patterns did not entail either a temporary period of alternative waged labour or necessitate new permanent forms of work for sons who were unable to acquire their fathers' land.

Table 3.14
Occupations of weavers' sons from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage records, 1857-67

Occupational Category	*N.*	*%*
Weaver	55	71.43
Labourer	11	14.29
Craft	5	6.49
Farmer	3	3.90
Servant	1	1.30
Transport	1	1.30
None/Unclear	1	1.30
Total	**77**	**100.00**

Source: As previous table.

Table 3.15
Occupations of labourers' sons, from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage records, 1857-67

Occupational Category	*N.*	*%*
Labourer	25	50.00
Weaver	9	18.00
Craft	8	16.00
Gardener	4	8.00
Soldier	2	4.00
Transport	2	4.00
Total	**50**	**100.00**

Source: As previous table.

Looking at this question from a different perspective, Table 3.16 shows that a farming father was nearly always a pre-condition for a farming son, while this was less true of all other occupations.

Table 3.16
Grooms' and grooms' fathers' occupations from First Presbyterian Church, Ballymena marriage registers, 1857-67

		Grooms' Fathers' Occupation								
Groom's Occupation	N.	Craft	Farmer	Gardener	Labourer	Pensioner	Transport	Weaver	Other	None/Unclear
Farmer	89	0.00	95.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.37	0.00	1.12
Labourer	49	2.04	18.37	0.00	51.02	0.00	2.04	22.45	0.00	4.08
Weaver	86	5.81	17.44	0.00	10.47	1.16	0.00	63.95	1.16	0.00

Source: PRONI, MIC/1P/114/1.

The farmer and weaver-labourer differentiation within the rural social structure described by John Young in 1880 is observable from a number of perspectives: wage dependence, education levels, marriage behaviour and patterns of social mobility. The social profile of the mid-Antrim district was being transformed by a decline in rural labourers through migration. At the same time, women were leaving the countryside as marriage rates declined and employment became centred in urban areas. These developments, coupled with the highly Presbyterian character of the rural district, reinforced the folk-memory of communal religion and the structures of the Presbyterian polity as an organ expressing communal solidarity in the countryside. The churches were central interfaces for groups in the rural and urban social structures. The Presbyterian polity had the potential to serve as an instrument of cultural coherence, bridging social distances through the incorporation of farmers, weavers and labourers—three central groupings in rural society—within the Presbyterian polity; these themes will be explored in the fourth chapter of this study. In a regional economy in which rural production was central, the instrumental utility of a religious body incorporating rural and urban populations placed it in an important

position to articulate precepts of cultural coherence based on institutional links between the districts.

As the structure of textile production changed, the weavers in Ballymena's rural areas related to the market in an increasingly indirect manner: principally through the practice of the rural putting-out system, but also, by the mid-1860s, as employees in weaving-shops and steam-powered spinning and weaving factories. Ballymena's Linen Hall testified to the importance of the putting-out principle in the organisation of production. The spatial articulation of commercial and industrial organisation within the district would soon include a red chimney rising along the banks of the Braid Water, heralding the arrival of urban steam-driven production to the local industrial townscape.

Although the 1850s had seen significant growth in Ulster's linen industry, the early 1860s witnessed an economic downturn resulting from the American Civil War. A number of local linen manufacturers disposed of their property or were declared bankrupt: large linen lapping premises in Galgorm Street with a lease of sixty-six unexpired years were advertised for sale in 1860.[27] The mills, machinery and land lease belonging to the bankrupt William Bowers Taylor outside the town were advertised for sale in September of the same year.[28] Two weeks later, Robert Wiley, a linen manufacturer, farmer and grocer in Ballywatermoy, transferred his property to trustees living in Ballymena.[29] Following their 1862 bankruptcy, trustees for Robert and Thomas Dill disposed of their property surrounding Ballymena, including two sites with beetling works; one month later, William Smyth, another Ballymena linen

[27] *Observer*, 7 July 1860.
[28] *Observer*, 28 September 1860.
[29] *Observer*, 8 September 1860, 29 September 1861.

manufacturer, advertised his bankruptcy in the local newspaper.[30] The distress resulting from the economic crisis was acute among the weavers of the district, the *Observer* noting on 20 December 1862 that a weaver "toiling to midnight, was unable to earn more than 4s. a week, and in many cases not more than 3s. 6d." But the newspaper suggested optimistically that good weavers were earning closer to 5s. 6d. and that, as the year ended, economic conditions showed signs of improvement. By the turn of 1862, the Irish linen trade became the beneficiary of a cotton famine precipitated by the American Civil War. The distress in Lancashire's cotton mills translated into demand for Ireland's premiere textile. The buoyant trade in linen textiles had a significant impact on the organisation of the local linen trade and on the development of a new labour force in the town.

Early in 1863 Robert Chesney's Melbourne House opened a linen manufacturing, bleaching and finishing department "specially made to take the place of the present exorbitant price of cotton."[31] Chesney was also a partner in the Ballymena Linen Company, established on premises formerly occupied by James Taylor in Broughshane Street; the Company began operations in February 1863, employing eighty to 100 hands.[32] Though weavers continued to suffer from depressed earnings, with charitable efforts promoted throughout the year to relieve their destitution, the establishment of hand-loom weaving shops—by Chesney, by Samuel Strahan in a range of converted farm buildings and by Robert Close in the former brewery buildings of Ballymena's smithfields—brought a new form of organised production to Ballymena's textile market: the urban hand-loom weaving factory. Although these weaving-shops had existed in other parts of Ulster prior to the

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[30] *Observer*, 29 March 1862, 26 April 1862.
[31] *Observer*, 10 January 1863.
[32] *Observer*, 28 February 1863.

Famine, they made a belated impact on the structure of production in mid-Antrim in the early 1860s. In weaving-shops, weavers were employed at looms which they often rented from factory proprietors and were paid on a piece-rate basis. Ballymena's weaving-shops were small capitalist enterprises, requiring an investment in urban land, buildings and looms, but without the much greater fixed capital requirements of a steam-loom factory. The shops offered proprietors a safeguard against embezzlement by outworkers and a greater degree of surveillance over the regularity and quality of production.[33] Their workforces predominantly comprised women and children: a widow employed at Samuel Strahan's shop appeared before Petty Sessions in February 1866 to beg J.P.s not to incarcerate her son, aged twelve or thirteen, in order that he could continue to attend her at the loom.[34] In a town of small-scale manufactories, the size of weaving-shop workforces was significant: in the shops belonging to Samuel Strahan and Robert Close, the *Observer* reported on 12 November 1864 that 120 looms were at work. In 1866, following the lead of power-driven spinning concerns, a steam-loom weaving concern was planned by J. H. and G. Bellas on the outskirts of the town, at a projected cost of £4,000; it was expected eventually to employ 220 hands at 2,000 looms, the employees being "chiefly females, each of whom will be able to earn from 12s. to 14s. per week."[35] An impetus for the development of steam-powered cloth production came in part from the erection of a large spinning factory in the heart of Ballymena.

By November 1863, a rapid revival in the fortunes of the linen trade led the *Observer* to declare that "every loom in the country is now employed" and it called

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[33] Cynthia J. Shelton, *The Mills of Manayunk: Industrialisation and Social Conflict in the Philadelphia Region* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 29.
[34] *Observer*, 24 February 1866.
[35] *Observer*, 9 June 1866.

for the establishment in the town of facilities for steam-powered production.[36] In 1864, it expressed concern that the district had only one mechanised spinning factory, the Davisons' Raceview Mill at Broughshane, and, as a consequence, "the female portion of the community who are the principal workers in factories" were "without employment"; furthermore, the newspaper warned that steam-powered production alone could prevent the town's linen trade "from being transferred to Belfast."[37] The undertaking required a large capital investment and the newspaper published letters debating the merits of a joint-stock company or a local co-operative society, with some correspondents expressing disquiet that an undertaking of such local importance would be in the hands of only a few men.[38] The town's weaving-shops were owned by members of the urban commercial sector: Robert Chesney was a draper and retailer, Robert Close a linen yarn dealer, and Samuel Strahan a grocer and general merchant. The call for an urban factory employing steam-power would be taken up by the most capitalised section of the local commercial community—the bleacher-merchants.

As previous chapters illustrated, the bleacher-merchants were present in a number of bodies of local government; they also came together in specific commercial associations and initiatives: correspondence from the early-nineteenth century records a meeting of the town's "principal linen merchants" to protest at the operation of the local system of cloth inspection.[39] Local bleacher-merchants also envisaged commercial collaboration prior to the 1860s linen boom. In 1836, members of the Young and Patrick families requested through the Estate Agent William Gihon, and then in a direct letter to Robert Shafto Adair, that the landlord make a lease of land for the purpose

[36] *Observer*, 7 November 1863.
[37] *Observer*, 30 April 1864.
[38] *Observer*, 30 April 1864, 14 May 1864, 6 August 1864.

of establishing "extensive spinning machinery" in the immediate vicinity of the town. They asked Adair for a lease of fifteen to twenty acres of land and appealed to him by suggesting that his own interest would be developed through support of local industry.

> We shall feel obliged therefore by your informing us at your earliest convenience what terms if at all you would grant a site for the proposed speculation.
> It is scarcely necessary to call your attention to the great advantage such an undertaking would be to the town of Ballymena as it would give employment to such a number of people and produce the regular expenditure of a large sum of money.
> You may perhaps suppose we require too much land but it would not accommodate all the men we should be obliged to employ and we contemplate only providing houses and accommodation for the principal and most confidential men employed in the business. We trust therefore you may not consider it inconsistent with your interest and that of your town to enter into our views...[40]

Large steam-powered factories were established throughout County Antrim by the 1860s: the Davison family of Raceview, proprietors of the Raceview Spinning Factory, installed a large steam engine at their long-established mill in 1866.[41] But the town of Ballymena lacked an urban-based factory. The buoyant linen market of the 1860s provided the impetus for its establishment, and the Patrick and Young families were principals in the company which brought steam-powered spinning to Ballymena. The *Observer* continued to be a proponent of the steam-powered factory, arguing that it was necessary in order to ensure the town's prosperity and secure its market in a rapidly changing industry. The newspaper argued that steam-powered manufactories would provide employment for local spinners and weavers who would in turn stimulate the commercial sector of the town. Mill-spinning and factory-weaving were seen as profitable forms of employment for the town's "industrious classes": whereas

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[39] Leter from C. Duffin, Ballymena, to John Foster, 14 April 1805, PRONI D/562/6141.
[40] Correspondence of John Patrick, James Young, William Young, Robert Young, J. Patrick and J. B. Patrick to Robert Shafto Adair, 8 October 1836, PRONI D/1364/B/8.

spinners in Belfast and its environs were paid daily wages of between 10d. and 1s. in 1855, in 1866 women were reported as earning up to 1s. 4 ½d. per day, with girls on wages of 10d. Power-loom weavers, who earned between 1s. and 1s. 2d. per day in 1855, earned up to 1s. 8d. in 1866, with boys earning 1s.[42]

When tracts of land in the centre of the town, part of an old bleachgreen bordering the Braid Water known as "Bell's Green," were auctioned in 1864 as part of the estate of James Given, the advertisement for the sale read that "the bleachgreen is in every way adaptable for the erection of a spinning mill or weaving factory, Ballymena being well-known for its linen market."[43] Shafto Adair was rumoured to be interested in the site in order to build a new entrance to the demesne, but he withdrew plans to bid for the land in the interest of local commerce.[44] The land was purchased in trust and in July 1864, the Ballymena Weaving Company (Ltd.) was entered in the register of joint-stock companies, with fifteen signed members of association and nominal capital of £12,000.[45] Eight months later, the Braid Water Spinning Company (Ltd.) was entered into the register, listed as purchasing "the property and premises of the Ballymena Weaving Company (Ltd.)" for the "manufacture and sale of linens and other textile fabrics."[46] The Company's offices were listed in Bridge Street, with fifteen members of association, 500 shares and nominal capital of £50,000. The Company brought together members of the linen aristocracy of the district—the bleacher John Patrick and his brother James, three members of the leading local merchant family, William A. Young and William and

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[41] *Observer*, 3 March 1866.
[42] "Return of Wages Published Between 1830-1886 (Industrial Workers in the United Kingdom)" [C.5172], HC 1887, vol. LXXXIX.
[43] *Observer*, 2 April 1864.
[44] *Observer*, 30 April 1864.
[45] "Return of Names, Places of Registration, Date of Registration, Nominal Capital and Number of Shareholders of Joint Stock Companies…to 31 May, 1866" (429), HC 1866, vol. LXVI, 96.

Robert Young, the linen merchants John Raphael, William and Thomas Anderson—and several members of the town's commercial and professional sector: the retailer Andrew Martin, the attorney Alexander Caruth and the medical doctor Arthur Ross.[47] The flax agents John Lowry, James Valentine and Henry Kirk also participated in the enterprise: their subsequent bankruptcy in 1874 was to have a significant impact on the linen industry throughout Ulster.

Work on erecting a mill began quickly—a red-brick building was planned that was 232 feet long and forty-seven feet wide, with a chimney reaching 140 feet. Separate buildings were erected as stores. The spinning factory alone added £1,963 to the town's valuation, which stood in 1867 at £13,031 2s. 0d.[48]; the *Observer* delighted in the contribution to rates made by the new urban factories.[49] The mill was an impressive five-storey building, rising on the banks of the Braid Water. Its physical layout reflected the high level of specialisation and differentiation in the factory production of linen yarn: the first floor contained a hackling-room, flax stores, mechanics' shop, engine room with boilers and a drying loft. The second floor was dedicated to hand-dressing and preparing, the third and fourth floors to wet-spinning and the fifth to reeling.[50] In May 1864, it was estimated that the mill would employ 500 families, and in 1865 it was reported to be preparing to engage "1,000 pairs of hands."[51] By 1888, the Company employed 1,100 workers.[52] Applications for work in the mill between 1865 and 1866 reflect the gendered structure of employment in the

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[46] Ibid, p. 98

[47] Colman O'Hagan, "The Braid Water Flax Spinning Company," in Eull Dunlop, ed., *Mid-Antrim*, Part 2, *Further Articles on Ballymena and District* (Ballymena: Mid-Antrim Historical Group, 1991),133-39.

[48] Griffith's Valuation Revision Books, PRONI VAL/12B/3/5A.

[49] *Observer*, 15 February 1868.

[50] From the copy of a letter by Albert Dawson to several insurance companies dated 20 September 1866, kindly supplied by Mr J. McConnell.

[51] *Observer*, 14 May 1864, 5 August 1865.

[52] *Irish Textile Journal* 15 (1888): 9: 105-6.

manufactory. Although women predominated in the workforces of most spinning mills, they were largely confined to reeling, preparing and spinning. Men applied for a wider range of duties, including supervisory and administrative work and trades connected with the management of mill machinery.

Table 3.17
Female applications for employment at the Braid Water Spinning Company, 1865-66

Applicant's Stated Position	*Applicants (N.)*
Reeler	4
Millworker	4
Preparer	3
Spinner	2
Cleaning	2
Rove carrying	1
Drawer & bundler	1
Carder	1
Cleaner/jobber	1
Beltsewer	1
None	19
Total	**39**

Source: From original company records of correspondence with the company regarding employment, kindly provided by Mr. J. McConnell.

Table 3.18
Male applications for employment at the Braid Water Spinning Company, 1865-66

Occupational Category	*Applicants (N.)*
Administrative & Commercial	13
Factory Supervisors	11
Flax Preparers, Dyers & Handlers	7
Infrastructural & Maintenance & Mechanical Workers	8
Other	5
None	37
Total	**81**

Source: As previous table.
For details of occupational categories, see Appendix D.

As the independent domestic unit of production diminished in importance, whole families were drawn into waged labour in Ulster's mills. Many applications for employment were made on behalf of families experienced in mill work and often included cousins, aunts and other extended family members with experience in textile factory employment: one man, a shoemaker from the town, wrote that his family included a reeler, a good doffer, a "doffer learner" as well as a ruffer, a bundler and an oiler.[53] Another applicant from Taylor's Mill in Belfast noted that his family comprised two spinners, one doffer and a heckler.[54] Other applicants received recommendations from one or more of the Mill proprietors, and notes to this effect were entered in the correspondence register. It was noted, for instance, that one applicant for a clerking or timekeeping position was a "native of Ballymena," although he was currently employed in Belfast; another applicant for a position as a beltsewer noted that "Mr. John Young knows him" and another applicant for a

[53] From original company records of correspondence with the company regarding employment, kindly provided by Mr. J. McConnell.

clerking or timekeeping position was recorded as having "referred" to Mill proprietors Robert Young and John Patrick. For those who did not have personal contacts and recommendations, demonstrations of skill through previous mill employment were also noted. Many applicants came from outside the town, from the surrounding rural district, from towns such as Carrickfergus, Belfast and Bessbrook, and from mills, foundries and other manufactories, both in the local area and in other parts of the province. Applications for factory employment from people in mills throughout Ulster reflected changes in Ballymena's population profile as workers from other districts in Ulster joined migrants from the mid-Antrim countryside who continued to swell the town's population. Among the applicants for work in the Mill were a number of employees from the Raceview Spinning Mill in neighbouring Broughshane, including Jane Wilson, who had three sisters who were spinners, and two sons, one of whom was a sorter and the other a wood-turner in Belfast.[55] These developments led the *Observer* to warn in 1866 that although the Mill had received many applications for employment from local residents, the requisite factory skills-base would require a "temporary influx of strangers" working and residing in the town.[56] As a factory labour force emerged in Ballymena, the Braid Water Spinning Company began erecting houses for employees across the Braid Water in the suburb of Harryville; the Town Commissioners supported the Company's plans by agreeing to connect the Harryville residences to the town's sewer system.[57]

If many of the mill workers were drawn from other mills and manufactories, it was due in part to the complex structure of employment in the Braid Water Mill and

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] *Observer*, 2 June 1866.
[57] *Observer*, 9 June 1866; Minutes of the Ballymena Town Commissioners, PRONI LA14/2B/1, 3 June 1866.

the specialist skills required in the organisation of factory production. These principles of labour specialisation and gender differentiation underpinned the linen factory system throughout Ulster, as a return of wages in Belfast-area mills suggests. Male and female employees rarely competed for the same positions in spinning mills, with adult males concentrated in higher-paying manual and supervisory work.

Table 3.19
Wages and employment structure in linen mills in Belfast and neighbourhood, 1866

Occupation	*Proportion of Workforce (%)*	*Men*	*Lads & Boys*	*Women*	*Girls*
Preparers	13	-	-	1s. 2d.	9d.
Spinners	46	-	-	1s. 4 1/2d.	10d.
Reelers	19	-	-	1s. 2d.	-
Hacklers	15	3s. 6d.	1s.8d. and 9d.	-	-
Mechanics	2	5s. 4d.	1s. 6d.	-	-
Warehousemen	1	2s. 6d.	-	-	-
Overseers	2	5s.	-	-	-
Labourers	2	2s.	-	-	-

The age and gender categories in the above table are those given in the returns.
Source: "Return of Wages Published Between 1830-1886 (Industrial Workers in the United Kingdom)" [C.5172], HC 1887, vol. LXXXIX.

The structure of payment for work in linen mills also varied by the type of work being undertaken: those involved in the initial stages of sorting and preparing the flax, and those who reeled the spun yarn, were paid on a piece-rate basis, while spinners and other workers were paid a weekly wage. By 1874, the basic structure of wages and employment listed in Table 3.20 had expanded to include eighty distinctive positions and wage rates.[58]

[58] See Appendix C.

Table 3.20
Braid Water Spinning Company wages, 1866

Department	*Position*	*Wage*	*Daily or Piece Rate*
Ruffing	Hand	1s.	Per cwt
	Milled	1s. 4d.	Per cwt
Sorting	Hand	2s. 3d.	Per 100 lbs
	Coarse Milled	2s. 9d.	Per 100 lbs
	Fine Milled	3s. 9d.	per 100 lbs (broken)
Machine Boys		5d. to 9d.	per day
Preparing	Spreaders	1s.	per day
	Rovers	1s.	per day
	Drawers	10d.	per day
	Learners	Commence at 6d.	per day
Spinners	2 Side Line	1s. 4d.	per day
Doffers		4d. to 10d.	per day
Reelers		1 1/2d.	per reel of 20 hanks[1] (under 60s)

Source: Copy of a letter from Albert Dawson to Alexander Davison, esquire, 19 September 1866, kindly provided by Mr. J. McConnell.
[1] Yarn wound on reels.

The integration of Ballymena within the provincial factory system reflected growing links between towns and markets in Ulster and the changing character of both the local textile labour force and of local weavers' relationship to the market. By the mid-1860s, the town was both a centre of industrial production and a commercial centre serving an agricultural hinterland in which significant textile production and processing continued to take place. But the transition to forms of urban textile production organised outside the principle of independent cloth production had been relatively delayed in the mid-Antrim district and even after the erection of the steam-powered spinning factory, a large majority of the district's weavers continued to

remain at the rural hand-loom, producing cloth for manufacturers on the putting-out system. The arrival in the town of small weaving manufactories did not occur until the 1860s, just a few years before steam-powered production began; the large urban textile labour force was therefore disciplined primarily within the culture of the large, steam-powered concern. Although the emergence of an industrial labour force followed, chapter one demonstrated that even in the early 1870s Ballymena did not have an occupational structure characteristic of the most heavily industrialised Ulster towns. Under these conditions, the local institutional and cultural developments discussed in the following chapters had referents in a set of economic and cultural relations rooted in the district's inter-related urban and rural network and specifically in its experience of limited industrialisation.

IV: Dynamics of Demographic and Institutional Development

Religious enthusiasms animated the mid-Antrim district through the spring and summer of 1859. In the charged atmosphere of religious revival, crowds gathered in streets and on rural farms to hear lay and licensed preachers. As news spread of the progress of the revivals through the townlands, villages and urban districts of the province, observers and participants debated the character and consequences of Protestant Ulster's "renewal." The effects of the revivals on local groups varied, but, overall, the summer of 1859 witnessed the reinforcement of religious experience and institutions in the generation of communal identities, the prominence of the laity in expressions of communal piety, and the incorporation of a number of local groups within a shared narrative of communal regeneration. The revivals built on foundations of communal worship with long-standing roots in the community, and originated in the rural world of mid-Antrim, where Presbyterian congregations served as agents of integration, underpinning the social infrastructure of the district during transitions in the town and countryside and affirming the special character of the rural world at the heart of an elect community. In this highly Presbyterian rural region, communal solidarity and institutional coherence were centred on institutions of longstanding importance: churches were historically central institutions in local communities. The extensive links between town and country, not least through institutions of Presbyterian religion, brought the revivals to town as well, where they were re-articulated in the urban arena and stabilised in a range of voluntary institutions which developed an administrative apparatus to serve the town and the wider district. Specific features of the town's institutional network and population structure privileged the resonance of rurally-derived evangelical Presbyterian ideologies and shaped their transmission from the countryside to Ballymena. The aim of this chapter is to describe the demographic and institutional developments within which the

revivals were situated; the next chapter builds on this analysis by exploring expressions of evangelical ideas in the rural and urban worlds of mid-Antrim. This chapter does not claim to provide a complete structural analysis of the causes of the revivals or of the religious behaviour which captured the attention of contemporary observers. It aims instead to explore the structural dimensions within which revivalism became an important instrument of communal coherence in mid-Antrim, building on co-ordinates in the district's demographic profile and institutional framework.

Historians have recently turned their attention from the local theatre of the Ulster revivals to analyse them in spatially and theoretically more extensive ways. Some have argued for an analysis which privileges the homogenisation of the power structure of post-Famine industrial Ulster.[1] Others have studied links between the revivals and similar expressions of Presbyterian renewal in Scotland and America.[2] Another approach has employed a comparative perspective in order to elucidate the relationship between community, scripture and politics in order to illustrate the coherent intellectual framework which underpinned an emerging political theology of Protestant unionism.[3] This study aims to draw on both contemporary accounts and recent historical scholarship to show the operation of the revivals at the local level in mid-Antrim. The deficiencies of highly localised narratives, which appear to confine revivals to individual congregations or to town boundaries, need to be balanced by

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[1] Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975); from the perspective of the erosion of Presbyterian culture, see Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism: The Historical Perspective* (Belfast: Athol Books, 1994).

[2] David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740-1890* (London: Routledge, 1992); Ian A. Muirhead, "The Revival as a Dimension of Scottish Church History," *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 20 (1980) :176-96; see S. J. Brown, "Presbyterian Communities, Transatlantic Visions and the Ulster Revival of 1859," in *The Cultures of Europe: The Irish Contribution*, ed. J. P. Mackey (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994), 87-105.

analyses which do not subordinate the local manifestations, character and consequences of revivalism to a narrative of homogenisation. If religious revivals were contributing events in the emergence of a more politically coherent "Protestant Ulster," this was effected through a series of highly localised manifestations with different ideological implications in structurally differentiated districts of the province.

The two censuses which bracketed the 1859 revivals illustrated changes in the Ballymena district's demographic profile which suggest that demographic and institutional developments may have created conditions in which both evangelical ideology and the institutional structures of organised religion could serve as instruments of expression within the community. Between 1851 and 1861, Ballymena's overall population increased by under 10 percent. This population growth, however, was gender- and denominationally-specific and spatially concentrated within the town. Harryville, the ten-acre rural village which was appended to Ballymena in the early-nineteenth century, but which lay across the Braid Water in a separate parish within a separate barony, absorbed most of the town's population increase over the decade and more than doubled in size between 1851 and 1861.

