

Irish Roots



Celebrating Irish Ancestry

**Taking A Research Trip To
Ireland? What To Expect
And How To Prepare!**



**Local Family History Resources For Tracing COUNTY MONAGHAN Ancestors.
Alternative Sources In Place Of Ireland's Lost Nineteenth Century Census.
The Imirce Project; A Powerful Collection Of Emigrant Letters & Life Stories.
Guidance For Using Griffith's Valuation Online Resource For Your Research.
News From The World Of Genealogy, Keep Up To Date With The Latest Irish
Genealogical Record Releases, Your Ancestral Research Queries Answered,
Books Selections And Lots Lots More!**

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A few words from the editor

Welcome to our autumn edition of Irish Roots magazine 2025. One of the articles featured in this issue features *The Imirce Collection*, pages 18 and 19. Kerby A. Miller spent five decades collecting Irish emigrant letters and life stories from Irish people who came to live in North America. The collection was donated to the University of Galway Library where a digital repository was launched to share this collection with the public. The main theme of many of the letters is the emotional toll the emigrant endured, and the sense of loss and longing for their home and family that many experienced. Old Irish ballads are full of this sentiment that exiles had to endure. I can remember hearing about the American Wake when I was young. Once upon a time when people emigrated to America it was unlikely that they would ever return, so a gathering was held at the home of the person due to emigrate, to bid goodbye to neighbours, extended family and friends. The following day, they made their way to Cobh, Co. Cork to board a ship for the long journey to America and most likely to never see their homeland again. In the 1960s air travel between America and Ireland became more accessible with airlines operating frequent routes, and lowering prices, so this thankfully afforded the exile an opportunity to return home to Ireland once again.



In this issue, Stephen Smyrl seeks alternative sources to the loss of the Nineteenth Century Census Returns, page 5. Dr. Mary Hatfield, gets busy *Using Griffith's Valuation*, page 6. DNA expert Donna Rutherford introduces us to *Getting Started with Chromosome Browsers and Chromosome Painting*, pages 8 and 9. James G Ryan takes us around *County Monaghan Local Resources for Family History Research*, pages 10 and 11. Seán O'Murchadha keeps us in the know with *Surnames of Co. Monaghan*, pages 22 and 23 and Susan McKee whisks us off on a well prepared ancestral research trip to Ireland, pages 28 and 29. Robert Flanagan Stieglitz kindly shares his reflections on his recent trip to Ireland (as pictured on the cover), page 14. See the contents section opposite for the full listing of articles on offer in this issue.

If you would like to share your genealogical reflections with us or would like to share some meaningful details about your Irish ancestors, do please do get in touch with us. We love a good story and enjoy sharing yours with our readers even more! You can contact us through the contact form on our website page at www.irishrootsmagazine.com or email us at editor@irishrootsmagazine.com.

We hope that you had a really lovely summer and are now refreshed, recharged and looking forward to getting busy again with your family tree research and adding to your own genealogical story during the autumn season. Happy researching!

Maureen



Robert Flanagan Stieglitz visiting the old homestead of his (Mc)Tighe family, Lisnagon, Co Meath on 29 April 2025, page 14.

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Local Resources For Family History Research

County Monaghan

By James G. Ryan

This article deals with researching Monaghan ancestors, but with emphasis on resources specific to the county, or only available within the county. County Monaghan was historically the Gaelic Kingdom of Oriel, whose chieftains were the McMahons and their allies, the McKennas and O'Connollys. Unlike many other Ulster counties, Monaghan was not 'planted' after 1603, but some English and Scottish families were given confiscated land after the 1641 rebellion. Common Gaelic names include O'Duffy, O'Connolly, McCabe, McWard, McArdle, McIlmartin, O'Byrne and O'Callan. The major Scots-Irish names are McAndrew, Mackay, Sinclair, Stewart, Buchanan, McKenzie and Davidson. Many Scots-Irish left during the 1700s due to repression of the Penal laws.

