



RESEARCHING IRISH FAMILY HISTORY

Introduction.

Many Sussex families could have an Irish connection as people from Ireland have come to Sussex looking for work for over 200 years, or longer.

In January 1834 the Justices of the Peace of the County of Sussex, Eastern Division, made an Order under which Poor Persons born in Ireland could be sent to London and from there removed to Dublin. (A copy of the printed Order signed by Langridge, Clerk of the Peace, can be found at East Sussex Record Office Par360/14/11.)

It was up to the churchwardens of each parish to avail of this facility, which also included Poor Persons from Scotland, the Isle of Man and the Scilly Isles. However, it is not known how many parishes took advantage of this Order. This Order only related to the Poor who were being maintained by the Parish. Any other Irish person would be allowed to stay.

Some English records, notably the Census, might indicate that a person was born in Ireland but would probably not give the place of birth. So some searching of Irish Records must then be undertaken.

Records in Ireland are very good from the middle of the 19th century but rather poor before then. This note mainly relates to the part of Ireland which is now the Republic of Ireland.

There are several websites devoted to family history in each county of Ireland and these are worth searching if you know the county that your ancestor originated from.

Civil Registration

An outline of the Civil Registration of births, deaths and marriages can be found at www.libraryireland.com/genealogy. This site also contains some useful tips for Irish Family Research.

Many images of the civil registers can be viewed for free at <https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie>.

The first register started in 1845 but only for Church of Ireland marriages. From 1864 they should provide details of births, deaths and marriages for all inhabitants.

Church Records

Some church records for Dublin City, Carlow, Cork and Kerry are available online and freely searchable at <https://churchrecords.irishgenealogy.ie>. These are easily searchable.

Some records of the Church of Ireland that survived the burning of the Public Record Office in 1922 can be found at www.ireland.anglican.org/genealogy.

Many Jewish records are available at the paying site www.irishjewishroots.com.

Records for many Catholic Churches are available at <https://registers.nli.ie/>. These are on microfilm and are often in Latin. (Some records were written in Irish!).

The information on the page for each parish might show other places where the records have been indexed and translated into English.

The Penal Laws meant that very few Catholic records were kept before 1800.

The records do not normally include burials.

Census

Unfortunately the Census Records for years before 1901 were destroyed but the Census for 1901 and 1911 as well as some remaining fragments from 1821 to 1851 are freely searchable at the Irish National Archives site <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>.

(The census records were used as proof of age when the old age pension was introduced in 1908 and some transcripts from 1841 or 1851 were made by the officials who approved the claim for a pension and these can also be viewed.)

Property Records

The TOWNLAND is the smallest of Irish land areas. Every PARISH consists of several townlands. If you can find the townland in which your ancestor lived then you have a good chance of finding the exact location of their house, cottage or hovel. This is because a valuation of every piece of property in Ireland was carried out between 1847 and 1864 and this showed the name of the occupier responsible for paying the tax. This is generally called Griffiths Valuation and free searches can be made through www.askaboutireland.ie/griffithvaluation. Maps are available too on this site and can show the location of each property.

Poor Laws

The English Poor Law system was extended to Ireland in 1838 and the records of many poor law Unions are still available. You may be lucky (or unlucky) to find an ancestor in these. They cover the period of the great Famine of the late 1840s in which many people died or emigrated. The Poor Laws were abolished in 1925. Ask about Ireland (www.askaboutireland.ie) has a great amount of information about this.

OTHER RECORDS

The UK National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) also hold a number of Irish records including service records of those who joined the armed forces in Ireland before 1921.

The usual family history sites, Ancestry, Find my Past, Family Search, etc. also contain many Irish sources. For example, Quaker Records from the mid 1600's as well as Army Pensioners from 1783 to 1822 are on Find my Past.

Many Irish people left the country and their descendants have done much research and there are many websites containing their questions and answers. A very useful website containing hundreds of genealogy sites to explore is <https://www.cyndislist.com/>.

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