

Tracing Your Family Tree

By

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[Irish Ancestries](#)

Firstly I'd like to thank Barbara, and the team for inviting me to speak to you today and also to thank you all for giving up your precious lunchtime. There is no need to take any notes, as copies of my power point presentation and talk will be available later.

I have also prepared a list of useful addresses and websites for you to take away with you at the end of this talk.

Genealogy is one of the top ten hobbies in the world today and attracts the second highest number of 'hits' on the internet. (After pornography!) Today we're going to focus on tracing your family tree in Ireland using both internet and primary source material.

Seven Golden Rules

Firstly we are going to look at the '*Seven Golden Rules*' of genealogy.

1. Do your homework
2. Be honest
3. Record your searches – even when you don't find anything
4. Use the internet wisely
5. Access original material – where possible
6. Write it up
7. Share it

Do your homework

Doing the homework is the starting point for most family trees. Talk to your parents or grandparents or aunts and uncles if they are still around. Ask them about their childhood memories. Where did they live, how many were in the family, what type of occupations did they have? Most of them will be only too happy to share. Ask open questions and allow them to talk. If you can, take a Digital recorder with you, or otherwise write up your interview notes soon afterwards. In particular see if they can supply you with dates, names and addresses. Also if they have any family photographs see if they will allow you to copy them.

Be honest

There is always a skeleton or two lurking in family closet and sometimes it is the black sheep of the families who are the most fascinating. In Ireland these skeletons tend to relate to the Civil War, pregnancy outside marriage, or service in the British army or even the Royal Irish Constabulary. These may

seem like ancient history to you now, but for elderly relatives they can still represent a source of hurt or shame so be sensitive to their feelings.

Record your searches

Almost all archives have a policy of **no pens allowed** so be prepared to go back to paper and pencil. In most cases they will let you bring in a laptop. Arm yourself with some hardback notebooks – an unused desk diary is ideal. Make a brief note of where you visit, how long you were there, what you searched, and what you found – even when you have a bad day and find nothing useful. It will help you to focus on your research and not to repeat work that you have already done. If you do find that you get hooked and you decide to buy a dedicated software package, record your search results and update your database with your findings.

Use the Internet wisely

If you Google the words 'genealogy' and 'Ireland' you will get approximately 5,330,000 choices (October 2010) and the number of sites is growing everyday. So how do you sort out the good from the bad? And can you rely on information which someone has posted on the internet? What if they have got the information from somewhere else?? If it is an index, how accurate is it? Is there a high rate of transcription errors? You don't want to base your research on someone else's research if it's not accurate.

Use the internet as a signpost not a Bible. Don't rely on it completely. There are a number of national and international sites which are excellent. Some have scanned original documents which you can download for a small fee or even for free. And this brings us to our next rule

Try to access original documents

Our own National Archives and National Library have a tremendous range of genealogical information based on original sources and a good genealogist will always try to track the original. They both provide a free genealogy advice service. The National Library has a collection of Catholic parish registers – some going back to the 18th Century. The National Archives holds the 1901 and 1911 Census of Population, Land Records, Wills, School Records, Prison Records, and Marriage Licence Bonds some of which we will discuss later. Many County Libraries hold collections of material relating to a particular locality as well as old newspapers and street directories which will prove invaluable to your research.

Write it up

So what are you going to do with all of your lovely research when you have finished? The temptation is to put it all into a big box and promise yourself that you will write it up later. You can be sure that what will happen later is that someone will have a big clear out when you are gone, and that years of work will end up in your local recycling centre.

There are many inexpensive and free software packages available that make recording your information quick and simple. Some software packages allow you to save copies of photographs, print charts and reports and share your information on CD or via the internet. Free forms to record your searches and country guides are available from familysearch.org. Can't decide what package to buy? Many of the genealogy magazines have regular product reviews, and also have free cds with shareware or trial packages so you can see which one suit you best. There are a good selection of genealogy magazines here today – feel free to take some away with you.

Share it.

So you've got it all done, found all the lost sheep and the black sheep and written it up and you're absolutely thrilled with yourself. So what's next? Have you thought about organising a family reunion? You could consider joining a 'one name' society, or your local history society. You could even think about donating a copy of your work to the National Library or National Archives. There is no point in all of that work sitting in a box in the attic. Share it.

