

A Castle in Phoenix?

How to Trace Your Irish Ancestors without Going to Ireland

Presented by Cindy Patricki
cindy.patricki@azirishlibrary.org
www.azirishlibrary.org

Introduction

The McClelland Irish Library

- Facts about the library
- Frances B. McClelland Genealogy Research Centre, Services and Resources
- Special Collections
 - **“The Search for Missing Friends: Irish immigrant Advertisements Placed in the *Boston Pilot*” – 1831-1876**
 - Seven-volume book set at McClelland Library
 - Free index access at Boston College website, <http://infowanted.bc.edu/>
 - Also, available on the New England Historic Genealogical Society website, www.americanancestors.org and www.ancestry.com.
 - **The Casey Collection – “O’Kief, Coshe Mang, Slieve Lougher and Upper Blackwater, Ireland” by Albert E. Casey**
 - 16-volume book set containing over 3 million indexed names
 - Covers the Blackwater region in Counties Cork and Kerry
- McClelland Library Website www.azirishlibrary.org
- Our Subscription Websites
 - Ancestry.com
 - HeritageQuestOnline.com
 - AmericanAncestors.org
 - FindMyPast.com
 - AncestryIreland.com
 - RootsIreland.ie
 - IrishNewsArchive.com
- Search our collection at the Phoenix Public Library website <http://phoenixpubliclibrary.org>
 - Select “Irish Cultural Center” as the location using the advanced search option

Facts about Ireland

- Current population of the island of Ireland is about 6.51 million
- Republic of Ireland – 4.67 million, Northern Ireland – 1.84 million
- Has over 62,000 townlands

Three Main Waves of Irish Emigration

Understanding when and why your ancestors emigrated from Ireland can help you to re-trace their steps back to their homeland.

Early to Mid-1700s – Irish & Scots-Irish Immigrants

- Characteristics
 - Primarily Protestant Scots-Irish farmers
 - Pennsylvania attracted many Irish Quakers and Scots-Irish Presbyterians
 - Migrated due to droughts, religious persecution and unfair rent practices
 - Valued personal and religious freedom
 - Scots-Irish often lived on the edge of the frontier
 - Played a significant role in the American Revolution

- Migration Patterns
 - Usually entered U.S. through port of Philadelphia
 - Initially settled in Pennsylvania, then moved into Virginia and the Carolinas
 - Later, moved into Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, the Ohio Valley and the New England states
 - As land opened up in the Midwest, they moved to Arkansas, Missouri and Texas

Mid-1800s – Irish Famine Immigrants

- Characteristics
 - Mainly Roman Catholic families who were poor, unskilled laborers
 - Left Ireland to avoid starvation due to the failure of the potato crop during the Great Famine
 - Couldn't afford to buy land to farm in the U.S.
 - Followed the jobs – factories, canals, railroads, mining, lumber industry
- Migration Patterns
 - Came to the U.S. through Boston, Philadelphia, New York and New Orleans; also by way of Canada through Quebec City and Halifax
 - Some stayed in the east coast cities and worked in the factories
 - Others moved on to Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota to find jobs working on the country's infrastructure

Late 1800s to Early 1900s – Irish Immigrants

- Characteristics
 - Many young, single workers, especially women
 - Lure of more jobs and higher wages in the U.S.
 - Lived in larger American cities
 - Chain migration was popular
- Migration Patterns
 - Many came through Ellis Island in New York, which opened in 1892
 - Other ports of entry were Boston, Philadelphia and New Orleans
 - Many lived in the larger cities where they had arrived, or moved to established Irish communities in Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco where they could find employment

Challenges in Irish Research

Loss of Irish Records

- Invasions – The country has been occupied for most of its history
- 1861 through 1891 census records were destroyed by government order
- 1821 through 1851 census records were destroyed by fire
- 1922 Irish Civil War – Four Courts building burned

Irish Naming Pattern

- 1st Son – Father's Father
- 2nd Son – Mother's Father
- 3rd Son – Father
- 4th Son – Father's Oldest Brother

- 1st Daughter – Mother's Mother
- 2nd Daughter – Father's Mother
- 3rd Daughter – Mother
- 4th Daughter – Mother's Oldest Sister

Irish Names

- Nicknames were commonly used to tell people with the same names apart
- Name spellings varied; vowels were interchangeable
- O', Mc, Mac and Fitz surname prefixes were not used consistently
 - O' indicates "descendant of" – surname has Irish origin
 - Mc or Mac indicates "son of" – surname usually has Scottish origin
 - Fitz indicates "son of" – surname often has Anglo-Norman origin
- Dates and ages were not consistent over time

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. This includes birth, marriage and death records for your ancestor's children, spouse and siblings. Also, 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
- Business and Financial Records
- DNA Testing

Irish Jurisdictions

When the townland or parish is found, determine all the other jurisdictions that place falls under.

