

Irish Vital Records in the 19th and 20th Centuries

Genealogical Forum of Oregon Virtual Open House, Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Research in Ireland has sometimes been considered difficult due to the lack of records. But that's not the case! While it is true that most Irish census returns from the 19th century were destroyed, Irish birth, marriage and death records were *not* destroyed, and both Civil and Parish records can be used to learn more about your ancestors who were in Ireland in the last half of the 19th century into the first half of the 20th century - a century's worth of vital records. But there are some issues:

- Names – there are many people with same names, and spelling can be “fluid.”
- Places – can have variations in spellings.
- Ages - are often estimates, especially for older adults.
- Record content - most records do not contain as much information as we are used to in vital records.

Census records and Census Search Forms

<https://genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/>

- 1821 - fully nominal; population 6.8M, 275K records survive
- 1831 - head of household only; population 7.8M, 80K records survive
- 1841 - fully nominal; population 8.2M, 16K records survive, many are certified copies from early 20th century
- 1851 - fully nominal; population 6.5M, 59K records survive, many are certified copies from early 20th century
- 1861 Census to 1891 Census - intentionally destroyed; population dropped from 5.8M to 4.7M.
 - While generally described as no surviving records, there are actually two small record sets, one of which available online. See <http://homepage.eircom.net/~seanjmurphy/nai/censusedmemo.htm>, how and why 1861-1891 censuses were destroyed, and <https://www.irishancestors.ie/drumcondraloughbrackan-1871-census-fragment-95>, transcription of one Catholic parish census in County Meath in 1871 (Catholic residents only.) A transcription of Catholic parishioners in Enniscorthy parish, County Wexford was made, but is not available online.
- 1901 - fully nominal, 4.4 million records, essentially complete
- 1911 - fully nominal, 4.4 million records, essentially complete

Civil records

Ireland - Search for images of civil and church records at <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/>

- Births: 1864 to 1920
- Marriages: 1845 to 1945 (Non-Catholic marriage registration began in 1845; civil registration of Catholic marriages began in 1864.)
- Deaths: 1871 to 1970 (Registrations began in 1864, those prior to 1871 are still being indexed.)

Northern Ireland - GRONI <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/search-gronis-online-records> - free name search, but registration and fees for further search or viewing records. Not to be confused with PRONI, which has other valuable genealogical resources.

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

Parish records

<https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/> - search transcriptions of some Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic parish records; images not digitized.

- Roman Catholic - All available registers were microfilmed in the 1950's by the National Library of Ireland, and the images can now be found online at <https://registers.nli.ie/>. The images are not indexed, but can be searched for free at <https://www.findmypast.com/page/free-ancestry-records>; you will need to sign up for a free account.
- Church of Ireland - more than half of the extant COI parish registers were destroyed in 1922, although some have been partially reconstructed from other sources. Few are available on-line, but many can be found at the Representative Church Body Library in Dublin, or at the PRONI - the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland. An updated list of available registers and locations:

[https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/ParishRegisters/PARISH REGISTERS.pdf](https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/ParishRegisters/PARISH%20REGISTERS.pdf)

Other useful links:

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

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

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/GuidedResearch:Ireland>

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

<https://www.letterfromireland.com/irish-podcasts-2/>, topical weekly podcasts on Irish culture

Blogs

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

<https://www.irishgenealogynews.com/>

Videos/Webinars

<https://www.youtube.com/> -search for Irish genealogy or Irish vital records

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45P6TdpxqtE>, *Understanding Irish Land Divisions*, American Ancestors.org (NEHGS.)

<https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/session/irish-family-history-is-easy-seriously>

(Rootstech, 2022; 20 mins, using Find My Past for Irish research)

<https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/using-findmypast-to-unlock-your-irish-ancestry/>

(expanded version of above)

UPCOMING - www.FamilyTreeWebinars.com/24 - Who were the Scots-Irish? by Natalie Bodle - Legacy Family Tree Genealogy Webinar Marathon, April 7-8