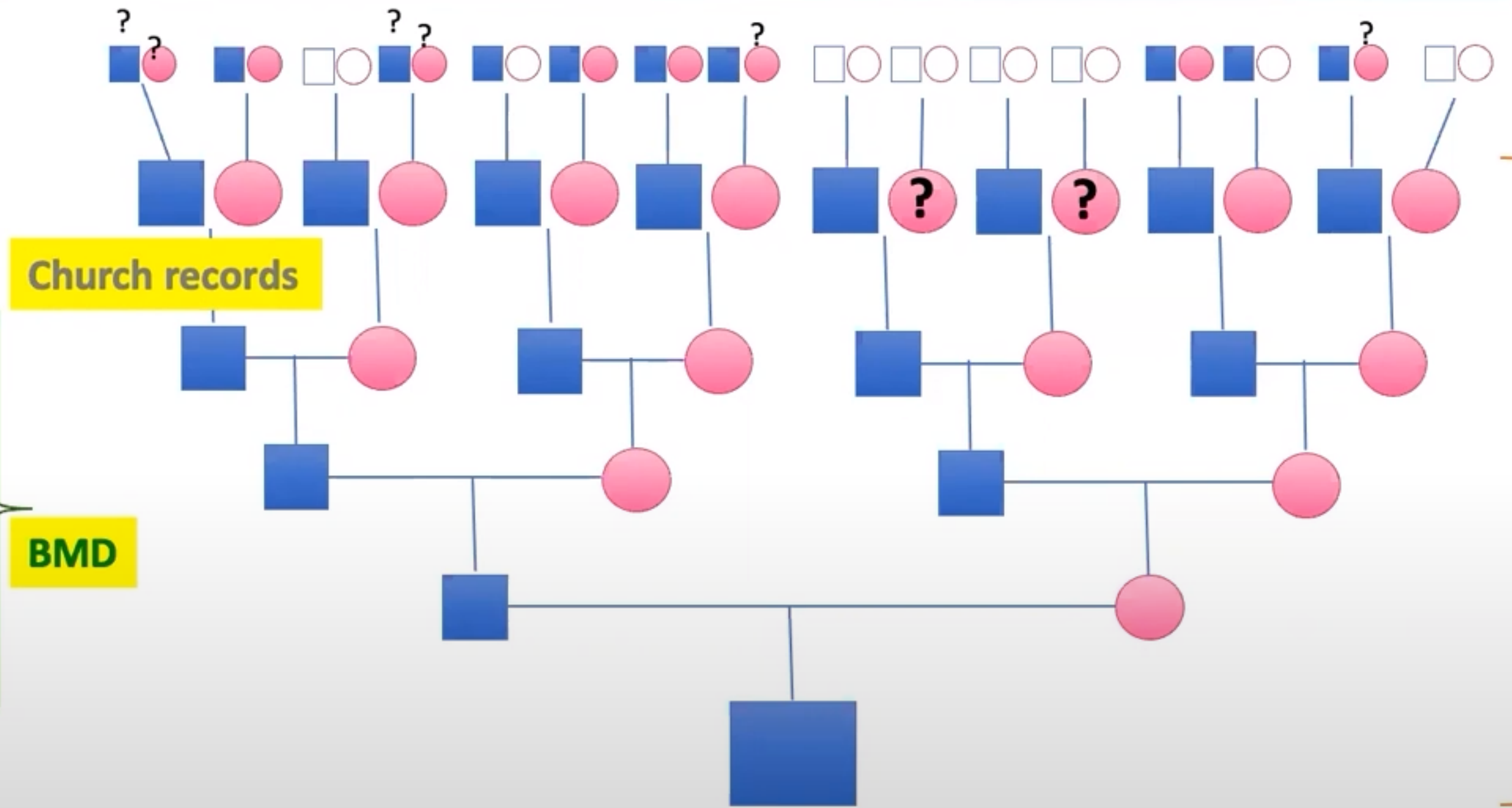


Celebrating Irish Heritage and Exploring Brick Walls
 Kate McCarthy
 March 2023

Breaking thru ... your Irish Brick Walls

1660
1695
1730
1765
1800
1835
1870
1901
1911
1930
1960



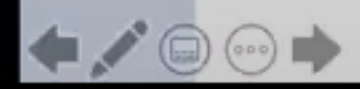
GV
1870
1901
1911
1930

Church records

BMD

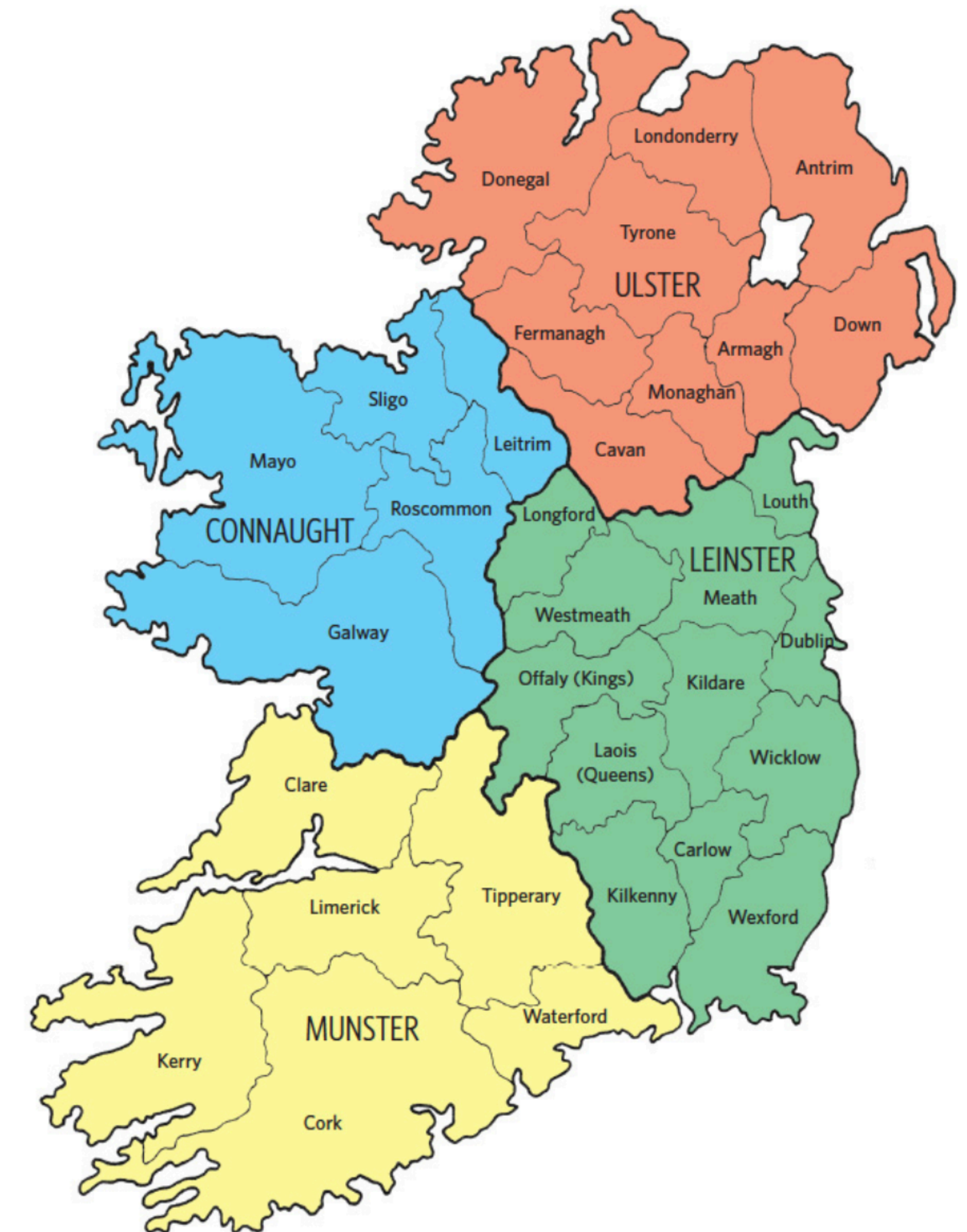
**Family
lore,
letters,
bible ..**

Collaboration with other researchers (ancestry, genesreunited, MyHeritage, rootsweb)



The Basics

- **11 Websites for Exploring Irish Genealogy:** <https://familytreemagazine.com/heritage/irish/11-best-irish-genealogy-websites/>
- **6 Historical Irish Jurisdictions Genealogists Should Know About:** <https://familytreemagazine.com/heritage/irish/historical-irish-geographic-divisions/>
- **Fact Checking Basics:** <https://familytreemagazine.com/strategies/fact-check-family-trees/>