For your nearest and dearest it's possible to have your research bound into a book – the Thesis Centre on Camden Street will do it for about 35 euro a copy for hardback binding. For the ones you don't love so much how about putting a copy on a CD and sending it with your Christmas cards – much better than a pair of socks or a box of after eights!

So now that we have our ultimate objective in mind, it's time to start work and for anyone who ever dozed off at the back of the class during their Irish history lessons - you are so going to regret it now!

Getting started

You will need to get access to various Archives and Libraries and to do that you will need a readers' card. Bring some photo ID and a household bill or two with you. Most archives will issue readers cards on the spot. I would recommend that you get a card for the National Archives, The National Library (they only issue cards at lunchtime) and the search room of the Gilbert Library in Pearse Street, Dublin.

You should also ensure that you have an up to date ticket for your local library. Some genealogy books are very expensive and as a result are reference only. Not every library may have a good collection of the types of books that you want. There is a way around this. Check the online catalogue for Dublin City Council and see if which libraries hold books that you are interested in. They can be ordered for you on an inter library loan for a small fee.

The National Library of Ireland is a copyright library and as such they should have copies of all books published in Ireland and the UK. Anyone signing up for an extra mural course with any of the Universities or Colleges at night can also apply for a library card, though sometimes there is an extra charge for this but it's well worth it.

19th and 20th Century Sources

Where they are and how to use them

Census Records

All thirty two counties of the 1911 and 1901 Census of Population are available online at the National Archives website.

The website can also be searched by religion, occupation, relationship to head of family, literacy status, county or country of origin, Irish language proficiency, specified illnesses, and child survival information.

For example, you can now search for female married teachers in Co. Cork, or how many people spoke Irish in Ballyshannon, or how many Presbyterians there were in Roscommon.

On line searches can be carried out by using name/surname or also by address. Using the online information can save hours of work poring over microfilms.

Here we see a typical Census Return from 1911 for St. Stephen's Green. In this case we are looking at Wesley College at number 95. For each person who was there on Census night we can get the following information.

- Name
- Relationship to head of household
- Religion
- Literacy
- Occupation
- Age
- Marital status
- County of birth
- Ability to speak Irish or English or both

As an example of how useful the Census is, we're going to take a peek at one little boy who lived on the green almost one hundred years ago. Reginald Leopold Mc Vitty was born in Cork in 1900, the son of a Methodist Minister William Mc Vitty. Shortly after he was born the family moved to Fermanagh, where we find him in 1901.

By the time the 1911 Census was taken, he was a pupil at Wesley College at 95 St. Stephen's Green.

Twenty years after the census was taken he married Honoria Alice Livingston at Clermont, New York in September 1931. Alice was a descendant of Robert Livingston one the founding fathers of the USA. The family were extremely wealthy and influential.

The wedding of Rex and Alice was filmed and I have managed to get a photograph of Rex and Alice returning to Ireland on honeymoon in 1931.

Married women were also asked to indicate how long they had been married, how many children had been born to them and whether those children were still alive at the time of the Census.

Apart from the individual household return there are also returns for each street which can give information on the type of housing they lived in, how many rooms they had, whether they shared a home with another family. If they were involved in agriculture, how many outhouses they had. A really nice feature is the fact that it was signed by the head of household – where they could write.

The same census information – apart from the question regarding marriage and surviving children was requested for the Census of 1901.

Armed with this information you would think that it should be easy enough to go along to the General Registrars Office and immediately get copies of all of their birth and marriage certificates? Wrong!

Ages of individuals recorded in the Census of Population can often be wrong. I have seen people age 12 or fourteen years between 1901 and 1911. In some cases they have got younger (usually the women!) You have to bear in mind that many people had a very limited standard of education. They would have never needed to obtain an official birth certificate, so a lot of them would only know that they were older or younger than a sibling but know exactly what age they were. So treat the ages recorded on a census return with caution.

At this point you're probably thinking gosh this is great I'll just fly through all of the censuses for the 19th and 20th centuries and I'll have this family tree done in no time.

