

# Introduction to Irish Internet Sites

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## A Few Key Websites to Get Started

These websites offer excellent research guidance and an abundance of Irish records:

- Help getting started – **FamilySearch Wiki** and **Irish Ancestors**
- Family trees – **Ancestry.com**, **FamilySearch**, and **My Heritage**
- Historical maps – **Ordnance Survey Ireland**
- Parish registers – **Irish Genealogy** and the **Irish Family History Foundation**
- Census records – **National Archives of Ireland**
- Civil registers – **General Register Office of Northern Ireland** and **FamilySearch**
- Much more

Dozens of websites now offer substantial support for Irish family history research. Most of these websites fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Web portals for Irish family history
- Irish archives, libraries, and record offices
- Government programs promoting family history
- Genealogy companies with Irish content
- Genealogical and historical societies
- County websites with local records

## Web Portals for Irish Family History

**FamilySearch Wiki: Ireland** ([www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ireland](http://www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ireland))

The FamilySearch Wiki's Ireland homepage provides guidance for Irish family history research. With dozens of support articles on various topics of Irish research, and hundreds of links to content on FamilySearch and other websites, the Wiki offers an excellent introduction to Irish genealogy and online research.

**Irish Ancestors** ([www.johngrenham.com](http://www.johngrenham.com))

Irish Ancestors is a great starting point for Irish genealogy. John Grenham has woven much of his popular guidebook, *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors*, into this website, with interactive maps of Roman Catholic and civil parishes, surname-distribution maps, instruction on genealogical records, and detailed listings of county-specific record sources. More databases and website features are available to subscribers. Previously hosted by *The Irish Times*, former users on that site are redirected to set up a new account.

## **GENUKI** ([www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl))

GENUKI stands for “UK and Ireland Genealogy.” The service was created to be a “virtual reference library,” especially designed to help people researching their ancestors from England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. This website contains instructional material on all aspects of Irish family history, with links to many of the best Irish genealogy websites.

## **IrelandGenWeb Project** ([www.irelandgenweb.com](http://www.irelandgenweb.com))

The IrelandGenWeb Project is part of WorldGenWeb, a grass-roots effort to build communities of family historians all around the world dedicated to local genealogical research. IrelandGenWeb is particularly focused on promoting websites for each of the thirty-two counties of Ireland and Northern Ireland. These county websites feature genealogical indexes, research guides, and useful links centered on local family history.

## **YouTube** ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com))

Why should anyone consider YouTube an Irish genealogy portal?! Because YouTube hosts useful videos on many aspects of Irish family history research. Try search terms such as *Irish genealogy* to find excellent training on successful approaches to Irish family history, genetic genealogy in Ireland, how-to guides for online Irish family history, and lots of details on local culture.

# **Irish Archives, Libraries, and Record Offices**

## **The National Archives of Ireland** ([www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie))

The National Archives of Ireland holds a treasure trove of manuscript and microfilm records such as censuses, probate, estate papers, land and property valuation records, many Church of Ireland parish registers (mostly on microfilm), national school registers, and many other historical documents of genealogical value.

The Archives, in conjunction with Library and Archives Canada, has digitized and indexed the 1901 and 1911 censuses of Ireland. The resulting images and searchable name index are available for free on the National Archives website. The Archives has partnered with FamilySearch and FindMyPast Ireland to digitize, index, and publish many other records, including early census fragments, tithe applotment books, the calendar of wills and administrations, estates court files, petty session records, prison registers, land valuation records, and a variety of yet-to-be-released records.

## **The National Library of Ireland** ([www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie))

The National Library of Ireland holds many records of genealogical value, including Roman Catholic parish registers (on microfilm), historical newspapers, landed estate papers, and Irish history and genealogy publications. The website has a detailed listing of the microfilmed Catholic parish registers.