Know the History of Both the Individual and the Country

- **You Hit A Genealogy Brick Wall: Now What?:** <https://www.creativefamilyhistorian.com/researching/genealogy-brick-wall/>
- **Irish Genealogy Brick Walls:** <https://www.findmypast.com/blog/help/irish-genealogy-brick-walls>
- **What Irish Genealogy Records Are Online? (Irish Ancestors):** https://www.johngrenham.com/browse/retrieve_text.php?text_contentid=488#general

TIMELINE OF IRISH HISTORY

- 432** St. Patrick travels to Ireland, according to legend
- 795** The first Viking raids on Ireland take place
- 841** The Norse set up permanent encampment at Dublin
- 1171** Irish kings submit to the British King Henry II
- 1315** Edward Bruce arrives in Ireland and rallies many Irish lords against Anglo-Norman rule
- 1607** The Flight of the Irish Earls sees the exile of Ulster's Gaelic aristocracy
- 1609** The Plantation of Ulster colonizes land with people from England and Scottish lowlands
- 1649** Oliver Cromwell's forces massacre Irish townspeople in Drogheda
- 1652** Cromwellian Settlement results in confiscation of Catholics' land
- 1660** The English King William defeats the exiled English King James II at the Battle of the Boyne
- 1691** Penal law bans Catholics from membership in Parliament
- 1737** Boston's Charitable Irish Society holds the first St. Patrick's Day parade in the Thirteen Colonies
- 1740** Weather-related famine results in widespread deaths
- 1759** Sir Arthur Guinness takes over a brewery at St. James' Gate
- 1791** The Society of United Irishmen is formed to fight for political, economic and social rights for all Irish
- 1793** Catholics can vote
- 1801** Great Britain and Ireland unite
- 1816** Potato crop failure contributes to famine and typhus epidemic in the Year Without a Summer
- 1832** Asiatic cholera in Belfast and Dublin spreads throughout Ireland until the following year
- 1845** Potato blight leads to massive crop failure (the Great Potato Famine) and emigration
- 1848** Patrick Kennedy, great-grandfather of President John F. Kennedy, leaves for America
- 1849** The Potato Famine draws to a close
- 1859** The *Irish Times* newspaper is launched in Dublin
- 1887** The Gaelic Athletic Association holds first All-Ireland Hurling Championship
- 1914** The home rule bill becomes a law, but is delayed until the end of World War I
- 1916** Irish Republicans stage Easter Rising for independence from Britain
- 1921** The Anglo-Irish Treaty establishes the Irish Free State from 26 counties; the six counties of Northern Ireland opt out
- 1922** The Irish Civil War begins; the Four Courts Fire in Dublin destroys many 19th-century historical records
- 1923** The Irish Civil War ends; poet William Butler Yeats wins the Nobel prize for literature
- 1937** The constitution abolishes the Irish Free State and establishes Éire
- 1949** Éire becomes the Republic of Ireland
- 1960s** The Troubles begin in Northern Ireland
- 1972** British troops fire on crowd of civil rights protesters on Bloody Sunday; protesters destroy the British embassy three days later
- 1993** The Prime ministers of Great Britain and Ireland sign a declaration promising peace to Northern Ireland
- 1997** Frank McCourt wins the Pulitzer Prize for *Angela's Ashes*
- 1999** Ireland adopts the euro

Irish Family Naming Patterns

- 1st Son- named after Father's Father**
- 1st Daughter named after Mother's Mother**
- 2nd Son named after Mother's Father**
- 2nd Daughter named after Father's Mother**
- 3rd Son named after Father**
- 3rd Daughter named after Mother**
- 4th Son named after Father's elder brother**
- 4th Daughter named after Mother's elder sister**
- 5th Son named after Mother's elder brother**
- 5th Daughter named after Father's elder sister**



Breaking Up A Brick Wall

1. Know the place.
2. Thoroughly research the American sources.
3. Check out the living relatives.
4. Be aware of name variations.
5. Watch for misinterpreted answers.
6. Use gazetteers to find parish names.

IRISH GENEALOGY TIPS

1 Know the place. Although online databases and digitized records have made Irish research faster and easier, it's helpful to know from where in Ireland your ancestors came before you begin searching them. A county name is good, but if you can discover the name of the townland—the smallest geographic locality in Ireland, similar to an American neighborhood—that's even better. For more information on the administrative divisions of Ireland, go to www.rootsireland.ie/help/help-administrative-divisions-in-ireland.