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[3] D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1991).

Table 4.1
Population growth, Ballymena and Harryville, 1831-61

Year	*Ballymena*		*Harryville*	
	Population (N.)	*Change (%)*	*Population (N.)*	*Change (%)*
1831	4,067	---	252	---
1841	5,152	26.68	397	57.54
1851	5,597	8.64	536	35.01
1861	5,600	0.05	1,169	118.10

Sources: "Return of the Population of the Counties of Ireland, 1831" (254), HC 1833, vol. XXXIX; "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Enumeration Abstracts of the Number of Inhabitants in Ireland, 1841,1851 and 1861; Religious Professions, 1861; Number of Houses and Families, 1841, 1851 and 1861 [2865], HC 1861, vol. L.

If the bulk of Ballymena's population growth was concentrated in Harryville, an analysis of characteristics of the village's population helps to elucidate the profile of the expanding suburb. By 1861, Harryville's denominational profile differed significantly from the section of Ballymena which lay across the Braid Water; indeed, Presbyterians formed a clear majority in the village, at over 54 percent.

Table 4.2
Denominational profile of Ballymena and Harryville, 1861

Denomination	*Ballymena (%)*	*Harryville (%)*
Presbyterian	45.52	54.23
Roman Catholic	25.38	20.02
Episcopalian	21.98	17.02
Methodist	3.38	4.79
Baptist	1.34	0.77
Other	2.30	3.17

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.

The village of Harryville was described in the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* in 1835 as primarily agricultural, with a limited institutional base.[4] Its surrounding townlands comprised weavers and farmers, with a high proportion of Roman Catholics. The annual Crebilly fair, held nearby, was a notorious local theatre for sectarian conflict. The primary retail districts for the village lay in the commercial heart of Ballymena, on the other side of the Braid Water. For the most part, Harryville comprised lower-rated residential streets, though none with the notoriety of Ballymena's most decrepit courts and lanes. The occupational profile of Harryville diverged significantly from that of Ballymena, although it contained increasingly fewer agricultural workers in the post-Famine period. The censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861 employed several measures of occupational structure, one of which identified families according to their "principal means" of income. The underlying schema for this categorisation was outlined in the 1841 Census Commissioners' report, and was premised on identifying a main source of family income, often linked to the activities of a main income earner.[5] Three basic categories were employed by the Commissioners. "Vested means" was defined by the Commissioners as those families "possessing capital in wealth or professional knowledge" and whose subsistence involved no "labour." The "Direction of labour" defined the principal means of those heads of families with "some fixed income or employment," including artisans "who possess acquired capital in the form of knowledge"; neither of these groups, however, was considered "exempt from labour," in contrast to those families whose principal

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[4] Angélique Day, Patrick McWilliams and Nórín Dobson, eds., *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland*, vol. 23, *Parishes of County Antrim VII: 1831-5, 1837-8: Ballymena and West Antrim* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1993) [hereafter cited as "Ordnance Survey"], 52-66.

means were "vested." The third category, "own manual labour," encompassed those heads of families who possessed no capital in "money, land or acquired knowledge," namely labourers and those whose means of existence was by employment which requires little or no instruction."

In contrast with Ballymena, Harryville's occupational structure included proportionally fewer families deriving income from vested means and from the direction of labour, implying a relative absence of professionals in the first instance and independent artisans in the second.

Table 4.3
Comparative "principal means", 1861

Principal Means	*Ballymena (%)*	*Harryville (%)*
Vested	3.46	1.16
Direction of Labour	51.12	32.17
Own Manual Labour	37.37	49.22
Not specified	8.04	17.44

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI.

This profile of principal means is consonant with the spatial configuration of the village as a periphery to Ballymena's commercial core. The industrialisation of Ballymena contributed to cementing Harryville's place as a residential centre for migrants to the town: as the preceding chapter illustrated, it was in Harryville that the Braid Water Spinning Company chose to erect workers' housing in the late 1860s. Females—disproportionately represented in the province's growing factory labour force—were also present in higher proportions in Harryville than in Ballymena, as Table 4.4 illustrates.

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[5] "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV.

Table 4.4
Females per 100 males, Ballymena and Harryville, 1861

Place	*Females per 100 males*
Ballymena	117
Harryville	131

Source: As previous table.

Harryville's gender imbalance affected the profile of the whole town of Ballymena, which was generally experiencing a gradually higher gender imbalance from 1841.

Table 4.5
Females per 100 males, Ballymena, including Harryville, 1841-61

Year	*Females per 100 males*
1841	114
1851	118
1861	120

Source: As previous table.

The female-to-male imbalance among residents aged twenty to twenty-nine—an important age group for marriage and fertility—also shows significant divergences when 1851 and 1861 census data are compared in Table 4.6. Harryville had a markedly higher gender imbalance than its neighbour across the Braid Water, supporting the view that the largest number of incomers to the suburb were young women migrating to the urban centre in search of employment. This development is important in understanding the nature of economic and employment structures in the town and their intersection with the life-cycle of its residents.

Table 4.6
Age distribution of females per 100 males, 1861

Age	*Ballymena*	*Harryville*	*Co. Antrim*
Under 1	105	88	105
1-9	97	113	97
10-19	109	125	102
20-29	141	163	131
30-39	115	142	119
40-49	144	151	113
50-59	134	131	107
60-69	128	116	113

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. II: Reports and Tables of Ages and Education, vol. II [3204-I], HC 1863, vol. LVII.

The female-to-male ratios were also denominationally-specific, with Harryville's Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Methodists having a higher gender imbalance overall than their co-religionists in Ballymena. The proportionally smaller Roman Catholic community, and smaller Protestant denominations, had a similar gender ratio in both places.

Table 4.7
Females per 100 males in Ballymena and Harryville, by denomination, 1861

Denomination	*Ballymena*	*Harryville*
Episcopalian	110	158
Roman Catholic	125	125
Presbyterian	117	126
Methodist	101	124
Other	144	142
Average of Total Population	**117**	**131**

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.

This analysis helps to demonstrate characteristics of the population cohort which migrated to Ballymena between 1851 and 1861. Harryville was the principal place of population growth within the boundaries of the town, and the cohort which migrated there was predominantly Presbyterian, disproportionately female, with proportionally higher numbers of waged labourers. In Harryville, Ballymena developed one of the small working-class areas of unstable social boundaries which were prevalent in many of Ulster's industrialising towns. The suburb would become an important residential centre for mill workers, but its distinctive demographic complexion was partly shaped in the period before urban industrialisation in Ballymena. The notorious conflicts surrounding the Crebilly fair outside Harryville pointed to more unstable sectarian boundaries in contiguous areas, as the rural parish adjoining Harryville had a much higher proportion of Roman Catholics than Ballymena's main parish across the Braid Water, and more closely resembled the other local sectarian flash-point in the district, centred on the village of Portglenone. While Ballymena had seen very little sectarian violence in 1857, in contrast with frequent and serious Belfast rioting, the Portglenone fair in May was the site of particularly violent affrays.[6]

Table 4.8
Denominational profile of the census rural districts of Ballyclug (Harryville), Kirkinriola (Ballymena) and Portglenone Parishes, 1861

Parish	*Population (N.)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Other (%)*
Kirkinriola	3,614	87.60	6.06	3.93	2.41
Ballyclug	3,422	57.80	5.90	35.51	0.79
Portglenone	6,503	61.23	5.63	32.11	1.03

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI.

[6] *News-Letter*, 24 July 1857.

These demographic developments suggest a number of local features which contributed to framing the revivals and amplifying a receptiveness to revivalism in the urban area: population growth, a growing gender imbalance, particularly among newcomers, and the development of a spatially distinct community within the town with characteristics of a Protestant working-class enclave in proximity to a rural area with traditions of sectarian tension. The intersection of these factors provided a coherent demographic foundation for local religious mobilisation.

Evangelicalism also found resonance in an area whose local institutional infrastructure was increasingly organised around denominational divisions; developments in the national education system in particular had implications for social distances within and between sections of the local community.[7] By mid-century a form of denominational segregation between Catholics and Protestants had developed within local schools. This segregation was not a feature of Ballymena's educational bodies in the 1830s, as *Ordnance Survey Memoir* statistics reveal. In 1835, for instance, only in the local Diocesan School did one denominational group, Episcopalians, overwhelmingly predominate, as Table 4.9 illustrates.

[7] A. C. Hepburn notes the important interplay of neighbourhood, church and school in developing denominational segregation in "Catholics in the North of Ireland, 1850-1921: The Urbanisation of a Minority," in A. C. Hepburn, ed., *Minorities in History*, ed. A. C. Hepburn (London: Edward Arnold, Ltd., 1977), 84-101, especially 86-7.

Table 4.9
Denominational profile of Ballymena schools, 1835

School	*N.*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*
Ballymena Town Free School	149	53.02	22.82	24.16
Guy's Free School	140	57.14	18.57	24.29
Female National School	100	51.00	34.00	15.00
Classical and Mercantile School	60	51.67	16.67	31.67
Diocesan School	50	16.00	80.00	4.00

Source: Ordnance Survey, 112-14.

School-establishment gained pace from the mid-1840s, with the foundation of a number of institutions, many under clerical management, as the pan-denominational ambitions of early Irish educational policy yielded to *de facto* denominationalism. The structure of local schools became a subject of debate between local religious leaders: in January 1859, for instance, the local Roman Catholic priest, John Lynch, accused the Presbyterian minister S. M. Dill of sponsoring a sectarian classical school in the town[8]; on other occasions, leading figures in the town were divided over the place of religious instruction in proposals for institutions of intermediate education in the district.[9]

[8] Eull Dunlop, "Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter in Mid-Antrim: Some Denominational Differences on the Eve of the 1859 Revival" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University of Belfast, 1993), 82-87.
[9] *Observer*, 12 March 1858.

Table 4.10
Selected National and state-supported schools, Ballymena

School	*Division*	*Year of Establishment*	*Status*	*Denomination*
Guy's Free	Male	1819	Non-vested	Protestant
	Female	1857	Non-vested	Protestant
	Infant	1847	Non-vested	Protestant
Castle St.		1843	Non-vested	Methodist
Ballymena	Male	1861	Non-vested	Roman Catholic
	Female	1861	Non-vested	Roman Catholic
Harryville	Male	1858	Non-vested	Roman Catholic
	Female	1858	Non-vested	Roman Catholic
Harryville	Female No. 2	1859	Non-vested	Presbyterian

Sources: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast [hereafter cited as "PRONI"] Educational folios: ED/6/2/2/1, folio 60; ED/6/2/2/2, folios 8, 13, 21, 22, 23 and Grant-in aid applications for Ballymena National School, Castle Street School and Harryville school, PRONI MIC/548, reel 10.

The consequence of these developments for the institutional framework of local education was a widening social distance between the town's Roman Catholics and Protestants; this occurred in Ballymena schools in the late 1850s and early 1860s, prior to the development of an urban industrial infrastructure. By 1868, most local schools were effectively denominationalised, with Catholics and Protestants only present in one small private institution in numbers proportional to their share of the local population.

Table 4.11
Attendance at selected Ballymena schools, by denomination, on 25 June 1868

School	*Status*	*N.*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Other (%)*
Castle St.	National	24	33.33	0.00	58.33	8.33
Castle St.	Private		*On*	*Holiday*		
Guy's Wellington St.	Free	270	23.70	1.48	73.33	1.48
Ballymoney St.	Parochial	187	45.99	1.07	52.94	0.00
High St	Private	46	0.00	0.00	97.83	2.17
High St.	Private	30	13.33	20.00	66.67	0.00
Georges St.	Private	20	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
Harryville	National	93	19.35	0.00	80.65	0.00
Harryville	National	113	0.00	98.23	1.77	0.00

Source: *Royal Commission on the Nature and Extent of Instruction by Institutions in Ireland for Elementary or Primary Education*, Part V, Education Census, vol. VI [C6-V], HC1870, vol. XXVIII, 5.

The town's Model School, which drew children from a particularly wide range of urban occupations, especially among local craft and distributive occupational categories, also experienced a widening social distance between Roman Catholic and Protestant pupils, following the 1860 condemnation of the Model School system by the Roman Catholic hierarchy in Ireland.[10]

[10] D. H. Akenson, *The Irish Education Experiment* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 303-7.

Table 4.12
Attendance by denomination at the Ballymena Model School in the last week of December 1856, 1861 and 1867

Denomination	*1854*[1] *(%)*	*1861*[2] *(%)*	*1867*[3] *(%)*
Presbyterian	60.53	73.77	77.60
Episcopalian	15.79	18.03	14.21
Roman Catholic	14.74	6.01	4.37
Other	8.95	2.19	3.83

[1] N.=190.
[2] N.=183.
[3] N.=183.
Sources: Annual Reports by Head and District Inspectors of the Ballymena Model School in: "Twenty-third Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland" [2304], HC 1857-58, vol. XX; "Twenty-eighth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland" [3026], HC 1862, vol. XX; "Thirty-fourth Report of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland" [4026], HC 1867-68, vol. XXVI.

These changes in Model School attendance patterns were also significant because the school had encompassed children of Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Roman Catholic fathers from similar positions in the local urban social structure, as leading occupations of the denominational groups confirm. This social base had been a feature of the Model School from its foundation, and it was described as having been "attended by children from almost all varied rates or grades of society, from the intelligent and industrious labourer and artisan, the small farmer, and more wealthy landholder, up to the more respectable mercantile or trading part of the community, and even to those of the professional class."[11]

[11] Quoted in *Royal Commission on the Nature and Extent of Instruction by Institutions in Ireland for Elementary or Primary Education*, Pt. I: Report, Appendix [C.6], HC 1870, vol. XXVIII, 736.

Table 4.13
The three leading occupations of Presbyterian[1] fathers of Ballymena Model School pupils, 1854-56[12]

Occupational Category	*N.*
Craft	33
Dealer	16
Labourer	14
Total	**94**

Source: Ballymena Model School registers, PRONI SCH/266/1/2.
[1] Only those identified as "Presbyterians", and not other designations for Remonstrant Presbyterians and other denominations, were included in this analysis.

Table 4.14
The three leading occupations of Episcopalian fathers of Ballymena Model School pupils, 1854-56

Occupational Category	*N.*
Craft	12
Dealer	4
Soldier	3
Total	**31**

Source: As previous table.

Table 4.15
The three leading occupations of Roman Catholic fathers of Ballymena Model School pupils, 1854-56

Occupational Category	*N.*
Craft	8
Transport	5
Labourer	5
Total	**31**

Source: As previous table.

The increasing distance between sections of this middling urban social group provided a basis for institutional elaboration premised on sectarian exclusion. The

[12] These tables have been adjusted to account for nominal repetitions by counting all pupils with fathers of the same last name, residing at the same address and with the same occupation as sharing the same father.

overwhelmingly Roman Catholic National School, on the other hand, comprised children of fathers from a wide urban occupational profile, from labourers to publicans, artisans and pedlars, reflecting the effective segregation of the local Catholic community. This segregation unhinged a primary interface for middle-class Protestants and Catholics. With reduced institutional contact between these groups, structural divergences within the general populations of Roman Catholics and Protestants in the town became increasingly important to structuring perceptions of, and relationships between, the communities.

Table 4.16
Ballymena National School, occupations of fathers, 1861-70[13]

Occupational Category	*N.*	*%*
Labourer	68	29.96
Craft	54	23.79
Dealer	33	14.54
Publican	18	7.93
Servant	10	4.41
Farmer	8	3.52
Transport	6	2.64
Police	5	2.20
Gardener	3	1.32
Pensioner	2	0.88
Hotelier	1	0.44
Soldier	1	0.44
Merchant	1	0.44
Other	14	6.17
None/Unclear	3	1.32
Total	**227**	**100.00**

Source: Ballymena National School registers, PRONI SCH/1238/1/1.

Characteristics of sections of the town's population were differentiated by denominational categories, as 1861 literacy rates suggest. An analysis of male literacy rates suggests a local hierarchy, with Presbyterian males over five the most literate in the town, followed by Episcopalians, Methodists and Roman Catholics. Outside a strong impetus emanating from political or cultural imperatives, these indicators suggest that there were limited structural characteristics around which common identities might coalesce between the local Episcopalian and Presbyterian populations, as there were large gaps between literacy rates of males in these groups.

[13] This table excluded mothers' occupations, where listed, and orphans; the same principles were applied as in the three previous tables. If two entries were identical in name and occupation, and

But a degree of pan-denominational Protestant coherence could develop if it was constructed in opposition to the local Roman Catholic population, which occupied the bottom of the literacy hierarchy. The potential, in the absence of institutional interfaces, for these characteristics to structure inter-denominational relationships became more pronounced as the Roman Catholic section of the town was removed from institutional contact with other denominations in local schools.

Table 4.17
Literacy rates, Ballymena males over five, by denomination, 1861

Denomination	*N.*	*Read & Write (%)*	*Read Only (%)*	*Neither (%)*
Presbyterian	1,245	72.85	18.39	8.76
Episcopalian	550	60.18	22.91	16.91
Methodist	100	55.00	31.00	14.00
Roman Catholic	622	50.00	24.60	25.40
Other	87	79.31	13.79	6.90

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.

Among females, inter-denominational structural divergences between members of the largest Protestant denominations on the one hand and Roman Catholics on the other were pronounced. These features are significant because of the increasing gender imbalance in the population, particularly in Harryville, the fastest-growing part of the town. There, an ideology premised on the commonality of Presbyterian and Episcopalian culture and interests could build on structural features of the population which reflected a degree of *relative* homogeneity among Protestants.

identical or compatible in abode (for instance, if one entry listed a street address and the other simply 'Ballymena'), they were treated as denoting one individual.

Table 4.18
Literacy rates, Ballymena females over five, by denomination, 1861

Denomination	*N.*	*Read & Write (%)*	*Read Only (%)*	*Neither (%)*
Presbyterian	1,511	53.28	36.33	10.39
Episcopalian	642	49.38	33.33	17.29
Methodist	108	48.15	42.59	9.26
Roman Catholic	802	31.42	38.28	30.30
Other	133	62.41	28.57	9.02

Source: As previous table.

The nature of developments in local educational institutions in the post-Famine period, and the structural differentiation of sections of the local community, made the urban world conducive to a social message with rural origins emphasising the centrality of religious criteria in defining communal identities and demarcating divisions between local Catholics and Protestant populations, particularly in a community that had not yet experienced a concentration of production in its urban centre and in which rural and urban areas retained strong institutional links. Institutional segregation in the community effected through the withdrawal of Catholics from the network of pan-denominational educational institutions reinforced social distances between local Catholic and Protestant populations.[14] In this environment, the construction of an ontological threat posed by non-participants in the culture of Protestant revivalism and culture found significant resonance.

There were other demographic features which induced specific forms of communal adaptation in rural and urban Ulster. In the late 1850s, the mid-Antrim countryside was relatively prosperous; even in 1862, when the local textile economy

[14] A similar approach to understanding denominational divisions is employed by Rosemary Harris in *Prejudice and Tolerance in Ulster: A Study of Neighbours and "Strangers" in a Border Community*, 2nd edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).

was severely depressed, agricultural labourers earned relatively high wages, supplemented by work at the loom.[15] The structure of holdings in the rural area reflected a process of consolidation after the Famine.

Table 4.19
Number of land holdings by size, Ballymena Union, 1847, 1857, 1867

Size of Holding (Acres)	*Holdings* 1847 (N.)	1857 (N.)	1867 (N.)
1 to 5	982	495	597
5 to 15	2,738	2,007	1,989
15 to 30	1,778	1,793	1,733
Over 30	1,940	1,257	1,294

Sources: "Return of Agricultural Produce in Ireland", HC 1847-48 [923], vol. LVII; "Agricultural Statistics of Ireland", HC 1859 session 1 [2461], vol. XXVI; "Agricultural Statistics of Ireland", 1866 [3958-II], HC 1867-68, vol. LXX.

The structural prerequisites for this relative rural prosperity involved a high level of emigration in the post-Famine period to England, Scotland, Canada, America and Australia. In 1859, emigration from Ulster increased dramatically from the previous year's level of 29,179 to 38,159, and the gender imbalance also rose. Emigrant numbers continued to be high throughout the spring and summer of 1859, as Table 4.20 reveals.

Table 4.20
Emigration from Ulster, 1858, 1859, 1860

Year	*N.*	*Change* (%)	*Male* *(%)*
1858	29,179	---	58.13
1859	38,150	30.74	59.92
1860	27,790	-27.16	50.55

Sources: "Table of Emigration from Irish Ports" [2653], HC 1860, vol. LXVI; [2875] HC 1861, vol. LXII.

[15] "Return of Average Rates of Weekly Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in Ireland, July—December 1860" (2), HC 1862, vol. LX.

Table 4.21
Emigration from Ulster by month, January to August 1859

Month	*N.*
January	2,395
February	2,127
March	3,382
April	4,526
May	4,459
June	3,851
July	3,676
August	4,044

Source: "Table of Emigration from Irish Ports" [2875], HC 1861, vol. LXII.

The gender imbalance in the emigrating cohort of 1859 was also markedly greater than the general pattern in the province since May 1851.

Table 4.22
Emigration from Antrim, 1 May 1851 to 31 December 1859

N.	*Male (%)*
66,652	55.32

Source: "Table of Emigration from Irish Ports" [2653], HC 1860, vol. LXVI.

The consequences of this particularly heavy and disproportionately male emigration, coupled with changes in the structure of the textile industry, were significant for the men, women and families of the district. But, as the next chapter describes, Ballymena's rural population remained relatively stable during this period. In the process of communal expression, the Presbyterian Church was adopted to generate precepts of community: Presbyterianism was the common denominator in the social profile of rural mid-Antrim, expressing communal solidarity and

propagating a memory of cultural uniqueness.[16] Its institutions encompassed groups throughout the urban and rural district and it was within this central organ of rural association that a process of communal coherence and institutional consolidation was initiated.

In the preceding chapter, the composition of Presbyterian congregations was analysed to demonstrate the presence in Dissenting congregations of three main groups in the rural social structure—farmers, labourers and weavers—each with limited structural characteristics. The divisions between town and country were more pronounced in Episcopal churches, owing to a parochial structure which underscored differences between primarily rural and urban congregations. The composition of the two Episcopal Church parishes straddling the Braid Water were markedly different, with Harryville's parish, Ballyclug, retaining strong links to the economy of the countryside from which a large majority of its members were drawn, including male weavers, who accounted for over one-quarter of fathers listed in baptismal registers between 1857 and 1859. In contrast with the Presbyterians, the number of Episcopalian farmers was very small throughout the district, and the total number of Episcopalians in Ballymena's rural hinterland was also small. The much larger Kirkinriola parish, comprising the town of Ballymena, on the other hand, had stronger urban links and served a larger Episcopalian community than the rural parishes of mid-Antrim, as demonstrated by a comparison of places of residence and occupational categories in baptismal registers. While more than three-quarters of Kirkinriola's married men were resident in town, fewer than one-quarter of those in Ballyclug parish were urban-based.

[16] For a discussion of the centrality of such institutions in the generation of nationalist symbols, see Miroslav Hroch, "Real and Constructed: The Nature of the Nation," in *The State of the Nation: Ernest*

Table 4.23
Place of fathers' residence from the parish baptismal registers, 1857-59 of Kirkinriola (Ballymena) and Ballyclug (Harryville) Episcopal Church Parishes

Place of Residence	*Kirkinriola*		*Ballyclug*	
	(N.)	*(%)*	*(N.)*	*(%)*
Harryville and Ballymena	203	76.32	20	21.98
Outside Harryville and Ballymena	46	17.29	69	75.82
Workhouse	3	1.13	0	0.00
None Given	14	5.26	2	2.20
Total	266	100.00	91	100.00

Sources: PRONI MIC/583/15-16.

Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism, ed. John A. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 91-106, especially 94.

Table 4.24
Fathers' occupational categories by place of residence, from Ballyclug Parish baptismal registers, 1857-59

Place of Residence	*Occupational Category*	*N.*	*%*
In Town[1]	Labourer	5	5.49
	Craft	5	5.49
	Merchant	2	2.20
	Pensioner	2	2.20
	Transport	2	2.20
	Gardener	1	1.10
	Servant	1	1.10
	Soldier	1	1.10
	Other	1	1.10
Out of Town	Weaver	23	25.27
	Craft	18	19.78
	Labourer	14	15.38
	Farmer	4	4.40
	Servant	2	2.20
	Gardener	1	1.10
	Clerk	1	1.10
	Other	2	2.20
	None/Unclear	4	4.40
None Given	Craft	1	1.10
	Weaver	1	1.10
	Total	**91**	**100.00**

Source: PRONI MIC/1/583/15-16.
For details of occupational categories, see Appendix A.
[1]Defined in this and the subsequent table as "Ballymena", "Harryville" or any street therein.