## **Ordnance Survey Ireland ([maps.osi.ie](http://maps.osi.ie))**

Ordnance Survey Ireland's national mapping agency has recently released a digital archive of historical maps for the time periods 1837–42 and 1888–1913, with scales of six-inches per mile and twenty-five inches per mile, respectively. These maps can help pinpoint precisely where an ancestor lived in Ireland. The online map viewer allows for overlays of historical and modern maps, permitting easy comparison of old buildings and the property divisions with modern equivalents.

## **Public Record Office of Northern Ireland ([www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk))**

The official PRONI website is genealogy friendly, offering helpful articles on historical records of genealogical value, county maps, parish maps, townland indexes, and finding aids to guide the researcher to the best records in Northern Ireland. The website has a few online indexes, including the list of nearly half-a-million men and women who signed the Ulster Covenant and Declaration, as well as a database of Freeholders' Records. Indexes and images are available free of charge.

The 'Your Family Tree' and 'Local History' series' are designed to assist both the beginner and the more experienced researcher. They cover the most popularly consulted archives, indicating their range and content and how they can be accessed.

Other series' relate to emigration, historical topics and more general information.

## **General Register Office of Northern Ireland ([www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk))**

In March 2014, the General Register Office of Northern Ireland (GRONI) launched an online service with fee-based access to civil registers of births, marriages, and deaths. Digital images and indexes are available online for the six counties of Northern Ireland – Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone—from the beginning of civil registration in 1864 (1845 for non-Catholic marriages) to these privacy cutoff dates:

- Birth records over 100 years old
- Marriage records over 75 years old
- Death records (including World War II death records) over 50 years old

To get started, go to [www.nidirect.gov.uk/family-history](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/family-history). To order records online, go to [geni.nidirect.gov.uk](http://geni.nidirect.gov.uk). This is a fee-based service, but the cost is reasonable at £0.40 for a record transcript and £2 for the transcript and digital image of the original record.

## **General Register Office of Ireland ([www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie))**

The General Register Office of Ireland has digitized and indexed the civil registers of births, marriages, and deaths for all of Ireland through 1922, with records of the Republic thereafter. However, they do not yet offer online access to the records as does GRONI.

## **Valuation Office ([www.valoff.ie/research.htm](http://www.valoff.ie/research.htm))**

The Valuation Office is digitized the revision books of Ireland, documenting the valuation of each property in Ireland from the 1860s to the 1970s. The Valuation Office has digitized the revision books of the counties of Ireland, available for public inspection at the Dublin offices.

## **Registry of Deeds ([www.prai.ie](http://www.prai.ie))**

The Registry of Deeds, established in 1707, houses original deeds and property conveyances documented through voluntary registration. Of special note is an indexing project published at [freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~registryofdeeds](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~registryofdeeds).

## **Linen Hall Library ([www.linenhall.com](http://www.linenhall.com))**

The Linen Hall Library, founded in 1788, is the oldest library in Belfast and contains a fantastic collection of Irish and local history materials. They have no online records but have an online catalog of their extensive holdings.

## **Representative Church Body Library ([ireland.anglican.org/about/42](http://ireland.anglican.org/about/42))**

The Representative Church Body Library (RCBL) houses the archives of the Church of Ireland. Parish registers, vestry minutes, and other manuscript holdings are available to the public at the RCBL and have not been digitized (although a very few parish register indexes are available on the RCBL website). Individual parish churches continue to send their older parish registers to the RCBL for safekeeping. In addition, the older parish registers have been microfilmed and these copies may be accessed at the National Archives. The RCBL website has up-to-date listings of parish registers and vestry minutes held in their archives (see [ireland.anglican.org/about/109](http://ireland.anglican.org/about/109)) as well as a link to many digitized parish registers on [www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie).

## **The National Archives (UK) ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk))**

The National Archives (of the United Kingdom) houses an enormous collection of historical records of value to Irish family history research, including British civil registration records from 1837, census returns from 1841 to 1901, wills, military records, and much more. The National Archives, in partnership with FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, and other organizations are digitizing key collections of genealogical value, including historical records from and about Ireland.

