

Irish Records Research

Begin at the Beginning ...

- Start with yourself and work your way back
- Exhaust all records in the country your ancestor settled in

Because of the lack of available census records for Ireland, you might need to know:

- Jurisdictions of Ireland
- Where your ancestor lived in Ireland
- Their religion

Jurisdictions of Ireland

- Province
- County ➤ Barony
- Poor Law Union
- Parish
- Civil
- Ecclesiastical
- Church of Ireland
- Roman Catholic
- Townland

Ulster & Northern Ireland

- Ulster the province is different from Northern Ireland
- When Ireland was partitioned in 1922, the counties of Ulster were allowed to vote on whether to join the Irish Free State or remain in the United Kingdom
- Three voted for the Irish Free State. The others voted for the UK.
- These six now form Northern Ireland which Unionists refer to as "Ulster" to separate from Ireland

Poor Law Union Maps

- Old territorial divisions used for the purpose of describing real property valuation and ownership
- Awarded to someone in recognition of their service to the English Monarchs
- Subdivision of a County
- Example: Old age pension claims (after 1908) organized by barony then civil parish

Barony

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Parish

- **Civil** ○ Same names and boundaries as the ecclesiastical parishes of the Church of Ireland (Anglican Church), the Established Church until 1870
- **Ecclesiastical** ○ Roman Catholic Church parishes are only ecclesiastical and often have different names and boundaries than the civil parishes in area

Townland

- About 61,117 townlands
- Named after topographical or man-made features
- Some only a few acres in size, some thousands of acres in size
- Smallest geographical unit
- Some townlands and counties have the same name
- Several townlands in a parish **PLANTATION OF ULSTER**

King James I successfully colonized Ulster

Beneficiaries of land in Ulster:

- Lords/Gentry from England & Scotland
- Veterans of the Irish wars
- The London Companies
- Trinity College in Dublin
- Established Church of Ireland

Pre-1717: Early Colonial - PENAL LAWS: 1695-1710

The Penal Laws forced Irish Catholics and Protestant dissenters (such as Presbyterians) to accept the reformed Christian faith as defined by the English state-established Anglican Church.

Irish Catholic were forbidden to:

- Exercise his religion
- Keep church registers
- Receive education, hold public office, vote

Pre-1717: Early Colonial: RECORDS AND SOURCES

- Census Substitutes (next slide)
- Deeds-began in 1708; 2% of the population
- Memorials (IGP Headstone Project <https://www.igp-web.com/IGPArchives/headstones.htm> and newspapers)
- Registry of Deed Index Project (<https://irishdeedsindex.net/>)
- Estate Papers (wills)
- Passenger and Immigration Index -William P. Filby

CENSUS SUBSTITUTES

- Land Records/Surveys
- Registry of Deeds (est. 1708)
- Muster Rolls
- Subsidy Rolls (records of taxation – 12 – 17th c.)
- Church Records
- Depositions
- Estate Records (National Archives of Ireland has overview, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has advice for exploring paper collections)

Church records

- Baptismal and marriage records before 1864 are church (ecclesiastical) records
- Burial registers kept by only about 20% of parishes until 1880; give only the name of the deceased and the date of burial
- When church records start for a particular area see *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* by John Grenham
- Depends on the denomination if records exist
- **Catholic** parish registers for many rural areas were not kept until the 1820s while records for urban areas started earlier
- Each parish kept its own records
- Baptisms, marriages, and some burial records
- Fewer than half the parishes register burials before 1900

- The National Library of Ireland (NLI) microfilmed registers from the majority of Catholic parishes (Indexes at Ancestry and FindMyPast) up to 1900 and are online
- The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) microfilmed records for six counties and some are online
- Of 1153 parishes, FamilySearch has records of 398 as of 2020. The NLI copies are available on FamilySearch.org
- The Irish Family History Foundation at www.rootsireland.ie has some records for all 32 counties
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, (www.IrishGenealogy.ie) has covered areas not included on rootsireland
- The **Church of Ireland** registers start much earlier than the Roman Catholic Church
- As early as 1634, local parishes required to keep records of christenings and burials in registers. The majority start in the years between 1770 and 1820
- The original indexes are available at the National Archives
- Transcripts and images are available at The National Archive of Ireland, FindMyPast, and at FamilySearch
- The Genealogical Office at the National Library of Ireland holds abstracts of Prerogative Marriage License Bonds from 1630 to 1858

