

Irish Roots

**Genealogy In Reverse:
Finding The Living**

**Clan Gatherings:
Best Practices,
Tips And Guidance
For Your Family Gathering**

Celebrating Irish Ancestry



The National Archives Of Ireland Launch A Major Public Programme To Mark The Forthcoming 1926 Census Release On The 18th April 2026.

Local Family History Resources For Tracing COUNTY MEATH Ancestors.

A Look Back AT DNA Testing In 2025 And What It Means For Genealogists.

Further Guidance For Using Griffith's Valuation Online As A Research Tool.

News From The World Of Genealogy, Keep Up To Date With The Latest Irish Genealogical Record Releases, Books Selections, Letters To The Editor And Lots Lots More!



Local Resources For Family History Research County Meath

By James G. Ryan

This article deals with researching Meath ancestors, but with an emphasis on the resources specific to the county, or only available within the county. In ancient times County Meath was the territory of the High Kings of Ireland, and is still known as the Royal County. The abundance of historic monuments in the county, including some of the most important Irish historic sites, testifies to its ancient importance. The county is now a prosperous agricultural area, described as the great grazing-ground of the country, through which the River Boyne flows gently on its way to the Irish Sea. It has several significant towns including Navan, Kells, Ashbourne and Trim.

For family history research, Meath has all of the major national records: Civil records of birth, death and marriage start in 1864 (see www.groireland.ie); Griffith's Valuation (a major listing of land occupiers) was conducted in 1854 and is available on many websites including www.askaboutireland.ie; and the 1901 and 1911 census returns are available on-line at www.nationalarchives.ie.

Although most of the 1821 census was destroyed in a fire, there are also surviving remnants from 19 parishes in Meath on this site. If you are beginning your search and do not know where your family was located, these are useful starting points.

Archives, Libraries And Other Repositories

Meath has several archives, libraries and on-line sources housing records

of relevance to family history. These include:

- **County Libraries.** The Meath library system has an extensive collection of books, journals, maps, newspapers and other material of local interest. It also has a digital collection of national and local journals. The Local Studies department, based in Navan library, holds a reference collection including: Newspapers, Local History Journals, maps, Photographs, Trade Directories, School Registers and Historical Maps <http://www.meath.ie/Community/Libraries/LocalStudies/>.
- **Meath Archives.** This contains local government records of County Meath and is located in the Athlone Library. The collection includes records of Grand Juries (from 1800), Boards of Guardians of the Poor Law Unions (or Workhouse) (from 1849); Athlone Borough Corporation, and Mullingar Town Commission. They are accessible by prior arrangement with the library.

- **Meath Heritage Centre.** This centre is part of the Irish Family History Foundation (see www.rootsireland.ie), a nationwide network of genealogy centres and is based in Trim, Co. Meath. They have indexed church and other records and provides a research service to locate local families in these records. They can be contacted at <http://meath.rootsireland.ie/> or by email at noeltrim@gmail.com.

- **Ask About Ireland.** askaboutireland.ie. This website is a portal to many sources of information, and contains down-loadable books of local relevance, including the 'Statistical survey of the county of Meath'. By Robert Thompson, Dublin: Graisberry and Campbell, 1802.

- **County Meath Genealogy Page (IGP)** www.igp-web.com/Meath is also worth exploring as it provides (free) records contributed by volunteers: it has a good collection of abstracts of gravestones, as well as limited court records; newspaper extracts and land-owners.

The Story of Us

Release date
**18th April
2026**

Census 1926



An Chartlann Náisiúnta
National Archives



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Grúpa Teaghlaigh, An tUas J Brennan
An tSráid Leathan, Port Láirge
Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann
POOLE WP 3417a

Family group, Mr J Brennan
Broad Street, Waterford
National Library of Ireland
POOLE WP 3417a

What's New? Review

The countdown has begun and excitement is building as the release of the 1926 Census draws nearer. At this rate, we'll all be fully frenzied by mid-April 2026 and in need of sedation before we start digging for our families in the spanking new mega collection. So try to enjoy a little distraction in the meantime with some of the more recent – albeit smaller – record arrivals.

By Claire Santry



Even if you managed to avoid all conversation with other Irish genealogists until next spring, it will be difficult to escape the growing noise about the upcoming 1926 census release. It will be everywhere – on tv, radio, social media, newspaper and magazine pages – and it will be loud. It's already started.

The National Archives of Ireland (NAI), the state agency charged with delivery of this massive project, recently announced a major public programme to mark the event. The collection of more than 700,000 household returns containing details of 2,971,992 individuals will be launched online, fully digitized, searchable and free, on 18 April 2026 and will provide a detailed view of life in the 26 counties just a few years after the island's Partition, see pages 16 and 17 or visit <https://nationalarchives.ie/engage-and-learn/census-1926-public-programme>. (The census taken in the six counties now in Northern Ireland are lost, presumed destroyed.)

Alongside the release, the NAI and the Department of Culture will launch exhibitions in Boston, London, Dublin and across Ireland. There will also be a new documentary on Ireland's national broadcaster, RTÉ, a theatre production with ANU Production, a book titled *The Story of Us: Independent Ireland and the 1926 census* and a new learning resource and teacher's pack for schools.

The NAI is also seeking 'centenarian ambassadors' – people who were recorded in the 1926 census and are still living – to share their stories.

Of course, if you're happy to go with the flow and enjoy the group hysteria, you can live and breathe all things 1926 Census via the Central Statistics Office website where a series of statistical reports, each holding anonymised data about the population's occupations, demographics, housing, religion and dependency and so on are available for download at <https://shorturl.at/3mSIW>. Should be enough there to keep you contented until Easter, at least!

What's Going On At IrishGenealogy.ie?

Regular readers of my column will not be surprised that I'm a bit fed-up with the state-managed website [IrishGenealogy.ie](https://www.irishgenealogy.ie). It is still THE go-to site for civil registrations of births, marriages and deaths, but it is becoming a mess. For longer than is reasonable, an important chunk of images from the death registers (the earliest ones, dating 1864-1870) has

failed to make its way into the online database. While the birth and marriage holdings have long been complete with both indexes and register images, the death holding was only complete from 1871. However, it had an index for the earlier years. But now it doesn't. With its usual lack of communication, the management team simply removed the indexes during October and didn't say a word. Were we supposed to not notice?

For now, if you want to view an index of deaths in 1864 to 1870, you will have to search Ancestry, FamilySearch, FindMyPast, or MyHeritage, or, if the death occurred in Northern Ireland, you can access both the index and register data (£,€, \$) at GRONI Online (bit.ly/GroniOnline).

Returning to [IrishGenealogy.ie](https://www.irishgenealogy.ie), a new search feature has been introduced. Previously, civil BMD searches could be narrowed down by providing the name of the Superintendent Registrar District where the event may have taken place. Now it is possible to search by county, making it easier to search a wider area if you are not sure of a specific location.