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Genealogical Sources for Co. Tipperary

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Introduction

Genealogy, or the study of family history, has been a common Irish pastime for centuries. Under Brehon Law, candidates for the clan leadership had to prove descendancy from a former *taoiseach* within four generations. In medieval Ireland, *filí* were employed by the powerful Gaelic and Norman Lords to compose *dánta*. These recounted the clan's deeds, joys, sorrows and former leaders, and often included the clan genealogy.

The Irish custom in the 19th and 20th centuries of naming children after their respective paternal and maternal grandparents indicates the reverence which Irish people place on their ancestry. Finally, "tracing" the family relations and ancestry still remains a popular pastime in many Tipperary homes to-day.

Researching a family tree can be very enjoyable and a rewarding hobby. It can reinforce the family's sense of identity and sense of place, and give insights into times past. It can even rekindle links with extended family members, particularly those who emigrated long ago.

It is essential that the family researcher has the patience and perseverance to put all the jig-saw pieces of the family history together. It is advisable too to keep all information gathered in one place - e.g. a notebook or a cardboard file.

There are two main types sources of information:-

- informal sources, e.g. older family members, old letters, photos, family gravestones;
- formal written sources of Co. Tipperary; these include the 1911 Census, Griffith's Valuation (1850), and the Hearth Roll Records (1666-1668).

Summary of Steps to Trace a Family Tree

1. Collect information from family sources.
2. Visit old graveyards associated with family.

20th Century

3. Obtain relevant Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates.
4. Consult the 1911 and/or the 1901 Census for Tipperary.

19th Century

5. Decide how much information can be obtained through the County Heritage Centres, especially regarding the Parish Registers.
6. Research the relevant Parish Registers.
7. Consult Griffith's Land Valuation (approx. 1850).
8. Consult Tipperary Tithe Applotment Books (1830s).
9. Research local censuses and other records if available.
10. Examine town directories, wills, deeds, newspapers.



18th Century

11. Research the 1766 Religious Census (Cashel & Emly).
12. Research the Parish Registers in Waterford and Lismore Diocese, and other material, if available.
13. Examine town directories, wills, deeds, newspapers.

17th Century

14. Consult Tipperary Hearth Roll Records (1666-1668).
15. Consult the Co. Tipperary Civil Survey (1654).
16. Consider any miscellaneous sources, such as estate papers, rental books, published articles and local history books.

An explanation of each of these 16 steps follows. In general, the family historian may reasonably expect to trace a family back to the early 1820s and even earlier. The more recent the record (e.g. the 1901 Census), the more comprehensive and more detail it gives on all social classes, compared to the 1641 Civil Survey, which details only the larger landlords.

General

1. Collect information from family sources.

The amateur family historian is well advised to begin research in the family home. Such sources are free, take up little time, and usually give definite leads as to where to begin research of Co. Tipperary records.

Older family members will be able to give details of immediate ancestors and relations - aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, grand-aunts, grand-uncles, great-grandparents, etc. Old photographs, letters and family trivia will also flesh out stories and incidents of the family long ago. More importantly, they may also help to recall details and incidents long forgotten.

Often, one older family member may be able to point to someone in the extended family who has more knowledge. Old neighbours may also be able to give information about the (old) family home and members, if approached. It should be remembered that neighbourhoods at the turn of the century were much more close-knit (and often inter-related) than to-day.

It will also be noted that certain names are very common in families. This is due to the old custom of naming the eldest daughter/son after the paternal grandparents, the second daughter/son after the maternal grandparents, and then any later children after the parents themselves.

This custom was followed quite rigidly in regard to older children, and is very useful for determining the earlier generations. Finally, the feelings of older family members and/or neighbours should be respected when discussing the past.

2. Visit old graveyards.

Irish custom in the 19th and early 20th centuries dictated the need for a common family burial-plot in the local parish. All members of the same family, including married daughters, were buried in the one plot. A Miss Burke from Bansha married to Mr. Kiely from Tipperary town would be buried in Bansha, with "her people" rather than with her husband. Some headstones of wealthier families date from the 17th century, but the majority were erected in the late 19th century. Much depended on family circumstances at the time.

Hopefully, the name of the old graveyard will be known within the family. Obituaries, mass cards, etc, may help in this regard. When visiting an old graveyard, a notebook is useful to copy out details of the family headstones.