Unfortunately the censuses for 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 were completely destroyed during the Civil War when the Public Records Office was burned. The census records for 1861, 1871 1881 and 1891 had already been destroyed before then, by order of the government. However fragments of some of these census returns do survive, but not many, and they mainly relate to northern counties. Other fragments which survive are called the Green Pages and these records relate to the introduction of the Old Age Pension in 1906. Just imagine the excitement in 1906 – free money from the government, and all you had to do was to prove that you were over 70. But how could you do that. You couldn't get a birth certificate because they were only introduced in 1864. Possibly you could get a copy of a baptismal certificate – if the parish registers survived. What you could do was to write to the Public Records Office and ask them to check the census return for 1851 for your family. So this is where this series of records originated and they are held in the National Archives. Bear in mind there are not very many of them.

So armed with the information from the Census of Population it's time to move on to the Birth Death and Marriage Records of the General Registrars Office in the Irish Life Centre.

General Registrars Office - Search Room

(3rd Floor, Block 7, Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 2

Some important dates to remember are 1864 and 1845. 1864 is when Statutory Registration of all Births, Marriages and Deaths began. Before then the only statutory records are for non catholic marriages and these date from 1845 onwards. All records of births, deaths and marriages before these dates can only be found in the Parish Registers.

The search room of the GRO has on open shelves at least one index book per year for births deaths and marriages which are organised in alphabetical order. In order to do a 'five year' search of the books there is a fee of 2 euro. If you are planning on doing a lot of searches in one day then you can pay for a 'day search' which will cost you 20 euro.

As well as a list of these names these books contain information on the District where the event was registered, the time of year e.g. March, June, September or December, a volume number, and a page number in that volume which contains the entry or certificate.

So if you have an ancestor with an unusual surname it should be a relatively simple process. There may be only a couple of entries for that name in a single year. Where you have a surname like Murphy or McCarthy you will see multiple entries of people with your ancestors' name. You need to figure out which one is the correct one because every extract or certificate that you order will cost you four euro and you can only order a maximum of five certificates per day!

This is where a little knowledge of history and geography comes in. At this stage you will know the locality where your ancestor lived and you need to figure out which Registration District is the nearest to that locality. Registration Districts are based on a very old system called Poor Law Unions. Between 1838 and 1852, 163 workhouses were built around the country to look after the poor and the destitute. They were generally built in or near large market towns.

Each Poor Law Union contained an average of six or seven Districts each having a Medical Officer with responsibility for public health. When statutory registration of births deaths and marriages began in 1864 these districts also became Registration Districts and had responsibility for recording BMD information. The important thing to remember is that the districts could sometimes encompass several parishes and could also cross county boundaries. So you may find that your family records may be registered in the next county.

There is a large map on the wall in the search room. Have a look at it before you begin searching, and identify the names of the registration districts which are nearest to the family home. When searching the volumes for each year there are a couple of things to be aware of. Between 1864 and 1877 there is a single volume for each year. From 1878 there are four separate volumes for each year. So make sure you check all of the volumes. At the back of each volume there are some additional pages. These cover late registrations i.e. births or marriages or deaths which were registered later (sometimes years later). There are also pages for overseas marriages – usually relating to army marriages. There can also be deaths at sea. They may not be relevant to you but they are worth checking – especially the late registrations.

Now that we can discount a good number of our McCarthy's or Murphys how do we decide which is the right one? One trick is to start with the family member with the most unusual Christian name. If you find that this certificate is correct, then you have successfully identified the registration district, and it should make finding the rest of the family a little easier. Also remember that the ages from the Census may not be correct and that you may need to search a couple of years on either side of the age indicated on the census form.

So now that we have finally got our certificates let's have a look and see what type of information do they contain?

Births

Date and place of birth

Name

Sex

Name surname and dwelling place of father

Name surname, maiden name and dwelling place of mother

Rank profession or occupation of the father

If they were born at home you may also find details of the informant – in some cases a relative of the mother.

Registration was supposed to be done within twenty one days of the birth or a fine could be imposed. In some cases where this was not done, people simply lied about the date of birth. Watch out also that births which took place at the end of the year may not appear until the following year. For a first child in some cases the mother would return to her family home for the birth. This can give you a whole new line of enquiry to follow.

