

# **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, Societies and Clubs
- 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 jurisdiction names for that place 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 and 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
- **“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 the Available Records in Ireland

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

- **Irish Ancestors** – [www.johngrenham.com](http://www.johngrenham.com)
  - Interactive surname and place name maps, along with a list of available records for each county and parish in Ireland
- **Irish Genealogy** – [www.IrishGenealogy.ie](http://www.IrishGenealogy.ie)
  - Free online search portal with links and descriptions of various record types

## 7. Search the Irish Records for Your Ancestors

Search the appropriate records for your ancestors based on the time period and location. Many Irish records are now online, however, some records can only be found on microfilm or in Ireland repositories.

- **Census Returns** – only 1901 & 1911 are complete; fragments for 1821-1851
  - National Archives of Ireland – [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)
- **Civil Registrations** (Vital Records) – non-Catholic marriages began in 1845; all others start 1864
  - Original online images
    - Irish Genealogy – [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)
      - All 32 counties before 1922; only Republic of Ireland for 1922 and later

- Registration District names are the same as Poor Law Union names
- Indexes
  - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)
  - Ancestry – [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
  - Family Search – <https://familysearch.org>
  - Ulster Historical Foundation – [www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)
- Order certified records from the General Register Office (GRO)
  - GRO of Ireland (in Dublin and Roscommon) – [www.welfare.ie/en/pages/general-register-office.aspx](http://www.welfare.ie/en/pages/general-register-office.aspx)
    - All of Ireland up to 1921; Republic of Ireland records 1922 to present
  - GRO of Northern Ireland (in Belfast) – [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)
    - All records for the six counties of Northern Ireland
- **Church Parish Records** – baptisms, marriages and burials; some go back to the late 1700s
  - Online original images of Catholic Parish Registers
    - National Library of Ireland – [registers.nli.ie](http://registers.nli.ie)
  - Online indexes of church parish registers
    - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)
    - Ancestry – [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)
    - Roots Ireland – [www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie)
    - Irish Genealogy – [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) – for selected areas
- **Gravestone Inscriptions** – published and on websites
  - Irish Graveyards – [www.irishgraveyards.ie](http://www.irishgraveyards.ie)
  - Historic Graves – [historicgraves.com](http://historicgraves.com)
  - Billion Graves – <https://billiongraves.com>
  - Find A Grave – [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)
  - Ulster Historical Foundation – [www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)
- **Griffith's Primary Valuation** – property tax records 1848-1864
  - Ask About Ireland – [askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation](http://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation)
  - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)
- **Tithe Applotment Books** – Church of Ireland tax records 1823-1837
  - The National Archives of Ireland – [titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie](http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie)
- **Wills & Administrations** – most originals destroyed in 1922; some indexes and abstracts still exist
  - Will indexes online
    - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com) – 1484-1858
    - Ancestry – [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) – 1536-1857
    - Family Search – <https://familysearch.org> – 1858-1920
  - Will calendars, abstracts and indexes
    - National Archives of Ireland – [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie) – 1858-1982
    - Public Record Office of Northern Ireland – [www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni) – pre-1858-1943
  - Will index books
    - McClelland Library – [www.azirish.org/genealogy-collection](http://www.azirish.org/genealogy-collection)
- **Landed Estate Records** – apply to large land owners; tenants may be mentioned
  - Free Landed Estates Database c.1700-1914 for Connaught and Munster
    - The Moore Institute at the National University of Ireland, Galway – [landedestates.nuigalway.ie](http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie)
  - Landed Estate Court Records
    - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)

- **Registry of Deeds** – Protestant land owners
  - Property Registration Authority – [www.prai.ie](http://www.prai.ie)
  - Volunteer transcription project for free access to deeds
    - Registry of Deeds Index Project – [www.irishdeedsindex.net](http://www.irishdeedsindex.net)
- **Newspapers**
  - Current and historical newspapers for all of Ireland and Northern Ireland
    - Irish News Archive – <https://irishnewsarchive.com>
    - The Irish Times – [www.irishtimes.com](http://www.irishtimes.com)
    - Find My Past – [www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com)

## 8. Additional Websites for Irish Research

- **Irish Genealogy Toolkit** – [irish-genealogy-toolkit.com](http://irish-genealogy-toolkit.com)
  - Free, independent how-to guide to researching Irish Family History
- **Ordnance Survey Ireland** – [maps.Osi.ie](http://maps.Osi.ie)
  - Online interactive maps searchable by county, parish and townland
- **UK & Ireland Genealogy** – [genuki.org.uk](http://genuki.org.uk)
  - Genealogy links and instructional material for Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man
- **Ireland Gen Web** – [irelandgenweb.com](http://irelandgenweb.com)
  - Volunteer website of links, indexes and research guides for all 32 Irish counties
- **Ireland Reaching Out** – [irelandxo.com](http://irelandxo.com)
  - Volunteer effort to connect worldwide descendants of Irish emigrants to people in Ireland
- **Irish Origenes** – [irishorigenes.com](http://irishorigenes.com)
  - Uses DNA to pinpoint Irish surnames, clans and castles on searchable maps of Ireland

## 9. Additional Sources

- **“O’Kief, Coshe Mang, Slieve Lougher and Upper Blackwater, Ireland”** by Albert E. Casey
  - Sixteen-volume book set containing over 3 million indexed names in the Blackwater region of Counties Cork and Kerry
- **“The Search for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in the Boston Pilot” – 1831-1921**
  - Seven-volume book set covering 1831 to 1921 – at McClelland 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” – [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)
- **“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)