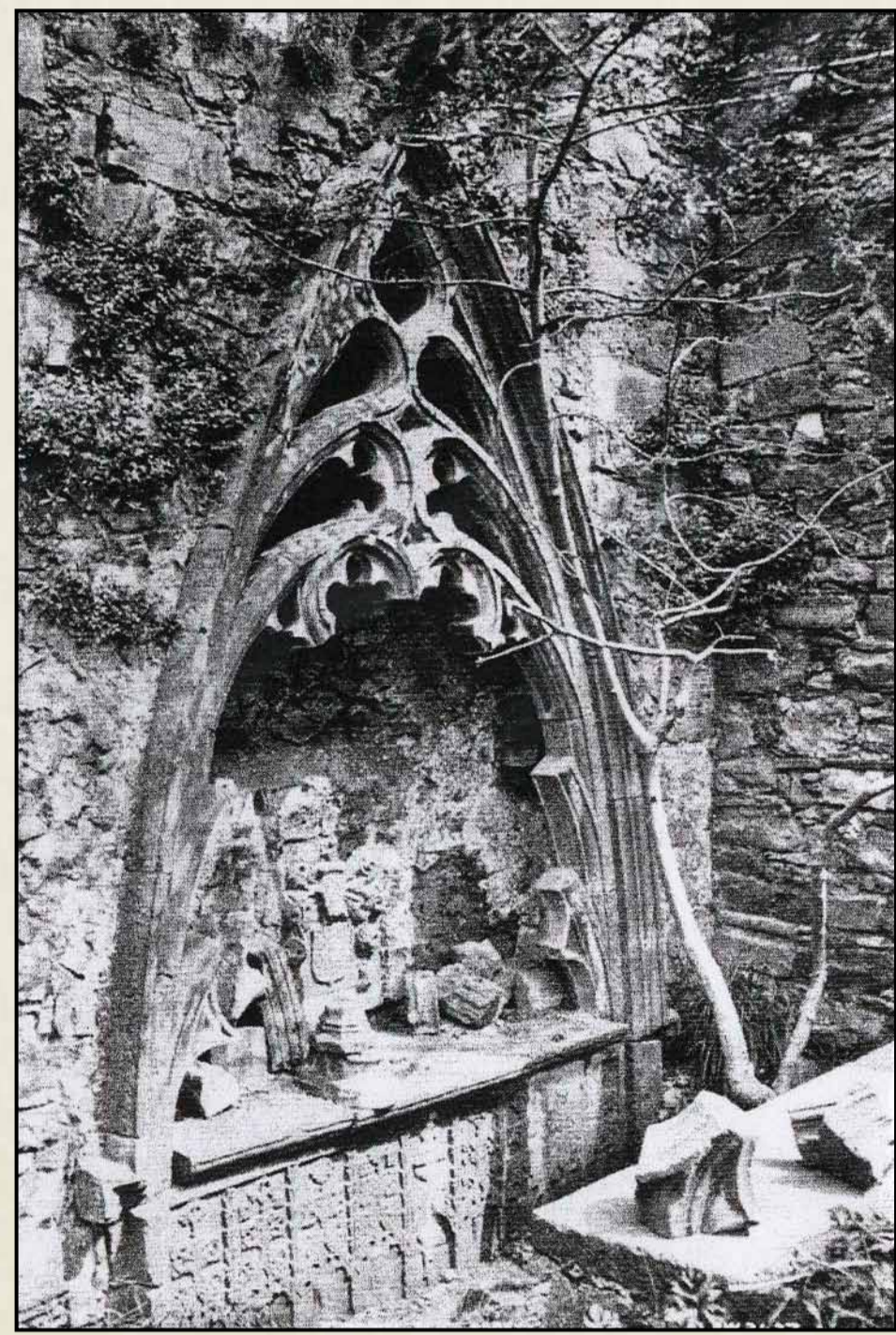


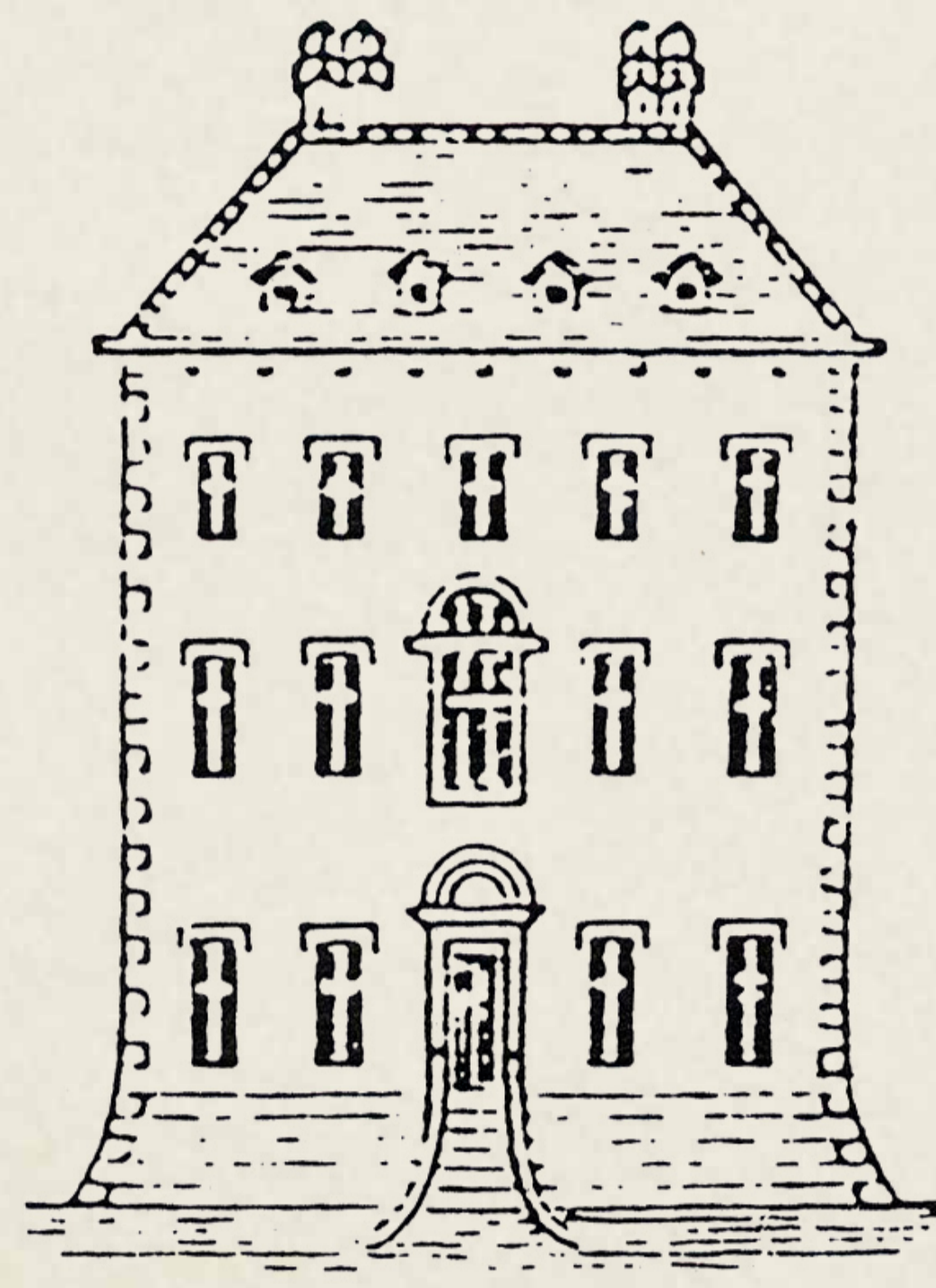
MERCHANT PRINCES OF SLIGO

O'Creans

Between the late 15th and mid 18th centuries the annalists rated the O'Creans as 'merchant princes' of Sligo, opulent, cultured and enjoying a social status comparable with that of the Galway merchants of that era. Eleven of the name, all merchants, figured in King James' General Pardon of 1603 but were excluded, presumably on grounds of religion, from the Corporation on its establishment in 1612. They were also prominent in ecclesiastical affairs and one of the family held the bishopric of Elphin. They also owned an imposing merchant's house on Castle Street, known as O'Crean's Castle.



O'Crean Altar Tomb



O'Crean's Castle from an 18th century sketch

The family's fortunes were rebuilt in the wake of the 1641 Rebellion, primarily by John O'Crean. In official documents he is described as "a gentleman of high station and great estate in the County".

