

How To Trace Your Ancestors In Ireland by Nick Cimino

I began conducting my genealogical research in 1989. Prior to a visit to Ireland in 2008, I became keenly interested in Irish Genealogy. During this period of research, I discovered that more and more can be done online, quite a bit can be done using LDS resources and some work must be done in Ireland.

< Introduction

Before beginning a genealogical search from public records, it is essential to collect as much information as possible about the family which is to be investigated. In order to have a reasonable chance of carrying out a successful search, it is generally necessary to know at least three things:

- 1 The Name of the family
- 2 The Parish in which they lived (if the surname is of the popular variety, then the townland of origin is most important or even perhaps a nickname).
- 3 Approximate Date

If this information cannot be supplied, a search can still be made in certain records but the chances of success are small.

< Starting Point

The starting point for any genealogical search depends on the information one already has. If one is starting with a name, a place and an approximate date, then the best place to begin is as follows:

- > For a person living around 1901 or 1911
Census Returns for those years
- > For a person living in the 1850's or 1860's
Griffiths Primary Valuation
- > For a person living in the 1820's or 1830's
Tithe Applotment Books

If you know the date of a birth, marriage or death, further details can be sought in different records. In cases where the parish or townland in which the family lived cannot be identified, an index to the Tithe Applotment Books/Griffiths Primary Valuation is available showing the parishes in which each surname appears. This index is generally of value only where the name is a fairly unusual one. Otherwise it is likely to yield only a long list of persons of the same surname, with no way of knowing which, if any, are connected with the particular family being investigated.

< Genealogy - A search for the greatest treasures, our ancestors >

Sources for Irish Genealogy

CENSUSES AND ALTERNATES

A Census of Ireland was taken every 10 years from 1821. Complete sets of enumerators' returns, the original manuscript forms from which the printed Census reports were compiled, have survived for two years – 1901 and 1911. The returns were arranged by townlands or in urban areas by streets.

The returns for each townland or street include a form filled in by the head of each household, giving the names of all persons living in that household with their age, occupation, religion and place of birth. No enumerators returns survived from the Census of 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891, these having been destroyed on the orders of the government.

There are some returns from the Census of 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 covering part of the counties of Antrim, Cavan, Cork, Fermanagh, Galway, Offaly, Derry, Meath and Waterford.

As mentioned earlier, the Census of 1901 is the earliest household returns available to the public. The 1901 and 1911 Census is available on microfilm through the LDS Family History Library.

< Genealogy is like hide and seek, they hide and I seek >

< Primary Valuation, Tithe Applotment Books and Freeholder Records

While no complete set of Census returns survives for a period prior to 1901, there are two records, which provide a partial substitute:

> Primary Valuation – Also known as Griffiths Valuation. This was a survey of the land and property carried out between 1847 and 1865 for purposes of local taxation. There is a printed valuation book for each poor law union showing the names of all occupiers of land and buildings and of the persons from whom these were leased, the amount of property held and the value assigned to it.

Griffiths Valuation - Fermanagh 1862

<http://members.cox.net/hayes1966/fermanagh.htm>

Nevin Francis Tattyreagh Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Galbraith Rafintan Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Hugh, Jr. Mullaghfad Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Hugh, Sr. Mullaghfad Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Richard Mullaghfad Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Richard Rafintan Aghalurcher Fermanagh

Nevin Robert Tullyweel Enniskillen Fermanagh

> The Tithe Applotment Book – These were compiled between 1823 and 1837 for the purpose of determining the amount which occupiers of agricultural holdings were to pay in tithes to the established church, the Church of Ireland. The Applotment book for each parish gives the names of occupiers, the amount of land they held and the value assigned to it.

1823-1838 INDEX

Tithe Applotment

- Sorted By Parish - and Townland -

Aghalurcher

FERMANAGH

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Beatty, John | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Beatty, Samuel | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Breadon, Andrew | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Brooke, Henry, Sir | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Lucy, Rebecca | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Lucy, William | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Lucy, William | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Nivens, Richard | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |
| Nivens, Thomas | Aghalurcher | Rafinton 1833 |

- Freeholders Records
- <http://www.proni.gov.uk/freeholders/intro.asp>

Freeholders' records are lists of people entitled to vote, or of people who voted, at elections. A freeholder was a man who owned his land outright (in fee) or who held it by lease which could be for one or more lives (for example, his own life or for the lives of other people named in the lease). From 1727 to 1793 only Protestants with a freehold worth at least 40 shillings a year were legally permitted to vote. Between 1793 and 1829 both Protestants and Catholics with 40 shilling freeholds could vote, but in 1829 the franchise level was increased to 10 pounds, so 40 shilling freeholders were no longer allowed to vote. This last measure increased the influence of landlords by effectively confining membership of Parliament to the propertied or monied classes.

