

The story of Taj Connemara begins in the 1700s when the great Nawab of the Carnatic orchestrated the construction of palaces across Madras, thirty-seven of them to be precise. The city was dotted with majestic architecture, each palace with soldiers, staff, British experts and a plethora of occasions to entertain his guests with lavish meals and gifts. Such was the extravagance of the Nawab's lifestyle.

A guesthouse of the palace "Ameer Bagh" accommodated the Nawab's surgeon, John Binny, who eventually became the Sheriff of Madras. When Binny bought the guesthouse, it was considered a separate entity and publicly referred to as "Garden House". Many of the Nawab's palaces were converted into hotels. During this era, the transformation of the "Garden House" to a hotel gave birth to what we call today "Taj Connemara". In truth, this hotel was merely a guesthouse attached to a palace. Such was the beauty of the building on its own.

The hotel opened in 1854 as "Imperial" and is South India's oldest, if not the



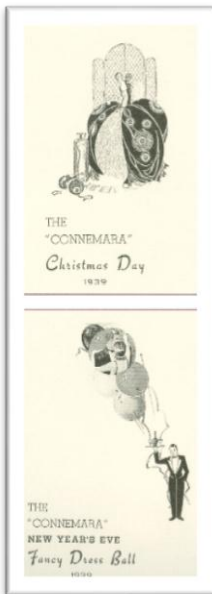
country's, according to the newspaper archive. In 1891, it was named "Connemara" to honour Robert Bourke, the Baron of Connemara, a cultural district in western Ireland known for its picturesque expanses of mountains and lakes as well as its traditional folk music. Lord Connemara was respected for his immense contribution to the city's development during his tenure as Governor of Madras.



the most recognized people of Madras. Amongst their various pioneering feats was the introduction of centralized air-

conditioning with an apparatus from Britain, the addition of a swimming pool and the sourcing of ice all the way from Canada to create the city's finest cocktails. Spencer & Co. gave it a prestigious place amongst some of the world's most luxurious hotels.

dinner parties for



In 1984, "Connemara" was handed over to Taj along with "West End" in Bangalore and "The Savoy" in Ooty, to continue their legacies and are now boasted off as our heritage hotels with a colonial charm. This hotel's past is not confined to its multiple transformations. It's the stories of people and its significance in Madras that make its history as alluring as it is. Our selection of recipes from menus of the past and cocktails intricately designed with ethnic ingredients are luxuries of Madras' British era tinted with modernity. The walls decorated with centuries-old photos and drawings support our storytelling and the services packaged with our associates' warmth and sincere care pave the way for Taj Connemara's mesmerizing journey to the past.