

## Discovering Your Irish Family History

**Maura Flood is a professional genealogist at the Irish Family History Centre in Dublin, partnered with EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum. Here are Maura's tips on how to trace your Irish ancestors.**

Most of our customers come from all over the US – not altogether surprising as it is estimated about 35 million Americans can claim Irish ancestry. We find people generally make the same mistakes when researching their Irish roots. It is so important that you thoroughly research ancestors in the US before you embark on Irish records. In other words, never put the cart before the horse! You should also keep in mind that only a small proportion of records are online, so some legwork will be required.

Firstly, identify your Irish emigrant by looking up the US Censuses. Many pre-20th century ancestors were not sure when they were born so be flexible with year of birth - you may find different records have different years.

From 1850 the Censuses will give you a place of birth and from 1890 to 1930, the year of immigration. From 1870 the Censuses also give parents' birth places.

1900-1930 Censuses give abbreviations regarding citizenship:

- AL means the person was an alien and had not begun the naturalisation process
- PA (papers) means the person had filed their declaration of intention, and was in the process of becoming a citizen
- NA means the immigrant had naturalised and was a US citizen.

**Naturalisation records** can give the place of birth from 1906, but only some records will give this detail before.

**Marriage records** may give parents' names but check the database you are looking at as it may be just an index to marriages. You may have to visit the records office to get the full marriage record.

**Death records** can also give parents' names and place of birth, particularly in the 20th century. Look up local newspapers for obituaries for additional information to locate your ancestor back in Ireland. Some emigrants were very proud of where they came from and had their county of origin engraved on their headstone.

**Passenger Lists** from c1890 can give a lot of detail but it can be difficult to identify your emigrant in earlier passenger lists unless they arrived as a family unit.

**WW1 Draft Registration Cards** The First Registration of men born between 6 June 1886 and 5 June 1896 and the Second Registration of men born between 6 June 1896 and 5 June 1897 gives place of birth.

**New York, Emigrant Savings Bank Records, 1850-1883 and**

FRANCIS J. SCULLY, Money Exchange Department, BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION, 100 N. WALL ST. N.Y.	
10 Sovereigns	at \$..... 48.24
Bank of England Notes	.....
Napoleons	.....
French Paper	.....
French Silver	.....
XX Marks	.....
Charles Paper	.....
Guillem Paper, Holland	.....
Guillem Paper, Aust.	.....
Kroner Paper	.....
Kroner Silver	.....
Russian Doubles	.....
Lira Paper	.....
Lira Silver	.....

Currency exchange receipt for Michael Curley. He had 10 Sovereigns and exchanged them for \$48. CREDIT: MAURA FLOOD



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**Bishop's Bank of Philadelphia** can also give place of birth.

**Information Wanted Ads** These were ads placed in newspapers e.g Boston Pilot 1831 to 1920, Herald (Toronto) 1846 to 1848, The Catholic Herald (Philadelphia) 1833 to 1856, where family members placed ads looking for loved ones and can provide county, townland, or parish.

**FANs (Friends, Associates, and Neighbours)** Take note of associates of your ancestor - witnesses on documents, spon-

sors on baptisms or even people on the same Census page. Many Irish lived in clusters from the same area in Ireland.

**County Histories** are useful if your ancestors were early settlers as they can give you some of their background information. If your ancestor was born in Ireland before 1864, the year when our civil births began, you will need to know their religion to enable you to look up church records in Ireland.

Some of these records can be found on databases like Find-

MyPast, Ancestry.com, MyHeritage or FamilySearch.

Call in to the Irish Family History Centre in Dublin, or book an online consultation – we'd be delighted to help with any level of research. While here, visit EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum, and discover an interactive experience telling the story of the more than 10 million people who left Ireland over the centuries, and their influence around the globe.

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