Table 4.25
Fathers' occupational categories by place of residence, from Kirkinriola Parish baptismal registers, 1857-59

Place of Residence	*Occupational Category*	*N.*	*%*
In Town	Craft	88	33.08
	Labourer	39	14.66
	Dealer	22	8.27
	Weaver	13	4.89
	Soldier	5	1.88
	Pensioner	4	1.50
	Servant	4	1.50
	Gentleman	3	1.13
	Publican	3	1.13
	Agent	2	0.75
	Clerk	2	0.75
	Farmer	2	0.75
	Government	2	0.75
	Merchant	2	0.75
	Police	2	0.75
	Professional	1	0.38
	Transport	1	0.38
	Other	1	0.38
	None/Unclear	6	2.26
Outside Town	Weaver	15	5.64
	Labourer	12	4.51
	Craft	7	2.63
	Farmer	4	1.50
	Transport	1	0.38
	Clerk	1	0.38
	Pensioner	1	0.38
	Servant	1	0.38
	Soldier	1	0.38
	Other	1	0.38
	None/Unclear	3	1.13
In Workhouse	Labourer	2	0.75
	Farmer	1	0.38
None Given	Craft	2	0.75
	Weaver	2	0.75
	Police	1	0.38
	Soldier	1	0.38
	Labourer	1	0.38
	None/Unclear	7	2.63
	Total	**266**	**100.00**

Source: PRONI MIC/583/15-16; For details of occupational categories, see Appendix A.

This study engages religious revivals as part of a process of notional communal regeneration premised on the articulation of socio-cultural coherence around religious institutions. The potential for these developments to link rural and urban sections of both Presbyterian and Episcopalian congregations is clear. It was largely within the relatively stable rural Presbyterian community that the revivals originated, although they also found resonance among mid-Antrim Episcopalians, whose congregational polities set more fixed barriers to interaction between urban and rural sections of the community, and whose rural numbers were very small. By contrast, other smaller denominations in the town were all but absent from the mid-Antrim countryside. The exporting of Presbyterian evangelical culture to the Episcopal Church helped to transcend Episcopalian polities' constraints and integrate rural and urban members in a common social infrastructure of prayer-meetings and Protestant commemoration.

A related instability in local associational culture also provided "space" in which rural evangelicalism was elaborated and institutionally expressed. Young men were employed in many of the urban trades experiencing significant reorganisation in the post-Famine period, notably in textile production and in tailoring. Reverend Wiliam Crooke of Coleraine addressed the public in the Ballymena Town Hall in March 1861 on "the present age and its demands upon young men."[17] The highly unstable nature of this urban cohort had effects throughout the institutions of local society. In 1860, the *Observer* reported that the town's Harmonic Society, though not formally dissolved, had "no practical existence."[18] "The instruments should have been given," the editor opined, "to young men belonging to and likely to remain

[17] *Observer*, 9 March 1861.
[18] *Observer*, 2 June 1860.

permanently resident in the town." Instead, the Harmonic Society had comprised "merchants' clerks, shopkeepers' assistants, young tradesmen, and apprentices—all very respectable persons, no doubt, but, for the most part, only temporarily connected with Ballymena." Similarly, the town's Fire Brigade, comprising fourteen first-class and twenty-eight second-class volunteers when it was established in 1854, was reported to have lost all but six of its original second-class members by 1866.[19] Even the Young Men's Christian Association published a letter in the *Observer* in September 1859, in which the secretary, Robert Esler, asked: "Surely Ballymena can spare 150 young men for one hour in the week to attend a meeting peculiarly their own and whose is the blame that the numbers have been as yet so inconsiderable?"[20] Another correspondent to the *Observer* in 1858 proposed the establishment of a mutual improvement society for the young tradesmen in the town. In reply, the editor noted that meetings of the Literary and Scientific Society had received little patronage from local "clergyman and gentleman" and public addresses had proved unintelligible to some Society members.[21] The instability of these associations extended to other institutions. Of sixty-four Masons who joined a local lodge between 1857 and 1867, for instance, eight of whom came from other lodges, only slightly more than one-quarter were on the rolls at the end of 1867.

[19] *Observer*, 24 March 1866.
[20] *Observer*, 24 September 1859.
[21] *Observer*, 18 September 1858.

Table 4.26
Masonic Lodge Number 431, position of members who joined 1857-1867 at the end of 1867

Position	*N.*
Resigned	22
Moved to Another Lodge	21
Died	2
Expelled or "Struck Off"	2
Remained on Register	17
Total	**64**

Source: Records of Masonic Lodge No. 431, Grand Lodge of A.F.&A. Masons of Ireland, Freemason's Hall, Dublin.

The instability of Ballymena's local associational network is also evidenced by the weakness of the Ballymena Teachers' Improvement Society, which was established for mutual development through informal instruction and whose membership comprised local educators. The Society, founded in 1860, ceased its activities after less than two years. At its April and May 1860 meetings, fourteen to seventeen local teachers attended, but that number dropped to a handful in the summer months. It also faced a dilemma in January 1861, when the Society's secretary refused to attend a Central Association meeting in Dublin convened to request a salary increase for teachers in Ireland "on account of the association not being for agitation, but rather for mutual improvement."[22] A special meeting of the Society was called in order to formulate a response to the Central Association's activities. It was decided that the local society would not join petitions to the House of Commons and Commissioners of National Education requesting salary increases, but it was subsequently reported that the Society's meetings "were interfered with and rendered uncertain by the General Meetings mentioned in former minutes." By

autumn 1861, the Society was declared moribund, after attendance continued to decline, postponing successive meetings.

Chapter three demonstrated the persistence of rural manufacture in the local textile market and the belated emergence of an urban textile labour force in the 1860s. Prior to its emergence, institutional and demographic features of the local community described in this chapter shaped the transmission and reception of rural evangelical ideology in the town. By the early 1860s, Ballymena's Roman Catholics and Protestants were segregated in local educational institutions. Additionally, denominational groups were characterised by differentiation in terms of population characteristics, and by structural divisions between Roman Catholics and members of the town's main Protestant denominations. Voluntary associationalism was unstable, owing to rates of mobility linked to internal migrations and to high levels of migration. In spite of these developments, however, the initial stages of religious institutional consolidation occasioned theological controversy in the town, but little violent sectarian conflict. Ballymena was not traditionally a venue for such religious confrontation, although the *Observer* reported occasional sectarian conflict centred in small back lanes and courts, such as Paper Mill Entry. Described by the newspaper in 1857 as "The Pound district" of Ballymena[23], Paper Mill Entry was a narrow lane near the disused "Bell's Green" beetling mill and premises; the lane's housing profile was similar to other back streets described in chapter two: in 1862, nine of its eleven tenements were valued at only 10s. each, and seven residents occupied dwellings at weekly rentals of 10d.[24] Chapter two described urban improvement initiatives in the

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[22] Minutes of the Ballymena Teachers' Improvement Society, PRONI MIC/90/1.
[23] *Observer*, 3 October 1857, 10 October 1857.
[24] *General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland. Union of Ballymena* (Dublin: Alexander Thom and Sons, 1862); handbill advertising the sale of lands In the Landed Estates Court, Ireland on Friday, 6 May 1864, PRONI D/929/HA12/F4/11C.

1860s focussed on the back streets of the town: during the same time Paper Mill Entry and Bell's Green were sold and by 1865 only two premises in the Entry—each rated at £1 5s. 0d.—remained occupied; its other tenements were listed as ruins and adjacent lands were identified as the future site of the Braid Water Mill. Although by mid-decade, the small and decrepit lane had all but disappeared, other spatial dimensions of religious segregation have been explored in this chapter, along with institutional and demographic dimensions of change within Ballymena's denominational communities. The next chapter demonstrates the importance of these foundations to dynamics of Protestant revival. Religious revivalism arrived in mid-Antrim not through conflict in sectarian enclaves or contested urban space, but from the countryside, through channels linking the town to processes of communal consolidation transpiring in a relatively denominationally homogeneous district of rural Antrim where the social infrastructure of Presbyterianism was strong.

V: Revivalism and Local Associational Culture

Rural evangelicalism was brought to Ballymena through channels encompassing areas surrounding the town and was expressed within the institutional and demographic framework described in previous chapters. The revivals of 1859 comprised a series of localised events characterised by emotional intensity expressed in purportedly unconventional forms of popular public worship and apparently spontaneous expressions of individual religious experience; they were centred on Presbyterian regions of the province. Although most of these events were confined to the spring and summer of 1859, the revivals came to occupy a central place in the cultural memory of Presbyterian mid-Antrim.[1] They also assumed an importance in the self-definition of Ulster Protestantism generally, as a moment of communal "renewal" in which pan-denominationalism was forged in a shared culture of evangelicalism focused on the personal experience of salvation and the communal experience of institutional revitalisation. Although they originated in the countryside, the revivals were also urban events. The transmission of rural religious ideology to Ballymena illustrates the importance of dialogues with rural areas in structuring urban institutions and events in mid-Antrim. Urbanisation in the district did not dissolve or dilute channels of interaction between the town and rural areas, but rather occasioned an intense interplay of people, institutions and ideas throughout the district. Aspects of Ulster Presbyterian religious culture incorporated powerful rural motifs, but they derived resonance within specific contexts. In Ballymena, structural and cultural developments were embedded within channels which promoted patterns of interchange between the town and its surrounding districts. This chapter explores

[1] For a brief but interesting analysis of the how the 1859 revivals have been central to debates over the development of Ulster Presbyterian culture, see Norman Vance, "Presbyterian Culture and Revival," *Bulletin of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland* 22 (1993): 16-19. Vance argues that the revivals may be seen as diminishing, rather than increasing, sectarian tension, through an emphasis on "sin, sloth and religious indifference" (17).

these channels, the events surrounding the 1859 revivals, and the forms and patterns of association linked to the experience of revivalism within the community.

From 1857, a number of observers travelled through Ulster recounting details of religious revivals in America; indeed when local religious enthusiasms were reported in the spring of 1859, the *Observer* noted that "the present state of matters is generally attributed to the influence of well-intended lectures, sermons and addresses, recently delivered throughout various portions of this country, descriptive of the religious revivals in America."[2] Reverend S. J. Moore, a Presbyterian minister in Ballymena, suggested that the American and Ulster awakenings occurred simultaneously, and prayed that the general effect "may become as extensive in the Old as it is in the New World!"[3] Certainly, Ballymena's residents had become aware of the American revivals by early 1859, following a lecture in the Town Hall in December 1858 by Reverend Professor Gibson.[4] In addition to these precursors of revival, preceding chapters have shown the centrality of religious institutions in the social infrastructure of the district and the important religious element in local culture and expressions of communal identity. The revivals took place—and their progress was interpreted—within conditions in which religious bodies had a historically active role in generating symbols of identity and furnishing institutions on which local communities were centred.

Some revival sources focus the narrative of communal and institutional "renewal" within a limited chronological framework comprising a discrete commencement of revival activity in the spring of 1859, culminating in the summer

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[2] *Observer*, 26 March 1859; see also George Salmon, *The Evidences of the Work of the Holy Spirit: A Sermon Preached in St. Stephen's Church, Dublin, on Sunday, July 3, 1859* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Co., 1859), 45-46.
[3] Reverend S. J. Moore, *The History and Prominent Characteristics of the Present Revival in Ballymena and its Neighbourhood* (Belfast: McCormick and Dunlop, 1859), 3.

months and ending in a putatively sustained, province-wide "revitalisation" of Protestantism among individuals and communities. In fact, other evidence suggests that the potential for communal institutional coherence to be expressed in particularly "revivalist" manifestations had been developing for some time in forms of communal piety influenced by the activities of Presbyterian clerics and the laity. The minister of neighbouring Ahoghill parish reported to the Ballymena and Coleraine Synod that motivations for revival had been "silently effectually working in some of our congregations for more than a year" and that these developments had only manifested themselves after a period of germination during which "the minds of the people were eagerly directed by the ministers" to the revivals in America.[5] Another commentator noted that prayer-meetings had been established in mid-Antrim four years prior to 1859, with the encouragement of a local Presbyterian minister.[6] The *Observer* reported that Ahoghill's First Presbyterian congregation had for some time seen a "gradual but silent" revival, with sixty-five new communicants added in 1856 and a new church erected in 1857.[7] Reverend S. M. Dill of Ballymena concurred with this analysis of the revivals, writing that in Connor, the site of the first religious excitement in 1859, there had been "a long work of preparation," characterised by greater attendances at religious services and Sabbath schools, inspired preaching and intensified private family prayer. On these foundations, Dill wrote, "Conversions began to take place, and thus the seed which had long been sown began to spring

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[4] *Observer*, 1 January 1859.
[5] In Frederick Buick, *Awakening in Ireland* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1859), 10-11.
[6] Reverend John Weir, *The Ulster Awakening: Its Origins, Progress, and Fruit* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1860), 26.
[7] *Observer*, 9 April 1859.

up."[8] Another clergyman noted that Dill himself had been in the habit of holding outdoor meetings previous to the revival—a phenomenon which had gained acceptance within the Presbyterian General Assembly earlier in the decade and which had become an increasingly popular form of religious expression as Ulster Presbyterianism adapted its structures and practices to the triumph of Henry Cooke's evangelical party in the Synod of Ulster and union with the Secession Synod in 1840.[9]

Contemporary accounts of the 1859 revivals, many of which were written by local and visiting clergymen, were characterised by localised frames of analysis and by a propensity to draw details from other narratives. The apparent spontaneity ascribed to some revival activities militated in part against highly detailed first-hand accounts, but the utility of these sources to historians is more generally limited by the structure of the revival genre: a mixture of factual reporting and generous and often unattributed third-party quotations grafted onto a teleological narrative of Ulster's "re-awakening" through the agency of God's mercy.[10] The revivals also provided an impetus for the wide dissemination of a second polemical genre: the counter-tract. These accounts were written by academics, clerics and observers sceptical of, and sometimes hostile to, the claims of the revivals' more sympathetic chroniclers. Sceptical observers of the revivals focussed on cases of religious "conviction" and sought to explain them in physiological and medicalised terms: several credited improper ministry for widespread religious enthusiasm, one noting that the prominence of lay-preachers created an environment in which "the ordinary ministers

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[8] In Weir, 14-15; a similar quotation from Dill appears in Reverend William Gibson, *The Year of Grace: A History of the Ulster Revival of 1859* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1860), 13; these comments are also supported by a letter by Reverend Dr. Edgar referred to in Weir, 15-16.

[9] Reverend. D. McMeekin, *Memories of '59 or the Revival Movement* (Hull: M. Harland and Company, 1908), 7-8; David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society, 1740-1890* (London: Routledge, 1992), 148.

are frequently cast aside as unprofitable servants."[11] The consequence of this source base for the study of the 1859 revivals has been to focus historians on the textual structure of revival narratives—which has helped to illuminate, for instance, representations of female piety in the language of revivalism—or on a partly speculative analysis of the relationship between the revivals and an underlying social and economic substructure.[12] Debate has centred on the consequences of the revivals for Protestant cultural and political identities in Ulster; this analysis argues that revivalism expressed the primacy of religious criteria in structuring communal identities, with co-ordinates in the historically central role played by religious bodies in local communities.

Although contemporaries widely acknowledged the transatlantic inspiration of the revivals, they differed on other details of Ulster's awakening. Reverend David Adams reported that the revivals commenced in Connor and his own Ahoghill parish, and then spread south to Randalstown, north to Cullybackey and Clough, west to Portglenone and east to Ballymena.[13] Reverend Daniel McMeekin agreed that the centre of revivalism was at Connor, but he argued that the origins of Connor's revival could be traced to Ballymena and an earlier visit to the town by "Mrs. Colville" of Gateshead on behalf of a missionary society.[14] The *Observer* reported on 4 June 1859

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[10] Ian Paisley draws on these accounts as the principal sources for his analysis *The 'Fifty-Nine Revival: An Authentic History of the Great Ulster Awakening* (Belfast: Martyr's Memorial Free Presbyterian Church, 1981).

[11] P.W. Perfitt, *The History, Character and Consequences of Revivalism in Ireland: An Appeal to the Common Sense of Englishmen* (London: James Pattie, n.d.), 8.

[12] Janice Holmes, "The 'World Turned Upside Down': Women in the Ulster Revival of 1859," in Janice Holmes and Diane Urquart, eds., *Coming Into the Light: The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster, 1840-1940* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994), 126-53. See also Hempton and Hill; Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975).

[13] Buick., 10.

[14] McMeekin, 7-8; a similar narrative appears in Reverend Charles Seaver, "The Ulster Revival: A Paper Read Before the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at Belfast," in Reverend Charles Seaver et al., *The Ulster Revival, in its Religious Features and Physiological Accidents* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1859), 8-10.

that Colville had been accompanied by a "Lieutenant Aikman" and that the first cases of "manifestation" had occurred under their influence at a house in Mill Street. Colville's evangelisation was said to have had a particularly strong effect on James McQuilken, a young employee in a local linen warehouse. According to this narrative, McQuilken returned to his native Kells, in Connor parish, and established a prayer-meeting with other young male converts in a local schoolhouse. The personal and commercial connections between Connor and Ballymena were very strong before the events of 1859, and these links were strengthened by the assistance offered by a local Presbyterian minister, S. J. Moore, to his brother, who was in charge of the Connor spring communion in 1857, when religious stirrings were reported.[15] The range of personal, institutional and commercial links between town and countryside described in preceding chapters, which were strengthened by the primacy of the distributive function of Ballymena's economy, created a number of channels through which the experiences of the rural regions could be communicated to the urban arena. Indeed, the first recorded expressions of religious revival in the town occurred among people from the country visiting Ballymena on market-days.[16] The connections between town and countryside provided a framework for cultural mobilisation which focussed on a coherent and dense institutional framework in Presbyterianism. These connections were central to a process of communal response and adaptation to rural and urban mid-Antrim's places within an evolving demographic environment and within the changing structure of economic relationships described in preceding chapters.

The relative denominational homogeneity of parts of the mid-Antrim countryside helped it to make it a locus for an ethno-religious experience which

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[15] McMeekin, 46.
[16] Moore, 3.

affirmed Ulster Presbyterianism by emphasising the sacerdotal nature of the Presbyterian rural world and by assigning regenerative functions to religious bodies within local society by deploying and strengthening the community's inner institutional resources: the Presbyterian polity, the prayer-meeting and the laity. In the rural parish of Connor, where this process commenced, communal coherence around Presbyterianism provided a resonant cognitive construct centred on a heavily Presbyterian rural area.

Table 5.1
Religious profile of the census rural district of the Parish of Connor, 1861

Parish	*N.*	*Presbyterian (%)*	*Roman Catholic (%)*	*Episcopalian (%)*	*Other (%)*
Connor	7,423	87.81	5.17	4.66	2.36

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI.

Although the parish's rural population decreased during the Famine, the decline was only slightly higher than 5 percent, a smaller decline than in the preceding decade, suggesting that the rural population had achieved a level of relative stability after three decades of significant population growth and decline. This stability provided a foundation for active lay leadership in Presbyterian congregations, which affected the character of religious expressions before, during and after 1859.

Table 5.2
Population of the census rural district of the Parish of Connor, 1821-61

Year	*Population (N.)*	*Population Change (%)*
1821	6,893	--
1831	8,394	21.78
1841	7,759	-7.56
1851	7,370	-5.01
1861	7,423	0.72

Sources: "Return of the Population of the Counties of Ireland, 1831" (254), HC 1833, vol. XXXIX; "Report of the Commissioners of the Census of Ireland, 1841" [504], HC 1843, vol. XXIV; *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt I: Area, Population, and Number of Houses, by Townlands and Electoral Divisions, Province of Ulster [3204], HC 1863, vol. LV.

Additionally, although Ballymena's female-to-male ratio was rising, in line with that of Belfast, in Connor the imbalance remained relatively low and more stable, in line with the complexion of rural County Antrim generally.

Table 5.3
Females per 100 males in the census rural district of the Parish of Connor, the census rural district of County Antrim, and the towns of Ballymena and Belfast, 1841, 1851 and 1861

Year	*Rural Connor*	*Rural Co. Antrim*	*Ballymena*	*Belfast*
1841	101	107	114	104
1851	104	107	118	114
1861	103	108	120	118

Sources: *Census of Ireland, 1851*: Pt. VI: General Report [2134], HC 1856, vol. XXXI; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt I: Area, Population, and Number of Houses, by Townlands and Electoral Divisions, Province of Ulster [3204], HC 1863, vol. LV; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt V: General Report, Appendices, County Tables, Summary, Index [3204-IV], HC 1863, vol. LXI.

The origins of the revivals were in this overwhelmingly Presbyterian rural area with a stabilising demographic profile relative to the urban centre. Just as the revivals cannot be easily linked to sudden economic "catastrophe"—this theme is discussed

later in the chapter—neither did they occur in conditions of dramatic demographic change. In fact, the revivals commenced in a district in which the population and the core institutions of Presbyterianism were relatively stable and historically strong. The laity could, by virtue of this stability, play an important role in defining the terrain of local religion. Throughout the revival, for instance, they were reported to be organising prayer-meetings on roadsides, in fields, private houses and barns.[17]

As the progress of these prayer-meetings and of the spreading revivals was documented, many descriptions focussed on the experience of female mill workers, but other accounts described participants as prosperous farmers, urban professionals, landowners, Belfast ship-yard workers and farm labourers.[18] There was considerable debate over how many individuals were affected by revival events, with some observers claiming that one-fifth of converts experienced "convictions"—which will be explored later in this chapter—and others suggesting that these cases numbered as few as one-tenth of revival participants.[19] There was a general consensus that the enthusiasms had first been manifested in Connor, described by its local minister as a parish "peopled by small farmers, weavers and linen manufacturers, nearly all Presbyterians."[20] References are replete in revival accounts to rural weavers, spinners and factory workers: on the death of James McCord, one of the most prominent local revivalists, for example, the *Observer* reported in 1861 that his body was carried to a grave "by about three hundred workmen and weavers."[21] But there are too many

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[17] F. Buick quoted in George Macaulay, *Times of Revival, or "The Natural Desirableness and Means of Revival in Religion"* (Edinburgh: John Menzies and Andrew Elliot, 1858 [?]), 82; Moore, 5
[18] Reverend John Baillie, *The Revival: or, What I Saw in Ireland* (London: James Nisbet and Co, 1860), 6-10, 30-35, 67; Reverend William Blair, "The Things Which We Have Seen And Heard," *Records of Revival*," ed. Horatios Bonar (no publisher, 1860 [?]), 56; Weir, 160-63; Gibson also discusses a mid-day meeting of Belfast mill girls (99).
[19] Reverend Oswald J. Dykes, *Apostolic Times Revived: A Lecture on the Present Progress of Christ's Kingdom in the North of Ireland* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co., 1859), 14.
[20] Reverend William Arthur quoted in Weir, 20.
[21] *Observer*, 12 October 1861.

contradictory analyses to establish that rural weavers or artisans and members of the "respectable working class" were the principal agents or subjects of revival, although these same social groups have been identified as important participants in revivals during the reorganisation of textile production in Philadelphia and Scotland.[22] Other accounts pointedly refer to subjects of the revivals in Ulster as being "not confined to any particular class, whether as regards social position, moral character or religious knowledge."[23] This narrative of revival impedes an occupationally-specific socio-economic analysis, but it is nonetheless important, as it demonstrates the extent to which the revivals were constructed by contemporaries as part of a universal process of communal regeneration within Presbyterianism, encompassing all social groups. The social structure of the mid-Antrim countryside was characterised by a range of overlapping forms of textile production and agricultural labour, involving labourers, weavers and farmers. The revivals, which emphasised their common cultural referents, provided an integrating ideological framework in the rural social structure. An evangelical creed reaffirming the rural Presbyterian world as an elect community also provided an adaptive instrument for economic and social transitions in rural Antrim.

The rural and urban worlds of mid-Antrim were linked through kinship, commerce and religion. In the urban milieu, the revivalist impulse also found resonance, although it was anchored to a different social structure and found stabilised expression in distinctive ways. There, the revival experience was described by contemporaries as differentiated along occupational and gender axes. There was a

[22] Gibbon makes the case for the former, and Hempton and Hill for the latter, 157; see also references to the composition of Armagh revival-meeting participants in *The Times*, 20 September 1859; Cynthia J. Shelton, *The Mills of Manayunk: Industrialisation and Social Conflict in the Philadelphia Region, 1787-1837* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1986), 116-33.

perception, conveyed in some local accounts, that poorer urban classes were more often subjects of "conviction" during religious events. Contemporary accounts also convey the varied nature of revival activity: from mill prayer-meetings to outdoor lay preaching to organised union prayer-meetings under the patronage of clergy, the district saw an institutionalisation of revival impulses in networks of local association, many based in the town of Ballymena.