4 Be aware of name variants. Sometimes the Irish (or US clerks) who recorded their names, dropped an *O'*, *Mc* or *Mac* surname prefix. You might find your ancestor listed in records variously as O'Riordan and Riordan. When you're searching records and indexes, look for the surname both with the prefix and without it. Also check for alternate spellings in an Irish surname dictionary. McGarr in America could be McGirr in Irish records. The surname MacGanly could also be Gantley, but the Gaelic spelling is Mag Sheanlaoich, so a variant English form is Shanly. And Knockton could be Naughten. Two helpful books to help you sort out Irish surnames are Edward MacLysaght's *The Surnames of Ireland* (Irish Academic Press) and Robert E. Matheson's *Special Report on Surnames in Ireland* (on the free Internet Archive www.archive.org) or in print.

2 Thoroughly research American sources. "Start with what you know and move backward in time" is a basic rule of genealogy. Be sure to research every possible record in the United States for your immigrant ancestor, as well as his family members and associates. Records of those relatives and associates might give you that townland name. And when you search Irish records, those details from your ancestor's and other folks' records can be invaluable. There are thousands of Mary Kellys, Joseph O'Briens and Michael Donovans. Knowing as much as you can about your ancestor from American records can help you make a positive ID in Ireland.

5 Watch for misinterpreted answers. Where do you come from? It seems a simple enough question, but to your ancestors, there were many potentially correct answers. They may have responded with the name of their civil parish as a place of origin on civil documents after immigration. But they're just as likely to have recorded the name of their local Church of Ireland parish or Roman Catholic parish when completing ecclesiastical documents (e.g., noting their place of baptism or marriage, rather than their place of abode or origin). If they took the question literally, they may even have stated their Irish port of embarkation. As a result, don't assume that the town of your ancestor's origin given in records is correct.

According to the company Britain's DNA, 34.7 percent of the Irish population carry genes for red hair. About 10 percent actually are redheads.

3 Tap living relatives. Family members might have clues to where your relatives came from in Ireland, as well as other genealogical leads. Don't overlook childless couples or unmarried relatives. In Irish families, almost as many people stayed single as married, and these maiden aunts and bachelor uncles (and even relatives who became nuns and priests) might be the genealogical gatekeepers.

6 Use gazetteers to find parish names. To identify the name of a Roman Catholic parish for a specific location, search a gazetteer using the name of the civil or Church of Ireland parish, which are usually easy to find. For example, the townland of Curragh near Clonakilty is in the civil parish of Kilkerranmore. Searching this parish name in Samuel Lewis's *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* reveals that Kilkerranmore is "in the barony of Ibane and Barryroe, county of Cork, and province of Munster, 2½ miles (S. by E.) from Clonakilty, on the road from Cork to Skibbereen." The entry goes on to say: "In the R. C. [Roman Catholic] divisions the parish is partly in the union or district of Rosscarbery, partly in Kilmeeen, and partly in Rathbarry," which means that research for Catholic ancestors in this area will need to cover three parishes: Rosscarbery, Kilmeeen, and Rathbarry.

Griffith's Valuation

- Griffith's Valuation (1847-1864) was done to produce a uniform guide to the relative value of land throughout the whole of Ireland in order to decide liability to pay the Poor Rate for the support of the poor and destitution within each Poor Law Union.
- It is composed of 300 books and original maps
- **Where you can find Griffith Valuation.** <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/griffiths-valuation.html>
- **The only complete version is found on FindMyPast.** <https://www.findmypast.com/blog/family-records/an-expert-guide-to-the-griffiths-valuation>
- **How to read Griffith's Valuation:** <https://www.findmypast.com/blog/family-records/an-expert-guide-to-the-griffiths-valuation>

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION

Griffith's *Primary Valuation of Ireland* is perhaps one of the most valuable complete sets of records for Irish research. The multi-volume survey records all of Ireland, organized by barony (1847-1851) or townland (1852-1864). Each page documents the name of the property's occupier, the leaser's name, the acreage, the value of the property, and the amount of tax assessed.

FIND GRIFFITH'S VALUATION ONLINE

Ancestry.com <www.ancestry.com>: Links to Griffith's Valuation images, Griffith's Ordnance Survey maps, and modern Ordnance Survey maps

AskAboutIreland.ie <www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml?action=nameSearch>: Links to Griffith's images and modern maps

FindMyPast.com <www.findmypast.com>: Links to Griffith's images and maps

RootsIreland.ie <www.rootsireland.ie>: Free database to Griffith's Valuation (but no images or maps)

The Valuation distinguishes between renters (Townlands & Occupiers) and landowners (Immediate Lessors).

