Catholic Church Records – Ireland

Parish Registers for 1086 parishes have been filmed by the National Library of Ireland and are available online. This presentation is about Catholic Records and the internet sites where the user can access them.

Records Timeline. Parish records are the earliest source of family information for the Irish people. For the vast majority of the people who lived in the 18th and 19th century they provide the only record of their existence. Civil registration did not start till 1864.

Typically, Catholic records in rural areas do not start till about 1820. Records in some western parishes in Ireland do not start until about 1850. There are a few records in eastern coastal cities that start in the 1600s, they are however, rare exceptions.

Roots Ireland

To access, Roots Ireland enter RootsIreland.ie in the search bar. For our *first case study* we will search for the baptism of *Patrick Smith*, born about 1853, in County Cavan. We will use Roots Ireland for the search.

The result of our search is Patrick Smyth baptized 12 February 1853 in Ballymachugh Parish and his parents are James Smyth and Bridget Smith. To *view a microfilm image of the parish register*, click on the bar at the bottom of the page. These images are from the National Library of Ireland which has filmed 1086 parishes records. On the National Library of Ireland site *enter* the name of the parish and *select* the appropriate set of records. Next *enter* the event, year, and month and *click* on apply. The search is not exact but will be in the neighborhood.

The image is notable for two reasons: first, is the use of Latin given names for Patrick, James, and Bridget, and second, is the obvious transcription error for Bridget Smyth instead of Smith. The use of Latin given names in church records was common in Ireland.

The **strength** of Roots Ireland is the premier site of Irish parish records. It has a flexible and powerful interface. Roots Ireland anglicizes given names. It provides images from the National Library of Ireland. Its transcriptions are from the original records not from film images. It has two powerful features. 1) It allows searches for children using the parents name and 2) it permits searches for baptisms and marriages by parish or townland.

The **limitations** of Roots Ireland are 1) limited coverage in County Cork, County Kerry, the city of Dublin and County Fermanagh, 2) its link to the National Library of Ireland is inferior to its competitors, and 3) it is a subscription site and is expensive.

For our s*econd case study*, search for children born to a given set of parents by searching for the children of Joseph Curry and Mary Nolan in County Longford. On the search form *enter* baptisms, the parents name, and the county. The result for this couple was three children. *Clicking* on a child's name will show the baptism details.

Our **third case study** is for a surname search by parish is for the Griffin family from Moycullen Parish in County Galway. On the search screen select Search by County. Next click on the County. Select either baptisms or marriages and search. Further details are available by clicking on a name.

Ancestry and Findmypast

Ancestry and Findmypast formed a partnership to transcribe and index the digitized records held by the National Library of Ireland. Ancestry and Findmypast have coverage of 1086 parishes. Access to these sites is free at Family History Libraries. The limitation of these sites is they do not anglicize the Latin names. This may require two searches one with a Latin name and the other with the English equivalent. Some individuals claim that transcriptions from film are inferior to those from original records.

Choose **Ancestry** for this case study**.** To access records in Ancestry, *click on the Search command* at the top of the Ancestry home page. A menu will appear- *click on Card Catalog*. *Next* enter the keywords – Irish Catholic records and *click on search*. One of the options which appears is Ireland Catholic Parish Registers. *Click on this option* which has 25+ million records. *Enter* Patrick Lorden, 1845 for the baptismal year and County Cork. The results show a baptism 24 May 1845, in Dunmanway Parish in County Cork. The parents are Brian and Ellen Lordan.

Next, we will demonstrate **Findmpast**. Our case study is Hugh Kelly married in 1836 to Mary in County Kildare. On the Findmypast home page *click* on birth, marriage, and death records. On the next page *enter* Hugh Kelly, marriage year 1836, Ireland, and County Kildare. *Click* on view results.

Click on the left side of the icon to the right to see the transcription of the record. This reveals that Hugh Kelly married May Cribbin, 12 May 1836 in Allen and Milltown in County Cork. *Click* on the icon at the top to display the parish register image.

National Library of Ireland

Next, we will do a search on the National Library of Ireland site. Our case study is Catherine Carty, born September 1821, in Killucan Parish in County Westmeath.

On the home page of the National Library of Ireland *enter* the parish name – Killucan. *Note* the map of parish boundaries and the date of the first ordinances. *Enter* the event – Baptism, year - 1821, and the month – September. Next *click* on apply.

The parish register image will require some search time. The image reveals her parents as John Carty and Catherine Gaffney.

The National Library of Ireland site **strengths** are that it 1) provides maps of parish boundaries and adjacent parishes, 2) gives alternative names of parishes, 3) shows when records start and where gaps exist, 4) covers 1086 parishes and provides images for Roots Ireland, Ancestry, Findmypast, and Irish Genealogy and 5) costs nothing—it is free.

The National Library of Ireland **limitations** are that it 1) consists of unindexed digitized records, 2) searches may be time consuming, and 3) most parish records terminate in 1880 or 1881.

Irish Genealogy

Next, we will illustrate Irish Genealogy. This site is primarily a civil registration site but has church records that are missing in Roots Ireland. Google - Irish Genealogy. On the home screen, *click* on Church Records. Typically, this site requires assurance that you are not a robot before it allows you to enter data.

Our **case study** is Timothy Garvey who was married about 1833 in Dingle Parish in County Kerry. Enter the above on the Search the church records page and click on search. The result is that Timothy Garvey married Ellen Duhig on 30 November in Dingle.

The **advantage** of this site is that it is free, and it has church records for County Kerry, County Cork, and the City of Dublin. The **disadvantages** of this site are a less flexible input interface and limited geographical coverage.

John Grenham

Finally, we come to John Grenham's site. Google - John Grenham and his home screen is Irish Ancestors. *Enter* a surname of interest and the site will display a map of households in Ireland of that surname*. Click* on either Roman Catholic Baptisms or Marriages. *Next click* on a parish name. The site will display the baptisms or marriages for that parish. The results displayed are on a Findmypast screen. A transcript and image of individuals can be obtained as illustrated in the Findmypast discussion.

The **strength** of John Grenham is it is a powerful search tool for Catholic Baptisms and Marriages. Its **limitation** is that it is a subscription site although it is free for limited use.