Top Websites For Irish Research!

Remains of the 11th-century Trim Castle in County Meath. The largest Norman castle in Ireland.

RESEARCHING YOUR IRISH ancestors is just getting easier and easier! The last few years have seen an explosion on what is more readily available to those researching Irish ancestors — and, many of these resources can be accessed online! The following is a summary of "some" of the online resources that you might want to check out when researching your Irish Ancestors! This list is not exhaustive! In fact, as soon as it's written, there will probably be a new source that could be mentioned!

And, some resources, such as the Griffith's Valuation, are available at multiple sites, whereas others are only available at one. And, not all Griffith's Valuation resources are the same — some might be just an index, one might have a better or easier-to-use search engine, one might be linked to digitized images, etc. Do explore the listed resources and then decide which ones work best for your purposes and/or budget.

Let me now introduce you to a mix of 45 free and subscription/ pay-per-view websites, large commercial ventures and some small personal efforts. What they have in common is that any one of these might crack your Irish brickwall. So, sit back, rest your legs and learn about the wonderful world of online Irish genealogy research.

GENERAL RESEARCH INFORMATION
These websites are a mix of tutorials and related resources that are important to your understanding of Irish record-keeping and history. Remember that the more you know about these topics, the more likely that your research might be successful.

• Your Irish Roots
www.youririshroots.com
This site provides a simple overview about tracing your Irish Genealogy. The best section on this site is "Irish History." Learn about the famine, A History of Ireland; 3000BC to 1922, and much more.

• Sean Murphy's "A Primer in Irish Genealogy"
http://homepage.eircom.net/~ seanjmurphy/epubs/primer.pdf
This is a great, easy-to-read overview on both genealogy and the specifics of Irish Genealogy. It will help give you some context for understanding what records are available (and not) and where they might be found as you pursue Irish ancestry.

• Fianna Guide to Irish Research
www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~fianna/ guide/index.html
Lots of good information on just about any topic related to researching one's family that you can think of, as well as some transcriptions

of records.

• Ask About Ireland
www.askaboutireland.ie
This site is an initiative of public libraries together with local museums and archives in the digitization and online publication of the original, the unusual and the unique material from their local studies' collections to create a national Internet resource for culture. It's a kind of mix of useful information about Ireland and researching in Ireland, along with links to actual resource material. As a minimum, check out the Digital Book Collection and the History & Heritage section — you might find those ancestors you are seeking! And, don't forget to check out the Griffith's Valuation Index, *www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml.*

• FamilySearch (also see Non-Commercial Websites with Irish Records)
www.familysearch.org
The long-available (and online) basic research guides have now been supplemented with video's on select topics. Check these out if you are looking for a concise and informative overview of various elements of Irish research and/or want to sit back and enjoy some videos. For classic research guides, at the website, click on the tab labeled "Research Helps." You will find the following (and more) entries for Ireland — Ireland 1901/1911 Census Worksheet, Country/City Maps Register, Research Outline, Historical Background, How to Find a Place Name, How to Find Compiled Sources, etc. Additionally, there are now videos available on such topics as Church Records, Civil Registration and Immigration (Strategies, Famine/Post Famine, Ulster/Scots Irish). To access the videos, on the drop down menu for "Research Helps" click on "Online Classes."

• Irish Genealogical Society International
www.irishgenealogical.org/irish_genea logical_res_intro.asp
A great feature of this website is that you don't have to be a member to access a nice collection of articles on doing Irish Research — Intro to Research, Starting Your Irish Research, Records to Search at Home, Problem of Names, Irish Places and Irish History, Digging Deeper in Ireland and Irish Sources. And, the Irish Sources piece provides links to some nice overviews of particular types of documents that may prove useful.

IRELAND REPOSITORIES
Just like in the US, Canada and elsewhere, Ireland has a national library, archives, "the keepers of the vital records" and other country-wide resources that are invaluable to the Irish genealogist.

• The National Archives of Ireland
www.nationalarchives.ie
Besides the Irish 1901 and 1911 census records discussed later, there are other free searchable databases, such as the Ireland-Australia transportation database (1791-1853). To get the most out of visiting this website, checkout the page dedicated to genealogical research, *www.nationalarchives.ie/ genealogy/index.html* — where there are very useful overviews of the various records collections, though note that most records are not available online.

