



Kerry Library

A Guide to Family History Sources

Moyderwell, Tralee, Co. Kerry
Phone: (066) 7121200
E-mail: localhistory@kerrylibrary.ie
Postcode: V92 X092
Website: www.kerrylibrary.ie
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KerryLibrary>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/KerryLibrary>



Please note:

When compiling genealogy of Kerry families, it is wise to be aware that there are limits to the number of generations for which definitive information and records will exist.

The book *Finding Your Ancestors in Kerry* (Flyleaf Press, 2015) provides a detailed list of extant church records for the county.

Kerry Church Records

Baptism and marriage records for Catholic parishes in Kerry are available up to approximately 1900 on a free access basis on the Irish Genealogy portal (www.irishgenealogy.ie) and the surviving original registers for much of the 19th century can be browsed on the dedicated National Library of Ireland registers site (<https://registers.nli.ie/>).

Church of Ireland records are also accessible on the Irish Genealogy portal together with records of baptisms, marriages and burials (in Church of Ireland burial grounds) up to 1911.

Civil Registration

Civil Registration of Births/Marriage/Deaths became law in Ireland for the Church of Ireland in 1845 and for Roman Catholics in 1864. Note that there were occasions when these were not officially registered. The Irish Genealogy portal also includes these civil records, with closure periods governing records of birth (100 year closure rule), marriages (75 year rule) and deaths (50 year rule).

Other Genealogical sources available Irish Genealogy website

◆ **1901 & 1911 Census Returns**

These are the first surviving complete census returns for Ireland. The 1901 returns give details of Name, Relationship to Head of family, Religion, Education, Age, Sex, Profession, Marital Status, Place (County/Country) of Origin, Whether or not an Irish Speaker and if any Physical/Mental Disability. In the 1911 returns, the marital Status information was usefully broadened out to include *Completed years of marriage* and *Number of children born & still living*. This latter category can be very useful in determining why family members/numbers do not coincide from one census to the next, or with other known records. Under the 100 year closure rule, the 1926 census has not yet been released. There was no census in 1921 due to the War of Independence.

◆ **Irish Census Search Forms 1841-1851**

These forms were used as part of the process by which people were determined (under the Old Age Pension Act 1908) to be of state pension age. A simple search for Kerry-related forms results in 2,764 *hits* from throughout the county.



Roots Ireland (www.rootsireland.ie), **TimeLine** (www.timeline.ie) and **Family Search** (www.familysearch.org)

all provide useful advice as to where additional information can be accessed. Search fees apply.

The Valuation Office of Ireland

(www.valoff.ie/en/archive-research/genealogy/) also has a useful genealogical resource in the Valuation Revision Lists. While Griffith's Valuation represented the snapshot of mid-19th century Ireland, the Revision Lists periodically updated the information carried in that primary record. This has resulted in a full property history for each plot referred to in Griffith's from that earliest record to the present.



Non-Digital material available at Kerry Local History & Archives

O'Kief, Coshe Mang & Slieve Lougher Collection (OCM)

Published between 1952-71 by the Amite and Knocknagree Historical Fund in Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A., this is a 15-volume collection of transcripts taken from church registers, civil registration indexes, newspaper genealogical notices for Cork & Kerry, tombstone inscription lists and other genealogical items.

While much of this material is now available elsewhere, the OCM Collection still has value. For example, some of the tombstone listings that were compiled in the 1950s and 1960s contain information that was no longer readable when subsequent listings were compiled. Hard copies are available at Tralee, Killarney & Castleisland libraries.

Parish Records Transcripts

Printouts of some of the Kerry parish records transcriptions. These often include remarks about later events in the life of baptised children. For example, Tralee Catholic baptism records for the latter part of the 19th century will sometimes include reference to a subsequent marriage of the baptised child.

Kerry Family Histories

On occasions, people who have compiled family research will submit a copy of their research work to the Kerry Local History section and they are available for reference.

The INA also has a strong range of provincial newspapers from outside Kerry, many of which carry references to Kerry families around the country.

The Irish Times newspaper archive is not available on the NA but is available through the **Online Resources** tab on www.kerrylibrary.ie

Ask About Ireland:

www.askaboutireland.ie

A link to this resource can also be found on the **Online Resources** tab on the Kerry library website www.kerrylibrary.ie and includes material available elsewhere, but also includes access to the periodical site JSTOR and links to the Ordnance Survey Historical Maps site; Griffith's Valuation and several other local history resources.



Other Sites of Kerry Genealogical Interest

The **Kerry Burial Grounds** project provides a searchable means of locating where people are buried. Kerry County Council has been responsible for burial grounds provision for the county since 1899 and, while registers are not complete for the whole of the time since that date, there is a substantial record available to search for free at www.kerrylaburials.ie/en/Index.aspx

In addition, archaeological surveys have been conducted by Kerry County Council on a number of Kerry burial grounds, and the associated reports can be accessed at www.kerrycoco.ie/archaeologically-protected-graveyards/

National Folklore Collection

There is a substantial Kerry collection, both in relation to the main collection and the Schools' Manuscripts Collection, in the **National Folklore Collection Archives**. This material can be accessed at www.duchas.ie

◆ Griffith's Valuation

The Primary valuation (commonly referred to as Griffith's Valuation) was the first full-scale valuation and survey of property for the whole of Ireland. Overseen by Richard Griffith, they were compiled and published between **1847 - 1864**.