Monaghan is one of the smallest Irish counties with a land area of 1,295 sq km, and a current population of 65,000. In 1841 the population was 200,000 but by 1851 this had fallen to 142,000 through death and emigration caused by the Famine. The main towns are Monaghan town (7,600), Carrickmacross, Castleblayney, Clones and Ballybay. It is mainly an agricultural county but has several significant industries.

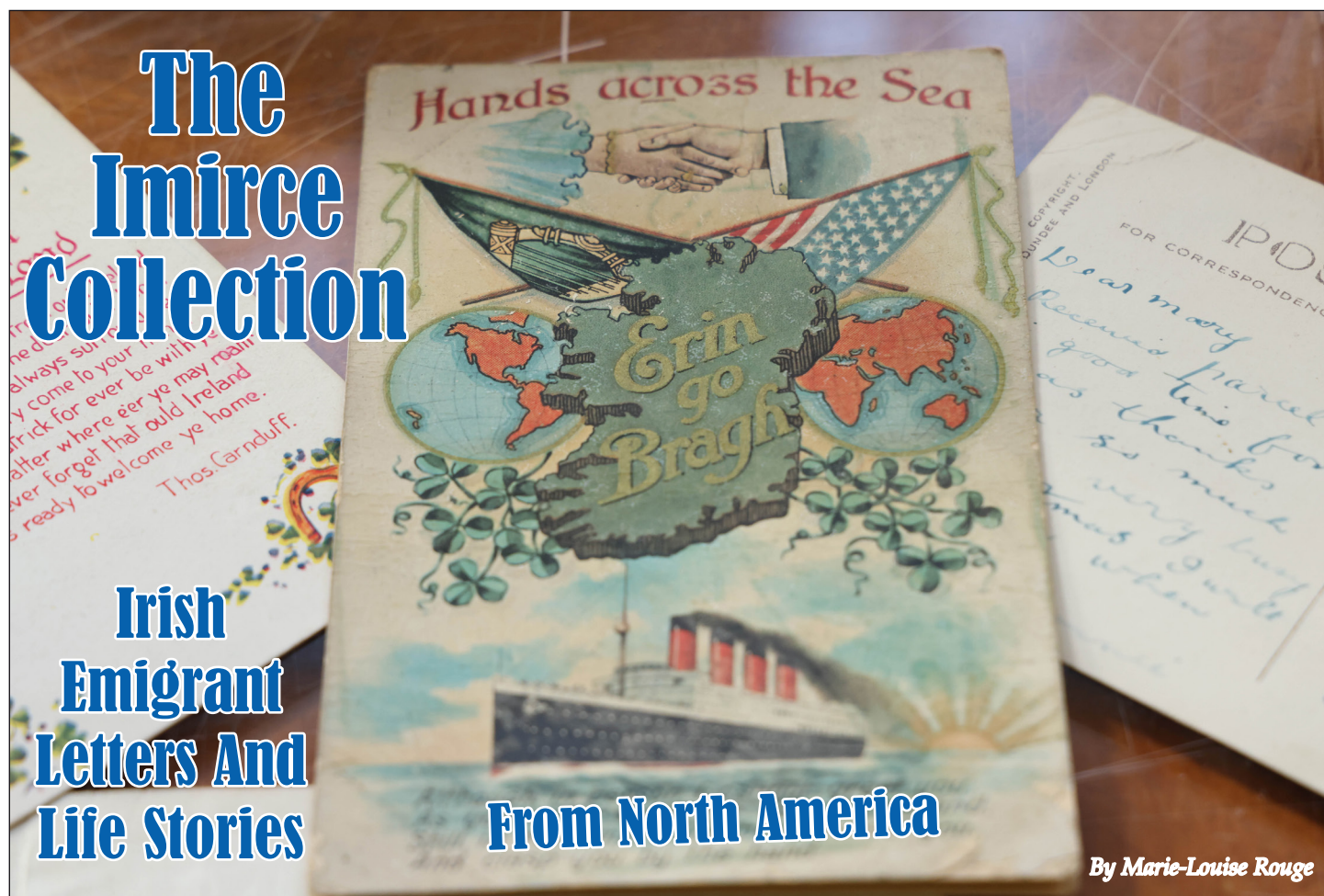
For family history research, Monaghan has all of the major national records: Civil records of birth, death and marriage start in 1864 and are available on-line from www.irishgenealogy.ie; Griffith's Valuation (a major listing of land occupiers) was conducted in 1858-60 and is available on many websites; and the 1901 and 1911 census returns are available on-line at <https://nationalarchives.ie/collections/search-the-census/>. If you are beginning your search and do not know where your family was located, these are useful

