

A GUIDE TO THE SOURCES FOR FAMILY RESEARCH IN County DONEGAL

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Family history at Donegal County Archives

Donegal County Archives (Archives Service of Donegal County Council) holds records which might be of assistance when undertaking family research from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards:

- General Valuation registers. These registers list occupiers and owners of land and property in Donegal from the 1880's (though we do not hold the actual maps, which are available in Dublin);
- Electoral (voters') registers for the county, some dating from the late nineteenth century.
- 19th - 20th century workhouse and medical records (Boards of Guardians/Board of Health), including information on inmates of workhouses and infirmaries. Records vary for each district. Please note that the workhouse records can be accessed online at www.findmypast.ie. This website can be accessed on a pay per view basis on home computers or *for free at Co. Donegal library public p.c.s (library computers must be booked in advance.)*
- A small number of estate and housing records and other private and public records;
- Primary/National School roll books and registers.
- Donegal Grand Jury: presentment records from c.1753 to 1899.
- A small number of legal documents including abstracts of title, leases, etc.
- Records relating to staff and members of Donegal local authorities.

Contact details are:

County Archives Service, Donegal County Council, Three Rivers Centre, Lifford, County Donegal. Tel: + 353 74 9153900.

E-Mail: archivist@donegalcoco.ie. For more information on sources check out the Website: <https://www.donegalculture.ie/en/services/archives/>

Donegal County Archives Service is happy to assist researchers in any way possible with their research. However, the County Archives is not a genealogical institution and in general we cannot conduct detailed research for individuals. We will however carry out research for researchers in records that, for privacy reasons, cannot be made generally available to the public.

Online Sources of Significance

Indexes of Registers of **births** in Ireland from 1864 – 1924, of **deaths** from 1871 to 1974 and of civil **marriages** from 1845 to 1949 are available, free to view online, at www.irishgenealogy.ie .

The Civil Survey of 1654 lists owners and leaseholders of property and can be found online in public libraries or at the County Archives.

Census, 1901, 1911

Please note that the records of the 1901 and the 1911 censuses for the whole of Ireland, including DONEGAL are now available from the National Archives website at: <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>

Griffith's Valuation and later Valuation registers

The www.askaboutireland.ie website has a link to the Griffith Valuation records which are available online. <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml>

For other Valuation/Survey registers (Field/House books etc) see <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/vob/home.jsp>

The Valuation books generally date from the 1840s – 1860s.

Tithe Applotment records

1823 – 1837 tithe applotment books which recorded land occupiers for the purpose of paying tithes to the church of Ireland are now available online at: <http://www.genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/>

Flax growers list co Donegal 1796

<https://www.failteromhat.com/flax/donegal.htm>

Catholic parishes online

Catholic parish registers provide the earliest direct source of family information. Those that have survived and are in the National Library are now online, free of charge.

<http://registers.nli.ie/>

Calendars of Wills and Administrations 1858 - 1920

<http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/search/cwa/home.jsp>

Virtual Treasury – free resource for searching Ireland's recovered documents from its original national archive, see: <https://virtualtreasury.ie/>

The Virtual Treasury reconstructs through digital technologies the Public Record Office of Ireland, the island's national archive destroyed on June 30th, 1922, during the Civil War.

Genealogy Services, institutions & websites

Central Library, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, Local Studies section, holds microfilms of census records and Griffith's Primary Valuation of land and property (from 1850's). It also holds local newspapers and a large genealogy collection, including histories of leading Donegal families. Phone no. +353-74-91 24950; website <http://www.donegallibrary.ie/>

Births, Deaths and Marriages: The District registry of Donegal holds original registers of births, deaths and Catholic marriages from 1864. Their address is District Registrars' Office, Tirconail House, St Conal's Hospital, Letterkenny; to order a Certificate contact: + 353 -74- 91 23771/23772.

Website:

[Births, deaths and marriages - HSE.ie](http://www.hse.ie/eng/yourhealth/yourfamily/birthsdeathsandmarriages.htm)

The records of admission and discharge from the **County Home, Stranorlar (St Joseph's Hospital)** from 1921 to 1974 are held by Child & Family Services/TUSLA, Donegal Adoption Services, County Clinic, St Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co Donegal, Tel: 074 910 4716.

See also

<http://www.irishgenealogy.ie/> (Irish state website, free)

<http://donegalgenealogy.com/> This site includes transcripts of 1820s Tithe applotment surveys for Donegal, graveyard inscriptions, and many transcripts from archival sources as well as links to other family history websites.

There are many commercial genealogy/family history websites (many require subscription) including:

<http://www.rootsireland.ie/>

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/>

[Genealogy, Family Trees and Family History Records online - Ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com/)

<http://www.ulsterancestry.com/> This site includes transcripts of 17th century Donegal muster rolls.