• National Library of Ireland
www.nli.ie
The most valuable resource is its catalog where you can easily learn about what is available — use a single interface to simultaneously search across the Library's printed, manuscript, visual and digitized material. Additionally, there is a new digital database — Sources: A National Library of Ireland database for Irish research which contains over 180,000 catalogue records for Irish manuscripts and articles in Irish periodicals. You will also find supplementary materials, such as the Newspaper Database, a database of downloadable Manuscript Collection Lists and more.

• Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)
www.proni.gov.uk
Established in 1923 following the partition of the island into the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is the official repository for public records for the six counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry (Londonderry), Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. Digital collections (with links to digitized images) include The 1912 Ulster Covenant archive and pre-1840 Freeholder Registers and Poll Books. Additionally, an index to the will calendar entries (grants of probate and letters of administration) for 1858-1900 is available and there are plans to link the index to digitized images of the wills. And, there are useful guides, such as the ones for church records, *www.proni.gov.uk/guide_to_church _records.pdf* and newspapers, *www.proni.gov.uk/newspapers_on_ microfilm.pdf.*

• Irish Genealogy
www.irishgenealogy.ie
This service of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport, contains a Step-by-Step Guide, The Central Signposting Index (C.S.I) which contains over three million genealogical records from Armagh, Cavan, Derry, Donegal, Fermanagh, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Tyrone & Wexford (details of the included records are at *www.irishgenealogy.ie/csi/csi_ breakdown.html*), and an online search engine of church records for Carlow, Cork & Ross, Dublin and Kerry. For found entries, you can view a high-quality image of the church register.

VITAL RECORDS
Though, anyone born in Ireland is Irish, it is an island governed by two distinct governments which means that vital records are kept in two different places.

• General Register Office (GRO) (Republic of Ireland)
www.groireland.ie
The GRO in Dublin holds vital records for the whole of Ireland before 1922 (vital records of non-Catholic marriages began in Ireland in 1845; births and deaths, and Catholic marriages in 1864)

and for the Irish Republic from 1922 onwards.

• General Register Office (GRONI) (Northern Ireland)
www.groni.gov.uk
The GRONI holds all birth & death records for Northern Ireland, as well as marriages from 1922 onwards.

CLEARINGHOUSES FOR INFORMATION
Some websites are just great places to go and get the "scoop" on what types of records might exist and where you might find them. These are a great way to quickly learn what may or may not survive in terms of records and what may or may not be available online for you to readily access.

• Genuki
www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl
Provides links to hundreds of sites that might help your ancestral research. First are listed resources applicable to all of Ireland. Then you can select a county of interest and see an overview of content particular to that county —some online and a lot of offline resources are listed.

• Ireland GenWeb
www.irelandgenweb.com
As is true for the world-wide GenWeb projects, you will find free resource material, organized by county. The material will range from databases to mailing lists to historical information and much more.

• Mary's Genealogy Treasures — Ireland and Northern Ireland
www.telusplanet.net/public/mtoll/ireland.htm
A nice collection of links to resources grouped under such headings as Archives, BDM, Cemeteries, Census, Church Records, Databases, Directories, IGI Batch #s, Immigration, Land Records, Libraries, Maps, Military, Newspapers, Research Helps, Societies, Surnames, Tax & Electors, Miscellaneous and others.

• A Little Bit of Ireland
www.celticcousins.net/ireland/index.htm
Another nice collection of

resources, ranging from *Walker's Hibernian Magazine* Irish Marriage lists to Freemen of Limerick (1746-1836) to items from the 1823 editions of the *Connaught Journal* and more.

NON-COMMERCIAL WEBSITES WITH IRISH RECORDS
Though much of the newest digitized content available online is via subscription and/or pay-per-view websites, they are not the only places providing access to transcriptions and/or digital images of original source documents.

• Familysearch
www.familysearch.org
Familysearch has updated its Classic search engine with a new version that showcases new family history technologies that are now ready for prime time! As we go to press, the Irish records Available include: Ireland Births and Baptisms, 1620-1881, Deaths, 1864-1870, Marriages, 1619-1898 andCivil Registration Indexes, 1845-1958.

• Fáilte Romhat
www.failteromhat.com
This is the personal website of John Hayes and contains a number of online Irish databases and transcribed documents, including Irish Flax Growers List 1796, Land Owners in Ireland 1876, Pigot & Co's Provincial Directory of Ireland 1824, other directory and census record collections, cemetery transcriptions and photographs, a searchable Griffith's Valuation (1848-1864), and much more.