In the town of Ballymena, Reverend S. J. Moore wrote that the first people to be stricken by convictions were country people visiting the town on market-day, followed shortly thereafter by a local boy aged sixteen and two older ladies.[24] Another account gives the names of the first converts as Hessie Herbeson and Mary Beattie, living in Springwell Street.[25] In the ensuing weeks of April 1859, Moore reported that "a goodly number of young men, in business establishments in town, and not a few workmen, shoemakers, carpenters, sawyers, and labourers, who were depending for their daily bread on their daily wages" temporarily gave up their work to share in ministering to the community.[26] The first group within the town reported by another clergyman to have been affected by the revivals was "the humbler portion of the people…the back streets and the lanes being most moved" and the *Observer* reported that over the ten days from 16 May 1859, thirty cases of impression had been reported, mainly in poorer districts of the town and "among the lower classes of the population."[27] The first organised revival activity in Ballymena reported in the *Observer* was a prayer-meeting led by men from Connor at the new schoolhouse in Harryville, a meeting which the newspaper described as so "densely filled" that the

[23] Reverend Thomas B. Bell, *Notes on the Revival in Newton-Ards: A Letter of James Douglas, esq…* (Edinburgh: A. Elliot, 1859), 6.
[24] In Weir, 37-38.
[25] McMeekin, 43.
[26] In Weir, 38.

event was adjourned to Ballymena's First Presbyterian Church.[28] The decision to base early missionary activity in Harryville reflected its status as an interface between the institutions of the town core, the rapidly expanding and predominantly Presbyterian population of the suburb and residents of rural areas beyond the town. By May, however, the *Observer* reported that activity was also concentrated in Brougshane Street, Ballymoney Street, Springwell Street and Galgorm Street and it expressed hope that the revivals would extend to Ballymena's notorious Sydney Lane.[29]

Open-air meetings, some in town streets and others in adjoining townlands, became central features of revival activity and frequently drew thousands of participants; local clergy were usually in attendance at these meetings, but it was in these forums that members of the laity played central roles as organisers and orators, thereby giving direction to expressions of communal piety.[30] The "popular" character of these meetings was welcomed by the Presbyterian minister S. J. Moore, who noted the resonance of lay preachers with "the people, especially of their own rank."[31] The development of popular spiritual discourses and social networks also won the approval of the Episcopal Incumbent of Kirkinriola, Daniel Mooney, who declared that "It has always been found that it is by the virtue and industry of the middle and lower classes the character of the nation is formed, and not by that of the higher classes, or aristocracy."[32] The organisation of revival meetings in the farmlands surrounding Ballymena developed further interfaces between town and country. It

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[27] McMeekin, 44; *Observer*, 28 May 1859.
[28] *Observer*, 9 April 1859.
[29] *Observer* 21 May 1859.
[30] *Observer*, 28 May 1859.
[31] Moore, 20.
[32] Reverend Daniel Mooney, *Revivals: A Sermon Preached in the Parish Church of Ballymena* (Ballymena: W. Erwin, 1859), 9.

was also at these meetings that cases of "impression" or "conviction" were most frequently reported.

The manifestation of revivals in the form of impressions divided observers: in its first reports, the *Observer* warned that "The sober-minded reader will naturally conclude that there is a dangerous amount of delusion, extravagance, and fanaticism, connected with the very extraordinary manifestations" associated with religious enthusiasms.[33] Of all the revival activities, the most contested were claims of conviction. On 23 April 1859, the *Observer* described an extraordinary occurrence in Galgorm Street, where an Ahoghill man had fallen to his knees, shouting "loud and desperate cries" as if he had been "suddenly attacked, and [was] sinking under the repeated and deadly stabs of an assassin." Similar cases were reported throughout the summer, many affecting women and children during outdoor services. The progress of conviction was generally described as commencing with a sudden realisation of personal sinfulness, accompanied by physical weakness, trembling, and occasional lapses into stupor. Stricken individuals, imploring penitence, then frequently fell to the ground in open prostration: in one evening, a correspondent to the *Observer* noted forty-three such cases.[34] These incidents were generally resolved within the course of the prayer-meeting, during which the subjects, labouring under a perception of their own sinfulness, declared themselves to be recipients of God's mercy. Occasionally, cases of extended stupor were reported lasting for several days. In one of the most sensational cases reported by the local press, Mary Fullerton, described as an orthodox Presbyterian from Connor, sank into despair after witnessing cases of "penitential conviction" at service, and subsequently fell into a profound state of

[33] *Observer*, 26 March 1859.
[34] *Observer*, 11 June 1859.

derangement from which she later died.[35] Most of the subjects whose cases were reported in journals, sermons and narratives were females, although other chroniclers clearly felt that such an emphasis on female participation undermined the universality of communal revitalisation and instead argued that conviction was experienced by men and women, young and old.[36] But the generally gendered nature of the narratives provided sceptics with a basis for dissecting cases of conviction in medical and physiological terms. Some clerics warned that subjects of impression were "chiefly hysterical" and the *Observer* noted that one such subject was a young female servant "utterly uneducated—unacquainted even with the letters of the alphabet, and heretofore unrestrained by any intelligent sense of her religious duties."[37] Another commentator claimed that the number of convictions was inflated by many subjects who repeated the experience at successive meetings.[38] Other, more sympathetic, explanations treated the convictions as God's grace revealed in specifically emotive ways to the rural peasantry and urban poor: "They appear to have served the purpose of arousing in the minds of the ignorant and careless to think of their salvation in a way which no other instrumentality (humanly speaking) could have done."[39] Even many less sceptical observers of the convictions described them as natural physiological responses to "strong spiritual emotionalism" and at times to female hysteria.[40] One of the most sceptical clerical observers of the revivals was the Episcopalian Archdeacon of Meath, Edward A. Stopford, who believed that they were induced by unscrupulous preachers; his analysis focussed in particular on the mill

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[35] *Observer*, 6 August 1859
[36] Buick, 4.
[37] *Observer*, 9 July 1859.
[38] *Observer*, 16 July 1859.
[39] A "sober-minded Banbridge layman" quoted in Weir, 173. This explanation provides the backbone of Weir's analysis of "The Physiological Affections, and their Solutions," 170-85.
[40] Dykes, 16-18.

girls of Belfast whom he saw as especially susceptible to the preaching of charlatans.[41]

Episcopalian clergy in Ireland were divided by the revivals, with prominent leaders such as Stopford highly critical of the more enthusiastic developments. Local Episcopalian clergy in the Ballymena district, however, were supportive of the revivals. The Incumbent of Kirkinriola not only endorsed the popular character of the revivals, but also offered a robust defence of religious emotionalism, drawing on Scriptural evidence.[42] His willingness to suspend the scepticism practised by many Episcopalian colleagues illustrates the links between the district's institutional and social structure and the local resonance of the cultural expression of religious revival. The previous chapter illustrated that the Episcopalian population in mid-Antrim was relatively small, with higher levels of illiteracy than Presbyterians and a rural population comprising very few farmers. The local clergy's support for the revivals can be seen not as determinative of the progress of revivalism, especially in light of the important lay element in revival leadership, but rather as a response structured partly by the character of the communities to which they ministered. In mid-Antrim, the popular character of the revivals resonated within the ranks of the Established Church. To Episcopalians, the popular discourse of Protestant unity also proved its instrumentality in the debate over the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church in Ireland, when they appealed for local support in the name of Reformed religion in a bid to uphold the established status of their church.[43]

By 22 October 1859, the *Observer* reported that cases of conviction had considerably abated and declared that "public excitement appears to have been

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[41] Reverend Edward A. Stopford, *The Work and the Counterwork, or, The Religious Revival in Belfast with an Explanation of the Physical Phenomena* (Dublin: Hodges, Smith and Co., 1859).
[42] Mooney, 1-5.

succeeded by earnest and persistent measures for the elevation of character, the maintenance of Christian principles, and the development of spiritual fruit." A Scottish minister concurred with this assessment, stating that all cases of conviction had occurred within four months of the beginning of the revival movement.[44] However, for a brief time during the spring and summer of 1859, Ballymena became a centre of intense clerical, journalistic and popular interest. Observers from England, Scotland and other parts of Ireland, including the Moderator of the Synod of Ulster, came to witness events transpiring in the district, with one visitor commenting that the district's "soil is rich, the population is numerous, and yet not squalid, but in comfortable circumstances, while the dwelling-houses, with their white-washed walls and their superior size, tell how the linen trade has long been the source of wealth to this special locality."[45] Another observer who visited Ballymena at the height of revivals claimed to have found local public houses emptied of clients.[46] At the same time, Ballymena converts circulated throughout the province and observers attracted to the town returned to their congregations to describe the effects of the revivals there.[47] One description of the revival in Belfast claimed a prominent role for the Ballymena Presbyterian minister, S. M. Dill, in bringing revivalism to ministers in the province's urban centre.[48] These visitors and revival emissaries created a network for communicating the revival experience to Protestants throughout Ulster, deepening anticipation of the imminent arrival of religious enthusiasms and providing an

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[43] See the report of a Protestant demonstration at Connor in the *Observer*, 14 December 1867.
[44] Dykes, 14.
[45] Weir, 103.
[46] See Willam Arthur, *The Revival in Ballymena and Coleraine* (London: Hamilton, Adams and Co., 1859).
[47] Weir, 128; Reverend A. Gray, "Minterburn," in *Records*, 151-58; Reverend T. Y. Killen, in *Records*, 198-214, especially 198.
[48] *Banner of Ulster*, 31 May 1859.

infrastructure for province-wide mobilisation around the cultural referent of Protestantism.

What had commenced as a process of rural Presbyterian communal regeneration took specific forms in the urban venue. One of the central effects of the revivals was to resolve levels of differentiation within religious congregations described in chapters three and four: between farmers, weavers and labourers in the Presbyterian congregations, and between urban craft and labouring populations and rural weavers and labourers within Episcopalian bodies. For rural weavers in particular, many of whom now assumed the status of landless, waged workers, revivalism reinforced communal referents which sanctified the communal identity of the rural world. There was little doubt that the primary denominational locus of revival activity was within Ulster Presbyterianism; it drew on a powerful rural folk-memory of revivalism stretching back to early periods of Scottish settlement, including a seventeenth-century revival at Six Mile Water, as well as the developments in communal piety described earlier in this chapter.[49] The historic experience of Presbyterian revival created a set of referents emphasising institutional continuity and structuring perceptions of the current revival: reflecting on the Six Mile Water revival, the Presbyterian minister S. J. Moore declared that "As now, so it then was, that the Presbyterian Church was aroused, and God endowed her with new life from on high."[50] The effects of the revivals in churches included a strengthening of links between rural and urban groups through internal denominational regeneration in a region where the balance of power was still distributed, like production, to privilege rural components of the community. This development would become an

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[49] S. J. Brown, "Presbyterian Communities, Transatlantic Visions and the Ulster Revival of 1859," in *The Cultures of Europe: The Irish Contribution*, ed. in J. P. Mackey (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1994), 94-6.

important foundation for the next period of rural mobilisation—among the district's cottier-weavers, and among its Presbyterian tenant-farmers, whose rural protests were to be pressed to a significant degree on urban centres.

The revivals also witnessed a limited degree of local co-operation between members of Presbyterian, Episcopalian and Methodist congregations; Moravian and Reformed Presbyterian ministers from adjoining districts were also reported to have assisted in ministering jointly to their populations.[51] Like expression of revivalism, this co-operation was not an entirely new phenomenon; in February 1859, the *Observer* noted the absence of "sectarian jealousy" in the administration of local Sabbath schools.[52] The most visible symbols of pan-denominationalism were meetings for united prayer which were established in the Town Hall, held on a weekly basis during the revivals and thereafter commemorated annually. But it would be wrong to conclude that the revivals provided a framework for the dissolution of Protestant denominational barriers. In Ballymena, the boundaries of religious contest often shifted and frequently focussed Presbyterians and Episcopalians on members of the town's smaller Protestant denominations, particularly in public controversies between Presbyterian clergy and Remonstrant Presbyterian, Baptist and Plymouth Brethren ministers, centred on detailed doctrinal disputes. Some of these smaller denominations, which drew on highly-literate, urban populations in the district, were sceptical of the revivals: the Remonstrant Presbyterians, notably, were vocally critical of religious enthusiasms, and in 1859, their local minister, J. A. Crozier, publicly expressed this disquiet to colleagues in Belfast.[53] In the wake of the revivals, a number of congregations, including Quakers and Plymouth Brethren, were established

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[50] Moore, 3
[51] *Observer*, 4 June 1859.
[52] *Observer*, 12 February 1859.

in Ballymena.[54] In September 1859, the *Observer* reported that the minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cullybackey had received adult baptism and that a number of people in Ballymena had "followed his example"; he later gravitated to, and led, local Baptist and Plymouth Brethren congregations.[55] In the same article, it was reported that John Pickering, described as a "respectable" inhabitant of Ballymena, was rumoured to have exerted pressure on others to join in adult baptism, to the consternation and disapproval of the "lower classes" of the town. Adult baptism became a subject of considerable debate, with Presbyterian and Episcopalian ministers organising lectures to defend the practice of infant baptism and Reverend S. M. Dill declining to attend the opening of the Baptist church erected in Hill Street in 1861 on account of these public controversies. Just as debate over baptism took place within the context of reported agitation among the urban "lower classes," local clergy were equally concerned by the possibility of smaller denominations developing constituencies among this section of their congregations—reflecting fears that a muscular assertion of lay direction and popular leadership in the revivals could be destabilised by the influence of other religious groups. Presbyterians in particular feared that the smaller groups would "poach" their co-religionists.[56] When a former Episcopalian missionary in Canada West visited the town in 1864, in connection with Ballymena's Plymouth Brethren community, "great excitement and alarm" was reported "among certain classes of the people in this town" following controversial

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[53] *The Banner of Ulster*, 21 July 1859.
[54] *Observer*, 22 March 1862.
[55] *Observer*, 17 September 1859.
[56] Myrtle Hill, "Assessing the Awakening: The 1859 Revival in Ulster," in *Church and People in Britain and Scandinavia*, ed. Ingmar Brohed (Lund: Lund University Press, 1996), 197-213, especially 207.

millenarian lectures which local Presbyterian and Episcopalian clergy later denounced to their congregations.[57]

Although these smaller denominations undoubtedly grew in size in the 1860s, receiving an impetus to expansion from the revivals, and in spite of concerns over their potential influence over rural and urban workers, they were distanced from Presbyterians and Episcopalians (and, to a lesser degree, Methodists) in terms of the characteristics of their adherents. Almost entirely comprising residents of urban mid-Antrim, these smaller denominations drew from an identifiable cohort within the town: their adherents were highly literate, and also more disproportionately female than other denominations in Ballymena.

Table 5.4
Literacy levels of adults over five in Baptist and "Other" religious categories, Ballymena, 1861

Denomination	*N.*	*Read & Write (%)*	*Read Only (%)*	*Neither (%)*
Baptist Males	28	67.86	21.43	10.71
Baptist Females	38	42.11	39.47	18.42
"Other"[1] Males	56	83.93	10.71	5.36
"Other" Females	92	69.57	25.00	5.43

Source: *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.
[1] The denominational claims of the three largest groups enumerated under the category of "Other" religions in County Antrim in 1861 were "Unitarians" (512 males and 505 females), "Covenanters" (422 males and 546 females) and "Moravians" (278 males and 334 females). In Ballymena and Harryville, the three largest denominations in the "Other" category were "Unitarians" and "Unitarian Presbyterians" (40 males and 52 females), "Covenanters" (11 males and 27 females) and "Reformed Presbyterians" (11 males and 10 females).

The profile of the town's Methodist population, on the other hand, stood in contrast to other smaller denominations, with neither higher rates of literacy nor higher female-to-male ratios than the larger denominational groups.[58] It too, however,

[57] *Observer*, 16 July 1864.
[58] See Tables 4.17 and 4.18.

experienced significant local growth over the course of the revivals and evidence suggests that females were, temporarily, disproportionately involved in Methodist classes—one of the principal associational manifestations of the religion—during the revivals.

Table 5.5
Methodist class members, 1853, 1856, 1859, 1861 and 1866

Year	*N.*	*Male (%)*	*Female (%)*	*Sex Unclear (%)*
1853	51	39.22	49.02	11.76
1856	48	43.75	54.17	2.08
1859	68	33.82	60.29	5.88
1861	100	55.00	33.00	12.00
1866	55	41.82	45.45	12.73

This data include names which were entered and subsequently crossed out in the original document, as the status of those deleted entries is unclear.
Source: Methodist Circuit Book, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast (hereafter cited as "PRONI") MIC/1E/58C/1.

Overall, membership in Methodist classes was volatile. One class, led by Hugh Fisher, recorded ten members in May 1856, rising to twenty-one in June 1859—at the height of the revivals. Thereafter, the group's numbers declined to twelve in June 1861, and eleven in 1866. Female piety and institutional participation, also limited in the public sphere by ideological constraints, became focussed on expression within the institutional frameworks of all congregations, but most was most notably evinced in disproportionate female membership in smaller denominational groups.

As part of the rhetorical emphasis on communal "purification," the cultural coherence around religious institutions, identities and discourses emphasised an increased devotion to the work of the church; one sceptic noted the contradiction between this dimension of evangelicalism and its retrospective portrayal of its own

community as morally degenerate, requiring reconstruction.[59] This retrospective construction of the ties of a "broken" culture of local Presbyterianism emphasised the primordial dimension of revival ideology, in which an emphasis was placed on the "restoration" and purification of the community, assigning a regenerative role to religious institutions through a reaffirmation of the religious dimension of local culture and the development of an institutional network centred in local religious bodies. This emphasis served in part to balance concerns over encroachment by smaller denominations, and fears about the fragmentary nature of Protestantism generally, by emphasising the continuity of local Presbyterian culture and traditions. Allied to this emphasis on renewal was a putative diminution in drinking, "licentiousness," profanity and Sabbath desecration following the revivals. One chronicler wrote of Ballymena:

> Ballymena, which the movement soon reached, is a flourishing town, of six thousand inhabitants and upwards, with a brisk trade and an air of well-doing. It contrasts sharply with towns of similar size in the south and west of Ireland, coming nearer to a substantial English market town; it is said that it contains 120 public houses. The frequency of the whiskey shop is distressing; and spirits are sold in the same shop with groceries, soft goods, fruit and even leather, as if every trade wished to back itself up by this all-alluring attraction. On a market-day, according to the account of the townspeople themselves, it was painful to walk the streets, from the number of drunken men reeling and swearing. Licentiousness, too, was prevalent.[60]

The writer claimed that God had "lifted his hand over Ballymena, and poured out a tide of repentance and remission," thereby restoring it from moral turpitude.[61] Many contemporary claims of communal regeneration are hard to assess, but evidence suggests that not long after the summer of 1859, the local Petty Sessions Bench

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[59] Perfitt, 7.

[60] No author, *The Revival Movement in Ireland: An Impartial History of the Revival Movement from its Commencement to the Present Time*. Belfast: George Phillips and Sons, 1859. (Belfast: George Phillips and Sons, 1859), 11-12; a similar description by a Ballymena "Roman Catholic" may be found in *The Times*, 23 September 1859, 16.

[61] *Impartial History*, 12

witnessed routine prosecutions for drunk and disorderly conduct. In 1867, in response to a sub-inspector's claim that Ballymena was "the most drunken town of its size in the United Kingdom," the *Observer* argued that nine out of every ten cases of drunkenness involved "strangers and market visitors," whose weekly numbers were estimated at between 20,000 and 30,000.[62] As early as the mid-1830s, an Ordnance Survey memoirist noted that Ballymena had 107 drinking shops and, contrary to the hopes of many Temperance advocates, in 1872 Ballymena continued to have one of the highest number of liquor licences per capita of any town in Ireland, as chapter one illustrated.[63]

Another purported effect of the revivals in the local community was the development of a more explicitly Biblical framework for daily life, with local churches becoming the focus for organised expressions of community.[64] This was allied with the development of a popular local associational culture with evangelical principles at its core. The exigency of stabilising patterns of association was partly practical: revivals were widely reported by observers to have occasioned considerable disruption to production as the laity turned its attention from work towards intensive religious practice. One chronicler noted that "a large number of persons gave up their work" in order to attend mid-day meetings in fields and in Ballymena's Town Hall.[65] Alongside the artisans and labourers described as offering their working time for the purposes of ministry in the first weeks of the revivals, weavers in the Lurgan district were reported to have been unable to continue at their looms "by reason of the spiritual distress which they suffer."[66] In Broughshane, neighbouring Ballymena,

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[62] *Observer*, 19 October 1867.
[63] See Table 1.23.
[64] Buick, 6.
[65] Weir, 34.
[66] In Weir, 90-91.

twenty to thirty female spinners and male workers in a local mill were described as having been stricken by convictions, necessitating the closure of the mill; when it reopened two days later, "nearly half the usual hands were absent."[67] The *Observer* noted that in addition to the closure of the Raceview Mill, the business of the Ballygarvey bleachworks had been "seriously impeded" by the effects of religious excitement.[68] Activities associated with the revivals also interrupted work at Ewart's and York Street Mills in Belfast.[69] Local economic activity also was affected in other ways: the Manager's Report to Directors of the Belfast and Ballymena Railway on 11 August 1859 reported a significant decrease in Sunday passenger traffic "which could I think be attributed to the present religious movement in this district."[70]

The structuring of leisure time around congregational institutions reflected efforts to redress this instability through the development of stabilised patterns of association and frameworks for sociability; it aimed, in particular, to provide shopmen and artisans with opportunities for "autonomous social activities."[71] This development was important in creating networks of association which propagated a memory of popular religious enthusiasm and which were interwoven into the fabric of a community in which, as previous chapters have shown, churches were strong and other units of association relatively weak. Many of the societies established in the wake of the revivals explicitly aimed to draw young men within the orbit of a stabilised associational culture brokered by clerical and middle-class patrons. The Ballymena Protestant Association, for example, was a predominantly Episcopalian

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[67] Gibson, 54.
[68] *Observer*, 6 August 1859.
[69] Hempton and Hill, 157.
[70] Managers' Report to Directors, Belfast and Ballymena Railway, PRONI UTA/11/C/1.
[71] R. V. Comerford, "Patriotism as a Pastime: The Appeal of Fenianism in the Mid-1860s," *Irish Historical Studies* 22 (March 1981): 240; Maura Cronin, *Country, Class or Craft? The Politicisation*

body established in 1860; its aims were "the dissemination of sound religious principles among the more youthful classes of the community," and, to this end, it established a junior category of membership.[72] Local Presbyterians established their own associations for young men, attached to individual congregations, with the church's minister as president; they were expected to "unite for counsel as members of one general and central association" periodically. The associations aimed to bring together "young men of different tastes and talents for the mutual improvement of one another" through lectures on the arts, sciences and theology and "matters of discipline and history in connexion with the Presbyterian church."[73] The *Observer* reported in October 1859 that "a large number of young men" had also attended a meeting aimed at establishing a Total Abstinence and Provident Association in the town, in connection with the Rechabite Institution in Belfast.[74] Through organising in congregational and local units, these societies retained links to wider local and provincial networks of association, which provided a framework for accommodating workers' mobility through a diffused institutional structure.

This focus on young men can be understood by employing the perspective from which some historians have analysed the contemporary Fenian movement, another institutional network drawing members from a male urban occupational base. The economic structure of Ballymena, described in the first chapter of this study as primarily a centre for exchange and small-scale production, implied that a number of young men were employed in small manufactories as apprentices or journeymen. While women found work in millinery, textile production and in service, young men

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of the Skilled Artisan in Nineteenth-Century Cork (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994); J. Springhall, *Coming of Age: Adolescence in Britain, 1860-1960* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986).
[72] *Observer*, 17 March 1860.
[73] *Observer*, 14 December 1861.
[74] *Observer*, 22 October 1859.

in particular were employed in craft and retail concerns, as apprentices or journeyman bakers, saddlers, cabinetmakers, coachmakers, shoemakers, tailors and drapers, as well as building tradesmen. Occasionally, drapers and tailors advertised for ten, fifteen or even twenty journeymen, especially in larger commercial drapery establishments, but for the most part production took place within smaller units. The next chapter will show how tailoring and other trades faced significant reorganisation in the 1860s: the development of a dense network of association for young men provided a stable framework for sociability during these changes.

The movement towards the elaboration of organised young men's associationalism was also given a strong impetus in 1866 when shopkeepers in the town adopted an early closing policy. Partly a response to the high local price of gas, the decision also created increased leisure opportunities for employees in local concerns, which intersected with the burgeoning range of Protestant libraries and societies. But it also underscored the challenges to evangelical organisation that persisted in the urban milieu: in addition to the pubs and dramshops which worried those concerned with the moral and physical condition of Ballymena's young men, a host of non-religious bodies, from cricket clubs to the non-sectarian Ballymena Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, competed with the interests of the denominational societies.[75] This latter body's vice-presidents, however, included several leading Episcopalian and Presbyterian clerics, as Table 5.6 shows, ensuring that clerics would play a role in the administration of oversight of the Association.

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[75] *Observer*, 17 March 1867.

Table 5.6
Ballymena Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association, Vice-Presidents, 1867

Name	*Occupation*	*Other Listed Occupations*
Reverend Robert King	Clergy	Diocesan School teacher
Reverend William Park	Clergy	
Reverend S. J. Moore	Clergy	
Reverend William Macloy	Clergy	
John Young	Linen merchant	J.P.; Magistrate
William Gihon	Bleacher	
John Raphael	Linen manufacturer	Bank director; Union Workhouse vice-chairman
James Martin	Grocer, chandler, wine & spirit merchant	
John Killen	Grocer	
Arthur Ross	Medical doctor	Dispensary Medical doctor
George White	Printer & wholesaler; proprietor and editor of the *Observer*	Notary public; District Registrar of marriages
Alexander Caruth	Solictor	Town Commissioner; Secretary of the Ballymena Newsroom and Library

Sources: *Observer*, 19 January 1867; *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1868* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1868); *Slater's Late Pigot's Royal National Commercial Directory of Ireland* (Manchester: I. Slater, 1870).