Martins

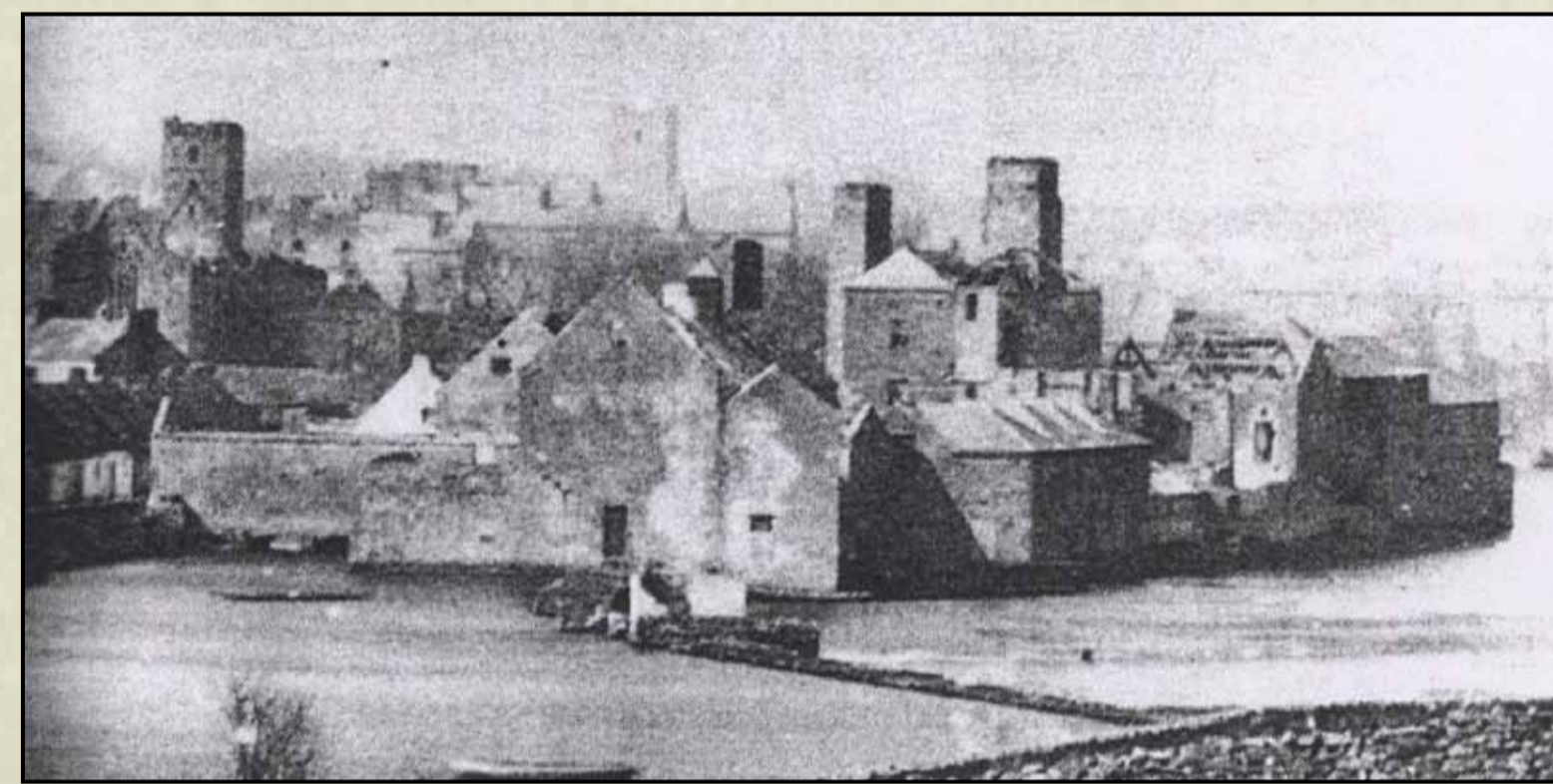
Between the early 18th and mid 19th centuries the Martin family were amongst the most prominent of the Sligo merchants.



Abraham Martin and wife Alicia Cuffe

Abraham Martin (1705-1777) a tanner by profession, leased the Sligo Mills and the adjoining salmon and eel fisheries. His son, John, followed in his father's footsteps and invested a portion of the family's wealth in the purchase of landed properties in the greater Sligo area.

