

## The Hill including Providence Place



**The Hill c.1900**

The chimneys of houses in Providence Place can be seen on the right

### The Hill

The Hill is one of the oldest streets in Groomsport. When the first Ordnance Survey maps were produced in the 1830s, Groomsport had only two streets – Main Street and the street we know as The Hill. In Griffith's Valuation of County Down (1864) and in some subsequent Valuation Revision Books, the street was referred to as "Upper Row". From 1908 it was recorded as being "Hill Street".

The Hill was originally a row of fishermen's houses which had a communal back street. Across the back street from each house was a long garden where fishing nets could be spread out to dry.

In 1864 there were 29 houses in Upper Row, one of which had been built "in rear" (in a back garden). The houses varied in size and the annual valuations ranged from £1 5s to £4 10s. Most of the houses had annual valuations between £2 and £3.

From the 1900s, the Valuation Revision Books recorded a growing number of additions to some of the properties on Hill Street. These were, variously, referred to as "back house in rear" or "back hut in rear" or, simply, "hut".

Some families who lived on The Hill moved into the building in their back garden for the summer months. They rented their main house to holidaymakers and earned extra income for the family.

### Providence Place

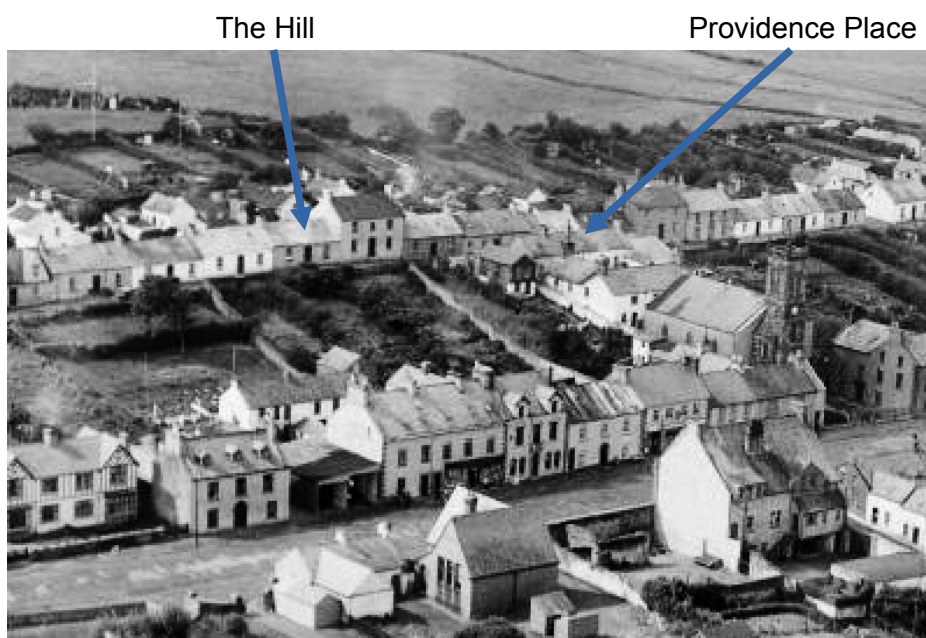
All of the houses on the part of The Hill that is parallel to Main Street faced the sea, with the exception of the four houses in Providence Place.

Groomsport's first Presbyterian minster, Rev Isaac Mack was appointed in 1841. He oversaw the building of the church in 1843 and, behind it, in 1845, the first school in Groomsport. In the space which remained between the school and The Hill, Rev Mack built four small houses which fronted The Hill. They were known as "Providence Place".

Unlike the rest of the houses on The Hill, the houses of Provident Place had no gardens and had some of the lowest annual valuations in the street. Whereas the other houses in The Hill were leased from Robert Perceval-Maxwell, the landlords of Providence Place were the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church. Providence Place could be said to be the first social housing ever built in Groomsport.

After the school moved to its new building on Main Street, the old school building was converted into six dwellings. The old school building and Providence Place were demolished in 1962.

This portion of an aerial photograph, taken in 1929, shows The Hill, with many buildings in back gardens and Providence Place, behind the Church and the old school.



[www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/XPW028694](http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/image/XPW028694) Copyright: Historic England

Peter Gibson  
January 2023

Sources:

"Tides and Times in the Port" by Rev Dr David Irwin

Griffith's Valuation: <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

Valuation Revision Books: <https://apps.proni.gov.uk/Val12B/Search.aspx>

Photographs supplied by Perry Moore.