<http://www.findmypast.ie/>

For advice on Ulster-Scots genealogy, see:

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

A list of accredited genealogists can be found at

<http://accreditedgenealogists.ie/>

For Derry ancestry, please contact: Derry Genealogy and Archive Service, based at the Tower Museum, Derry, for contact information see <https://towermuseumcollections.com/archive-genealogy/>

Emigration Sources

The Centre for Migration Studies at Omagh has a database and genealogical information on emigrants from Ireland (mainly to USA) including passenger lists. Phone no.: +44 (0)28 8224 3292;

<https://www.librariesni.org.uk/resources/cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-collections/mellon-centre-for-migration-studies/>

To see the CMS database containing letters of those who emigrated see:

<https://www.dippam.ac.uk/eppi>

*****Note that there are many excellent online databases for immigrants to USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, including:*

<http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger>

<https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/immigration-and-citizenship>

<https://archives.govt.nz/search-the-archive/researching/research-guides/citizenship-and-migration/searching-passenger-lists>

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/Pages/introduction.aspx>

Census material from other countries may be of use also. For example, the 1921 census of England and Wales is now available to search via www.findmypast.ie

Births, deaths and Marriages & parish records

In other parts of Ireland genealogical Material held by National Research Institutions include:

The General Register Office, Government Offices, Convent Road, Roscommon, tel: +353 (0) 90 6632900; LoCall: 1890 252076; website: <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/143f25-about-the-general-register-office/> The General Register Office holds microfilm copies of all registers of births, deaths and marriages in the island of Ireland from the beginning of registration (January 1864) to 1921. It holds these records for the Republic of Ireland dating from 1921 to the present day, and master indexes for all three. Protestant marriage registers are there also (from 1845). (Charges apply).

For **Northern Ireland births, deaths and marriages** check the General Register Office, Oxford House, 49/55 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4HL, Northern Ireland, tel. (048) 90 252000, email: Go to GRONI online | nidirect . **The North of Ireland Family History Society** can be contacted at www.nifhs.org

For the period before 1864, parish registers provide the only record of most births, marriages and deaths.

Catholic parishes online The **National Library of Ireland**, Kildare Street, Dublin 2 (phone no. + 353 - 1- 6030200, <https://www.nli.ie/>) is the chief repository for the microfilm copies (for the period up to 1880) of those Catholic parish registers still held in local custody. Catholic parish registers provide the earliest direct source of family information. Those registers that have survived and are in the National Library are now online, free of charge. [Catholic Parish Registers at the NLI](#)

Local parishes should also be contacted to find out if records are held locally.

The National Archives, Bishop Street, Dublin 2 (phone no. + 353 - 1 - 407 2300 / **Lo Call:** + 353 1890 252424), <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/> and the **National Library** both hold archives which may assist in tracing ancestors, including 1901 and 1911 census, Griffith's Valuation, and estate papers. *The websites of both institutions also list names and contact details of professional researchers who may be able to assist you in your research.*

Graveyards/Cemeteries

The location of burial grounds' Registers varies, a small number from the 1930s are in Donegal Co. Archives. Some are held at parishes. Some are transcribed online, for example <http://www.irishgraveyards.ie/> or www.findagrave.com

The National Archives (Dublin) holds inquest records where they have survived. Local newspapers sometimes report on inquests, see: <https://www.irishnewsarchive.com/>

Court records

Court records are held at the National Archives (Dublin).

Transportation records

The National Archives (Dublin) holds records relating to people transported to Australia, records date from c1788. [Australian Transportation Records | The National Archives of Ireland](#)

Religious Institutions

The website of the Roman Catholic diocese of *Derry* (including parishes in Donegal) is:

<http://www.derrydiocese.org/>

The website of the Roman Catholic diocese of *Raphoe* is:

<http://www.raphoediocese.ie/>

The Raphoe Diocesan Archive holds records relating to the Catholic clergy and other valuable social records. Contact: The Bishop's House, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. Phone: (+353) 74 9161109.)

E-mail: archives@raphoediocese.ie>

Website: [Raphoe Diocesan Archives | Association for Church Archives of Ireland](#)

<http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com> This organisation holds an almost complete set of microfilms of registers of baptisms and marriages and other records of the **Presbyterian Church in Ireland**, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland and the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

The Church of Ireland's website for Donegal is:

<http://www.ireland.anglican.org/>

The Representative Church Body library, Braemor Park, Dublin 14, holds Church of Ireland records. See <https://www.churchofireland.org/about/rcb-library>

The Methodist Church in Ireland holds its own genealogy services, see

<http://www.irishmethodist.org/genealogy-services>

<http://methodisthistoryireland.org/>

Land and Estate

The smallest division of land in Ireland is known as a townland, these are often the actual addresses of people living in rural areas. The townland index for Ireland including for Co. Donegal is online at [Townland Index](#)

See also: [Townland index.xlsx](#)

The **National Library, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland** (see below for contact details) and the **National Archives of the UK** (see contact details below) all hold collections of estate papers relating to Donegal.

