

NAAS LOCAL HISTORY GROUP



William Staples in 1882.

WILLIAM STAPLES – CHIEF CITIZEN OF NAAS

William Staples if alive today could arguably be described as the “father figure” of Naas. As a business man and public representative he had no equal. Originally from County Wexford he was one of the most prominent, successful and well-liked men in the Town at the turn of the century. He had a great interest in the local community and was very much involved in many of the local improvements made at the time. As a citizen of his adopted town he showed great concern for the well being of his fellow citizens being a supporter of many works of charity and acting as a friendly neighbour to all he had dealings with.

He came from an old and well-respected family in the Barony of forth, Co. Wexford. His early education was in Curraclloe and he showed a great interest and aptitude for business matters from an early age. He was accordingly apprenticed in Dublin to acquaint himself with an all round knowledge of the grocery, wine and spirits trade. He learned his trade in Thomas Street, Dublin, in a house run by a Mr. Dolan. This prepared him well to start up his business in Naas. He did manage a business in Robertstown for a short while before setting up in Naas.

He was a political activist and was imprisoned along for two months along with Mr. Cahill, editor of the *Leinster Leader* and Mr, Edward O’Connor of the Commercial Hotel for backing the cause of the rent-racked. You can guess he received hearty welcome from the local nationalists on his return to Naas.

At community level he was he was heavily involved with the St Vincent De Paul and was a staunch supporter of the Nurses Association. As Chairman of the Town Commissioners and a Justice of the Peace he ranked highly among the town’s dignitaries. In fact he read the address to welcome King Edward VII on his visit to Naas in 1904. As a founder member of the *Leinster Leader* he was responsible for helping provide news to Kildare and the surrounding counties in a time of great political and land problems. He can certainly lay claim to be a “First Citizen of Naas”.