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Getting Started

This leaflet provides a brief introduction to the records used by family history researchers in the National Library, together with a number of important addresses. For more detailed information on the records, you should consult the other leaflets in this series.

Beginning the Search

Your research begins with you and your immediate family. Ask questions of family members whom you think might know a little bit more about the family history. Consult old photographs on which names and dates may be noted, as well as family gravestones and any documentation in which family information is recorded.

As you do this, try to establish approximate **dates** (of birth, marriage and death) as well as **names** (forenames and related family names) and **places of residence**. This information will point the way to relevant records. Of course, religious denomination is also important in determining which records are relevant to your research.

The Records

The principal sources used for genealogical research in Ireland fall under the following headings:

- civil records

The civil or State registration of marriages, other than Catholic marriages, commenced in Ireland in 1845. In 1864, civil registration of all births, marriages and deaths began. These civil records are held at the General Register Office.

- church records

Microfilm copies - usually up to the year 1880 - of most surviving Catholic parish registers are available for consultation in the National Library of Ireland. For the start-dates of relevant registers - and microfilm numbers - consult the *List of Parish Registers*. (Copies of the list may be consulted in the Catalogue Room in the Genealogy Service, and on the Library's Website at www.nli.ie).

Most registers may be freely consulted. However, in the case of two dioceses - Cashel and Emlly and Kerry - letters of authorisation must be obtained prior to consultation of the microfilms. Relevant contact addresses and other details are given in Leaflet No. 2 (*Parish registers in the National Library of Ireland*) in this series.

The situation regarding Church of Ireland (Anglican) records is more complicated. Many original records were destroyed in the 1922 Public Record Office fire. Some original registers are held in the National Archives, others are in the **Representative Church Body Library** while some are retained in the parish. The **Public Record Office of Northern Ireland** also holds many original and copy registers.

For a comprehensive listing of Church of Ireland registers, and their whereabouts, consult the relevant lists (in the Reading Room and Genealogy Service).

Enquiries regarding Presbyterian records can be addressed to the **Presbyterian Historical Society**.

Prior to the 1810's, records of Methodist births, marriages and deaths are found in Church of Ireland registers. For details of surviving registers after that date, contact the Methodist church in the area closest to your area of research. (For the Ulster counties, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland holds a county-by-county listing of surviving registers and their locations).

For Quaker records, contact the **Library of the Religious Society of Friends**.

For information on Jewish records, contact the **Irish Jewish Museum**.

- census records

Surviving census records are in the custody of the **National Archives**. The earliest complete surviving Census is that of 1901.

There are a number of records which may be used as **Census Substitutes**, many of which are held here in the National Library. There is a useful chapter on 'Census Substitutes' in D.F. Begley (ed.) [Irish Genealogy: a Record Finder](#). County by county listings of Census Substitutes can be found in John Grenham's [Tracing your Irish ancestors](#) and in James Ryan's [Irish Records: Sources for Family and Local History](#).

- land and property records

Under this general heading can be found two important Census Substitutes - the ***Tithe Applotment Books*** (1824-1838) and the ***Primary Valuation of Ireland*** or ***Griffith's Valuation*** (1848-1864) - much used by genealogists.

There are copies of both of these records in the National Library of Ireland, together with the county by county ***Index of Surnames***, an alphabetical listing of the surnames recorded in both records, broken down by County, Barony and Civil Parish.

For further information see Leaflet No. 3 (*Valuation Records*) in this series.

As your research progresses, remember that the National Library holds other material of interest to the genealogist including newspapers, directories, maps and estate papers, as well as local and family histories. Also available are the archives of the Genealogical Office, which can be consulted on microfilm or, if not available on film, in the Manuscripts Reading Room.

Some Important Addresses:

Genealogical research is a step-by-step process. Information from one record will lead to research in another and you are likely to find yourself working in a number of different archives and libraries.

The addresses of some of the other research repositories you may need to contact are as follows:

National Archives, Bishop Street, Dublin 8. Tel. 407 2300
www.nationalarchives.ie

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast BT9 6NY. Tel. (04890) 251318.
<http://proni.nics.gov.uk/>

General Register Office, Joyce House, Lombard Street, Dublin 2. Tel. 635 4000
www.doh.ie

Representative Church Body Library, Braemor Park, Dublin 14. Tel. 492 3979
www.ireland.anglican.org/

Registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin 1. Tel. 670 7500.
www.irlgov.ie/landreg/

Presbyterian Historical Society, Church House, Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6WD. Tel. (04890) 322284
www.presbyterianireland.org

Religious Society of Friends Library, Swanbrook House, Morehampton Road, Dublin 4. Tel. 668 7157

Irish Jewish Museum, 3-4 Walworth St., South Circular Road, Dublin 8. Tel. 453 8388

Do you wish to commission research?

While the National Library does not offer a research service to readers or correspondents, a list of researchers – private individuals and organisations – willing to carry out research on a professional, fee-paying basis is available in the Library.

A list of **regional research centres** (operating under the auspices of the Irish Family History Foundation) is also available.

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