

Irish Research Fundamentals and Tips - Dale Fogarty © 2022

Research

Genealogy Research Process (attach) & Genealogical Proof Standard

Irish Context: Social, Cultural, Linguistic, Historical: national and local events, Geographical, Religious, Political, Legal

Irish Language

Spelling variations - Names and Places (**TIP:** keep a list of variants available when searching)

- Not standardised until Griffith's Valuation and beyond
- Varies between and within records
- Vagaries of the recorder
- Linguistic Anglicisation or mangle-isation - sound & meaning
- Literacy levels
- Be flexible and open to alternative possibilities

TIP: Clues to be had by following unique spellings & variants but don't be attached to or fixed on only one

Names and Naming Patterns

Surnames

Get to know your surname of interest - Frequency, distribution, and variants

- <https://www.johngrenham.com/surnames/>
- <https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/beginners-guide-irish-surnames>
- Irish Surnames database <https://peig.ie/sloinne>

Forenames

Old Irish first names and aliases

- <https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/irelandxo-insight-old-irish-first-names-and-aliases>

Old Irish Names for Girls & their aliases

- <https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/old-irish-names-girls-their-aliases>

Old Irish (Gaelic) boy names and their meaning

- <https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/old-irish-names-boys-and-their-gaelic-spelling>

Latin and English were the languages of the Catholic Church. Irish speakers would most certainly have been known by the Gaelic equivalent of the names on their baptism or civil birth records.

Naming Patterns

Typical vs actual

May help to provide another generation

<https://irelandxo.com/ireland-xo/news/irelandxo-insight-irish-naming-and-baptism-traditions>

Reliability and Exceptions to the Naming Patterns

Not all families followed these customs.

Patterns may be disrupted for a variety of reasons

TIP: Check to see if your families used any patterns, or variations on patterns

Records

- Get to know the factors that determine why a record was made and kept
- Get to know and understand the different types of records and the information they may contain
- What exists, time & place (trigger dates)
- What doesn't exist - seek possible alternatives
- Where located - may be in multiple places, online or not
- How to find - browsing, searching, navigation, results - **methodology matters and has a direct impact on what you find (or not)**
- How to observe, compare, analyse and interpret

Irish records described and explained, by counties and categories - John Grenham

https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/records_index.php#records

Administrative Divisions

Understand that different record sets have different administrative divisions

<https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Irish-land-divisions.html>

TIP: Civil parishes, modern Catholic parishes and Church of Ireland parishes may differ in extent and in name.

TIP: Maps are essential, relevant to the record set, time period

Placenames and Locations

Irish Townlands <https://www.townlands.ie/>

The Placenames Database of Ireland: the official government site for placenames

- <https://www.logainm.ie/en/>

<https://www.johngrenham.com/places/>

Townland Index and Database - 1851

- <https://www.swilson.info/townlands.php>

<https://www.irishfamilyroots.com/post/are-you-using-maps-in-your-irish-research>

OS MAPS <https://osi.ie/>

Universal Sources: Civil, Church, Census & Griffith's Valuation

Civil records - Births, Marriages and Deaths 1864-

<https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/>

GRONI online has births, marriages and deaths for Northern Ireland

Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/go-groni-online>

Census - 1901, 1911, earlier fragments

<http://census.nationalarchives.ie/>

Church records - RC Parish Registers

<https://registers.nli.ie/>

Griffith's Valuation

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

Church Records

The vast majority of the population was Roman Catholic, with Church of Ireland and Presbyterians making up most of the rest. Actual proportions varied according to location and time period.

Catholic Parish Registers at NLI <https://registers.nli.ie/>

TIP: these are not indexed so use finding aids at Find My Past and RootsIreland Kerry, West Cork, Dublin City <https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/>

The List of Church of Ireland Parish Registers

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/ParishRegisters/PARISHREGISTERS.pdf>

RootsIreland - covers the majority of Ireland – more than 20 million records

<https://www.rootsireland.ie/>

Census Records

1901 & 1911 are the only complete returns, digitised

<http://census.nationalarchives.ie/>

TIP: look at the original handwritten Forms for Households and Buildings

Griffith's Valuation 1847-1864

Searchable by Name and Place

Details, Original Pages, OS Maps

<https://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

<https://search.findmypast.ie/search-world-records/griffiths-valuation-1847-1864>

TIP: Contents differ so check both sites

Other Issues to be Aware of:

Baptised Before Birth

TIP: Compare when birth was registered with birth date and baptism date

TIP: Get both Birth AND Baptism records, whenever available and compare them, many later baptisms record the birth date.

<https://www.irishfamilyroots.com/post/baptized-before-birth>

Estimating Ages & Year of Birth

Most people born before 1870 simply didn't know their age or exactly when they were born.

Clues: if the age ends in 0 or 5 (e.g. on census or death), there is a good chance that the age is rounded down to the nearest 5 years (birth order and age differences between siblings usually remain constant)

You may see a greater increase in age (>10 years) from 1901 to 1911 due to the introduction of the Old Age Pension in 1908 for people over 70.

Ages at death tend to be underestimated so search earlier dates. However, in other circumstances depending on the place of death and the informant, ages may be overestimated.

TIP: Allow ± 5 years as a reasonable timeframe window

Tips and Strategies

- Work from the known to the unknown, recent to past, connecting each generation
- Gather all info in the country of immigration first
- Always get original records whenever available / possible
- Extract all of the information and note where it came from (source)
- Identify siblings, sponsors to baptisms and witnesses to marriages
- Cluster and collateral research to establish identities
- Ancestral research
- DNA and descendent research
- You will need to use multiple sources in combination

<https://www.irishfamilyroots.com/post/but-where-in-ireland>

<https://www.irishfamilyroots.com/post/finding-women-in-your-family-tree>

Essential Resources

Website: Irish Ancestors <https://www.johngrenham.com/>

Book: *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* (5th edition) – John Grenham

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh1WNp17x-hGdMdbpChrE6Q/videos>