Before the 1872 Ballot Act introduced the secret ballot, voters were required to stand up and declare publicly their electoral allegiance. Their fear of going against the landlords' wishes resulted in a substantial number of candidates returned being either landlords or their relations or supporters.

PRONI's freeholders project entailed the digitisation of c.5,500 sheets from pre-1840 Registers and Poll Books, and the provision of an index of names linked to the high-quality digitised images. This allows for more flexible navigation and readier access to a unique resource for family and local history. It is hoped that on-line access will encourage a wider and more inclusive audience, especially those who are unable to visit PRONI in person.

I searched Nevin in County Fermanagh

Surname Forename Address ProniRef

Result 1 Nevin Thomas Rafinton D/1096/92

Result 2 Nevin Reverend Hugh Clogher, County Tyrone D/1096/92

Result 3 Nevin Anthony Rafinton D/1096/92

Result 4 Nevin Richard Rafinton D/1096/92

Result 5 Nevin Richard Rosinton T/808/15063

VITAL RECORDS

<http://www.groireland.ie/research.htm>

A system of state registration of births, deaths and marriages began in Ireland in 1864. Records of all births, marriages and deaths occurring after this date are preserved in the General Register Office Research Room located at Joyce House, 8/11 Lombard Street East , Dublin , 2.

The General Register Office is the central civil repository for records relating to Births, Deaths and Marriages in the Republic of Ireland . It is concerned with civil registration matters only, and **does not engage in Genealogical/Family History research.**

The LDS Family History Library has copies of their records as described below.

Can I search for Birth/Death/Marriage Records online?

No, our index and records are in a manual format, which is basically unchanged since the 19th century. We are in the process of computerising them but a decision has yet to be taken about which, if any, of these records will be available online.

Our Research Room is open from Monday to Friday, (excluding public holidays) from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. for the purpose of searching the indexes to birth, death and marriage records and obtaining photocopies / certificates. Joyce House is situated near the junction of Pearse Street/Westland Row.

The following records are deposited in the General Register Office:-

1. Registers of all Births registered in the whole of Ireland from 1st January, 1864, to 31 December, 1921, and in Ireland (excluding the six north-eastern counties of Derry, Antrim, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone know as Northern Ireland) from that date.
2. Registers of all Deaths registered in the whole of Ireland from 1st January, 1864 , to 31st December 1921 , and in Ireland (excluding Northern Ireland) from that date.
3. Registers of all Marriages registered in the whole of Ireland from 1st April 1845 , to 31st December 1863 , except those celebrated by the Roman Catholic clergy.
4. Registers of all Marriages registered in the whole of Ireland from 1st January, 1864 , to 31st December, 1921 , and in Ireland (excluding Northern Ireland) from that date.

The local records for a specific County can be obtained from The Registrar, Births, Deaths & Marriages in that County.

The main source of information on births, deaths and marriages occurring before 1864 are parish registers.

Name Ireland. General Register Office Titles [Death records of Ireland, 1864-1870, with index of deaths, 1864-1921](#)

[General index of births, marriages and deaths registered in Saorstát Éireann \[Irish Free State\], 1922-1958](#)

[Marriage records, 1845-1870, with indexes to marriages, 1845-1921, in the General Registry Office of Ireland](#)

[Quarterly returns of births in Ireland, 1864-1955, with index to births, 1864-1921](#)

[Register of births and deaths at sea, 1864-1884](#)

[Register of certificates of baptism, 1864-1868](#)

CHURCH RECORDS

For the period before 1864, parish registers recording details of baptisms, marriages and burials provide the only source of information relating to births, marriages and deaths. Prior to making use of these records, it is of course necessary to be aware of an ancestor's religious affiliation and often the name of the parish in which the baptism, marriage or burial occurred.

Roman Catholic parish registers are normally still held by the parish priest, but there are microfilm copies of most of them for the period up to 1880 in the National Library of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 (Website: <http://www.nli.ie/>) In some instances, the written permission of the parish priest must be obtained before the microfilms can be seen.

Church of Ireland parish registers for the period up to 1870 are public records. Registers are available for about one third of the parishes. Most are still held by the local clergy, although some can be found in the following repositories:

Irish National Archives, Bishop Street , Dublin 8. (Website: <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>) and others are in the

Representative Church Body Library, Braemor Park , Dublin 14 (Website: <http://www.ireland.anglican.org/library>) and still others in the

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NY
(Website: <http://proni.nics.gov.uk/index.htm>)

Presbyterian church records are arranged by congregation and any enquiries should be directed to the Presbyterian Historical Society, Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6TW (Website: <http://www.presbyterianireland.org/>)

CEMETERIES

All over the country there are cemeteries and tombstone inscriptions providing details of name and date, which might not be available from any other source. Those not particularly enamoured with the idea of trudging through long wet nettles in an overgrown graveyard in hopeful pursuit of a reference to a long-departed ancestor will be relieved to know that a large number of graveyards have been inspected over the years and the inscriptions recorded.

