

# *My Roots*

TRACING YOUR  
BELFAST ANCESTORS

William Roulston

*with*

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ULSTER HISTORICAL  
FOUNDATION  
2008

This booklet has been financed under the *Renewing Communities* Action Plan administered by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure.

*Renewing Communities* is the Government's response to the report of the taskforce on Protestant working-class communities. It is a cross-departmental project reflecting the work undertaken by agencies in relation to improving social and economic interests within the community. The strategy is to create a fair and inclusive society where all individuals, families and communities can access the right support, realise opportunities to achieve the best of their ability and make the best possible contribution to Northern Ireland society.

Published 2007, updated 2008  
by the Ulster Historical Foundation  
Cotton Court, Waring Street, Belfast BT1 2ED  
[www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)

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Printed by Thomson Litho  
Typeset by December Publications & FPM Publishing  
Design by Dunbar Design

**RENEWING COMMUNITIES**  
RENEWING COMMUNITIES - REBUILDING COMMUNITY SERVICES

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CI	Church of Ireland
DED	District Electoral Division
GRO	General Register Office
LC	Local Custody
M	Methodist
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
P	Presbyterian
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
RC	Roman Catholic
UHF	Ulster Historical Foundation

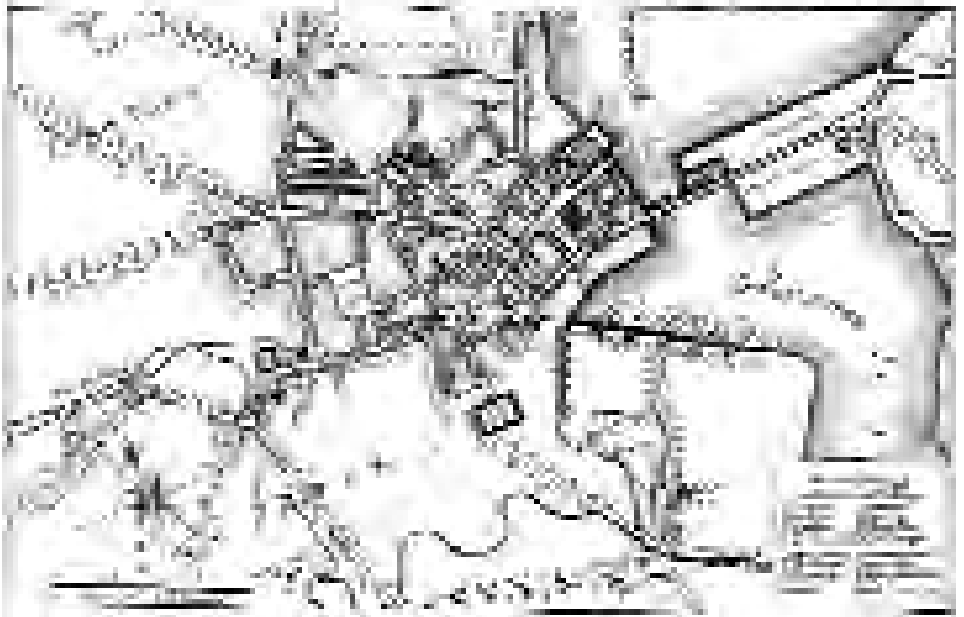
*All references, unless otherwise stated, are for documents held by PRONI.*

## GLOSSARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

**Barony.** A unit used in Ireland between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries for administrative (census, taxation, and legal) purposes. Often drawn on pre-existing Gaelic divisions, baronies consisted of large groupings of townlands within a county. The 1891 census is the last to use the barony as an administrative unit.

**County.** The county system as a form of territorial division was introduced into Ireland shortly after the Norman Conquest in the late twelfth century. The creation of counties or shires was gradual, however, and the present arrangement of county boundaries was not finalised in Ulster until the early seventeenth century. In 1898 local councils based on county divisions were created. County councils remain the principal administrative body of local government in the Republic of Ireland but were abolished in Northern Ireland in 1973. The counties in Ulster are: Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry, Monaghan and Tyrone. Of these, Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan are in the Republic of Ireland, with the rest in Northern Ireland.

**Diocese.** A diocese is an area controlled by a bishop and composed of a group of parishes. The number of parishes in a diocese varies considerably. In the diocese of Connor, there were over seventy parishes, while in the diocese of Clogher there were approximately thirty-



Belfast in 1791, population 18,320. Reprinted from *Merchants in Plenty*

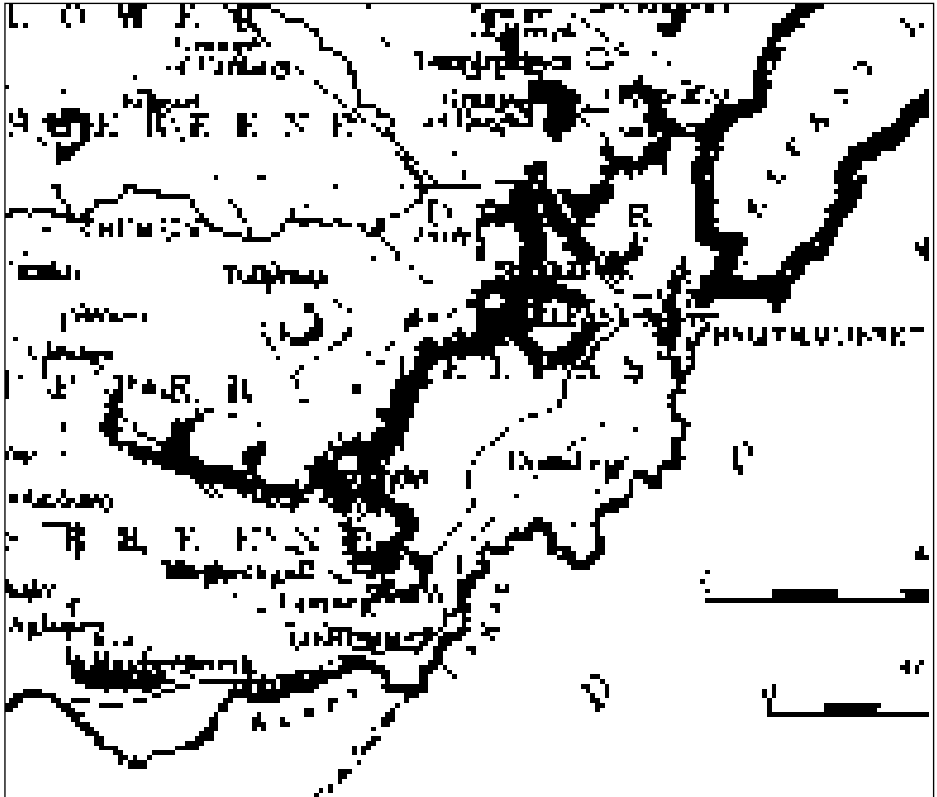
five parishes. The network of dioceses was created in the medieval period and continues to be used by both the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Church with only minor alterations. The dioceses in Ulster are Armagh (covering all or part of counties Armagh, Londonderry and Tyrone), Clogher (Donegal, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Tyrone), Connor (Antrim, Down and Londonderry), Derry (Donegal, Londonderry and Tyrone), Down (Down), Dromore (Antrim, Armagh and Down), Kilmore (Cavan and Fermanagh) and Raphoe (Donegal).

**Manor.** The manor was introduced to Ireland by the Normans in the twelfth century. In the early seventeenth century grantees in the Ulster Plantation were given power to 'create manors'. The manor provided the basic legal framework within which an estate could be managed and was vital to its successful development. The lord of the manor was enabled to hold courts leet and baron to regulate the affairs of his estate. The manor courts also provided an arena where tenants could settle their disputes.

**Parish.** This territorial division refers to both civil and ecclesiastical units. Civil parishes largely follow the pattern that was established in medieval times. Ecclesiastical parishes do not always coincide with civil parish boundaries, however. Following the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Church of Ireland more or less maintained the pre-Reformation arrangement. Church of Ireland parishes are, therefore, largely coterminous with civil parishes. When the Catholic Church began its institutional re-emergence in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it constructed a new network of parishes which did not follow the civil parish network. The County Antrim part of Belfast is mainly in the parish of Shankill. That part of Belfast in County Down is mainly in the parish of Knockbreda.

**Province.** Provinces are composed of groups of counties. There are four provinces in Ireland: Ulster in the north, Leinster in the east, Munster in the south, and Connacht or Connaught in the west.

**Townland.** This is the smallest administrative territorial unit in Ireland, varying in size from a single acre to over 7,000 acres. Originating in the older Gaelic dispensation, townlands were used as the basis of leases in the estate system, and subsequently to assess valuations and tithes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They survive as important markers of local identity.



Extract from Samuel Lewis, *Atlas of Ireland* (1837)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to be an introduction to the sources available for researching Belfast ancestors and is aimed at those starting out in their quest to find more about their family history. It considers the main categories of record, where they may be found and how they can be used to assist you with your research. It is designed to be a handy guide to have with you when you visit the different archives and libraries in the course of your research. A much more comprehensive volume on researching Belfast ancestors will be published by Ulster Historical Foundation in due course.

The best way for someone to begin researching the history of their family is within their own family circle. In nearly every family there is at least one member with an encyclopaedic knowledge of who married who and how many children they had and where they lived etc. Collect as much information as possible on names, dates and places relating to your family; write it down and begin to plot out the skeleton of a family tree. A family Bible is another possible source of information on your ancestors. Gathering this information before you visit the archives can save a great deal of time. Once you find out what you do know, you will then be aware of the gaps and will have a clearer idea of what you should be looking for.

## 2. CIVIL REGISTRATION

Civil registers of births, marriages and deaths provide basic family history information. However, their usefulness for the genealogist will depend on the period being researched. Civil or state registration of all births, deaths and marriages began in Ireland on 1 January 1864. Non-Catholic marriages, including those conducted in a government registry office, were required in law to be registered from 1 April 1845. Civil registration followed the administrative divisions created by the Poor Law Act of 1838. The country was divided into Poor Law Unions. The Poor Law Unions were subdivided into dispensary districts, each with its own medical officer. Under civil registration the area covered by a Poor Law Union was used as the basis of each superintendent registrar's district, while the dispensary districts corresponded to the registrar's districts. In some cases the medical officer also served as the registrar. In overall charge of registration was the Registrar General in Dublin. Certified copies of all registers compiled locally were sent to his office and, from these, indexes covering the whole of Ireland were produced.

### **Birth certificates**

Birth certificates record the date and place of birth of the child. Normally the name of the child is also given, but in some cases only the sex is given, i.e. the child had not been given a name by the time the birth was registered. The name and residence of the father is given.

Usually this will be the same as the place of birth of the child, but in some cases it will show that the father was working abroad or in another part of Ireland when the child was born. The father's occupation is also given. The mother's maiden name is provided as well as her first name. Finally, the name and address of the informant is given, together with his or her qualification to sign. This will usually be the father or mother or someone present at the birth, such as a midwife or even the child's grandmother.

### **Marriage certificates**

Civil records of marriage normally give fuller information than birth and death certificates, and are the most useful category of civil records. Information on the individuals getting married includes their name, age, status, and occupation. The names and occupations of their fathers are also given. The church, the officiating minister and the witnesses to the ceremony are named. In most cases the exact age of the parties is not given, and the entry will simply read 'full age' (i.e. over 21) or 'minor' (i.e. under 21). If the father of one of the parties was no longer living, this may be indicated in the marriage certificate by the word 'deceased' or by leaving the space blank, but in many cases it is not. This should always be borne in mind when planning the next steps in your research.

### **Death certificates**

Civil records of death in Ireland are rather uninformative in comparison to other countries. The name of the deceased is given together with the date, place and cause of death, marital status, the age at death, and occupation. The name and address of the informant is also given. Usually this is the person present at the time of the death; this may be a close family member.

### **The indexes**

Indexes to civil marriages 1845–63 are hand-written, but thereafter all indexes are printed. From 1864 to 1877 indexes for births, marriages and deaths consist of a single yearly volume covering the whole of Ireland. From 1878 the annual indexes are arranged on a quarterly basis. In each index the surnames will be arranged alphabetically, followed by the first names. The name of the superintendent registrar's district is also given, followed by the volume number and page number of the master copies of the registers in Dublin. In the indexes to deaths the age of the deceased will be provided. When using the indexes it is important to bear in mind possible variations of the name being researched. In the birth indexes an unnamed child will appear as 'male' or 'female' after the surname.

