



Ten Step Guide to Researching your

# Donegal Ancestry

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## Using the guide

The purpose of this booklet is to provide a simple step by step guide for those who wish to research their ancestry in Donegal in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. It concentrates on sources available both **locally** and on the **internet**, with some reference to sources available nationally. **It makes significant use of the internet** so, because web page addresses sometimes change, it may occasionally be necessary to go to the website's home page and find a particular page. The main website for any page is the first group of letters after **http://** and frequently ends with **.com**, **.org**, **.ie** or **.uk**. Where Tinyurls have been used to shorten overly long web addresses, the name of the website will not be given and it may be necessary to put some key words into the Google search engine in order to find the site.

The information contained herein is equally valid and applicable to all creeds and denominations but only the three main churches are covered specifically, viz: Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian.

The guide assumes that you have already talked to the more senior members of your family, who will have oral or indeed written information, and that this has concentrated your research in Donegal.

The guide is laid out in the order you might consider conducting the research, which in turn is governed by the availability of sources. However, your research will also be governed by whether you are in Donegal and can easily visit local repositories or whether you will be dependant on the internet, writing to and emailing local and national archives in Belfast and Dublin and visiting your own local Family History Centre. **Much of the research described here can now be done on the internet.**

Much of what is contained in this guide is equally relevant to any other county in Ireland.

This is a basic guide to Family History research in Donegal. It is what you might realistically expect to achieve during a week's visit to the county, if you make preparations in advance of your visit. It does NOT cover the much more laborious, time consuming and difficult business of researching the many documents available in the national archives in Belfast and Dublin.

Family History Centres (FHCs) are Mormon (Church of Latter Day Saints or LDS) run local repositories of records. They are an essential resource both for people from Donegal and also for those living elsewhere. The Mormons have millions of records on microfilm, which are free but for postage. For people in Donegal, the nearest Family History Centre is the one at the [Mormon Church on the Racecourse Road in Derry City](#). The telephone number is 028 7135 0179 (0044 7135 0179 from outside the United Kingdom) and you should ring in advance to book the use of the microfilm reader. The centre is open from 10am to 1pm, Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 7pm to 9pm on Thursday. It has a huge stock of films and they are all are free to view.

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## These films include:

	Index	Records
Civil Births	1864 - 1958	1864 - 1881
Civil Marriages	1845/64 - 1958	1845 - 1870
Civil Deaths	1864 - 1958	1864 - 1870
Index to Raphoe Diocesan marriages		
Muster Rolls	17th century	
Protestant Householders Index	1766	
Flax Growers Lists	1796	
Tithe Applotment Books		1828 - 1834
Griffiths Primary Valuation		1848 - 1858
OAP/ Census Records		1841 and 1851
1901 Census		1901



Many more can be ordered from Salt Lake City for a few pounds.  
You will find your nearest Family History Centre at:

<http://tinyurl.com/4po5>

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To conduct successful research in Ireland, you really need to know your ancestor's name, an approximate date of emigration, and preferably the townland or at least the parish where she or he lived. Earlier than the middle of the Nineteenth century and it becomes considerably more difficult because the main record, the Griffiths Valuation, was only produced in the 1850s.

A townland is the smallest administrative unit in Ireland; it is not a town (urban area) though it may contain one or more clusters of houses, sometimes known as clachans; it is still the basis of addresses in the Republic of Ireland.

If you do not know the townland, you can try to “triangulate” using two or three ancestors' names (see page 28).

Remember, many people in Nineteenth century Donegal could neither read nor write, so there was no “correct” spelling of a name. A McClements could just as easily be a McLamont or even a Clammond. It depended on how the clergyman, or the clerk, decided to write down the name. So, search for all permutations of a name.

Finally, you should try to do as much research as possible on the internet, not just into your particular family, but also into the resources which are available, where you will find them and what they will contain. There are many sites relevant to Donegal which you can use but the most comprehensive is the website created by Lindel Buckley of New Zealand. Packed full of original data, it is growing on a daily basis. Check it out at:  
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~donegal/>  
(or simply search for “Lindel Genealogy Donegal” using Google.)

**This genealogy booklet is on the front page of Lindel's website and the blue links are live = click and go.**  
<http://tinyurl.com/ckwzppd>

**It can also be found at Bob's excellent Donegal website:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/5h3k83>



## Step 1: The Griffiths (Primary) Valuation online index

This was a land survey published in Donegal in the mid 1850s and is often referred to as a census substitute. The reason we need a census substitute is that almost ALL of the censuses from the Nineteenth century were destroyed, either deliberately during World War One to create paper, or accidentally in the fire at the Four Courts in Dublin during the Civil War in Ireland in 1922.

The Griffiths Valuation only gives the Head of Household in each townland and not the spouse, children or assorted grannies, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends who may have lived there. Not much, but the best we have. An index of the names and townlands in this survey is online at several sites so, in seconds, you can begin to see if you have ancestors in Donegal.

**The full Griffiths Valuation can be viewed online at:**

<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>

**This web site has not only all the details of each household but also maps showing the locations of each house.**

It is essential to have the correct spelling of both the surnames and the townlands in order to search the Griffiths Valuation at the main website above. Fortunately, there is another website which lists everyone in the Griffiths Valuation by Surname and by Parish so you can find the correct spelling and also do faster searches using the indexes there:

<http://tinyurl.com/44brbwh>

It is also possible to view microfilms of the full Griffiths Valuation at [Letterkenny Central Library](#), but you will need to book a microfilm reader. Telephone: (00353) 74 9124950.

By combining the Griffiths Valuation maps with modern Ordnance Survey maps, it is possible to drive straight to the place where your ancestors lived in the Nineteenth Century.



The full Griffiths Valuation will tell you how much land, if any, the Head of Household leased, rented or owned, the value of any land or buildings, and therefore give some indication of how wealthy she or he may have been (see page 10 for an example).



FEDDYGLASS.  
(Ord. S. 62 & 70.)

1	a	Andrew Smyth, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	49 1 35	30 15 0	3 0 0	33 15 0
-	b	Alexander Lowry, . . .	Andrew Smyth, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 0 20	0 2 0	0 13 0	0 15 0
2	A, a, n	Rev. John Leekie, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	54 1 38	39 0 0	9 0 0	48 0 0
-	λ b	Hugh Tinny, . . .	Rev. John Leekie, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 0 20	0 2 0	0 13 0	0 15 0
-	c	Thomas M'Ginly, . . .	Same, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 0 20	0 2 0	0 8 0	0 10 0
3	a	Samuel Stewart, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	59 3 5	47 0 0	2 10 0	49 10 0
-	b	Edward Stewart, . . .	Samuel Stewart, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
-	c	Edward Coyle, . . .	Same, . . .	House and garden, . . .	0 0 20	0 2 0	0 8 0	0 10 0
-	d	Patrick Killenny, . . .	Same, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 5 0	0 5 0
4	A	} Moses M'Crea, . . .	} Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	} House, offices, & land, . . .	10 3 25	6 0 0	—	} 56 10 0
-	B				10 3 5	5 10 0	—	
-	C				69 0 10	41 0 0	4 0 0	
-	B a	Robert Porter, . . .	Moses M'Crea, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
-	b	Robert Gillespie, . . .	Same, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
5		Thomas Rodan, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, office, and land, . . .	8 0 10	4 0 0	1 0 0	5 0 0
6	a	George Lowry, . . .	Same, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	79 3 20	38 0 0	4 0 0	42 0 0
-	b	Robert Leech, . . .	George Lowry, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 10 0	0 10 0
-	c	Margaret Martin, . . .	Same, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 5 0	0 5 0
7		Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	In fee, . . .	Plantation, . . .	42 3 25	13 0 0	—	13 0 0
Total, . . .					385 3 13	224 13 0	28 2 0	252 15 0

DRUMFAD.  
(Ord. S. 62 & 70.)

1	a	Hugh Lowry, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	55 1 15	37 0 0	2 0 0	39 0 0
-	b	Anne Smith, . . .	Hugh Lowry, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 5 0	0 5 0
2		Thomas Logan, . . .	Marquis of Abercorn, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	54 2 15	26 10 0	1 10 0	28 0 0
3	a	Patrick M'Menamin, . . .	Same, . . .	House, offices, and land, . . .	54 1 14	30 0 0	1 10 0	31 10 0
-	b	Neal Boyle, . . .	Patrick M'Menamin, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 5 0	0 5 0
-	c	Daniel Donnell, . . .	Same, . . .	House, . . .	—	—	0 5 0	0 5 0
Total, . . .					164 1 4	93 10 0	5 15 0	99 5 0



## Step 2: Online Maps of Donegal parishes and their townlands

The main benefit of these maps is that, when used in conjunction with the online Griffiths Valuation index, you should be able to identify the townlands adjacent to or near to the one where you think your ancestors originated. This is important because your ancestors might have moved back and forth between nearby townlands as they changed jobs, or married people who came from nearby townlands. So, the people in the townland next door, or a few townlands away, could well be your family or relatives of your family by marriage.

Bob Hilchey has produced some excellent online maps of townlands and parishes in Donegal and they can be found at:

<http://tinyurl.com/6cc52j>

## Step 3: The 1901 and 1911 censuses

Useful for finding ancestors who did not leave Donegal in the Nineteenth century, or who left the area in the 20th century or for finding the descendants of siblings and other relations of those left behind when your folks did emigrate. They would be your “cousins”.

The 1901 Census will give more data than almost any other source. As well as the name of the Head of Household, it will give other family members, ages, where born, religion, marital status, literacy and county or country of birth.

The 1911 census has even more data including how long a couple had been married, how many children a woman had and how many of them were still alive. Remember to tick the box, “Show all information”.

There are two pages of particular interest in each census. The top sheet, called Form B1, gives details of who lived in every house in the townland, who owned the houses and what sort of houses they were. Form A gives details of the inhabitants of each house.

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CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

FORM B. 1. HOUSE AND BUILDING RETURN.

12 / 1

Parliamentary Division, East Wick Poor Law Union, Wick District Electoral Division, Wick Urban Sanitary District, Wick Street, Wick Parish, Wick Township.

Name & Address of Owner or Person in Charge of Premises, or of the person who has taken or is taking possession of the premises, or of the person who has taken or is taking possession of the premises, or of the person who has taken or is taking possession of the premises.

No.	NAME OF HOUSE OR BUILDING	NAME OF OWNER OR PERSON IN CHARGE OF PREMISES, OR OF THE PERSON WHO HAS TAKEN OR IS TAKING POSSESSION OF THE PREMISES	PARTICULARS OF INHABITED HOUSES					No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as Dwelling	No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as Shop, Warehouse, or Store	No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as Workshop, Factory, or Mill	No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as Public House, Tavern, or Refreshment Room	No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as Stables, or other Buildings	No. of Rooms or Parts of Rooms used as other Buildings				
			Walls	Floors	Roofs	Windows	Doors										
1	Rail Station	3	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
10	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
11	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	do	do	yes	1	1	3	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Form B. 1. - House and Building Return. See Form B. 1. - House and Building Return. See Form B. 1. - House and Building Return. See Form B. 1. - House and Building Return.



Do not expect all details in these censuses to be totally accurate.

**Letterkenny Central Library** has both of these censuses on microfilm – book up the reader as there is only one - Tel No is 00353 74 9124950 or 00353 74 9124950 from outside the Republic of Ireland.

**The 1911 census is also now available online in full at:**

<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/>

This database, like the one for the Griffiths Valuation, requires that you always enter the correct spelling for both surnames and townlands. This means trying various spellings for each or you can also try entering another townland close by that is easier to spell, finding the DED and then using that along with the surname to find the correct spelling of the townland, which may actually change between one census and the next.

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The house numbers have no significance and will also change.

And do not expect people to be honest about their ages! The 1911 Census is usually more accurate as the Old Age Pension was introduced in 1909 and people had to be 70 so there was an incentive to be honest about your age!



# CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.

Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.  
FORM A.

No. 99 Form B. 5

RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.

NAME AND BIRTHDAY	RELATION to Head of Family.	RESIDENCE	EDUCATION.	AGE (per Census)		RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARITALS.	WORKER ROOM.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If born outland? (Deny only; language of birth; or Census.)
				Age Male.	Age Female.					
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>41</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		
<i>John J. O'Sullivan</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Frederickstown</i>	<i>Read &amp; write</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>Do not speak</i>		

I solemnly certify, as required by the Act 10 Edw. VII. and 1 Geo. V. cap. 11, that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.

*John J. O'Sullivan* Speaker of Head of Family



## Step 4: The Tithe Applotment Books

This was an earlier land survey carried out between 1827 and 1835, this time in order to see who should pay tithes (taxes) to the Established Church, which was the Church of Ireland (Anglican).

It only shows Heads of Household in each townland and unfortunately, it does not include all of them. Some land was excepted from paying tithes. So you should not assume that simply because your ancestors are not mentioned, they did not live here.

You should also be aware that the surveyors who drew up the Tithe Applotment Books did not use the same type of acre as those who drew up the Griffiths Valuation. This means that the plots of land held by a family, from one survey to the next, are not directly comparable.

These records are available on microfilm at [Letterkenny Central Library](#), which is why it is included this early in the research. If you cannot visit Letterkenny Library, an index of names in the Donegal Tithe Applotment Books is available at your local Family History Centre (British Film 919003):

<http://tinyurl.com/3bgywk>

and also the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin:

<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/genealogy/valuation.html>

Many parishes have also been transcribed to Lindel's website:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~donegal/>

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32	<i>Thronenkamp</i>	<i>Das Leben</i>	1899	214	806.79
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## Step 5: Church Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths

These are usually available at **local churches** but most clergymen these days are overworked and underpaid, so book in advance by phone; be very polite; expect to have only restricted access in some cases by those clergymen who consider the records to be very private, notwithstanding the fact that you can photocopy any of them at the Public Records Office in Belfast; and expect to contribute to the “church roof fund”.

The only other source is PRONI in Belfast although some of the Catholic records are held in the National Library of Ireland in Dublin: <http://www.nli.ie/en/parish-register.aspx>

Most Presbyterian churches began keeping records circa 1830; Roman Catholic churches usually even later; and Church of Ireland churches perhaps a couple of decades earlier. A list of the records available at churches or in Belfast or Dublin is given below. There may well be gaps however even after the starting dates given:

18



For ALL Protestant churches, not just Church of Ireland as suggested:

<http://www.dun-na-ngall.com/churchoi.html>

And for Catholic churches:

<http://tinyurl.com/3gu67fd>

**Many church records are also now online (see page 21).**

Early Church of Ireland registers often include Presbyterian and Catholic baptismal and marriage records (and indeed, Methodist, Baptist and the smaller denominations). This is because, in the first half of the Nineteenth century, only the Church of Ireland was permitted by law to register any baptisms, marriages or burials. There are virtually NO death or burial registers (Church of Ireland may be the exception) in Donegal; most registers will be baptisms and about half of the churches will have a small number of marriages. Some churches may also have Communicants Roll Books and Vestry Minutes, both of which also have value to the family historian.

Not all new parents bothered to baptise officially at the church so, just because your folks are not there, does not mean they did not live in this area.

Some registers will only give dates of baptism, especially the early ones. Make sure you know whether you are recording a date of birth or a date of baptism as the latter can be anything from a few days to several years later than the former.

Church registers vary considerably in their value, depending on when they were done (earlier ones are less detailed), which religion they are and whether the clergyman was conscientious and neat in his handwriting! Their main use to the family historian is for the names of the fathers, and sometimes the mothers, of ancestors, as well as their addresses. Catholic baptismal registers usually do not have the parents but frequently have sponsors who may well be relations of the child.

Most **local churches** will also have graveyards and some useful information can be gathered from the headstones. Very few of these will be much older than about 1850 and the older ones will usually be in Church of Ireland graveyards. As with written records however, many Church of Ireland graveyards will also have burials of people belonging to other denominations.



## Step 6: Civil Records of Births, Marriages and Deaths

Civil registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths only began in 1864 (except for Protestant marriages which started in 1845). They end in 1933 for Family History Centres.

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Indexes for all three (Births, Marriages and Deaths) and a limited set of the actual records are available in the [Family History Centre on the Racecourse Road in Londonderry](#). At other Family History Centres, you will have to order most of them from Salt Lake City. If you want to be sure of ordering the correct films, the reference numbers can be found at the LDS site:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/5so2f>

Copies of the actual birth, marriage and death certificates, from 1864 onwards (or 1845 for Protestant marriages), can be obtained from the [Civil Registration Office in Letterkenny](#), Tel: (00353) 74 9124576.

You can order them over the telephone and pay by credit card. The cost is ten euros per certificate.

The records are also available at six euros per certificate from The General Registry Office in Roscommon:

<http://www.groireland.ie>

Especially in the years just after registration became compulsory, many folks did not bother to comply with the law so yet again, missing ancestors does not mean they did not exist.

Births are useful for giving addresses, fathers' names, mothers' maiden names, and occasionally the person who registered the birth will be a family member other than the father or mother.

Marriages are very useful for addresses, occupations, fathers' names, sometimes age, status (single or widowed), fathers' occupations and witnesses again may be relatives.

Deaths are mostly useful for determining approximate Dates of Births by subtracting the age at death from the year of death. They also give addresses, the person "Present at Death", who is usually a very close relative, and the cause of death.

**The Mormons have now transcribed most of the indexes to the records as well as many church and civil records and they can be viewed online at:**

<https://familysearch.org/>

**A commercial website also has many church and civil records of birth/baptism, marriage and death online at:**

<http://www.rootsireland.ie/>

**where the cost is €2.50 per record.**

21





Uimh No. **CRD** 17126  
0115



Deimhnú báis ar na h-éisiúint de bhun an Acht um Chláru Sibhialta, 2004.  
**DEATH CERTIFICATE issued in pursuance of Civil Registration Act, 2004.**

Báicanna a Chláruadh i gCeantar Deaths Registered in the District of <u>Killygordan</u>		i gCeantar an Chláraitheora Maoriseachta do in the Superintendent Registrar's District of <u>Stranorlar</u>					i gContae in the Country of <u>Donegal</u>			
Uimh. No.	Dáta agus Ionad Báis Date and Place of Death	Ainm agus Sloinne Name and Surname	Genas Sex	Staid Condition	Aos an La Breithe is Déanaí Age last Birthday	Céim, Gairm nó Sli Bheatha Rank, Profession or Occupation	Cúis Báis Dheimhneithe agus Fad Tinnis Certified Cause of Death and Duration of Illness	Síniú, Cáilocht agus Ionad Cónaithe an Fhaisnéiseora Signature, Qualification and Residence of Informant	An Dáta a Chláruadh When Registered	Síniú an Chláraitheora Signature of Registrar
(1)	(2)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
417	March Eighth 1870  Sallywood	Patrick Bradley	m	married	88 years	Farmer	Old Age. Eighteen years. Not certified.	John Bradley Present at death Sallywood	May Twenty Seventh 1870	James Love Registrar  Cláraitheoir Registrar

Deimhneáir gur thionsóidh na sonraí seo ó chlárleabhar coinnithe faoi alt 13 den Acht um Chláru Sibhialta, 2004.

Certified to be compiled from a register maintained under section 13 of the Civil Registration Act, 2004.

this Twenty Ninth day of January 2008

Ath-Scríofa  
Copied P. Blackburn

Scrúdaithe  
Examined P. Blackburn

Is cion trom é an teastas seo a athrú nó é a úsáid tar éis a athraithe

**TO ALTER THIS DOCUMENT OR TO UTTER IT SO ALTERED IS A SERIOUS OFFENCE**



## Step 7: Griffiths Valuation Revision Books

These are updates to the Griffiths Valuation and they show changes to who held the property after the initial valuation in the 1850s up to circa 1930.

They can be ordered from Family History Centres:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2sfcnc>

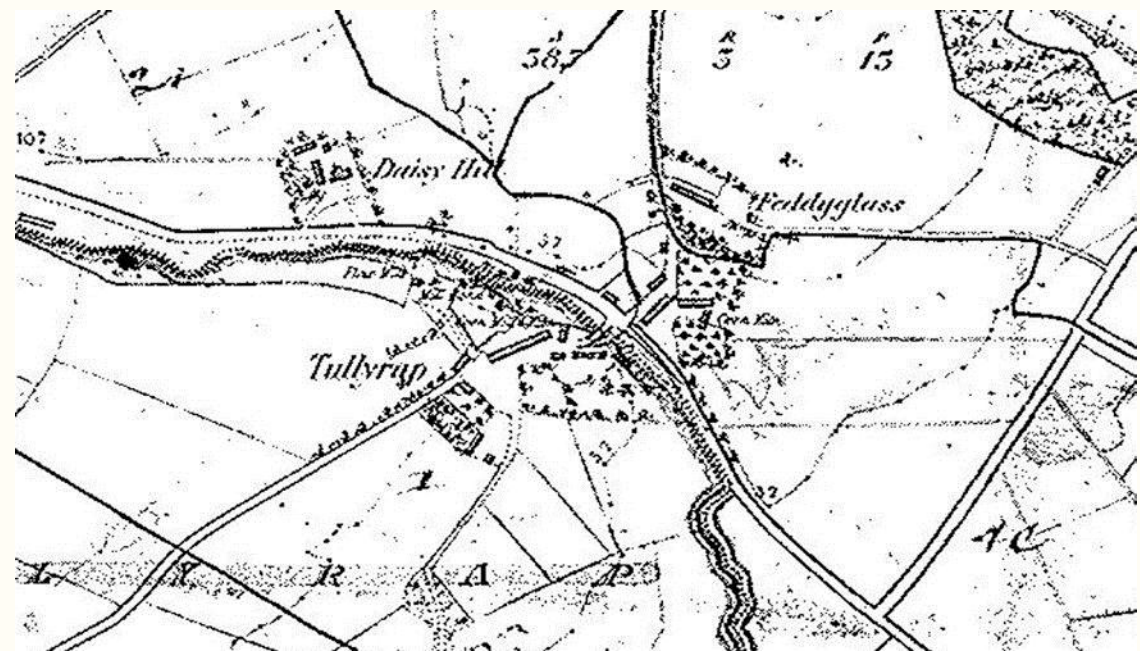
They are also available in PRONI in Belfast and at the Valuation Office in Dublin.

These records are very useful for showing younger family members who only became Heads of Households after mid 1850s, or for people who moved into the area after the Griffiths Valuation, or indeed who may have left the area or died.

Dates are very unreliable as they were only recorded when an enumerator noticed that the tenancy had changed. This means an elderly person who went to live with a relative can disappear from the books long before he or she died. Conversely, a deceased person may be shown still in residence long after death!

These books are written up in 5 or 6 volumes, each covering ten to fifteen years, and numbered back to front. For example, Book 5 will cover the 1850s/60s, while Book 1 will contain the most recent amendments.

The books are not easy to interpret on microfilm as coloured ink was used to show the changes and the dates when the changes were made. You will be reduced to comparing handwriting and the weight of pen strokes!



## Step 8: House and Field Books

Precursors of the Griffiths Valuation, these were produced between the late 1820s and the 1850s and were not usually published.

Like the Griffiths Valuation Revision Books, they show changes in landholders and may therefore be the only source of someone who emigrated before the Griffiths Valuation was published and Church or Civil Records began.

The House Books, especially the rough drafts, are the most useful as they list buildings whereas Field Books list land. Some do not list houses worth less than £5.

Available at Family History Centres, PRONI in Belfast and at the Valuation Office in Dublin.

Some of the original books are held by the [Donegal County Archive Service at the Three Rivers Centre in Lifford](#), Tel: (00353) 74 9172490. You should ring ahead to see what is available and to book an appointment.





## Step 9: Wills

**26** Many Wills were destroyed in the fire at the Four Courts in Dublin. Some do however remain in both the Public Records Office in Belfast and the National Archives in Dublin. There are also indexes to many of the older wills and from 1858 there are Calendars of Wills. These contain brief transcripts of the wills and include the name and address of the deceased person, where and when he or she died, the value of the estate, the place of Probate and the name and address of the person to whom probate was granted, including the relationship of that person to the deceased, if there was one.

Remember that wills and Calendars of Wills will be catalogued by the date of probate, not the date of death.

These Calendars of Wills, along with the wills themselves from 1900, are held in the **Probate Office in Bishop Street in Derry**, Tel: (0044) 028 7136 3448. Telephone in advance as a ladder may be needed!

