

## **IRISH GENEALOGY RESEARCH GUIDE**

Ireland can be one of the most challenging countries in which to do genealogy research. Using an organized approach can significantly increase your chances of finding your Irish ancestors.

### **1. Select Your Research Goal**

- Decide what you want to know
- Your research question will determine what records you should search
  - Family Relationships
    - Birth and Baptismal Records
    - Marriage Records
    - Census Records
  - Family Residence in Ireland
    - Valuations/Tax Records
    - Census Records and Census Substitutes
    - Land and Estate Records

### **2. Start with What You Know**

- Gather Known Family Information
- Determine the Source of Your Information and Its Reliability
- Check the Original Record Whenever Possible
- Verify Facts with Multiple Sources
- Document What You Know, Including Sources
- Work Backwards to the Irish Immigrant

### **3. Search U.S. Records for the Irish Place of Origin**

Success with Irish research depends on knowing the parish or townland where your ancestor came from in Ireland. Find U.S. records for everyone in your family (past or present) who was born in Ireland that might provide a clue to where they came from. Investigate neighbors, church groups, business associates and witnesses on documents.

- Family Records
- Obituaries, Death Records and Gravestones
- Birth and Marriage Records
- Church Records
- Newspapers
- Military Records
- Land and Court Records
- Immigration and Naturalization Records
- Associations
- Business and Financial Records

#### 4. Frame the Problem

What makes your ancestor unique?

- Name and nickname
- Age
- Spouse
- Children
- Parents
- Siblings
- Year of Emigration
- Occupation
- Military Service

#### 5. Determine the Irish Jurisdictions

When the townland or parish is found, determine all the other jurisdictions that place falls into using geographic finding aids.

- **2 States:** Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
- **4 Provinces:** Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught
- **32 Counties:** Antrim, Armagh, Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Down, Dublin, Fermanagh, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Leitrim, Limerick, Londonderry, Longford, Louth, Leix (Queens), Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly (Kings), Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Tyrone, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow
- **137 Poor Law Unions**
- **331 Baronies**
- **2,508 Civil Parishes**
- **Church Parishes** – Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland or Presbyterian Congregations
- **62,000+ Townlands**

#### Geographic Finding Aids

- **IreAtlas Townland Database** [www.thecore.com/seanruad](http://www.thecore.com/seanruad)
  - Free online search engine that gives all jurisdictions for any Irish place name
  - Allows searches on partial place names if the spelling is unknown
- **“General Alphabetical Index to Townlands”**
  - Alphabetical list of baronies, civil parishes and Poor Law Unions for each townland
  - Based on the 1851 Census of Ireland
  - Use when only a townland is known
- **“The Topographical Dictionary of Ireland”**
  - 1838 town and place descriptions
  - Some family names may be mentioned
- **“A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland”** by Brian Mitchell (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)
  - County, barony, parish and Poor Law Union maps
  - Use to visually locate a parish or poor law union in a specific county

## 6. Determine What Records are Available

Record availability varies by the time period and place of the event in Ireland.

- **“Tracing Your Irish Ancestors”** by John Grenham (4<sup>th</sup> Edition)
  - Detailed county-by-county reference guide of what records are available and where to find them
- **Irish Genealogy Website** [www.IrishGenealogy.ie](http://www.IrishGenealogy.ie)
  - Free online search portal with links and descriptions of various record types

### Major Types of Irish Records

- **Census Returns** – only 1901 & 1911 are complete; fragments for 1821 - 1851
- **Civil Registrations** (Vital Records) – marriages for non-Catholics began in 1845; all other birth, marriage and death registrations start in 1864
- **Catholic Parish Registers** – many go back to the early 1800s and late 1700s
- **Land Commission Records** – began in 1881
- **Griffith’s Valuation** – property tax records from 1848-1864
- **Tithe Applotment Books** – Church of Ireland tax records from 1823-1837
- **Estate Records** – apply to large land owners, but tenants may be mentioned
- **Wills & Administrations** – most originals destroyed in 1922; some indexes and abstracts still exist
- **Registry of Deeds** – Protestant land owners
- **Religious Censuses** – partial lists for 1766 and 1749
- **Hearth Money Rolls** – tax on the number of chimneys in each house - 1664 to 1666
- **Gravestone Inscriptions** – published and on websites

## 7. Identify the Location and Format of the Records

Where are the records currently held? Have they been microfilmed or digitized for online or remote access?

