



"Slán agaibh" Goodbye to my Ireland: Finding the origins of Irish Immigrants to America

British Research Unit ~ Family History Library
35 North, West Temple, Salt Lake City, UT 84150

Most of the work you will do to try to establish your immigrant's place of origin will be in "country of settlement" sources.

Information You Should Find Out From US/Canadian Records . . .

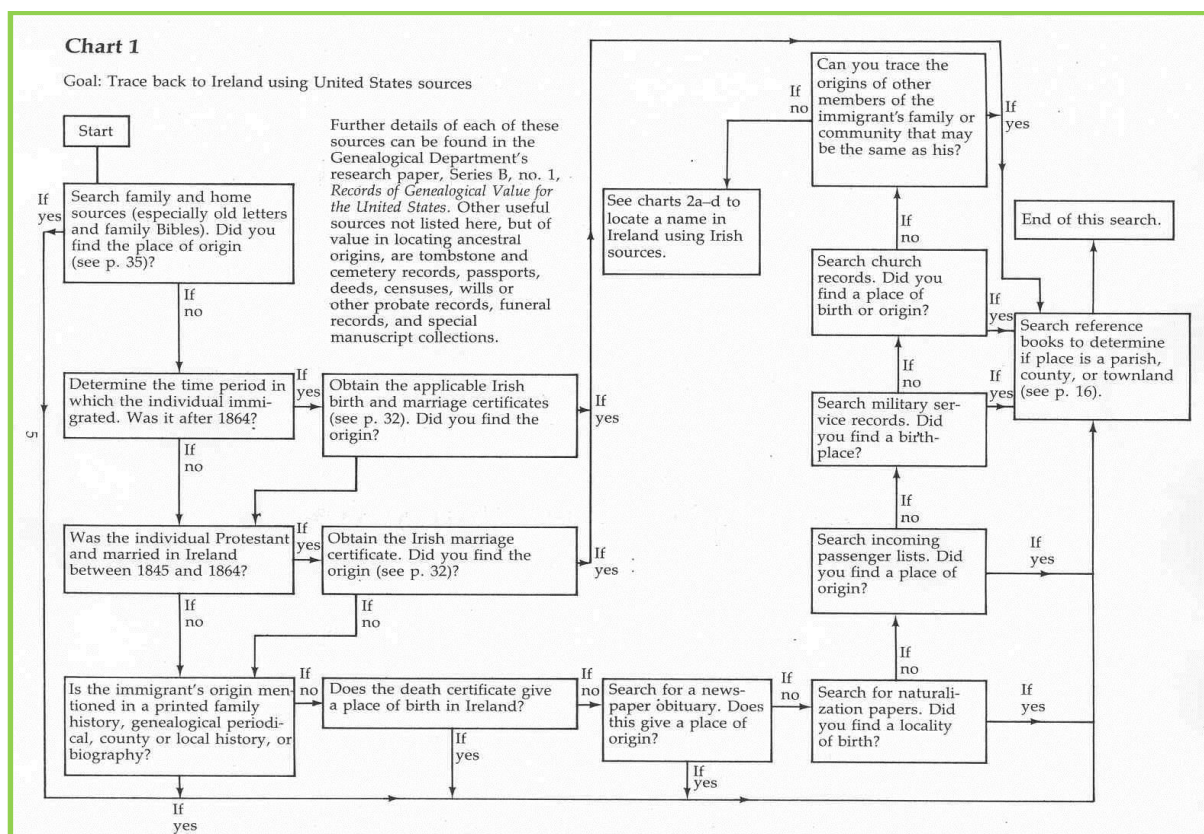
- Name
- Date
- Place (at least a county)
- Names of family members to put the immigrant into context

Any additional information such as occupations, friends and neighbors, religion etc. will also help. See Tracing Immigrant Origins research outline available at www.familysearch.org for guidance and suggestions.

Strategy—Leave no stone unturned

1. Search all records to learn EVERYTHING about your ancestor's life in the country they immigrated to. Even events that seem extraneous may contain important clues.
2. Do the same for everyone they were related to who came with them.
3. Do the same for everyone you suspect who were associated with back in the old country.
4. Come forward in time. Documents of the immigrant's children will often reveal the missing link.
5. The later the vital record[s] of death and/or marriage (i.e. after 1900), the much better chance that a certificate will reveal the place of origin in Ireland.

Here is a flow chart that will help you decide where to start:



From *A Genealogical Research Guide for Ireland*, The Genealogical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Series A, no. 58, 1978, Revised 1983 (929.1 G286gs ser. A no. 58 1983).

Checklist – Have You Looked at These Records?

There are many sources where you might find the place of origin when you are least expecting it. Even federal censuses occasionally give a county or town of origin. * Indicates first priority records to search, both because of ease of finding and likelihood of containing desired information.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking records | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biographies* | <input type="checkbox"/> Land records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business /Employment records | <input type="checkbox"/> Military records* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery/Sexton records | <input type="checkbox"/> Naturalization* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Census - Fed/State (all years alive!)* | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspapers—local, trade, relig. etc |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church records* | <input type="checkbox"/> Obituaries/Anniversary notices* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compiled collections | <input type="checkbox"/> Orphanage records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Passenger lists (esp/ after 1890)* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Court records | <input type="checkbox"/> Pension records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family records* (incl. family Bibles) | <input type="checkbox"/> Periodicals – see Smith's Inventory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Co. Poorlaw/Workhouse recs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fraternal org. (e.g. Freemason, Orange Lodges etc) | <input type="checkbox"/> Probate records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Funeral home records | <input type="checkbox"/> School/University records |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local town/county/regional histories | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Security applications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional records (i.e., hospital) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tombstone Inscriptions* - esp. Can. |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Vital recs. for all emigrant's children* |



Tips for Finding Naturalization Records

Use the 1900, 1910, 1920 and 1930 U.S. Census to see what year your ancestor immigrated and if he naturalized.

- Check www.ancestry.com and www.familysearch.org. Many naturalization records are now being digitized and put online.
- For New England (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont)—United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. Index to New England Naturalization Petitions, 1791-1906. FHL films 1429671-1429787.
- For other states, check in FHLC under [State]-[Naturalization and Citizenship] and [State], [County]-[Naturalization and Citizenship]

If naturalized after September 27, 1906 the records are indexed by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Visit www.uscis.gov/g-639 for information and to download a form to request a search for the naturalization packet of your ancestor. Provide: Full name and any aliases, country of birth, approximate date of birth, country of origin, port of entry and date, court where naturalized, and address at time of naturalization (at least the town). Not all of this information is necessary, but providing as much as you can (and any additional helpful details) will decrease the chances of getting the wrong person with the right name.

Tip for finding a cemetery transcription

www.findagrave.com, www.billiongraves.com, www.namesinstone.com, www.deceasedonline.com and there are many more. . . .

Tips for find military records:

See <http://wiki.familysearch.org> and search U.S. Military Records for many more and details on how to use them.

- National archives Microfilm Publication M860 General Index to Compiled Military Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers, Sailors, and members of Army Staff Departments. FHL US/CAN 88284-98.
- White, Virgil D. Genealogical Abstracts Of Revolutionary War Pension Files. Waynesboro, Tennessee: National Historical Pub., c1995. FHL US/CAN 973 M28g v. 1-4.
- National Archives Microfilm Publication M602. Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served during the War of 1812. FHL US/CAN 882519-752.
- White, Virgil D., comp. Index to war of 1812 Pension Files. FHL US/CAN 973 M22i v. 1-2.
- Most of the above records are indexed between three sites: www.ancestry.com, www.heritagequestonline.com, and www.footnote.com.
- United States Passport Applications, 1795-1924—look in FHLC using a Keyword search (Film No. 1463566, Item 2) - also indexed on www.ancestry.com.

Lesser-known Sources

- World War I draft registration cards (available on www.ancestry.com).
- Voter Registration (use the “Keyword” search feature of the Family History Library Catalog (FHLC) available at www.familysearch.org. Use the keywords Voter (or Voting) Registration [State].
- St Albans Border Crossing Records, 1895-1954. This is soundexed from 1895 to 1952. To find the entry in the FHLC, do a keyword search using St Albans Border. There is a smaller set of border crossing records through Detroit. Do a keyword search using Detroit District manifest records. These include mostly people who crossed the border by train or ship.
- Index of the Canada Company Remittance Books, 1843-1847. US/CAN Book 971.3 W29g v. 1-3.
- The Search for missing friends: Irish immigrant advertisements placed in the Boston Pilot, Ruth-Ann M. Harris and Donald M. Jacobs, editors. Seven volumes cover 1831-1920. FHL US/CAN Ref 974.461 H29s (also in stacks). Indexed by name and place. There is a free online index and partial transcription of these books at <http://infowanted.bc.edu/>. An every-name index and a full transcript of these books are available on www.newenglandancestors.org (\$) (the FHL has a subscription to this Web site). Also: Irish relatives and friends: from “Information Wanted” ads in the Irish American, 1850-1871, DeGrazia, Laura Murphy. US/CAN book 974.71 B38d.
- Emigrant Savings Bank records, 1841-1945. (Search for this by title in Family History Library catalog at www.familysearch.org) To read about how to use these records, go to <http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/rbk/faids/emigrant.pdf>. They are also indexed on www.ancestry.com.
- If you suspect they may have been in St John, New Brunswick around 1861, the 1861 Canadian census for Albert Ward (the only ward that 1861 census records survive for in St John) gives the townland and/or parish where an immigrant was from. Most of the ward was Irish. FHL film 477,561.
- Massachusetts 1865 State census for the Irish parts of Boston often gives county of origin.
- Iowa 1925 State census often gives town of origin.
- Records for Catholic priests and religious sisters and brothers often give good biographical detail. Contact the archdiocese in the U.S. or Canada for help in locating these records.

Records in Ireland

If you’ve exhausted your sources in the country of arrival but you do have 1) a county of birth 2) a date and 3) a few relatives’ names, you may be able to use Irish records to help you.

Griffith’s Valuation—1848-1864 heads of households only, generally good coverage but not complete. Indexed in:

- <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml>
- www.ancestry.com (\$) but free at the FHL)
- www.failteromhat.com
- FHL CD series 9 part 188
- Grenham’s Irish Record Finder, available on FHL B2 computers 39, or 40—maps surname distribution to the parish level based on Griffith’s Valuation. (You can use this

source online for a fee at www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/surname/.)

- Householders Index—FHL British Book 941.5 R22i v. 1-14, FHL film 919001-919007.

Tithe Applotment—1823-1837 heads of households only, it has been estimated that it only includes approximately 40% of heads of households. Cities and large towns were excluded.

Indexed in:

- www.familysearch.org (Northern Ireland only)
- www.ancestry.com
- www.titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/
- FHL CD series 9 part 262 (this indexes only Northern Ireland PRONI index to Tithe Applotment, do author search for PRONI and then title Tithe applotment books and indexes, for Northern Ireland, ca. 1822-1837)
- Householders Index—FHL British Book 941.5 R22i v. 1-14, FHL film 919001-919007.

Flax Growers Bounty—1796 Heads of households only, very incomplete coverage, coverage the best for Northern Ireland. Indexed in: FHL CD series 9 part 271a, and on

www.ancestry.com.

Heritage Centres

You may be able to use the services of a heritage centre (see www.irish-roots.ie for a complete listing). They have typically indexed the extant Roman Catholic records (and sometimes other records) for their area. They can search their indexes (for a fee) for matching entries, but again, you must have more than just a name and a date. Remember that for an ancestor who was born before the mid-19th century, the parish he/she was born in may not have even been keeping church records yet. This means that the heritage centre indexes are not a complete record for a given time period. See

<http://globalgenealogy.com/globalgazette/gazkb/gazkb62.htm> for an article on how to get the most from your interaction with a heritage centre. Many heritage centres have now posted their records (over 19 million) online at <http://www.rootsireland.ie/>.

Cast a Wider Net Strategy

Most people moved to a place where they already knew someone. Catholics practiced chain migration, and Presbyterian Scots-Irish often came over in groups. Trace family, friends, and associates that you believe your ancestor may have known in the old country. Reconstructing their Irish community in the U.S. or Canada may lead to the community they came from in Ireland. With these new people to look for, you can go back to the sources mentioned on the previous pages, and one of their records may give you a place of origin. Also, you can use their surnames in the Surname Distribution Strategy.

Sources Especially for Ulster Immigration

Guides to previously compiled genealogies:

- <https://books.familysearch.org/>
- Check the FHLC using the Surname search and under [State]-Genealogy or [State], [County]-Genealogy.
- Check PERiodical Source Index (PERSI) on www.ancestry.com

DAR Patriot Index Centennial Edition DAR patriot index FHL US/CAN 973 C42da 1990

Scots-Irish Goodies:

Hanna, Charles A. The Scotch-Irish or The Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America. FHL US/CAN 973 F2sh vol. 1-2. Volume 2 p. 94 begins Chapter V "The Settlements Enumerated" which gives the locations of early Presbyterian settlements and congregations in the Colonies by geographic region.

Revill, Janie. A Compilation of the Original Lists of Protestant Immigrants to South Carolina, 1763-1773. Columbia, S.C. : The State Co., 1939 FHL US/CAN 975.7 W2r, FHL US/CAN Film 22819

Ford, Gary J. "On the First Fair Wind," Familia 1992 vol. 2 no. 8, pp. 112-124. FHL British 941.6 D25uL. An article about using the South Carolina Council Journals.

"Home towns of Ulster Families 1691-1718" Appendix VI of Scotch-Irish Pioneers by Charles Knowles Bolton FHL US/CAN 973 F2sb 1977, film 847631 is an alphabetized list of early American Elders, Commissioners etc in the Presbyterian church giving their county and or town of origin in Ireland. Sources: early American synod records, Cathedral records of Londonderry (New Hampshire) from Mr. Morrison's History of Windham, Journal of the Association for the Preservation of Memorials of the Dead in Ireland, Ulster Journal of Archaeology.