A crayon rubbing, using some light paper and crayons, will help decipher any difficulty of weather-beaten or damaged gravestone inscriptions. Old graveyard maps, which indicate where the various family burial plots are, may also be available in local custody.

The Bru Boru Centre in Cashel has listed most of the graveyards in South Tipperary. These records contain names of old graveyards, family burials and gravestones inscriptions. Similar records for North Tipperary are in the Co. Library, Thurles, and in Roscrea and Nenagh Heritage Centres.

20th Century Research

3. Obtain relevant Birth, Death, Marriage Certificates.

Civil or state registration of all births, deaths and marriages for County Tipperary (and all counties of Ireland) dates from 1864 only. Civil registration of all non-Catholic marriages dates from 1845.

The significance of these certificates lies in the details they contain about an ancestor. Details are given of names, addresses and occupations, which will provide information for research on earlier generations.

A Birth Certificate includes the person's full name, date, parents' names (including the mother's maiden name), address and father's occupation. A Death Certificate includes information such as name, date, age on last birthday, marital status, occupation, cause of death and a witness to the certificate (often a relation - a brother, sister, offspring).

In the 19th century Death Certificates, the maiden name of the married woman is not included. Hence these certificates are of limited use when tracing the female line in a family.

Marriage Certificates probably contain the most information for family history purposes. Each one specifies the date of the marriage, church and parish, names of the couple, ages (sometimes merely "full age" is stated - over 21 years), occupation of both bride and groom, father's name and occupation — of both bride and groom. It also includes the names of the presiding priest and witnesses.

The births of either ancestor can be deduced from the certificate. The inclusion of the father's names and addresses can extend the family tree back immediately by another generation. Local parish registers (baptismal and marriage) and the relevant census can now be consulted.

It should be noted that between 5% and 10% of all births, deaths and marriages failed to be registered in the earlier decades of civil registration. This may hamper research.

Births, Deaths and Marriages Certificates may be obtained from —

(a) Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Joyce House, Lombard St. E (nr. Pearse Station, Westland Row) Dublin 2 (all counties);

or

(b) The Registrar's Office, Nenagh (N. Tipperary only), or The Registrar's Office, Clonmel (S. Tipperary only).

4. Consult 1911 and/or 1901 Census for Tipperary.

These Censuses are the earliest available for Co. Tipperary and indeed, for all Ireland. Both are extremely comprehensive in their documentation of all individuals, regardless of rank, status, age or occupation.

Each Census divides Co. Tipperary into electoral divisions, and then by townland. No index of surnames is yet available for the county, and so it is imperative to know the townland address of a family, in order to obtain the relevant Census form.

The 1901 Census gives information on each member of the household, as on 31 March 1901. This information includes names, religion, ages, marital status, occupation, county of birth, ability to



read/write, and fluency in Irish or English of each occupant of the household. The relationship of to the head of the household is also listed, e.g., son, daughter, brother, sister, servant.

Details are also listed about the family home : number of rooms occupied, type of roof, and the total number of windows at the front. If the family was a farming one, details can also be obtained about the number of outhouses. Ages given by adults are suspect, as they were usually older than admitted.

The 1991 Census was taken on 1 April, 1911, for all Ireland, including Tipperary. It is arranged in the same way as the 1901 Census: county, electoral division and townland. Again, it is necessary to know the family townland address at that time, allowing for such factors as emigration, or migration to another parish or county.

The 1911 Census gives all the same details for each occupant as the 1901 Census, with one important addition. A married woman on this Census was required to state the number of years married, the number of children born and the number of children still surviving.

This provides a useful guide to the marriage date. Many widows supplied this information as well, though not required to. Finally, the 1911 Census can provide a check on the ages given by adults on the 1901 Census.

Neither Census gives details on absent family members. Both are freely available for research purposes in the National Archives, the Four Courts, Dublin 7. The 1901 Census may be researched by using the services of a researcher in the Mid-West Archives, the Granary, Limerick city, and in most of the County Heritage Centres.

Further censuses taken in the 20th century e.g. 1926, 1936, 1946, are not yet available for research purposes. Earlier censuses in the 19th century were destroyed in the 1922 Four Courts fire (e.g., 1821, 1831, and the 1841), or were destroyed by government order (e.g. 1861, 1871 censuses).

19th Century Research

5. Use of County Heritage Centres.

A choice can be made at this stage in relation to how further research may be done.