# **Government Programs Promoting Family History**

## **Irish Genealogy ([www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie))**

Irish Genealogy publishes free name indexes to parish registers for hundreds of Church of Ireland and Irish Catholic parishes. By March 2014, rich indexes of church records (and some digital images) for the following areas are available for free:

- Church of Ireland: Counties Carlow, Dublin, and Kerry
- Roman Catholic: Counties Cork, Dublin, and Kerry (with Monaghan soon)
- Presbyterian Church: County Dublin

## **Ask about Ireland ([www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation](http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation))**

This government-sponsored initiative designed for public libraries, a collaborative work with the Cultural Heritage Project, provides digitization and online publication of historical materials about

Irish culture. The most useful genealogical content is the Primary Valuation of Tenements, or Griffith's Valuation, which is free on this website.

## Genealogy Companies with Irish Content

### FamilySearch ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org))

Many Irish records are now available on FamilySearch, including three searchable name indexes of vital records from Ireland:

- Ireland, Civil Registration Indexes, 1845-1958 (23.1 M names)
- Ireland Births and Baptisms, 1620-1881 (15.8 M names)
- Ireland Marriages, 1619-1881 (1.7 M names)

FamilySearch has recently digitized records at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast and the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. FamilySearch is jointly publishing digitized images and indexes of many more records of the National Archives of Ireland in collaboration with FindMyPast Ireland.

The Family History Library also has the most comprehensive collection of Irish genealogy in the world, including these major record sets:

- Civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths, 1845–1958 (with gaps)
- Catholic parish registers (35% of all pre-1880 registers)
- 1901 and 1911 censuses
- Tithe Applotment books, 1823–1838
- Griffith's Valuation, 1847–1864
- Canceled land books, 1850s–1920s
- Townland and tenement valuation manuscripts, 1830–1864
- Registry of deeds, 1708–1929
- Wills and administrations, post-1858, and pre-1858 indexes
- National school registers for hundreds of schools, mostly in Northern Ireland

Many of these microfilm and digital collections will become available online as digital images or indexes. The Family History Library Catalog is the key to finding collections in the Family History Library. The online catalog lists Irish records by country, county, or civil parish, depending on the specific record collection.

### Ancestry.com ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com))

Ancestry offers many record collections for Irish-American family history research and a growing collection of Irish and British records. The website has a large the largest online collection of family trees, U.S. censuses, British censuses, genealogy message boards, and passenger lists, including many millions of Irish men and women who migrated to the United States and England. Ancestry also has some indexes of Irish records per se, including a number of indexes recently acquired from FamilySearch (e.g., civil registration indexes) and the National Archives of Ireland (e.g., 1901 and 1911 censuses).

Ancestry has also digitized and indexed a few dozen Irish Catholic parish registers and published the color images with indexes:

- Ireland, Select Catholic Birth and Baptism Registers, 1763-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Marriage Registers, 1775-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Confirmation Registers, 1775-1912
- Ireland, Select Catholic Death and Burial Registers, 1767-1912

### **Find a Grave** ([www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com))

Find A Grave has attracted a huge base of contributors who have uploaded tombstone photographs, inscriptions, and occasional family history sketches of some 112 million individuals (as of March 2014). Recently acquired by Ancestry.com, Find A Grave is the largest collection of online cemetery “records.” While the majority of the contributions originate in the United States, a growing number are appearing for Ireland.

### **Findmypast Ireland and Irish Origins** ([www.findmypast.ie](http://www.findmypast.ie)) and ([www.findmypast.com](http://www.findmypast.com))

Findmypast hosts over one hundred Irish record collections available by subscription. Irish Origins is now owned by Findmypast and their online databases previously accessible by subscription are now honored by Findmypast. These include a dozen census substitutes—Griffith’s Valuation being the most significant; passenger lists leaving the United Kingdom; prison registers; petty session order books; a few Irish newspapers, dozens of parish registers; the FamilySearch indexes to Irish civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths; and city directories. FindMyPast partners with FamilySearch on many digitization and indexing projects. The most valuable content on this website is the definitive version of Griffith’s Valuation, 1848–64, a superb online index linked to images of the original publication. Most significant collections are:

- Irish Catholic Parish Registers of Baptisms (7,395,285 records)
- Irish Catholic Parish Registers of Marriages (3,076,560 records)
- Ireland Petty Sessions Court Registers (23,437,915 records)
- Ireland 1901 and 1911 Censuses (8,788,529 records)
- Irish Prison Registers (3,127,594 records)
- Griffith’s Valuation 1847-1864 (2,936,878 records)
- Ireland, Society of Friends (Quaker) Congregational Records (1,462,540 records)

### **Emerald Ancestors** ([www.emeraldancestors.com](http://www.emeraldancestors.com))

Emerald Ancestors boasts an online subscription-based database of over one million birth, marriage, death, and census records for the counties of Northern Ireland—Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, and Tyrone. The indexed records include a selection of parish registers, will calendars, part of the 1901 census, school registers, and a few other record types.

### **Irish Newspaper Archives** ([www.irishnewsarchive.com](http://www.irishnewsarchive.com))

This subscription service hosts the largest online collection of historical Irish newspapers.

## **MyHeritage** ([www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com))

MyHeritage has developed a nice suite of Irish record collections over the past several years and now offers their own powerful search engine results that may differ from the search of the same records on other websites. Major collections:

- United Kingdom, Death Index, 1980-2020 (6,351,219 records)
- 1901 and 1911 Ireland Census (8,794,377 records)
- Ireland Marriages, 1619-1898 (1,473,257 records)
- Griffith's Valuation, 1847-1864 (1,250,708 records)
- Republic of Ireland, Index of Burials, 1900-2019 (205,995 records)

## **Genealogical and Historical Societies**

### **Genealogical Society of Ireland** ([www.familyhistory.ie](http://www.familyhistory.ie))

The Genealogical Society of Ireland, founded in 1990 and based in Dublin, promotes Irish genealogy, social history, vexillology, heraldry, and Irish DNA research. The society has national and international membership, offering a monthly newsletter and annual journal.

### **North of Ireland Family History Society** ([www.nifhs.org](http://www.nifhs.org))

The North of Ireland Family History Society seeks to build interest in family history with a focus on families originating in the nine counties of Ulster. The society has branches in Ballymena, Belfast, Coleraine, Fermanagh, Foyle, Killyleagh, Larne, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, North Armagh, North Down & Ards, and Omagh. The society has a research centre in Newtownabbey and encourages collaboration across its membership.

### **Ulster Historical Foundation** ([www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com))

The Ulster Historical Foundation established the Ulster Genealogical and Historical Guild, a group of nearly 2,000 members dedicated to family history research in Ulster. They support Irish and Scots-Irish research interests. The website hosts dozens of genealogy databases containing over two million entries.

### **Presbyterian Historical Society** (<http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com/>)

“The object of the Society is to promote the knowledge of, and advance public education in, the history of the churches of the Presbyterian order in Ireland. This is achieved by various means, including the collection and preservation of historic materials and records of these churches. When the Society was formed in 1907, it was made up of the three churches which held the Presbyterian Order in Ireland. These are the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. This is still the position today. To search the database for information on over 600 congregations in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland you must be a member of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.”

### **Accredited Genealogists Ireland** ([www.accreditedgenealogists.ie](http://www.accreditedgenealogists.ie))

(Formerly the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland). Sometimes the best approach to breaking through a brick wall involves hiring a professional genealogist. Founded in 1986, they have set the standards for family history research in Ireland and awards accreditation in

genealogical research to those who apply and qualify. Some of the most qualified genealogists in Ireland are members or fellows of AGI.

### **Society of Genealogists Northern Ireland ([www.sgni.net](http://www.sgni.net))**

The Society of Genealogists Northern Ireland provides a listing of genealogical researchers for the six northern counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry (Derry), and Tyrone.

### **Irish Genealogical Research Society ([www.irishancestors.ie](http://www.irishancestors.ie))**

The Irish Genealogical Research Society (IGRS) aims to “promote and encourage the study of Irish genealogy and to collect books and manuscripts of genealogical value.” The Society, established in 1936, publishes an annual, scholarly journal, *The Irish Genealogist* and newsletter.