Efforts to create a stable associational culture also involved the development of patterns of association which renewed links within congregations between town and country. During the revivals, commercial activity necessitated the establishment of a Saturday religious meeting for "market-people" in the Open Square of Ballymena's Linen Hall; this represented an institutional extension of evangelicalism to the large rural population with a pattern of regular contact with district's urban core. In addition to the open-air meetings, which diminished in frequency after the

summer of 1859, another important result of the revivals in the district was the expansion and renovation of rural and urban congregational buildings: within six months, new Presbyterian churches were planned in Broughshane and Ahoghill, a new prayer meeting-room in Lisnamurrican, and rebuilt Presbyterian premises in Killymurris, Cloughwater and Grange. In Ballymena, a new Presbyterian church was planned, along with a Baptist church and an extension of the Methodist meeting-house.[76] Local congregations reported increases in adherents, with sixty-four new communicants added to the First Presbyterian congregation and ninety more weekly participants at services in comparison to the period before the revivals. In the town's Third Presbyterian congregation, 160 new communicants and 200 more worshippers were in attendance than before the revivals. A network of prayer- and fellowship-meetings proliferated throughout the town and its rural district.[77] These prayer groups provided an informal institutional infrastructure in the rural districts as reading clubs had once done in the eighteenth century for the area's farmer-weavers; they also provided a forum for lay leadership and expression.[78] Within Ballymena, Reverend Daniel McMeekin wrote that prayer meetings had been established in Springwell Street, Fountain Place Schoolroom, William Street, Broughshane Street, Ballymoney Street, Galgorm Road, Coach Entry, Mill Street Place, Mill Street, Galgorm Street, Robert Street, Meeting-house Lane, Alexander Street, Bridewell Street and Bridge Street, and on the other side of the Braid Water at the Harryville Schoolroom, Railway Street and in the townlands of Brocklamont and Dunclug.[79] These meetings, and an expanding Sunday School network, provided more opportunities for lay leadership. From March 1863 to March 1864, the First Presbyterian Church recorded

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[76] *Observer*, 26 May 1859.
[77] From tables provided by Gibson, 404-29; McMeekin refers to these fellowship meetings, 53.
[78] Gibbon, 30.

100 Sunday School teachers and 1,540 scholars.[80] The Third Presbyterian Church recorded fifteen teachers, 120 scholars and 1,090 prayer-meetings conducted by members of the congregation, and Wellington Street Church claimed fourteen Sunday School teachers and 130 scholars.[81]

In addition to prayer-meetings, Sunday schools and church expansion, institutions which developed in the wake of the revivals and whose foundational precept was evangelical Protestantism included the Ballymena Mutual Improvement Society, established in 1859 for "Protestants, of some evangelical denomination."[82] Local clergy were patrons of many of these new bodies: through the spring and summer of 1859, their visibility and role in directing communal piety had been effectively reduced by the leadership of the laity in the revival movement. This relative marginalisation was reinforced by the extended removal from the district of the leading Presbyterian ministers, S. J. Moore and S. M. Dill, at the height of the revivals and by the subsequent departures of Episcopalian and Methodist ministers to lead congregations in other parts of the country. The elaboration of institutions under clerical patronage, attached to their congregations, allowed ministers to play a leading role in cultural brokerage and in the articulation of a stabilised pattern of association and restored their authority and local prominence in the direction of religious communities. It also built on a tradition of active clerical involvement in local voluntary associations which included the Episcopalian minister's leadership of the

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[79] McMeekin, 48.
[80] *Listing Mid-Antrim Presbyterians in 1864: Annual Reports of the Congregations in Connexion with the Ballymena Presbytery for the Year Ending May, 1864* (1864; reprint, Ballymena: Mid-Antrim Historical Group, 1996).
[81] Ibid., 25, 30.
[82] *Observer*, 17 November 1860.

Ballymena cholera committee in the 1830s, and clerical prominence in the Ballymena Brunswick Club in 1828 and in the Ballymena Protestant Society in the 1830s.[83]

The continuing development of a religious social infrastructure also drew on the resources of members of the district's commercial sector. An observer of the revivals in Ballymena reported having attended a Friday afternoon prayer meeting conducted "for the higher classes" of the town, presided over by a local physician, and held separately from popular revival activities.[84] Leading rural gentry provided patronage to many religious institutions and, through the course of the revivals, they enhanced their profile in the community through visible support of institutions which served as agents of evangelical articulation. The bleacher-merchants brought to the development of associational culture high degrees of capital, positions of status within congregational institutions, experience as large employers in rural industry, and a paternalist counterweight to the urban small capitalist ethic. They were in close contact with the rural world at a range of levels, as previous chapters have shown. Most of them resided in the countryside and some, including John Young of Galgorm, were large landowners and landlords in the district. As Justices of the Peace, they assisted in regulating the agricultural and textile sectors of the local economy. The Patrick and Young families, as well as being major employers in the countryside, were proprietors of the Braid Water Mill, which linked them to the urban industrial world through the 1860s. These individuals were positioned as interlocutors between urban and rural constituencies and enhanced their profiles through active development of local religious associational culture. John Young advanced large sums of money

[83] In 1857, Presbyterian and Methodist clergy served as successive secretaries to the Ballymena Literary Society (*Observer*, 16 January 1858); Notice of the formation of the Ballymena Brunswick Constitutional Club, PRONI D/1364/M/13; Angélique Day, Patrick McWilliams and Nórín Dobson, eds., *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland: Parishes of County Antrim*, vol 7, *1831-5, 1837-8: Ballymena and West Antrim* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1993), 98.

free of interest to pay the building debt of the First Presbyterian Church on the condition that he was repaid annually.[85] He and other leading merchants donated funds to a range of voluntary bodies and initiatives in the town, and provided monetary and social capital for their infrastructural elaboration. The Ballymena Savings Bank, for example, established in 1859, relied principally on merchants to serve as its trustees, while its managers were drawn from a wider range of status groups within the local middle class.

Table 5.7
Ballymena Savings Bank, Trustees and Managers, 1859

Occupational Category	*Trustees & Managers (N.)*	*Managers Only (N.)*
Merchant	10	3
Clergy	3	4
Dealer	1	5
Landlord	1	0
Professions	1	2
Commerce	0	2
Government	0	1
Unknown/Unclear	0	3
Total	**16**	**20**

Sources: *Observer*, 1 September 1860; *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1858-59* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1858).

The presence of linen merchants in the highest echelons of local Protestant associational culture was also a feature of Belfast's voluntary network; they drew on a range of resources in guiding the development of local society, not least their monetary capital, which could provide a significant proportion of the operating costs of institutions, and their social capital, which could be drawn upon to raise

[84] Weir, 105.

contributions for these organisations.[86] At the same time, urban retailers and artisans played an active role in administering this voluntary network, especially when its objectives were complementary with those of agencies of local government. An exploration of voluntary strategies for supporting the district's poor illustrates the interplay between the urban shopocracy and figures with interests in rural districts, including members of the Ballymena Union Board of Guardians.

The revivals occurred in a period of modest economic expansion: Table 5.8 suggests that workhouse numbers were lower than in 1858. They also occurred at a point in the agricultural season when the Union workhouse had its fewest residents, as Figure 5.1 demonstrates. Indeed, one observer alluded to the reduced number of Connor residents in the workhouse as evidence of "altered" popular habits.[87] The genesis of the revivals cannot be easily linked to an immediate economic "catastrophe," but when distress did arrive in the district, revivalism furnished a set of potential institutional mechanisms with which to respond to the crisis.

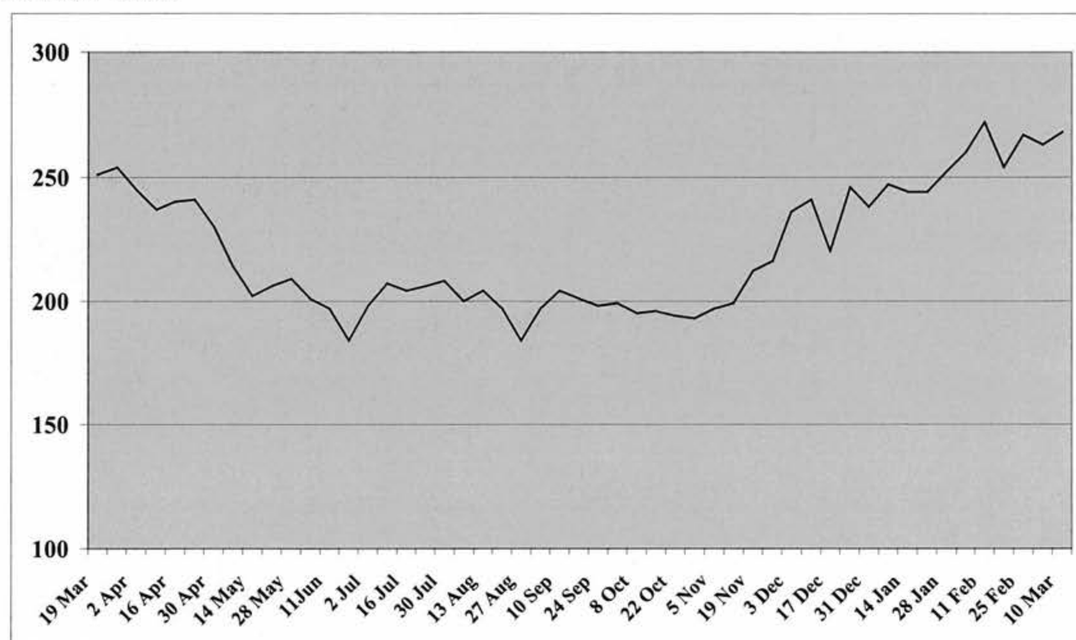
Table 5.8
Average number of workhouse residents in County Antrim and total numbers on indoor and outdoor relief, on 1 January 1858, 1859 and 1860

Year	*Average in Co. Antrim Workhouses (N.)*	*Total on Indoor & Outdoor Relief (N.)*
1858	1,074	2,932
1859	851	2,708
1860	865	2,632

Source: From data in Agricultural Statistics of Ireland, 1859 [2763], HC 1861, vol. LXII.

[85] *Observer*, 7 May 1864.
[86] Alison Jordan, *Who Cared? Charity in Victorian and Edwardian Belfast* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, nd), 199-214.
[87] Impartial History, 35.

Figure 5.1
Ballymena Union workhouse, number of residents, 19 March 1859 to 10 March 1860



Source: Ballymena Poor Law Union Records, BG4/A/7.

Less than two years after the 1859 revivals, Ballymena's linen trade was in pronounced decline, as a consequence of the American Civil War. On 1 May 1859, the population of the local workhouse stood at 214; by 3 May 1862 it had risen to 367 and one year later, on 2 May 1863, it stood at 575.[88] The emphasis on Protestant religious solidarity and voluntary organisation which derived an impetus from evangelical revival was timely, as it provided an ideological and institutional infrastructure for brokering relief to the district's poor without local rate financing and outside formal agencies of district government. The rural poor were identified in a range of accounts as being among the first to experience the local revivals, and churches responded to the popular character of revivalism by developing instruments to bring this group within their orbit, at first through missionary activity. "The gracious awakening with which God has visited us, has brought the poor and ignorant

into a state the most favourable for receiving religious instruction, and attending on gospel ordinances," an announcement in the *Observer* declared, stating that the sessions and committees of Ballymena's First and Third Presbyterian churches had unanimously resolved to "procure the services of a missionary for the town and neighbourhood" on wages of £70 per year.[89] The announcement declared that increases in the population of the district had created a "surplus population, the spiritual needs of whom our regular ministers are wholly unable to meet." As a consequence, a missionary was appointed to preach the Gospel every Sunday at noon in Harryville.[90] A second temporary congregation was established by the Reverend John McVicker, formerly of Cullybackey Reformed Presbyterian Church, in a former granary in Broughshane Street.[91] By 1860, Harryville had its own missionary, the "inhabitants and owners of property in the suburb" having raised requisite funds through voluntary subscription.[92] The friends and subscribers of the Ballymena town mission met annually, with S. M. Dill as secretary, and the Episcopalians also turned their attention to local extension activities: in spring 1860, the parish vestry approved plans for the appointment of a curate to aid the Incumbent, his salary paid by voluntary subscription.[93]

The distress occasioned by the American Civil War provided another impetus for voluntary organisation in aid of the rural labouring population: textile production was seriously disrupted and distress in the district was widespread. Children were withdrawn from local schools in greater numbers and urban trade was severely

[88] Minutes of the Board of Guardians of Ballymena Poor Law Union, PRONI BG/4/A/7-9.
[89] *Observer*, 25 June 1859.
[90] *Observer*, 22 October 1859.
[91] *Observer*, 5 November 1859.
[92] *Observer*, 9 June 1860.
[93] *Observer*, 14 April 1859.

depressed.[94] The distress in mid-Antrim was acute among rural Protestants. Although it has been demonstrated in the previous chapter that local Roman Catholics occupied a relatively low place in the urban social structure, both Presbyterian and Episcopalian populations were affected by the linen crisis, as an 1863 Religious Census of the Union Workhouse reveals. Table 5.9 compares the 1863 census with the 1861 returns of four mid-Antrim baronies.

Table 5.9
Denominational profile of Ballymena Union workhouse residents, 1863 and four County Antrim baronies, 1861

Denomination	*Workhouse*[1] *(%)*	*Baronies*[2] (%)
Presbyterian	49.24	62.43
Roman Catholic	30.76	26.24
Episcopalian	20.00	8.87
Other	0.00	2.46

[1] The total workhouse population reported on 14 February 1863 was 660.
[2] The four baronies are Lower Antrim, Kilconway, Upper Toome and Lower Toome, all or part of which fell within the boundaries of the Ballymena Poor Law Union. The combined population of the baronies in 1861 was 99,913.
Source: Minutes of the Ballymena Poor Law Union, BG4/A/8, 14 February 1863; *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. I [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LIX.

The presence of many Presbyterians and a disproportionate number of Episcopalians among the rural poor of the district provided a rationale for voluntary intervention. It allowed the churches to reinforce their special relationship to the rural world, and Presbyterians and Episcopalians to reinforce communal solidarities as the Ballymena Union workhouse filled with large numbers of co-religionists. The workhouse was a focus of Guardians' oversight in religious matters. The Board expressed concern in 1862, for instance, that Reverend William Campbell, the Presbyterian chaplain, had not administered Communion to the large number of

[94] *Reports of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland*, vol. II, from the year 1852 to the

Presbyterian inmates for more than six months, and threatened to bring the matter before Presbytery if he did not adopt the practice of his predecessor, who had held Communion twice a year.[95]

Not only did Poor Law Guardians seek to regularise religious practice in the workhouse; as large rural employers, many members of the Board of Guardians also sought to develop strategies to manage poor relief in ways consonant with the needs of the local labour market. They embraced outdoor relief in the mid-1860s, as chapter two discussed, but voluntary activity provided an instrument for relief which did not require rate-financing. With an emphasis on providing cloths, blankets and coal, local voluntary relief could prevent residents who were only seasonally unemployed from swelling the ranks of the workhouse in winter months, when inclement weather and a shortage of seasonal work traditionally saw an increase in admittances. With the bleacher John Dickey presiding, a meeting in November 1860 resolved to establish a local Provident Association, organised by local women, in order to distribute clothing and fuel to the district's poor. At its inception, debate revolved around whether the activities of the Association would be limited to Ballymena and Harryville or whether it would also provide assistance to people in the rural district; the latter position was strongly supported by members of the local clergy. In the end, however, it was resolved that the poor of outlying districts would be aided only in proportion to funds received as donations and subscriptions in each district, that fuel aid would be restricted to the town, and that clothing would be provided at a nominal charge to all "honest poor persons."[96] These restrictions represented efforts by urban administrators of voluntary relief to establish a proportionality in funding and provision which would

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year 1864, inclusive (Dublin: Thom, 1865), 11.

[95] Minutes of the Board of Guardians of the Ballymena Union, PRONI BG4/A/8, 14 June 1862.

[96] *Observer*, 1 December 1850.

ensure that urban donations would be targeted at the town's poor. This preoccupation of urban retailers and artisans with relief within the boundaries of the town—against the counsel of local clerics—was consonant with their general conception of the district's urban area as the primary venue for their activities. Episcopalian minister Edward Maguire's role as Association secretary testified to the Protestant character of the society, as did an announcement published in the *Observer* on 29 December 1860 to "the Roman Catholic poor of Ballymena" advising them that "your Protestant townsmen have not been unmindful of your present sufferings. They have established a Provident Association, amply supported by voluntary contributions, for the supply of clothing and fuel for the deserving poor of every denomination in Ballymena."

Urban-based retailers and processors were familiar with business structures centred on small-scale retail and production. They assisted in the development of voluntary societies through the contribution of this administrative expertise and their authority in the urban setting. In several cases, the institutional emphasis on voluntarism provided an ideological counterweight to activism in town government, and the smaller-scale retailers and producers harnessed the apparatus of evangelical voluntarism as a principle to govern the town. William York, for instance, encountered little opposition when he sought voluntary contributions for the sinking of public pumps in the town, as chapter two demonstrated. When, however, he enjoined ratepayers to finance the ongoing maintenance of the pumps, he was widely rebuked. In fact, aspects of "governance" in the local community fell to institutions such as the Ballymena Provident Society. Although the Society was a voluntary body, the surveillance of the community through the offices of volunteer District Poor Inspectors was substantially effected by the same men who served, as Town Commissioners, in statutory roles of local governance.

Table 5.10
Ballymena Provident Society, District Poor Inspectors, 1859

Name	*Occupation*	*Town Commissioner*
John Jellett	Coroner	X
Adam Steele	Grocer & dealer	
Alexander Patterson	Grocer & dealer	
H. M. Shannon	Woollendraper	
Alexander Robinson	Woollendraper	X
Robert Morton	Flour merchant	
Hugh Davidson	Rope manufacturer	X
James Patrick	Linen merchant	
James Kinnear	Linen merchant & manufacturer	X
Robert Atkinson	<Unmatched with an occupation>	

Sources: *Observer*, 24 December 1859; *The Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory for 1858-59* (Belfast: News-Letter Office, 1858).

The interplay between sections of the district's middle classes created a stable set of institutions within local society which were reinforced by elite patronage and managed by elements of the craft and distributive sectors of the town economy. The Adair family, though absentee landlords until 1865, also provided funds for religious congregations, and were generally more catholic in their patronage of the community: their donations included sums for the erection of a new Roman Catholic church, an augmentation of the Episcopalian minister's stipend and support for the erection of new Baptist and Presbyterian meeting-houses. Shafto Adair served as a patron of many of the local societies, and, in the interest of developing the institutional infrastructure of the town, which could significantly increase property values, he proposed in 1866 that residents consider the erection of a museum and other public buildings by voluntary subscription.[97] As landlords and proprietors of Ballymena's public buildings, the Adair family also controlled access to the larger public meeting

spaces within the town. In 1861, the *Observer* reported that a deputation from the Ballymena Protestant Society, including the town coroner John Jellett, planned to wait on residents in order to solicit subscriptions for the erection of a Protestant Hall. Three weeks later, it was announced that Shafto Adair had granted use of the Town Hall to the group and therefore no separate hall would be required.[98]

These institutional networks within which power and philanthropy were enacted in the district extended an administrative apparatus which encompassed Ballymena and its surrounding district and proved instrumental in efforts to develop strategies for addressing the crisis of the textile trade when links with the labour forces of the townlands were of critical importance. The voluntary apparatus was centred on a cultural coherence throughout large sections of the district premised on religious ideology and institutions. The revivals strengthened the popular cultural framework within which religious criteria structured communal identities; in this context, and particularly in light of the heightened fears of the fragmentary tendencies in Protestantism, forms of Catholic mobilisation could be perceived as an ontological threat to the political theology of Presbyterian evangelicalism. Divisions between Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists could be subsumed within a broader alliance in defence of institutions and relationships perceived to be central to the discourses of "Protestant Ulster." In 1866, a letter written by a Kilrea farmer to the Chief Secretary's Office in Dublin suggested local paramilitary organisation might be initiated in order to counter local Fenian organisation:

> I am unwilling to humble you but I think it my duty to the government and myself to ask the question. There is a large "RC" population within five miles of my house. I know they are drilled and ready for an attack if they dare. I

[97] *Observer*, 5 January 1867.
[98] *Observer*, 23 March 1861, 13 April 1861.

> have many Protestants just about me, they are quite quiet and no regular organisation among them…[*sic*][99]

The Chief Secretary's Office replied to the letter, assuring the correspondent that the forces of the state would provide adequate protection and that while "no objection could be offered to persons placing their dwelling in a sufficient state of defence, I think it would be most undesirable that any body of men not in the service of the government should commence anything like patrollings or moving about in armed bodies."[100] This exchange suggests that Protestant rural mobilisation in response to perceived threats to the internal coherence of the countryside would remain a possibility as debate crystallised on the constitutional status of Ireland in the Union. In rural Kilrea, Roman Catholics formed almost 56 percent of the total population[101]; little evidence exists to suggest, however, that farmers in more homogeneously Protestant areas of mid-Antrim were similarly disposed toward paramilitary mobilisation.

In cultural terms, the revivals signalled the consolidation of a number of processes which had been developing within Ulster Presbyterianism for some time, including a theological shift to evangelicalism which created opportunities for greater co-operation with other denominational groups (although, as this chapter has shown, in institutional terms such co-operation was limited).[102] The revivals undoubtedly gave impetus to the expansion both of churches and of affiliated clubs and societies, which in mid-Antrim were especially concentrated in Presbyterian congregations.

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[99] Correspondence between Robert H. Dolliny [?] and the Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin, December, 1866, National Archives of Ireland, Dublin 21923.

[100] Ibid.

[101] *Census of Ireland, 1861*: Pt. IV: Reports and Tables Relating to Religious Professions, Education and Occupations, vol. II [3204-III], HC 1863, vol. LX.

[102] For a discussion of the increasing influence of evangelicalism within Ulster Presbyterianism, see David Miller, "Presbyterianism and 'Modernisation' in Ulster," *Past and Present* 80 (1978): 66-90 and

They were interwoven, like the churches themselves, into the fabric of local communities and provided a basis for propagating evangelical religious principles and identities, and for developing stable associational patterns in areas where residents were experiencing changes in the framework of relations which were historically central to urban-rural contact, as chapter three illustrated. In terms of internal and inter-communal organisation and definition, the revivals formed central parts of a process through which Ballymena Protestants generally, and Presbyterians particularly, developed cultural expressions of their increasing segregation from Catholics residentially, institutionally and along the axis of social class, as chapter four demonstrated. Presbyterians had a distinctive position with the framework of revivalism: the events of the spring and summer of 1859 were primarily generated within rural Presbyterianism and as a cultural expression they referred to specific historical experiences of Ulster revivalism within the cultural memory of Presbyterian communities. Revivalism was also facilitated by developments in Presbyterian practices in worship and doctrinal emphases from earlier in the century, and the revivals themselves won more Presbyterian than Episcopalian clerical support in large parts of Ulster. The mid-Antrim revivals also involved expressions of an evangelical terrain substantially defined by the laity—although these expressions diminished and the institutional network of organised religious subsequently expanded, this series of events was central to popular communal self-definition among the district's Presbyterians. The revivals were a demonstration of the shifting terrain of internal communal dynamics of popular religious expression in mid-Antrim Protestantism. The integrity of the dense inter-related urban and rural networks within local

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R. F. G. Holmes, "Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Nationalism," in *Studies in Church History*, vol. 20, *Religion and National Identity*, ed. Stuart Mews (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 541-42.

Presbyterianism, the cultural importance of Presbyterians' specific experience of revival in rural and urban regions of Dissenting demographic weight, and the robust popular assertion of the primacy of the Protestant laity provided cultural coherence at a time when, as the next chapter demonstrates, the integrated nature of the local urban and rural economies faced increasing pressure from exogenous forces.

VI: Dynamics in Local Market Culture

Expressions of religious revivalism in mid-Antrim were shaped by the channels through which they were transmitted in the district, by the institutional and demographic features of areas in which they resonated and the manner in which they were institutionalised. Contests over changes in local market practices also realigned relationships within the district, responding in part to exogenous pressures, and were expressed in ways specific to the distribution of authority and resources in the district. These changes were strongly influenced by broader efforts at market reform in Ireland, driven in the northern counties by commercial imperatives associated with the growing Belfast-centred commercial system. These efforts aimed to create standardised practices across Ulster and Ireland and reflected the greater integration and specialisation of markets in the province and the country. Adaptations to new practices of production and commerce occasioned tensions between local merchants and retailers, rural flax processors, weavers and farmers in which competing interests sought to define and influence custom through normative discourses of "market reform." Although efforts to develop new precepts of market culture frequently focussed urban commercial interests on the "reform" of the countryside, claims to define and direct market changes were contested—as this chapter will demonstrate. Not simply an interface for exchange, the market was also a cognitive category in which these groups attempted to develop normative ideas governing its operation.[1] In the 1870s, local weavers demonstrated their opposition to perceived transgressions of their rights in the marketplace by assertively promoting the "restoration" of a market structure in which they claimed an autonomous position. These claims reflected efforts by rural weavers to shape the ideology and practice of the textile market and

[1] William M. Reddy, *The Rise of Market Culture: The Textile Trade and French Society, 1750-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 1-21.

also demonstrated the channels through which local rural protest was articulated and resolved. This chapter explores commercial relations in Ballymena in order to assess how conflict over the terrain of the local market contributed to the development of mid-Antrim's specific experience of the post-Famine realignment of provincial commercial relationships. These changes were fundamental to particular ideological developments in the district because, like the element of enthusiastic Protestantism, they had important local structural and cultural co-ordinates.

