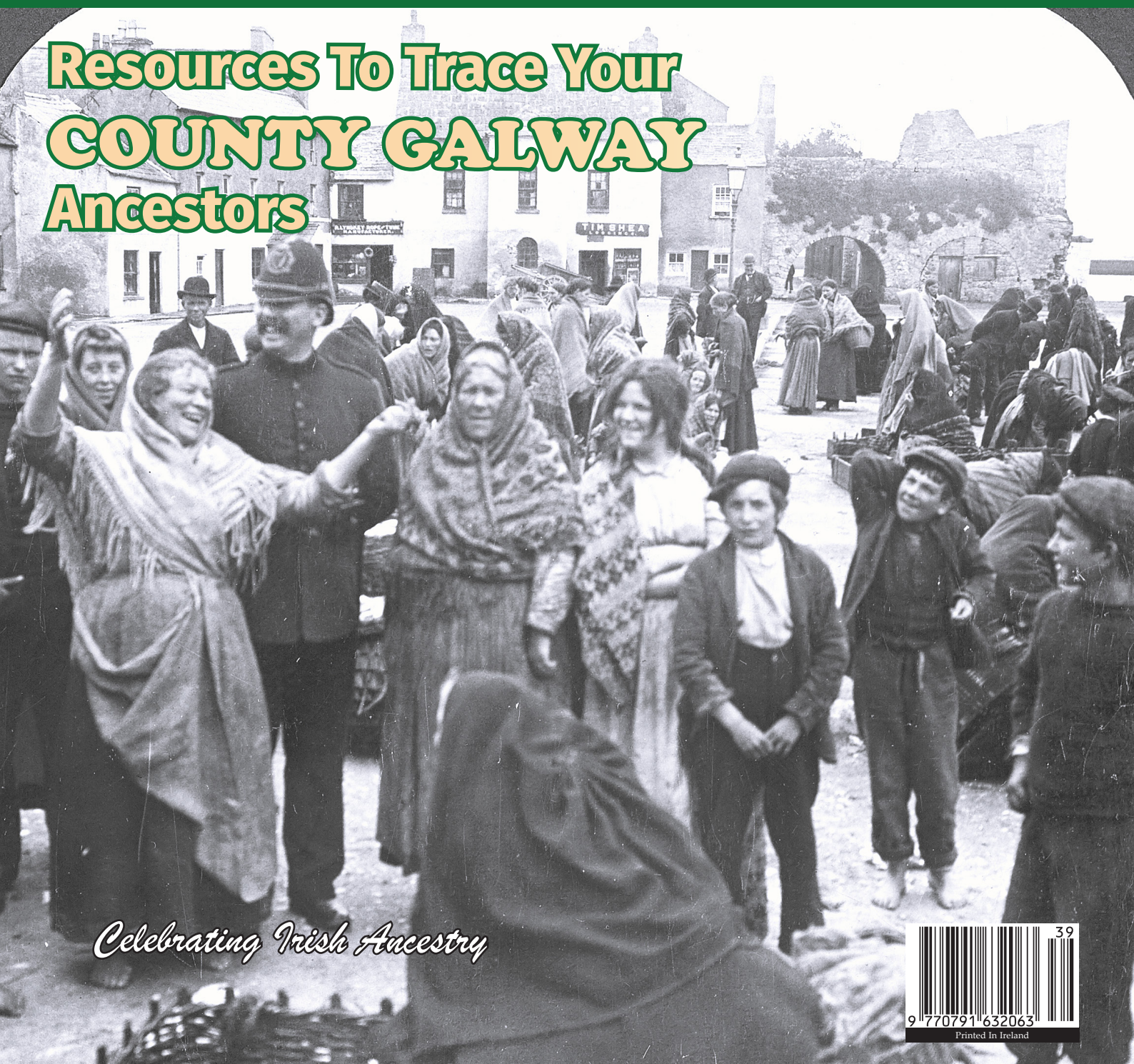




Irish Roots

Resources To Trace Your **COUNTY GALWAY** Ancestors



Celebrating Irish Ancestry



- In This Issue; Using Y-DNA To Explore Your Irish Surname.
- The 'Photo Angel' Project - Connecting Lost Photographs With Their Relatives.
- Discover The History And Background To The Many Surnames Of County Galway.
- Keep Up To Date With Irish Genealogy News, Records, Tips, Books, Queries & More!



By
Donna Rutherford

This article was developed from a discussion with Dr Maurice Gleeson and John Cleary, two leading figures in Irish genetic genealogy and experienced Y-DNA surname project administrators. In the previous issue of *Irish Roots*, we explored how Y-DNA research is reshaping our understanding of Irish surnames, revealing that many have multiple genetic origins rather than descending from a single ancestor. This time, drawing on Maurice and John's experience, we turn to the practical side of surname research. If you want to investigate your own Irish surname using Y-DNA, where do you begin, who should test, and what can you realistically expect to discover?

Why Y-DNA?

Most family historians begin their DNA journey with an autosomal DNA test. It is an excellent tool for identifying cousins, confirming documentary research, and solving mysteries within the last five or six generations. However, when the goal is to investigate a surname that may stretch back hundreds of years, a different type of DNA test is needed.

