

Claire Bradley Meets The Quakers And Discovers Their Treasure Trove Of Family History Records Available



The Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers, were one of several dissenting religions which emerged following the English civil war in the 1650s. Their founder, George Fox, felt that clergy and administration got in the way of a person's direct relationship with God. He encouraged members to gather for silent worship and if they felt moved by the holy spirit to speak, they could. Many early converts were drawn from the ranks of soldiers and adventurers who came to Ireland following the war.

The first Quaker in Ireland was an English soldier called William Edmundson. He founded the first Meeting, as Quaker services are called, in 1654 in Lurgan, Co. Armagh, but they soon spread down the coast and through the midlands. Most of the early Irish Quakers were English, making them genetically distinct from the natives. By the mid-1700s, Quakers had a presence in most urban settlements in Leinster, Munster and Ulster, but they never gained much traction in Connacht, perhaps because very few learned to speak Irish and therefore, they couldn't easily proselytise.

While many members were farmers, Quakers also went into business. The Society gained a reputation for hard work and honest business practice and their members became part of the growing middle-class in Ireland. However, they also faced persecution under the Penal Laws just like Catholics. Their unwillingness to pay tithes to the Church of Ireland and take oaths caused much trouble, and sometimes worked against themselves, as they could not serve on juries or take legal action.

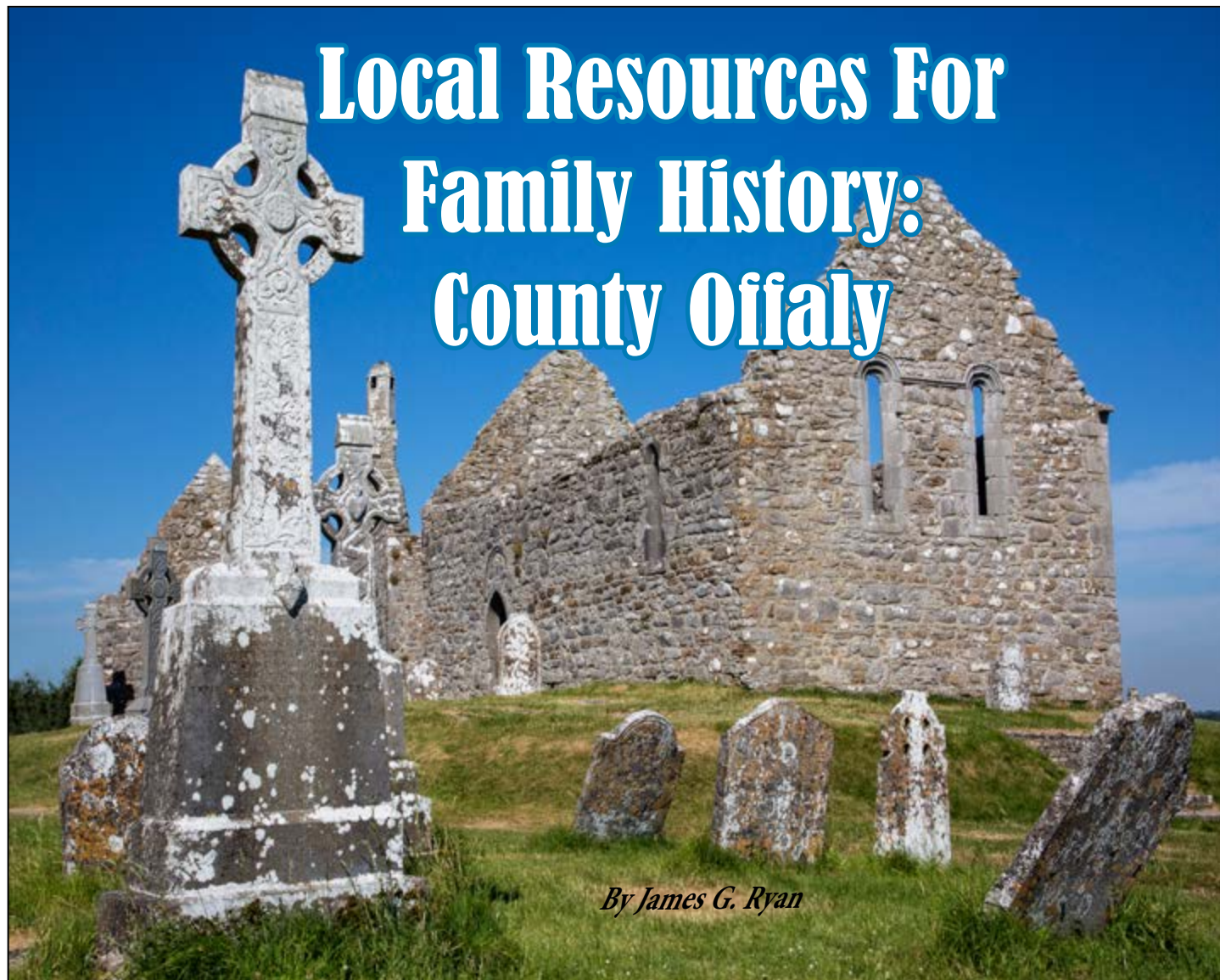
Quakers were unique for the period in many ways. They allowed their women to minister and take on administrative duties. However, this should not be mistaken for an early form of feminism, as women were still subject to the laws of the land, and it was difficult to gain any true independence.