Although the patents to Ballymena's markets and fairs were held by the Adair family, in the first half of the nineteenth century effective management of local markets was delegated to other interests in the town. In 1806, Robert Adair agreed with Bryan O'Rawe, a local innkeeper, to a seven-year lease of "all of that and those customs of the fairs and markets of the town of Ballymena" for an annual rent of £72 16s. 0d.[2] In 1813, the Ballymena market, along with other property, was placed under the management of a private company on a ninety-one-year lease—a development explored in chapter two. After the Adairs regained control of the market in 1845, they undertook a programme of physical expansion and renovation at the shambles and on the local Fair Hill: one contractor charged just under £50 for work on the two sites.[3] In addition to new buildings in the shambles, Shafto Adair erected a new weighhouse and sheds in the marketplace, adding another weigh-bridge in 1850. The large new Linen Hall he erected in 1853 reflected the centrality of the textile trade to the local economy. It also testified to the changing structure of Ballymena's linen market described in chapter three, with agents of Belfast-based concerns occupying local

[2] "William Adair, esquire and Bryan O'Rawe: Lease of the Customs of the Fairs and Markets of the town of Ballymena…", 20 September 1806, Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast [hereafter cited as "PRONI"] D/929/HA12/F2/5.

[3] Bill from James Ballentine to Sir Robert Adair, 17 December 1846, PRONI D/929/HA12/F3/6/B.

offices and stores in the Hall, where they organised the distribution of yarn to the district's rural weavers.

Trade in Ballymena and in the network of Ulster's market towns was affected by the increasing dominance of Belfast in the nineteenth century, and by the re-distribution of commercial and other resources throughout the province. Evidence suggests that Ballymena's local market consolidated its regional position in this period at the expense of other towns, although the principles underpinning its operation were dramatically changed. By the 1830s, for instance, Portglenone's market had been substantially absorbed by Ballymena[4], and James Campbell, a cloth manufacturer and yarn dealer resident in Ballymoney, testified before the Fairs and Markets Commissioners in 1853 that prohibitively high fees levied for stamping woven cloth in the Ballymoney market had led to a large loss of trade to Ballymena, where fees were considerably less.[5] Nonetheless, the evolving commercial network in the north of Ireland, in which Belfast predominated, in which small centres were linked by rail and in which buyers and sellers had increasing access to larger and more remote markets, required significant adaptations of local commercial and production practices and of local market cultures.

One of the cornerstones of national commercial standardisation was reform of the highly localised weights and measurements systems in place throughout Ireland. In the early 1850s, parliamentary commissioners presented proposals for the legislated standardisation of weights and measures. In many of the markets and fairs

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[4] See W. H. Crawford, "The Evolution of Ulster Towns, 1750-1850," in *Plantation to Partition. Essays in Ulster History in Honour of J. L. McCracken*, ed. Peter Roebuck (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981), 154-55.

[5] Angélique Day, Patrick McWilliams and Nórín Dobson, eds., *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland*, vol. 23, *Parishes of County Antrim VII, 1831-5, 1837-8: Ballymena and West Antrim* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, 1993) [hereafter cited as "Ordnance Survey"], 8; *Royal Commission to Inquire into the*

held throughout the country, different standards were employed in exchanges, varying even over the space of a few miles.[6] The range of measurements used in the markets also varied by commodity: a barrel of wheat, for instance, was reported to be twenty stones "almost everywhere," while a barrel of barley was six stones in most places, but twenty-one stones in Newtownlimivady.[7] Potatoes were exchanged in some markets by stones of fourteen or sixteen pounds and in other places by weight of twenty-one pounds. Flax was variously sold in stones of fourteen or sixteen pounds or by the hundredweight measurements of 112, 120 or 124 pounds. One of the few commodities which was exchanged on a fairly uniform basis throughout the province was pork, which was sold in the "long hundredweight" of 110 pounds: but in the south of the country, pork was traded in quantities and fractions of 112 pounds.

Surveying this highly localised commercial system, the Fairs and Markets Commissioners proposed a system of standardised weights and measurements throughout Ireland, and made thirty-eight recommendations which aimed to integrate practices of exchange in local marketplaces. They recommended the appointment in each market of a weighmaster charged with maintaining beams and scales in accordance with systems of national usage. Livestock and produce were to be brought to the public crane and weighed by the weighmaster; deductions for tare (the weight of the wrapping or container in which goods were exchanged), beamage, porterage and brokerage—customary practices in Ballymena and many other markets—were to be made illegal.[8] The Commissioners also made proposals for the adjudication of disputes arising in the local marketplace. Legislation to this effect was passed by

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State of Fairs and Markets in Ireland [hereafter cited as "Fairs and Markets"], Part II, Minutes of Evidence [1910], HC 1854-55, vol. XIX, testimony of James Campbell, q. 10135, q. 10136.

[6] Fairs and Markets, Report [1674], HC 1852-53, vol. XLI, 32.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid, 38-39

Westminster in the early 1860s. From 1 January 1863, Head Constables were named *ex-officio* Inspectors of Weights and Measures within their districts, and the constabulary were required to keep copies of Imperial Standard measures. The appointed officer was empowered to enter any "Shop, Store, Warehouse, Yard or Place within His Jurisdiction," in order to ensure that no weights were found to be "light or unjust"; in such instances, weights and measures could be seized and the storekeeper or seller held liable for fines of up to £5.[9]

Locally, the standardisation of weights and measures occasioned considerable debate over which groups and institutions would provide surveillance and enforcement of commercial practices. In 1860, the *Observer* reported that Ballymena's Town Commissioners drafted and passed a memorial complaining of the state of the markets and fairs of Ireland and broadly endorsed the resolutions of a Market Reform Association in Belfast which had called for "a system of well-adapted, conveniently situated, and properly regulated markets and fairs" in the country.[10] The meeting called for an abolition of allowances at the weigh-cranes for packing. "Proper officers," it read, "should be appointed for collecting the tolls, maintaining order in the markets or fairs, for the inspection of meat, provisions, victuals, and provender, and the inspection and adjustment of weights and measures, not only in the markets, but other places with their jurisdictions and tolls." The

[9] "Weights and Measures (I.) Act (1860) Amendt. 25&26 Vict. Cap. 76," in *A Collection of the Public General Statutes Passed in the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Years of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, 1862* (London: George Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1862), 543-49.

[10] *Observer,* 25 February 1860. On 2 January 1860, a deputation of farmers from Counties Antrim, Armagh and Down (described later as the "Farmers' Fairs and Markets Reform Committee" [*News-Letter*, 17 January 1860]) presented a memorial before a meeting of the Belfast Town Council containing a number of proposals for market changes; these proposals were referred to the Council's Market Committee (*News-Letter*, 3 January 1860).

Ballymena Union Board of Guardians added their support for standardisation, criticising the provisions of a proposed bill in 1861 as inadequate.[11]

After new legislation took effect in 1863, debate centred on its enforcement. Between June and July 1864, sixteen traders in the Ballymena district were brought before Petty Sessions under provisions of the legislation. The Bench was told that on many occasions the law left some doubt as to who was responsible for the adjustment of weights and measures. In response to calls for a more clearly-defined mechanism for ensuring conformity with the legislated standardisation, Shafto Adair published a letter in the *Observer* on 30 July1864:

> ….I have noticed with sincere regret the position of difficulty in which tradesmen and dealers are placed, from the want of an official authority to adjust, as well as test, weights and measures. In adjustment, the law gives no assistance, and the magistrates, who are responsible for putting the law into force, have no option but to inflict a fine on the information which the constabulary on their part are bound by their duty to lay. I propose the establishment of a public "weights and measures office" in the public market, under a market officer, who will be provided with a duly verified set of weights and measures, corresponding exactly with those in the possession of our constabulary. He will consequently be an estate officer, under the weighmaster. He will have his workshop, and adjust weights and measures according to fixed prices by a pubic tariff…

The office opened on 1 January 1865, as an "appurtenance of the Ballymena Estate," operating on Mondays for town merchants and on Fridays for residents of rural areas.[12] Adair's intervention reflected his concern for maintaining and developing the commercial foundations of the district: his promotion of a mechanism for developing legal practices in exchange was intended to secure the foundations of the local market which were central to the value of the Estate. Less than a year after the office's establishment, however, the *Observer* reported that fewer that one in ten of the district's dealers had taken advantage of its services: weekly revenue from fees had

[11] *Observer*, 18 May 1861.

fallen in one week to 3d. and Adair's losses were estimated at £20.[13] At the same time, frequent convictions under the Act continued in fortnightly Petty Sessions. The transition to new standards in weights and measurements occasioned less than universal conformity. Efforts to develop and enforce new precepts of exchange in local butter, meat and flax markets also placed stress on producer-commercial relations, with the potential to conflate rural-urban divisions as different groups attempted to claim influence in defining "reformed" practices in the market.

In 1860, the *Observer* reported that the Market Reform Association of Belfast targeted the butter trade when it proposed a series of market changes which called for firkins, crocks and other vessels used in the sale of butter to be branded by a public officer, the butter to be sold in open markets and inspected prior to sale.[14] Efforts to improve the quality of butter produced by local farmers, and to standardise commercial practices in the exchange of butter, took place within the context of liberalised trade between the United Kingdom and other European countries which saw prohibitively high tariffs removed from foreign butter imports. Exporters in the north of Ireland faced impediments to the stability and expansion of their trade due to fraudulent practices in the firkin-butter trade.[15] In the 1860s and 1870s, the Irish export trade found itself competing with other countries, notably Denmark, in the English butter market, which was developing a preference for continental produce and greater confidence in European suppliers.[16] Ballymena's butter merchants attempted to organise in response to these changes following a warning from a Liverpool butter

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[12] *Observer*, 14 January 1865.
[13] *Observer*, 25 November 1865.
[14] *Observer*, 25 February 1860.
[15] For a detailed discussion of the structure of the Cork butter market during the same period, see James S. Donnelly Jr., "Cork Market: Its Role in the Nineteenth-Century Irish Butter Trade," *Studia Hibernica* (1971): 11: 131-63.
[16] Ibid., 146-47.

merchant published in the *Observer* on 28 April 1860: in his correspondence, the merchant insisted that in order to retain clients in the United Kingdom, the quality of locally-produced butter would have to improve appreciably. In 1853, John Dickey, in testimony before the Fairs and Markets Commissioners, described problems in the butter trade as the largest impediments to the successful operation of the local market, which he attributed to pressure from butter buyers "with an anxiety to go out and stop parties coming in" to the open market.[17] In the 1860s, local merchants began to exert pressure on the agricultural interest to standardise market practices in order to effect changes in production processes which would secure Ballymena's butter trade.

On 25 February 1861, Ballymena's butter merchants assembled in the Town Hall in order to pass a series of resolutions "in consequence of a practice resorted to by some farmers in this district of purchasing empty butter firkins from coopers considerably over the weight branded on them."[18] As a result of this practice, the dealers stated, rural farmers were able to realise a higher price for their produce while supplying a smaller amount than was acceptable to merchants. In order to exert pressure on farmers to conform with resolutions of their meeting, the merchants agreed that from 1 May 1861, all firkins produced for the butter trade of the town were to weigh one pound less than their branded weight, in order to account for soakage as they were filled. They also resolved to adopt the Belfast practice of appointing a brandmaster responsible for weighing and marking each firkin, at a cost to coopers of one half-penny for each firkin. The merchants committed themselves to these resolutions by imposing a fine on anyone trading in butter who did not abide by them—a demonstration of solidarity in order to exert greater influence over the

[17] Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9881.
[18] *Observer*, 2 March 1861.

district's farmers. John Beaumont, the market cranemaster, was subsequently named brandmaster, and Shafto Adair signalled his support for the initiative by agreeing to provide him with weighing facilities on the town's Fair Hill.[19] Having secured uniformity of practice in firkin measurement, local butter merchants then turned their attention to improving the general quality of produce in the local market, by circulating printed instructions on the careful preparation of butter to the district's farmers.[20] But the Irish trade continued to suffer from competition in the English marketplace and by 1867 merchants were compelled to consider new ways of organising the system of exchange in the Ballymena butter market, premised on their participation in the "open market."

In 1867, the merchants debated a proposal to situate exchanges in the local butter trade in the marketplace, in the hope of securing better produce through open competition on the Fair Hill. This debate centred on the longstanding preference of many local dealers for exchanges in private stores outside the market. The butter merchants' reluctance to engage in marketplace exchange was noted by Ballymena's Estate Agent in 1853; he had suggested that dealers distorted the principle of the open market by excluding other buyers from purchasing butter there.[21] Indeed, John Strahan, a leading Ballymena pork and butter merchant, also testified in 1853 that he had not attended the butter market that year because "strange buyers" had increased the price of trade.[22] In response to continuing pressures from the export market, however, Strahan and several of the town's leading dealers committed themselves to exchanges conducted exclusively in the open market from 10 August 1867. They portrayed the decision as an endorsement of open market exchanges in order to

[19] *Observer*, 16 March 1861, 30 March 1861, 6 April 1861.
[20] *Observer*, 20 August 1863.
[21] Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9881.

promote competition between buyers and sellers, in the hope that the local trade would be improved. This promotion of the open market as the exclusive venue for exchange and as a mechanism for securing fairer trade came only after efforts to inculcate new practices of production among farmers had proved unsatisfactory. The discourses linking fair trade to open market structures were to resonate again, in the district's weavers' efforts to promote a "return" to open market-based exchange in the 1870s.

Like the butter market, Ballymena's pork market was affected by the national standardisation of weights and measures, and local groups attempted to negotiate the implications of standardisation on the operation of local exchange practices. In 1862, in accordance with the law, Ballymena's pork dealers abolished a customary local eleven-pound deduction made from the gross weight of pork carcasses brought to them for sale, which had been a source of grievance to district farmers, but a number continued to levy a porterage fee. In 1866 the Union Board of Guardians confirmed that such fees were contrary to the spirit and letter of the law.[23] These changes in trading practices were accompanied by efforts to regulate the production and processing of pork and meat through local instruments of inspection. Such powers of inspection fell within the remit of the Town Commissioners, and in 1856 they resolved to advertise for an "Inspector of Nuisance and Inspector for the Sale of Food" on wages of £35 per year.[24] The pork- and flesh-meat market was also subject to surveillance by the local authorities and to adjudication in the Petty Sessions courts. Many of the town's butchers remained concentrated near the town's Linen Hall—on a street which had once served as Ballymena's shambles. By the mid-1860s, they had

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[22] Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Straghan [*sic*], q. 9957

[23] *Observer*, 29 December 1866.

also expanded into Broughshane Street, but others plied their trade in small streets and courts in low-rated residential parts of the town. The Town Commissioners' powers were limited to the town boundaries and they sought to enforce restrictions on meat processing and trade through the active prosecution of local butchers. They ordered the registration of Ballymena's slaughterhouses, for instance, in July 1856.[25] In 1858, the butcher William Ross, a resident of the town's humble Coach Entry, was charged with slaughtering pigs within his own dwelling-house; the same year, another resident of Coach Entry, Matthew John Wales, was charged with selling bacon unfit for human consumption.[26] On 10 October 1863, the *Observer* reported that Ballymena's Inspector of Flesh-meat undertook another visitation of slaughterhouses, and, accompanied by local constables, again seized unfit meat from the slaughterhouse of William Ross. Concern over the quality of flesh-meat in the local market led the *Observer* to suggest on 3 November 1866 that "nearly one-third of all the pork at present offered for sale in Ballymena's market is more or less diseased." These fears over contagion focussed attention not only on urban butchers, but also on their agricultural suppliers.

In 1865 a meeting was convened by Shafto Adair to discuss these mounting concerns with the district's farmers and dealers. A spreading cattle disease was said to have originated in County Down and by May 1866 it was suspected of having caused the death of three cows in Dunclug, an area immediately contiguous to the town.[27] In response to local concerns, Adair proposed the establishment of a slaughterhouse in Ballymena and announced efforts to ensure that local beef was privileged in the

[24] Minutes of the Ballymena Town Commissioners, PRONI LA/14/2B/1 [hereafter cited as "Town Commissioners"].
[25] Town Commissioners, 11 July 1856.
[26] *Observer*, 27 March 1858, 17 July 1858.
[27] *Observer,* 19 May 1866.

marketplace in an effort to ensure sources of supply. John Young, speaking at the meeting, called upon dog owners to ensure that their animals were restrained and prevented from running at large through the district in order to prevent the spread of the disease: instructions to this effect were later issued to town residents by the Town Commissioners.

These public meetings were the most common mechanisms for debating proposed changes in market practices. In some cases, meetings focussed on internal commercial practices, but in many other instances, including the meetings of butter dealers, the proceedings aimed to change the practices of farmers, processors and other groups. Direction to the meetings and their deliberations was usually offered by specific commercial groups, often the urban shopocracy, who attempted to develop strategies for promoting changes among rural farmers and workers. In the butter market debates, Ballymena's dealers used the public meeting to publicise their views to country farmers and to assert their authority in directing change in production practices. In overseeing the local pork market, the commercial sector of the town relied in part on mechanisms of surveillance provided by an institution of local government, the Town Commissioners, in which they predominated. Some of the most rancorous debates over the structure of local commerce took place within the flax and linen markets. In part, efforts to influence changes in the structure of textile production aimed to extend the authority of the urban commercial sector over production and local trade.

The quality of mill scutching—the processing of flax before it was brought to market—had long been a source of concern to the overseers of Ireland's linen trade. The development of a satisfactory "flax culture" proved to be one of the most intractable problems in the regulation of the Irish linen industry. Merchants testifying

before a committee investigating the linen trade of Ireland in the early 1820s alluded to the poor management of the scutching process, and the committee described the preparation and management of flax as "extremely defective." The Royal Society for the Promotion and Improvement of the Growth of Flax in Ireland was established in 1841, but problems continued to bedevil flax growth and preparation in Ulster.[28] Repeal of the Corn Laws removed a premium for grain crops and, with the growth of the linen industry, flax became an increasingly popular choice for cultivation.[29] Flax also provided Ulster's farmers with a profitable crop for cultivation during the extended agricultural crisis of the late 1850s and 1860s, when the acreage under flax in the Ballymena Union expanded significantly.[30]

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[28] "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1850" [1304], HC 1851, vol. XXIII, Report of T. J. Howell.
[29] Ibid.
[30] See James S. Donnelly Jr., "The Irish Agricultural Depression of 1859-64," *Irish Economic and Social History* 3 (1976): 3: 33-54, especially 45-46.

Table 6.1
Percentage of total cultivated area under flax, by size of holding, Ballymena Union, 1857-1867

Year	*Holdings of 5 to 15 acres % Under Flax*	*Holdings of 15 to 30 acres % Under Flax*
1857	1.36	2.31
1858	1.11	2.05
1859	2.95	3.96
1860	2.79	3.91
1861	5.10	6.35
1862	5.40	6.83
1863	13.82	12.55
1864	21.23	19.54
1865	14.34	13.52
1866	15.16	14.69
1867	11.29	12.27

Sources: "Agricultural statistics of Ireland", 1857 [2461], HC 1859, session 1, vol. XXVI; 1858 [2599], HC 1860, vol. LXVI; 1859 [2763], HC 1861, vol. LXII; 1860 [2997], HC 1862, vol. LX; 1861 [3156], HC 1863, vol. LXIX; 1862 [3286], HC 1864, vol. LIX; 1863, [3456] HC 1865, vol. LV; 1864, [3766] HC 1867, vol. LXXI; 1865 [3926], HC 1867, vol. LXXI; 1866 [3958-II], HC 1867-68, vol. LXX; 1867 [4113-II], HC 1868-69, vol. LXII.

Traditionally regarded as an industry linked to agriculture, flax scutching was estimated by Factory Inspectors to employ close to 9,000 workers in Ireland in 1865.[31] The number of scutching mills in County Antrim climbed in the 1860s from ninety-three in 1861 to 183 in 1867.[32] Because of their close ties to agriculture and due to the seasonal pattern of their operation, scutching mills fell outside the remit of specific regulatory legislation and the surveillance of Factory Inspectors—a situation that one sub-inspector described as unsatisfactory in an 1855 report, owing to the high number of accidents in mills, the preponderance of women and children employed in

[31] "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1865" [3622], HC 1866, vol. XXIV, Report of Robert Baker.
[32] Data from "Agricultural Statistics of Ireland", 1861 [3156], HC 1863, vol. LXIX; "Return of Number of Mills for Scutching Flax, Ireland, 1868" [3958], HC 1868-69, vol. LXII.

them, and the poor quality of air breathed by mill workers.[33] An 1866 letter from the dispensary surgeon in the Broughshane district described "common laceration of limb and losses of life" occurring in the scutching mills of his district.[34] Accidents in mid-Antrim's scutching mills occurred frequently and the *Observer*'s columns often included reports of deaths and dismemberment during the scutching season: on 24 October 1863, for instance, it reported the death of William Boner, a scutcher in William Craig's mill at Kilconriola, and noted that within "a short space of time," three workers, including the proprietor's son, lost limbs at the mill.

The quality of flax cultivation and scutching was one of the most significant motivations for merchant organisation in Ballymena in order to compel rural interests to develop new processing practices. In 1862, Factory Inspectors stated that the value of Irish flax was being eroded by "the careless and inefficient manner in which it is scutched."[35] The *Observer* reported in 1864 that one-fifth of flax brought to Ballymena's market remained unsold, principally due to the poor quality of its preparation. The newspaper reported that in some mills common labourers had been employed in the place of experienced scutchers, but it was also critical of the system of remuneration within the mills. "The scutcher is not paid by the week like other tradesmen," the newspaper noted, "but by a fixed rate upon every stone of flax that by any means, however hastily, wastefully or slovenly, he can manage to pass through his hands upon the allegation that it is in a finished state."[36] At times, the town's commercial sector attempted to exert influence over farmers in order to encourage

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[33] "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1865" [3622], HC 1866, vol. XXIV, Report of Robert Baker.
[34] Edward Patman quoted in paragraphs 77 and 78 of the *Royal Commission on the Employment of Children in Trades and Manufactures not Regulated by Law*, Fifth Report [3678], HC 1866, vol. XXIV.
[35] "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to the Secretary of State for the Home Department for the Half-Year Ending 31 October 1862" [3076], HC 1863, vol. XVIII; Report of Robert Baker.

them to ensure that their flax was brought to reputable mills, but on other occasions the scutching mills themselves were subject to considerable commercial pressure.[37] Concern about the poor quality of flax processing led to a meeting of twenty-eight local mill owners on 29 July 1865, with John Loughridge of Laymore in the Chair.[38] After reading a letter from Shafto Adair urging the meeting to adopt measures to improve the quality of work in the mills, participants turned their attention to establishing a uniform scale of scutching charges for the upcoming season, in order to place limits on competitive practices in the trade. The meeting ended in open conflict, with Archibald Moore of the Broughshane Mills supporting a uniform tariff throughout the year of 1s. per stone, rather than the proposed sliding charge of 1s. 2d. in the summer and autumn months diminishing to 10d. from January to the close of the season. The *Observer* chastised the mill owners for failing to adopt more specific proposals for the improvement of milling practices.[39]

Labour practices in scutching mills also induced protest by employees. In January 1865, damages were awarded to William Brownlees against his employer, Archibald Moore of Broughshane Mills. Brownlees, who worked as a scutcher on wages of 16s. a week, had been fired when he and other workers combined to take a holiday on the Monday after Christmas.[40] Localised employee protests were also reported in the area of the Kells Water in August 1865, when a number of workers in linen cloth beetling mills protested their stagnant rates of pay—1s. per day and 6d. per half-night for enginemen.[41] The workers asserted their rights to increased rates of pay under a moral economy which protested against their increasing wage dependence.

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[36] *Observer*, 24 September 1863.
[37] *Observer*, 24 June 1865.
[38] *Observer*, 5 August 1865.
[39] Ibid.
[40] *Observer*, 14 January 1865.

They claimed that their wages had not increased for some time, although the customary practice of letting small plots of land to them had all but disappeared, and with it the possibility of supplementing wages with small-scale cultivation. The referent of custom was a powerful theme in the protest of rural workers, who also complained that their positions were being taken by children and unskilled field labourers, whereas two-years' training had once been a qualification for work in the beetling mills. One correspondent to the *Observer* bemoaned the early failure of workers to mobilise and establish a trades society which could have promoted and protected the mill workers' interests.[42]

These competing efforts to re-define practices and re-orient relationships within the terrain of the local market revealed breaches between sections of the urban commercial sector—which sought to claim "natural" leadership and inculcate normative practices in production and market organisation—and rural textile producers, farmers and flax processors. At the same time, an urban labour force was emerging in the town through the process of reorganisation of spinning and weaving described in chapter three. Public meetings considered means of exerting influence on producers and were also used by sections of the local economy for forms of internal reorganisation, including the adoption of limits on competitive behaviour. Likewise, resolutions by sections of the town's commercial sector were announced to the public through the local newspaper. Ballymena's woollendrapers and haberdashers, for instance, were annual signatories to a notice advising patrons of their closure during Christmas to allow employees an extra holiday: their collective decision precluded any firm from profiting from the closure of its competitors.