Deaths

Date and place of death

Name and surname of deceased

Sex

Marital status

Age at last birthday

Rank, occupation or profession

Cause of death and duration of final illness

Details of the person who registered the death – they may also be a relative. The age may not be correct but will give you some idea of how old a person was.

Marriages

Date

Names of Parties

Ages

Marital Status

Rank profession or occupation

Residences at the time of marriage

Name Surname and rank of the father of each of the parties

Where the marriage took place

Names of the witnesses

A marriage certificate is probably the most useful one for genealogical research because of the sheer amount of information it contains, and the fact that it gives a direct link back to a previous generation which will also contain an address. Watch out too for the witnesses, in a lot of cases they can be brothers, sisters or even the mothers of the bride and groom.

Still can't find the certificate? Perhaps you need to look at variations in the spelling of the surname. Has a Mc or an O been added or dropped or perhaps the event has been registered late. In the back of some volumes there is a listing of late registrations – make sure to check this. There is also the possibility that it isn't registered at all and you may need to look elsewhere for the information.

We could probably do a whole talk on surnames on their own and so we must briefly mention them here. There are an enormous number of variations in surnames in Ireland. Where there was a high level of illiteracy there is an inconsistency in the spelling of surnames even within branches of families. Where people emigrated the surnames changed again and when regional accents are added to the pot you have a very fine surname stew indeed. Don't just stick to the obvious spelling of the surname. Have a quick look at the variations also. There are a number of texts devoted to surnames e.g. Edward Mc Lysaght's 'Surnames of Ireland' which should be on the reference shelves in your library. If you do find that you are not having much luck perhaps it's time to look at the variant spellings. You could also have a look at Matheson's Report on surnames which was published in the late 19th Century and is now available on CD.

19th Century Land and Valuation Records

Now that were back in 1864 and we've exhausted the resources of the GRO search room, we need to consider other sources of information to take us back a little further. In the absence of Census Records for this period we are going to look at a number of Property and Valuation records and these are

Griffiths Valuation of Ireland 1847 - 1864

Tithe Applotment Books 1823 – 1838

Tithe Defaulters Lists

Estate Records

Griffiths Valuation of Ireland

The first and probably most accessible of these records is called Griffiths Valuation or the Primary Valuation of Land. This survey was undertaken by Sir Richard Griffiths between 1847 and 1864 as part of a reform of local taxation in Ireland. It lists every landowner and householder in Ireland including a description of the property, the landlord, acreage and a rateable valuation.

We have a copy of the survey for Grand Canal Street. The street was first established c. 1795. One of the most famous men to be associated with the street was of course Sir Patrick Dun. He was born in Aberdeen in 1642 and he studied medicine on the continent before setting up practice in Dublin. He was president of the Royal College of Physicians five times. By his will he left a trust fund and with this money Sir Patrick Dun's hospital was founded.

As you can see this survey will only give the name of the head of household, but by tracing through the cancelled valuation books over a period of time you can see when someone died and when the next generation took over the property. Occasionally the enumerator will include some extra information in the margin (like 'John died' or perhaps in time of famine 'Michael evicted'). It is also a way to trace the history of a property, to establish when improvements or additions were made.

Apart from the actual published survey itself there are a number of working books which the surveyors used while the survey was taking place. These are known as Tenure Books (landlords and leases), Rent Books (rents paid), Quatro Books (relating to towns), Perambulation Books (recording visits of valuers) and Mill books (relating to Mills). Bear in mind that not all of these books survive for each county, those that do are available in the National Archives of Ireland, along with the valuation maps which can also be a good source of information if you want to locate a piece of land where an ancestor lived.

Much of the physical work of surveying was done by teams of men going around the country measuring the land and buildings using a pole and chain. Thomas Drummond was an engineer with the Ordnance Survey of Ireland who worked alongside Richard Griffiths. While surveying they found that there was a lot of downtime due to poor visibility. So in conjunction with a gentleman called Goldsworthy Gurney, they invented something called limelight. This was later adapted for use in theatres – now that's a good one for a quiz question.

