

## RESEARCHING SCOTS-IRISH ANCESTORS HANDOUT

By John D. Beatty, CG©

### Irish Land Divisions

- County
- Province
- Barony
- Diocese
- Parish
- Townland (smallest land division)

### Finding a Place of Origin in Ulster

- Gold standard is to find the parish and townland – very difficult
- More difficult for 18<sup>th</sup> century Irish immigrants
- Few church records in America in 18<sup>th</sup> century, and virtually none of them list places of origin
- If the name is unusual, check later enumerations, such as Griffith's Valuation from the 1847-64 (may be too late for most Scots-Irish American families)
- Tithe Applotment List, 1823-1838
- Check Freeholder's records on PRONI website
- Check Belfast Newsletter for references to surname

### Belfast Newsletter research

- Vital record notices
- Advertisements
- Land sales
- Criminal notices
- Runaways

### Problem of Scots-Irish Name Variants

- Consider all possible ways of spelling
- Vowel shifts, ie. Pollock vs. Polk vs. Poag vs. Poak
- Changes can happen over generations of same family
- O and Mac can be dropped from names, O'Donnell vs. Donnell
- Anglicized Irish names into English
- Studies of surname distribution can help

### William Roulston's *Research Scots-Irish Ancestors*

- Best and most definitive guide
- Church records list for Ulster best in print
- Local histories bibliography comprehensive
- Lists of landed estate papers by parish and family

- Archives and libraries listing
- Maps
- Good overviews of all other archival sources for Ulster

### **Church Records in Ulster**

- Church of Ireland (Anglican)
- Presbyterian (various sects)
- Methodist
- Roman Catholic (not as strong in North as in Republic)
- Moravian (Gracehill and Ballinderry, County Antrim)
- Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
- Huguenots (at Lisburn, County Antrim)

### **Strategies for Finding Ulster Church Records**

- Some were lost in the 1922 Public Record Office fire in Dublin
- Those that survive are often incomplete
- Many births, marriages, and deaths occurred in Ulster not recorded in church records
- Always search neighboring parishes for baptisms

### **Miscellaneous Sources**

- Muster rolls 1630
- 1641 Depositions
- Down Survey 1650s (maps with some landowners)
- Hearth money rolls
- Censuses (fragments) and 1796 Flax Premium list
- Deeds
- Landed estate records
- Wills
- Cemeteries
- Genealogists' papers and transcripts

### **Deeds**

- Extant from 1709 – not all were recorded
- All digitized by Familysearch, searchable online
- Grantor indexes online
- Original deeds at Registry of Deeds in Dublin
- Many deeds are leases, not land transfers
- Terms of lease often for three named lives
- Much incidental information

### **Types of Irish Deeds**

- Leases (most common)
- Land sales and transfers
- Annuities and Mortgages

- Marriage settlements (prenuptial agreements)
- Wills (occasionally)

### **Deed Arrangement**

- Book – Page – Memorial number
- Grantor index (no grantee index)
- Town and townland index

### **Landed Estate Records**

- Correspondence
- Leases not otherwise recorded in Registry of Deeds
- Rent books
- Estate maps
- Search for the land owners in the areas where your family lived
- Manuscripts at PRONI and National Library of Ireland
- Hayes Manuscript and Periodical Sources for Irish Research

### **Wills**

- Diocesan wills (filed by diocese)
- Prerogative wills
- Indexes survive
- Most originals destroyed in 1922 fire
- Abstracts and copies exist for many
- Betham's Abstracts of Prerogative Wills

### **Selected Bibliography of Histories and Guides**

Carleton, S. T. *Heads & Hearths: The Hearth Money Rolls and Poll Tax Returns for County Antrim, 1660-69*. Belfast: PRONI, 1991. Gc 941.6101 C19h

Clarke, Aidan, ed. *1641 Depositions*. Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2014-. Five volumes published so far of projected 12-volume set. Gc 941.5 C55si

Falley, Margaret Dickson. *Irish and Scotch-Irish Ancestral Research: A Guide to Genealogical Records, Methods, and Sources in Ireland*. 1962. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1981, 2 volumes. Gc 929 F19i

Grenham, John. *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Dublin: Gill Books, 2019. Gc 929 G822tac

Hunter, Robert J. *'Men and Arms': The Ulster Settlers, c. 1630*. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2012. Gc 941.6 H916me

------. *Strabane Barony during the Ulster Plantation, 1607-1641*. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2011. Gc 941.6 H91st

-----, *Ulster Plantation in the Counties of Armagh and Cavan*. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2012. Gc 941.6401 H91u

MacLysaght, Edward. *Irish Families: Their Names, Arms, and Origins*. Dublin, H. Figgis, 1957. Gc 929.121 M22i