< Keep on digging, the best bones are buried deepest! >

< I trace family history so I will know who to blame >

IRISH ESTATE RECORDS

Few people realize that many of the landed estate owners kept detailed records of their estates, including records of their tenants. These estate records are invaluable for the genealogist.

The diversity of sources found in estate records is amazing. One of the better estate records that I am aware of is that of the Brownlow family of Co. Armagh, 1 These estate papers, which are deposited in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), consist of 520 volumes and more than 9,000 numbered documents. Included in the records are a pedigree (dating from the 1600s to the 1980s) and a brief history of the family, a list of the townlands encompassed by the estate, account books, correspondence, ejectment records, freeholders registers, household inventories and accounts, Irish Land Commission papers, Manorial Court books (including names of jury members, overseers, plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses), lease books and leases, mill records, plans and maps, rentals, school records (names of the pupils, their age, religion, residence, and names of the parents are listed for the Lurgan Free School dating from 1786 to 1795; also included is a list of poor parishioners in Shankill to whom aid was provided from 1810 to 1814), title deeds, valuation and surveys, wage books, yeomanry documents, and miscellaneous records.

Estate records usually include the business accounts of the estate owner or his agents. Such accounts might detail the type of work done and wages paid to tenants for various tasks performed on the estate. One example is a workmen's account book for an estate in counties Donegal and neighboring Londonderry that mentions the employees by name, what each did over a period of several months, and sometimes how much they were paid.

John McConnaghy, for instance, during the week of 18 December 1865, topped turnips on Monday, washed turnips on Tuesday, loaded hay on Wednesday, topped turnips on Thursday, threshed on Friday, and worked with manure on Saturday.

Estate records may also contain information about tenants who emigrated, often under assisted emigration schemes sponsored by estate owners. The estate records of the Kingwilliamstown Crown Estate (an estate belonging to the king) include a return of persons who emigrated to America in 1849 and 1850. Names of the emigrants, ages, relationships, and the townland of residence were included in those lists.

Some estate owners took censuses of their tenants. The rent rolls of the Templetown estate in Co. Londonderry include a list of the tenant families with names, ages, relationships, religion, and observations recorded. Included in those observations was the fact that several of the families emigrated to America (the family of William John Boyd, for instance, went to California).

It is not always easy to trace Irish tenant families. The record destruction that took place in Ireland effectively wiped out most of the census returns, many of the probate records (although tenants seldom left wills), and a good portion of the Church of Ireland records. For Catholic families, records may not begin early enough to locate an ancestor. Deeds, the bulk of which are lease, may contain information for the poorer segment of the Irish population. As has been shown, a large percentage of the deeds were not recorded in the Registry of Deeds. Thus, estate records remain as one of the few sources that provide details about the day-to-day lives of the tenant class as well as genealogical information that might not be found in any other source.

D998/26/10 : 28 Oct. 1751 Lease from Henry Brooke, Colebrooke, Co. Fermanagh, to Richard Nevans, Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, relating to middle portion of Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, 23a., for the lives of Richard Nevans, Thomas Nevans and John Leslie at a rent of £6 12s. 0d. together with 12 pence per pound Receivers fees, six days work of man and horse and six hens or tenpence in lieu of each days work and fourpence in lieu of each hen.
<http://www.ulsterancestry.com/ua-BrookeDeeds.html>

D998/26/295 : 29 Sep. 1812 Lease from Henry Brooke, Colebrooke, Co. Fermanagh, to Richard Neven and Thomas Neven, Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, of 25a. 2r. 5p. of Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, for the lives of Thomas Neven, Mathew Lucy and Thomas Neven: (1) Rent £37 5s. 10d.; (2) Thirty-seven days work of man and horse and thirty-seven fat hens or two shillings in lieu of each days work and fourpence in lieu of each hen; (3) Corn, etc, to be ground at mill of Henry Brooke, payment for not doing so £5; and, (4) Reserves right to make a road.

D998/26/606 15 Apr. 1841 Lease from Sir Arthur B. Brooke, Colebrooke, Co. Fermanagh, to Thomas Nevin, Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, of 20a. 25p. of Rafintan, Co. Fermanagh, reserving 17a. 19p. of turf bog adjoining, for the lives of Henry Francis Brooke and Mathew James Burnside: (1) Reserves right to make a road; (2) Rent £15; (3) Seven days work of man and horse and fifteen pence in lieu of each days work and sixpence in lieu of each hen; and, (4) Corn, etc, to be ground at mill of Sir Arthur B. Brooke, payment for not doing so £2. style="mso-spacerun: yes"> Courts, Leet. style="mso-spacerun: yes"> Courts, Baron.
<http://www.ulsterancestry.com/ua-BrookeDeeds.html>

< To understand ourselves... we must study the past! >

< Isn't genealogy fun? The answer to one problem, leads to two more! >

< Parish Histories

These are another valuable genealogical resource. The Centenary Year of the GAA in 1984 led to the valuable production of club and parish histories. Whether due to lack of club information or indeed club success, most club histories were expanded to include much valuable genealogical information.