Following the publication of the Survey the valuation books continued to be used up to the 1970's when rates were abolished. These 'cancelled valuation books' as they are called are available to view in the Valuation Office in the Irish Life Centre in Abbey Street. There is a fee for research time and number of books viewed. Over the years, changes of ownership or valuation of property were recorded using different coloured pens to indicate different years. They are a complicated set of records to use but are particularly useful in identifying when someone died, emigration, relationships where land passed from one branch of a family to another. Unlike most other books you have to start at the back of the books and work your way forward. You will need to know the name of the Townland or place where your ancestor lived in order to use these records.

With regard to the results of Griffiths Survey itself it is available on microfilm in the National Archives and National Library and is also available on line for a fee at Irish Origins. Some of the microfilm images have become much scratched over the years, so if you need a nice crisp clean image the online version is the best option.

Tithe Applotment Books and Tithe Defaulters Lists

For those who did doze off in history, the Tithes were a tax payable by all landholders to support the Established Church of Ireland. A survey was carried out to determine how much tax would be payable by each landholder. Even the poorest potato field was not exempt but curiously large areas of grassland used for grazing were often skipped over. As a result the taxes were unfair and bitterly resented. From a genealogical point of view they are not a complete record. Anyone not in occupation of land does not appear in the Tithe Books. Only the name of the head of household was recorded, as well as the amount and type of land he held and his landlords' name.

However, in the absence of Census or other records the Tithe Books can often be the only record available for poor families in the early 19th Century. Obviously with such an unpopular tax there were going to be consequences. In 1831 a campaign of resistance called the Tithe War began and this resulted in another set of Tithe records being produced called the Tithe Defaulters Lists.

Microfilm copies of the Tithe Books are available in the National Archives of Ireland. Not all of the Tithe Defaulters Lists survive but those that do are also available from the National Archives of Ireland. They are also available on CD. I've brought copies of various data CD's along with me today if anyone wants to have a look later

From a genealogical perspective the Tithe Books and Griffiths Valuation of Ireland can indicate the passing of land from one generation to the next. The middle of the 19th century was a time of great change because of the Great Famine and the social and physical upheaval that it caused.

Estate Records

In the middle of the 19th Century, most of the Irish population who lived outside the cities were small tenant farmers. They rented their small patch of land from large landowners who were mainly Anglo Irish and most of the time lived outside the country. They often borrowed money to pay for seeds and tools and paid their landlord back when the harvest came in. This type of relationship resulted in administration records being created such as maps, account books, loan books, and tenants' lists. The National Library of Ireland probably has the most comprehensive listing of surviving estate records. This is available in the main reading room.

These records can be difficult to use, firstly because you need to identify the landlord. Tenant farmers didn't usually rent directly from the owner of the landed estate. They rented from middlemen who might rent a large area of land from an absentee landlord and then sublet smaller plots to a tenant farmer and his family. The Tithe Applotment books and Griffiths Valuation only identify the immediate lessor, and in most cases this can often be the middleman. You can sometimes get around this by looking for the home of the middleman and seeing who his landlord is, or by looking at who the largest landholders in the county are and making a list of likely subjects.

There is a publication called 'Landowners of Ireland: Return of Owners of Land of One Acre and Upwards' by Hussey de Burgh. This was first published in 1876 and is available on CD and should be available in the National Library.

Church Records - How to find them and use them

As we discussed earlier, statutory registration of Births Deaths and Marriages only began in 1864. Prior to this records of births marriages and deaths may only be found in the surviving parish registers. You will note the word *surviving* - not all parish registers survived.

The vast majority of surviving Catholic Parish Registers only begin in the first half of 19th century and some can even be later than that. Years of religious oppression from the 16th to the 19th centuries during the penal times meant that record keeping wasn't exactly a number one priority. The situation is not quite so bad in the big cities, where some records can go back to the late 17th or early 18th centuries but these are the exception rather than the rule. It is for this reason alone that many people tracing their family tree in Ireland are lucky to get beyond 1800. The precious genealogical chain that links different generations of families is broken or at best severely damaged.

Where they survive the older records are written in English or Latin. Most are brief and to the point.

Baptismal Records usually contain the following information:

- Date
- Child's name
- Parents' names
- Sponsors

They may also give an indication of where the family live but not always.

