

Ireland Catholic Church Records

OVERVIEW OF IRELAND

- Before 1922 Ireland was one country
- The Church of Ireland was the established Church
- Majority of population was Catholic
- In 1922 Ireland split into Northern Ireland, which remained part of the United Kingdom, and the Republic of Ireland which formed its own country.

OVERVIEW OF CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS

- Roman Catholic Church records were not destroyed in the 1922 Civil War
- Many did not keep records until the 1800s
- Urban areas would likely have records before the 1800s
- Rural areas would have records beginning in the 1800s.
- Church records are mostly in Latin



Common Latin words in Catholic Church records:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filia - daughter of • Filius - son of • Et - and • de - of • Coram - in the presence of (witnesses) • Patrini or Sp. or Ss. - sponsors (godparents) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conj./conjuncti - joined together in marriage • consanguinati en tertio grado - second cousins • affinus - related thru previous marriage of two families |
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Understanding Parishes:

- Two types of parishes: Civil and Ecclesiastical
- Church of Ireland civil parishes are the same boundaries as the ecclesiastical parishes
- Roman Catholics had different boundaries- they overlapped multiple Civil Parishes
- To see the Catholic parish equivalent to the Church of Ireland parishes go to www.familysearch.org > Wiki > Type "County Dublin Parishes," or "County Cork Parishes," etc.
- To see a map of the Ireland Catholic parishes go to www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/browse
- Catholic parishes had multiple names over the years.
- For information about parishes go to www.libraryireland.com/topog/
- Always search the Church of Ireland records in the area where your Catholic ancestor lived because the Anglican records were the only ones considered legal in a court of law.
- Check surrounding parishes where your ancestor lived if you cannot find the records.

Information contained in the records:

- **Baptisms** - Child's name, father's name, mother's maiden name, sponsors (godparents) date of baptism (usually baptized as soon as possible after birth)
- **Marriages** - Name of groom, name of bride, witnesses (often relatives), date of marriage
- **Burials** - Registers kept by only about 20% of parishes until 1880. Typically only give - Name of deceased & date of burial. Look for Tombstone, Monumental Inscriptions or possible obituary

notices for death info.

- Penal laws: no burial grounds for dissenting religions (like Roman Catholics)
- Forbade dissenting ministers from performing services unless Church of Ireland minister present

WHAT CATHOLIC PARISH REGISTERS EXIST

- www.nli.ie/en/parish-register.aspx – National Library of Ireland listing of Catholic Parish Registers. Virtually all of the Catholic parish registers on microfilm pre-1880. The National Library of Ireland are digitizing these records.
- www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/browse - Listing of where to find Catholic records on multiple sites.
- www.proni.gov.uk – Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (Catholics living in Northern Ireland)
- www.rootsireland.ie – Transcripts of Church Records online.
- Roman Catholic records at Family History Library (FHL):
 - About 30% of Catholic parish registers on microfilm. Go to www.familysearch.org < click **Search** < Click **Catalog** < **Places** search < type the name of the parish
 - Includes Transcripts of other Catholic parish registers
 - Casey Collection - covers Upper Blackwater River—North Cork and East Kerry. Use the Library Catalog and type **Upper Blackwater** in the **Keyword** search.

For local custodial information:

- Google parish name, county & *Roman Catholic* – Write a letter or telephone - be courteous & offer donation for time.

Heritage Centres:

- Have indexed many of the church records
- Will research on commission
- Typically indexed at least Roman Catholic records for their area & many have indexed the extant Church of Ireland & some Presbyterian records
- Valuable resource if you know county and some dates & relationships but that's all. More valuable in counties where FHL has no Catholic records - see www.rootsireland.ie for complete listing.
- Over half the centres have records online, pay-per-view with free indexes
- Records for Dublin City & Kerry – www.irishgenealogy.ie

CATHOLIC CHURCH RECORDS ONLINE

- www.familysearch.org – Click **Search** > Click **Records** > Scroll down and click **United Kingdom & Ireland** > Click **Ireland**. This database gives you the microfilm number to the original image.
- www.irishgenealogy.ie – Click Church Records > Type ancestor's name in the search boxes then click **Search** < Use the **Narrow your search** feature to narrow the search results. This is a free website and includes some church records for Counties: Dublin, Cork, Carlow, Kerry, & eventually Monaghan. Most of the images have been digitized and are available free online.
- www.ancestry.com – Go to **Search** > Click **Search All Records** > Scroll down and click **UK & Ireland** < Click **Ireland** on the map > Click **View all Ireland Birth, Marriage, & Death**. This site includes digital images of the Catholic Church records for select parishes throughout Ireland.
- www.rootsireland.ie – Must register for the site, then sign on with your username and password. Very extensive collection of Church records throughout Ireland. Is not yet complete for all of

Ireland. Purchased credits are required to search the index and view the transcripts of the original image. Does not include the original image.

- www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/browse – A great website that points you in the right direction of what Catholic Church records exist and where to find them if you know the parish where your ancestors lived.
- www.proni.gov.uk – The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland contains the Catholic Church records for Catholics living in Northern Ireland.
- www.findmypast.com – Go to **Search records** > Click **A-Z Records Sets** > type a specific Ireland County. A growing collection of church records.
- Search engines – www.google.com, www.bing.com, www.dogpile.com, etc.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Surnames variations – use www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/surname for various spellings, etc.
- First names and nicknames – (i.e. Delia or Biddy for Bridget). More information - *A Rose by Any Other Name: A Guide to Irish Christian Names* by Judith Eccles Wight (FHL Book 941.5 D4w or film #1162446, item 2)
- Search record indexes – which point to originals
- Understand historical timelines
- Always check Church of Ireland records in the area where your ancestors lived

GOOD BOOKS FOR IRISH RESEARCH

Grenham, John. *Tracing your Irish Ancestors, 3rd edition*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2006.
Much of this book is on-line at www.ireland.com/ancestor/browse/.

Maxwell, Ian. *Tracing your Ancestors in Northern Ireland*. Edinburgh: The Stationary Office, 1997.

Radford, Dwight and Kyle Betit. *Ireland: A Genealogical Guide*. Salt Lake City: The Irish at Home and Abroad, 1998. (FHL film 1145947 item 3); *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering your Irish Ancestors*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 2001.

Ryan, James. *Irish Records: Sources for Family and Local History*. Provo, UT: Ancestry Inc., 1997. (now in 2nd ed.) *Irish Church Records : Their History, Availability and Use in Family and Local History Research*. Glenageary, Dublin, Ireland: Flyleaf Press, 2001.