PAY-PER-VIEW (FREE SEARCH) COMMERCIAL WEBSITES WITH DIGITIZED IRISH RECORDS
A typical pay-per-view service allows you free access to indexes of the available material and then you can pay to access specific documents. These are great if you only have a very specific record you are seeking, or only one family branch that might be Irish — basically, rather than jumping into to a full subscription service that maybe more than you need, this allows you to dabble. For my one lone Scotsman, who in the 1800s hap-

pened to live for about 10 years in Ireland, this was the perfect type of service for my needs!

• Irish Family History Foundation
www.RootsIreland.ie
The new online record research system of The Irish Family History Foundation (IFHF) will eventually contain almost 40 million Irish Ancestral records (currently over 16 million are available). The ability to search country-wide into Irish birth and baptism, marriage, death, census or Griffith Valuation records is invaluable. You must register (for free) to use the website. You can search the indexes for free — the indexes list surname, first name, year and county. To view a detailed record, you can purchase credit online for instant access. A great feature is that the available records are not necessarily limited to just those of the Roman Catholic Parishes.

• Irish Ancestors (via Irish Times),
www.irishtimes.com/ancestor
This site contains a plethora of records, organized by county, and includes Census, Local history, Local journals, Directories, Gravestones, Estate records, Catholic records, Civil parishes and more. You can browse the current holdings, by county, at *www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/browse*. This page is also important as it provides a gateway to a series of articles on Emigration and The Records, amongst other topics.

SUBSCRIPTION COMMERCIAL WEBSITES WITH DIGITIZED IRISH RECORDS
Where a typical pay-per-view service allows you some access to indexes of the available material and then you can pay to access specific documents, a subscription site is one where you purchase a subscription and then gain unlimited access to the available records. Sometimes, there is a "trial" option, which gives you free access for a limited period of time.

• Emerald Isle Ancestors
www.emeraldancestors.com
This website focuses on the Ulster region — counties Antrim,

Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone. It contains baptism, marriage, death, burial and census records for over one million Irish ancestors. Most of the results are indexes or partial transcriptions. To learn about what is included, visit *www.emerald ancestors.com/databases*.

• Irish Origins
www.irishorigins.com
Like the other subscription services, you will find that new material is constantly becoming available. Check out the main page to see what resources await you. The site features an Irish Wills Index (1484-1858), the 1851 Dublin City Census, Irish Royal Garrison Artillery Records, Griffith's Valuation, Directories of Ireland, Griffith's Survey Maps & Plans 1847-1864, etc. You will also find some helpful articles at *www.origins network.com/Help/resarticles-io.aspx*.

• Ancestry.com
www.ancestry.com
Some of the records currently found in the ever-growing Irish collection include the 1766 Religious census, Irish Marriages, 1771-1812, Irish Passenger lists, 1847-1871 and the Irish Emigrants in North American series, The Royal Irish Constabulary 1816-1921, Index to Griffith's Valuation, 1848-1864, Famine Relief Commission Papers, 1844-1847, Tithe Applotment Books, 1824-1837, Irish Flax Growers List, 1796, Railway Gazette Worldwide Historical Data, 1860-1930, The Public Register or *Freemans Journal* (Dublin, Dublin, Ireland) and much more.

• Family Relatives
www.familyrelatives.com
For a current listing of the Irish records available, check out *www.familyrelatives.com/post_search .php?sr=Ireland*. Some of the Irish records found include Return of Owners of Land as well as Indexes to Irish Wills, Quaker Records Dublin Abstracts of Wills, Alumni Dublinense 1593-1846, Irish Immigration records 1846-1850, Index to Prerogative Wills of Ireland, select directories, etc. Note

that this website also has a pay-per-view option.

• FindMyPast
www.findmypast.co.uk
Though this site doesn't currently have a lot of Irish records, it is in the process of expanding its collection and it does have two databases that you might want to check out: Outbound Passenger Lists for long distance travel (encompasses Irish ports) and Civil Service Evidence of Age records 1752-1948 (28 percent are Irish born, many before civil registration was man-

The Bridge of Tears in West Donegal, Ireland. Family and friends of immigrants would accompany them as far as the bridge before saying goodbye.

dated). And don't forget to check out the "specialist records" tab to see what other Irish research records are listed.

