TRACING YOUR FAMILY TREE

Tips from Clare County Library

Step 1.
Where do you start? Start with yourself! Then continue at home with details of your own immediate family. Check the correct names, dates of birth, marriage and death of your parents and grandparents, and make out a record card/sheet for each one. List also the brothers and sisters of each parent or grandparent, as far as you can. This information can be obtained by asking your family members - parents, aunt, uncles, grandparents etc.. Your record of these two generations should also include information on places - where they were born, lived, married, worked, died and were buried.
Free family tree charts and worksheets are available to print and download from many websites.

Step 2.
Log on to Clare County Library's website at www.clarelibrary.ie. Click on the 'Genealogy' link and discover a treasure trove of resources which will assist you with your family tree. The principal records online on the Clare library website are:

- Complete census returns for County Clare for both 1901 and 1911;
- Griffith's Valuation for 1852/1855
- Tithe Applotment Books for 1820s – 1840s
- Trade Directories
- School Registers
- Photograph collections
- Online map collection, including 1840 Ordnance Survey maps for County Clare.
- Research Support, including townland and parish indexes, church records listings, Clare Past Forum, genealogical services, and other genealogical sources.
- Donated Material from individual contributors to Clare County Library, including Biographies, Births/Baptisms, Marriages, & Deaths, Census Records, Court Reports, Directories, Emigration Records, Family Histories, Graveyard Inscriptions, Military Records, Mortuary/Memorial Cards, Registers & Rent-rolls, Shipping and Seamen, and Wills.

Step 3.
Verify your own information from official sources and family records.
- Check details on headstones in graveyards, particularly for dates of birth and deaths, but also for any other relevant information.
- Visit your local parish church and search the records for births, baptisms, marriages and deaths.
- Visit the Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths, Sandfield Centre, Ennis, for civil registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths for Clare since 1864.

Step 4.
Visit The Local Studies Centre, Harmony Row, Ennis. This is Clare County Library's reference library for resources relating to Co. Clare. Holdings there include:
- Clare newspapers from the end of the 18th century to the present day (microfilm or original copies)
- Catholic Parish Records for the Diocese of Killaloe (microfilm)
- Freeholders lists
- Parish and Sporting histories
- Map collection
- Archaeological and historical journals
- Estate Records
- Folklore collections

Tel. +353 65 6846271 http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/library/local-studies/locstudi1.htm

Step 5.
Check other sources, including:
- Wills
- Property transfers
- Marriage licences
- School records
- Military records

- ◆ Professional records
- ◆ Voters registers
- ◆ County Archives
- ◆ Genealogical websites, e.g. http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/links/genealogy.htm

List of Genealogical Sources

PARISH REGISTERS

Parish registers of all denominations are an excellent source of genealogical research and probably the best starting point as they include baptisms, marriages and sometimes deaths for all classes of the population. They also pre-date civil registration which began in Ireland in 1864.

Roman Catholic

Roman Catholic registers are kept in individual parishes and, in most cases, were not deposited in national repositories. This ensured their survival from the Public Record Office fire in 1922 and makes them one of the most comprehensive records available. The Local Studies Centre has microfilm copies of the Clare parishes in the Killaloe Diocese.

The main disadvantages pertaining to their use:

•they can be difficult to decipher

•names and addresses were not standardized

•names were entered on a chronological basis so it takes time to search for the members of a particular family

•it may not be possible to find a complete family in one parish as families move between parishes and counties.

Church of Ireland

The Church of Ireland, as the Established Church, had a more regular system of recording entries, using formatted books long before its Catholic counterpart, making their registers easier to research. Parish registers can be held locally by the rector whose permission must be sought to consult them, or they will be in the RCB (Representative Church Body) Library.

Genealogical Centres

The IFHF centres (e.g. Clare Heritage & Genealogy Research Centre, Corofin) have compiled computerised indexes from the original registers of all the major churches in Ireland. There is a charge for this service.

TITHE APPLOTMENT BOOKS 1823-1838

The Tithe Applotment books provide a record of the titheable land in each parish and were compiled in accordance with the Irish Tithe Composition Acts passed between 1823 & 1838. The purpose was to make an assessment of land values for the payment of tithes which was a tax levied on land, but not dwellings or out-offices, for the support of the church.

The Tithe

A tithe was a tax paid to Established Church (Church of Ireland), calculated as one-tenth of the rateable value of one's agricultural produce. Information was recorded under the following headings:

- •occupier,
- •classification of land,
- •amount of tithe payable,
- •a summary of the townland and parish totals and
- •a list of landowners' name.

The return was made for each townland within a civil parish within a barony.

The tithe system pre-dates the Reformation. After that they were applied to the upkeep of the minority Established/Church of Ireland church.

As a Genealogical Source

Although an excellent genealogical source, it was only concerned with tithe payers, thus excluding other classes such as cottiers, landless people and those living in urban settlements. It is important to remember that only persons occupying upwards of 5 acres of land were liable for tithes. It cannot be considered a comprehensive record.

