



In the last issue, I discussed finding the locality in Ireland if your ancestor was born after 1864 (Civil Registration in Ireland) and emigrated in the late 1800s or early 1900s. The issue of identifying the place in Ireland becomes more difficult if they were born prior to 1864 or emigrated at the time of the famine. If this is your problem, one of the items in your Research Plan must be church records in the country where your ancestor settled. Yes, I know, most aren't online! If you're lucky, your ancestors lived in one of the locations where projects are underway to digitize Roman Catholic records. Thanks to AmericanAncestors (Archdiocese of Boston) and Findmypast (Archdioceses of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cleveland, Toledo and Chicago) we are starting to see some of these records. If your ancestors were in a smaller locality, you're going to have to do this the old fashioned way, write (or email).

Begin by checking out the website or the church. Some have the history of the parish online, and may even have information on how to request records. Make sure the parish existed at the time your ancestor lived. You might begin with an email to the parish on their process for requesting records.

Be as specific as possible. If you can give an exact date of birth or marriage, you're more likely to get a response. Many parishes only have a part-time assistant and honestly, looking up records on your ancestor may not be their top priority. It is not likely that they are going to have the time to search through years of records. Even if a charge is not specified you should consider sending a donation.

Ask for everything in the record. Typically you will receive back a form with the information filled in and signed by the priest. If there is information in the register that doesn't have a blank on the

form, you're not likely to get it unless you ask. In your request, especially for marriage records, tell the church you are looking for information on the place of birth in Ireland. Sometimes a priest would require proof of their baptism in order to marry a couple (that information was required after about 1907).

Here's an example of a note that was pinned into the register for my husband's great aunt (remember to search everyone).

It is from the parish priest in Ireland giving her baptismal date, names of parents

*Elisha Martin daughter
of Patrick Martin &
Catherine of Doagh parish
of Magheraclone was
baptized on the 9th of
July 1882. Parents
Michael Martin &
Elizabeth Shannon.
S. Kieran P.P.
Magheraclone
14/4/19*

and sponsors along with the parish and townland. This record is from St. Bernard's Church in New York City, and although the record is now online at Findmypast, it does not include this note.¹ Prior to seeing this, the only information I had was Carrickmacross (Monaghan). This is where understanding the administrative jurisdictions in Ireland is important.

Carrickmacross is a market town, a Poor Law Union and Registration District located in the Civil Parish of Magheross. Alice Martin and her siblings were from the Civil Parish of Magheraclone, an adjoining parish and the townland of Doagh, but also in the Poor Law Union (Registration District) of Carrickmacross. It was not uncommon for our ancestors to mention the closest large town or to use a different jurisdiction. Because the Martin surname was one of the most common in both these parishes, I might

AmericanAncestors.org has partnered with the Boston Athenæum to offer a new database, Boston, MA: Provident Institution for Savings, 1817-1882

by Molly Rogers

This database currently contains two volumes; Signature Book 10, 1854-1858 and Waste Book 1D, 1 Mar 1821 – 5 Jun 1822. When complete, the database will contain 6 Signature books and 6 “Waste” books. There are currently over 600 pages and over 56,500 names available to search. The additional books are actively being indexed, and new volunteers are welcome. Email Rachel Adams, Database Services Volunteer Co-ordinator at AmericanAncestors.org (rachel.adams@nehgs.org) for more information on contributing to this project. More volumes will be available online by the end of 2020, and the project will continue into the new year.

The Provident Institution for Savings in the Town of Boston was incorporated in December 1816.¹ It began around the same time as the Philadelphia Savings Fund Association (which was established first, but incorporated later than the Provident), both institutions were among the first of their kind in the country. James Savage “lawyer, scholar, and philanthropist” founded the bank after reading a report on the London Institution for Savings, and becoming inspired about the possibility of opening a similar institution in Boston.² According to his *Memoir*, written by George Stillman Hillard, “Mr. Savage watched over the infant institution with something like paternal care from 1817 to 1862, a period of forty-five years. He was successively, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President, and President; and these services were given much of the time without compensation.”³ Other prominent Bostonians involved in starting the bank included William E. Channing, Josiah Quincy, Elisha Ticknor, Thomas Dawes, and Samuel Elliot among others.⁴

The “Object of the Institution” was “To provide a safe and profitable mode of enabling industrious persons of all descriptions to invest such parts of their earnings or property, as they can conveniently spare, in a manner which will afford them both profit and security,”⁵ according to the first by-law.

