

# Researching in Irish Records

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## Jurisdiction definitions

The classic Irish structure is Province → County → Barony → Civil Parish → Townland.

- There are four provinces, Ulster, Connacht, Leinster, & Munster, and 32 counties.
- Baronies were ancient political areas, but they are rarely used today.
- Civil Parishes were created when the Church of England took over the Catholic Church. These parishes then became the civil administration areas.
- Catholic Parishes and Civil Parishes often have name and geographic differences.
- Townlands are the smallest unit of land division and are key to finding your ancestor.

The other important structure is the Poor Law Union **aka** Registration District **aka** Superintendent Registrar's District.

- Poor Law Unions covered a 10 or 12-mile radius around a market town and may not conform to county or parish boundaries.
- Later Poor Law Unions became known as Registration Districts or because they were overseen by a Superintendent, Superintendent Registrar's Districts.
- Local Registrar's Districts are subdivisions of a Registration District.
- District Electoral Divisions are subdivisions of Local Registrar's Districts.

Besides the county and townland of your ancestor you will also need to know the following jurisdictions to search in Irish records.

Type of Record	Jurisdiction, Administrative or Land Division
Census	District Electoral Division. See 1901 Townland index below.
Civil Registration (Vital Records)	Poor Law Union/Registration District/Superintendent Registrar's District. Sometimes the local Registrar's District is needed to narrow results. See <a href="https://www.johngrenham.com/places/plu_index.php">https://www.johngrenham.com/places/plu_index.php</a> .
Catholic church	Catholic Parish. See <a href="https://www.johngrenham.com/places/rcmap_index.php">https://www.johngrenham.com/places/rcmap_index.php</a> .
Church of Ireland	Civil Parish. See <a href="https://www.johngrenham.com/places/civil_index.php">https://www.johngrenham.com/places/civil_index.php</a> .
Griffith's Valuation	Civil Parish. See above.
Tithe Applotment	Civil Parish. See above.

## Townlands

- 1901 Index of Townland names with District Electoral Divisions and other jurisdictions at <https://www.irishancestors.ie/resources/unique-resources/index-of-townlands-1901/>.
- Map townlands and other jurisdictions at <https://www.townlands.ie/>.

## Resources by Civil Parish

Search for townland at <https://www.johngrenham.com/places/>. Then select its Civil Parish to see all the resources that are available.

## Census

- Full census records available for 1901 and 1911 and fragments left for 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 at <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/>.
- Search for other household members using <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/ireland-census-1901>.  
<https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/ireland-census-1911>.
- Census search forms of 1841 and 1851 census for proof of age for pensions at <http://censussearchforms.nationalarchives.ie/search/cs/home.jsp>.

## Civil Registration

- Non-Catholic Marriages began in 1845. All other Birth, Marriages and Deaths began in 1864. Online records released for births after 100 years, marriages after 75 years, and deaths after 50 years. Remember the Republic of Ireland & Northern Ireland separated in 1922.
  - Indexes & originals at <https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/>. Includes all of Ireland's births through 1920. Republic of Ireland's marriages through 1945 and deaths through 1970.
  - Indexes through "Ireland Civil Registration Indexes, 1845-1958" at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1408347>. Includes all of Ireland up to 1922 and the Republic of Ireland up to 1958. Reminder: The Event "place" is the Civil Registration District not the county or parish.
  - Partial **early** transcriptions with "event place" not consistently transcribed; could be just "Ireland" or county, parish, or townland.
    - "Ireland Births and Baptisms, 1620-1881" with parent's names up to 1881 at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1584963>.
    - "Ireland Marriages, 1619-1898" with spouse's & maybe parent's names thru 1870 at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1584964>.
    - "Ireland Deaths, 1864-1870" with occupation and marital status at <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1584965>.
- For Northern Ireland from 1922 see instructions for using GRONI at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/go-groni-online>.
- For records not currently online:
  - Request Republic of Ireland copies via email with an online payment of €5 via <http://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Apply-for-Certificates.aspx>.
  - Request Northern Ireland copies for £15 (£8 for copy and £7 search fee) via <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/ordering-life-event-certificates>.
- For civil registration history and what the records contain see [https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/retrieve\\_text.php?text\\_contentid=1#GRO](https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/retrieve_text.php?text_contentid=1#GRO).