### **General Register Office, Belfast and District Registrars' offices**

The General Register Office (GRO) in Belfast holds the original birth and death registers recorded by the local district registrars for Northern Ireland from 1864. Marriage registers for Northern Ireland are available from 1922. The following computerised indexes to the civil registers are available at the GRO:

birth indexes	–	1864 onwards
death indexes	–	1864 onwards
marriage indexes	–	1845 onwards

Only the indexes are available for public inspection, not the registers themselves. Visits

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THE ABOVE THIS INFORMATION IS THE BASIS OF THE ISSUANCE OF A DEATH CERTIFICATE

1. Residence of Deceased 1000 1st St. N. W. Washington, D.C.

2. <u>Place of Birth</u> <u>St. Louis, Mo.</u>	3. <u>Place of Death</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>	4. <u>Place of Burial</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>	5. <u>Place of Interment</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>
6. <u>Sex</u> <u>Male</u>	7. <u>Color</u> <u>White</u>	8. <u>Religion</u> <u>Methodist</u>	9. <u>Marital Status</u> <u>Married</u>
10. <u>Age</u> <u>65</u>	11. <u>Occupation</u> <u>Teacher</u>	12. <u>Education</u> <u>High School</u>	13. <u>Signature of Registrar</u> <u>[Signature]</u>

14. Signature of Physician [Signature]

15. Signature of Coroner [Signature]

16. Signature of Registrar [Signature]

Example of birth certificate

1. <u>Name of Deceased</u> <u>John Doe</u>	2. <u>Sex</u> <u>Male</u>	3. <u>Color</u> <u>White</u>	4. <u>Religion</u> <u>Methodist</u>
5. <u>Place of Birth</u> <u>St. Louis, Mo.</u>	6. <u>Place of Death</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>	7. <u>Place of Burial</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>	8. <u>Place of Interment</u> <u>Washington, D.C.</u>
9. <u>Sex</u> <u>Male</u>	10. <u>Color</u> <u>White</u>	11. <u>Religion</u> <u>Methodist</u>	12. <u>Marital Status</u> <u>Married</u>
13. <u>Age</u> <u>65</u>	14. <u>Occupation</u> <u>Teacher</u>	15. <u>Education</u> <u>High School</u>	16. <u>Signature of Registrar</u> <u>[Signature]</u>

Example of death certificate

to the GRO to view the indexes have to be arranged in advance. An index search costs £10. This includes four verifications of items found in the indexes, with the option of further verifications at £2.50 each. An assisted search service is also provided. This can be a much quicker method of extracting information from the civil registers, especially if a specific location is known, but costs £24 per hour. A full certified copy of a birth, death or marriage certificate costs £10.

The General Register Office is located at Oxford House, 49–55 Chichester Street, Belfast, BT1 4HL. Applications for certificates can be made in person, by post, by telephone (028 9025 2000) or online ([www.groni.gov.uk](http://www.groni.gov.uk)). Searches will be made in the year quoted plus the two years either side unless a wider search is requested. A further fee will be required for each extra five years searched. Personal applications are processed within three working days; postal or telephone applications are processed within eight working days. The GRO also holds adopted children registers from 1931 and marine registers of births and deaths on ships at sea from 1922.

Although indexes to civil marriage registers are available at the GRO from 1845, the original registers are located at the District Registrars' offices of local councils. The Registrar's Office in City Hall, Belfast holds some 4,000 marriage registers. If you know the exact date and place of the marriage an application can be made directly to the Registrar's Office (tel. 028 9027 0274). Otherwise it would probably be better to visit the GRO and get the details, from the index to marriages, from that office.

The Ulster Historical Foundation has a database of virtually all civil marriage records in Belfast from 1845 to 1921 and has made these available on its website on a pay-per-view basis ([www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)). It is also possible to make an appointment with the Foundation to visit its office at 30–42 Waring Street, Belfast, and for a fee view its computerised databases (tel. 028 9033 2288).

### **Latter-Day Saints**

From 1948 the Latter-Day Saints (LDS), or Mormons, began microfilming documentary material in Ireland. The most important resource acquired at that time was the registers of births, deaths and marriages as well as the indexes to these records held in the Registrar General's Office in Dublin. The Mormons were not able to complete the filming of all registers before work was suspended. The LDS collection of microfilms of civil registers and indexes is as follows:

birth indexes	1864–1921
birth registers	1864 to first quarter 1880; 1900–13
marriage indexes	1845–63 (non-Catholic); 1864–1921 (all denominations)
marriage registers	1845–63 (non-Catholic); 1864–70 (all denominations)
death indexes	1864–1921
death registers	1864–70

These can be consulted at their Family History Centre, 401 Holywood Road, Belfast (tel. 028 9076 9839).

The Mormons have indexed many of the two million reels of microfilm that they hold, and these indexes have been made available as the International Genealogical Index (IGI). This index is arranged both by county and by surname and is available in many libraries

and record offices and also on the Internet. Access to the IGI is free of charge, as is the viewing of films held in Mormon Family History Centres. A microfiche version of the IGI is available at PRONI under reference MF/1/6/C. While there are doubts about the veracity of some of the information contained in the IGI, it can occasionally provide information of relevance.

### 3. CHURCH RECORDS

Prior to the commencement of civil registration the main sources of family history information are church registers. PRONI has a vast collection of microfilms and photostat copies of church records, as well as some original material, relating to nearly all denominations in Ulster. Before looking at the range of material that can be found in church records, it would be useful to summarise the background to the four main denominations that can be found in Ulster.

#### **The Church of Ireland**

In 1536 Henry VIII was declared 'the only supreme head in earth of the whole church in Ireland', marking the formal beginning of the Reformation in Ireland. The Reformation, however, had little impact in Ulster and it was not until the early seventeenth century that Protestantism was established here. The Church of Ireland was required to keep proper records of baptisms, marriages and burials from 1634, but very few registers survive from the seventeenth century. In general, however, the records of the Church of Ireland start much earlier than those of other Protestant denominations and of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church of Ireland is organised into parishes which in general conform to civil parishes. Over 1,000 Church of Ireland registers were lost in Dublin in the destruction of the Public Record Office of Ireland, which occurred on 28 June 1922 in the opening salvoes of the Irish Civil War. Surviving Church of Ireland registers in PRONI are listed under MIC/1 and CR/1.

#### **The Roman Catholic Church**

Following the Reformation in Ireland in the late sixteenth century the Roman Catholic Church went through a lengthy period when its activities were severely curtailed. The Penal Laws were a series of enactments of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries designed to remove the rights of Catholics to public office and to careers in certain professions. In spite of the Penal Laws, Catholic priests and bishops operated freely in most areas. During the eighteenth century the Catholic Church was able to set up diocesan and parochial structures. From the beginning of the nineteenth century many new churches were built. These either replaced earlier, less substantial buildings or were built where previously there had been no church. It is important for family historians to bear in mind that Roman Catholic parishes generally do not conform to civil parishes. The *Guide to Church Records* provides the names of the civil parishes, or parts of them, included in each Catholic parish. Most Roman Catholic parishes have more than one church. Sometimes

only one register was kept for the entire parish, but at other times each church had its own registers. PRONI has microfilm copies for Roman Catholic churches listed under MIC/1D. In addition there are some copies under CR/2.

### **The Presbyterian Church**

Presbyterianism came to Ireland from Scotland with the first plantation of Ulster during the early seventeenth century. It did not become an organised denomination until the second half of the seventeenth century, however. The distribution of Presbyterian churches in Ulster is generally a reflection of the pattern of Scottish settlement in the province. Presbyterian registers are available on microfilm in PRONI under MIC/1P. An indispensable guide to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is the *History of Congregations* published by the Presbyterian Historical Society in 1982. It provides brief sketches of each of the congregations, mainly focussing on the succession of ministers. It is particularly useful in determining when a particular congregation came into being. A *Supplement of additions, emendations and corrections with an index* was published in association with the Ulster Historical Foundation in 1996.

### **The Methodist Church**

To begin with the majority of Methodists belonged to the Established Church and they remained members of their own local churches. Therefore they continued to go to the parish church for the administration of marriages, burials and baptisms. In 1816 a split developed between the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists, who retained their links with the Established Church, and the Wesleyan Methodists, who allowed their ministers to administer baptisms. The majority of Methodist baptism and marriage registers do not begin until the 1830s and 1845 respectively. There are very few Methodist burial registers, because Methodist churches rarely had their own burial grounds. However, an important record is a large volume of baptismal entries for Methodist churches throughout Ireland deriving from the administrative records of the Methodist Church in Ireland (MIC/429/1), which may have been the product of an attempt to compile a central register of baptisms. Although incomplete, it contains baptisms from 1815 to 1840 that often pre-date the existing baptismal registers of Methodist churches.

The information found in church records can be categorised as follows:

#### *Baptismal registers*

The basic information provided in a baptismal register is the name of the child, the name of the father and the date of baptism. The mother's name will usually be given as will a specific location. The occupation of the father and the date of birth of the child may also be provided. Roman Catholic registers will normally give the names of the sponsors of the child.

#### *Marriage registers*

Prior to the standardisation of marriage registers after 1845 for non-Catholics and 1864 for Catholics, these will give in their simplest form the date of the marriage and the names of

<p><b>T. South Church</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1877
<p><b>U. Presbyterian</b>                      Fort Worth, (1841) (1842-1843) (1844-1845)                      544 S. Broadway, Box 1, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p>Various church records of churches and ministers                      with indices, 1791-1881</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1877
<p><b>W. North Church, First Methodist</b>                      544 S. Broadway, Fort Worth, Texas, 1841-1842                      544 S. Broadway, Fort Worth, Texas, 1843-1844                      544 S. Broadway, Fort Worth, Texas, 1845-1846</p>	1840-1846
<p><b>W. North Church, Second Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Third Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fourth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fifth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Sixth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Seventh Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Eighth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Ninth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Tenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Eleventh Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twelfth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fourteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fifteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Sixteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Seventeenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Eighteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Nineteenth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twentieth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-first Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-second Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-third Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-fourth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-fifth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-sixth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-seventh Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-eighth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Twenty-ninth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirtieth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-first Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-second Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-third Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-fourth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-fifth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-sixth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-seventh Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-eighth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Thirty-ninth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fortieth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-first Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-second Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-third Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-fourth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-fifth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-sixth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-seventh Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-eighth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Forty-ninth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845
<p><b>W. North Church, Fiftieth Methodist</b>                      Epworth St. Methodist Church, Ft. Worth</p>	1840-1845

the bride and groom. The residence and the name of the father of each party are often provided. The names of the witnesses may also be given.

### *Burial registers*

Burial registers can be fairly uninformative, with the name of the deceased, the date of burial and occasionally the occupation and age at death given. The deaths of children will usually include the name of the father, while the burial of a wife may include her husband's name. Many Catholic 'burial' registers are actually registers recording payments made at the funeral of the deceased.

### *Vestry minute books*

Vestry minute books record the deliberations of the parish vestry and will be found, where they survive, with the Church of Ireland records for a particular parish. The role of the vestry included the upkeep of the Church of Ireland church, the maintenance of roads in the parish and the care of the destitute and abandoned children. The money to pay for these services was raised through a cess or tax on the land in the parish. Vestry minute books are a rich source of information on life in a parish in bygone times. Occasionally they will include a list of the names of the parishioners drawn up for taxation purposes.

For a listing of records available for Belfast churches see the *Guide to Church Records*. This is now slightly out of date as new records have been acquired by PRONI since it was published in 1994, but an updated version is available in the Public Search Room at PRONI. Most surviving church records for Belfast prior to c.1880 are available in PRONI, usually on microfilm, but sometimes as originals or photocopies. Some registers are still in local custody. Generally these post-date the introduction of civil registration and it is usually not necessary to check these if the details of the birth or marriage are available elsewhere.