A transcription of the Tithe Applotment Books for County Clare is available on the library website www.clarelibrary.ie . This resource features a Parish Index, a Surname Index, a List of Surnames, and a Frequency of Surnames list.

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION 1848-1864

The Primary Valuation of Tenements, also known as Griffith's Valuation, was undertaken in order to establish the value of land and buildings in Ireland as a basis for levying a local system of fair taxation under the Irish Poor Law Act of 1838.

Compilation

The Valuation was compiled on a barony basis and further subdivided according to townlands, civil parishes and the electoral divisions of Poor Law Unions. The first column heading is number and letters of reference to map; the number given refers to the location of the tenement on the 6'' to the mile townland maps. Under the description of tenement, land and buildings are included, and, under net annual value, the annual rent expected, including maintenance and taxes and excluding the tithe rent, is given.

The Information

Griffith's Valuation provides detailed information about land tenure, names of lessors and occupiers, their land and buildings. It records the occupier's name, the extent of his holding, and the immediate landlord who is not necessarily the owner. However, one must bear in mind that it does not carry names of married sons or daughters for example, who may also occupy the

dwelling. The information on towns is equally important, as the individual tenements were arranged according to streets. It is the only general assessment of land values in Ireland.
It is generally referred to as Griffith's Valuation after Richard Griffith who directed its compilation.

A transcription of Griffith's Valuation for Clare is available on the Clare library website at www.clarelibrary.ie . This resource features a Parish Index, a Surname Index, a List of Surnames, and a Frequency of Surnames list.
The Local Studies Centre has, in print format, copies of Griffith's Valuation for the Poor Law Unions of County Clare.

GRAVESTONE INSCRIPTIONS

These can be very useful, particularly the Church of Ireland ones. However, many people did not erect gravestones and those surviving today probably represents as low as 1% of the population.
See the 'Donated Material: Graveyard Inscriptions' section of the Clare library website on www.clarelibrary.ie for a selection of graveyard inscriptions and photographs which have been generously donated to Clare County Library.

CENSUS REPORTS

From 1821 a census was carried out every ten years.
Unfortunately, a large amount of this material was destroyed in 1922, some was pulped for paper during World War I and some destroyed by government order.
For the purpose of genealogical research the two available census reports are those of 1901 & 1911.
The returns give detailed information relating to all persons, including householders and their dependents, residents of army and R.I.C. barracks, convents, hospitals, and other institutions, similar to present day censuses. The barony, civil parish and townland were the territorial divisions used.
The 1901 and 1911 census reports for Co. Clare are both available on the Clare library website at www.clarelibrary.ie . The Local Studies Centre also has microfilm copies of the 1901 and 1911 census reports.

Civil Registration

Civil registration of births, marriages and deaths began in 1864, and these records are an important source of genealogical information; the registration of non-Catholic marriages began in 1845.

The information available is concise and accurate, though there may be some omissions, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the introduction of civil registration.

Birth
A birth certificate contains the date and exact place of birth, child's name, surname, address, occupation of father and mother's maiden name.

Marriage
A marriage certificate includes the names of the parties, their current marital status, date of marriage, address and occupation of fathers and, occasionally, the mothers' names.

Death
A death certificate provided minimal information, usually the name, age and occupation of the deceased and the place and cause of death. It may also give the name of the informant, in most cases a relative.

The Registry of Births, Marriages & Deaths, Sandfield, Ennis, holds computerized civil registers for Co. Clare since 1864. There is a small charge for printouts from the registry office.

Other Useful Genealogical Sources

•**Alphabetical Index of Townlands**
This index is a useful starting point in genealogical research. It is an alphabetical list of townlands giving the barony, civil parish, rural district and electoral division in which each townland is located.

•**The Civil Survey 1654**

•**Census of 1659**

•**Wills 1661–1826**

•**Books of Survey and Distribution**

•**Hearth Money Rolls 1662**
Introduced in 1662, when, under the Hearth Money Act of that year, a tax of two shillings was imposed on each hearth, i.e. fireplace. The rolls contain the names of householders, arranged by county and subdivided by parish and townland. None of the originals survive but copies exist for some counties.

•**Religious Census 1766**

•**Land Survey 1876**

•**The Landowners of Ireland** by V. H. Hussey de Burgh

•**Local Newspapers**
These can be a useful source for birth, marriage and obituary notices.

• **Directories**
Directories are useful in that they provide names and, in some cases, occupations of individuals, e.g. Thom's Commercial Directory. Others, such as Lewis's Topographical Dictionary give information on a locality, its markets, towns, churches, arranged on a county and parish basis.

•**Incumbered Estates Records/Landed Estates Court Rentals**

•**Estate Records**

•**The Down Survey 1654**

•**Registry of Deeds**

•**Land Commission**

•**Crime and Outrage**