The Valuation uses now-archaic land-measurement units: the acre (4,840 square yards), the rood (a quarter acre, or 1,210 square yards), and the pole (1/40 of a rood, or 30.25 square yards).

Each entry includes a reference to a map, which can help you visualize the survey.

Griffith's provides rich details, including a brief description of the land and a statement of taxes owed. This entry was assessed as owing one pound and 15 shillings.

Reference to Map	Name	Description of Tenement	Area	Taxes	
				Land	Buildings
6	Killeedy North Comb?	Leasehold	0 3 0	0 10 0	-
1	Thomas Dunbar	W. and front garden	-	-	0 7
7	Thomas R. Dunbar	Land	12 1 7	38 5 0	28 5 0
7	Thomas R. Dunbar	Land	17 3 32	18 0 0	18 0 0
8	Thomas R. Dunbar	House and office	-	-	1 5 0
9	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
10	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
11	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
12	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
13	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
14	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
15	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
16	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
17	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
18	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
19	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
20	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
21	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
22	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
23	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
24	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
25	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
26	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
27	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
28	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
29	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
30	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
31	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
32	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
33	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
34	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
35	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
36	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
37	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
38	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
39	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
40	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
41	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
42	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
43	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
44	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
45	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
46	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
47	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
48	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
49	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0
50	Thomas R. Dunbar	House	-	-	1 5 0

TIPS FOR USING GRIFFITH'S VALUATION

SEARCH FOR NAME VARIANTS.

Spelling hasn't always been standardized, so search the Valuation for various forms of your ancestor's names. Be sure to run searches for names like Connell/O'Connell both with and without apostrophes, as this prefix (along with Mc/Mac) were frequently added and dropped.

COMPARE MAPS.

Many websites that feature Griffith's Valuation will allow you to view the maps Griffith created as he surveyed Ireland, and some even allow you to compare these to modern maps. Doing so will let you see where your ancestor lived in today's context.

MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR URBAN-DWELLERS.

Griffith's Valuation typically only named one head of household. As a result, your ancestor might not be listed in the Valuation if he lived in a tenement with many people, as the Valuation would have only named one person per property.

Poor Law Unions (PLU)

- Poor Law Unions (Superintendent Registrar's Districts) were the areas of administration for poor relief established under the Poor Relief Act of 1838.) Parliament enacted the Irish Poor Law Extension Act (June 8, 1847) and dumped the entire cost and responsibility of famine relief directly upon Ireland's property owners.
- In the 18th century those who were too ill, old, destitute or orphaned children were put into a local 'workhouse or poor house'. Those able to work, but whose wages were too low to support their families, received 'relief in aid of wages' in form of money, food, and clothes.
- The workhouses continued under local authority control in the form of 'Public Assistance Institutions' until final abolition of the Poor Law in 1948.



Poor law unions (PLUs) were created by the government to administer poor relief, but they can be helpful for genealogists as well.

Catastrophic Loss of Irish Records in 1922

- **At the beginning of the Civil War an explosion and fire in the Public Records Office in Dublin in 1922 destroyed many records.** https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Ireland_Record_Loss
- **What was lost in the 1922 fire?** <https://www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/irish-records-burned.html>
- **Reconstruction of Irish Records:** <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/22/irish-public-record-office-civil-war-bombardment-archives-reborn>
- **Breaking Through Brick Walls in Irish Family Trees Using DNA (Maurice Gleeson):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRO1k1oQW3w>



Legacy Family Tree Webinars

(You may need a subscription to get in to see these.)

Using Ancestor's Siblings: <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/pointing-fingers-at-ancestors-siblings-breaking-down-brick-walls-with-collateral-research/?category=methodology&subcategory=brickwalls>

What's next when you are told all the records were "burnt up". <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/whats-next-when-you-are-told-those-records-were-burnt-up/?category=methodology&subcategory=brickwalls>

Hints and Tips for Unknown Parentage and Brick Walls (Advanced): <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/hints-tips-for-solving-irish-cases-of-unknown-parentage/?sortby=newest>

These webinars are available free for the first week before they go beyond the paywall. Get on their mailing list to see the schedule. <https://familytreewebinars.com/>