### **Extract from burial register of Christ Church (Church of Ireland), Belfast**

<b>First name</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>Abode</b>	<b>When Buried</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Burial Place/Comment</b>
Francis	Harvey	Andersons Place off Mill Street		50	Shankill churchyard. Mr H was a devoted Sunday School teacher.
William	Watson	Salt Water Bridge, Durham Street	04 March 1837	38	Shankill
Margaret	Bertram	10 Galway's Entry off Barrack Street	08 March 1837	58	Shankill; wife of bellows maker. Educated at charter school of Shannongrove
John	Hamilton	Durham Street	31 March 1837	52	[Clifton St] graveyard rear of Poor House
Michael	Culloden	Cornmarket	Date not recorded [1837]	35	[Clifton St] rear of Poor House. Man of great worth and usefulness. Asst Superintendent of the Christchurch Sunday schools and assistant manager of the pew rents. He was interred amid the regret and tears of many



As well as registers of baptism, marriages and burials, other items of interest include:

- *Funeral register of Rosemary Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church (known as the First Presbyterian Church of Belfast), 1712–36*, published in 1995 by the Ulster Historical Foundation, edited by Jean Agnew.
- Census of Christ Church Church of Ireland congregation, 1852 – CR/1/52
- Censuses of Knockbreda Church of Ireland congregation, 1873 and 1875 – T/2786

Check the *Guide to Church Records* for more information.

#### 4. GRAVESTONE INSCRIPTIONS AND BURIAL RECORDS

The value of gravestone inscriptions for ancestral research has long been recognised. The discovery of a single gravestone may provide more information on the history of a family than could otherwise be gleaned from hours of searching through documentary sources. A visit to the graveyard in which your ancestors are buried is, therefore, an essential part of compiling your family tree. Discovering the graveyard in which your ancestors are buried is not necessarily straightforward. They may be buried in the graveyard adjoining the church to which your family belongs. Alternatively they may be buried in a graveyard no longer in use or adjoining another church. Burial registers kept by a church are one way of finding the place of burial, but as was explained above, these have limitations and do not survive for every graveyard. In nearly every parish in Northern Ireland there is at least one graveyard pre-dating the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In these graveyards it is not unusual to find all denominations buried.

The information recorded on a gravestone varies considerably. Some gravestones will record the dates of death of several generations of one family. Others may simply record the family surname. In most graveyards there will be at least one gravestone that has an overseas connection. Ages of death recorded on gravestones should be treated with some caution as they are often guesses or have been rounded up. Nonetheless they provide a basis for working out the year of birth which can be useful when it comes to looking for a birth certificate or record of baptism.

The Ulster Historical Foundation has recordings for a large number of graveyards in Northern Ireland. These are available on its *History from Headstones Online* website: [www.historyfromheadstones.com](http://www.historyfromheadstones.com). Another major resource on this website is a series of maps showing the location of graveyards. These are dynamic maps so that it is possible to plot graveyards by denomination or view the location of all graveyards in a county at one time. Precise grid references are provided making it possible, using the Ordnance Survey *Discoverer* series of maps (1:50,000 scale), to pinpoint exactly the site of a graveyard. Case studies published in the website look in detail at individual graveyards and there is also a guide to how to study a graveyard.

There are more than a dozen graveyards in the city of Belfast or in its immediate environs. The oldest graveyards in the Belfast area are Shankill, Friar's Bush and Knock, all



Headstone from Shankill graveyard

of which date from the medieval period. There was once a graveyard on the site of what is now St George's Church in High Street, but it was removed in the early nineteenth century and virtually all of the gravestones were lost. Belfast City Cemetery and Milltown Cemetery were both opened in 1869. In more recent times, burial grounds have been opened at Dundonald (1905) and Roselawn (1954). You can read about the history of these graveyards online ([www.belfastcity.gov.uk/cemeteries/](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/cemeteries/)).

The following volumes of gravestone inscriptions have been published by the Ulster Historical Foundation in its *Belfast* series.

- Vol. 1: *Shankill, plus interior memorials in Christ Church and St George's Church of Ireland churches*
- Vol. 2: *Friar's Bush and Milltown*
- Vol. 3: *Balmoral, Balmoral Friends, Malone Presbyterian*
- Vol. 3: *The New Burying Ground, Clifton Street*

In east-Belfast the inscriptions for the graveyard attached to Knockbreda Church of Ireland church as well as the old Knock graveyard at Knock were published in its *County Down* series. In addition the Ulster Historical Foundation also has a card index to gravestone inscriptions from Belfast City Cemetery.

#### *Burial records*

In addition to gravestone inscriptions, there are burial records for a number of the cemeteries and graveyards in Belfast. These are set out below.

#### **FRIAR'S BUSH**

Volume containing a record of graves, 1774–1956 – D/3000/20

Registers of interments, 1829–59, 1889–1982 – MIC/1D/91/8–10

Register of burials, 1869–91 – D/3456/4

Registers of purchasers of grave plots, 1830–38, 1856–74 – D/3456/2–3

Plan of graveyard indicating grave numbers, c.1830 – D/3456/1

Admittance slips for burials, 1891–1966 – D/3435

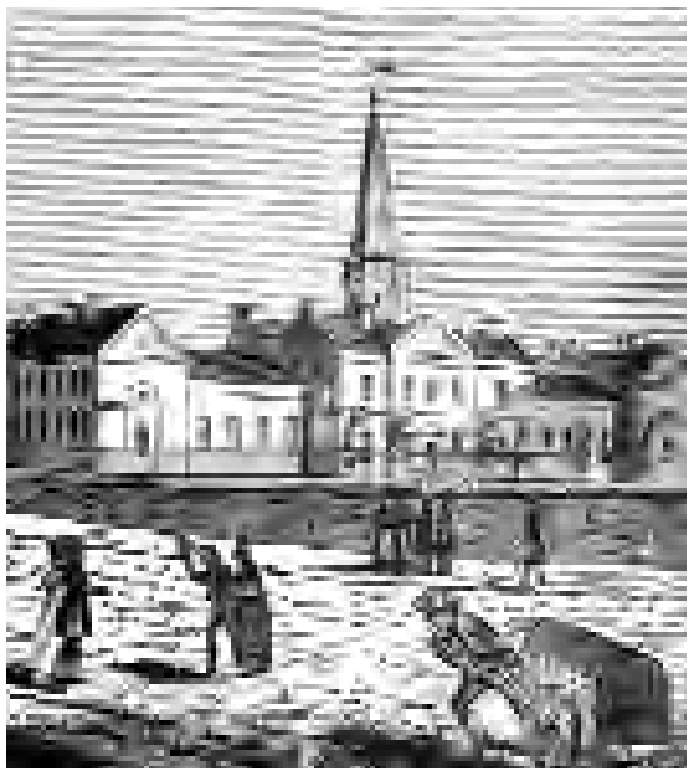
#### **THE NEW BURYING GROUND, CLIFTON STREET**

An extensive collection of records of the Belfast Charitable Society has been microfilmed and is available in PRONI under reference MIC/61. Much of this relates to the New Burying Ground, including registers of interments, 1831–1960 as well as inscriptions on headstones and registers of plots sold.

#### **BALMORAL CEMETERY**

Burial register, 1855–96 – D/1075/6

Notebook of burials, 1908–11 – D/2966/64



Belfast Charitable Society, Clifton Street

### **BELFAST CITY CEMETERY**

The Ulster Historical Foundation has a database of burials at Belfast City Cemetery from 1869 onwards. This includes burials in Glenalina Cemetery from 1915. These records are now available on its website ([www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)).

### **MILLTOWN CEMETERY**

The following registers for Milltown Cemetery have been microfilmed and copies are available at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland under reference MIC/1D/91/1-7.

- Registers of interments in the General Ground, 1869-62
- Registers of grants of burial ground (with index), 1871-1959
- Registers of interments in the Public Ground, 1895-1922

Contact details for the cemeteries run by Belfast City Council are set out below:

- City Cemetery – 028 9032 3112
- Dundonald – 028 9048 0193
- Roselawn – 028 9044 8288

Around Belfast there are many other graveyards where you will find inhabitants of the city buried. Names from gravestones in Hannahstown Roman Catholic churchyard on the outskirts of west Belfast were published in *A History of St Joseph's, Hannahstown* by Eileen Fulton. The graveyard known as Our Lady's Acre in Whitewell, north Belfast, dates from 1900. North of the city, Carnmoney Cemetery near Glengormley was opened in 1906.

## **5. CENSUS RECORDS**

The first census was held in Ireland in 1821 and thereafter every ten years until 1911. Unfortunately, the earliest census that survives in its entirety for the whole of Ireland is the 1901 census. Census returns 1821-51 were almost entirely lost in 1922 in the destruction of the Public Record Office in Dublin. Census returns 1861-91 were completely destroyed by government order, many during the First World War as scrap paper.

### **1901 census**

On 31 March 1901, a census was taken of the whole island of Ireland. The original returns are deposited at the National Archives in Dublin; microfilm copies of the returns for Northern Ireland are available at PRONI under reference MIC/354. The information in the census is listed under the following headings: name; relationship to the head of the household; religion; literacy; occupation; age; marital status; county of birth (or country if born outside Ireland); and ability to speak English or Irish. Every town, village and townland is represented and those inhabitants who were at home on 31 March 1901 are listed. The 1901 census is arranged by district electoral division (DED). To find out DED a particular townland is in it is necessary to consult the *Townland Index* of 1901 which is

1901

# CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

FORM A.

(For use in the enumeration of the population of the Republic of Ireland.)

No.	Name of Person	Sex	Age	Married	Single	Widowed	Divorced	Total
1	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
2	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
3	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
4	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
5	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
6	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
7	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
8	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
9	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
10	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
11	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
12	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
13	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
14	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
15	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
16	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
17	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
18	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
19	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
20	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
21	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
22	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
23	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
24	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
25	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
26	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
27	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
28	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
29	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
30	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
31	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
32	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
33	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
34	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
35	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
36	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
37	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
38	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
39	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
40	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
41	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
42	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
43	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
44	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
45	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
46	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
47	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
48	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
49	John J. [unclear]	M	45					
50	John J. [unclear]	M	45					

available on the shelves of the Microfilm Reading Room in PRONI. Each DED is listed in a series of calendars which will give you the appropriate reel number. Within each DED in the 1901 census the townlands are arranged alphabetically and numerically.

### **1911 census**

The 1911 census was taken on 1 April of that year and contains additional information including the number of years a wife was married, the number of children born and the number still living. Because of the 100 year closure rule placed on certain documents in the UK, this census is not yet available at PRONI, but it is hoped that it may be made available soon. Microfilms of the original census returns can be viewed at the National Archives in Dublin. The National Archives Ireland and the National Archives of Canada are currently engaged on a project to digitise the 1901 and 1911 census returns.

The returns of the 1901 and 1911 census for west Belfast have recently been indexed and are available on line at [www.belfastfamilyhistory.com](http://www.belfastfamilyhistory.com).

### **Old age pension claims**

It is worth checking the old age pension search forms, as they contain extracts from the 1841 and 1851 censuses, the originals of which were almost completely destroyed. The old age pension was introduced on 1 January 1909 for those over seventy years of age. For many born before 1864, when the state registration of births began in Ireland, it was necessary to pay for a search to be made of the 1841 and 1851 censuses in order to prove their entitlement to the pension. The forms submitted by the claimants include such information as the names of parents, location at the time of the 1841 or 1851 census, and age at the time of the claim and during the relevant census year. Individual application forms completed by or on behalf of the applicant are known as 'green forms'.

The green forms are held at the National Archives, Dublin, under reference CEN/S/8. Another form of evidence related to the old age pension returns are 'form 37s', which were submitted by local pensions offices. These include the applicant's name, stated age, parents' names and address at the time of the census. Details of the search were added to the form, and each claim was bound according to barony in a series of volumes that are now deposited in PRONI. A partial index is available on microfiche (MF/9/1/1-9), but its entries relate to the Mormon microfilm copy and do not always correspond to the originals. A volume based mainly on surviving old age pension claims was compiled by Josephine Masterson of Indianapolis, USA. This is entitled *Ireland: 1841/1851 Census Abstracts (Northern Ireland)*.