His grandson, Abraham Martin (1772-1853) was foremost amongst the Sligo merchant princes in the opening decades of the 19th century. In an 1820 Trade Directory he was listed as "Merchant, Distiller, Malter and Shipowner of Knox's St" and in his time was widely respected as contributing much to the improvement and progress of Sligo.



The Distillery, Riverside c.1870

He owned and successfully operated a distillery, a flourmill and a bakery and was one of the largest employers of labour in the Sligo of his day. His distillery at the Riverside was very successful, and "Martin's Whiskey" enjoyed a countrywide reputation.

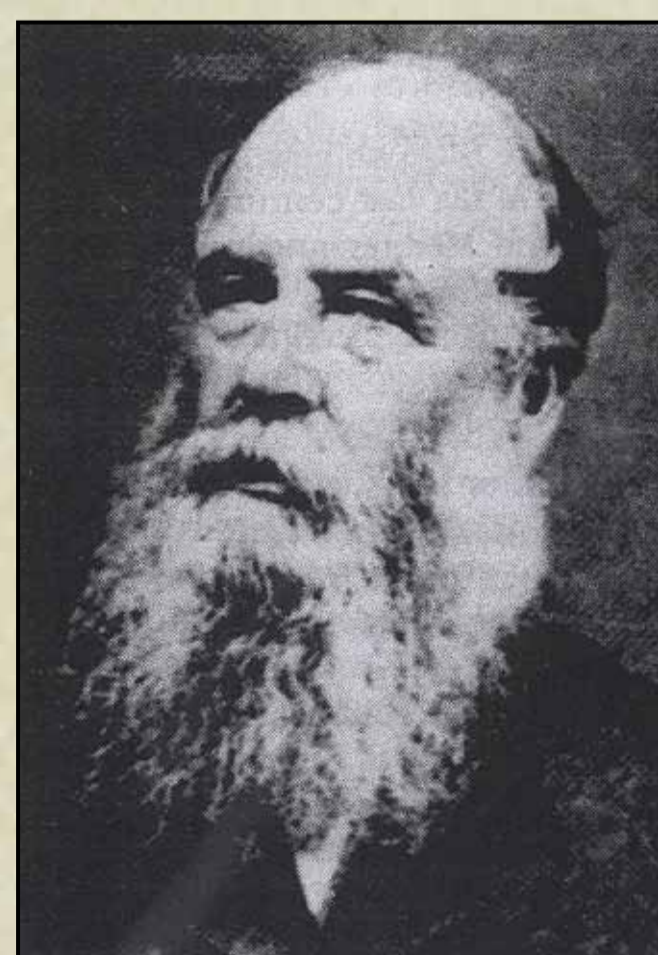
Middleton & Pollexfen

William Middleton, (1819-1882), Merchant and Ship-owner, the son of William Snr. and Elizabeth Pollexfen, succeeded to the extensive family business in 1832.

In partnership with his relation, William Pollexfen, he founded the firm of Messrs. Middleton and Pollexfen, ship-owners and flour-millers, the most successful commercial venture in 19th century Sligo. He was also the principal shareholder and active partner in the Sligo Steam Navigation Company, the success of which was also largely attributable to his enterprise and foresight. He also ventured into property and in 1867 purchased 'The Rosses', as it was called, from the Cooper family and greatly improved the resort by the building of seaside lodges and other developments. In 1876 he was credited with the ownership of 1,650 acres in the County, and could boast of two residences, Avena, Ballisodare, and Elsinore, a summer retreat at Rosses Point.