Caring for the poor and pacifist principles also marked Quakers out. Sensing the coming rebellion, a directive instructed all members to destroy their weapons in 1796. Thomas Christy Wakefield, a young man from Lurgan, who had recently bought a new gun, was heard to lament compliance with this dictat for the rest of his life! It would perhaps be akin to destroying your new Iphone today. In the nineteenth century, they championed the abolitionist cause.

Quakers established their own schools to ensure their children were brought up in their ways. The most famous was Ballitore in Co. Kildare, which took non-Quaker pupils such as Edmund Burke and Napper Tandy. The noted diarist, Mary Leadbetter, née Shackleton, lived there and her books help to build a picture of 18th century Quaker life.

They rejected titles and treated everyone equally referring to people as "Friend" rather than Mr, Mrs or Lord and Lady. Another way in which they set themselves apart was by retaining the by then archaic use of Thee and Thou in the singular rather than you. This was known as Plain Speech. Indeed, plainness in every facet of life was encouraged. Clothes should be appropriate but not fussy – too many

Local Resources For Family History: County Offaly



By James G. Ryan

Whereas there are a wide range of records available for research at a national level, this article deals with the specialised resources available within County Offaly (once King's County), or which are specific to the county. Offaly is located in the midlands, and is one of the smallest counties (771 square miles). It was originally part of the kingdom of Ui Failghe, ruled by the O'Connor Faley clan. In the mid 16th century, part of this kingdom was 'shired' by the English rulers of the day and named King's County in honour of King Philip of Spain, who was then married to Queen Mary of England. On the formation of the Irish Free State in 1921, the name was changed back to Offaly in honour of the ancient kingdom.

The major Gaelic families of the county are the O'Connor (Faley), O'Molloy, O'Carroll, Holohan, Gilfoyle, Coughlan and Mooney. The village of Moneygall www.moneygall.ie was the birthplace of Fulmouth Kearney, an ancestor of Barack Obama.

Offaly has all of the major national records: Civil records from 1864; Griffith's Valuation listing of land occupiers in 1854; 1901/11 census returns as well as Church records of most denominations. These were the subject of an article in Irish Roots magazine, issue no 105. This article deals with the more specialised local repositories and organisations within the county that are of potential value in your family history research. Local libraries can be a

goldmine for research on local families. Their staff or members know the county history and culture; and also the events and organisations that may have generated records. Local people have donated materials to these organisations rather than to the major national repositories. They will almost all have material that is not available in National Repositories, and an increasing amount of their holdings is available on-line

Offaly County Library

www.offaly.ie/eng/Services/Libraries is the major in-county source of family history records (in addition to National Repositories). It has a major collection of purchased and donated manuscripts, books, directories, and newspapers. Offaly has 8 public libraries, each of which has a local studies section, but

the main collection is in Tullamore library. This supports local researchers on social, economic, historical and other issues and holds many items of family history relevance. Information about access and other issues is available from tullamorelibrary@offalycoco.ie.