### **The Ulster Covenant, 1912**

Prime Minister H.H. Asquith introduced the Third Home Rule Bill to the House of Commons on 11 April 1912. It provided for a parliament in Dublin with limited powers, and it met with strong oppositions from Ulster Unionists who saw it as the first step to Irish independence. On 'Ulster Day', 28 September 1912, the Ulster Covenant was signed by 237,368 men and 234,046 women who pledged themselves to use 'all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland'. The Ulster Covenant Signatories of 1912 are an invaluable genealogical resource.



Extract from mid-19th century Ordnance Survey map (PRONI)

This source is more than simply a list of names and include street addresses, townlands, etc. The signatures have been indexed by PRONI and a searchable database is available on its website ([www.proni.gov.uk](http://www.proni.gov.uk)).

## 6. VALUATION RECORDS

### **The Primary or Griffith's Valuation, 1848–64**

The 1848–64 valuation gives a complete list of occupiers of land, tenements and houses. This Primary Valuation of Ireland, better known as Griffith's Valuation after the Commissioner of Valuation, Sir Richard Griffith, is arranged by county, within counties by Poor Law Union division, and within Unions by parish. It includes the following information: the name of the townland; the name of the householder or leaseholder; the name of the person from whom the property was leased; a description of the property; its acreage; and finally the valuation of the land and buildings.

Griffith's Valuation is of particular interest to anyone wishing to trace their family tree, due to the fact that so little of the nineteenth century census returns has survived. It is available in manuscript form at PRONI (VAL/2B). A bound and printed summary version is available on the shelves of the Public Search Room, PRONI, and at major libraries. These volumes are arranged by Poor Law Union within counties, and then into parishes and townlands. There is an index at the front of each volume which enables searchers to identify the page or pages in which a specific townland may be found. The valuer's annotated set of Ordnance Survey maps showing the location of every property is available at PRONI (VAL/2A). These enable a researcher to identify the exact location of the house in which an ancestor may have lived. An index to Griffith's Valuation for all of Ireland is available on CD-ROM from Irish World in Coalisland, County Tyrone.

### **Valuation revision books, from c.1864**

The manuscript valuation books were updated on a regular basis and these books up to c.1930 are available under PRONI reference VAL/12B. The so-called 'cancelled books' consist of manuscript notebooks kept by the valuation office and updated to take account of changes in tenure. When a change of occupancy occurred, the name of the lessee or householder was crossed off and the new owner's name written above it, while the year was noted on the right-hand side of the page. Different-coloured ink was often used to differentiate between years with a key at the start of each book to indicate which colour represented which year.

The years in which changes in occupancy took place help to establish significant dates in family history, such as dates of death, sale or emigration. On rare occasions there can even be a comment to the effect that a family had emigrated or that an individual had died. Changes in the valuation of buildings can indicate when a new house was built or when the existing one was abandoned. By the early years of the twentieth century most of the occupiers of land had become landowners, thanks to a series of land purchase acts. This explains the initials L.A.P. (Land Act Purchase) that may be found stamped on an entry in

the revision lists. The corresponding maps are also available under reference VAL/12D. Later valuation revision books are now available in PRONI up to the 1990s.

## 7. EARLY SOURCES

The further one goes back in time the more difficult it becomes to discover precise details about family history. Sources specific to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are rarely more than lists of names, sometimes arranged by townland and parish. They will usually not provide information on family relationships, and because they almost always give the name of the head of the household nearly all of the names will be those of men. Occasionally two men with the same name will be found in the one townland and may be distinguished with the words, 'senior' and 'junior', in which case it is reasonable to infer that they are father and son. However, despite their limitations, sources from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are useful if they can be used to demonstrate that a particular name occurred in a parish or townland at a certain date. The principal sources from this period are set out below.

### **Census of Ireland c.1659**

The census of 1659 is not a census in the true sense of the word as it contains only the names of individuals termed 'tituladoes' (mainly those with title to land) and the total number of English and Irish resident in each townland (Scots were usually counted with English). An edition of the census by Seamus Pender entitled, *A Census of Ireland circa 1659*, with supplementary material from the poll money ordinances, was published in 1939 by the Stationery Office, Dublin, on behalf of the Irish Manuscripts Commission (recently reprinted). This includes a breakdown of the figures for each county and an index of both personal names and place names.

### **Hearth money rolls, 1660s**

In the 1660s the government introduced a tax on hearths as a means of raising revenue. The returns, arranged by parish and usually with townland locations, list the names of all householders paying this tax. They survive for half of the counties in Ireland, with coverage most complete in Ulster (in full or in part for all counties except Down). Hearth money rolls for counties Antrim, Londonderry and Tyrone, together with an index, are available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland under reference T/307A.

*Heads and Hearths*, edited by S. T. Carleton (Belfast, 1991), provides a detailed analysis of the hearth money roll of County Antrim, matching 1669 townlands with those from the present day and identifying where two or more parishes have been listed under one heading. It also listed names from the 1666 hearth money roll of County Antrim not found in the 1669 roll.

### **Petition of Protestant Dissenters, 1775**

The Petition of Protestant Dissenters is a list of names of Dissenters on either a parish or a congregational basis which were submitted to the government in October and November 1775. A bound volume containing a typescript of the petitions can be found on the open shelves of the Public Search Room of the PRONI.

For other sources that can help with tracing ancestors in Belfast prior to 1800 check the sections that deal with Church Records, Landed Estate Records, and Newspapers.

## 8. LANDED ESTATE RECORDS

Until the early part of the twentieth century, most of the land in Ulster, like the rest of Ireland, was split between a number of landed estates. In most cases the origins of these estates went back to the early seventeenth century and the scheme for the official plantation in Ulster, as well as the private plantations in east Ulster.

### **The records**

The records generated by the management of landed estates are a major source of genealogical information. The best collection of Irish estate papers is housed in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. A two-volume *Guide to Landed Estate Papers* is available for consultation in the Public Search Room. It is arranged by county with the estate collections listed alphabetically according to the name of the landowning family. A brief synopsis of what is available is provided for each estate collection along with reference numbers. For several of the larger estates there are excellent records. For many of the smaller estates, however, there are relatively few records available for inspection in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

Some categories of estate papers are more useful to genealogists than others. Title deeds are concerned with the legal ownership of an estate, and are generally of limited value to genealogists. The same can be said of mortgages. Wills and marriage settlements usually refer only to the members of the landowner's family. However, rentals, leases, lease books, maps and correspondence can all be extremely useful to those searching for their ancestors within landed estate records.

### *Rentals etc.*

Rentals, rent rolls or rent books record rent payments made by a tenant to his landlord. They are generally arranged by year (rents were usually paid half-yearly) or with several years covered by the same volume. The information provided will usually be limited to the name of the tenant, the extent and location of his holding and the rent payable by him. Occasionally rentals are annotated with a change in occupancy, and the reason for it is sometimes noted.



### *Leases*

A lease granted by a landlord to a tenant gave him the right to occupy the property for a specific period of time. Two copies of the lease were usually prepared; the original lease was signed by the landlord and kept by the tenant. The counterpart was signed by the tenant and kept by the landlord. A lease was usually for a term of years, 21 or 31 being quite common, but leases for three lives were in fairly widespread use. A three-life lease expired when all the three persons named in the lease died. Three-life leases are very useful for genealogists because a tenant often named members of his family (particularly sons and grandsons) as the lives. When new lives were inserted details of age and relationship were often included and it is possible to work out when the old life died. Lease books can be among the most useful of estate papers as far as genealogy is concerned. They record in condensed form the same sort of information contained in the original leases, such as the name of the lessee, the location and extent of the holding and the rent payable on it. Generally covering an entire estate, they can be a much quicker way of finding information on a tenant farmer than searching through several bundles of leases.

### *Maps*

Maps form an important element in most estate collections. These show the property of the landlord, who employed a surveyor to illustrate the extent of his land and the more important features on his estate. Maps come in all shapes and sizes and can be coloured or roughly etched in black and white.

### *Correspondence*

The correspondence between a landlord and his agent can be of immense genealogical value. Not only does it include details of the day-to-day running of the estate, but mention is often made of those who worked on the estate.

Many of those who occupied smallholdings will not appear in estate collections because they did not lease their ground directly from the landlord. Instead their few acres were sublet to them by another farmer. While landlords were firmly opposed to the practice of subletting they found it very difficult to stamp out. It does, however, make it almost impossible to identify such people in the historical record. Occasionally they will turn up in correspondence if a landlord was trying to do something about subletting on his estate.

Belfast formed part of the Donegall estate and a vast collection of documents relating to this estate can be found in PRONI. Two items of interest include:

- Names of inhabitants of Belfast extracted from Donegall estate leases – D/509 (listed in calendar)
- List of names of lessees on the Donegall estate in Belfast, 1750–1815, arranged by occupation with nearly 400 names in all – T/1641

See the *Guide to Landed Estate Papers* for more details.



## 9. WILLS AND TESTAMENTARY PAPERS

Once the date of death of an ancestor has been discovered, it is worth finding out whether they left a will. Wills contain not only the name, address and occupation of the testator, but can also include details of the larger family network. Many wills also include the addresses and occupations of the beneficiaries, witnesses and executors. It must be borne in mind, however, that the vast majority of people did not make a will. This section will demonstrate how to find out whether or not someone left a will and, if a will was made, how to access it.

### **Wills before 1858**

Prior to 1858 the Church of Ireland was responsible for administering all testamentary affairs. Ecclesiastical or Consistorial Courts in each diocese were responsible for granting probate and conferring on the executors the power to administer the estate. Each court was responsible for wills and administrations in its own diocese. However, when the estate included property worth more than £5 in another diocese, responsibility for the will or administration passed to the Prerogative Court under the authority of the Archbishop of Armagh.

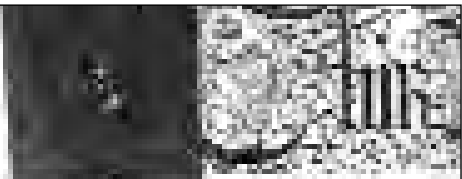
Unfortunately, nearly all original wills probated before 1858 were destroyed in Dublin in 1922. However, indexes to these destroyed wills do exist and are available on the shelves of the Search Rooms at PRONI and the National Archives in Dublin. These are useful, for although the will cannot now be produced, the index contains the name and residence of the testator and the date that the will was either made or probated. Occasionally the testator's occupation is given. The indexes are arranged by diocese, not by county.

Despite the loss of virtually all pre-1858 wills, in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland there are over 13,000 abstracts, extracts and duplicate copies of the originals including some 400 for Belfast. These derive from a wide variety of sources: landed estate papers, solicitors collections, the papers of private genealogists etc. There used to be a card index of these wills, but in more recent times this has been superseded by a typed index available in calendar form in the Public Search Room of PRONI. This index is by no means complete, however, and many more abstracts or duplicate copies of wills can be found in unsorted boxes of landed estate papers and solicitors collections as well as the massive Land Registry archive in PRONI.

Another useful source for pre-1858 wills is the Registry of Deeds in Dublin. A will was usually registered if there were concerns that it was going to be contested. Abstracts of over 2,000 wills registered between 1708 and 1832 were published in three volumes by the Irish Manuscripts Commission (P.B. Phair & E. Ellis (eds), *Abstracts of Wills at the Registry of Deeds* (1954–88)).

### **Wills 1858–1900**

The testamentary authority of the Church of Ireland was abolished by the Probate Act of 1857. Testamentary matters were brought under civil jurisdiction and exercised through District Probate Registries and a Principal Registry in Dublin. The registries covering Ulster were at Armagh, Belfast and Londonderry. The wills of wealthier members of society



The Right Honourable James Bradford Esq.

and the Right Honourable James Bradford Esq. by  
 their respective attorneys at law  
 do hereby certify that the within  
 copy of the Statute for the better  
 regulation of the said Street, is  
 a true and correct copy of the  
 original thereof.



and the said James Bradford Esq. do hereby  
 certify that the within copy of the  
 Statute for the better regulation of  
 the said Street, is a true and correct  
 copy of the original thereof.