William Middleton



William Pollexfen

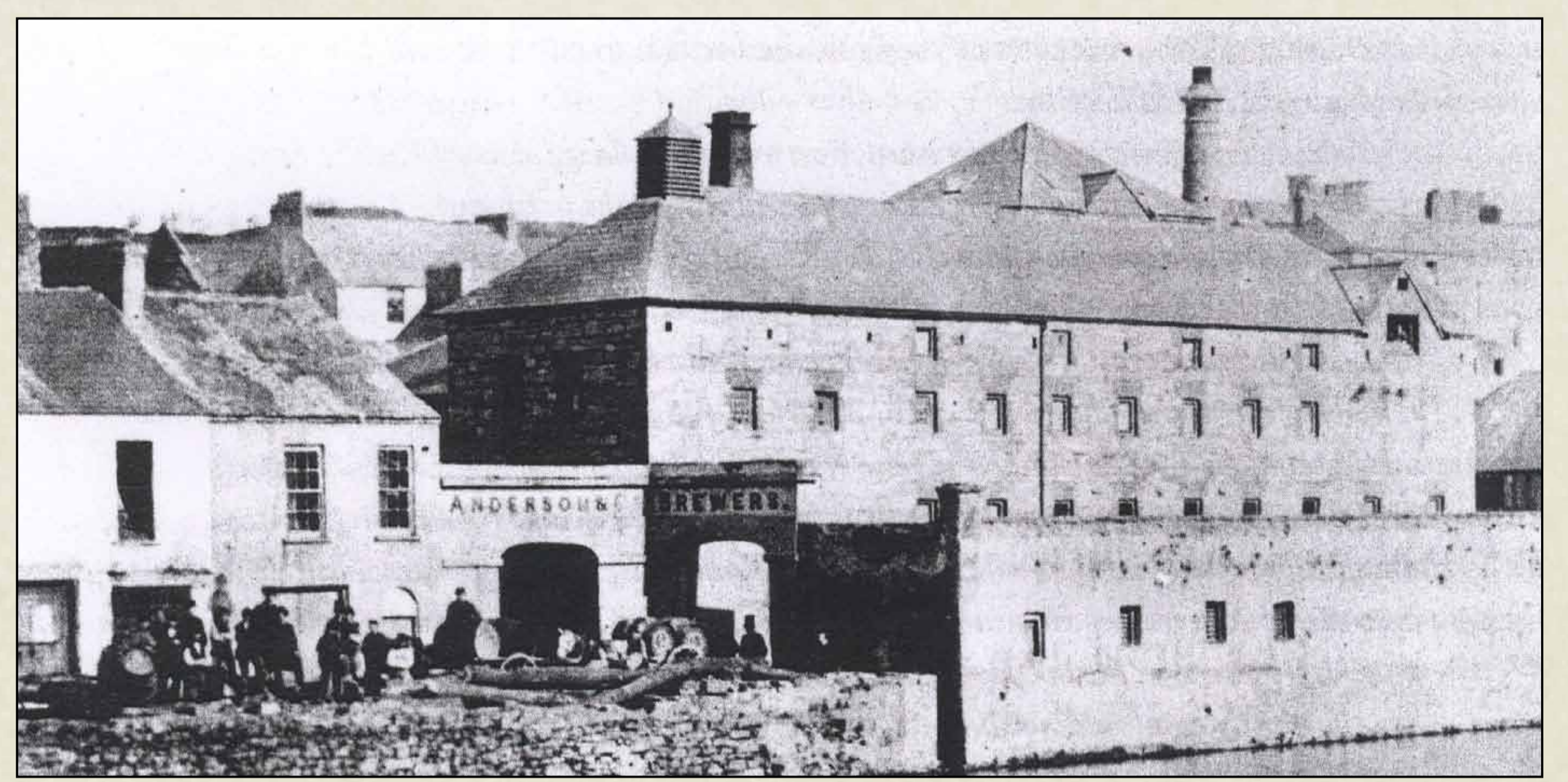
He held a seat on most public bodies including the Town and Harbour Board and was elected an Alderman for the North Ward. As a mercantile man he had no peer in the West of Ireland and for almost half a century, in spite of changing markets and depressions, he successfully controlled the affairs of Middleton & Pollexfen, as senior partner and trusted chief.

Andersons

In the early 19th century Sligo acquired a countrywide reputation for producing ales of excellent quality and taste. This was mostly due to the enterprises of the Anderson family of Farmhill on the Strandhill Road. Brothers, John and Charles Anderson, operated a small brewery and malting house in the late 1790s, where they produced "a plain and wholesome ale".