Check out this website for a compilation of Parish Histories by County:

<http://www.connorsgenealogy.com/books/>

< Theory of relativity: If you go back far enough, we're all related >

< Genealogy: Tracing yourself back to better than you >

< Genealogy: Where you confuse the dead and irritate the living! >

Burkes Peerage, Burkes Irish Family Records and local county histories often give the family history of what has been called "the local snobocracy". Such material is totally irrelevant to the vast majority of Irish people. Anybody intending to draw up a family tree could consult this material for guidance and ideas.

< Genealogy... it's not a hobby, it's an obsession >

< In order to find his equal, an Irishman is forced to talk to God >

< Why waste your money looking up your tree? Just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you! >

< No man, however great, is known to everybody and no man, however solitary, is known to nobody >

< Sharing genealogy is a rewarding experience! Just when you think you've found them all, up pops another!

< Happiness is a genealogist who just found their lost ancestor! >

< Whoever said, seek and ye shall find was NOT a genealogist >

< When some people talk about their family tree, they trim off a branch here and there >

Irish Genealogy Links and Addresses

compiled by Nick Cimino, League City, TX

Irish Genealogical Society, Intl.
P.O. Box 16585
St.Paul, MN 55116-0585
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~irish/>

Irish At Home and Abroad
P.O. Box 521806
Salt Lake City, UT 84152-1806
Fax: 801-467-6507
<http://www.ihaonline.com/>

National Archives of Ireland
Bishop Street
Dublin 8
Ireland
Tel: + 353 (1) 407-2300
Fax: + 353 (1) 407-2333
E-mail: mail@nationalarchives.ie
<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>

Dublin City Archive
City Assembly House
South William Street
Dublin 2
Ireland
Tel : + 353 - 1 - 677 5877
Fax: + 353 - 1 - 677 5954
<http://www.iol.ie/resource/dublincitylibrary/archives.htm>

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)
66 Balmoral Avenue
Belfast
BT9 6NY
Northern Ireland
Tel: (01232) 251318 (public enquiries)
Tel: (01232) 255905 (public search room)
Fax: (01232) 255999
E-mail: proni@doeni.gov.uk
<http://proni.nics.gov.uk/>

Public Record Office – UK
Family History Information
<http://www.pro.gov.uk/FamilyHistory/default.htm>

Irish Family History Foundation
<http://www.mayo-ireland.ie/roots.htm>

Ulster Historical Foundation
Northern Irish Genealogy
12 College Square East
Belfast
BT1 6DD
Northern Ireland
Tel: +44 1232 332288
Fax: +44 1232 239885
E-mail: enquiry@uhf.dnet.co.uk
<http://www.uhf.org.uk/>

GENUKI: Ireland
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl/>

The Irish Ancestral Research Association: TIARA
Dept. W
P.O. Box 619
Sudbury, MA 01776
<http://world.std.com/~ahern/TIARA.html>

Irish Genealogy: The A-Z of Irish Genealogy Sites
<http://www.irish-insight.com/a2z-genealogy/index.html>

Irish History on the Web
<http://www.ms.utexas.edu/~jdana/irehist.html>

Olochlainns Irish Family Journal
<http://www.irishroots.com/>

Irish Genealogy (A.J. Morris)
<http://genealogy.org/~ajmorris/ireland/ireland.htm>

Irish Genealogy
<http://www.irishgenealogy.com>

Emigrant Savings Bank Records Online
At the Genealogy Exchange & Surname Registry
<http://www.genexchange.com/ny/Emigrant.CFM>

Publications and Products

- [*Irish Records*](#) by James G. Ryan, Ph.D.
- *Irish Church Records* by James G. Ryan, Ph.D.
- [*Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*](#) by Kerby A. Miller
- [*Land Owners in Ireland, 1876*](#)
- [*Tracing Your Kerry Ancestors*](#) by Michael H. O'Connor
- *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* by John Grenham
- *Fairbairn's Book of Crests of the Families of Great Britain and Ireland* by James Fairbairn
- [*Of Irish Ways*](#) by Mary Delaney
- [*A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland*](#) by Brian Mitchell
- [*Ireland: 1820 \(two-sheet map\)*](#)
(Originally issued by John Pinkerton in the early 19th century)