Irish Roots and Branches
May 2026

Welcome to the newest edition of the Irish Roots and Branches genealogy eNewsletter! This newsletter will highlight the Irish Special Interest Group (SIG), featured Irish resources, research tips, and interesting topics relating to Ireland.

"Summer in Ireland is like a welcome friend who stays just long enough to make you miss them."

—Irish saying

Irish Special Interest Group

Join us from time-to-time a year for lively conversation and shared curiosity about all things Irish. We gather from 2-3:30 pm Central in March, June, and September Meetings are offered in person on Saturdays and virtually on Zoom. Be sure to attend a one for someone to join.

If you're planning to attend, we'd love to have you—register in advance to save your spot.

Irish Special Interest Group (Zoom)
Saturday, June 6 | 2:00 p.m.

Irish Special Interest Group
Sunday, June 7 | 2:00 p.m.

REGISTER

Ireland to Canada

Passage from Ireland to Canada, 1847 by Robert Whale (1810-1866) Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Emigration to Canada began in the late 17th century with the Ulster Scots and increased throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. The majority of Irish emigrants settled in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Halifax. Nova Scotia, beginning in 1896, steamship companies and railroads advertised to immigrants traveling to the United States, encouraging them to settle in Canadian ports and then gain entry into the U.S.

Major Canadian ports of entry included Quebec, Montreal, Waterford, Cork, Dublin, Liverpool, Southampton, Bristol, and London. About 1.2 million Irish immigrants landed in Canada between 1825 and 1970, with nearly half arriving during the famine years. Grosse Isle served as a quarantine station outside Quebec City, where thousands of famine victims died. In 1847 alone, 5,424 persons from 96,000 new immigrants, and as many as 50 people died there each day.

Library and Archives Canada has many passenger list collections during the famine years. Other helpful resources include FamilySearch - Canadian Passenger Lists, 1881-1922, Ryerson's Irish Settlers, 1823-1825, and Immigrant Ships Transcribers Guild.

In the 1820s, Roman Catholics priests in New France (Quebec) began keeping vital records, while many protestant did not begin keeping them until after 1867. During the 1850s, civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths was established, but many births, marriages, and deaths were consistently registered until the late 1920s. Ancestry, FamilySearch, Findmypast, and other genealogy websites contain collections of Canadian vital records.

—Start It

Featured Resources

A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland

The most important record source, the Griffith's Valuation, is also known as Griffith's Valuation, is organized by year by civil parish, county, and province. Most records are available before 1858 are organized by diocese, and after 1858 by probate district. Other records include census substitutes, wills, and various records of lease or expectation linked to one or another of these administrative divisions.

To help in identifying the precise location of these divisions, and thus their jurisdiction, Mr. Mitchell has drawn at least two maps for every county. The first county map depicts the civil parishes, the baronies within which they are grouped, and the towns. It also illustrates the poor law unions and the parishes included in the probate districts serving that county.

CHECK OUT!

British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries

British and Irish Women's Letters and Diaries

This database contains the largest online database of Irish newspapers from 1738 to the present. Researchers can read about the lives of their ancestors in the pages of the press and compare the country where one of any given town.

According to the Irish Newspaper Archive, "The archive consists of over 6 million pages of newspaper content from Northern and Southern Ireland and the diaspora. It is one of the largest online editions, are searchable and viewable across more than 370 years of Irish publications."

EXPLORE

Recent Records and Updates Online

- *Ancestry has Belfast, Northern Ireland, The Belfast Newsletter (Belfast, Montreal and Dublin Advisor), 1738-1925*
- *FamilySearch has updated Ireland Tithe Appointment Books, 1824-1835*
- *MyHeritage has Ireland, Catholic Parish Deaths and Burials, 1700-1881*
- *FindMyPast has British and Irish Roots Collection, 96 million records that identify a British or Irish emigrant*
- *The 1926 Irish Census was released in April and is available for free on various platforms including the National Archives of Ireland*

Research Tips

Online Resource Tip

Primary Valuation of Ireland, also known as Griffith's Valuation, was a property tax survey conducted between 1847 and 1864 in Ireland for the purpose of assessing the rate of local taxation. The law levied for the upkeep of poor and distributed the document identifies nearly every household in the country. The survey recorded the name of the occupier, the name of the landlord and the type, size, and value of their property.

Richard John Griffith started to value land in Scotland and spent two years in 1966-1967 valuing Antrim. In 1831 Griffith was appointed by Irish Government to carry out boundary survey of Ireland, to mark boundaries of townlands, baronies, civil parishes and barracks. He completed boundary survey in 1836.

If your ancestor was born in the 1850s or 1860s, their father will appear in the valuation. Women who appear are widows. In the absence of census records in Ireland before 1901, valuation records act as a census substitute.

Narrow down possibilities by finding parishes where your ancestor's surname was prevalent. Find father's name on both a marriage certificate and Primary Valuation of Ireland. Look for neighbors who may have as well such:

- Tenure or holding
- Townland or Street where the property is located
- Name of the occupier
- Name of the landlord
- A brief description of the property and land area
- The valuation of the property and land
- Valuation is arranged by county, barony, PLU, civil parish and townland

You can find Griffith's Valuation on Ancestry, FamilySearch, FindMyPast, IrishGenealogy.ie and maps on FindMyPast while older parish maps on Askaboutireland.

