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On the Record: Looking at Irish Civil Registration
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What is Irish Genealogy?

Irish Genealogy is a website started and run by the Irish Government (specifically DTCAGSM – the Department for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media) to provide a way for people to trace their Irish ancestry, providing access to records to help you with your research. Additionally, it also serves as a signpost to other useful sites that may be useful to you.

To visit the site, click here: https://irishgenealogy.ie

What is available on Irish Genealogy?

- Civil records
- Parish records for certain dioceses:
    - Carlow [Church of Ireland]
    - Cork & Ross [Roman Catholic]
    - Dublin [Church of Ireland]
    - Dublin [Presbyterian]
    - Dublin [Roman Catholic]
    - Kerry [Church of Ireland]
    - Kerry [Roman Catholic]
- Sign post to other useful websites when doing Irish genealogy research.

What are the limitations on civil records in Ireland?

The first kind of civil registration in Ireland had been for non-Catholic marriages, which began in Ireland in 1845. It was not until 1864 that registration began for births, marriages and deaths across Ireland of all denominations. Not all of this is online, however. As of the time this talk and syllabus is uploaded for RootsTech 2025, the images for civil deaths in Ireland from 1864 to 1870 are **not** online.

Should you want to look at these records, you will need to buy a research copy of the entry from the General Register Office (GRO) for €5, or a certified copy should the need arise for €20.

Names

If you have a name that you don't know any alternatives for, or know someone's nickname and want to find out what their actual name is, a handy guide to refer to in this situation would be: https://www.rootsireland.ie/help/first-names/

What is online?

The following is accessible online on Irish Genealogy:

- Births: 1864 to 1923
- Marriages: 1845 / 1864* to 1948
- Deaths: 1864** to 1973

At the time of making this syllabus, I need to add that the addition of another year of records to Irish Genealogy has not taken place yet, but when it does – you will be able to access births up to 1924, marriages up to 1949 and deaths up to 1974. (and add another year one for the next year, the year after that etc.)

* As mentioned above, if the marriage was a non-Catholic marriage, you will be able to access marriages as far back as 1845.

** As mentioned above, if the death occurred between 1864 and 1870, you will not be able to view an image of the death, unless you purchase a research copy from the General Register Office. How to buy the certificate will be covered below.

Searching

When conducting searches, there are two different search functions. One which is a bit more basic and a more advanced search allowing you to search using other details which they might have indexed. When searching, ensure that you tick the box for what life event you are trying to find. However, if you don't do this to begin with, there isn't a problem as you will be able to filter it later.

You will be able to search for births with a mother's surname from circa. 1899 to 1923 as anything prior to this, you will have to click into every result to try and determine the right record you are searching for as the mother's birth surname is not recorded on the search result.

(Left: Basic search. Right: Advanced search.) – image: IrishGenealogy.ie

Districts

When searching, you will often see a record and it be in a certain district (historically known as poor law unions). This is an administrative region where births, marriages and deaths would be registered under. It is always handy to know what district you might be dealing with to help refine your search.

Using Google Maps (https://maps.google.com) combining it with any of the following maps and tools will help you to establish precisely (and if it's halfway between two or three) or give you a few districts to restrict your search down to.

Tools:

- Civil Registration District Map Browsing Tool for navigating IrishGenealogy.ie entries – Shane Wilson: https://www.swilson.info/regdistmap.php (which works best using internet browser, Mozilla Firefox – if you do not have it on your device, you can download that here: https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/)
- List of Civil Registration Districts – Claire Santry of Irish Genealogy Toolkit: https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Ireland-civil-registration.html
- List of Civil Registration Districts in a coloured map and list format – made by the National Library of Ireland (NLI): https://www.nli.ie/sites/default/files/2024-02/nli_fh_civil_districts_map_eng.pdf [this would be very useful as a printout, should you wish to do so]

Civil Registration Index (CRI)

This is a collection which contains an index of reference information for births, marriages and deaths between 1864* to 1958 (excluding indexes for counties in Northern Ireland, from 1922 onwards). This collection can be viewed on the following sites, you can click the name of the site to be taken to the collection page to search. The URLs might not be the local site you use, change accordingly to your local site:

FamilySearch, FindMyPast (Birth, Marriage, Death), MyHeritage (Birth, Marriage, Death), Ancestry

The information on each one contains:

- **Birth**: First Name. Last name. Birth Year. Registration Year. Registration Quarter. Registration District. County. Country. Volume Number. Page Number. Mother's Maiden Name. [if birth occurred after 1928]
- **Marriage**: First Name. Last name. Registration Year. Registration Quarter. Registration District. County. Country. Volume Number. Page Number. List of potential spouses.
- **Death**: First Name. Last name. (Approx.) birth year. Age at death. Year of Death. Registration Year. Registration Quarter. Registration District. County. Country. Volume Number. Page Number

* 1845, for non-Catholic marriages.

Ordering a Certificate

To order a certificate for a death between 1864 to 1870 (or one that you have an index up to 1958 for), you will need to email GROResearchRoom@welfare.ie – when emailing them, it's important you try to supply them with as much information that you have.

As seen above with the CRI, if you have an index for the entry that you are after, it's important you include in your request as it'll greatly speed up their retrieval, allowing you to get the entry much quicker.

Search Tips

- Be very open minded, what you know from family stories or other sources might not always be correct.
- Try to find the root of a name for searching i.e. Biddy or Delia or Bridie would be alternatives of Bridget.
- There may be mistranscriptions along the way (but overall, it's on point), so persist!
- For names (in particular) that begin with O' for instance O'Sullivan – try O'Sullivan, O Sullivan, OSullivan and Sullivan. Try anything.

Further Reading

To learn more about civil registration in Ireland, I would recommend reading this book from John Grenham:

- Grenham, J., 2020. Tracing Your Irish Ancestors. 5th Edition ed. Dublin (Leinster): Gill Books.