Irish Civil Registration

BACKGROUND SOURCES

Names
- Surnames—to find spelling variations of surnames use www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/surname
- First names and nicknames—for example, Delia or Biddy were nicknames for Bridget. For more information, see *A Rose by Any Other Name: A Guide to Irish Christian Names*, by Judith Eccles Wight (FHL film 1162446 Item 2).

Place names, Gazetteers, and Maps
Levels of Jursidiction. In Ireland geographic organization went from smallest to largest in the following order: townland or town, civil parish, barony, county, country. In the case of a large city, there might be several parishes in that city. Ireland was all one country until 1922, when it divided into the Republic of Ireland (which includes the counties of Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Galway, Kerry, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Limerick, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Sligo, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, and Wicklow) and Northern Ireland (which contains the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Tyrone, and Derry, also known as Londonderry).

Civil Registration District. The poor law union also served as the civil registration district. The following sources will help you determine the district that your townland or parish belonged to. Several districts are in a county. The district may or may not have the same name as the place your ancestor lived.
- *A New Genealogical Atlas of Ireland*, 2nd edition, by Brian Mitchell (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2002)
- *Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns of Ireland* by Alexander Thom (FHL microfilm 476999 item 2; fiche 6020345-53). This is the 1871 edition. This index also exists for 1851 (not on microfilm) and 1901 (FHL film 865092). On-line at www.seanruad.com.

CIVIL REGISTRATION

Civil registration of all births, Catholic marriages, and all deaths began on January 1, 1864, in Ireland. Registration of non-Catholic marriages began on April 1, 1845. Registration of all marriages began in 1864. Civil registration was a system where people were to report births, marriages or deaths to the government. One huge advantage is that once civil registration began, there is one index to vital events for all of Ireland. The Family History Library has:
- Indexes for all of Ireland from the beginning of Civil Registration to 1958.
- Birth registers for all of Ireland from 1864-March quarter 1881, 1900-1913; Republic of Ireland 1930-1955; Northern Ireland 1922-1959.
- Pre-1871 marriage and death registers for all of Ireland; marriage and death registers for Northern Ireland 1922-1959.

These are in the FHLC under the heading **IRELAND—CIVIL REGISTRATION**. You can order the certificates for years that we don't have from the Office of the Registrar General for the Republic, www.groireland.ie or from the General Register Office for Northern Ireland, www.groni.gov.uk.

Following is a summary of what information each type of certificate will provide:

Birth
The date and place of birth (in large cities it will usually state a street address), child's name, gender, father's name and occupation, mother's name and maiden name, and the informant.

Marriage
The date and place of marriage (pay attention to what religion), bride and groom's name, occupation, residence at the time of marriage, and whether single or widowed, the name and occupation of the fathers of both the bride and groom, the signatures of the bride and groom and two witnesses.

Death
The date and place of death, name, gender, cause of death, occupation and marital status. In the case of women or children, their "occupation" will often show the husband or father's name.

CIVIL REGISTRATION INDEXES

Recommended Search Order:
1. International Genealogical Index (especially for early years) www.familysearch.org
2. Free indexes at FamilySearch Record Search http://pilot.familysearch.org
3. British Vital Records Index
    - May be available at pilot.familysearch.org soon
    - On CD-ROM at your local family history center or by ordering at www.familysearch.org
4. Indexes and transcriptions for some counties available at www.brsgenealogy.com (index is free; transcriptions are €5 each record)

Searching Tips
- Never trust the birth date. One-in-three parents lied about a child's birth date in order to avoid paying a late registration fee. Baptism dates may pre-date the birth date!
- Mc and O' may be dropped off a surname. Search with and without these prefixes, and also try interchanging them.
- It is estimated that about 15% of events, particularly births, were not registered in the early years. So your ancestor may not be listed.
- Births for 1864-1876 and marriages for 1845-1870 are indexed in the International Genealogical Index or the British Isles Vital Records Index, but are not complete.
- Search tips for http://pilot.familysearch.org:
    o If you want to narrow your search by using the registration district, you must choose the option **exact, close & partial matches.** Otherwise the search will not work.
    o If you don't know the registration district, then the search can be narrowed by using the county.
    o When you enter a place for your search, sometimes there is more than one spelling for the same place, and you will get different results for a search on each place. If you enter a place and do not find the person, try a different spelling for the place. For example, if you enter "**Leix**," then the drop down window will give you other spellings for this county, such as "**Laois"** and "**Laoighis**." You may need to try all of these spellings for this county.
    o To search again, choose **Refine search**. If you choose New search, you will return to the home page and have to go to the Ireland Civil Records search page again.
    o The search engine is not picking up all of the name variants. For example, if you search on "**Hanora**," then you get a different set of results than if you searched on "**Honora**." Thus, you should manually try other name variants if you do not find the person you are looking for.

Finding Marriages in Civil Registration
- If you know their children's birth dates, estimate their marriage date as 1-2 years before the birth date of the oldest child.
- A bride and groom are on the same page of a marriage register, therefore will have matching index entries.
- Search for the least common name first.
- Then search for a matching entry of the other spouse's name.

FINDING THE ACTUAL CIVIL REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

Check the FHLC by doing a Place search of the FHLC under **"Ireland"**, then select the subject "**Civil Registration"** and then either **deaths**, **"marriages"**, or **"quarterly returns of births"** to see if the FHL has a microfilm copy of the certificate in the year you desire.
- If you found your ancestor in the IGI as an extracted record and there is a number before the place name and there is a source film, simply order the film, and turn to the number found before the place name—it is the page number.
- If you find your ancestor in the IGI as an extracted record but there is no page number or source film, use indexes at http://pilot.familysearch.org to obtain the volume and page number. Then use the FHLC to obtain the film number for that volume and year

If the FHL does not have a microfilm copy, you can order the certificate from Ireland from either www.groireland.ie for all of Ireland before 1922 or the Republic of Ireland beginning in 1922 to the present, or www.www.groni.gov.uk for Northern Ireland.

For more help go to https://wiki.familysearch.org and search for **"Ireland Civil Registration."**