Offaly Archives

www.offalyarchives.com is the jointly managed archives service of Offaly County Library and Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society (see below). Their joint collections are housed in a common facility at Axis Business Park, Clara Road, Tullamore, Co Offaly. It contains newspapers, journals, books, manuscripts and maps. It includes the archives of local government (documents produced by the Grand Jury; Workhouse; County Council, Public

Donna Moughty offers more helpful tips and tools for your family history research

In the last issue, I discussed Five Commonly Asked Family History Research Questions. In this issue, I'll continue to address questions about Irish genealogy I receive, offering specific online and offline resources. When your research relates to a specific topic or locality, the best thing to do is to go into a learning mode and so here, I offer resources so you will be able to use your research skills to answer your questions. The questions for this issue relate to getting started, immigration and death records.

Where do I begin?

I frequently get asked, "Where do I begin?" This isn't necessarily a question related to Irish research, but the basics of doing genealogical research. Like any new pursuit, education is a requirement. You begin your genealogical research with yourself and then work backwards, generation by generation "proving" each connection. Start by filling out a basic pedigree chart listing yourself as the first person, then your parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc. with whatever information you already know. For each individual, you want to know the date AND place of their life events, such as birth, marriage and death. Fill in as much as you know. The empty spots will provide you with the key question for your Research Plan...the document that directs your research (<https://tinyurl.com/26hpcp2j>).

Once your research question is answered, move on to the next blank. A great place to learn about the basics is at [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org). Under the "Search" tab, select the Research Wiki and type in "Getting Started" as the topic. You can also go to the [Learning Center](https://www.familysearch.org/learn) for video lessons. [FamilySearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) is a free website, although you do need to register.

If you are not an absolute beginner, the FamilySearch Wiki is still a great resource. Perhaps you want to find a birth record in Michigan. Type the locality, i.e. Michigan in the search box to find out what type of records are available for that locality and time period.

For your Irish research, it's important to begin your research in the country



where they settled. The key requirement is knowing the locality in Ireland (County, Civil Parish and Townland) where your ancestor lived. You can refer to the articles in Issues 115, 116 and 117 of Irish Roots magazine for additional information.

Immigration

Is there a good source that tells the story of the people who went from Counties Kilkenny, Carlow, and Wexford (and others) to Newfoundland pre-1830?

When it comes to immigration, I get a lot of really specific questions like the example above. I'm not familiar with this specific area, so let's look at the question as a case study.

First, let's take a step back. It's important to understand the push and pull of immigration. The question you're trying to answer is: Why did your ancestor leave their home and why did they choose a specific locality to settle? They probably didn't throw a dart at a map — they likely immigrated to an area where they knew someone. It might have been a family member or a neighbour from home. To better understand your ancestor, you should research the history of the area, both where your ancestor originated and where they settled.

To answer the above question, I'd begin with a Google search, typing in "migration from Ireland to Newfoundland." This search returns 7.6 million hits (probably more than you want to look at). The first result is titled "Irish Migration" from a website [Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador](https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/society/irish-migration.php) (<https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/society/irish-migration.php>) and it covers the time period beginning in the late 17th century. According to the article, most of the migration began with temporary workers from the southeast of Ireland going to work in the fisheries, with the main port of departure being Waterford. That fits with the counties mentioned in the question. As you peruse the Google results, note the other websites such as [Library and Archives Canada](https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/) (<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/>) as well as various colleges and universities, genealogical and historical societies and blog sites. Reading these sources might not mention your ancestor, but will give you a better idea of the "pull" and the history of the area.

Next I'd check out John Grenham's site, Irish Ancestors ([JohnGrenham.com](https://www.johngrenham.com)) or his book, [Tracing Your Irish Ancestors](https://www.johngrenham.com). John provides an extensive bibliography of material by locality. If you know the