The idea behind the institution was that the savings bank would encourage thrift and self-improvement of the poor of Boston without subjecting them to the so-called moral corruption associated with outright charity. By offering their customers dividends on savings, the Provident would encourage them to keep their money in the bank for longer periods of time, rather than spend as they earned it. Henry Lee reports, “There is a tradition that the bank was founded partly at the urgent request of good Bishop (afterwards Cardinal) Cheverus, that his people...might have a place of deposit and so not spend or lose their little savings.”⁶ Bishop John Cheverus was the first Bishop of Boston, one of the early founders of the Catholic Church in Massachusetts.⁷

When the bank began, deposits were only accepted from residents of Boston and Charlestown, but in 1822 the bank expanded to accept deposits from people from Quincy, Milton, Dorchester, Dedham, Roxbury, Brookline, Waltham, Brighton, Newton, Weston, Cambridge, Watertown, West Cambridge, Medford, Saugus, Malden, and Chelsea.⁸

Over the course of the next century, the Provident expanded, investing in industries such as textiles, as well as real estate.

No	Name	Birth Place	Residence	Occupation	Amount
10398	Agnes H. Blake	Boston	36 Pleasant St.	Single	235
	Minnie Blake	"	"	"	249
	Mary H. Blake	"	"	"	249
209	Alary R.	"	"	"	
	Margaret W.	"	"	"	
1	John O'Sheaffe	Cork	2 North Wharf	Labor	103
2	Barbara Abbott	Limerick	44 Ireland	Shawmut	200
3	George Howard	London	30 Prince	Rigger	112
4	Timothy Kalloran	Cork	25 Hamilton	Labor	50
5	Jack Fitzgerald	Limerick	63 Federal	"	130
6	Jane Perry	Cork	50 South Am. Main	"	10
7	Robt Williams	Cork	Boston 2d, Upper St.	"	60
8	Bridget Murphy	Malden	27 Chelsea Am. Main	"	20
9	Stephen Sullivan	Rockingham	2 Spring St.	Tailor	50
10	William Mahan	Limerick	27 Federal	Labor	100
1	Antonia de S. Rocha	St. Louis	27 W. Main	Seaman	150
2	J. Proctor Huskins	Petersham	29 W. Main	Chemist	500
3	Eden Fozell	New York	7 Alcorn St.	Chf. Clerk	10
4	Castle Nowlan	Longford	14 North St.	Widow	50
5	Wm E. Lechebat	St. Louis	121 Albany	Carpenter	75
6	Thomas Downen	Limerick	170 Federal	Tailor	20
7	Castle Norman	Cork	127 South Am. Main	"	50
8	Timothy Roche	Cork	Livermore St. in Sun. Bldg.	"	310
9	Neand Zwartjes	Limerick	59 Shawmut Ave	Pop. Saver	100
20	Redd Crocker	Cork	Brookline Ave	Coachman	52
1	Elizabeth Thell	Boston	24 Spring St.	"	14
2	Helen A. Carter	"	316 7th St.	"	100
3	J. A. Archer	Shawmut	2d, Boston	"	500
4	James Barr	Antwerp	8 Bay State	Clerk	50
5	Eden Delaney	Cork	18 East St.	"	50
6	John Laughlin	Westmoreland	132 North St.	"	250
7	Joseph Formelle	Limerick	117 Canal St.	Blacksmith	150
8	James Doudou	Limerick	2 Humphreys St.	Shawmut	63
9	Patrick Tigan	Cork	Chelsea St.	Labor	150
30	Chas. Reistle	Germany	143 Spring St.	Shawmut	70
1	Castle W. Higgins	London	8 Cherry	Single	500
				Ant. Ford	1540

The Provident became a subsidiary of Hartford National Corporation in 1986⁹ and continued to operate as the Provident Institution until it was merged with Shawmut Bank in 1992, which subsequently donated the Provident's records to the Boston Athenæum (another institution for which James Savage was a founding member).¹⁰

While scoping this project, American Ancestors identified that 80% of the records represent immigrants to Boston. “More than half of the depositors are either foreigners or children of foreigners, the Irish the earliest and most numerous, and after them the Germans and representatives of all nations,” recounts Lee.¹¹ This database can be a great resource for learning more information about your Irish immigrant ancestors who lived in Boston.