Marriage Records

- Contain the name of both parties,
- The date,
- Witnesses to the ceremony

Occasionally the place where they live but this is more likely in the Dublin City Registers.

Death Registers are extremely difficult to trace. Many parishes don't appear to have kept death registers at all and some are mixed in with other records at the beginning or end of a register.

Microfilm copies of the majority of Parish Registers are available from the National Library of Ireland in Kildare Street. Up to recent times not all were accessible and you needed to get the permission of the local bishop – this is not a joke – by contacting them by telephone. Thankfully this situation has now been reviewed by the National Library and all surviving parish register records held by them are freely available.

You may also find some of these records on the internet for free at the LDS website of which more later.

The first step in tracing your parish records, is by knowing which parish registers to look at. The shop in the National Library sells a pamphlet for each county called a parish list. This gives a map and a list of civil parishes and the corresponding catholic parishes. It costs about 30 cent and is well worth the investment. For those looking for something nice for their bookshelves, you could get a copy of Brian Mitchell's 'Guide to Irish Parish Records' or James Ryan's book 'Irish Records'.

If your ancestors are from Dublin City then the simplest way of identifying the catholic parish is by checking their address in Thom's Directory and this will indicate what parish the street is in.

One thing to bear in mind is that where a register begins too late to be of interest to you – don't write it off. There were a number of new Roman Catholic parishes created in the late nineteenth century. These were often offshoots from other older parishes, so check the surrounding parishes and see where the older records lie.

When you do locate the correct microfilm for the correct parish – don't cry. I remember my first experience of looking at these old spidery, Latin scribbles and I wanted to press the rewind button and go home. Don't try to decipher every word on every page. Have a look at the general format of the record. The surname is usually among the first few words on every second line. Focus on where it appears and skim through the page. You will get used to the writing after the first few pages. When you find the correct record write every word down even the Latin terms that you don't understand. You can

check them later and research time is precious. When working on parish registers bear in mind the lessons you learned from the Census – be sceptical about ages and search a good wide margin around projected dates.

Although you may not get burial records you may find tombstone inscriptions. Many old graveyards have been surveyed and some are on the open shelves in the National Archives and National Library and some are available on CD. In particular I would recommend Brian Cantwell's volumes.

Wills and Testamentary Documents

I wouldn't be allowed back into the Probate Office this afternoon if I didn't mention wills as a genealogical resource. But before this can I ask you to do one thing. Please don't make your own wills.

Probate seems to be the one area of the law that lay people seem confident to 'have a go' and hundreds if not thousands of people every year take a chance with their homes, and their hard earned savings by making their own wills. Just bear in mind that it can all go horribly wrong. Your family may find that you leave a legal mess behind you that can take years to clean up. Almost every single home made will that comes across my desk needs an affidavit from the witnesses, if not more to set things right. Some home made wills end up in court and this can cause grief and hardship to your families at a time when they least need it. So please get a good probate solicitor to make your will for you.

In the Probate Office, we do get an eclectic selection of items which are eventually proven, as somebody's last will. These included an egg shell, an x-ray chart, and my favourite one, which came from a farmer who made his will at the local bank. He was told to take it home and put it somewhere safe. So he put it in the pocket of his farm overalls which he wore everyday and left hanging in the barn every night. By the time he died the poor will had been chewed through by mice and ended up in court because they had eaten a hole right through the middle of it.

Many people associate wills with wealthy people having a lot of property and not with our own ancestors who would have been small farmers or agricultural labourers with not a lot of money. They would be right to a certain extent, as only about one in twelve of the population made a will before 1900. In addition, many wills were also destroyed in the public records office fire during the Civil War.

Before 1858 Wills were administered through the Established Church of Ireland. They had Diocesan Courts and Prerogative Courts. If a person died and had property in more than one Diocese, or if he owned property worth more than £5 his estate was administered through the Prerogative Court which in Ireland meant Armagh. Also if any bequest was made to charity then there could also be a record of this in the National Archives of Ireland. They hold records relating to the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and

Bequests for Ireland. In some cases this can be a photocopy of a will, the original of which was subsequently lost in the fire of 1922.