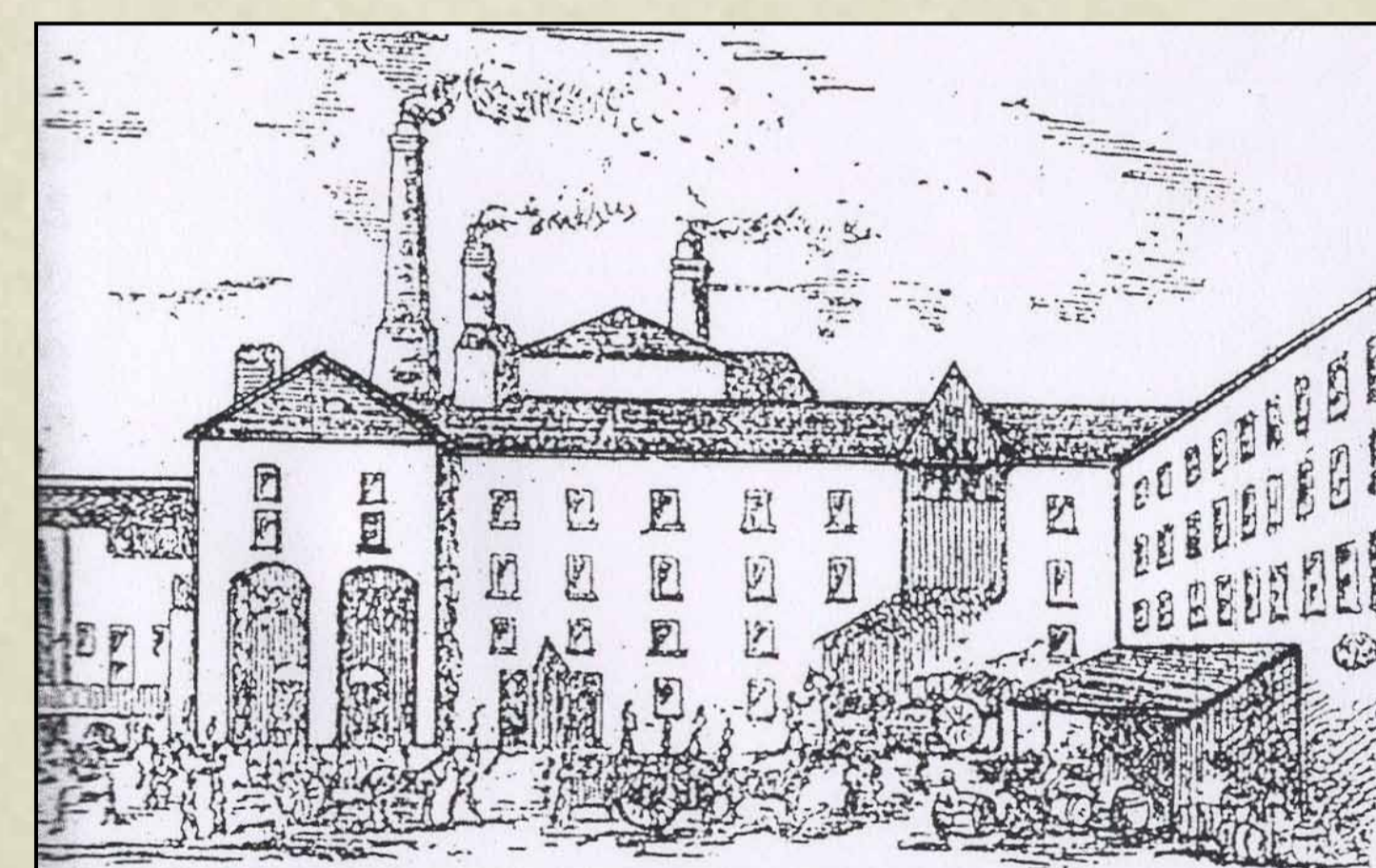


Lough Gill Brewery c.1870

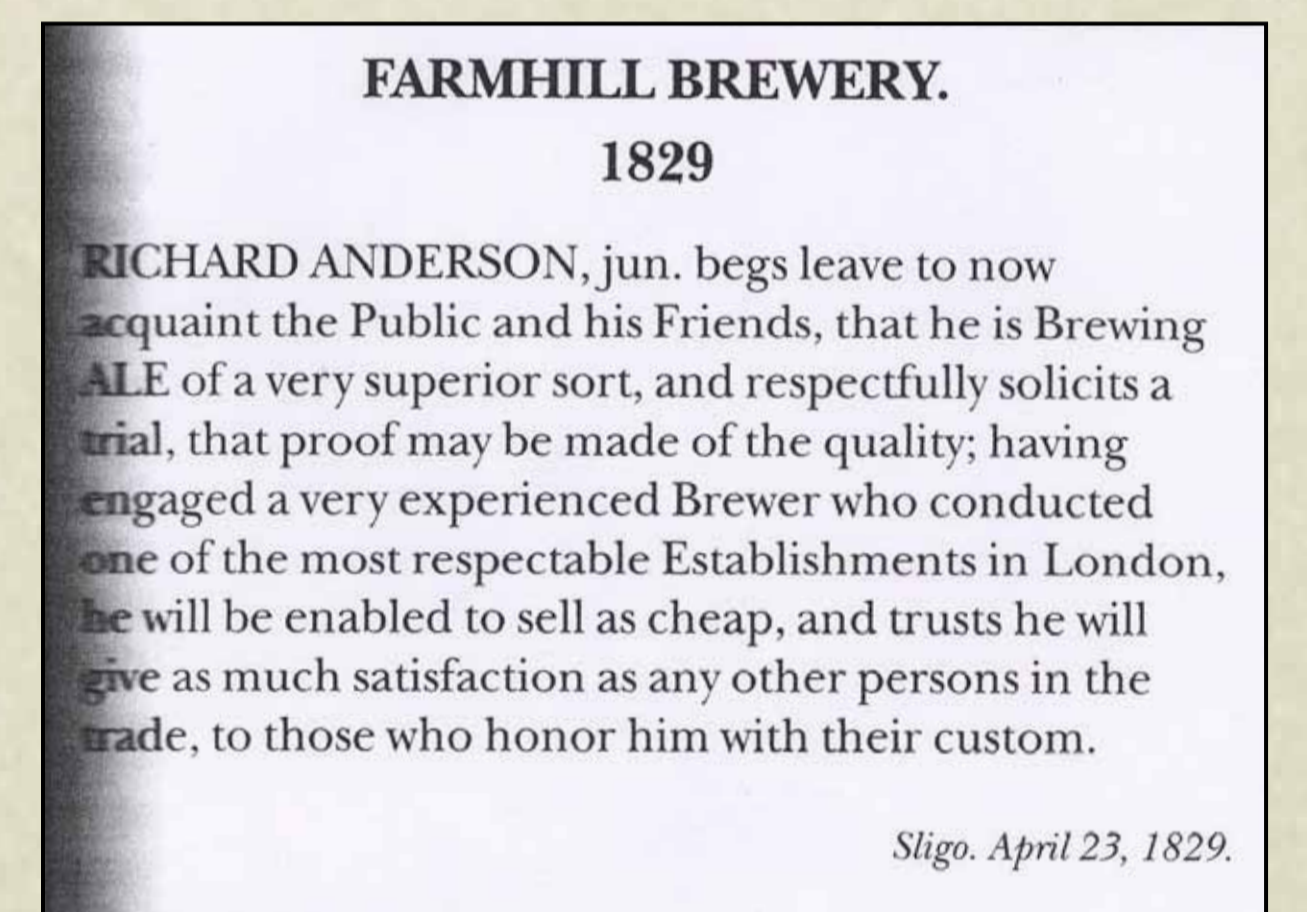


Andersons Brewery c.1875

By the 1830s, they were operating a large premises in Water Lane, before purchasing the Lough Gill Brewery, off Bridge Street in 1849. John Anderson, an Alderman of the Corporation, was the head of the firm until 1855. It was principally through his enterprise that the brewery was enlarged and modernised rendering it one of the most complete establishments of its type in the Province.