Extract from lease, Donegall estate papers (PRONI)

tended to be probated at the Principal Registry. The district registries retained transcripts of the wills that they proved and of the administrations intestate that they granted before the annual transfer of the original records (20 or more years old) to the Public Record Office of Ireland in Dublin. The original wills were destroyed in Dublin in 1922 but the transcript copies in will books survived. These are now on deposit in PRONI and the National Archives, Dublin. Those for Northern Ireland are available on microfilm at PRONI for the period 1858–1900 (MIC/15C). Each volume begins with an alphabetical index.

There is no comprehensive index to these post-1858 wills and grants. However, there are bound annual indexes called 'calendars' on the shelves of the Library at PRONI. These calendars are of value to genealogists since they provide the name, address, occupation and date of death of the testator as well as the names, addresses and occupations of the individual or individuals to whom probate was granted, the value of estate and the place and date of probate. Each calendar covers a single year and the entries are in alphabetical order. Even if you have only an approximate date for the death of an ancestor it is worth looking through a number of volumes in the hope of spotting an entry giving details of their will.

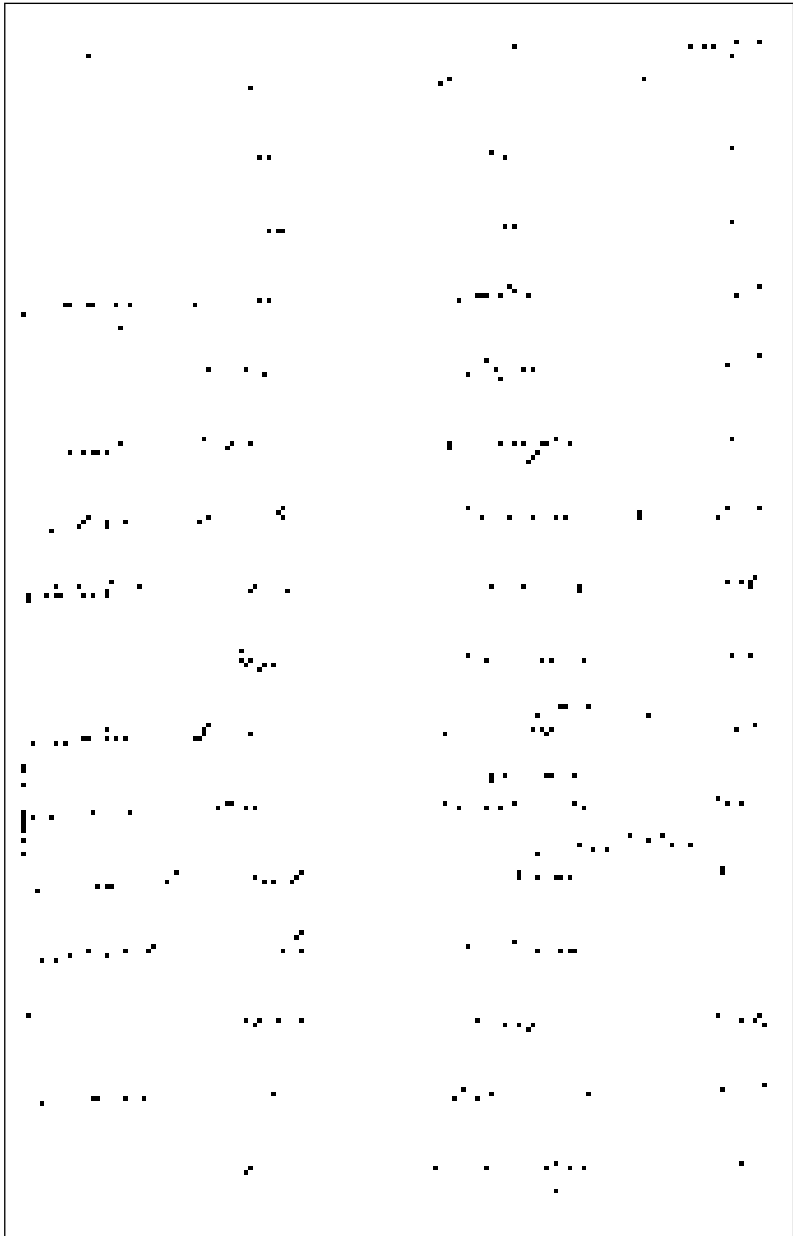
When using these calendars to gain access to a will or transcript, the vital date to note is not the date when the will was signed or the date of death. It is the date of probate, i.e. the date when it was officially proved in a probate registry. This date of probate is normally a few months after a person died. However, it is well to bear in mind that, for a variety of reasons, a significant number of wills were probated ten or more years after death. Such delays may have been more common where probate was in the Principal Registry in Dublin.

PRONI has recently created an index of wills probated at the district registries of Armagh, Belfast and Londonderry from 1858 to 1919. This index can at present only be accessed at PRONI. The Ulster Historical Foundation has an index to the calendars for all Ireland covering the period 1858–1900 on its website ([www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)). This index gives the date of death and county of residence. Access to the index is available to members of the research co-operative, the Ulster Genealogical and Historical Guild.

PRONI also has a card index to post-1858 surviving wills and will abstracts. This index is most useful when looking for a copy or abstract of a will probated at the Principal Registry in Dublin, which would have been destroyed in 1922 without a transcript being made.

### **Wills from 1900**

PRONI has in its custody all wills for the districts of Belfast and Londonderry from 1900 to, at present, the mid-1990s, and Armagh from 1900 until it closed in 1921. After 1900 the original wills and their associated papers are available filed in a separate envelope for each testator. If the person did not make a will there may be letters of administration that give the name, residence and occupation of the deceased as well as the name and address of the person or persons appointed to administer the estate. Post-1900 wills are found by using the annual will calendars located in the reception area at PRONI.



## 10. SCHOOL RECORDS

A state-run system of education was established in Ireland in 1831. Prior to this (and for some time after it) there were several different organisations and institutions providing education in Ireland. These included the Capel Street Association for Discountenancing Vice, the Kildare Street Society, the London Hibernian Society as well as the different churches. The records for Royal Belfast Academical Institution (RBAI) survive from 1814. Pupils at this school came from a much wider area than simply the city of Belfast and it was the foremost educational establishment in Ulster in the early nineteenth century. 'Albums' listing names of pupils and with some details about their background and occasionally about their subsequent careers, are available for inspection in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The following records of interest are available:

- SCH/524/1A/1 – Album, 1814–76
- SCH/524/1A/2, 3 – indexes to above Album
- SCH/524/1A/5, 6, 7 – Albums of the Collegiate part of the school, 1815–48

### Extract from the register of the Collegiate section of Royal Belfast Academical Institution (SCH/524/1A/6)

student's Christian name	student's surname	age	father's Christian name	father's surname	father's profession	abode	presbytery	dates	remarks
Archibald	Black		/	/	schoolmaster	Pullans, [Kildollagh, Co L'Derry]	/	1817–1818	teacher in Coleraine
David	Boyd	39	Samuel	Boyd	gardener	Castlereagh [Knockbreda]	Down	1817–1823	taught at Belfast Academy; school master Belfast licensed by Associate Presbytery of Belfast
Edward	Alexander	38	Edward	Alexander	farmer	Killinchy, Co Down	Belfast	1817–1822	minister of Carlow, Dublin Presbytery; resigned taught in Belfast
								1827–	
George	Bellis	16	James	Bellis	farmer	near Coleraine	Route Synod of Ulster	1817–1822	Died there c.1832/1833 minister of 4th Congregational Belfast; at school with Rev Mr Guilar, Coleraine
George	Jardine		John	Jardine	farmer	near Banbridge, Co Down	Dromore Synod of Ulster	1817–1823	taught by Rev Mr Lunn, Greenhill; licensed by Dromore Presbytery; went to America

From 1831 National Schools were built with the aid of the Commissioners of National Education and local trustees. Between 1832 and 1870 about 2,500 national schools were established in Ulster. The records of over 1,500 schools in Northern Ireland are held at PRONI. Of particular interest are the enrolment registers. These record the full name of the pupil, his or her date of birth (or age at entry), religion, father's address and occupation (but unfortunately not his name), details of attendance and academic progress and the name of the school previously attended. A space is also provided in the registers for general comments, which might tell where the children went to work after leaving school or if they emigrated. Some registers have an index at the front that can greatly ease searching. As they include the age of pupils, school registers can be cross-referenced to other records such as baptismal records or birth certificates.

Many of the schools, particularly in the early part of the century, were cross-denominational, with the religion of the child listed as RC (Roman Catholic), P (Presbyterian) or EC (Established Church, i.e. Church of Ireland). A series of calendars listing the registers available at PRONI are available on the shelves of the Public Search Room. Each school is given the prefix SCH and then a separate reference number. Not all school records are in PRONI as some are still in local custody, while others have been lost or destroyed. School records in PRONI are listed under the reference SCH. Some of the Belfast registers have been microfilmed under reference MIC/15H. A full list of all the schools for which PRONI has records will be found in the Public Search Room. There are records for over 200 Belfast schools in this collection.

## 11. ELECTION RECORDS

Election records come in various forms. Registers of freeholders list the names and addresses of individuals entitled to vote at parliamentary elections. Poll books (often in printed form before the Ballot Act of 1872) list the names of voters and the candidates they voted for. Until the late nineteenth century the qualification for voting was generally linked to the tenure of land, and only a small minority of men had the right to vote. In Ireland, from 1727 to 1793, only Protestant men with a 40-shilling freehold had the right to vote. Between 1793 and 1829 both Protestants and Roman Catholics with 40-shilling freeholds had votes, although a Catholic still could not become a member of parliament. The 40-shilling freehold was property worth 40 shillings a year above the rent, and either owned outright or leased during the lives of named individuals. Many important and indeed prominent people had no vote because they leased their property on terms that disqualified them for the vote. Surviving electoral records are available at PRONI and most of them have been digitised and are available as a database on its website.

The following are some of the Belfast election records:

- Belfast voters, 1744 – R. M. Young (ed.), *The Town Book of the Corporation of Belfast* (Belfast, 1892), pp 215–17.
- Belfast poll book, 1832–37 – D/2472/1 (manuscript list of names by street)
- Belfast voters, 1837 – D/2966/5/1 (printed alphabetical list of names)