Not all original wills were destroyed and there is a testamentary index in the NAI search room which can be searched. This is an example of a transcript of a will from the 18th Century. It is the will of an Irish man returning to Cork on what must have been a difficult voyage. Demetrius Crowley made his will on the ship and obviously had some concerns that his property wouldn't fall into the wrong hands. He must have been quite a stylish chap by all accounts. Carrie Bradshaw eat your heart out!

With our history of emigration it's not surprising when an Irish will turns up in a very unexpected place. In this case it is Jamaica – the testator is called Verdon and his family attended St. Michan's which was first built in 1095, although the present structure dates from the late 1600's. The Verdons originally lived on Ushers Island, and even though they moved to Jamaica, they maintained contact with the area. Their children returned home to be educated and one of them eloped with the daughter of his school master when he was only seventeen – she was several years older. Several of them became lawyers. The family are buried in the grounds of St. Michans.

After 1858 a Principal Registry was established with twelve (now fourteen) district registries around the country. After 1858 a yearly calendar of Wills and Administrations was published and these are available on the open shelves of the National Archives. So even though the wills are gone the Calendars survived. This is a typical entry from a Calendar and you can see that it contains quite a lot of useful information, including Names, addresses, relationships and value of estate. So don't ignore wills as a resource – they may surprise you.

Street Directories

I made a brief reference to Street Directories earlier. This is an example of Pettigrew and Oulton's Street directory from 1842 for Grand Canal Street. A good run of Thom's Directories are available in the National Library. The National Archives has taken its collection of street directories off the shelves and these records are now available on microfilm only. For the best run of Dublin Street Directories from the 1700s to date, the research room of the Gilbert Library in Pearse Street is the best place to go. Other County Libraries and Archives around the country have directories relating to their own areas. Check their catalogues – many are online – for details.

Occupational Records

Army, Navy and Coastguard Records

Not all of our ancestors were small farmers or agricultural labourer. With farms being so small often the second or third son had to find an occupation of his own. In many cases this meant joining the British Army or Navy. It is estimated that in 1830 approximately 40% of the British Army were Irish or Irish descent. Obviously most of these service records are in the National

Archives at Kew. However some of these records are available on line and copies can be downloaded for a small fee. In order to join the Coastguard, a man had to have service in the Navy. Copies of the coastguard records (officers only) are available in the Garda Museum at Dublin Castle.

Royal Irish Constabulary (Police) Records

As with Army and Navy Records the originals are held in Kew. However the best source for details of the RIC and the Dublin Metropolitan Police are Jim Herlihy's books on the RIC and the DMP 'The Royal Irish Constabulary: A Complete Alphabetical List of Officers and Men, 1816-1922 (1998) and The Dublin Metropolitan Police: A Short History and Genealogical Guide (2000). When you consider that in the period 1816 to 1922 some 85,000 men served in the RIC and its predecessor force, it may be worth your while having a look.

Law

If your ancestor had money then maybe he went for a career in the law. Records of admissions to Kings Inns from 1607 to 1867 have been published and are available at the National Library and the Gilbert Library.

University

If he was lucky enough to go to college then Trinity College may have a record of admissions. Alumni Dublinenses is a register of the students, graduates, professors and provosts of Trinity College, in the University of Dublin from 1637 to 1846. With over 300 names from 1593-1637 when there are no surviving registers.

Trinity College Dublin is the oldest university in Ireland, and this register includes the full name, the date they entered the college, their age at entry, their father's name and address, the degree they received and the date they graduated. Other information about their lives is often included. Students at Trinity College came from all over Ireland, Britain, and the British Empire. This has been republished on CD by Enneclan.

Drapers

If you enter a street name like Grafton Street into the search field for the online records of the 1911 census you may be surprised at how many people were living over the shop. Most Drapery Businesses had a live in policy. There are also a number of trade magazines including 'The Irish Draper' which included details of social outings and photographs.

Genealogy and the Internet

LDS – familysearch.org

This is one of the biggest genealogical websites in the world with billions of records on it including BMD and Census records for the UK USA and Canada. They also offer a facility for checking the US social security death index. They have a good range of free research guides, blank worksheets for different types of research and best of all – they are free.