Irish Geographical Divisions

- 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, or Presbyterian Congregations
- 62,000+ Cities, Towns and Townlands

Geographic Finding Aids

- **"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
 - Use to find all the jurisdictions for a specific townland

- **IreAtlas Townland Database** – 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
- **“A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland”** by Brian Mitchell (2nd Edition)
 - County, barony, parish and poor law union maps
 - Use to visually locate a parish or poor law union in a specific county

Major Types of Irish Records

- **Census Returns** – only 1901 & 1911 are complete; fragments for 1821 – 1851
 - National Archives of Ireland – www.nationalarchives.ie
- **Civil Registrations** (Vital Records) – marriages for non-Catholics began in 1845; all other birth, marriage and death registrations started in 1864
 - Indexes on www.Ancestry.com, www.FamilySearch.org, www.FindMyPast.com
 - Order original records from the General Register Office (GRO)
 - **GRO of Ireland** (Dublin) – All of Ireland up to 1921; Republic of Ireland records 1922 to present www.welfare.ie/en/pages/general-register-office.aspx
 - **GRO of Northern Ireland** (Belfast) – All records for 6 counties of Northern Ireland www.nidirect.gov.uk/general-register-office-for-northern-ireland
- **Catholic Parish Registers** – baptisms, marriages and deaths; some go as far back as the late 1700s
 - National Library of Ireland <http://registers.nli.ie>
 - Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht www.irishgenealogy.ie
 - County Heritage Centers www.rootsireland.ie
- **Gravestone Inscriptions** – published and on websites
 - Irish Graveyards – www.irishgraveyards.ie
 - Historic Graves – <http://historicgraves.com>
 - Billion Graves – <http://billiongraves.com>
 - Find A Grave – <http://findagrave.com>
- **Griffith’s Primary Valuation** – property tax records from 1848-1864
 - <http://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation>
- **Tithe Applotment Books** – Church of Ireland tax records from 1823-1837
 - The National Archives of Ireland <http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie>
- **Wills & Administrations** – most originals destroyed in 1922; some indexes and abstracts still exist
 - Will index books at McClelland Library
 - Will indexes online
 - www.FindMyPast.com – 1484 – 1858
 - www.Ancestry.com – 1536 – 1857
 - www.FamilySearch.org – 1858 – 1920
 - Will calendars, abstracts and indexes
 - www.nationalarchives.ie – 1858 - 1982
 - <http://www.proni.gov.uk> – pre-1858 – 1943
- **Estate Records** – apply to large land owners, but tenants may be mentioned
 - Free online Landed Estates Database c.1700 – 1914 for Connaught and Munster
 - <http://www.landedestates.ie/LandedEstates/jsp>
- **Land Commission Records** – began in 1881
 - National Archives of Ireland www.nationalarchives.ie

- **Registry of Deeds** – Protestant land owners
 - Property Registration Authority – <http://www.prai.ie>
 - Volunteer transcription project for free access to deeds
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~registryofdeeds>
- **Religious Censuses** – partial lists for 1766 and 1749
 - www.familysearch.org
- **Hearth Money Rolls** – tax on the number of fireplace hearths in each house - 1664 to 1666
 - www.familysearch.org

Reference Guides

“Tracing Your Irish Ancestors” by John Grenham (4th Edition)

- Detailed county-by-county reference guide of what records are available and where to find them

FamilySearch Wiki <https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ireland>

- Explains the different record types and their locations
- Has an extensive list of Irish genealogy websites

Irish Genealogy Website www.IrishGenealogy.ie

- Ireland Dept. of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Free online search portal with links and descriptions of various record types
- Online access to church parish record transcriptions for the Republic of Ireland
- Currently have completed the counties of Kerry, Carlow, southern Cork, and Dublin City

Additional Irish Websites

IrishTimes.com/ancestor

- Informational site created by author John Grenham
- Interactive Roman Catholic and civil parish maps, and surname distribution maps

GENUKI.org.uk

- UK and Ireland genealogy
- Contains instructional material and many links to the best sites for genealogy in Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

IrelandGenWeb.com

- Part of WorldGenWeb
- Links to websites for all 32 Irish counties that include many indexes and research guides

IrelandXO.com

- Ireland Reaching Out - “reverse genealogy” program
- Volunteer effort to identify the Irish people who left Ireland and trace them and their descendants worldwide
- They may be looking for you

Griffith’s Valuation Example

- James Parker, Sr. living in the townland of Ballykeel in the mid-1800s
- AskAboutIreland website - <http://askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation>