Irish Church Records

This presentation is about Irish Church Records.

Background. There is some review of the material from the previous presentation on Catholic Church Records in Ireland. Historically Ireland was overwhelmingly Catholic. Northern Ireland had significant Presbyterian congregations and some Protestant churches including Methodist and Baptist units.

The Church of Ireland was scattered throughout Ireland but was concentrated in coastal cities like Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork. About half of their records were destroyed in the Four Courts Fire in 1922.

Irish Church Records on the Web. Irish Church web sites are Roots Ireland, Ancestry, Findmypast, Irish Genealogy, John Grenham, and The National Library of Ireland. Roots Ireland and Irish Genealogy have some Church of Ireland records. The balance of these sites are exclusively Catholic records.

The National Library of Ireland has microfilm images for 1086 parishes. These images can be searched but usually the search is more time consuming since they are not indexed. The site is extremely useful for the parish maps, information about when the records begin, and alternative names for the parish. It is free.

The Four Courts Fire in 1922 destroyed almost half of the Church of Ireland records. As indicated previously some of these records are available from Roots Ireland and Irish Genealogy. The great majority of the records which remain are available from the Representative Church Body in Dublin or PRONI in Belfast.

The Representative Church Body has published a comprehensive list which shows which records were destroyed, which records were destroyed but copies of which were subsequently found, records in local custody, records available at PRONI in Belfast, and records available at the Representative Church Body in Belfast.

This list is available by googling – The List of Church of Ireland Parish Registers. It is color coded.

Finally, we deal with the records available from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI). Most of these records are for the six counties of Northern Ireland and the three border counties of Cavan, Monaghan, and Donegal. There are also records for the counties of Leitrim and Louth. These records are available at PRONI in Belfast on film. These records include Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, and other Protestant records. With the exception of Catholic records Family Search has very few of these records, however a few printed records are available. A list of these records can be obtained by the user by googling – PRONI Guide to Church Records.

Methodist records are available throughout Ireland. When searching Protestant records other than Church of Ireland one should keep in mind that these congregations had no boundaries and one attended where they felt most comfortable.

Case Studies.

Case Study 1. We begin our presentation of a case study of Mary Lyden, daughter of Bartholomew, born in 1874 in County Galway. The results show Mary was baptized 1 February 1874 in Moycullen Parish and her mother was Julia Connor.

As previously shown Roots Ireland uses images from the National Library of Ireland. The user can obtain these images by entering the event, year and month and clicking on- apply.

The **advantages** of Roots Ireland are that it includes some Church of Ireland records, has flexible search alternatives, includes some post 1880 records, and anglicizes Latin given names. It is however expensive and has limited coverage of a few counties.

Ancestry and Findmypast entered a partnership which transcribed and indexed 1086 parishes of microfilmed records held by the National Library of Ireland.

To access these records in Ancestry, access the card catalog and enter the key words – Ireland Catholic Records, then click on search. Select Irish Catholic Parish Registers. Note the number of records.

Case Study 2. Our case study is Bridget Kelly, born in 1837, in County Meath. The result shows she was baptized 6 June 1837, in Oldcastle Parish in County Meath. Her father was Cornelius and her mother was Mary Reilly.

Findmypast provides more convenient access to these records click on Birth, Marriage, and Death Records. Our case study is Hanora Murphy married in 1821 in Tipperary.

Enter her name, marriage year, Ireland, County Tipperary. Click on View 1 Result. Then click on the left side of the icon to the upper right. This displays the transcription. The transcription shows her marriage date as 14 January 1821, her spouse as Darby Darcy and the parish as Clonoulty. Clicking on an icon in the upper left shows the image of the parish register.

Findmypast and Ancestry use the same database. The **advantages** of these two sites are their coverage of 1086 parishes and free access at Family History Centers. These two sites have no non-Catholic records, the records terminate in 1880, and Latin given names are frequently used by parish priests and this complicates searches in Ancestry and Findmypast.

Irish Genealogy is primarily a Civil Registration site, but it has Catholic records for areas not covered by Roots Ireland principally County Kerry, western County Cork, and the City of Dublin. It also has Church of Ireland records for County Kerry, the City of Dublin and County Carlow.

Case Study 3. Our case study is a marriage of John Clare, in Dublin in 1830. We enter his name, location, and year. The results show a marriage to Jane Whitton on 24 July 1830 at St. George Parish in Dublin. The record contains – (COI), which indicates this is a Church of Ireland marriage.

Irish Genealogy has limited geographical coverage but has records for areas where Roots Ireland is limited and has Church of Ireland records for some areas. It is also a free site.

Case Study 4. John Grenham's site shows the distribution of a surname throughout Ireland. Our case is Griffin. Click on search and it has an option of displaying the baptisms or marriages by parish for this surname. We selected Moycullen Parish. Clicking on that parish shows the baptisms or marriages for that parish. John Grenham has partnered with Findmypast and the results are displayed in that format. One can view the transcription and the image as previously discussed for Findmypast.

John Grenham is a subscription site but is a powerful tool in researching Irish families.