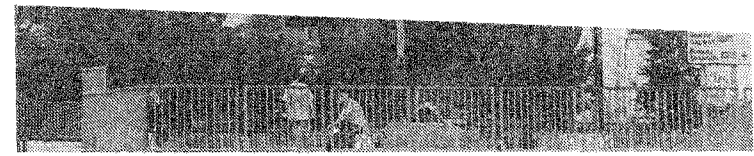


William Street; Cecil Street; Broad Street and Bedford Row.

There are three areas in Raheen, Fedamore, and Moyard, North Circular Road, where NAMA has taken over agricultural lands.



The life and times of entrepreneur Peter Tait

By John O'Shaughnessy

TAIT'S Clock....Tait's Clothing Factory... The Tait Centre...

The question is, how many Limerick people are aware of the origins of such landmarks

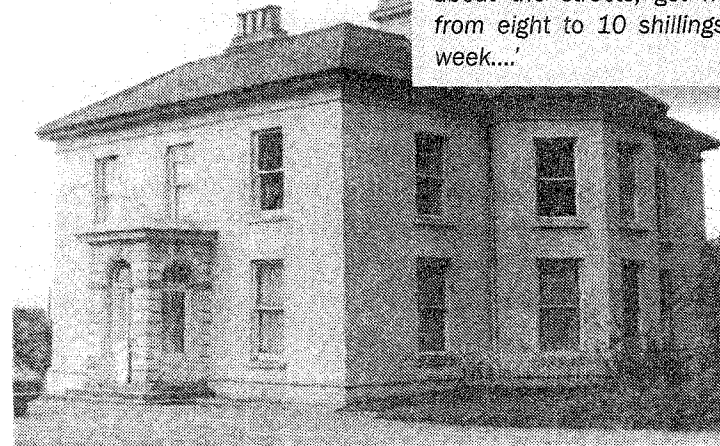
Who was Tait?

The answer is to be found in a most informative new book, Supplier to the Confederacy, the life and times of Peter Tait & Co, Limerick, written by Craig L. Barry and David C. Burt.

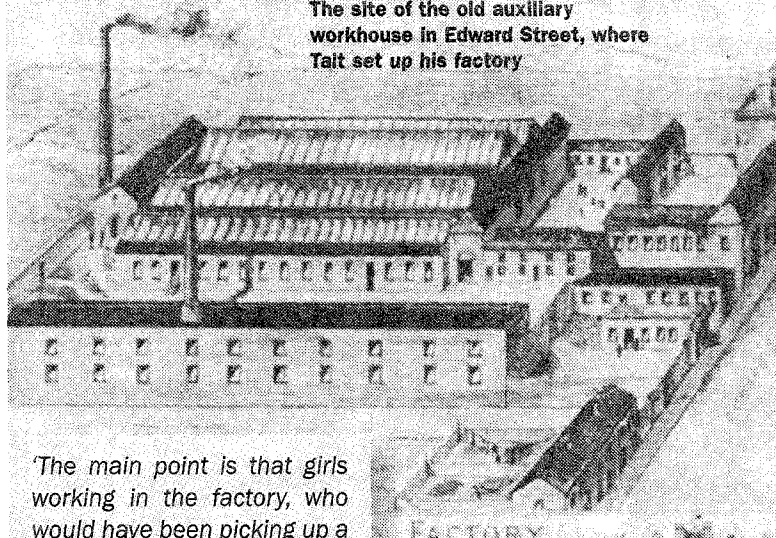
Peter Tait was born in Lerwick, the capital of the Shetland Islands of Scotland in 1828, the son of Thomas Tait and Margaret Linklater.

At the tender age of 16 young Tait left home with three half crowns in his pocket and headed for Limerick, where he gravitated towards the drapery trade and was apprenticed with a Limerick

Southill House, home to William and Rose Tait and their nine children



The site of the old auxiliary workhouse in Edward Street, where Tait set up his factory



'The main point is that girls working in the factory, who would have been picking up a wretched livelihood by making a little lace and hawking it about the streets, get here from eight to 10 shillings a week....'

firm comprised of fellow Scots, Cumine and Mitchell.

In 1853 with his fortunes on the rise, Peter Tait married into nobility and with his wife Rose, he would eventually have nine children.

Rose had lived in the family home at Fort Prospect, but the couple purchased a famed mansion, Southill House.

Showing his entrepreneurial skills, Tait set up business in Bedford Row and placed an advertisement in the Limerick Chronicle asking for 500 shirt makers using the latest steam powered sewing machines.

Thus was set up a new type of working practice-the production line, a new way of sewing garments where each person did a particular job, thereby making each garment quicker and easier to

manufacture.

Tait received his first government orders in 1855 to outfit the Royal Limerick County Regiment, a militia unit with 3,000 uniforms

Two years later, his firm secured major contracts to supply uniforms for British line and rifle regiments serving in India.

In 1858, Peter Tait took out a 999 year lease on the old auxiliary workhouse in Edward Street and set about completely renovating the property turning it into the most modern clothing factory in Europe.

The London Times newspaper even sent over a journalist to visit the Limerick plant, and wrote "the main point is that girls working in the factory, who would have been picking up a wretched livelihood by making a little lace and hawking it about the streets, get here from eight to 10 shillings a week".

The book further reveals that the man who would play a vital part in the story of Peter Tait & Co and the supply of uniforms to the Confederate States during the latter part of the American Civil War, was Peter's elder brother James Linklater Tait.

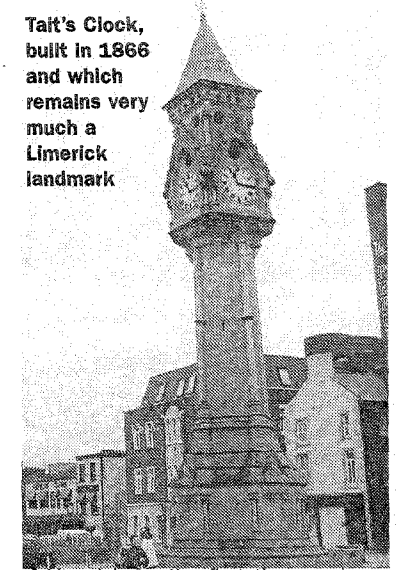
James travelled to the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, where he began initiating contracts with the Confederate government for the supply of army stores and uniform "kits".

However, this book casts doubt on the fact that all so-called 'Tait' jackets supplied to the Confederacy were indeed made by the Tait firm.

It suggests that they were, in fact, a joint effort with the other major British supplier of military clothing of the day-namely Hebbert and Co of London.

In 1865, Peter Tait was elected Mayor

Tait's Clock, built in 1866 and which remains very much a Limerick landmark



of Limerick for the first time, and was re-elected for an unprecedented third term in 1867.

After being defeated in the General Election of 1868 for the Limerick seat in a bitter and underhand election campaign, and because of his pressing engagements in London, Tate resigned the Mayoralty on November 25, 1868.

Tait's Clock, in Baker Place, was built in 1866 in a tribute to Peter Tait for bringing jobs and prosperity to the town, with contributions from John Arnott and George Cannock, Tait's former business partners.

It was handed over to Limerick Corporation in 1867, was refurbished in 2000 and now runs on electricity.

Tait, knighted in 1868, died 22 years later. Rose Tate died in 1906

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