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[41] *Observer*, 2 September 1865.
[42] *Observer*, 2 September 1865.

Similarly, in 1866, when many of the town's leading commercial establishments resolved to adopt the practice of closing their businesses from six o'clock in the evening, they published a declaration of their decision in the *Observer*. The newspaper reported that the decision was unanimous amongst the "woollendrapers, haberdashers and milliners" of the town, but its 2 June 1866 edition featured announcements by Robert Forsythe and James McAuley that they would be withdrawing their names from the subscription, arguing that they had no shopmen, and therefore no employees who would be inconvenienced by the arrangements. Attempts were also made to protect trades from changes in production and craft practice and to limit the effects of open competition in trades. Just as scutching mill owners had met to debate terms for uniform rates of charges in the district, in 1867 Ballymena's master blacksmiths, agricultural implement makers and horse-shoers agreed on a uniform scale of charges, which they resolved to display in every workshop of the town and district.[43]

Strikes and other forms of organised labour protest in the Ballymena district were often limited in scope and effectiveness, but, like the protests of the Kells Water mill workers, they also represented a collective assertion of claims to participate in defining principles of local production and commerce. As early as 1834, Ballymena witnessed a withdrawal of labour by local sawyers, and the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs* noted that there was "an understanding among the tailors not to work under a certain price."[44] Among the town's trades, the tailors were the most active in organising protest; in the early 1860s, their trade was vulnerable to the introduction of new technology in the form of the sewing machine. But the effectiveness of trade

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[43] *Observer*, 19 January 1867.
[44] Ordnance Survey, 102.

combinations was limited, especially in the face of judicial disapproval and frequent dissension within the ranks of tradesmen. The case of Hamilton Greacy and five other members of the Association of Journeymen Tailors in Ballymena was brought before Petty Sessions in 1859; their fellow journeymen accused them of decamping from town with the Association's funds.[45] The merchant and draper John McVickar brought two of his journeymen tailors, Neal McAfee and Arthur Gilchrist, to Petty Sessions after they refused to work with portions of cloth which had been stitched by machine: Gilchrist absconded from town and McAfee was fined 5d. and ordered to return to work.[46] Another of McVickar's employees, John Cahoon, appeared in court later in 1864, claiming to have been assaulted by two local members of the Tailors' Trade Society when he and two other tailors who were not society members encountered co-workers in Mill Street. During the same Petty Sessions, a foreman tailor employed by William J. Craig at a sewing machine claimed to have been assaulted by two Trade Society members who came to Craig's establishment and chided tailors who were working there; John Young, J.P., expressed his disapproval of such combinations in remarks from the Bench.[47]

Although tailors were active in resisting the introduction of the sewing machine, their associations did not include all members of the local trade, and efforts to withdraw labour sometimes induced division within the ranks of operatives. Other trades in the town encountered similar difficulties: in 1864, Ballymena's journeyman bakers withdrew their labour. In response, Morton and Simpson, a large local concern, brought over three replacement workers from Scotland. The availability of alternative sources of labour also militated against the effectiveness of trades organisation.

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[45] *Observer*, 5 June 1859.
[46] *Observer*, 16 July 1864.
[47] *Observer*, 5 November 1864.

Scottish workers were also brought to the town in the summer of 1867, to replace stonecutters employed by the contractor James Henry to build the new home of Shafto Adair on Ballymena demesne. Local workers had withdrawn their labour in protest at low wages and their replacements returned to Scotland amid claims of intimidation.[48] The majority of these instances of trade-based association involved young men—mostly in the journeymen stage of the craft cycle. To this particular urban group, migration and emigration served as options which militated against the stability of their urban cohort, a theme which was explored in chapters four and five. The evolution of an associational culture within the town was especially concerned with incorporating young men within the institutional network of clubs and societies and stabilising this cohort within an institutionalised culture of association. The patronage provided by leading commercial figures to the voluntary network can also be seen as a strategy for a developing an autonomous focus for associational culture outside the network of trades societies.

The forms of commercial reorganisation and protest which have been explored in this chapter show how dialogues contesting the structure and practices of the local market engaged producers, distributors and institutions of local authority. Throughout the late 1850s and subsequent decades, these interests sought to negotiate transitions to new market practices conditioned by the changing structure of the provincial and national market system. The influence exerted by exogenous institutions on the development of new market practices was profound, and the increasingly powerful commercial sector in Belfast played a central role in shaping market structure and culture. It also contributed to shaping forms of protest against market practices, which could refer to Belfast either as a model for commercial relations or as an exogenous

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[48] *Observer*, 10 August 1867.

threat to the autonomy of local market culture. Efforts by both workers and mercantile interests to defend their positions in the evolving commercial system created the potential for peculiarly local expressions of protest to develop in opposition to the overwhelming influence of Belfast interests, with referents to local custom and market structures.

Proximity to Ireland's most important industrial town and port and Ulster's market centre dictated that Ballymena was invariably linked to commercial changes in Belfast: indeed reform of the local butter market was self-consciously styled on initiatives proposed by groups in Belfast, as this chapter previously discussed. Prices in Belfast were regularly compared to those in the Ballymena market, with one commentator noting that a six-penny loaf weighed three pounds in Ballymena, but four pounds in Belfast in 1860.[49] The structure of the market in Belfast, the province's commercial centre, was used as an exemplar by some local groups to advance their interests. In 1866, for example, local masons and bricklayers presented a memorial to their employers requesting that their work terminate at two o'clock in the afternoon on Saturdays, claiming it was the custom of the bricklayers of Belfast to have a longer weekend holiday; the request was accompanied by the threat to withdraw their labour.[50] But the Belfast market's regional dominance was also seen by some as a threat to local commercial institutions. Concern about the dominance of Belfast's market over local institutions led Ballymena's pork merchants to refuse to close their shops on the day following Christmas in 1865, fearing a loss of trade to Belfast unless its pork market was also postponed.[51] This controversy involved the Town Commissioners, who had been petitioned by "young men connected with the

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[49] *Observer*, 25 August 1860.
[50] *Observer*, 28 April 1866.
[51] *Observer*, 23 December 1865.

mercantile business of Ballymena" to convey their desire for a postponement to the Estate, which, as proprietor of the markets, had the authority to declare a holiday. The Estate, after consultations with local dealers, expressed regret that it could not meet the employees' wishes, owing to a decision to hold Belfast's markets on the usual day. Similarly, pressure from Belfast flax buyers led in 1867 to a public meeting at which a proposal was considered to change the day of the Ballymena linen market from Saturday to Thursday. The ultimate sanction cloth buyers could exercise in a bid to influence the direction of market change was withdrawal from the local marketplace: a tactic which had proved successful in Lisburn in the 1760s.[52] In May 1867, Belfast linen merchants unilaterally declared that they would no longer attend Ballymena's Saturday flax market from 1 June 1867. A petition was subsequently circulated in Ballymena, signed by 124 local commercial figures who opposed changing the customary market day, and, at a stormy meeting of the Town Commissioners, representatives of the Estate, the linen merchant John Young and the Raceview Spinning Mill proprietor Alexander Davison all pronounced their opposition to the change.[53] The Belfast merchants' demands were said to have been partly motivated by a desire to establish a half-day holiday on Saturday afternoons and, in an effort to accommodate their demands, the Estate Agent proposed that Ballymena's market would henceforth open on Saturdays at eight o'clock in the morning, thereby allowing merchants to return to Belfast on the mid-day train. The market-day debate resulted in the establishment of a committee, chaired by the linen merchant James B. Patrick and comprising John Young, Robert McKane, Alexander Davison, Samuel Curry, William Anderson and the Estate Agent, Captain Perry, with

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[52] Anne McKernan, "Contested Terrain: The Making of A Market Culture in Ulster Linens," in *The Warp of Ulster's Past*, ed. Marilyn Cohen (London: Macmillan, 1997), 94.
[53] *Observer*, 18 May 1867.

responsibilities to "watch over the interest of the trade in connexion with the proposed change, and to take such further steps from time to time as they may think expedient."[54] These exogenous pressures on commercial practices exerted by merchants in the province's urban centre created local pressure to develop mechanisms to mediate the customary expectations of local market actors and the demands of the metropolitan commercial world. Contest over the character of market culture did not come from one direction; indeed the structure of the local textile market was highly contested, and the district's rural weavers in particular made powerful claims to autonomy from Belfast practices by asserting a particular conception of open market structures with referents to the tradition of independent weaving discussed in previous chapters of this study.

Contests between groups of market participants for power within Ulster's textile marketplaces had longstanding foundations. A number of laws and practices in textile exchange, including the regulation of web measurements, had been adopted in the eighteenth century, but the operation of market practices was also governed by custom and by the contested moral economies of producers and commercial interests. In Ulster's linen markets, several legislated practices became sources of bitter conflict between merchants and buyers in the eighteenth century. In the 1750s and 1760s, Lisburn drapers organised buyers' associations in order to effect changes in customary practices in what Anne McKernan has described as efforts to create a "buyer-defined market terrain" in the local textile market.[55] At Richill in County Armagh, initiatives by these associations included the prohibition of market-interloping hawkers from the linen trade, the standardisation of cloth lengths, and in

[54] *Observer*, 25 May 1867.
[55] McKernan, 105.

1761-62, a withdrawal from textile exchanges effected at fairs.[56] In Lisburn in 1762, efforts by organised buyers to enforce rules on the display of webs were seen by cloth-producers as a transgression of the moral economy of the local market; weavers attacked the market-house in response to these buyer-led efforts to assert their power over the trade.

Conflict between merchants and weavers also centred on the organisation and activities of the linen seal-masters. The brown linen seal system had been devised in order to provide a rudimentary system of standardised cloth inspection, and was confirmed by an Act of Parliament in 1764; in practice, many weavers were appointed brown seal-masters, and concern about the apparent conflict between these two activities led to the establishment in some areas of "sole seal-masters" –salaried individuals responsible for entire market towns. While merchants were divided over the efficacy of this system, with some preferring a sole seal-master to a brown seal-master who doubled as a weaver, weavers complained of excessive delays in the operation of many markets because of the cumbersome system of inspection by one officer. A meeting at Ballymena described in an 1822 parliamentary report resolved unanimously that "we think the present system of seal-masters is preferable to the one proposed, of appointing sole-sealmasters for market-towns; but we humbly recommend to the honourable board, a more frequent revision of the outstanding seals (say once every five years)"; this change was proposed in order to provide greater instruments of accountability.[57] John Stevenson Ferguson, a Belfast linen merchant, expressed public support before a parliamentary committee for a system of seal-masters connected to linen manufacturers, rather than a public system, and he

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[56] Ibid., 103.

denounced a ploy practised by some weavers of plaistering and glazing their cloths, thereby disguising the quality of their webs and rendering finishing more difficult.[58] The province-wide debate over the seal-master system in the early-nineteenth century demonstrated how varied interests competed in efforts to define the culture of exchange in local markets. These conflicts became more pronounced in the 1850s and 1860s as the agricultural and linen sectors underwent the important changes described in this and preceding chapters.

The particular evolution of structures in mid-Antrim's linen trade described in chapters one and three provided co-ordinates for an ideology of rural autonomy which was dramatically expressed in a series of events in 1873, when rural weaver-labourers pressed their organising potential and a moral economy of rural textile production on Ballymena and on Belfast in a powerful manner. At issue was the perceived decline of an open market culture in which weavers maintained an autonomous position within the market—a system which had persisted in mid-Antrim until the Famine and which, as chapter three described, was transformed in the decade following the Famine. In 1873, however, protest against the organisation of the trade did not take the form of poets' verse, but of district-wide mobilisation

The *Observer* reported in January 1873 that weavers in the Ballymena district were organising protests at the prevailing system of textile exchange.

> For a considerable time past the operative linen manufacturers of Ballymena district have been labouring under what they consider to be serious grievances, on a variety of points connected with their department of trade; and this dissatisfaction has now culminated in the formation of affiliated associations, with view to a general representation and ultimate enforcement of their claims. Their primary and principal complaint is, that they are not sufficiently remunerated for their industrial labour—that there is no

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[57] *Select Committee on the Laws Which Govern the Linen Trade of Ireland*, Report (560), HC 1822, vol. VII [hereafter cited as "Linen Committee 1822"], testimony of the Marquess of Downshire, 30-31 [questions and replies are not numbered].

[58] Linen Committee 1822, testimony of John Stevenson Ferguson, 35-39.

> reasonable proportion between the amount of their earnings and the large profits of the manufacturers by whom they are employed.[59]

Increasingly, the district's weavers' work was characterised by a pattern of seasonal agricultural labour on small rented plots of land combined with production on the putting-out system—a position which John Young claimed before a Royal Commission placed them in an advantageous position compared to other agricultural workers in Ulster.[60] At another inquiry, however, Young warned that the increasing number of cottier-weavers working the land as seasonal labourers was very prosperous "in good times, but of late wages have been very low."[61] In 1873, the linen industry was suffering from a severe downturn[62], leading the *Observer* to suggest that a weaver's weekly earnings at the loom, where he was assisted by a "boy or woman," were no more than 8s. per week; by contrast, twenty years earlier, in 1853, the district's weavers were reported to have earned 1s. to 2s. per day.[63]

Weavers' demands were centred on the length of webs demanded by manufacturers, which had risen from fifty-two yards to sixty to sixty-five yards; weavers claimed that the longer lengths were more difficult to produce. In December 1872, weavers meeting near Kells resolved not to produce webs longer than fifty-two yards, and in Ballymena in January 1873, an assemblage of some 1,000 district weavers was addressed by the Belfast populist John Rea, who launched into a scathing attack on the manufacturers accompanied by a rambling discourse taking in

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[59] *Observer*, 18 January 1873.
[60] *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Working of Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Acts*, Minutes of Evidence [C.2779-II], HC 1881, vol. XIX, testimony of John Young, q. 5691, q. 5692, q. 5693
[61] *Select Committee of the House of Lords on Land Law (Ireland),* First Report (249), HL 1882, vol. XI, testimony of John Young, q. 3098, q. 3099, q. 3100.
[62] F. W. Smith, *The Irish Linen Trade Hand-book and Directory* (Belfast: W.H. Greer, 1876), 137-38.
[63] *Select Committee of the House of Lords on Land Law (Ireland),* First Report (249), HL 1882, vol. XI, testimony of John Young, q. 3098, q. 3099, q. 3100; *Observer*, 25 January, 1873; Fairs and Markets, testimony of John Dickie [*sic*], q. 9885.

many wider themes in Irish history.[64] The *Observer* suggested that the previous open-market system could be restored, thereby circumventing the class of manufacturers to whom "the present race of operative weavers, formerly independent, have now, almost universally, become the hirelings." A correspondent to the newspaper endorsed this view, enumerating many conditions placed upon contracted weaving by the manufacturers.[65] By the end of March 1873 another letter to the editor announced the formation of a Weavers' Defence Association.[66]

Manufacturers responded to the protests by circulating a declaration that they could not accept any webs under sixty yards, because of the demands of Belfast-based exporters. On 1 March 1873, a deputation of weavers met with representatives of the local manufacturing interest at the Adair Arms Hotel at a meeting chaired by John Young. The weavers proposed a standard length of fifty-six yards, but no agreement was reached. Another mass meeting of weavers was planned on the following Saturday at the Linen Hall, although Shafto Adair refused permission to hold the meeting there, instead offering the use of Ballymena's Town Hall. In expectation of protests, a large reinforcement of the local constabulary arrived in Ballymena ahead of the planned meeting, and when 1,000 weavers marched to the Linen Hall to demand entrance, they were refused admission.[67] Instead, they accepted a proposal to hold their meeting in the People's Park on the condition that they were received by a deputation of local manufacturers. In accordance with a request, John Young, William Young, William A. Young, John Patrick, and S. W. Perry accompanied the assemblage to the Park and heard their protests. A meeting between representatives of

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[64] *Observer*, 18 January 1873. Another example of the maverick Rea's populism can be found in S. A. Royle, "The Lisburn By-elections of 1863," *Irish Historical Studies* 25 (1987): 99: 280-81.
[65] *Observer*, 18 January 1873.
[66] *Observer*, 25 January 1873.
[67] *Observer*, 8 March 1873.

the two groups was then agreed, and, as they conferred, the ranks of operative weavers in the town swelled to 3,000. At the end of negotiations, John Young announced that a standard length of fifty-six yards had been agreed, to triumphant cheers from the weavers.[68] It appeared that local commercial intermediaries had successfully brokered a solution that could satisfy the demands of both Belfast's linen exporters and the district's weavers. But Samuel Curry, a local linen manufacturer, warned that the agreement could not be accepted by the manufacturers' delegation before consultation with their colleagues. The weavers' triumph was short-lived. The following week, local manufacturers met to declare that they could not accept the agreement, expressing "regret that, with every disposition to carry out this compromise, the Manufacturers are rendered powerless in the matter by the resolution of their principal customers—the Belfast Linen Merchants—that Webs of less than 60 Yards they cannot buy."[69] In response, an announcement was circulated by weavers:

> NOTICE TO WEAVERS OF THE COUNTIES OF LONDONDERRY AND ANTRIM.—We beg to announce to Weavers in general that on account of the Manufacturers breaking through the Amicable Settlement that was agreed to by the Manufacturers, Weavers, and Magistrates, we call a monster meeting of all Weavers, to attend at Ballymena, on Saturday, 22nd March, 1873, *to claim the settlement.*[70]

This powerful claim to articulate a moral economy of production reflected protest against a system of exchange purportedly dictated by the commercial demands of the province's commercial centre and aimed to restore a degree of autonomy for rural producers. Unrest continued as two dwelling houses of weavers manufacturing

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[68] *Observer*, 13 March 1873.
[69] *News-Letter*, 21 March 1873.
[70] *Observer*, 22 March 1873.

sixty-yard webs were attacked the following Monday.[71] Authorities prepared for the Saturday protest meeting by bringing thirty members of the Royal Dragoons to town, along with fifty men from the 78th Regiment and one hundred extra police officers from across Ulster.[72] Eventually, another agreement was brokered by local manufacturers in which they agreed to pay weavers the full rate for all cloth over sixty yards. In exchange for a dilution of their demands over cloth lengths, the weavers won support from local traders for the re-establishment of a small open market in the town, where they could sell any single webs they produced independently to local merchants and drapers, in a notional return to the organisation of production which had previously existed in the area. This concession by local manufacturers, albeit symbolic, represented an affirmation of the moral economy of the weaving population, and of the potential for local figures to serve as brokers between a commercial system deriving legitimacy from its links to a rural world with referents in a powerful cultural memory and a borough increasingly connected to a world of metropolitan commerce.

The agreement to restore the open market also reflected the powerful residual moral economy of production linked to the commercial and cultural autonomy of rural textile producers. Like the revivals of 1859 described in chapter five and the poetic protests explored in chapter three, the weavers' agenda in 1873 had important referents to cultural and structural features which shaped a memory of uniqueness in mid-Antrim. That this particular conception of market relationships continued to animate local producers in the 1870s was due in part to a folk-memory of rural cultural autonomy in a district where the independent organisation of production had

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[71] *Observer*, 29 March 1873.
[72] *News-Letter*, 24 March 1873.

persisted longer than in most areas of Ulster and where the inter-related rural-urban network—described as late as 1879 by the Chairman of the Town Commissioners as central to the town's prosperity[73] —remained very strong. This powerful rural dimension of local ideology contributed to the articulation of an identity which, when intertwined with the cultural and institutional foundations of muscular evangelicalism transmitted from the countryside, could be mobilised against urban political and economic interests perceived to be transgressing local principles of rural and urban institutional and ideological integrity. The successful brokerage of the weavers' grievances in securing their notional autonomy in relation to the market, led by John Young in particular and Ballymena's merchants generally, reinforced solidarities between the rural and urban worlds of mid-Antrim. Building on a communal consciousness with referents to historical patterns of economic and communal organisation in the district, the local responses to exogenous pressures discussed in this chapter—and the robust, popular Protestantism described earlier—became the basis for the elaboration of a distinctive ideology expressing resistance to the diminution in local custom and culture, carving out an autonomous position within the politics and society of post-Famine Ulster.

[73] *Royal Commission to Inquire into Boundaries and Municipal Areas of Cities and Towns in Ireland*, Pt. III: Minutes of Evidence [C.3089], HC 1881, vol. L, testimony of Robert Simpson, q. 145.

Conclusion

This study has explored the density of local institutions, the character of social and commercial relations and forms of cultural and political expression in the Ballymena district. Urban institutions sought to access and structure the economic and cultural resources of the wider district, but rural areas also exercised influence in defining the character of the region's economic, social and cultural relations. This study has argued that particular demographic and institutional features in the Ballymena district shaped community formation, served as cultural resources and provided co-ordinates for cultural expressions in mid-Antrim. The structures explored in this study also provided foundations for distinctive religio-political expressions which emerged in late-Victorian and Edwardian Ulster and found significant levels of support in mid-Antrim.[1] They comprised anti-oligarchic critiques of unionist ideologies and institutions and were frequently combined with discourses of "muscular, principled Protestantism"[2] drawing on the district's experience of evangelical revival. These discourses provided frameworks for only limited solidarity with Roman Catholics and non-evangelical elements of local society on the basis of shared socio-economic critiques of privileges within mainline unionism, but with separate sets of cultural referents. Mid-Antrim was also a relative stronghold of political Liberalism through the 1880s until it was eclipsed by hardening political divisions over the constitutional status of Ireland, by ineffective internal organisation and by the changing nature of the Presbyterian-Catholic and urban professional-agrarian alliances which underpinned it.[3] How can these apparently contradictory

[1] Frank Wright, "Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster," *European Journal of Sociology* 14 (1973): 213-80.
[2] Henry Patterson, "Independent Orangeism and Class Conflict in Edwardian Belfast," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 80 (1980): 15.
[3] Paul Bew and Frank Wright, "The Agrarian Opposition in Ulster Politics, 1848-87," in *Irish Peasants. Violence and Political Unrest, 1780-1914*, eds. Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly Jr.

political expressions be related to each other and to the structural developments in mid-Antrim described in this study? Do they reflect a tradition uniquely linked to Ulster Presbyterians, their ambiguous place within the power structure of the province and their ambivalence towards political initiatives which were perceived to be dominated and articulated principally by metropolitan, Episcopalian and landed interests?[4]

Urban institutions in mid-Antrim were inextricably bound up with the structure of agriculture and the local textile economy. Even after the belated emergence of an urban factory workforce in the 1860s, these features of the local economy—and of textile production in particular—remained paramount. Liberalism continued to vie with other political movements because the structure of power in the district facilitated forms of political and ideological contest: the strength of the petty capitalist element of the urban economy and the relative prosperity and security of the agrarian interest[5] militated against the overwhelming political dominance of district's landlords. Most of mid-Antrim's landowners were not sympathetic to the Liberal politics of Shafto Adair, but his prominence in the community, and in Ulster politics generally, reinforced the contested character of landlord politics. The district's Presbyterian bleacher-merchants were also politically divided: John Young of Galgorm was a local Conservative organiser, but challenges to the Tory political machine were partly led by bleaching families with roots in the Remonstrant

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(Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), 192-229; Richard McMinn, "The Myth of 'Route' Liberalism in County Antrim, 1869-1900," *Eire-Ireland* 17 (Spring 1982): 137-49.

[4] Richard McMinn, "Presbyterianism and Politics in Ulster, 1871-1906," *Studia Hibernica* (1981): 21: 127-46. McMinn offers a critical assessment of the suggestion that Independent Orangeism had the potential to articulate a community of interests transcending religious divisions offered by J. W. Boyle in "The Belfast Protestant Association and the Independent Orange Order, 1901-10," *Irish Historical Studies* 13 (September 1962): 50: 117-52. David Miller relates evangelical expressions of unionism to conditions peculiar to Presbyterians' status in Ireland in "Presbyterianism and 'Modernisation' in Ulster," *Past and Present* 80 (1978): 66-90.

Presbyterian tradition, including the Patricks and the Currells, who provided support for tenant-right associations and Liberalism through the 1870s. Local Presbyterian clergy were also divided, with some expressing strong support for tenant-right groups and others favouring the Conservative Party. In the context of this politically divided local society, many of the district's institutions—newspapers, clubs and associations—expressed contested politics in the mid-Antrim, as an exploration of county election results reveals.

Tenurial reform was a central issue in Irish politics in the 1860s and 1870s, and divisions between Liberals and Conservatives often reproduced political conflicts over land reform. Tenant-right, as practised by mid-Antrim's landlords, reflected significant ideological divergences. The Conservative paternalist John Young believed in restricting the freedom of tenant sales at auction, and in the right of landlords to exercise a veto over incoming tenants.[6] The Liberal Shafto Adair subscribed to neither of these tenets[7], though he was occasionally challenged on other matters, including the practice of denying tenant-right to occupiers of Ballymena's outlying townparks.[8] In the early 1870s, the district's farmers founded a Ballymena Tenants' Protection Society, which actively contested local landlords in land courts, with the support of Presbyterian clergy and a new local newspaper, the *Ballymena Advertiser*. A tenant-right meeting in February 1874, in Ballymena's Town Hall, included linen merchants such as J. B. Patrick and Andrew Currell, the Presbyterian minister of Ballymena's High Kirk, Reverend David McMeekin, and Reverend

[5] See the Report of Dr. Knox in "Reports from Poor Law Inspectors in Ireland as to Existing Relations Between Landlord and Teannt in Respect of Improvements" [C.31] HC 1870, vol. XIV.
[6] *Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Working of Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Acts*, Minutes of Evidence [C.2779-II], HC 1881, vol. XIX [hereafter cited as "Landlord and Tenant"], testimony of John Young, q. 5883, q. 5884, q. 5885, q. 5886, q. 5886a, q. 5887, q. 5888, q. 5889, q. 5890, q. 5891, q. 5892.
[7] Landlord and Tenant, and testimony of Alexander Caruth, q. 34670, q. 34671.

Alexander Robinson of Broughshane. Robinson was a champion of Presbyterian particularism; he had conducted public exchanges with Reverend Hugh Hanna in the 1850s opposing the extension of pan-denominational Protestant co-operation. He had also publicly challenged members of the local Episcopalian and Conservative linen family, the Davisons of Broughshane, claiming in the late 1850s that they had placed pressure on their workforce at the Raceview Mill not to attend Presbyterian services.[9] The strong Presbyterian foundations of political Liberalism, including support from leading clergymen such as Davison, buttressed local agrarian agitation through the 1870s. In 1875, for instance, in protest against at a Connor-area farm, the tenant-right society received strong support from the Connor Presbyterian minister Reverend Lyle.[10] But its local activities tended to be restricted to tenant-right agitation, and not to building a wider "community of interests" outside the objectives of tenurial reform.

Building on the infrastructure of local tenant-right associations linked to a very active county central organisation and a provincial body over which Shafto Adair (now Lord Waveney) presided, in the 1874 general election the Liberal candidate Charles Wilson polled just a few hundred fewer votes than the two Conservative victors.

Table 7.1
General election results, County Antrim, 1874

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
James Chaine	C	4,356	X
Hon. Edward O'Neill	C	4,142	X
Charles Wilson	L	4,009	

Source: Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary Election Results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), 248-49.

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[8] *Weekly Northern Whig*, 25 March 1880.
[9] Eull Dunlop, "Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter in Mid-Antrim: Some Denominational Differences on the Eve of the 1859 Revival" (Ph.D. dissertation, Queen's University of Belfast, 1993), 9-10, 21-23.
[10] *Advertiser*, 25 December 1875.

In 1880, Wilson stood again for the Liberals, alongside the Randalstown farmer Samuel Black.[11] Edward Macnaughten, Q.C., the brother of a prominent north-Antrim landlord, and the incumbent, James Chaine, stood for the Conservatives. At a meeting convened in March 1880, Reverend S. M. Dill joined John Young and William Gihon in endorsing the Conservative candidates. They did not express support for Conservatism in opposition to agrarian agitation; they suggested another potentially powerful principle for mobilisation against Liberalism. The Presbyterian minister Dill declared that "The question at present to be decided was whether they were prepared to stand by the Conservatives or whether they were prepared to put themselves in the power of agitators and Home Rulers."[12] The Tories won, but Liberal Party strength persisted in Presbyterian areas of north-, east- and mid-Antrim until 1885, in spite of growing Orange organisational support for Conservative candidates locally.[13]

Table 7.2
General election results, County Antrim, 1880

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
James Chaine	C	5,124	X
Edward Macnauten, Q.C.	C	4,936	X
Charles Wilson	L	4,789	
Samuel Black	L	4,610	

Source: As previous table.

In 1885, Liberalism delivered its most significant result in a county by-election victory precipitated by the death of the Conservative M.P., James Chaine.

[11] Brian M. Walker, *Ulster Politics: The Formative Years, 1868-86* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation and Institute of Irish Studies, 1989), 139.
[12] *News-Letter*, 25 March 1880.

The Belfast-born, Liverpool-based businessman W. P. Sinclair carried the ballot over the Hon. R. T. O'Neill, a son of Antrim landlord Lord O'Neill.[14]

Table 7.3
County Antrim by-election results, 1885

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
W. P. Sinclair	L	3,971	X
Hon. R. T. O'Neill	C	3,832	

Source: As previous table.

The emergence of the Home Rule debate and organisational support for Conservatives by Orange lodges throughout Ulster contributed to re-structuring local and provincial political dynamics. Sympathies for rural agrarian mobilisation around Liberalism were superseded by the imperative of mobilisation against Home Rule. With a re-distribution of constituencies at the 1885 general election, mid-Antrim returned an M.P. in its own right, enhancing John Young's influence over local Conservatism. Hampered by local-level political reorganisation necessitated by the redistribution, Liberalism in mid-Antrim weakened and the ideological pre-dispositions of evangelicalism gained strength in concert with political Conservatism. T. A. Dickson, a radical proponent of land reform and a strong political unionist, accepted the Liberal nomination only two weeks before the elections in 1885 and was decisively defeated by the Conservative candidate, R. T. O'Neill. In 1886, the results were even more dramatic as the Gladstonian Liberal J. H. McKelvey was routed, following the introduction of Home Rule legislation in April.

[13] Walker, 162.
[14] Ibid., 170-71.

Table 7.4
General election results, Mid-Antrim, 1885

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
Hon. R. T. O'Neill	C	3,822	X
T. A. Dickson	L	2,713	

Source: As previous table, 325-26.

Table 7.5
General election results, Mid-Antrim, 1886

Candidate	*Affiliation*	*Votes*	*Elected*
Hon. R. T. O'Neill	C	4,631	X
J. H. McKelvey	L	933	

Source: As previous table.

By 1886, voters in the Ballymena district had decisively abandoned patterns of Liberal-Conservative political contest in favour of Conservative unionism.

Historians of Ulster Presbyterianism in the nineteenth century have located the development of Protestant and unionist identities and politics in theological shifts from utopianism to evangelicalism and in shifting perceptions of socio-economic interests within the community.[15] One consequence of these developments was that those interests were seen to be coextensive with expressions of British nationality, unionist politics and Protestant communal identities. This study has shown that in mid-Antrim, Presbyterianism was an especially important vehicle for expressing a consciousness of communal heritage, building on a number of enabling features

[15] Miller; Peter Brooke, *Ulster Presbyterianism: The Historical Perspective* (Belfast: Athol Books, 1994), 145-63; D. H. Akenson, *God's Peoples: Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1991), 97-150; Peter Gibbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism: The Formation of Popular Protestant Politics and Ideology in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 1975; I. R. McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 208-31.

within the institutional, social and economic structures of the district.[16] But within the constellation of Protestantism and unionism, these resources also enabled the persistence of particularisms characteristic of politics in mid-Antrim and other districts of Presbyterian concentration.

The elaboration of tenant-right associations at the local, county and provincial levels—many with close links to each other and with clerical support and middle-class patronage—provided an institutional network in mid-Antrim for the articulation of the predominantly Presbyterian agricultural interest. But Conservatism also drew support from a local brokerage system linked to the influence of several local landlords and their agents, including Reverend R. W. Rowan, John Young and Lord O'Neill. The 1869 County Antrim election results described in chapter two illustrated the uneven distribution of votes throughout regions of Antrim that fell under the influence of Conservative and Liberal landlords.[17] Those same influences were credited by newspapers with bringing out the county's Conservative voters in 1874, and as late as 1885, it was reported that the Liberal Lord Waveney's local agents were canvassing for the Conservative interest.[18] The increasing underpinning of Conservatism by the institutions and cultural precepts of Orangeism in Ulster also secured a significant rural and urban mobilising momentum through the early 1880s. In 1880, for instance, a special meeting of the County Antrim Grand Lodge of the Orange Order in Ballymena unanimously supported Conservative candidates.[19] The correspondence between the political theology of Orangeism—in an area which was

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[16] For a general discussion of conditions of ethnic and rural mobilisation, see Ellen Wiegandt, David Howell and Gert von Pistohlkors, introduction to *Comparative Studies of Governments and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups*, vol. 7, *Roots of Rural Ethnic Mobilisation*, ed. D. Howell (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, Ltd., 1993), 1-7.
[17] See Tables 2.2, 2.3, 2.4.
[18] *Northern Whig*, 4 December 1885.
[19] *News-Letter*, 25 March 1880.

not traditionally an Orange heartland—combined with the revivals' discourses of "Protestant culture" to gain increasing resonance. A correspondent to the *Advertiser* in 1884 called on local Protestants of all denominations to support the Order:

> The foundation upon which the Orange Institution is based, is first, the Bible, and next, loyalty to the Crown and love of fellow-men, the time has now come, when Liberals and Conservatives are things of the past, when the words Presbyterian and Episcopalian should be but sounds, Liberal and Conservative must merge into Loyalists. Presbyterian and Episcopalian must join together and…stand shoulder to shoulder in the fight for religious Liberty.[20]

With the rise of the Home Rule debate, the organisation of relatively segregated Catholic politics outside Liberalism and the eventual displacement of the Liberal Party, Conservatives, drawing on the support of newly-enfranchised rural labourers, commercial interests and provincial Orangeism, consolidated their influence over large sections of the Protestant electorate in Ulster. The resonance of the popular political theology of sectionalism and the cultural precepts of evangelical Protestantism, elaborated in the revivals, provided co-ordinates for discourses of Protestantism, unionism and Empire. But as Conservatism and later Ulster Unionism's political structures evolved, they continued to encounter movements expressing militantly anti-oligarchic protests against their ideologies and institutions. Mid-Antrim was a centre for this tradition, which was linked to the structure of the region's economy and society and the interconnected rural-urban network which played a central role in community formation, power and production structures and cultural expressions in the district.

Mid-Antrim's economic and demographic base was different from other environments in which expressions of unionism were formulated. Anti-oligarchic impulses gained currency in a district in which landlord hegemony had always been

impeded by a combination of contested politics within the landed class, the relatively secure position of the agrarian interest and the urban influence of petty capitalists. Ballymena also had historically important commercial functions, organising trade in the wider rural district. These distributive functions were significantly altered in post-Famine Ireland, precipitating conflicts and adaptations to an emerging commercial system, but claims of local autonomy were enabled by the continuing independent commercial functions of the town. The weavers' muscular challenge to the exporter-defined terrain of the local linen market in 1873 demonstrated the popular mobilising power of an important rural group, which was soon to be enfranchised. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the legitimacy of the rural weavers' critique of changing commercial practices was accepted by local manufacturers and merchants, who sought to accommodate their demands. Following the collapse of Liberalism as an alternative system of local political brokerage, expressions of protest in mid-Antrim took place within the political terrain of unionism and the religious terrain of Protestant evangelicalism.

Like other historians of late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ulster Protestantism who have located a variety of expressions within political unionism[21], Frank Wright identifies two distinctive strands of Protestant unionism in his influential analysis of Protestant identity in Ulster: one "liberal," advancing institutional incorporation of Roman Catholics in attempts to shape a notionally mutual "community of interests," and the other an "extreme" form drawing on the religio-political discourses of Protestant supremacy partly formulated in defence of

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[20] *Advertiser*, 8 March 1884.

[21] Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon and Henry Patterson, *Northern Ireland, 1921-1996: Political Forces and Social Classes* (London: Serif, 1996); Henry Patterson, "Independent Orangeism" and *Class Conflict and Sectarianism: The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement, 1868-1920*

interests historically enshrined in the privileged access of Protestant groups to particular resources.[22] In the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, forms of Protestant protest within unionism which won high levels of support in Ballymena—the challenges of Johnston of Ballykilbeg, Independent Orangeism and Russellite Unionism, for instance[23]—appeared to combine these two dispositions. Occupying a place in popular imagination as the heartland of Protestant Ulster, as the generator of a fundamentally popular evangelical culture and as the primary locus for events enshrined in the memory of Ulster Presbyterianism, mid-Antrim's Protestant politics robustly asserted the primacy of their place in Protestant Ulster. They also provided a framework for the rural Presbyterian world's assertion of influence over metropolitan unionism, their claims reinforced by the rural world's importance as the locus of a communal cultural "renewal" which was of critical importance in the self-definition of Ulster Protestantism.

Unionist discourses emphasising the intrinsic superiority of Protestantism could be articulated by groups seeking to extend, defend or enshrine Protestant privileges.[24] In mid-Antrim, where Roman Catholic political organisation was relatively weak and where Catholics occupied demonstrably subordinate positions in the local social structure—lacking landed capital in the countryside and with generally low levels of literacy—popular unionism became a vehicle for advancing the claims of Presbyterian petty capitalists and agrarian interests in contest with other formulations of unionism. Capable of alliances with both the Protestant working-class and Roman Catholics in anti-oligarchic protest, this popular evangelical unionism was

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(Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980); Jennifer Todd, "Two Traditions in Unionist Political Culture," *Irish Political Studies* 2 (1987): 1-26.
[22] Wright, 220-22, 223-42.
[23] See introduction, 8-9.
[24] Wright, 241-42.

also decidedly critical of mainline "compromise" with Catholicism—a position relating to features of the district where Roman Catholics, in limited numbers and with restricted access to resources—were not seen to compete with, or pose a threat to, the material resources and cultural integrity of the Protestant community. These forms of protest within Protestantism drew on the district's local memory of uniqueness and the strong institutional framework of Presbyterianism which enshrined and propagated that memory. Their base was in structural features which reflected the preponderance of Presbyterians in the district, and they were strongly influenced by a tradition of anti-metropolitan critiques which had roots in the protests of independent rural weavers, tenant-right farmers and the local petty bourgeoisie against Belfast's overwhelming influence in the formulation of provincial commercial and political ideologies and practices.

This study has sought to illustrate how expressions of Protestant community and culture in Ballymena were linked to referents in the experience of commercial, social and cultural development in mid-Antrim. The complex interplay of cultural and political expressions emanating from the countryside found form and expression in the town. The demographic, institutional and economic features of the community also reflected the interplay between people, institutions, ideas and other influences from the wider district. Religious revival, forms of organised rural protest and Protestant critiques of political institutions all found co-ordinates in the density of links between rural mid-Antrim and the district's urban centre and referred to localised conditions, structures and ideologies. The strength of ties between town and countryside contributed to making mid-Antrim a base for popular politics which capitalised on locally-resonant religious discourses with referents to mid-Antrim as a repository of unique historical memories within Presbyterianism. They also drew on a

tradition of local assertion against exogenous forces which were seen to threaten the integrity of the dense, interrelated urban-rural network and practices and interests enshrined in the community's social and economic structures. In specific contexts described in this study, the structure of rural economic relations and cultural forms became capable of exercising persistent, rather than diminishing, influence over the development of district-wide institutions, ideologies and identities. In examining the influences which contributed to structuring cultural expressions and communal identities in the district, this study suggests the importance of exploring dialogues between town and townland in post-Famine Ulster, as well as the networks within which these dialogues were situated.

Appendix A
Occupational and Production Categories: Lists of Occupations

A) Occupational Categories

Craft

Baker
Bleacher[1]
Boot & shoemaker
Brewer
Builder
Cabinetmaker
Cap maker
Carpenter
Coach builder
Coachmaker
Cooper
Dresser
Dressmaker
Dyer
Enginemen in bleachgreen
Gasman
Glazier
Haberdasher
House painter
Ironmoger & hardware agent
Lapper
Leathercutter
Linen lapper
Loft-man
Mason
Mechanic
Mill carpenter
Miller
Millman
Millwright
Nailer
Painter
Painter, paper-hanger & glazier
Plasterer
Plumber
Printer
Reed merchant
Reedmaker
Saddler
Saddler & harnessmaker
Sawyer
Sewer
Shirtmaker
Shoemaker
Shuttlemaker
Smith
Stone mason
Stonecutter
Tailor
Tinsmith
Turner
Warper
Watch & clockmaker
Watchmaker
Whitesmith
Yarn winder

[1] "Bleacher" was widely used to describe both bleachgreen workers and proprietors; where a nominal entry did not match town directory entries for bleachgreen proprietors, it was classified under the "craft" category.

Clergy

Clergyman
Minister

Clerk

Clerk
Clerk in a bank
Clerk of Ballee

Commerce

Banker
Bank manager
Bank resident sub-manager

Dealer

Butcher
Cattle dealer
Chemist & druggist
Clothier
Dealer
Factor
Family grocer
Goodsman
Grocer
Grocer & seed merchant
Grocer & spirit dealer
Hatter & woollendraper
Leather & hide merchant
Linen draper
Milliner & dressmaker
Pawnbroker
Provision merchant
Seed merchant
Shopkeeper
Shopman
Store [man]
Store hand
Woollendraper

Farmer

Farmer

Gardener

Gardener

Gentleman

Gentleman
Gentry

Government

Bailiff
Clerk of markets
Coroner
County inspector
Clerk to the Board of Guardians
Surveyor of Income Tax
Watchman
Weighmaster

Hotelier

Hotelkeeper
Innkeeper
Lodgekeeper
Hotel proprietor

Labourer

Labourer
Farm labourer
Road labourer

Manufacturer

Line yarn boiler
Linen manufacturer
Manufacturer

Merchant
Merchant
Bleacher[1]
Linen merchant
Timber merchant
Merchant & land proprietor
Merchant & mill owner
[1] See the note on bleachers under the "craft" category list.

Pensioner
Pensioner
Pensioner, 5th fusiliers
Pensioner, 64th regiment

Police
Coast guard
Constable
Police
Policeman

Professional
Solicitor
Medical attendant, Union workhouse
Surgeon

Publican[1]
Publican
Spirit dealer
[1] When no goods were listed, dealers in wine, beer and sprits were included in this category; food and spirit grocers, however, were listed under "Dealers."

Servant
Housekeeper
Servant

Soldier
Captain
Private
Royal artillery…
Sergeant
Sergeant in artillery
Soldier
Soldier, 18th regiment

Transport
Bread cart driver
Car driver
Car man
Carter
Coachman
Porter
Railway gate-keeper
Railway guard
Railway porter
Railwayman

Teacher
School teacher
Schoolmaster
Teacher

Weaver
Weaver

Other
Barber
Basketmaker
Boatsman
C.b. officer
Caretaker
Farmer's son
Fisherman
Gamekeeper
Gatekeeper
Granger
Musician
Pedler
Planter
Ploughman
Road contractor
Sweep
Yardman

B) Production Categories

Accommodation
Hotel proprietor

Clothing
Boot & shoemaker
Clothier

Drink
Spirit dealer
Publican

Food
Grocer & seed merchant
Baker
Butcher

Furniture
Cabinetmaker

Government
Clerk of markets
Clerk to the Board of Guardians
Coroner

Law
Solicitor

Leather
Leather & hide merchant
Saddler & harnessmaker

Medicine
Surgeon
Medical attendant

Miscellaneous Retail
Ironmonger & hardware agent

Miscellaneous Services
Watch & clockmaker
Painter, paper-hanger & glazier
Chemist & druggist

Print
Printer

Religion
Minister

Textiles & Clothing
Bleacher
Woollendraper
Hatter & woollendraper
Linen manufacturer
Linen draper
Linen yarn boiler

Timber
Timber merchant

Transport
Coach builder

Appendix B
Places of Residence Identified in Wills And Letters of Administration

Ahoghill
Ballee
Ballybeg
Ballyclose
Ballycraigy
Ballykeel
Ballylesson
Ballymena
Bottom
Brocklamont
Clogher
Clonavon
Craigbilly
Dunfane
Dunnyvadden
Gilgad
Gloonan
Gracehill
Kirkinriola
Laymore
Leighenmohr
Lisnafillen
Moorefields
Rasharkin
Tesham

Appendix C
Rates of Wages at Braid Water Spinning Company
20 June 1874

Source: Braid Water Spinning Company Machine Book, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast D/1492/8

Hackling Department	Foreman in flax dept	100s. per fortnight
	Foreman Sorter	80s. per fortnight
	Machine Master	76s. per fortnight
	Storeman	40s. per fortnight
	Hackling mill clerk	42s. per fortnight
Roughers	Mill scutched Irish	1s. 8d. per cwt
	Engligh	1s. 8d. per cwt
	Courtrai	1s. 6d.
	Dines	1s. 6d.
	Ghent	1s. 5d
	Bruges	1s. 5d.
	Douai	1s. 5d.
	Pernau	1s. 5d.
	Hand Scutched	1s. 5d.

Machines Boys	10s. per fortnight

Hackling or Sorting	Courtrai, before the hand	6s. 1d. per 100ths
	Mill scutched, fine	5s 5d.
	Mill scutched, end about (medium)	4s.10d.
	Mill scutched, double ended (coarse)	4s. 7d.
	Dutch, ghent, moi, douai, end about	4s. 7d.
	Dines before the hand	6s. 1d.
	Hand scutched, unbroken	3s. 8d.
	Hand scutched, double ended	4s. 7d.

Preparing Department	Preparing Master	100s. per fortnight
	Oiler	16s. per fortnight
	Can Weigher of Set-boy	14s. per fortnight
	Rove-man	15s. per fortnight
	Flax boy	12s. per fortnight
	Roller boy	10s. per fortnight
	Flax-looser	15s. + 1s. bonus
	Spreaders	13s. + 1s. bonus
	Back minders&drawers	11s. + 1s. bonus
	Rovers	13s. + 1s. bonus
	Doffing Mistress	15s. + 1s. bonus
	Doffers	6s. + 6d. bonus
	Sweeper	11s + 1s. bonus
	Carding Master	48s. per fortnight
	Tow carrier	16s. per fortnight
	Waste boy	14s. per fortnight
	Set-boy	9s. + 1s. bonus
	Carders	14s. + 1s. bonus
	Drawers & back minders	11s. + 1s. bonus
	Rovers	13s. + 1s. bonus
	Doffers	6s. + 6d bonus
	Sweeper	9s. + 1s bonus

Spinning Department	Head Spinning Master	120s. per fortnight
	No 3 Spinning Master	85s. per fortnight
	No 4 Spinning Master	30s. per fortnight
	No 2 Spinning Master	30s. per fortnight
	Tow Spinner (2 sides)	18s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Tow Spinner (1 side)	13s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Line Spinner (2 sides)	17s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Line Spinner (1 side)	11s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Doffing Mistress	20s. + 2s. per fortnight
	Doffers	11s.+ 6d per fortnight
	Doffers down to	6s. + 6d per fortnight
	Band-tiers	11s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Truck boys	11s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Oilers	19s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Sweepers	11s. + 6d per fortnight
	Rove woman	11s. 6d. + 6d per fortnight
	Water-carrier	10s. 6d. + 6d per fortnight
	Roller-girls	17s. + 1s. per fortnight
Reeling Department	Reeling Master	80s. per fortnight
	Hoist-boy	13s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Ticket-boy	13s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Yarn counters	11s./- 9/- + 1/- per fortnight
	Truck boys	12s., 11s., and 9s. + 1s. per fortnight
	Sweeper	9s. + 1s. per fortnight
Reelers Tow Yarn		
	12 to 20	1 3/4d. per reel of 20 hanks
	22 to 50	1 5/8d. per reel of 20 hanks
Yarn Line		
	20 to 60	1 1/2d. per reel of 20 hanks
	55 to 90	1 5/8d. per reel of 20 hanks
	95 to 120	1 3/4d. per reel of 20 hanks
Short Reels Line		
	80 to 100(s)	1 7/8 d. per reel of 20 hanks
	110 to 120	2d. per reel of 20 hanks
	130 to 140	2 1/4d. per reel of 20 hanks

Fines

10 shreads short 1d.
20 shreads short 2d.
30 shreads short 4d.
40 shreads short 8d.
50 shreads short 1s. 4d.
60 shreads short 2s. 8d.
40 shreads over 1d.
50 shreads over 2s.
60 shreads over 4d.
70 shreads over 8d.
Double cuts 3d.
Split cuts 6d.

Mechanics	Foreman:	120s. per fortnight
	Journeyman:	70s. per fortnight
	Journeyman	56s. per fortnight
	Apprentice	7s., 8s., 9s., 10s., 12s.
	Blacksmith	68s. (Helper 22s.)
	Wood-turner	56s. to 14s.
	Flyer boy	1s.
	Fluters	10s., 11s., 12s.
	Engine drivers	40s. to 44s.
	Oiler	36s.
	Fireman	36s. (Helper 30s.)
	Painter	52s.
	Carpenters	54s., 60s.
	Carter	30s.
	Gate-man	24s.
	Watchman	30s.

Appendix D
Male Occupational Categories,
Braid Water Spinning Company

Administrative and Commercial:
Clerk or timekeeper
Bookkeeper
Assistant to manager
Clerk
Timekeeper or superintendent
Watchman
Office [worker]
Flax buyer

Factory Supervisors:
Machine Master
Ruffing Master
Preparing Master
Reeling Master
Spinning Master
Foreman Heckler
Foreman and Engineman

Flax Preparers & Spinners
Rougher
Yarn bundler
Heckle maker
Dye and handle yarn
Dyeing and handling
Drying loft
Yarn bundler, baler etc.

Infrastructure & Mechanical
Belt sewer
Carter
Engine man
Fireman
Gas man
Painter, preparer and finisher
Wood turner
Woodturning, carpenter, labouring work

Other
Millworker
Apprentice to spinning business

Source: Book of Wages and Costs, Braid Water Spinning Company, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast D/1492/8.

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