



# Irish Roots



**OPEN THE DOORWAY  
TO DISCOVERING YOUR  
COUNTY WEXFORD  
ANCESTORS!**

*Celebrating Irish Ancestry*



**How To Find Your Irish Ancestors In The 1950 American Census.**

**Were Your Ancestors Among Immigrants To Moreton Bay, Australia, 1848-59?**

**A Helpful And Historical Survey Of Main Street, Gorey, Co. Wexford.**

**Discover Tuke's Assisted Emigration Scheme From Ireland, 1882-1884.**

**Keep Up To Date With The Latest Irish Genealogical Record Releases.**

**News From The World Of Irish Genealogy And Lots Lots More!**



By Dr. Mary Hatfield

The National Archives was formed in 1988, when the Public Record Office, founded in 1867 located in the Four Courts, and the State Paper Office, founded in 1702 originally located in Dublin Castle, were merged to create a single institution. The NAI took up their current premises on Bishop Street in 1992. The NAI have a responsibility to care for the papers and archives within their holdings and ensure their long-term survival. They are also tasked with making arrangements for public access to their collections. There is a 30-year embargo on the release of government papers to the public. Census records are subject to a 100-year rule to protect individuals' privacy, the 1926 census will be released in 2027.

## History

In 1922 the Four Courts were destroyed by an explosion and extensive fire, and huge swathes of material created during the British administration of Ireland were destroyed in the blaze. It was a singular event with enormous consequences for the history of Ireland. However, there has also been some exciting developments to try and recover some of this lost material with the Beyond 2022 project, discussed below.

Because so much was destroyed in the fire, the NAI's records are strongest in relation to the twentieth and late nineteenth century, however, there are significant collections from the eighteenth and nineteenth century that researchers can use creatively to glean insight into their family history through the papers of landed estates.

## Births, Marriages, And Deaths

If you have your ancestors name, then you can search for their personal records online. Civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths began in 1864 and can be found in the General Register Office papers. After 1922, the births, marriages, and deaths in the six counties

of Northern Ireland were recorded and lodged in the General Register Office Northern Ireland, at Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

Before 1864 church records are the best resource for finding information about birth and death dates. Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Jewish marriages were civilly registered from 1845. The NAI holds some church registers, however the National Library of Ireland and the PRONI, also hold parish records so you may need to broaden your search.

A key online resource that readers are likely already familiar with is the 1901 and 1911 census records which are fully digitized and searchable online <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/>. There are also fragmentary census records surviving from 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851. If all you have is a name, then the census is a great place to start.

## Links To Local Place

Once you have established the area your family is from, there are lots of different resources to gain further insight into the local area and wider kin networks. The Tithe Applotment books were compiled between 1823-1837 by the Church of

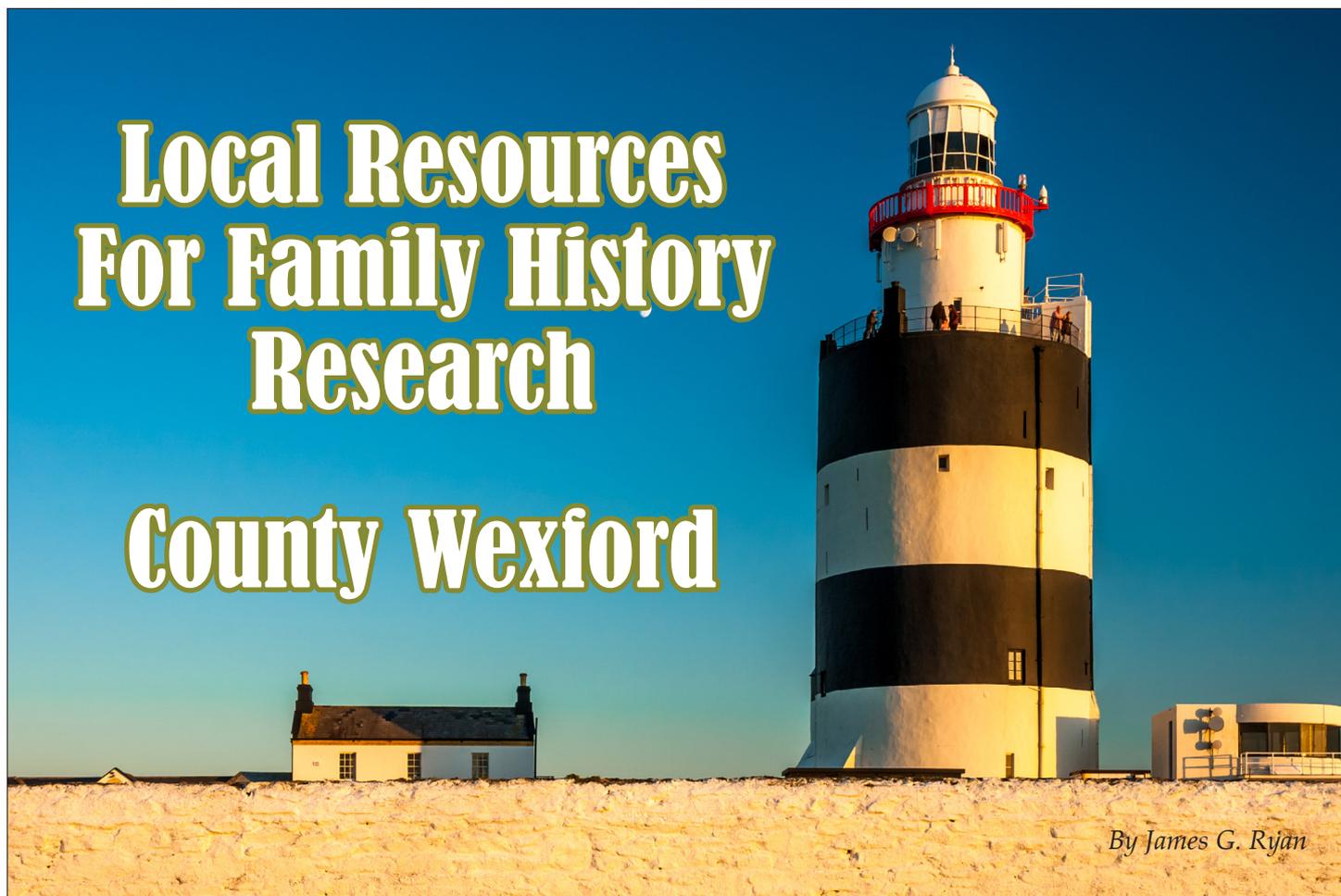
Ireland to calculate the tithes due from local farmers. Urban areas are generally not included, but records survive from nearly all parishes in Ireland. The tithe books record the names of householders and their land holdings.

