

## Irish Research

People have been crossing the Irish Sea to and from Ireland for hundreds of years. In the worst times, for example, after famine, rebellion or other civil unrest, many went beyond Britain to Australia, New Zealand, America and Canada. Now known as the Irish Diaspora, these exiles never forgot their native land. So it's very likely that there are quite a few of us in this part of the world with at least a trace of Irish blood, even though we may not know it, and only find out when we start our Lancashire or other English research. Those who do know, are often discouraged from trying to find out more about their Irish ancestor because they have been told it is impossible. After all, all the records were destroyed in 1922, weren't they? Well, not quite true. Some records were destroyed when the Irish Public Record Office in Dublin was blown up, but many were never there. And remember, from about the twelfth until the early twentieth century, Ireland was part of the union of four nations, English, Irish, Scots and Welsh, and many records were similar to those on this side of the Irish Sea, and so are research techniques.

The early census returns up to 1851 were lost in the 1922 fire; and those from 1861 to 1891 were destroyed on Government order. As a concession, the 1901 and 1911 returns were made available early. Census substitutes such as the mid 19th century Primary Valuation of Ireland known as

Griffiths Valuation, the earlier Tithe Applotment Records, and the Old Age Pension Returns are used.

Some of the Church of Ireland Registers were lost also, but others are still available as not all had been sent to the PRO Dublin. Those which survived are gradually being deposited with the Representative Church Body Library in Dublin.

Other denominations generally kept their own registers. Roman Catholic records are with the parish priest with film copies to 1880 in the National Library, Dublin. Other Protestant and Non-conformist denominations also kept their own records and these are still with the respective denominational authorities.

Civil Registration started in Ireland in 1864 with Protestant marriages from 1845. So, a birth, marriage or death certificate for an event from that date, may be obtainable either from the Dublin or Belfast GRO.

With these few basic sources it is possible to start researching your Irish ancestry using Irish records. But, first of all, it is most important to know the place of origin in Ireland, the townland, the parish, or at least the county. So, before you start on Irish records, you need to do your homework as with all your other family research.

Work backwards starting with your own

family, gathering as much information as you can on names, dates and places. When did the family leave Ireland?

Consult older family members. They may remember place names they visited as children. Do they have any letters, photographs? Is there an address in Ireland? Is there a family tradition about coming from a certain place?

Check local English parish registers especially if your family were Roman Catholic. There may be additional information not shown on a certificate such as both parents' names and possibly their address in Ireland.

Check as many census returns as possible. A place of birth may be given, not just Ireland. Look for other Irish people living nearby - where did they come from? Are there other families with the same surnames? Immigrants tend to go to friends and relatives first of all, so these people may have been known to them.

Don't ignore family stories, but don't take them as gospel. There will be a kernel of truth there. Try to separate fact from fiction. At the same time avoid assumptions.

Join your local family history society. You will not be alone in looking for Irish ancestry and you will get help when needed.

**GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR RESEARCH**  
Compiled by  
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## Irish Ancestry Group

The Irish Ancestry Group was set up in 1996 as a branch of the Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society.

Meetings are arranged as notified in 'Lancashire' the Society's quarterly Journal, and are advice and research sessions or lectures. They are usually at two monthly intervals on Saturdays, and are held at the Resource Centre, 2 The Straits, Oswaldtwistle, Lancs., BB5 3LU.

See also the Society's website [www.lfhhs.org.uk](http://www.lfhhs.org.uk) for details.

## Resources

The group has a growing reference library of research aids for Irish ancestry, books, microfiche and CDRoms

It includes good guides for tracing Irish Family History, on Irish libraries and museums and their holdings, some bibliographies, plus information on the history of Ireland (e.g. The Great Famine) or of a particular place, or on emigration.

There are a small number of village and town histories, and a smaller number of family histories.

We try to keep up to date with news about the publication of parish register transcripts, monumental inscriptions or census indexes, and buy them when possible. There are copies of useful articles, mostly donated by members.

The microfiche includes all the projects of the Lancashire FH&HS, the IGI for Ireland, some directories, plus other records of relevance to Irish research.

We also have the full microfiche of Griffith's Valuation provided by the Society

There are a few family history or clan (name) journals from Irish societies, and we add to these when possible.

CDRoms include the surname index to Griffith's Valuation, 18th century Flax Growers lists, Surname Sources, MI's for part of County Galway, a few surviving census indexes, and the CDRoms issued by the Society.

Additional research aides are acquired as and when the group's finances permit. We gladly accept any donated material relating to Irish research.

The library is always available at meetings or at other times by arrangement. Unfortunately, we cannot carry out research for members but will willingly give advice and guidance.

All Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society members are automatically entitled to be part of the group and to attend meetings.

Contact [irish@lfhhs.org.uk](mailto:irish@lfhhs.org.uk) for further details

## LFHHS Chorley Branch LFHHS Chorley Family History Research Centre



## Irish Research

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