Guides to the Draper Collection:

Harper, Josephine L. Guide to the Draper Manuscripts. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Madison, 1983. FHL US/CAN 977.583/M1 A3h

Wolfe, Barbara S. Index to Lyman C. Draper Manuscripts. [n.p., nd.] US/CAN 977.583/M1 A3w

There are calendars to the Draper collection for Kentucky, Tennessee, South Carolina, Virginia and other parts of the collection. Look for these in the FHLC by doing an "author search" for Draper, Lyman Copeland.

Finding manuscript materials:

Search the Family History Library Catalog under:

[State]-Genealogy

[State]-Archives and Libraries

[State], [County]-Genealogy

[State]-Archives and Libraries-Inventories, registers and catalogs

[State], [County], [Town]- Genealogy

Search www.google.com & other search engines

Search the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections

<http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/nucmc.html> (includes manuscript portions of OCLC and RLG for free)

Finding Early Presbyterian Ministers and their possible origins in Ireland:

Addison, W. Innes. The matriculation albums of the University of Glasgow from 1728-1858. FHL 941.43/G1 J2a. Also by the same author, A roll of the graduates of the University of Glasgow from 31st December, 1727 to 31st December, 1897 : with short biographical notes FHL British 941.43/G1 J2g.

McConnell, James, comp., revised by Samuel G. McConnell. *Fasti of the Irish Presbyterian Church, 1613-1840*. Belfast: The Presbyterian Historical Society, [1951?]. FHL British 941.5 K24f, film 994080 item 5.

Sources in Ireland

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Card index of names, 1990 edition also Card index to wills in the several collections held at the Public Record Office, Belfast, 1536-1920. To find these, do an “author” search in the FHLC for the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Then go to the title as listed.

Transcripts of many graveyards in Northern Ireland: www.historyfromheadstones.com (pay per transcript)

- Belfast Newsletter Index: www.ucl.ac.uk/bnl/
- Registry of Deeds, 1708-1929. Grantor Index FHL films 100251
- Deputy Keeper Reports—See FHLC keyword search “Deputy Keeper Reports Northern Ireland,” these are partially indexed on www.nra.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra.

To discover what sources exist for your county or parish once you’ve narrowed it down to a county or parish:

Grenham, John. *Tracing your Irish Ancestors*, 3rd edition. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2006. FHL 941.5 D27gj 2006. Much of this book is on-line at www.irishtimes.com/ancestor. More of it is available as Grenham’s Irish Record Finder computer program located on the B2 floor.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. *An Irish Genealogical Source Guide to Church Records* FHL British Q Ref 941.6 K23pr.

For a great bibliography and more help:

http://scripts.ireland.com/ancestor/magazine/articles/iha_scotsus1.htm The Irish At Home and Abroad journal of Irish genealogy and heritage (volume 2 #1, 1994/1995)

Remember, you want to build your case first in the country they came to, you will then have an easier time identifying the right family in Ireland.

Gazetteers

See Samuel Lewis’ *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* for important historical details about each township and parish: see <http://www.libraryireland.com/topog/placeindex.php>

See Sean Ruad’s outstanding website based on 1851 Census placenames of Ireland, at: www.thecore.com/seanruad. Know a townland etc., but can’t find details? Type in the name of the Ireland county and click “Submit”; you can search all county townlands & places alphabetically!

Once You Think You Know Where They Came From . . .

Try to disprove the connection. For example, you find a birth in Ireland of someone who you think is “your immigrant”. You know your immigrant was in the 1850 U.S. census. You search more in the Irish records and discover “your immigrant” died in Ireland in 1845.

- Look in Griffith’s Valuation, subsequent Valuation Revision Lists, the 1901 Irish census or other pertinent sources to make sure the potential family is not still in Ireland.

- Make sure the puzzle pieces fit together.

Background Information is Important!

Does your family fit larger patterns that might help you?

Watch for spelling variations of surname and given names, also beware of nicknames!

Passenger lists don't begin in US until 1820, and in Great Britain until 1890. U.S. lists rarely give town of origin until 1890s.

Surname Distribution Strategy

You may be able to use surname distribution to pinpoint a location to begin searching, particularly if you have 1) an uncommon surname or 2) surnames of two or more people that you know (or suspect) knew each other in Ireland. For example, if you know the surnames of the immigrant's parents (you must know the mother's maiden name), the assumption is that they likely lived near each other to have met and married. This can help you narrow down from the county to a parish they were potentially from. (You can try this strategy even if you don't have a county, but without the county it often yields too many results to be helpful.) However, you must then search other records to confirm if that parish really is where they were from. Griffith's Valuation is an excellent tool for this. Sources for the Tithe and Flax Growers are also listed below. See <http://www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/surname/> for an excellent surname map.

© 2014 by Intellectual Reserve, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reprinted or reproduced in any form for any purpose without prior written permission.