

DUBLIN CITY ARCHIVES:

Ch/08:

Records of:

**Duchess of Marlborough
Famine Relief Committee 1880**

**Dublin City Archives
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Introduction

The Duchess of Marlborough Relief Fund was founded in December 1879 for the relief of distress in Ireland. This distress had been caused by the successive failures of the harvests of 1877 – 1879, and by 1880 it had developed into the Little Famine.

The Duchess of Marlborough was born in 1822 as the second child of Charles William Vane, 3rd Marquess of Londonderry and Lady Frances Anne Emily Vane-Tempest. In 1843 she married Sir John Winston Spencer-Churchill, 7th Duke of Marlborough, who became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1876. As a result of her marriage, Lady Frances Anne Emily Vane was styled as Marchioness of Blandford on 12 July 1843 and her name became Spencer-Churchill. During her marriage she had eleven children. In 1857 she became Duchess of Marlborough. She died on 16 April 1899 at age 77 at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England.

The Duchess was “deeply moved by the famines in Ireland and deems it imperative that private charity should step into supplement the ordinary system of poor relief and so she makes an appeal to the generosity of the British public.”¹

Because of the great Famine in 1845 till 1849 there was a great willingness to help among the population of the United Kingdom. So the Duchess of Marlborough found many donors who supported her to establish the Fund. In April 1880 she referred the responsibilities of the Administration to Trustees. In July 1880 it became clear, that there would be a good harvest in Autumn. Therefore the work of the Fund wasn't needed anymore and it was wound up at the end of the year.

The collection of the Fund consists of two boxes of documents relating to the administration of the Fund and distribution of relief in the Poor Law Union of Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Includes docketts authorizing issue of Indian Meal to named individuals. It is likely that the records were in the keeping of Sir Benjamin Whitney, who served as Clerk of the Crown in Co. Mayo from 1869, possibly because he served in an official capacity on the local committee. De-accessioned by National Archives of Ireland and deposit with Dublin City Archives. Received in March 2005. The second deposit was received from National Archives of Ireland in June 2008.

The collection covers the period from January till September 2008 and the documents have been numbered in straight successive sequence from Ch/08/01 to Ch/08/38 by descending importance.

The Great and the Little Famine were both very formative events in Irish History. To preserve the records of this Fund, which supported the Irish people, who suffered from hunger in 1880, is important for the next generations.

Listed by: Christiane Arndt
 Kristin Laue
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¹ The Irish Times – Tuesday, 23 December 1879, page 6.

Ch/08 Duchess of Marlborough Famine Relief Fund 1880

General Administration Local Committee

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/01	Minute Book, Local Committee Castlebar Union	
	January – September 1880	1 book (35 pages)
Ch/08/02	Ledger, Local Committee Castlebar Union	
	February – September 1880	1 book (55 pages)
Ch/08/03	Memorandum showing, Local Committee Castlebar Union	
	10 February 1880	1 item
General Administration Local Committee – Announcements and correspondence		
Ch/08/04	Circular letters concerning meetings and decisions of the Fund, mainly from Local Relief Committee Castlebar, County Mayo	
	January –June 1880	35 items
Ch/08/05	Printed form letters from the Fund, regarding different matters	
	22 April + 9 August 1880, two undated	4 items
Ch/08/06	Handbills concerning the Fund	
	N.D.	2 items
Ch/08/07	Letters and notes concerning various issues of the Fund (meetings, allocations...)	
	24 January – 24 September 1880	65 items

Food Distribution – Allocation Forms

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/08	Allocation Forms District 1	
	N.D.	30 items
Ch/08/09	Allocation Forms District 2	
	March – May 1880, some undated	62 items
Ch/08/10	Allocation Forms District 3	
	March – July 1880, some undated	51 items
Ch/08/11	Allocation Forms District 4	
	February – August 1880, some undated	62 items
Ch/08/12	Allocation Forms District 5	
	May – July 1880, some undated	38 items
Ch/08/13	Allocation Forms District 6	
	N.D.	46 items
Ch/08/14	Allocation Forms District 7	
	March – July 1880, some undated	51 items
Ch/08/15	Allocation Forms District unknown	
	26 – 30 June 1880	7 items

Food Distribution – Lists

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/16	Recommended families for seed potato in Ballintubber and Killawalla	
	10 April 1880	1 item
Ch/08/17	Applicants and recommended names for seed in District 6 and District 1	
	N.D.	2 items
Ch/08/18	Lists of parishioners in the Castlebar Union, who haven't received potatoes and oats from the latest allocation by the Fund. With endorsement: "Father Sheridan's list"	
	N.D.	2 items
Ch/08/19	Applicants for seed potatoes in the Belcarra District	
	22 March 1880, one undated	2 items
Ch/08/20	List of persons returned for seed in Balla Parish	
	15 March 1880	1 item
Ch/08/21	Names returned for seed potatoes in Castlebar, District 3	
	N.D.	1 item
Ch/08/22	List of persons, who got some of last allocation of seed potatoes by the Fund	
	N.D.	1 item
Ch/08/23	Lists with names regarding seed potatoes	
	N.D.	8 items
Ch/08/24	List with names, residence, holding – District 2, Kiltimagh ?	
	N.D.	1 item (4 pages)

Food Distribution – Miscellaneous

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/25	Tenders for meals as support for the Fund for one month, offered by different people	
	February – May 1880	44 items
Ch/08/26	Order from District 4 from Edward Gibbons to Mr. Sheridan (Storekeeper) to give food to several people	
	7 – 8 April 1880	5 items
Ch/08/27	Receipt books / stubs for meals and Harvest Tickets	
	N.D.	2 items (104 and 50 pages)

Food Distribution – Dockets

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/28	Dockets District 1	
	11 February – 10 August 1880	215 items
Ch/08/29	Dockets District 2	
	11 February – 16 August 1880	407 items
Ch/08/30	Dockets District 3	
	12 February – 24 July	178 items

Food Distribution – Dockets (Continued)

Doc. No.	Description	
Ch/08/31	Dockets District 4	
	10 February – 15 August 1880	433 items
Ch/08/32	Dockets District 5	
	9 February – 15 May 1880	167 items
Ch/08/33	Dockets District 6	
	22 April – 21 July	148 items
Ch/08/34	Dockets District 7	
	16 April – 23 August 1880	28 items
Ch/08/35	Dockets District unknown	
	30 April – 12 August 1880	208 items
Ch/08/36	Dockets Variation II	
	27 – 29 February 1880	87 items
Ch/08/37	Dockets for potatoes	
	24 March 1880	263 items
Ch/08/38	Envelopes for docketts	
	9 March – 25 August 1880	8 items