Y-DNA follows the direct paternal line in much the same way that surnames have traditionally been inherited. Fathers pass their Y chromosome to their sons, who then pass it on to the next generation. Although small genetic changes occur over time, the Y chromosome remains remarkably stable, allowing paternal lines to be traced over many centuries. "Y-DNA reaches much further back than autosomal DNA," explains Maurice Gleeson. "It allows us to explore relationships well beyond the period that traditional genealogy can usually reach."

For Irish surname research, this makes Y-DNA uniquely powerful. Instead of simply identifying living cousins, it can reveal whether men carrying the same surname share a common paternal ancestor and, in some cases, approximately when that ancestor lived.

Choosing The Right Person To Test

One of the first surprises for many researchers is that not everyone can take a Y-DNA test. Because only men inherit a Y chromosome, only men can be tested directly. That does not mean women are excluded from surname research—it simply means they need to identify an appropriate male relative to act as a proxy. For example, if you wish to investigate your father's surname, a brother, paternal uncle, or male cousin descended through an unbroken male line may all be suitable candidates. Likewise, if you are researching your maternal

grandfather's surname, you would need to locate a living male descendant who has inherited that same Y chromosome. Finding the right tester is one of the most important steps in the entire process. Testing the wrong person can answer a completely different genealogical question.

Both Maurice and John emphasise that some documentary research should always come before purchasing a DNA test. Understanding your family tree and identifying exactly which surname line you want to investigate will save both time and money.

Start By Researching The Surname

It may seem counterintuitive, but one of the best pieces of advice is not to order a test immediately. Instead, spend a little time researching the surname itself. Is there already a FamilyTreeDNA surname project? Have other researchers

Local Resources For Family History Research



County Galway

By James G. Ryan

This article deals with researching Galway ancestors but with emphasis on resources specific to, or only available within, the county. Major Gaelic families are O'Flaherty, O'Kelly, O'Madden, O'Malley, O'Daly, O'Fallon, O'Hynes and O'Naughton; while later Norman arrivals include Burke and Joyce. The county has a range of healthcare industries and is a major centre of tourism. The major towns are Galway city (population 90K), Athenry, Loughrea, Tuam and Clifden.

For family history research, Galway has all of the major national records: Civil records of birth, death and marriage (from 1864) are at www.irishgenealogy.ie; Griffith's Valuation (a major listing of land occupiers) was conducted from 1853-6 and is available on many websites including www.askaboutireland.ie (see below); and the 1901, 1911 and 1926 census returns are available on-line at www.nationalarchives.ie.

Tithe Applotment Books (1823-1837) lists occupiers of agricultural land who paid tithes and is available at nationalarchives.ie. If you are beginning your search and do not know where in the county your family was located, these are useful starting points.

Archives, Libraries And Other Repositories

The local archives, libraries and on-line sources housing records of relevance include:

Galway County Library Service

Galway County Library Service (www.galwaylibrary.ie) runs 29 libraries. Their Local Studies collection is at Island House in Galway. Email: localstudies@galwaylibrary.ie

galwaylibrary.ie. Notable items include: *The Galway Reader*, a journal published by the Library from 1948 to 1954 containing articles on Galway history. This can be downloaded free of charge. The library has an extensive hard-copy and digital collection of local sources including books, periodicals, maps, photographs, commercial directories; Grand Jury Presentment Books (1812-1899).

Galway County Council Archives

Galway County Council Archives has a mission to '... acquire, preserve and make accessible the documentary memory of county Galway'. It holds local administrative records including those of the Poor Law Commissioners and District and Town Councils, as well as valuation records, electoral rolls, and staff attendance records.

Publications based on these collections are available for free download including *"For the Record: The Archives of Galway's Rural District Councils"*. It also holds photographic collections, diaries, and records of some landed families including: Kellys of Castlekelly, Ballygar, (1606 - 1880); Burkes of Loughrea (1707-1970); Lawrences of Lawrencetown (1826-1930); and Ffrench of Rahasane (1765-1831). The latter two are available

on-line, as are some other holdings. See: www.galway.ie/en/libraries-archives.

University College Galway Library

University College Galway Library also has an extensive collection of local and national material in their "Archives & Special Collections Reading Room" which includes estate papers; rare books; maps; local government papers. Details at: <https://library.universityofgalway.ie/collections/>

Galway Family History Society

Galway Family History Society (<https://galwayroots.com/>), founded in 1991, offers a professional research service and has indexed Catholic and Church of Ireland records, as well as many other sources. They also publish a range of books on local history and people. They are based near Loughrea and can be contacted at: galwayroots@gmail.com.

The National Library Of Ireland

A major resource of all kinds of resources including books, periodicals, photographs, maps and also private papers and manuscripts. The collection can be searched at <https://sources.nli.ie/> or www.nli.ie. Some material is accessible on-line.

National Archives, Ireland

Thinking of starting your personal genealogy journey?

Our Genealogy Advisory Service (GAS) is available in person and via email.

The service is available during office hours (Mon–Fri, 10am to 5pm) and is run on behalf of the National Archives by an external panel of professional genealogists, all holding credentials from Accredited Genealogists Ireland (AGI).

Email enquiries should be sent to: query@nationalarchives.ie

Further information is available at: <https://nationalarchives.ie/help-with-research/types-of-research/genealogy-advisory-service/>



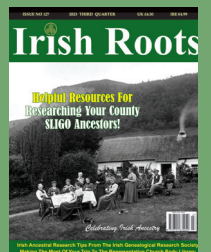
An Chaitlann Náisiúnta
National Archives



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