The calendars and the wills are also available at the Public Record Office in Belfast and the calendars and **many of the wills can now be viewed online at the PRONI website:**

<http://tinyurl.com/c4zqrm4>

## Step 10: Old Age Pension/Census Returns

In 1909 the Old Age Pension was introduced in Ireland but elderly people had to prove that they were over 70 in order to claim it. Since birth certificates had not been introduced until 1864, this in effect meant applying to the authorities in Dublin, who held the 1841 and 1851 censuses, and asking if your name was recorded therein. These letters of application survived after the two censuses were destroyed and are our only record of what was in them. They can prove of immense value in locating your ancestors.

The letters are stored in large binders in the Public Records Office in Belfast. They were filmed by the Church of Latter Day Saints and so are available through your local Family History Centre. The only problem is that the letters are not very well catalogued and Donegal applications will be found in several volumes mixed in with other counties. It is a matter of trawling through the volumes in Belfast, or the microfilms in your FHC:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/2jev2>

Remember, this guide only covers the relatively straightforward sources. When you have done all of this it will be time to tackle the really serious business of Estate Papers and Land Registry Deeds!



## Triangulating

If you do not know the townland where your ancestors lived, the best way to make progress is to try to locate your ancestors using the confluence of two or more surnames. Most poor folks in the Nineteenth Century, and even many wealthier ones, did not travel far to marry and therefore they should generally be found living close to each other.

You need to check the Griffiths Valuation for all of the names you have and see which parish or group or townlands contains all or most of the surnames you are researching. This works better if you are using at least one unusual name. Most importantly, it can be done online in advance of any visit using the indexes to the Griffiths Valuation given on Page 8 above and the map website mentioned on page 11.



## Hints and Tips

Record every detail of relevant records. If possible, use a good digital camera so that you can examine the records again and again in the light of further evidence. Most Family History Centres will allow this but not all public records offices or churches are so amenable.

Organise your raw material, even if only into Land Records, Birth, Marriage and Deaths Records, and Other Records, so that you can easily locate data at a later date.

Visit the Lists for Donegal where people will help with your research:  
<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/intl/IRL/DONEGALEIRE.html>  
and  
<http://lists.rootsweb.ancestry.com/index/intl/IRL/IRL-CO-DONEGAL.html>

Use a Family Tree Programme to create diagrams, which act as both repositories of the data you have collected and also representations of the familial links between your ancestors. Family Tree Maker is best for reports but GenoPro is best by far for trees (and the trial version is free). Both store data efficiently.

<http://www.genopro.com> and <http://www.familytreemaker.com>

Whether you use a tree or some other system, it is essential that you note down the source of every piece of information you find. You will always need to know where you found a date, fact, person or event if you want to determine how reliable that information is in the light of contradictory evidence which you may find as your research progresses. Remember those people who had managed to lose 10 or more years off their age for the 1901 census. A church birth record will be a much more reliable guide to the true date of birth!

**And finally, do have fun. Genealogy is only a hobby, even if an addictive one!**

**And enjoy Donegal and all it has to offer.**



## Useful Addresses

### **Central Library**

Oliver Plunkett Road  
Letterkenny  
Co Donegal  
Tel: +353 74 9124950

### **Civil Registration Office**

Tirconnell House  
St Conals Hospital  
Letterkenny  
Co. Donegal  
Tel: +353 74 9124576

### **The Archive Service**

Donegal County Council  
Three Rivers Centre  
Lifford  
Co. Donegal  
Tel: +353 74 9172490

### **Family History Centre**

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints  
Racecourse Road  
Londonderry  
BT48 7RE  
Tel: +44 48 7135 0179

### **Probate Office**

Courthouse  
Bishop Street  
Londonderry  
BT48 6PY  
Tel: +4448 7136 3448



## Travelling to Donegal

Donegal Airport,

City of Derry Airport

<http://www.cityofderryairport.com>

Belfast City Airport

<http://www.belfastcityairport.com>

C.I.E , Irish Rail and Bus Network

<http://www.cie.ie>

### Visit:

Monreagh Heritage Centre

<http://monreaghulsterscotscentre.town.ie/>

Letterkenny Museum

<http://www.heritageisland.com/attractions/donegal-county-museum/>

Doagh Famine Village

<http://www.doaghfaminevillage.com/>

# O'Donnell, Stewart, Swe Bd, Timm, Colman Peopl, Hamilton, Ly



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Website: <http://westulstergenealogy.com/>