## **County Websites with Local Records**

### **Irish Family History Foundation ([www.rootsireland.ie](http://www.rootsireland.ie))**

The Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF) offers coordinated access to genealogical indexes created by Irish County Heritage Centres. The IFHF website has the largest online index of Irish parish registers with 15 million church and civil records of births, baptisms, marriages, deaths, and burials from most counties in Ireland, but the indexes are incomplete for many counties. You can search the basic index for free, but viewing all indexed fields for a single record is expensive.

### **Clare County Library ([clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/genealog.htm](http://clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/genealogy/genealog.htm))**

Clare County Library hosts the best county collection of Irish family history on the Internet. Great care has been taken to index many of the best sources of genealogy, including the 1901 census for County Clare, Tithe Applotment records, Griffith’s Valuation, city directories, school records, numerous census substitutes and local records.

### **Waterford County Library ([www.waterfordcountylibrary.ie/familyhistory](http://www.waterfordcountylibrary.ie/familyhistory))**

This website has a number of online databases for family history research in Waterford, including death registers 1864–1901, census returns, grave memorials, wills, tithe applotment books, Griffith’s Valuation, and a number of trade directories from 1824–1910.

### **Limerick City Archives ([www.limerick.ie/cityarchives](http://www.limerick.ie/cityarchives))**

The Limerick City Archives website hosts a number of digitized records and indexes such as electoral registers, burial registers, valuation books, and family histories.

### **Kerry Local Authorities Graveyard Records ([www.kerrylaburials.ie](http://www.kerrylaburials.ie))**

The Kerry Local Authorities control over 140 cemeteries in County Kerry. Recognizing the genealogical value of the burial registers, they have digitized 168 registers and indexed about 70,000 names, publishing the indexes linked to color images online. Each burial register is individual downloadable as a PDF file. The website incorporates Google Maps to highlight the location of each cemetery geographically.

## **Cork City and County Archives ([www.corkarchives.ie/genealogy](http://www.corkarchives.ie/genealogy))**

The Cork City and County Archives has an Online Digital Archive with a number of digitized records available for download in PDF format: cemetery registers, valuation lists, city directories, and other historical documents.

## **County Tyrone ([www.cotyroneireland.com](http://www.cotyroneireland.com))**

The County Tyrone website has a large volume of indexed records, including church parish registers of various denominations, Griffith's Valuation, maps, photographs, directories, hearth money rolls, tithing applotments, and much more.

## **Donegal Genealogy ([freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal))**

The Donegal Genealogy Resources website has over 2,800 pages of indexed records in support of Donegal family history research. Many individuals have contributed details on their ancestral families in addition to the substantial volume of indexed records.

# **More Great Websites for Irish Family History**

## **IreAtlas Townland Database ([www.thecore.com/seanruad](http://www.thecore.com/seanruad))**

IreAtlas is an online version of the townland index produced from the 1851 census of Ireland. The flexible search form accommodates a wide variety of place-name searches, making it easy to find places even if the exact spelling is not known. This includes calling up lists of all townlands in a parish or county.

## ***Irish Roots Magazine* ([www.irishrootsmedia.com](http://www.irishrootsmedia.com))**

*Irish Roots* is a quarterly publication dedicated to helping people learn how to research their Irish family history, break down genealogical brick walls, and discover their Irish heritage. They offer an electronic edition as well.

## ***Irish Lives Remembered Magazine* ([www.irishlivesremembered.com](http://www.irishlivesremembered.com))**

*Irish Lives Remembered* is a free monthly magazine available online or as a downloadable PDF file. This e-magazine typically runs over seventy pages per edition and has lots of up-to-the-minute details on Irish research, records, archives, history, publications, online databases, and local genealogical news.

## **Fáilte Romhat ([www.failteromhat.com](http://www.failteromhat.com))**

The Fáilte Romhat website provides a number of early census substitutes and directories as well as some cemetery transcriptions.

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