Share It

Some online resources include:

- *FindMyPast - Griffith's Survey Maps & Plans, 1847-1864*
- *FamilySearch - Ireland, Valuation Office Books, 1815-1858*
- *Ancestry - Ireland, Griffith's Valuation, 1847-1864*

Irish History and Culture

Irish Surname Origins

O'Connor means descended from Conchobhair (dog or hound-loving) and is one of the most common surnames.

There were five unrelated O Conchobhair families originally. They were in Kerry, Offaly/Roscommon, Offaly/Laois, Clare, and Kerry. The above coat of arms is for one of the O'Connor clans.

Did You Know?

- The longest place name in Ireland is Muckanaghederdauhaulia.
- If someone hugs you a Wink, you buy them a drink back.
- The shamrock isn't a national symbol of the Republic of Ireland.
- You can see the Northern Lights in Ireland.
- There are over 3,000 castles in Ireland.

Plantation of Ulster

During the reign of James I in 1609 Ulster Britain organized a plantation in Ulster. Ulster was the last province of Ireland called Northern Ireland) with people from southern Scotland and northern England. Most land confiscated from native Gaelic clan chiefs, hence why Red Ireland for Europe in 1607 following the Nine Years' War against English rule.

At the time, the north was the most Gaelic province of Ireland, least anglicized and most independent of English, and the region with the least land. Enormous was based on agriculture, mainly cereals.

The Nine Years' War of 1594–1603 between the Gaelic Chieftains, O'Neill of Tyrone, O'Donnell of Tyrconnell, and Maguire of Fermanagh and the English Crown. Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone and Rory O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell, fled to mainland Europe. O'Neill was also left Ireland seeking Spanish help for new rebellion which did not materialize.

King James issued a proclamation of treason and forfeiture of land and titles. Over 500,000 acres of land was confiscated and given to settler across from counties Armagh, Cavan, Fermanagh, Tyrone, Donegal, and Londonderry. Land in counties Antrim, Down, and Monaghan were privately colonized with the King's support.

The colonists were required to be English-speaking, Protestant, and loyal to the King. Scottish settlers were mostly Presbyterian. Lowlanders and the English were mostly Anglican Northerners. This created an Ulster Protestant community with ties to Britain and led to centuries of animosity.

Places to Visit

Galway, Ireland

Galway, a harbor city on Ireland's west coast, sits where the River Corrib meets the Atlantic Ocean. The city's hub is 18th-century Eyre Square, a popular meeting spot surrounded by shops and pubs that often offer live Irish folk music.

The city takes its name from the Gaillimh river (River Corrib) that forms the western boundary of the walled settlement, which was called Dun Bhun na Gaillimhe, or the fort at the bottom of the Gaillimh. The word Gaillimh means "stony" as in "stony river". The city is also known as Gaillimh na dTreabh, or Galway of the Tribes because "Tribes" (merchant families) ran the city or its Hiberno-Norman period.

Sites to see in Galway include Eyre Square (park), Lynch Quarter (historic neighborhood), Galway Cathedral (Gothic church), Salthill (park with shops, Irish pubs, and restaurants), Galway Cathedral, and Salthill Promenade (scenic almost 2 miles of coastline, ideal for a relaxing walk along the seafront).

Waterford, Ireland

Waterford is a city in County Waterford in the south-east of Ireland, in the province of Munster. At the head of Waterford Harbor, it is the oldest and the fifth most populous city in the Republic.

The site of a Viking settlement, Waterford's medieval defensive walls and fortifications include the 13th/14th-century Reginald's Tower. Waterford is known for its glassmaking industry, manufactured in the city from 1783 until 2009. The Waterford Crystal Factory reopened in 2010 and the Waterford Crystal Visitor Centre in 2015 and resumed production. In the 13th century Waterford resumed shape by two predecessors to the English Dromoe. King Henry VII gave the city its motto: Urbs Intacta Manet Waterfordia ("Waterford remains an untouched city").

Sites to see include the Medieval Museum, 13th-14th-century Charlottes Hall and 18th Century Mine vault including the Great Kitchen, Bishop's Palace, Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford Museum of Treasures, Waterford Crystal Factory Quay, Reginald's Tower, Garrison, Ramsey Waterfront, and the Comeragh Mountains.

Limerick, Ireland

Limerick is in the county of Limerick in the province of Munster. Situated on the River Shannon, Limerick is Ireland's 3rd city. It was founded by Scandinavian settlers in 812, during the Viking Age. The city is by the River Shannon and Abbey River.

There are many sites in Limerick, including King John's Castle, Thomond Park, Limerick Cathedral, Limerick Museum, and Mayor's Park. King John's Castle is a 13th-century castle located on King's Island. Although the site dates to 922 when the Vikings lived, the castle was built on the orders of King John of England in 1200. There is a visitor center, interactive exhibitions with computer-generated animations, and a café.

Hunt Museum is in the Custom House. It holds a personal collection assembled by the Hunt family. Works by Pablo Picasso, Jack B. Yeats, and Neil Connolly and historical items such as the O'Dea Mitre and Cruiser are found here.

Thanks for Reading!

"May love and laughter light your days."

Irish saying

Thank you for reading the debut Irish Roots and Branches newsletter. Stay tuned for the next issue in August.

—Share It

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