- Online, remote or on-site access?
- Dublin or Belfast?
- General Register Office of Ireland (GRO) – [www.welfare.ie/en/pages/general-register-office.aspx](http://www.welfare.ie/en/pages/general-register-office.aspx)
- National Archives of Ireland – [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)
- National Library of Ireland – [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)
- Registry of Deeds (Property Registration Authority) – [www.prai.ie](http://www.prai.ie)
- General Register Office of Northern Ireland (GRONI) – [www.nidirect.gov.uk/general-register-office-for-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/general-register-office-for-northern-ireland)
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) – [www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)
- Irish Family History Foundation – [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie)
- National Archives of England – [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)
- Searching the collection at McClelland Irish Library – <http://azirishlibrary.org>

## 8. Search the Records for Your Irish Ancestor

### Subscription Websites at McClelland Irish Library

#### **Ancestry.com**

- Search card catalog for individual Irish databases by entering either “Ireland” or “Irish”, or a portion of the database title in the Title search box
- About 200 Irish databases, including:
  - Indexes for Civil Registrations of Births, Marriage and Deaths
  - Index to Roman Catholic parish registers
  - Griffith’s Valuation, 1848-1864
  - Tithe Applotments, 1823-1837
  - Royal Irish Constabulary Record Index, 1816-1921

#### **FindMyPast.ie**

- Over 150 Irish databases, including:
  - Index to Roman Catholic parish registers
  - Index to Civil Registrations – births, marriage and deaths
  - Ireland Passenger Lists
  - Irish Directories
  - Griffith’s Valuation
  - Will indexes
  - Military records
  - Court and land records

#### **RootsIreland.ie**

- Irish Family History Foundation
- Indexes to Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian parish records

#### **AncestryIreland.com**

- Ulster Historical Foundation
- Many Irish and Scots-Irish databases for counties in the northern province of Ulster

#### **IrishNewsArchive.com**

- Current and historical newspapers for all of Ireland and Northern Ireland
- Coverage ranges from current issues back to the mid-1700s in some areas.

#### **IrishTimes.com**

- The Irish Times Newspaper – historical and recent issues
- Ancestor section created by author John Grenham
- Interactive Roman Catholic and civil parish maps, and surname distribution maps

#### **Fold3.com**

- Specializes in U.S. Military records – Revolutionary War to recent times
- Indexes to naturalizations and passport applications – 1700s to mid-1900s

#### **Newspapers.com**

- Over 4,000 newspapers from the 1700s to the 2000s
- Includes newspapers for the U.S., Canada, the UK and Australia

#### **AmericanAncestors.org - New England Historic Genealogical Society**

- Over 500 databases of early New England records
- Emphasis on Boston and Massachusetts records where many Irish immigrants lived

## **Additional Websites for Irish Research**

### **FamilySearch.org**

- Has many microfilms, CD's and microfiche of Irish records
- MIL is an affiliate library – films can be ordered online from the Family Search Library and sent to our library to be viewed on our microfilm readers
- Use a "Place" search in the card catalog to find Irish films and fiche

### **Registers.NLI.ie**

- National Library of Ireland's free website of original Roman Catholic parish records
- Browseable by parish only

### **IrishGenealogy.ie**

- Online search portal with links and descriptions of various record types
- Includes transcriptions of church parish records for selected Irish counties

### **AskAboutIreland.ie**

- Government-sponsored site with historical material about Irish culture
- Free access to Griffith's Valuation and corresponding maps

### **Irish-Genealogy-Toolkit.com**

- Free, independent how-to guide to researching Irish Family History
- Free Irish maps and family history forms

### **Maps.Osi.ie**

- Online interactive maps by Ordnance Survey Ireland
- Searchable by county, parish and townland

### **GENUKI.org.uk**

- UK and Ireland genealogy
- Contains instructional material and many links to the best sites for genealogy in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

### **IrelandGenWeb.com**

- Part of WorldGenWeb
- Links to websites for all 32 Irish counties that include indexes and research guides

### **IrelandXO.com**

- Ireland Reaching Out - "Reverse genealogy" program
- Volunteer effort to identify worldwide descendants of the Irish who left Ireland

## **Additional Sources**

- **The Casey Collection – "O'Kief, Coshe Mang, Slieve Lougher and Upper Blackwater, Ireland" by Albert E. Casey**
  - 16-volume book set containing over 3 million indexed names
  - Covers the Blackwater region in Counties Cork and Kerry
- **"The Search for Missing Friends: Irish immigrant Advertisements Placed in the Boston Pilot" – 1831-1921**
  - Seven-volume book set at McClelland Irish Library
  - Online Index at Boston College website, <http://infowanted.bc.edu/>

- **“Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation”**
  - Compiled by Richard J. Hayes
  - Online at the National Library of Ireland as “Sources Database”
- **“Great Book of Irish Genealogies”**
  - Compiled 1645 to 1666 by Connacht scholar Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh at the height of the Cromwellian Wars
- **“Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland”** also known as **“Annals of the Four Masters”**
  - Chronicles of medieval Irish history, including the various clans and their disputes
  - From the Deluge, dated as 2,242 years after creation, to AD 1616
  - Wikipedia has links to all seven volumes; Volume 7 is the index  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annals\\_of\\_the\\_Four\\_Masters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annals_of_the_Four_Masters)