Cyndi's List

Contains a regularly updated list of genealogy websites for all around the world. This site has been operating for more than a decade. It doesn't contain records but if you are interested in a particular area or a topic then Cyndi's List will give you a link to other websites.

Rootsweb

This is the internet's oldest and one of the biggest free genealogy websites. Its primary purpose is connecting people, and they do this by way of message boards or mailing lists. In other words if you are interested in particular surname or topic e.g. Ships of the Crimean War, then there are sure to be a few other individuals out there with the same interests. You can subscribe to a particular mailing list on the site and then just unsubscribe when you are finished that particular piece of research. They also have a lot of volunteer projects where people undertake to transcribe and upload data.

National Archives of Ireland

Moving closer to home lets have a look at some of the Irish websites. The National Archives is currently digitising the 1911 census, which is available online for free. This is an ongoing project so check the website regularly to see if your county has been digitised yet.

They also have a number of other online databases including a record of Transportation of convicts from Ireland to Australia, The Famine Relief Commission papers.

National Library of Ireland

You can check the main catalogue of the Library online. They also have a Newsplan database which is a list of Irish newspapers where they can be found. If you are interested in seeing images of the past, then they have a look at their photographic database.

Irish Ancestries

This website has a free place name finder for Irish towns and town lands. So even if you're not sure of the spelling of a place name you can do a wildcard search.

County Libraries/Sites

Many individual counties have a good selection of material relating to their own area. We don't have time to go into it now but a few worthy of mention are

Leitrim-Roscommon Genealogy

have a wonderful facility for those with links in Leitrim Roscommon Mayo and Sligo, including the 1901 Census of Population.

Clare County Library – also has an excellent section on genealogy

County Louth Genealogy Homepage – Brendan Hall has a marvellous site with more than 70,000 Louth related names.

So don't forget to check out your county library and archives on the web for links to other genealogy pages

Genealogical Society of Ireland

Is another Irish website. The society publishes a good range of genealogical material ranging from memorial inscriptions, census extracts, school registers and census substitutes to expertly researched articles on genealogy, heraldry. They also accept articles for publication in their annual journal.

Ellis Island

For those of you who have ancestors who emigrated to the USA check out EllisIsland.org. This is another good free website, where you can search the records and even look at digitised copies of the original ships manifests. The information includes nearest next of kin in Ireland and the address and relationship of the person they were going to stay with in America.

Genuki

Is a website dedicated to sources for Irish and UK genealogy.

With the growing interest in genealogy many commercial websites have sprung up. They have digitised copies of records online that you can access on a ppv basis. Among the best of them are

Find my past – mainly UK related records but can be useful in tracing Irish emigrants to the UK. They have digitised copies of indices of births, deaths and marriages, passenger records for those leaving the UK, as well as census records etc.

Genes reunited – again another UK based service. You pay an annual subscription, and this gives you the opportunity to search other people's family trees and send messages to them if you think you have a connection. You can also use this site to search census and Vital records – for a fee.

Ancestry.co.uk – probably the big daddy of all the commercial genealogy websites. Again, you can search census and Vital Records. They have a free index search to the 1881 UK Census. They also have digitised the old UK Phone directories and they can be searched online. Ancestry also have some Irish Records, including Griffiths and Tithe Applotment books

Conclusion

I hope you have all enjoyed our brief time travel through some of the genealogical records of the last two hundred years. I have brought a number of data CDs with me in case anyone is interested in having a look. There is also a list of popular websites relating to Ireland available for you to take away with you and may I wish you all happy hunting.

If anyone has any questions on material I've covered or indeed on material that I haven't covered, please feel free to ask them.

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GENEALOGISTS PRAYER

*Lord, help me dig into the past
And sift the sands of time
That I might find the roots that made
This family tree of mine.*

*Lord, help me trace the ancient roads
On which my fathers trod
And led them through so many lands
To find our present sod.*

*Lord, help me find an ancient book
Or dusty manuscript,
That's safely hidden now away
In some forgotten crypt.*

*Lord, let it bridge the gap that haunts
My soul when I can't find,
The missing link between some name
That ends the same as mine.*

Question Time – 15 mins approx.

Caroline McCall
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