Other collections which yield fascinating insight into family and local history are the Ordnance Survey, the Valuation Office, Hospital records, and the Commissioner of National Education records.

The Ordnance survey began in 1824 in its efforts to create maps of Ireland. In addition to the maps, the survey generated a great deal of ancillary records which contain observations of local history, the orthography of place names, and descriptions of boundaries. While the survey does not contain any information about individuals or families, it can illuminate the location of family homeplaces, and neighboring geographical landmarks. The original documents are held in the NAI, but some are available online. Maps for the six counties in Northern Ireland are accessible online using the PRONI Historical Maps tool (<https://apps.spatialni.gov.uk/PRONIAplication/>)

# Local Resources For Family History Research

## County Wexford



By James G. Ryan

This article deals with researching Wexford ancestors, but with an emphasis on the resources specific to the county, or only available within the county itself. Wexford is primarily an agricultural county, but has significant tourism, healthcare and food industries. The current population is 163,000 and the major towns include Wexford town (population ~20,000); Enniscorthy, New Ross and Gorey. It was originally the Gaelic Kingdom of Uí Ceinnselaig and the major Gaelic families were Kinsella, McMurrough and Kavanagh. Other Gaelic families included O'Day/O'Dea, O'Leary, Murphy, O'Byrne, O'Dugan and Bolger. Norman families who settled from 1169 include Sinnott, Esmonde, Stafford, Codd, Furlong, Hore and Devereux all of which are still common names.

**W**exford has all of the major national records: Civil records of birth, death and marriage start in 1864 and are now available free at [www.Irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.Irishgenealogy.ie). Griffith's Valuation (an 1850s listing of land occupiers) is available free on <https://www.askaboutireland.ie/> and 1901 and 1911 census returns are free at <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/>. If you wish to know where your family was located within Wexford, these are useful starting points. Some useful county specific sources include:

### Wexford Archives

The Wexford Archives (<http://wexfordcountyarchive.com/family-history>) is engaged in 'identifying, acquiring, preserving .. original materials that document the history and development of County Wexford'. It is the official repository for records of public bodies in the county, and also holds donated and acquired records. Those relevant to

family history are: **Workhouse/Board of Guardian records:** No admission or discharge registers survive, but Minute books for Wexford, Enniscorthy, Gorey and New Ross workhouses are in this archive. They contain mainly administrative information, but names occur in weekly reports, and in records of an Assisted emigration scheme (1848-49); Microfilmed **Burial records** from 11 burial grounds managed by Wexford County Council (from 1922); and by Wexford Borough Council from 1881. It is planned to put some of these on-line.

The archive also houses more modern items: **Valuation records**, c. 1925-1980s (names of occupiers and immediate lessors); **Rate books**, 1983-93 (local taxpayers); and **Housing records**, 1905-40s. **Estate papers:** The archive holds papers for many estates (see below); and from businesses, solicitors; clubs, societies and School records. Other more general holdings include Grand Jury Records, Town Council papers, donated family histories and some collections

of private papers. The archive is based in Ardavan, close to Wexford town. Contact: <https://wexfordcountyarchive.com>. Email: [archivist@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:archivist@wexfordcoco.ie)

### Wexford Public Library

Wexford Public Library is linked to the Archive, but holds additional material including books, photographs, maps etc which document Wexford's history, geography and culture. It also holds local historical society journals, newspapers (from 1858) and copies of some national records. There are five branches of the library, but the main local history collection is in Wexford town Library.

### Visit Wexford

The 'Visit Wexford' site provides valuable tourism information on visiting the county, and has a specific page ([www.visitwexford.ie/genealogy](http://www.visitwexford.ie/genealogy)) with general guidance on the major sources available.