Tailte Éireann (formerly Valuation Office/Property Registration Authority) <https://www.tailte.ie/> holds registers of occupiers of property for the 26 Counties in the Republic of Ireland. It is also the repository (Registry of Deeds) for legal deeds including Wills, in relation to property. <https://www.tailte.ie/valuation/archive-research/> Tailte Éireann is based in Dublin, <https://www.tailte.ie/en/registration/contact-us/> Phone: 051 303000

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) which holds Northern Ireland's public and private archives, also holds many private records which relate to Donegal among other counties, particularly estate records.

PRONI is at 2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast, BT3 9HQ.

Website: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/public-record-office-northern-ireland-proni>

Derry Archives & Genealogy Service (Derry City and Strabane District Council) holds records relating to Derry/Strabane district. Contact details are:

Derry City & Strabane District Council

Museums & Visitor Services - Archives & Genealogy

Tower Museum, Union Hall Place, Derry/Londonderry

Website: [Archive & Genealogy – Tower Museum](#)

E: bernadette.walsh@derrycityandstrabane.com

Search for your Derry ancestors on www.derry.rootsireland.ie

Maps, Architectural Plans and drawings

For archives relating to architectural plans or drawings try The Irish Architectural Archive, at <http://www.iarc.ie/> Address: 45 Merrion Sq, Dublin 2.

Historical ordnance survey Ireland maps can be viewed at

<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>

See also:

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/understanding-the-valuati/>

Schools

National school records for Co Donegal, where they have survived, are held in different locations, including at Donegal County Archives (see above); at the National Archives (www.nationalarchives.ie); and at schools themselves; while some are in private hands.

Second and third level school and college records are generally held on site at the school, where such records have survived.

Military and police records

The National Archives of the UK, Kew, London, holds **military records** relating to Ireland before the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 including records of Irish men who served in the British Army, including records of the Donegal Militia. <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

18th century records of the Donegal Militia can also be found in the Killadoon papers in the **National Library** (www.nli.ie).

The Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Rathmines, Dublin 6, holds military records from the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922; www.militaryarchives.ie; Phone: 00 353 1 8046457.

E-mail militaryarchives@defenceforces.ie.

Military pension records, witness statements and brigade reports (of those involved in 1916 – 1923 revolutionary period) are now online, see above website.

The records of the Royal Irish Constabulary can be researched at the National Archives of the UK, Kew, London.

See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/royal-irish-constabulary/>

World War 1 and World War 2

County Donegal Book of Honour, The Great War 1914-1918

Donegal County Museum has undertaken research into the men and women from Co. Donegal who died in the First World War. For further information contact Donegal County Museum, High Road, Letterkenny, Co Donegal; 074 9124613; museum@donegalcoco.ie

<https://www.donealgreatwardead.com> This database contains information on each known person from County Donegal who died as a result of the First World War. Information contained in this database includes name, service number and place of birth as well as additional information. The database listings are based on the 5th Edition of the County Donegal Book of Honour, The Great War 1914-1918.

www.cwgc.org – Commonwealth War Graves Commission - casualty database lists the names and place of commemoration of the 1.7 million men and women of the Commonwealth forces (including those from Ireland) who died during the two world wars. It also records details of the 67,000 Commonwealth civilians who died "as a result of enemy action" in the Second World War.

Ireland

<http://soldierswills.nationalarchives.ie/search/sw/home.jsp> - The National Archives of Ireland holds a collection of the wills of Irish soldiers who died while serving in the British Army. Most of these date from World War I but there is a small number from the late 19th Century and from the period of the South African War, 1899-1902. Free online.

Canada

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/personnel-records/Pages/personnel-records.aspx> - This database combines references to various First World War personnel records; includes

digitized files for many individuals of the Canadian Expeditionary Force and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and Newfoundland Forestry Corps (courtesy of the Rooms Provincial Archives). Newly digitized CEF files are added to the references every two weeks.

Australia/New Zealand

[Search Anzac Memorial, First World War | Findmypast.ie](#) This website includes profiles of Anzacs who enlisted in World War I.

United States

<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530> - United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918 - Name index and images of draft registration cards for World War I. Three registrations occurred between 1917 and 1918. The 1st was held 5 Jun 1917 for men ages 21-31. The 2nd was held 5 Jun 1918 for men who turned 21 since the 1st registration. The 3rd started 12 Sep 1918 for men ages 18-45. The collection includes cards for 24 million men. The cards are arranged by state, by city or county, by local draft board, then alphabetical by surname.

<http://abmc.gov/> - This register includes the records for those buried and memorialized at our World War I and World War II overseas, military cemeteries, along with those names on the Walls of the Missing at the East Coast Memorial, West Coast Memorial, and Honolulu Memorial. Burial information can also be found for those interred at Corozal American Cemetery and Mexico City National Cemetery. This register does not include individuals who died overseas in World War I or World War II and were repatriated to the United States for burial.