In addition to the published books and associated maps (which can also be viewed on the www.askaboutireland.ie website), the National Archives of Ireland provides free access to the surviving associated records used for compilation of the final Valuation. These include

- Field Books,
- House Books,
- Tenure Books and
- Quarto Books,

and are searchable at <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/search/vob/home.jsp>

◆ Street and trade directories

In them you may find the head(s) of the household in each house in the principal streets of the relevant city or town and a list of those involved in trades, professions and crafts. They include Slater's [1846] ; Guy's [1886 & 1893], Thom's for various years, etc.

◆ Tithe Applotment Books

Given that no census records survive for the pre-Famine period, the Tithe Applotment Books serve as a surrogate source for genealogical research. They were compiled between **1823 - 1837** to determine tithe payments for the upkeep of the Established church (i.e. the Church of Ireland). All agricultural land holdings of over one acre were subject to a tithe charge.

As a genealogical resource for Kerry, these have their limitations, including:

- On occasions, the tithe charge was carried by the landlord, which meant that the tenant farmer did not necessarily appear in the tithe books.
- It ignored cottiers and urban/village settings.
- It only dealt with the property holder, so that its value is limited to confirmation of a family presence.

The Tithe Applotment Books regularly included placenames that were not given in the slightly later Ordnance Survey and many of which are now obsolete.

◆ 1926/1927 Register of Electors

◆ Soldiers' Wills

The National Archives of Ireland holds over 9,000 wills of enlisted and non-commissioned officers who fought in either the Boer Wars (1899-1902) or World War I. This represents about 25% of all Irish casualties in these conflicts. Can be searched by soldier's name or service number.

◆ Calendars of Wills and Administrations, 1858-1920

Wills and testamentary records are of value to genealogists as evidence of the date of a person's death, family and property of a deceased person. A Calendar entry will give name, address, occupation and financial effects on death of the testator (i.e. the person who made the will). It will also give a date of death, date and place where and when probate or letters of administration were granted, names and addresses of executors and beneficiaries and relationship to the testator, and the marital status of all women mentioned.

Searches can be conducted by testator name, date of death, county of death or by document type. A simple search in this dataset for Kerry-related records brings up 8,779 hits.



◆ Commonwealth War Graves Commission/Irish War Memorials

Both of these sites record the dead of (primarily, but not exclusively) World War I. Both can be searched by name, service number and regiment.

◆ Bureau of Military History & Military Services Pension Collection

These datasets provide a comprehensive view of activities of all nationalist combatants throughout the revolutionary period and into the Civil War.

◆ US Immigration at Castle Garden and Ellis Island

Castle Garden was established as an immigration centre in 1855 and continued in that role for 37 years, following which Ellis Island took over that function on its opening in 1892.

◆ Ireland-Australia Transportation Database

Where petitions to the Lord Lieutenant against transportation of an individual took place, a case file would be generated. The associated investigations were known as Prisoners' Petition Cases (PPC) from 1778 - 1835 and Convict Reference Files (CRF) from 1836 - 1853. There are approximately 1,200 Kerry-related files in this database.

Kerry Library: on-site access resources

Unlike Irish Genealogy, there are other websites which are available by subscription only. Kerry Library has taken out institutional subscriptions to some useful genealogical and provides free access to these sites across its public PC network in each library.

FindMyPast

From a family history viewpoint, the most useful of these is **FindMyPast**. This site includes over 150 dedicated Irish datasets, as well as access to the World edition which makes it possible to conduct searches for Irish families abroad.

In an Irish context, many of the datasets are similar to those available elsewhere, but FindMyPast also provides exclusive access to:

- Petty Sessions Court Registers (over 1,000,000 Kerry references),
- Dog Licence Registers (over 225,000 Kerry references between 1854-1923),
- Irish Prison Registers (over 67,000 Tralee references, 1852-1920),
- Ireland Merchant Navy Crew Lists, 1863-1921, &
- Full Royal Irish Constabulary Service and Pension Records.

Irish Newspaper Archive (INA)

As well as access to national newspapers (*The Freeman's Journal*, *The Irish Examiner*, *The Irish Independent*, and *The Irish Press*), the INA includes Kerry newspapers from 1828 to the present. It is digitally searchable and can be a very valuable tool in compiling family information. However, it has a few drawbacks:

- Some editions for the period 1930-60 of *The Kerryman* have not been digitised. Access for these is via the microfilm holdings.
- *The Tralee Chronicle & Killarney Echo* (1843-1881) is not available in a searchable form. It can be browsed through the site, but digital indexes are not applied. The *Chronicle* was the main nationalist newspaper in the county throughout its period of publication.
- Due to the uneven quality of the originals from which the digital copies were rendered, not all words are recognised by the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software. This is an unavoidable drawback.
- Poor Law Boards of Guardian Minute Books. Kerry Library holds for all the Kerry Unions & Glin/Listowel. The records for Killarney 1845 & 1846 have been digitised as part of the Quinipiac University's collection of art and literature dedicated to The Great Hunger- An Gorta Mór www.thegreathunger.org