## **Catholic Church Records**

There is no one site that has all the records. Most records were microfilmed thru about 1880. After 1880 records are in local custody or sometimes on RootsIreland.ie.

- Browsable images at <https://registers.nli.ie/>.
- Search transcriptions of
  - Baptisms at <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/ireland-roman-catholic-parish-baptisms>.
  - Marriages at <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/ireland-roman-catholic-parish-marriages>.
- Alternatively, some records for Cork, Kerry, Dublin and Carlow are transcribed at <https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/>.
- Most of the remainder are on the subscription site <http://www.rootsireland.ie/>.

## **Other Church Records**

Some Church of Ireland records on the subscription site <http://www.rootsireland.ie/>.

Otherwise see what is available in a particular Civil Parish at

[https://www.johngrenham.com/places/civil\\_index.php](https://www.johngrenham.com/places/civil_index.php).

## **Land Records**

- Griffith's Valuation was taken between 1847 and 1864 and listed the occupiers of land. Search at <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>.
- Pre-Griffith's books from 1824 to 1856 are at <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/vob/home.jsp>.
- Post-Griffith's books are called Cancelled Land or Revision Books.
  - Republic of Ireland only available at the Valuation Office in Dublin.
  - Northern Ireland at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/searching-valuation-revision-books>.
- Tithe Applotment Books show occupiers of land between 1823 and 1837. Search at <http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/home.jsp>.

## **Maps**

Resources for a variety of maps with directions for searching at

<https://www.pinterest.com/pamelagholland/mapping-irish-locations/>.

## **Cemeteries**

- An Irish community-focused, heritage project at <https://historicgraves.com/>.
- Irish Graveyard Surveyors at <http://www.irishgraveyards.ie/>.
- Other graveyard information at <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/irish-records-what-is-available/graveyards>.

## **Social History**

Schoolchildren folklore, photographs and manuscripts at <https://www.duchas.ie/en>.

## **Newspapers**

For a good description of Irish newspapers and what they might contain, see

[https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/retrieve\\_text.php?text\\_contentid=80#Newspapers](https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/retrieve_text.php?text_contentid=80#Newspapers)

- The major online Irish newspaper archives are all subscription sites.
  - <https://search.findmypast.ie/search/irish-newspapers>.
  - <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>.
  - <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/>.
  - <https://www.irishtimes.com/archive>.

## **Wills**

- See list of databases from the National Archives of Ireland at <http://www.genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/>.
- Some Northern Ireland wills at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/search-archives-online/will-calendars>.

## **Estates**

- Landed estates and historic houses in Connacht and Munster database at <http://www.landedestates.ie/>. Note: website was hacked in 2021 for updates on availability see <https://www.irishgenealogynews.com/2021/10/connacht-munster-landed-estates.html>
- Landed Estates Court Rentals 1850-1885, a subscription database at <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/landed-estates-court-rentals-1850-1885>.

## **Surnames**

Variations, history and mapping at <https://www.johngrenham.com/surnames/>.

## **Names**

- First name variations <http://www.rootsireland.ie/help/first-names/>.
- Latin first names at <http://www.from-ireland.net/irish-names/latin-names-in-english/> & <http://www.ulsterancestry.com/free/ShowFreePage-443.html>.

## **The major multi-source providers with Irish databases**

FindMyPast – <https://search.findmypast.com/search-ireland-records>

FamilySearch – <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/location/1927084>

Ancestry – <https://search.ancestry.com/Places/Europe/Ireland/>

## **Providers with useful tools**

- Irish Ancestors (John Grenham) – <https://www.johngrenham.com/>
- Shane Wilson's website of directories, maps and more – <https://www.swilson.info/>

## **Keeping up with the latest developments**

- Irish Genealogy News by Claire Santry at <https://www.irishgenealogynews.com/>.
- Irish Roots blog by John Grenham at <https://www.johngrenham.com/blog/>.