-----, *Surnames of Ireland*. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969. Gc 929.4 M22s

Radford, Dwight A. *American Scots-Irish Research: Strategies and Sources in the Quest for Ulster-Scot Origins*. Orting, WA: Family Roots Publishing, 2020. Gc929.121 R11a

Robinson, Philip. *Plantation of Ulster: British Settlement in an Irish Landscape, 1600-1670*. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2000. Gc 941.6 R56pL

Roulston, William J. *Researching Scots-Irish Ancestors: The Essential Genealogical Guide to Early Modern Ulster, 1600-1800*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2018. Gc 941.6 R759ra

Scott, Brendan, and John Dooher, eds. *Plantation: Aspects of Seventeenth Century Ulster Society*. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 2013. Gc 941.6 P69sc

### **Irish Archival Sources and Databases Online**

Ask about Ireland. <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/> Has Griffiths Valuation for free.

*Belfast Newsletter*. Newspaper, 1738-1925. Partial index, Ancestry. Online index, 1738-1800, <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bnl/>; full online text and index, *Irish Newspaper Archives* website <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/belfast-newsletter-newspaper-archive/>; Card File Index, Linen Hall Library, Belfast. An important source for residents of Ulster in this period.

Betham, Sir William. "Betham Genealogical Abstracts" and "Betham Prerogative Marriage Licences Abstracts." Find My Past website. Searchable collections of abstracted prerogative wills and marriage bonds made before the 1922 fire. <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/betham-genealogical-abstracts>

Crossle, Philip. "Crossle Genealogical Abstracts" collection. Find My Past website. <https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-Records/crossle-genealogical-abstracts> Fully searchable database of many abstracted genealogical records. Crossle did research before the 1922 fire.

Deeds. See Familysearch [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) under "Transcripts of Memorials of Deeds, Conveyances, and Wills, 1708-1929." Includes all deed books, grantor and place indexes. Begins with film #100251. An important source for Irish residents in the 1700s and later.

*Down Survey of Ireland*. 1656-1658. Trinity College Dublin. Database with images <[downsurvey.tcd.ie](http://downsurvey.tcd.ie)> Detailed land ownership maps from 1656 to 1658. Only large landowners shown.

Flax Growers List [Spinning Wheel Premium Entitlement List] 1796. [Known under various titles, with several versions online]. See Familysearch for index and images. DGS no. 8088598. Lists of persons to whom premiums were paid for growing flax in 1796.

*Freeholders Records, Pre-1840.* Index and images, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni> Lists of males taken from polls books who had the right to vote based on their land holdings. It includes some lists from the 1760s forward and is an important census substitute.

GENUKI. <https://www.genuki.org.uk/> Useful links to many towns and counties

Grenham, John. *Irish Ancestors* website. <johngrenham.com> Contains excellent record lists by county with links to some online records.

*Griffith's Valuation of Ireland, 1847-1864.* Available on Find My Past and Ancestry. Lists are too late for most Americans with Scots Irish ancestors, but it may provide clues about the locations of certain family names.

Groves, Tenison. "Genealogical Collection of Muster Rolls, Householders, Wills, Deeds, Parish Registers." *Familysearch*. Digital files 258471-258524. A genealogist who did research before the 1922 fire.

Hays, Richard J. *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*. National Library of Ireland website. <https://www.nli.ie/en/udlist/manuscripts-catalogues-and-databases.aspx>

"Ireland 1766 Religious Census." Index on Ancestry. Images are not online.

Ireland Department of Tourism. *IrishGenealogy.ie*, [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie) Has some church books for Dublin, Carlow, and Cork. More C of I parish registers are expected in the future.

Logainm.ie [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie) Detailed place name indexes with maps, as well as minor place names within townlands.

National Archives of Ireland. [www.NationalArchives.ie](http://www.NationalArchives.ie) Has Tithe Applotment books with images and surviving censuses

National Library of Ireland. *Sources*. <sources.nli.ie> Database of sources, including manuscripts, compiled by the National Library of Ireland.

*Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland*, online database <irishdeedsindex.net/index.php> Database with abstracts of over 38,000 deeds.

RootsIreland. Website. <https://www.rootsireland.ie> Paid site.

*Tithe Applotment Books, ca. 1814-1855.* Index on Ancestry; index with images; Familysearch. Microfilm in Genealogy Center. Lists are too late for most American with Scots Irish roots, but it may provide clues.

Trinity College Dublin. *1641 Depositions Online* database. <1641.tcd.ie> Database with images of original depositions from the 1641 Irish Rebellion.

Ulster Historical Foundation. Website. [www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com) Paid and free site with historical records.

Wills. Pre-1858 Diocesan Will Indexes. PRONI website. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/public-record-office-northern-ireland-proni>