The information found in the Signature and Waste books will vary. The Signature books contain information about people who held accounts at the bank. Records include the account number, a person's name, their birth place, residence, occupation, and amount deposited. If the depositor is Irish, the birth place column will usually contain the county in Ireland where the person was born. The residence contains their address in Massachusetts.

What's New?



There were plenty of smiles in family history circles this autumn when, completely unexpectedly, another tranche of death register images joined the civil registration BMD indexes in the [IrishGenealogy.ie](https://www.irishgenealogy.ie) database. A pleasantly surprised Claire Santry has the details.

Happy indeed is the genealogist with new records to explore! Recent deliveries didn't all arrive in big packages, but there were certainly some welcome opportunities to distract us from the pandemic and hunt down some ancestral connections. One of the most well-received was a further instalment (hopefully, the penultimate) of Ireland's historical civil death register images at [IrishGenealogy.ie](https://www.irishgenealogy.ie).

While the indexes have been available for years, the task of linking the indexed entry to a copy of the respective register image page – where (potentially) useful information about the deceased's identity can be found to confirm or deny genealogical connections – has been slow. The newly released images relate to 671,599 island-wide deaths registered from January 1871 to 1877. Images for those deaths registered from 1878 to 1969 are already available on the state-managed site (excepting those from Northern Ireland after 1921), so the only outstanding images are those for 1864 to 1870 – a seven-year span that could complete so many genealogical jigsaws. When this final tranche will land is anybody's guess.

Another unexpected island-wide release came in the form of what the National Archives of Ireland has called a Teachers' Census. Prepared by the Privy Council Office, the collection holds a full list of working National School teachers as recorded on 31 March 1905. It records the names and ages of teachers, where they themselves went to school, their

place of teacher training, their length of service and where they were currently posted and in what capacity. If only such an interesting information had been gathered from labourers, eh?

The release is presented in an alphabetically arranged series of 35 pdf downloads. If you have teachers in your family tree, this legible 'census' is definitely worth checking out at <https://www.nationalarchives.ie/article/list-of-teachers-employed-by-the-commissioners-of-national-education-on-31-march-1905/>.

Ireland's Military Archives, based at Cathal Brugha Barracks in Rathmines, Dublin, also caught us by surprise with a ninth release from the Military Service Pensions Collection. It holds claims lodged by 1,170 individuals or their dependants, and contains new information on the War of Independence and the Civil War.

This release brings the number of individuals whose files are now available online to over 10,720 entries (representing over 32,000 files). You can search the files at <http://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military->

[service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/november-2020-release](https://www.militaryarchives.ie/collections/online-collections/military-service-pensions-collection-1916-1923/release-history/november-2020-release)

Other updates of island-wide relevance saw editions of the *Dublin Gazette* from 1750-1800 added to FindMyPast's database ([Directories & Social History category](https://search.findmypast.ie/search-ireland-records-in-directories-and-social-history)) <https://search.findmypast.ie/search-ireland-records-in-directories-and-social-history>. While these are available free on the Oireachtas Library site as rather cumbersome and sluggish pdf downloads, the FindMyPast's version offers easier searching and a quicker route to the page you want to view.

The Gazette includes corporate and personal insolvency notices, personal legal notices relating to deceased estates, company notices and profiles, and state notices. It also contains birth, marriage and death notices, similar to Announcements in newspapers.

Also new to FindMyPast were the *Belfast Gazette*, 1922-2018, and the London and Edinburgh editions. Unlike the Dublin edition, these are all available free at the official 'The Gazette' site, which has an efficient search engine, see <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>