Websites for Church Records

- Family History Foundation - Subscription based
- Irish Genealogy - Free site
- Ancestry Library Edition - Indexes for certain years
- Familysearch.org - Indexes and some records.
- Irish Ancestors Where to find them
- FindMyPast - Subscription based
- Ulster History Foundation - Paid site
- Search the net for transcribed records

Late Colonial : 1717-1783 FIVE WAVES OF MIGRATION

- 1717-1718: First Wave: Drought, rack renting (excessive rent for property), diminished trade in wool, persecution
- 1725-1729: Second Wave: Drought, scarcity of provisions, rack-renting, silver shortage
- 1740-1741: Third Wave: Famine
- 1754-1755: Fourth Wave: Drought and effective propaganda
- 1771-1775: Fifth Wave: Rack-renting

Late Colonial: 1717-1783 Records and Sources

- *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church, 1613-1840, (Record of Ministers) (book)*
- *History of congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and biographical notices of eminent Presbyterian ministers and laymen (book)*
- *Estate Papers-Ireland: Researching Scots-Irish Ancestors* by William Roulston (book)
- PRONI (Public Records Office of Northern Ireland)
- Census substitutes

Pre-Famine : 1783-1845

- 1791 – Catholic Relief Acts - relieving Catholics of certain political, educational, and economic disabilities
- 1803 – Passenger Acts - price went up. Emigration dropped
- 1829 – Catholic Emancipation - Catholic Church registers begin
- 1838 – Poor Law Unions created

Pre-Famine : 1783-1845 Records and Sources

- Church Records – FamilySearch, Irish Genealogy, RootsIreland, FindMyPast
- Catholic / Church of Ireland (Anglican)
- Tax Records – FamilySearch, FindMyPast, National Archives
- Tithe Applotment Books-1823-38 (names of townland occupants)
- Poor Law/Workhouse – Ancestry, National Archives, FamilySearch, FindMyPast ➤ Census substitutes

Poor Law Union and Workhouse Records

1838-Poor Law Unions established

- No comprehensive guide exists
- Migration came from overflow of workhouses
- Flooded into Liverpool for relief. See England Workhouse Records. Sent elsewhere to work for 6 months then shipped to US
- Became Superintendent Registrar's Districts

Irish Census Records

- 1821 to 1891 mostly destroyed
- What is left of 1821-1851, the 1901 and 1911 on-line at the NAI, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc.
- No census taken in 1921 due to Irish Civil War
- 1926 census will be released in 2027

Famine : 1845-1851 RECORDS AND SOURCES

1845-1851-The Great Hunger

- Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site of Canada (Emigration going to NY. Coffin ships going to Canada – slow ships, 30% die)
- *New York Emigrant Savings Bank* – Ancestry (Single women migration – they send home money. One brother stays home)
- Evictions (<https://irishfamineeviction.com/>) Irish Famine Eviction Project
- Passenger lists – NARA (National Archives and Records Administration) passenger lists listed, not a name search
- Ancestry, FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc.
- Church Records
- FindMyPast, FamilySearch, etc.
- Tithe Applotment: 1823-38
- National Archives, Ancestry, FamilySearch
- Griffith's Valuation: 1847-1864 (Head of Household)
- AskAboutIreland, Ancestry, FamilySearch, FindMyPast

Civil Registration

Know the Superintendent Registrar's District

- Began in 1845 for Church of Ireland (Anglican) marriages and in 1864 for all BDMs
- Registration districts set up in boundaries of existing Poor Law Unions
- RootsIreland for counties with parents' names for births and father's name for marriages
- Northern Ireland - refer to PRONI
- The Family Search Library, Ancestry LE have indexes for civil records (1845-1958) ➤ Contact Registrar's office for other years

1851-1921: Records and Sources

- Valuation of Property
- Griffith's Valuation (Valuation Revision Books)
- Civil Registration –1864
- Census –1901, 1911
- RC Church Records – some don't start until 1850's
- Registry of Deeds – (Registry of Deeds Project at <https://irishdeedsindex.net/>) ➤ Wills and Testamentary Records: 1858-1920 ➤ Major gen. databases, NAI, Irish Genealogy, etc.

1851-1921: Why Records Lost?

- Civil War –1922-1923 – Bombing of the Public Records Office (now called the National Archives)
- In 1922 Anti-Treaty forces put ammunitions into the PRO
- Fired upon by cannons (28 June 1922), fires started and blew up everything in inner offices scattering documents
- Census-only fragments survive before 1901
- Wills-most destroyed; indexes survived
- Church Registers for Church of Ireland