Dee Street National School

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Religion	Address	Notes
1	John Smith	3	M	Roman Catholic	123 Main St	
2	Mary Jones	4	F	Roman Catholic	456 Elm St	
3	James Brown	5	M	Roman Catholic	789 Oak St	
4	Elizabeth White	6	F	Roman Catholic	101 Pine St	
5	William Black	7	M	Roman Catholic	202 Cedar St	
6	Ann Green	8	F	Roman Catholic	303 Birch St	
7	Robert Grey	9	M	Roman Catholic	404 Spruce St	
8	Elizabeth King	10	F	Roman Catholic	505 Willow St	
9	Thomas Lee	11	M	Roman Catholic	606 Ash St	
10	Margaret Hall	12	F	Roman Catholic	707 Hickory St	
11	John Walker	13	M	Roman Catholic	808 Sycamore St	
12	Elizabeth Young	14	F	Roman Catholic	909 Magnolia St	
13	William King	15	M	Roman Catholic	1010 Poplar St	
14	Ann Lee	16	F	Roman Catholic	1111 Chestnut St	
15	Robert Hall	17	M	Roman Catholic	1212 Walnut St	
16	Elizabeth King	18	F	Roman Catholic	1313 Elm St	
17	Thomas Lee	19	M	Roman Catholic	1414 Oak St	
18	Margaret Hall	20	F	Roman Catholic	1515 Pine St	
19	John Walker	21	M	Roman Catholic	1616 Cedar St	
20	Elizabeth Young	22	F	Roman Catholic	1717 Birch St	
21	William King	23	M	Roman Catholic	1818 Spruce St	
22	Ann Lee	24	F	Roman Catholic	1919 Willow St	
23	Robert Hall	25	M	Roman Catholic	2020 Ash St	
24	Elizabeth King	26	F	Roman Catholic	2121 Hickory St	
25	Thomas Lee	27	M	Roman Catholic	2222 Sycamore St	
26	Margaret Hall	28	F	Roman Catholic	2323 Magnolia St	
27	John Walker	29	M	Roman Catholic	2424 Poplar St	
28	Elizabeth Young	30	F	Roman Catholic	2525 Chestnut St	
29	William King	31	M	Roman Catholic	2626 Walnut St	
30	Ann Lee	32	F	Roman Catholic	2727 Elm St	
31	Robert Hall	33	M	Roman Catholic	2828 Oak St	
32	Elizabeth King	34	F	Roman Catholic	2929 Pine St	
33	Thomas Lee	35	M	Roman Catholic	3030 Cedar St	
34	Margaret Hall	36	F	Roman Catholic	3131 Birch St	
35	John Walker	37	M	Roman Catholic	3232 Spruce St	
36	Elizabeth Young	38	F	Roman Catholic	3333 Willow St	
37	William King	39	M	Roman Catholic	3434 Ash St	
38	Ann Lee	40	F	Roman Catholic	3535 Hickory St	
39	Robert Hall	41	M	Roman Catholic	3636 Sycamore St	
40	Elizabeth King	42	F	Roman Catholic	3737 Magnolia St	
41	Thomas Lee	43	M	Roman Catholic	3838 Poplar St	
42	Margaret Hall	44	F	Roman Catholic	3939 Chestnut St	
43	John Walker	45	M	Roman Catholic	4040 Walnut St	
44	Elizabeth Young	46	F	Roman Catholic	4141 Elm St	
45	William King	47	M	Roman Catholic	4242 Oak St	
46	Ann Lee	48	F	Roman Catholic	4343 Pine St	
47	Robert Hall	49	M	Roman Catholic	4444 Cedar St	
48	Elizabeth King	50	F	Roman Catholic	4545 Birch St	
49	Thomas Lee	51	M	Roman Catholic	4646 Spruce St	
50	Margaret Hall	52	F	Roman Catholic	4747 Willow St	
51	John Walker	53	M	Roman Catholic	4848 Ash St	
52	Elizabeth Young	54	F	Roman Catholic	4949 Hickory St	
53	William King	55	M	Roman Catholic	5050 Sycamore St	
54	Ann Lee	56	F	Roman Catholic	5151 Magnolia St	
55	Robert Hall	57	M	Roman Catholic	5252 Poplar St	
56	Elizabeth King	58	F	Roman Catholic	5353 Chestnut St	
57	Thomas Lee	59	M	Roman Catholic	5454 Walnut St	
58	Margaret Hall	60	F	Roman Catholic	5555 Elm St	
59	John Walker	61	M	Roman Catholic	5656 Oak St	
60	Elizabeth Young	62	F	Roman Catholic	5757 Pine St	
61	William King	63	M	Roman Catholic	5858 Cedar St	
62	Ann Lee	64	F	Roman Catholic	5959 Birch St	
63	Robert Hall	65	M	Roman Catholic	6060 Spruce St	
64	Elizabeth King	66	F	Roman Catholic	6161 Willow St	
65	Thomas Lee	67	M	Roman Catholic	6262 Ash St	
66	Margaret Hall	68	F	Roman Catholic	6363 Hickory St	
67	John Walker	69	M	Roman Catholic	6464 Sycamore St	
68	Elizabeth Young	70	F	Roman Catholic	6565 Magnolia St	
69	William King	71	M	Roman Catholic	6666 Poplar St	
70	Ann Lee	72	F	Roman Catholic	6767 Chestnut St	
71	Robert Hall	73	M	Roman Catholic	6868 Walnut St	
72	Elizabeth King	74	F	Roman Catholic	6969 Elm St	
73	Thomas Lee	75	M	Roman Catholic	7070 Oak St	
74	Margaret Hall	76	F	Roman Catholic	7171 Pine St	
75	John Walker	77	M	Roman Catholic	7272 Cedar St	
76	Elizabeth Young	78	F	Roman Catholic	7373 Birch St	
77	William King	79	M	Roman Catholic	7474 Spruce St	
78	Ann Lee	80	F	Roman Catholic	7575 Willow St	
79	Robert Hall	81	M	Roman Catholic	7676 Ash St	
80	Elizabeth King	82	F	Roman Catholic	7777 Hickory St	
81	Thomas Lee	83	M	Roman Catholic	7878 Sycamore St	
82	Margaret Hall	84	F	Roman Catholic	7979 Magnolia St	
83	John Walker	85	M	Roman Catholic	8080 Poplar St	
84	Elizabeth Young	86	F	Roman Catholic	8181 Chestnut St	
85	William King	87	M	Roman Catholic	8282 Walnut St	
86	Ann Lee	88	F	Roman Catholic	8383 Elm St	
87	Robert Hall	89	M	Roman Catholic	8484 Oak St	
88	Elizabeth King	90	F	Roman Catholic	8585 Pine St	
89	Thomas Lee	91	M	Roman Catholic	8686 Cedar St	
90	Margaret Hall	92	F	Roman Catholic	8787 Birch St	
91	John Walker	93	M	Roman Catholic	8888 Spruce St	
92	Elizabeth Young	94	F	Roman Catholic	8989 Willow St	
93	William King	95	M	Roman Catholic	9090 Ash St	
94	Ann Lee	96	F	Roman Catholic	9191 Hickory St	
95	Robert Hall	97	M	Roman Catholic	9292 Sycamore St	
96	Elizabeth King	98	F	Roman Catholic	9393 Magnolia St	
97	Thomas Lee	99	M	Roman Catholic	9494 Poplar St	
98	Margaret Hall	100	F	Roman Catholic	9595 Chestnut St	
99	John Walker	101	M	Roman Catholic	9696 Walnut St	
100	Elizabeth Young	102	F	Roman Catholic	9797 Elm St	

- Belfast voters, 1837 – T/516 (typescript list of names by street)
- Illiterate voters in Belfast in 1837 – *Directory of Irish Family History Research*, no. 25 (2002)
- Belfast electors, 1855 – BELF/5/1/1/1
- Belfast electors, 1876 – BELF/5/1/1/2
- Registers of Belfast electors divided into North, South, East and West divisions, 1904 onwards – BELF/5/1/2

## 12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RECORDS

Local government was formally established in Belfast with the granting of the first charter of incorporation in 1613. This established a body with responsibility for running the town. The corporation minutes of Belfast have been published as *The Town Book of the Corporation of Belfast, 1613–1816*, edited by R. M. Young (Belfast, 1892), and include the roll of freemen, 1635–1796 (pp 246–300). As a corporate town Belfast was able to send two MPs to the House of Commons. It lost this right in 1832 with the passing of the Reform Act. As a result of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1840 the corporation was reformed; it was to be composed of a mayor, ten aldermen and thirty councillors to be elected on the vote of £10 householders. In 1882 city status was conferred on Belfast and in 1896 the boundaries of the city were extended and the number of electoral wards increased from five to fifteen. In 1973 Belfast City Council was created and the present boundaries of the city established.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has an extensive collection of local government records for Belfast under reference LA/7. For example, dating from 1843 is a declaration signed by over 200 residents of the city that the rights of powers of the Belfast Police Commissioners should be transferred to the new Belfast Town Council (LA/7/1A/2). Other items of interest in this collection include:

- Rate ledgers, 1843–51 – LA/7/5BA/1/1–5
- Rate ledgers applotment books, 1853–71 – LA/7/5BA/2
- Town council rent book, 1851–82 – LA/7/12G/1

The Corporation archive also includes numerous wage books under reference LA/7/6, all of which post date 1900. There are also Gas Department wage books, 1909–48 (LA/7/19/1/1F/1) and numerous wage books for the Transport Department covering drivers, conductors etc. (LA/7/26).

Another source of information on local administration in Belfast is the Crown and Peace archive at PRONI under reference BELF. This includes a number of different items such as court cases heard before the Belfast Recorder's Court from 1891, mainly offences such as assault and theft. Other useful categories of record for the researcher include:

- Workmen's compensation registers, 1898– — BELF/6/2/1
- City coroner's record of inquests, 1886– — BELF/6/1/2
- Register of persons who have obtained spirit licences, 1883– — BELF/6/5/1
- Indexes of publicans, 1890–1923 — BELF/6/4



The Corporation Bellman of Belfast (*Historical Notices of Old Belfast*)



Thomas McCabe denouncing Waddell Cunningham's proposed Belfast Slave-Ship Company in the Old Exchange, 1786 (*Historical Notices of Old Belfast*)

1000	1001	1002	1003	1004	1005	1006	1007	1008	1009	1010	1011	1012	1013	1014	1015	1016	1017	1018	1019	1020	1021	1022	1023	1024	1025	1026	1027	1028	1029	1030	1031	1032	1033	1034	1035	1036	1037	1038	1039	1040	1041	1042	1043	1044	1045	1046	1047	1048	1049	1050	1051	1052	1053	1054	1055	1056	1057	1058	1059	1060	1061	1062	1063	1064	1065	1066	1067	1068	1069	1070	1071	1072	1073	1074	1075	1076	1077	1078	1079	1080	1081	1082	1083	1084	1085	1086	1087	1088	1089	1090	1091	1092	1093	1094	1095	1096	1097	1098	1099	1100	1101	1102	1103	1104	1105	1106	1107	1108	1109	1110	1111	1112	1113	1114	1115	1116	1117	1118	1119	1120	1121	1122	1123	1124	1125	1126	1127	1128	1129	1130	1131	1132	1133	1134	1135	1136	1137	1138	1139	1140	1141	1142	1143	1144	1145	1146	1147	1148	1149	1150	1151	1152	1153	1154	1155	1156	1157	1158	1159	1160	1161	1162	1163	1164	1165	1166	1167	1168	1169	1170	1171	1172	1173	1174	1175	1176	1177	1178	1179	1180	1181	1182	1183	1184	1185	1186	1187	1188	1189	1190	1191	1192	1193	1194	1195	1196	1197	1198	1199	1200	1201	1202	1203	1204	1205	1206	1207	1208	1209	1210	1211	1212	1213	1214	1215	1216	1217	1218	1219	1220	1221	1222	1223	1224	1225	1226	1227	1228	1229	1230	1231	1232	1233	1234	1235	1236	1237	1238	1239	1240	1241	1242	1243	1244	1245	1246	1247	1248	1249	1250	1251	1252	1253	1254	1255	1256	1257	1258	1259	1260	1261	1262	1263	1264	1265	1266	1267	1268	1269	1270	1271	1272	1273	1274	1275	1276	1277	1278	1279	1280	1281	1282	1283	1284	1285	1286	1287	1288	1289	1290	1291	1292	1293	1294	1295	1296	1297	1298	1299	1300	1301	1302	1303	1304	1305	1306	1307	1308	1309	1310	1311	1312	1313	1314	1315	1316	1317	1318	1319	1320	1321	1322	1323	1324	1325	1326	1327	1328	1329	1330	1331	1332	1333	1334	1335	1336	1337	1338	1339	1340	1341	1342	1343	1344	1345	1346	1347	1348	1349	1350	1351	1352	1353	1354	1355	1356	1357	1358	1359	1360	1361	1362	1363	1364	1365	1366	1367	1368	1369	1370	1371	1372	1373	1374	1375	1376	1377	1378	1379	1380	1381	1382	1383	1384	1385	1386	1387	1388	1389	1390	1391	1392	1393	1394	1395	1396	1397	1398	1399	1400	1401	1402	1403	1404	1405	1406	1407	1408	1409	1410	1411	1412	1413	1414	1415	1416	1417	1418	1419	1420	1421	1422	1423	1424	1425	1426	1427	1428	1429	1430	1431	1432	1433	1434	1435	1436	1437	1438	1439	1440	1441	1442	1443	1444	1445	1446	1447	1448	1449	1450	1451	1452	1453	1454	1455	1456	1457	1458	1459	1460	1461	1462	1463	1464	1465	1466	1467	1468	1469	1470	1471	1472	1473	1474	1475	1476	1477	1478	1479	1480	1481	1482	1483	1484	1485	1486	1487	1488	1489	1490	1491	1492	1493	1494	1495	1496	1497	1498	1499	1500	1501	1502	1503	1504	1505	1506	1507	1508	1509	1510	1511	1512	1513	1514	1515	1516	1517	1518	1519	1520	1521	1522	1523	1524	1525	1526	1527	1528	1529	1530	1531	1532	1533	1534	1535	1536	1537	1538	1539	1540	1541	1542	1543	1544	1545	1546	1547	1548	1549	1550	1551	1552	1553	1554	1555	1556	1557	1558	1559	1560	1561	1562	1563	1564	1565	1566	1567	1568	1569	1570	1571	1572	1573	1574	1575	1576	1577	1578	1579	1580	1581	1582	1583	1584	1585	1586	1587	1588	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1594	1595	1596	1597	1598	1599	1600	1601	1602	1603	1604	1605	1606	1607	1608	1609	1610	1611	1612	1613	1614	1615	1616	1617	1618	1619	1620	1621	1622	1623	1624	1625	1626	1627	1628	1629	1630	1631	1632	1633	1634	1635	1636	1637	1638	1639	1640	1641	1642	1643	1644	1645	1646	1647	1648	1649	1650	1651	1652	1653	1654	1655	1656	1657	1658	1659	1660	1661	1662	1663	1664	1665	1666	1667	1668	1669	1670	1671	1672	1673	1674	1675	1676	1677	1678	1679	1680	1681	1682	1683	1684	1685	1686	1687	1688	1689	1690	1691	1692	1693	1694	1695	1696	1697	1698	1699	1700	1701	1702	1703	1704	1705	1706	1707	1708	1709	1710	1711	1712	1713	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726	1727	1728	1729	1730	1731	1732	1733	1734	1735	1736	1737	1738	1739	1740	1741	1742	1743	1744	1745	1746	1747	1748	1749	1750	1751	1752	1753	1754	1755	1756	1757	1758	1759	1760	1761	1762	1763	1764	1765	1766	1767	1768	1769	1770	1771	1772	1773	1774	1775	1776	1777	1778	1779	1780	1781	1782	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804	1805	1806	1807	1808	1809	1810	1811	1812	1813	1814	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824	1825	1826	1827	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
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Page from indexes of publicans, Belfast, c.1900 (PRONI)