The family historian may do the research herself or himself. The National Archives, (Four Courts, Dublin 7) and the National Library, (Kildare Street, Dublin 2) welcome such people and allow free access to records. The Co. Library, Thurles, has many of these records, but not parish registers. It must be remembered, however, that microfilms of the original records, or indeed the originals themselves, are usually available only to a researcher. This can provide some difficulty to the beginner.

Use can be made of the Family Heritage Centres in Co. Tipperary. These include Tipperary Town Heritage Unit, Nenagh Heritage Centre, Roscrea Heritage Centre and the Bru Boru Centre at Cashel. Each Centre is staffed by a FAS Co-ordinator and employs a number of young people, to index the Parish Records, to answer written replies and public enquiries. Each centre is at a different stage of growth in regard to accumulation of records, indexing and computerisation. All Heritage Centres have access to some Roman Catholic Parish Register indexes.

However, some have these indexes only, while others have additional records such as the Griffith's Valuation, Tithe Books, etc. Therefore, individuals are advised to make enquiries at the relevant Centre as to the range of records available. It should be noted that all the Centres work in conjunction with each other, should a family enquiry involve a number of places.

Two other Centres in relation to Co. Tipperary must also be mentioned:

Mid-West Archives, The Granary, Limerick city. This has the 1901 Census, Griffith's Valuation, Tithe Books, all the microfilms of all Tipperary parishes (unindexed) and also some parish indexes.



Waterford Heritage Survey, Ursuline Convent, Waterford. This has the Parish Register Indexes for those Tipperary parishes which are in the Waterford and Lismore Diocese. These parishes comprise Ardfinnan, Ballyneale, Ballyporeen, Ballylooby, Cahir, Clonmel, Kilsheelan, Newcastle, Powerstown, Ballyporeen and Carrick-on-Suir. It also has other additional records.

All Heritage Centres require a fee to cover research expenses. In general, they do not provide access for individuals to do research.

6. Examine Parish Register Records.

Roman Catholic Records — Co. Tipperary has over 64 individual parishes, which are spread over four dioceses. Parish records comprise the baptismal register and the marriage register.

The four dioceses are:

- a) **Diocese of Killaloe.** This includes some of the most northern parishes of the county (i.e. parishes above Nenagh), nearest to the Co. Clare border with Co. Tipperary. Records in these parishes begin in the late 1820s or 1830s. Indexes to them are held at the Nenagh Heritage Centre.
- b) **Cashel and Emly Diocese.** This embraces the greater number of parishes in mid-Tipperary, stretching from Thurles to near Cahir and from Ballingarry to Emly on the Limerick border. The majority of its parishes began keeping records between 1800 and 1810. Indexes are held in Tipperary town.
- c) **Diocese of Borris and Ossory.** This extends over the extreme north-east of the country (Roscrea area). Records begin in Roscrea town in 1810, and in other parishes in the 1820s and 1830s. Indexes are held in the Roscrea Heritage Centre.
- d) **Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.** This mainly Co. Waterford diocese extends into the very southern parishes in Co. Tipperary. Parishes and towns such as Ardfinnan, Ballyneale, Ballyporeen, Ballylooby, Cahir, Clonmel, Clogheen, Kilsheelan, Newcastle, Powerstown and Carrick-on-Suir. The parish records begin quite early on, but are often fragmented; e.g., Cahir records begin in 1776 but exclude the period from 1804-1809. Clogheen records begin in 1778, and Ballyporeen records begin 1817. Indexes are held in the Waterford Heritage Centre.

Baptismal Registers hold entries on the name of the child (or adult) for baptism, the parents' names, and the date. Some entries include extra information, such as the father's occupation, family address, the priest's name, or the donation made for the service, depending on the individual parish. Godparents' name may help to trace a family line as they were usually relations.

Marriage Registers often begin at a later date than the Baptismal Registers for the same parish. Each entry has the names of the couple, the date, and witnesses to the marriage. Sometimes other information is included, such as the priest's name, address and occupation of the groom. Often this information is only available for the earlier decades of the Parish Registers and peters out in the 1840s and 1850s, the time of the Famine.

A microfilm of each individual parish is freely available in the National Library in Dublin. The Parish Register is arranged in chronological order, starting from the earliest date to the mid-1880s. The family researcher may have to contend with carelessly written entries, or badly faded or damaged entries - in rare cases even in Latin.

Each Heritage Centre has an alphabetical index of surnames per parish.

Church of Ireland Registers — These usually include three registers: Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths. Records often begin much earlier than the Roman Catholic Parish Records - often in the mid-18th century.