starting points. Some useful county-specific sources include:

- **County Library.** The major local history collection in the local library system is in the Clones branch, and includes books, journals, maps, newspapers, and a digital collection of national and local journals. Monaghan County Libraries have also produced an excellent guide on "How to trace your Ancestors in County Monaghan". This lists a huge range of sources, as well as contact information for church parishes and other relevant archives and organisations. It is available on-line at: <https://monaghantourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Monaghan-County-Library-Service-TraceYourAncestorsBooklet.pdf>
- **Monaghan Genealogy** is part of the Irish Family History Foundation, a nationwide network of genealogy centres. It offers a fee-based service to conduct research on local church and other sources which they have indexed. The centre can be contacted through <https://www.rootsireland.ie/monaghan/>

or by email at info@monaghangealogy.com.

- **Ask About Ireland** (www.askaboutireland.ie/) This website is a portal to many sources of information (including the Griffith Valuation noted above) but also contains down-loadable books and sources of local relevance in their 'Reading Room'.
- **Monaghan County Museum.** This award-winning museum does not have material relevant to tracing ancestors, but it holds some 50,000 items showing local life and folk-lore over the centuries. <https://monaghan.ie/museum>
- **County Monaghan Genealogy Page (IGP):** is also worth exploring as it provides (free) records contributed by volunteers: it has a good collection of abstracts of gravestones, court records; newspaper extracts and land-owners. <https://www.igp-web.com/Monaghan/index.html>
- **Fáilte Romhat - Irish Genealogy and History:** <https://www.failteromhat.com> (enter 'Monaghan' in the search bar on



History is the study of people – in all their glory and their frailties – and for the fly-on-the-wall perspective of the past, there may be no better medium than personal correspondence. Beyond the typical measures of demographics and economics, letters capture the complex perceptions and preoccupations of the authors as they tackle the myriad challenges of daily life.

Kerby A. Miller, the distinguished historian of Irish emigration and Irish diaspora communities, spent five decades collecting letters to preserve and elevate the stories of ordinary Irish men and women in North America. In 2021, Miller's research collection was donated to the University of Galway Library, and in March 2024, a digital repository was launched to share this collection with the public. Whether researching a particular location, family name or historical period, or just looking for an entertaining read, all are welcome to explore *Imirce*.

Kerby A. Miller And The Imirce Collection

In the 1970s, when researching what became his landmark publication *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (1986), Miller sought letters that were already held in libraries and archives collections. He also placed adverts in Irish newspapers asking members of the public to share their family correspondence with him to copy, transcribe and return. This method yielded great results, as hundreds of families welcomed the opportunity to



share their precious heirlooms with someone with genuine interest and knowledge about this subject area. Allowing Miller to make a copy meant that the letters could be preserved and shared with others while also allowing families to keep the original manuscripts that often hold significant sentimental value.

The Kerby A. Miller Collection (Archival ID: p155) was digitised in its entirety in early 2023 (more than 150,000 pages). Over the last two years, the collection has been catalogued to item level for release online to a dedicated repository called *Imirce* (the Irish word for 'emigration'). In addition to letters, Miller collected longer emigrant narratives, including memoirs,