### 13. BOARD OF GUARDIANS RECORDS

The new English system of Poor Law administration was applied to Ireland in 1838. Destitute poor who were previously granted relief at parish level were to be accommodated in new workhouses, where conditions were to be as unpleasant as was consistent with health. Ireland was divided into 137 Poor Law Unions. These ignored traditional divisions, such as the county, barony and parish, and were centred on a market town where a workhouse was built. Each workhouse kept registers of those admitted to it; these give the name, religion and residence of each of the inmates. The management of the workhouses was the responsibility of the Boards of Guardians composed of elected representatives of the ratepayers in each union, together with *ex officio* members including Justices of the Peace. In the minute books, kept by the Guardians, are details of the day-to-day running of the workhouse, including information on many of the inmates and those employed in the workhouse as teachers, nurses, chaplains, etc.

Indoor registers provides the names of those who were admitted to the workhouses. The information recorded also includes the townland, age, spouse's name and religion of each inmate. Vaccination registers are another useful source among the Board of Guardians records. Surviving Board of Guardians records for Northern Ireland are deposited at PRONI under reference BG. Access to some of these records can be a problem, as there is a 100-year closure rule on all documents in the Boards of Guardians papers. This means that, for example, an admissions register covering the period 1870–1910 will not be available to the public until 2011.

#### *Minute books*

Minute books record the matters that were brought to the attention of the Board of Guardians and their deliberations on them. They include items on the administration of the workhouse, such as discipline and the appointment of workhouse officials, to measures taken to provide assistance to those in need. Some extracts below from the minutes of the Belfast Board of Guardians serve as examples of the type of information that may be found:

- 21 October 1845: 'Mary Proctor admitted for one month until her daughter is discharged from jail.'
- 23 December 1845: 'The master's book of punishments was read by which Alexander Davis aged 14 years was put to break stones an hour extra for two days and forfeit buttermilk for scaling the wall and absenting himself until night on Sunday the 21st instant.'
- 9 February 1848: 'Mr Vance [relieving officer] to make enquiry in reference to Ann Clarke's husband, a picture-frame maker, who has deserted her; thought to be in Belfast.'

#### *Indoor registers*

These record the names of people admitted to the workhouse. The information on each individual comprises the name, age, condition (i.e. married, single, orphan etc.), disabilities, religion, employment, name of spouse, number of children, observations, electoral division and townland, date admitted, and date left or died.

### *Outdoor relief registers*

These include similar information to the indoor registers, but concern those who received assistance without going into the workhouse.

### *Vaccination registers*

These are usually available by registrar's district and record name of the child being vaccinated, together with his or her age, date of vaccination, residence, the name and residence of the father, mother or person in charge of the child, and the name of the person administering the vaccination. Most children were under two years when vaccinated.

The Board of Guardians records for Belfast are available in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland under reference BG/7. The most important categories of record are listed below.

- Minute books, 1842–
- Rough minute books, 1847–
- Outdoor relief register, 1869–98
- Registers of tradesmen's' times, 1892–6
- Indoor registers, 1864–
- Indexes to indoor registers, 1892–
- Records of deaths, 1872–

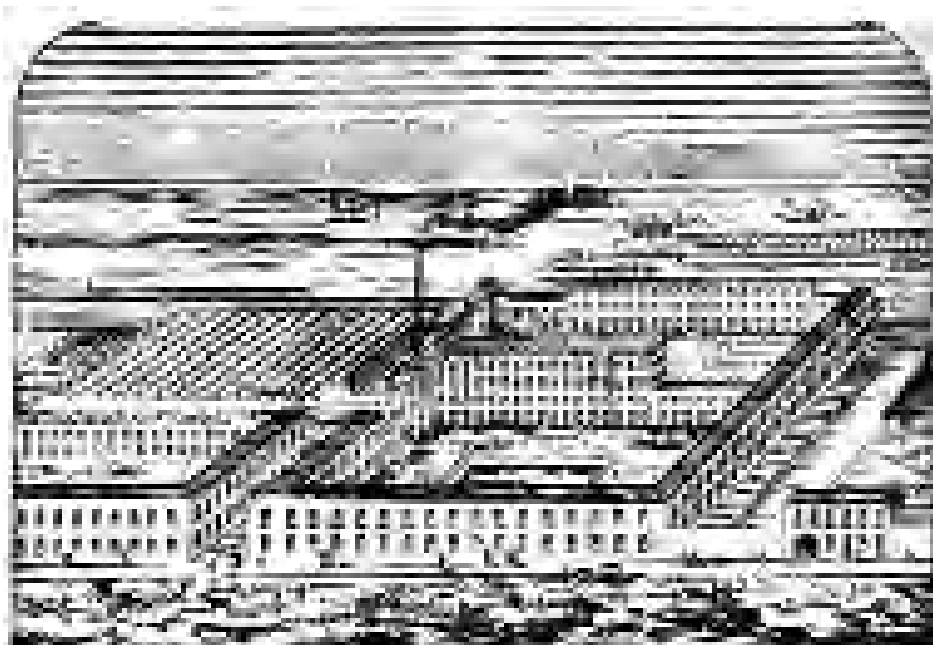
## 14. BUSINESS RECORDS

In the nineteenth century Belfast became the most important industrial city in Ireland with tens of thousands of men and women employed in the textile, shipbuilding and other industries. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has a large collection of business records relating to some of the most important firms in the city as well as a host of other minor enterprises. One of the earliest is an account book of James Ferguson of Belfast, a linen merchant, 1771–83 (D/468/1). Jean Agnew's *Belfast Merchant Families in the Seventeenth Century* (Dublin, 1996) provides an excellent analysis of the business community in this period. See also George Chambers, 'Divided loyalties in the business community of Belfast in 1798' in *Familia* no. 10 (1994), pp 13–38, which includes brief pen pictures of 105 of the town's merchants.

The following firms are among the companies in Belfast with records on deposit at PRONI.

### **HARLAND AND WOLFF**

There is a vast collection of records relating to the world-famous shipyard in PRONI under reference D/2805. This collection has been expertly catalogued. Of particular interest to anyone researching an ancestor who worked in the shipyard are the extensive listings of wage books for a whole range of different categories of employee including foremen, engine



York Road or Milewater Mill

works staff and typists. Not all of these records are open to the public and researchers should check with staff to find out which volumes can be consulted.

**BELFAST ROPEWORK CO.**

Volume of receipts for salaries, 1894–1903 – D/2889/H/1

**BERNARD HUGHES LTD (BAKERIES)**

Workers' account books and wages books, 1903–56 – D/3338/G/1

**BLACKSTAFF LTD**

Mill wages analysis books, 1894–1905, general wages book, 1917–63 – D/2120/2/1–3

## 15. PRINTED SOURCES

### **Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland**

Ordnance Survey memoirs provide a great deal of background information on the character and habits of the people who lived in Ireland during the early part of the nineteenth century. The memoirs were written descriptions intended to accompany the original Ordnance Survey maps, containing information that could not be fitted on to them. They are a unique source for the history of the northern half of Ireland before the Great Famine, as they document the landscape and situation, buildings and antiquities, land-holdings and population, employment and livelihoods of the parishes. The surveyors recorded the habits of the people, their food, drink, dress and customs. Details of ruined churches, prehistoric monuments and standing stones were also included. The Ordnance Survey memoirs were published in 40 volumes by the Institute of Irish Studies at The Queen's University of Belfast, with an additional index volume covering the entire series. Unfortunately, there is no memoir for the parish of Shankill. The memoir for Knockbreda parish was written in 1832 and contains some information of interest about east Belfast when it was still very rural in character.

### **Street directories**

Street directories contain a great deal of information on the gentry, the professional classes, merchants, etc. They give details of even the smallest of market towns and ports in Ireland. Beginning with a description of the town and surrounding countryside, the names and addresses of the local butchers, pawnbrokers, blacksmiths and coach-builders are given, as well as the various places of worship, with the names of the local ministers etc., and the location of local schools. Street directories can therefore be useful if you wish to find out which church or school your ancestor attended. The names and addresses of the local members of parliament, magistrates, Poor Law Guardians and town commissioners are also included in many street directories. In fact the only classes that are excluded from all directories are the small tenant farmers, landless labourers and servants.

The first directory published for Belfast appeared in 1807 and was published by Smyth

EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE RECORD

No.	Name	Address	Employment Dates		Rate of Pay	Total Pay	Total Hours
			From	To			
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Page from wages book for Harland and Wolff, 1912 (PRONI)

and Lyons. It was entitled *Belfast Directory for 1807; or, a list of the names and places of the merchant traders etc. alphabetically arranged; also the principal characters*. Although there was a statement on the title page that it was 'to be published annually' only one further volume appeared in this series. Both were reprinted in a single volume as *Merchants in Plenty* in 1991 by the Ulster Historical Foundation. The next street directory published in Belfast was Thomas Bradshaw's *Belfast General and Commercial Directory* of 1819. Several directories published by Martin and by Henderson appeared in the 1830s, 40 and 50s. The first volume in the well-known *Belfast and Province of Ulster Directory* appeared in 1852. It did not become an annual volume until 1894 and continued to be printed until the mid 1990s. There is a good collection of street directories in Belfast Central Library, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, and the Linen Hall Library.

### Newspapers

Newspapers are an important source of family history information. The major drawback with using them is usually the lack of an index of names. Of particular interest to genealogists are birth, death and marriage notices. In many cases a newspaper notice may be the only record of one of these events if it took place prior to civil registration and if a church record has not survived. The *Belfast Newsletter* was first published in 1737. Its readership extended far beyond Belfast to cover much of Ulster. In 1962 it became simply the *Newsletter*. Some early items of interest for Belfast include:

- List of free and independent inhabitants of Belfast: c.120 names – *Belfast Newsletter*, 26 February 1754
- Names of merchants, traders and inhabitants of Belfast, 1774, c.60 names – *Belfast Newsletter*, 26–29 July 1774
- List of Belfast inhabitants who subscribed to a request for information on missing artillery pieces, c.151 names – *Belfast Newsletter*, 5 June 1798

A comprehensive index to the pre-1800 issues of the *Belfast Newsletter* is available on microfiche at the Linen Hall Library and on the web: [www.ucs.louisiana.edu/bnl/](http://www.ucs.louisiana.edu/bnl/). In addition there is an index to the pre-1800 birth, marriage and death notices in the Linen Hall Library and at PRONI (T/1584). At the Linen Hall Library in Belfast there is a card index to birth, marriage and death notices in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 1801–63.

