



WESTERN FAMILY HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Family History Tutorial

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The following is a brief summary of the discussion at the May 2014 meeting of the Western Family History Association.

Family history should always start with yourself. Write down everything you know. Ask older family members and write down everything they know. Avoid leading questions, e.g. instead of asking 'did Mary marry John?', ask 'who did Mary marry?'.

Use wildcards when searching the 1901 & 1911 census. For example when searching for Thomas Shaughnessy, type 'Shau*' for surname and 'Tho*' for first name. Names are often spelled incorrectly, and first names can be abbreviated, for example, Thomas is often written 'Thos'.

Church marriage records often provide valuable information if the bride and groom were related. The following annotations are typically given:

- Disp. 2^o & 2^o First cousins
- Disp. 2^o & 3^o First cousins once removed
- Disp. 3^o & 3^o Second cousins
- Disp. 3^o & 4^o Second cousins once removed
- Disp. 4^o & 4^o Third cousins

Note: 2^o, 3^o and 4^o are often written secundo/tertio/ad quartum gradu consanguinitatis.

FamilySearch.org is an excellent site for online records which is free of charge. It has many Irish records as well as shipping records, U.S. census records (some not free), and birth, death and marriage records for many states in the U.S. Many records have original images which can be viewed by clicking 'view document' on the right side of an individual record page.

EllisIsland.org, another free website, contains all the passenger lists for arrivals in Ellis Island.

Griffith's Valuation is available for free at askaboutireland.ie. Revisions to the records can be viewed in the Cancelled Land Books, available at the Valuation Office in the Irish Life Centre in Abbey Street, Dublin.

For research on families in Galway, the website places.galwaylibrary.ie provides a wealth of information on placenames. By searching for a parish name, a list of the townlands in that parish can be viewed, together with the variants in their spelling. Within each townland page, there are links to Griffith's valuation and the 1901 & 1911 census records for that townland. Also included are links to OS maps and the Down Survey.

Irish court records are available on the subscription site Findmypast.ie. These record the name and townland name of the defendant as well as the details of the offense committed, and thus records for a particular family are easily searchable.

Findmypast offers a free 14 day trial. Those who take up this offer should be aware that you will be charged the subsequent subscription unless you cancel before the end of the free trial.

A month's subscription is available for €14.95. Again, those availing of this should go to the page entitled 'Personal Details' which can be found under 'My Account', and untick the 'Auto-renew my subscription' box followed by 'Update details'; if you do not do this your subscription will renew automatically and you will be charged for subsequent months.