Lough Gill Brewery

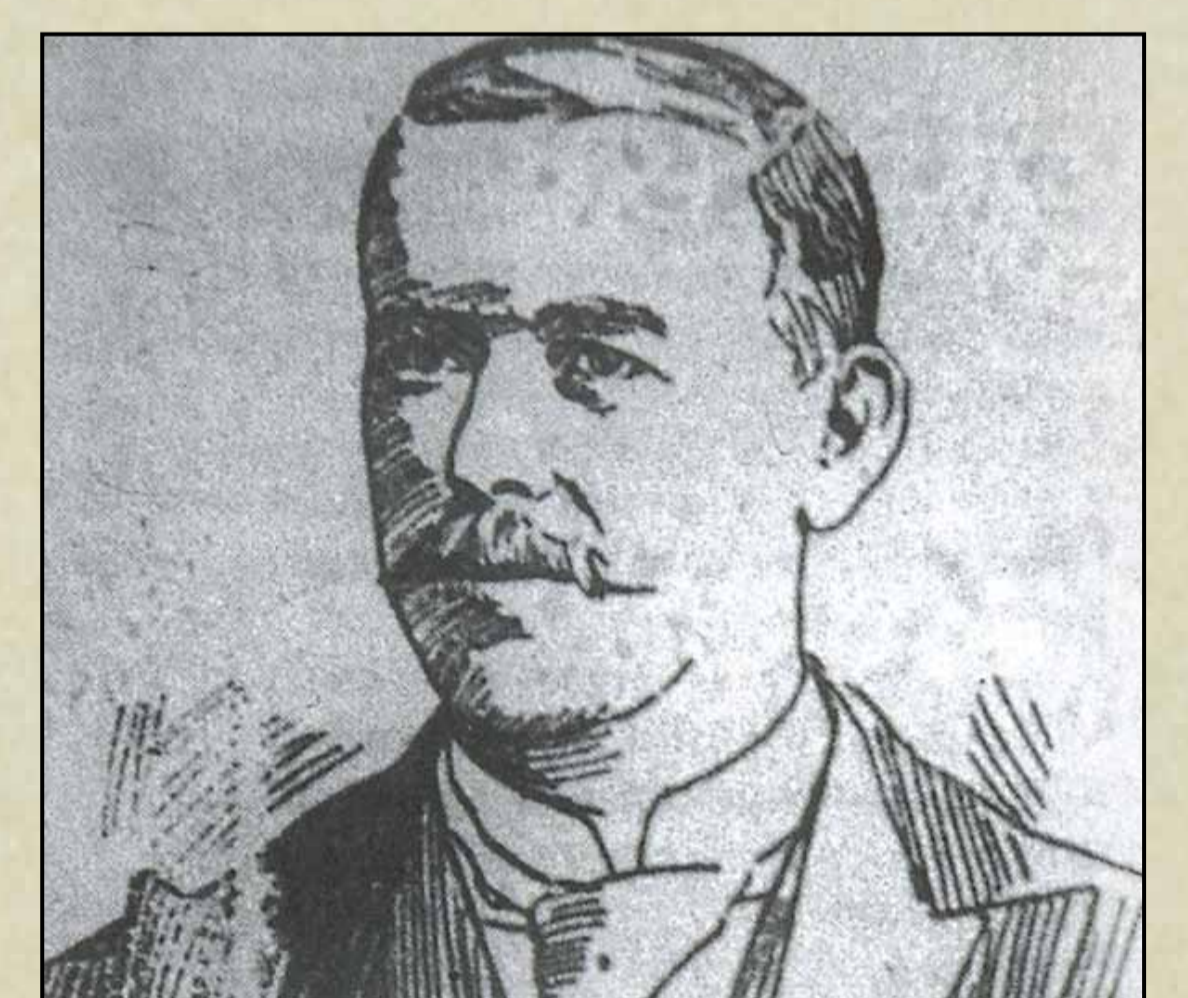


Brewery advertisement in the Sligo Journal

Another scion of the family, Richard Anderson Jnr., had continued brewing at Farmhill, where he engaged an experienced brewer from London to assist in the production of ale of a "very superior stout".

Arthur Jackson, (1853-1938)

Merchant and Company Director settled in Sligo following his marriage to Alice, the daughter of William Pollexfen. In 1892, he took over the management of Messrs W. & G.T. Pollexfen Ltd., merchants and flour millers of Sligo and Ballisodare.



Arthur Jackson

Possessed of extraordinary energy and an unlimited capacity for hard work, he quickly gained himself a reputation as an enterprising businessman and "the last of the great merchants who made Sligo famous as a trading port". The Pollexfen firm prospered and his name was well known in the Corn Exchanges throughout the world.

In 1886 he gained a seat on the Harbour Board on which he served for over half a century. He was also Managing Director of the Sligo Steam Navigation Company and a director of both the Sligo Gas Company and the Great Southern Railways Company. Arthur Jackson, J.P., a man who played such a dominant role in Sligo affairs for half a century, died at his residence 'Lisroyan' in February 1938, in his 85th year.