Other important Belfast newspapers include:

- *Northern Whig*, 1824–1963 (changed name to *Northern Whig and Belfast Post* in 1919)
- *Belfast Morning News*, 1855–92 (incorporated with *Irish News* in 1892)
- *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 1870–present (changed name to *Belfast Telegraph* in 1918)
- *Irish News*, 1891–present

The Newspaper Library of Belfast Central Library, the Linen Hall Library and PRONI all have good newspaper collections. For a full list of newspapers printed in Ireland with dates of publication and availability visit the following website: [www.nli.ie/ca\\_newsplan.htm](http://www.nli.ie/ca_newsplan.htm).

**WALTERS & SONS**  
 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178, 180, 182, 184, 186, 188, 190, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272, 274, 276, 278, 280, 282, 284, 286, 288, 290, 292, 294, 296, 298, 300, 302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 318, 320, 322, 324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 334, 336, 338, 340, 342, 344, 346, 348, 350, 352, 354, 356, 358, 360, 362, 364, 366, 368, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378, 380, 382, 384, 386, 388, 390, 392, 394, 396, 398, 400, 402, 404, 406, 408, 410, 412, 414, 416, 418, 420, 422, 424, 426, 428, 430, 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 450, 452, 454, 456, 458, 460, 462, 464, 466, 468, 470, 472, 474, 476, 478, 480, 482, 484, 486, 488, 490, 492, 494, 496, 498, 500, 502, 504, 506, 508, 510, 512, 514, 516, 518, 520, 522, 524, 526, 528, 530, 532, 534, 536, 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 558, 560, 562, 564, 566, 568, 570, 572, 574, 576, 578, 580, 582, 584, 586, 588, 590, 592, 594, 596, 598, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, 612, 614, 616, 618, 620, 622, 624, 626, 628, 630, 632, 634, 636, 638, 640, 642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 654, 656, 658, 660, 662, 664, 666, 668, 670, 672, 674, 676, 678, 680, 682, 684, 686, 688, 690, 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, 722, 724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738, 740, 742, 744, 746, 748, 750, 752, 754, 756, 758, 760, 762, 764, 766, 768, 770, 772, 774, 776, 778, 780, 782, 784, 786, 788, 790, 792, 794, 796, 798, 800, 802, 804, 806, 808, 810, 812, 814, 816, 818, 820, 822, 824, 826, 828, 830, 832, 834, 836, 838, 840, 842, 844, 846, 848, 850, 852, 854, 856, 858, 860, 862, 864, 866, 868, 870, 872, 874, 876, 878, 880, 882, 884, 886, 888, 890, 892, 894, 896, 898, 900, 902, 904, 906, 908, 910, 912, 914, 916, 918, 920, 922, 924, 926, 928, 930, 932, 934, 936, 938, 940, 942, 944, 946, 948, 950, 952, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970, 972, 974, 976, 978, 980, 982, 984, 986, 988, 990, 992, 994, 996, 998, 1000.

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THE BELFAST

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PROVINCE OF ULSTER

DIRECTORY

1852

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Vol. 3.

1852

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WILLIAM BROWN, at the "Belfast Directory Office,"  
No. 10, Queen's Street, Belfast.

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## 16. THE POLLOCK FAMILY: A BELFAST FAMILY CASE STUDY

Siobhan Deane

The best way to show what results can be gleaned from archives in Belfast which are easily accessible is to give a practical example of an actual family research project, in this case the Pollock family.

Research into the Pollock family began with a photograph which showed a man standing proudly in the doorway of his tailor's shop, the number above the door was 53 but the street name was not known. The identity of the man was a mystery; it was only known that he was a member of the Pollock family. Interest had been drawn to the picture because the name above the shop 'J. Pollock' was different to the name in the window 'H. Pollock' and from this it was surmised that the man in the picture had just become the new proprietor of the business. This turned out to be the case.



Pollock's tailor's shop, 53 King Street, Belfast

We began the search with a look at the *Belfast and Province of Ulster* street directories which showed us that a John Pollock, Tailor, had premises at 53 King Street, Belfast.

Working back, the directories also told us that John Pollock had begun as a tailor in Quinn's Court, off High Street, in about 1855, before moving to 1 Bank Lane in 1860; 8 Orr's Entry c. 1862; Castle Street until about 1889, before eventually settling in King Street.

A D A R Y T

DAVID MEEK,

Merchant Tailor and Boys' Clothier,  
15 ROYAL AVENUE, BELFAST.

Opposite College Road to SEINF.

15 ROYAL AVENUE, BELFAST.  
 Opposite College Road to SEINF.  
 DAVID MEEK,  
 Merchant Tailor and Boys' Clothier,  
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 15 ROYAL AVENUE, BELFAST.  
 Opposite College Road to SEINF.

John Pollock and his family were living above their shop at this address when the 1901 census was compiled. The census return told us that John had been born in Belfast *c.* 1839 and he was married to a woman called Elizabeth, who was two years his junior. The children

RETURN OF IRELAND, 1901.

NAME	RELATION	AGE	SEX	MARRIAGE	EDUCATION	RELIGION	INDUSTRY	REMARKS
John Pollock	Head	62	M	Married	None	Roman Catholic	None	
Elizabeth Pollock	Wife	60	F	Married	None	Roman Catholic	None	
John Pollock	Son	18	M	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
Elizabeth Pollock	Daughter	16	F	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
John Pollock	Son	14	M	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
Elizabeth Pollock	Daughter	12	F	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
John Pollock	Son	10	M	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
Elizabeth Pollock	Daughter	8	F	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
John Pollock	Son	6	M	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	
Elizabeth Pollock	Daughter	4	F	Single	None	Roman Catholic	None	

1901 census return for the Pollock family living at 53 King Street





the grave were some of John's siblings and several of his children who died young. The gravestone inscriptions transcribed on this family plot were noted in a local publication found in the Linen Hall Library, (*Gravestone Inscriptions, Belfast, Volume 2, Friar's Bush and Milltown Graveyards*) and this gravestone not only gave details about John's children but also about his own parents.

The family burial place of John Pollock.

In memory of his father Hugh Pollock and his mother Mary.

Also 3 of his children, Mary E, Mary E and Terrence.

Also the above John Pollock died 23rd August 1901 aged 69 years.

And his wife Elizabeth Pollock died 1st April 1902 aged 69 years.

Also his son John Pollock died 11th May 1906 aged 30 years and Henry Pollock, killed in France 27th September 1915.



Notice to open the grave in Friar's Bush graveyard for Margaret Pollock's interment



Personal details and the burial place of those soldiers who died during the First or Second World Wars can be located using the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website at [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org), but a lesser known source is the beautifully illustrated *Ireland's Memorial Records 1914-1918*, copies of which can be found at the Ulster Historical Foundation or the Linen Hall Library. These records were compiled shortly after World War One and sometimes contain more detail on the casualty than can be found on the later website. Henry Pollock was a private with the 1st Battalion Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).

So whose face is it we are looking at standing at the doorway of 53 King Street? Given the natural progression of things it would seem feasible that the older son Hugh is the likely successor to his father, but Hugh married at St Peter's Catholic church in 1902, presumably leaving King Street to set up home with his new wife.

From the street directories it is known that it was actually Henry Pollock who was the last person to have the tailor's shop at 53 King Street, as it is he who is listed at the address in 1908. Shortly after this date the shop is no longer in the Pollock family's ownership. We can wonder if he is the 'H. Pollock' we are seeking to identify? Perhaps we will never know, as Henry never married and has no direct descendants to claim him, he lies buried in Cambrin Churchyard, France, a casualty of war.



Medal Card for Henry Pollock (Reg. No. 5245) held at The National Archives (WO 372/16)

## 17. USEFUL ADDRESSES

### **ULSTER HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

Cotton Court

30–42 Waring Street

Belfast, BT1 2ED

Telephone: (028) 9033 2288; Fax: (028) 9023 9885

E-mail: [enquiry@uhf.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@uhf.org.uk)

Websites: [www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com)

[www.booksireland.org.uk](http://www.booksireland.org.uk)

[www.historyfromheadstones.com](http://www.historyfromheadstones.com)

Ulster Historical Foundation is a not-for-profit educational charity (No. XN48460) which was founded in 1956. It exists to promote a knowledge of, and interest in, Irish history and genealogy with particular reference to the historic province of Ulster and to make information about the documentary sources in these fields more readily available. For half a century the Ulster Historical Foundation has been the premier genealogical research agency in Northern Ireland. In that time it has completed some 13,000 searches for clients with Irish and Scots-Irish roots. The Foundation has also published a broad range of books looking at different aspects of Irish history and genealogy, and organises conferences, family history workshops and lectures tours. The register of the Ulster Genealogical and Historical Guild (the Foundation's membership association), has topped the 10,000 mark. Guild members get free access to numerous online genealogical databases. If you would like to find out more about the work of the Ulster Historical Foundation, and how the organisation can help you trace your ancestors, you can make contact by post, email or telephone (details given above) or in person by visiting the premises during normal offices hours.

There are numerous databases on the Foundation's website of value to those searching for Belfast ancestors. These include:

- Belfast civil births, 1864–1921 (incomplete)
- Belfast civil marriages, 1845–1921
- Belfast City Cemetery burials, 1869–1997
- Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic church records for Belfast, *c.*1722–1900 (incomplete)
- Belfast leases, 1750–1815
- Directory of businesses in Belfast, 1807, 1808
- Belfast Prerogative wills, *c.*1600–1856
- Merchants and traders in Belfast, 1865

### **BELFAST CENTRAL LIBRARY**

Royal Avenue

Belfast, BT1 1EA

Telephone: (028) 9050 9150; Fax: (028) 9033 2819

E-mail: [info@libraries.belfast-elb.gov.uk](mailto:info@libraries.belfast-elb.gov.uk)

Website: [www.belb.org.uk](http://www.belb.org.uk)

**BELFAST CENTRAL LIBRARY – NEWSPAPER LIBRARY**

Library St  
Belfast, BT1 1EA  
Telephone: 028 9050 9117; Fax: 028 9033 2189

**GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE**

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency  
Oxford House  
49/55 Chichester Street  
Belfast, BT1 4HL  
Telephone: (028) 9025 2000; Fax: (028) 9025 2044  
E-mail: gro.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk (Birth, Death and Marriage Certificate Enquiries)  
E-mail: groreg.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk (Marriage, Re-registration and Adoptions)  
E-mail: grostats.nisra@dfpni.gov.uk (Statistical Queries)  
Website: www.groni.gov.uk

**BELFAST REGISTRAR'S OFFICE**

Belfast City Council  
City Hall  
Belfast BT1 5GS  
Telephone: 028 90270274  
E-mail: registrar@belfastcity.gov.uk

**LINEN HALL LIBRARY**

17 Donegall Square North  
Belfast, BT1 5GD  
Telephone: (028) 9032 1707; Fax: (028) 9043 8586  
E-mail: info@linenhall.com  
Website: www.linenhall.com/Home/home.html

**PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND**

66 Balmoral Avenue  
Belfast, BT9 6NY  
Telephone: (028) 9025 1318; Fax: (028) 9025 5999  
E-mail: proni@gov.uk  
Website: www.proni.gov.uk

**BELFAST FAMILY HISTORY CENTRE (LDS)**

40 Holywood Road  
Belfast, BT4 2GU  
Telephone: 028 9076 8250

**NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF IRELAND**

Bishop Street

Dublin 8

Telephone: (01) 407 2300; Fax: (01) 407 2333

E-mail: [mail@nationalarchives.ie](mailto:mail@nationalarchives.ie)Website: [www.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.nationalarchives.ie)**NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND**

Kildare Street

Dublin 2

Telephone: (01) 603 0200; Fax: (01) 676 6690

E-mail: [info@nli.ie](mailto:info@nli.ie)Website: [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)**CENTRE FOR MIGRATION STUDIES**

Ulster-American Folk Park

2 Mellon Road

Castletown

Omagh, Co. Tyrone, BT78 5QY

Telephone: (028) 8225 6315; Fax: (028) 8224 2241

E-mail: [uafp@iol.ie](mailto:uafp@iol.ie)Website: [www.qub.ac.uk/cms](http://www.qub.ac.uk/cms)

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