



McCann's Irish Oatmeal - A Lucky Cargo



The story of McCann's Irish oatmeal dates back to 1800 when John McCann built a mill at Beamond, four miles from Drogheda on the east coast of Ireland. The mill was powered by water diverted from the Nanny River, from which Mr. McCann's rod and line hooked some excellent trout.

John McCann's Irish Oatmeal secured many prizes for its excellent quality over the years. A double success in the London Exhibition and the Dublin Exhibition in 1851, was followed by first prize at the Philadelphia Exhibition in 1876 and an award for "Uniformity of Granulation" in 1893 at the Chicago Exhibition.

In 1898, the company moved to new premises on Merchant's Quay in Drogheda Port. Two years later the directors recorded with pride that their mills were equipped with all the best modern machinery procurable and were working night and day.

McCann's Irish Oatmeal has long been a favourite with American consumers, and still remains its major market today. Its success in America came about by accident. In the mid-1800's an American sailing vessel arrived in the port of Drogheda with a cargo for Mr. McCann. The ship's captain requested an exchange cargo for ballast on the return journey. All that Mr. McCann could offer on the day was oatmeal. The captain, who was on a very tight sailing schedule reluctantly accepted and brought his cargo back home to the US where it was tasted there for the very first time. The natural nutty taste of the oatmeal was an immediate hit and this maritime link was the start of a flourishing trade for McCann's Irish Oatmeal.

In 1964, Odlums acquired the business of John McCann's and transferred production to their own oatmeal mill in Sallins, Co. Kildare.

Beamond Mill

The mill was built in 1800 by John McCann and used a steam engine for power when the river was low. The oatmeal produced was of very high quality and won many prizes throughout the world in the period 1851 to 1883. During this time a lot of meal was exported to the United States of America. John McCann Jr. merged with R. R. Hill of Drogheda in 1896 and Beamond Mill closed in 1898. The building was demolished in 1936. The McCanns came from North Louth and were still in milling in Newry up to the 1990's. The family are buried in Kilsharvan graveyard in a railed plot with no name.