Baptismal entries include the following information: name of child (or adult) for baptism, date of birth, parents' names, address and father's occupation of both bride and groom. Marriage entries include the couple's name, address and occupation and fathers' names. This information is thus useful in determining the previous generation. Civil registration of these marriages is also available from 1845 onwards. Burial entries give the name, date, age, and address.

Church of Ireland Parish Registers may be searched in the National Archives in Dublin. However, many for Tipperary parishes were destroyed in the 1992 Four Courts fire, while still others may still be in local custody. The Heritage Centres should be also contacted for information, and for a listing of what parish indexes are also available.

Methodist Records — Methodist Church Registers are indexed in Roscrea Heritage Centre. These include baptisms, marriages and burial records. The Heritage Centre also has the Methodist records for Nenagh, Borrisokane and Tarbet in Co. Clare.

7. Consult Griffith's Land Valuation (approx. 1850).

This government land survey is available for all counties of Ireland, including Tipperary. It was conducted by Sir Richard Griffith between 1848 and 1860.

It lists each householder and landowner and is arranged by county, barony, civil parish and lastly, townland. It details the name of the owner, acreage held/property leased, estimated value of the holding and the name of the landlord from whom the holding was leased.

It does not give any details regarding family members, (if any), unlike the census. It is a useful secondary source, however, to be used in conjunction with the above Parish Records, in order to fix the existence of an earlier generation in a particular place.

Alphabetical Indexes of Surnames and the Valuation itself are available per civil parish, per barony and per county in the National Library, the National Archives and the Co. Library. A barony is a cluster of parishes in an area, while a civil parish corresponds to the 19th-century Church of Ireland parishes and is quite small.

8. Examine Tithe Applotment Books (approx. 1830s).

These are arranged by county, barony, civil parish and finally townland. Each book is known by its civil parish. The Tithe Books list each occupier of titheable land per townland, and were compiled between 1823 and 1838. Usually, only one book per parish survives.

A tithe was a tax which was payable to the Established Church (Anglican) of Great Britain and Ireland. It included a small segment of the population; it did not include cottiers, weavers or labourers or any purely urban dwellers. This fact aside, a majority of people were then living on the land but those that had less than an acre of land are not listed. Therefore, it is still worthwhile consulting this record.

The information in each Tithe Book is a list of occupiers per townland, amount of acreage held and the tithe/tax levied. It is useful in relation to the Parish Records, and can indicate the family presence in an area in the 1820s and 1830s. Tithe Books for all Co. Tipperary parishes survive and can be researched in the National Library, the National Archives, the Co. Library and the Heritage Centres.

9. Examine Local Censuses.

Three other individual censuses in the county remain for consultation. In 1834, the parish of Templebredin had a local census conducted. This has been printed in the *Journal of the North Munster Archaeological and Historical Society* 1975, and copies are available in the National Library.



In 1835, similar local censuses were carried out in the Parish of Newport and Birdhill. A census was taken of Catholics living in certain parishes in Barony of Ikerrin (Roscrea region) in 1850. All are available in the National Library.

10. Examine Town Directories, Wills, Deeds, Newspapers.

Although the major 19th-century records have been discussed above, other sources remain. All these secondary sources are available in the National Library, the National Archives and the Co. Library, and some in the Heritage Centres.

Town Directories. These were produced for every decade of the 19th century. Each directory lists traders, gentry, shopkeepers and professional people in each local town. As the directories become more and more recent (e.g. for 1870, 1881, etc.) they include more and more categories of people such as teachers clergy, local farmers within the town area and also within the small villages e.g. New Inn, Golden, etc.

The main directories include Pigot's Directory of 1824, Bassett's Directory of 1889 and Slater's Directories of 1846, 1856, 1870, 1881 and 1894.

Wills and Deeds. These are available in the registry of Deeds, Henrietta Street, Dublin 1, established in 1708. They vary from family to family in the amount of information they provide to a family tree.

Individual research is complicated by the indexing methods, the legal terminology and the physical bulk of the the heavy leather-bound books. The type of records held there include wills, will extracts, marriage licences and law suits. Co. Tipperary is particularly well represented.

However, small farmers and cottiers rarely figure in the deeds, but there is much information regarding the farming middle classes, merchants, traders and the nobility. The Registry is best approached when all records are researched, and then at a slow pace. It is up to each individual researcher to make a calculated judgement as to the value of these records for a particular family tree.

