

Come to Ireland to Find Your Ancestors

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Ready....

As with any trip to Europe, your travel preparations should include:

- valid passport, no visa is required for Ireland
- travel insurance and any medical documentation you might require (prescriptions),
- valid driving licence. Book your car rental in advance for the best deal
- get a good map: <http://www.discoverireland.com/gb/ireland-places-to-go/explore-by-map>
- a brief history of Ireland so you can be clear on periods and major historical events
- Accommodation for at least the first night especially in summertime
- pack for the weather.. an umbrella or raincoat is essential, comfortable shoes, etc.
- 2 or 3 inexpensive thoughtful gifts...American book, chocolates for that nice person you will meet in the repositories, guest houses, etc.

Set....

Prepare your research information and materials in an orderly fashion

- identify the **county of origin** of your ancestors from documentation in your home country. Don't just seize on a county where the surnames originated. Follow the emigrant ancestor's paper trail for vital clues especially his county of origin, year of birth and of course, his/her parents' names.
- get a good book on Irish genealogy (see bibliography) and learn about the records held in the major Irish record repositories.(addresses, contact information and opening times below)
- develop a research plan. Set priorities and budget your time between major repositories and county level research
- make separate folders, possibly colour coded, for each family you are researching
- compile a list of resources you have already used. No point in repeating work you have already done at home
- make a check list just prior to departure of the materials you want to take for researching such as copies of documents which provide placenames in Ireland, documents, photographs, etc.
- letters and journals written in Irish (Gaelic) are not a problem can be translated. An Irish/English dictionaries on line: <http://www.irishdictionary.ie>, or you can contact translators through Gael Linn or email Sean ÓDúill, B.A., H.Dip, certified Irish translator, sean@heirsireland.com
- any items you use in research, a magnifying glass, spare pair of glasses, your favourite pen, your laptop, portable scanner if you have one etc. Remember to bring current convertor if needed
- be well rested and energized for the transatlantic trip. Travel as lightly as possible as you will no doubt want to leave room (and weight allowance) for souvenirs to bring home.

Go....

Alone, with an understanding partner/friend or with a research group?

- you may enjoy being on your own for a week or prefer travelling with a friend. Choose someone who can find things to do while you research. Not everyone is “hooked” on family history so choose a patient and flexible travelling companion.
- Being with like minded enthusiasts on a planned and supervised programme maximises your time and can make the experience more rewarding. You’ll make friends and learn a great deal. Check the internet for research trips to Ireland, e.g. TIARA, New England Historical and Genealogical Society, etc.

- First stop in Dublin is the **Genealogical Advisory Service** in the **National Archives** or in the **National Library**. These services are free, provide professional advice and you can pick up a map of the major repositories in Dublin in both repositories. Note opening times, mornings only in National Archives, 9:30 to 5PM in National Library.

-If you decide you need more one on one help, you can contact members of the Association of Professional Genealogists in Ireland at www.apgi.ie or members of the research panel on the National Archives and National Library websites.

- Plan some activities other than genealogical research for a well- balanced trip. Include cultural events: theatre, museums, music sessions...have some fun!
- Remember your repository manners. Irish ways of doing things might be different from your own. Fellow researchers may be more helpful than the overworked staff. Irish people generally are friendly. Resist the temptation to pester people who appear to know the system.
- Do not fulfil the “Ugly American” stereotype. Be grateful for assistance you receive. Be subtle and open to new ways of doing things. The handy box of chocolates for someone who has been especially helpful will be greatly appreciated....even more than a “tip”.

Be realistic about what you can achieve.

- Good planning will maximise your use of time in the repositories. The GRO for instance is only open from 9:30 to 4:30, Monday through Friday. Note opening times of repositories before planning to go there.
- Familiarise yourself with road maps for that trip down the country. Pace yourself. It isn’t realistic to drive to from Dublin to Donegal and return that same day....it doesn’t look all that far, but it is!
- Keep your eyes open while you travel around Ireland. Don’t whiz past the Rock of Cashel in your anxiety to get to Cork. Do touristy things as well as research. Don’t forget to send postcards home!

Finally, enjoy yourself!

Finding the birth certificate of great grandmother is exciting but don’t overlook the living. Meeting distant cousins can be the highlight of your trip. Family resemblance can be striking and even if you don’t meet blood kin you will find the Irish look like your folks back home and have a welcoming way. Enjoy a pint, some traditional Irish music, hearty Irish breakfasts and savour the experience of your visit to the ancestral home...

This is an emotional as well as a research experience so we hope you will bring home happy memories and impression as well as nuggets of information from your trip of a lifetime.

Major Record Repositories

General Register Office

Irish Life Centre
Lower Abbey Street
Dublin 1

www.groireland.ie

Monday to Friday.

9:30 AM- 4:30 PM

General Register Office

Oxford House
49-55 Chicester Street
Belfast BT 1 4HL

www.groni.gov.uk

Monday to Friday

By appointment

National Archives

Bishop Street
Dublin 8

www.nationalarchives.ie

Monday to Friday

10:00 AM - 5:00PM

National Library of Ireland

Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Phone: (01) 603 0200
Fax: (01) 676 6690

www.nli.ie

Monday-Wednesday 10am-9pm

Thursday/Friday 10am-5pm

Sat 10am-1pm

Representative Church Body Library

Braemor Park, Churchtown
Dublin 14

Phone: (01) 492 3979

Fax: (01) 492 4770

Monday-Friday 9.30am-1pm and 1.45pm-5pm
(take #14 bus from city centre)

Registry of Deeds

Henrietta Street
Dublin 1
Phone: (01) 670 7500
Fax: (01) 804 8406

www.irlgov.ie/landreg/

Monday to Friday

10am-4.30pm

Valuation Office

Irish Life Centre, Lower Abbey Street
Dublin 1

Phone: (01) 817 1000

Fax: (01) 817 1800

www.valoff.ie

Monday to Friday

9.30am- 4.30pm

Irish Genealogy Ltd. County Kerry, Carlow and some Cork and Dublin city parishes at:
(recently redesigned as a portal to other genealogical sources) www.irishgenealogy.ie

Irish Family History Foundation heritage centres

www.Irish-roots.net

The Gathering 2013 :

<http://www.thegatheringireland.com>

Bibliography:

John Grenham, *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* (Dublin, Ireland: Gill and Macmillan, fourth edition, 2012).

Ian Maxwell, *How to Trace Your Irish Ancestors: An essential guide to researching and documenting the family histories of Ireland's people*, (Oxford, U.K., How to Books Ltd., 2008)

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James and Paula Warren, *Getting the Most Mileage From Genealogical Research Trips.*, 3 ed. (St. Paul, MN : Warren Research & Publishing, 1998)