• Irish Family History Research,
www.irishfamilyresearch.co.uk
A smorgasbord of databases can be found on this site — the most popular database features transcriptions of gravestones from old churches and graveyards. Other interesting databases include the various directories, electoral registers, yeomanry arms lists, landowners lists and more. A full listing of what's available (many unique databases only found here) can be found at *www.irishfamily research.co.uk/dbshortlist.htm*.

CENSUS RECORDS
For a variety of reasons, many of

the Irish census records, including most of the 19th century ones, have NOT survived to the present day. Fortunately, the 1901 and 1911 censuses have survived and are accessible online.

• Census of Ireland 1901 and 1911
www.census.nationalarchives.ie
These two census collections for all 32 counties in Ireland include digitized images of the original forms. The 1901 is the earliest surviving complete Census of Ireland and enumerates some 850,000 households. You are able to search on all

fields — this means more than just names, county, address, age, etc., — and includes religion, occupation, relationship to head of family, literacy status, county or country of origin, Irish language proficiency, specified illnesses, and child survival information. Be sure to read the detailed guide at *www.census.nationalarchives.ie/help/ about19011911census.html*.

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION
This was the first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland and is a primary substitute for the lost censuses for landed individuals in the mid-19th century (it also lists anyone leasing land from the owner). It was overseen by Richard Griffith (hence the name) and was published between 1847 and 1864. It is available, in various forms, at a

multitude of websites which have already been mentioned previously.

COUNTY & REGIONAL-FOCUSED RESOURCES

As when researching any locale, there are some local groups, individuals, authorities, etc., which strive to make their historical records available online. Let's talk about a few of these and make sure that you look and see if your county of interest might also have undertaken such an initiative.

• County Clare
www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/
genealogy/genealog.htm
Having researched my lone Scotsman with Irish roots who just happened to settle in County Clare, you will understand, once you see this website, why I felt fortunate! There is a lot of invaluable, freely-available material for those researching County Clare ancestors.

• Limerick Digital Archives
www.limerick.ie/DigitalArchives
A great collection of unique resources have been put online by the Limerick City Council — these include various and unusual Limerick resources, such as the Private Papers and Business collection [Limerick Chamber of Commerce 1807-1946, Bedford Row Lying-In Hospital, 1868-1971, Rentals and Particulars of Sale, 1808-1923, Devon Estate Rentals, 1774-1893, Fair Rent Tribunal, 1881-1916, etc.,], the City Council and other local government documents [Limerick Corporation (Pre-Reform), 1719-1917, Limerick City Council Minute Books, 1841-1972, Commissioners for the Improvement of St. Michael's Parish, 1810-1851, Limerick Union Board of Guardians Minute Books, 1842-1922 and Rate Valuation Books, 1893-1971], as well as burial records covering 1855-1961 for Mount Saint Lawrence (Limerick's largest cemetery).

MAPS, PLACENAMES, ETC

When researching any place in Ireland, make sure you understand "where" your ancestors lived.

Given an island split under two governments, never mind the large number of churches sometimes close to a community, complicating factors of ecclesiastical versus geo-political boundaries and that it's not unusual to have several locales in the country that share similar names, e.g., Miltown Malbay and Miltown [near] Tulla, both in County Clare. Geography is important.

• Past Homes
www.pasthomes.com
A collection of the First Edition 6-inch-scale Ordnance Survey maps of Ireland, 1829 and 1843. These are extremely detailed maps of Ireland's townlands. You can purchase access to individual maps or take out a one year subscription.

• Ireland's Historical Mapping Archive
www.irishhistoricmaps.ie/historic
This site provides access to Irish maps from 1829-1913, including the first ever large-scale survey of an entire country, between 1829 and 1842. You purchase credit to view the available maps for one day, three days, one week, one month or one year.

• Irish Maps Online [via the National Archives (UK)]
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
documentsonline/irishmaps.asp
Digitized collection of early Irish Maps (*c.* 1558- *c.* 1610) from the State Papers of Ireland. You can search and download more than 60 different maps depicting plantations, fortifications and townships in Ireland during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I.

• Placenames Database of Ireland
www.logainm.ie
Make sure to click in the upper right hand corner on "English version" and you'll have immediate access to the official translation of approximately 100,000 Irish placenames. Some names have sound files associated with them and sometimes informative notes.
• IreAtlas Townland Database
www.seanruad.com
Search for a particular Irish placename, or enter a townland or

county to generate a list all of the civil parishes, poor law unions, and townlands in a particular area.

NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers, both those produced in Ireland or where the emigrant settled, can be very important when researching Irish Ancestry. Given the complexity of Irish records, you want to have a very good idea of what county and hopefully townland is pertinent.

• Irish Death Notice Index
www.irelandoldnews.com/obits
An index of 54,500 obituaries of people who were born and/or died in Ireland, or whose deaths were mentioned in Irish newspapers. The actual obituaries are not necessarily available online. They have been indexed from newspapers all over the US and Canada, as well as Ireland and elsewhere, including 25,056 entries from *The Cork Examiner* of the 19th and early 20th century, and 1,947 entries from the 19th century [New York] Irish-American.

• The Irish Times Digital Archive 1859-2009,
www.irishtimes.com/search/index.html
This is an archive of the *Irish Times*, the newspaper of record for Ireland. You can search for free and then access any found articles via a one-day, one-week, one-month or one-year subscription type.

• Irish Newspaper Archives,
www.irishnewsarchive.com
A subscription service to more than two million pages of newspaper content for 23 newspaper titles such as: *The Freeman's Journal* (1763-1924), *Leitrim Observer*, *Sunday Independent*, *The Connaught Telegraph*, *Irish Independent* (1905-2003), *Meath Chronicle*, *The Anglo-Celt* (1908-2001), *The Tuam Herald* and more.

• Information Wanted: A Database of Advertisements for Irish Immigrants Published in the *Boston Pilot*
http://infowanted.bc.edu
From October 1831 through October 1921, the *Boston Pilot*

newspaper printed a "Missing Friends" column with advertisements from people looking for "lost" friends and relatives who had emigrated from Ireland to the United States. This collection of 35,159 records is available as a searchable online database, which contains a text record for each ad that appeared in the Pilot.

EMIGRATING
Obviously, many of us are researching Irish records because we had ancestors who had emigrated from that country to the US or Canada. If you haven't yet found a passenger record for your Irish emigrant, it is definitely worth the effort to try and do so!

• Irish Passengers Research Guide
www.genealogybranches. com/irishpassengerlists/
The resource lists created by Joe Beine are unparalleled in providing you excellent guidance about what records may or may not be available online (and off-line). For Irish ancestors, do check out his helpful guide on Irish Passenger records.

• Passenger Records and Ship List - Irish Famine (via the National Archives and Records Administration)
http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-description.jsp?s=639
If your ancestry includes someone who emigrated during the Irish Famine, check out the two databases here, Famine Irish Passenger Record Data File and List of Ships that Arrived at the Port of New York During the Irish Famine, both dated 1/12/1846-12/31/1851, which collectively contain over 600,000 records.

• Irish Famine Migration to New Brunswick,
http://archives.gnb.ca/Irish/IWDP/en/Default.aspx
What used to just be a list of passengers who traveled from Ireland to New Brunswick during the Irish Famine (1845-1852) has now expanded to not only include these passenger records, but it has extensive information about the Irish in New Brunswick, including

Old postcard of Dublin, early 1900s.

almshouse, funeral home, letters, newspapers, as well as a source for many of those emigrants, over 6,000, the Fitzwilliam Estate Emigration Books (County Wicklow) and more.

MISCELLANEOUS
There are always some sites that defy pigeon-holing. This list features those gems that simply don't seem to fit in with the previous sections, and yet you want to be sure to check them out.

• Irish Mariners
www.irishmariners.ie
Contains an index of Irish-born merchant seamen contained in the CR10 series of index cards (270,000) in the Southampton Civic Archives covering the multination work force of the British Merchant Marine during the period from late 1918 to the end of 1921. If you find a relevant card, you can then order a copy of the found card — many of which contain photos!

• 1939 "War Time" National Register
www.ic.nhs.uk/services/1939-register-service
In 1939, for the entire UK, including Northern Ireland, all households were documented. Information gathered for each person was their name, sex, date of

birth, marital condition, occupation and whether a member of the armed forces or reserves. This information (for a fee) can only be accessed for those individuals who are deceased and, if like me, you had parents, grandparents, or grandparents alive — it provides a great snapshot of your family.

CONCLUSION
After reading this article, trawling the Internet, hopefully discovering your Irish ancestors and/or possibly other wonderfully relevant databases, I hope you will agree that researching your Irish ancestors is easier-than- ever! *Éirinn go Brách!* (Ireland Forever!)

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