Newspapers. Items announcing births, deaths, and marriages are available for research purposes. In general, these items are confined to the wealthier classes, but become more common for all social classes as the century progresses. The town of Clonmel supported many newspapers while the towns of Nenagh, Roscrea, Thurles and Cashel also had newspaper publications at different times. (See Hayes Guide to Tipperary Newspapers in 1989 issue of the *Tipperary Historical Journal*, also available in pamphlet form, with additional data in later issues).

18th Century Research

11. Consult 1766 Religious Census (Cashel and Emly diocese only).

This provides a major genealogical source for the 18th century and is available for consultation in the National Archives. There is also a photo-copy at Co. Library Headquarters, Castle Ave, Thurles. It is arranged by barony, civil parish and townland.

Its main function was to compile a list of Catholic (Papists) and Anglicans and others (Protestants) in each parish. Hence, each parish contains a list of householders, with religion and townland address. It also totals the number per religious persuasion and clergy serving in each parish, but gives little other details.

This census is useful only if a family name is unusual and is known to be associated with a certain area; e.g., Higgins is associated with the Hollyford area and is not very common there, while the same area has numerous O'Dwyers and Ryans. It simply confirms the existence of a family in an area, and it should be remembered that, despite its name, it is not totally comprehensive in listing all householders per parish.



12. Examine Parish Records in Waterford and Lismore Diocese, (& if available, other records).
The parishes of the extreme southern part of Co. Tipperary are included in this diocese, which has already been discussed; see 5 above.

Other material includes the 1799 census of Carrick-on-Suir, a detailed survey of all 10,907 inhabitants of the town at that time. It is arranged by street-name, and details the name, age, religion and occupation of each person and the relationship to the head of the house hold. It is available in the National Library.

13 Examine Newspapers, Wills and Deeds.

These have already been discussed. These sources are mainly confined to the wealthier classes at the time. An Index of Biographical Newspaper items from the mid-18th century to 1821 has been compiled by Ms. R. Ffoliott for the Counties of Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. A copy is available in the National Library for consultation. Also see Hayes Guide to Tipperary newspapers, referred to at No. 10 above.

17th Century Research

14. Consult Tipperary Hearth Rolls (1666-1668).

These were published in 1911 by Dr. Laffan as the Tipperary Hearth Rolls and are available in the National Library. It is among a minority of county hearth rolls that survived the 1922 fire in the Four Courts.

A tax of one shilling was payable per hearth/fireplace in a house. The lists of those who paid are filed according to townland, civil parish and barony in the county. Again, it includes only those wealthy enough to pay such a tax and those who paid up, so it does not cover cottiers, etc. As with the 1766 Religious Census, it provides only a means of confirming a family in an area and should be used in conjunction with other records.

15. Consult Civil survey of Co. Tipperary 1654, and 1659 "census".

These were compiled by Sir William Petty, and copies are available in the National Library, the National Archives and some libraries.

The 1659 Census, despite its name, lists only the major landlords of the county per civil parish - usually the nobility and English settlers. It also totals the total number of persons - both Irish and English - per parish and lists the more common names in that barony, together with their number.

The Civil Survey of Co. Tipperary is again one of the few remaining ones that survived the 1922 fire. It lists only the major landlords of the time and is arranged in the same way as the 1659 Census. It also lists the previous Gaelic owners, prior to the Cromwellian Wars.

16. Miscellaneous Sources.

Various other sources can be used to complement the above records. These include local history books; detailed ordnance survey maps and parish maps; articles; histories of a family name, family coat of arms and family crests.

Estate papers, rental books, etc. may also be used. Such Estate papers include the Mathew Estates at Thurles and Thomastown, and the Glengall Estates at Cahir. These records are available at the National Library. There is local material such as the Timothy Looney Collection at the G.P.A. Bolton Library at Cashel, and other collections at the County Library.

The County Library also has some North American passengers listings. Workhouse records can also be of assistance, as too will be the records/minutes of the Cashel & Fethard Corporations.



Workhouses were erected in the 1840s in every major Tipperary town. Some of these records are in the Heritage Centres, the County Library, the National Library or the National Archives.

A very useful book is the *Description of Ireland and the State Thereof as it is at present in anno 1598* by E. Hogan, SJ (1878), available in the National Library. This discusses the main septs in the county at that time, such as the Ryans of Inch and the Heffernans of Lattin. Other families mentioned are the Keatings, Butlers, O'Dwyers, Whites and Kennedys.

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