



Local History: 1

THE TOWNLAND



Ireland and its counties are sub-divided in a unique way, counties into baronies, baronies into parishes, and parishes into townlands. The townland is a unique feature of the Irish landscape and certainly existed long before the parishes and counties. An ancient division dating back to pre-Norman times, it is the common term or English translation for a variety of small local land units that varied in name and meaning throughout the island of Ireland. In the north there had been a large division called a 'ballybetagh,' generally divided into around 12 'ballyboes', but into around 16 'tates' in the area of Fermanagh and Monaghan. The 'ballyboe' was notionally of 120 acres and the 'tate', 60 acres, but these measurements clearly referred to useable land in an area that might also include marsh and mountain waste. The 'ballyboe' might be further divided into three 'sessiagh's while the term 'carrow' (Irish 'ceathramh', a 'quarter') may refer to either a quarter of a 'ballybetagh' or a quarter of a 'ballyboe'. The 'ballybetagh' disappeared after the Plantation and the subdivisions became the modern townlands, the average size of which, in most of Northern Ireland, is now c.350 acres but c.180 acres in Fermanagh. The spelling of townland names is subject to considerable variation due largely to the difficulties of representing the pronunciation of Irish language names in English spelling.

The original Irish names of townlands were eventually written down in anglicised form as they sounded to English court scribes. A good example of names being written down in this fashion can be found in the Raven maps (**T510/1**). It is possible to trace how they became increasingly anglicised in the *General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland* and in the Ordnance Survey maps.

In naming townlands frequent use was made of natural or man-made features of the landscape as well as names of families. The townland name may originally have referred to an easily identifiable feature of the landscape such as **Carraig** (meaning rock) or **Tullagh** (meaning a hill) or a botanical feature such as **Annagh** (meaning marsh). The social customs or history of the people who have lived in a particular place can also be reflected in the name of the townland. Often these names are the only records which survive of the families who held the land in pre-plantation times.

Bally or **Baile** (both meaning settlement) are usually compounded with personal or family names and examples can be found all over Ireland including such names as Ballywalter, Ballyrussel and Ballysavage. Many townlands throughout Ireland took their names from early habitation sites, both ecclesiastical and secular, and these include **Rath** (meaning fortification) or **Dun** (meaning fort) or **Chill** (meaning church).

There are approximately 62,000 townlands in Ireland and great variations are evident in their size and shape. They may be as small as an acre or as large as 7,000 acres. In Northern Ireland there are over 9,000 townlands ranging from Acre McCricket in County Down with 4 acres to Slievedoo in County Tyrone with 4,551 acres. It is not known exactly why there should be such discrepancies in size - it may be due to local topography or perhaps farming practices. Anything from five to thirty townlands may be grouped together to form a civil parish.

Up until the early 19th century townland boundaries altered considerably, following subdivisions. While townlands are almost all compact units it is possible to find parts of a townland in different civil parishes.

Townlands were used as the basis for plantation grants in the 16th and 17th centuries so you will find that land was let by landlords on a townland basis. Information in rentals, for example, will be arranged by townland and estates were mapped by townland. Townland names were recorded in a variety of documentation concerning land throughout the 19th century. The Tithe Applotment Books used the townland as its smallest division and it was adopted by government as the administrative unit for the decennial census and for valuation purposes. The boundaries of townlands are marked on the Ordnance Survey maps.

An alphabetical list of all the townlands in Ireland can be found in the *Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, Parishes and Baronies of Ireland* published at various dates. The indexes were compiled during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries after each census and will indicate in which county, barony, parish, poor law union and district electoral division each townland is situated. They are available in the Public Search Room. Once you have located your particular townland you should consult the Geographical Index (also available in the Public Search Room) which is arranged by townland and describes what archives exist for that townland as well as the PRONI reference numbers.

Opening Hours

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Local History: 2

CHURCH OF IRELAND VESTRY RECORDS



The vestry was an assembly of parishioners which met to discuss parochial business and took its name from its meeting place - the vestry or room in the church in which the priest's vestments were kept. The vestry could raise funds for local services such as poor relief, parish constables and road repair. The select vestry was a small committee which could levy taxes for religious purposes - the maintenance of the church and the payment of parish officers such as the sexton and the parish clerk.

The money which the churchwardens spent on behalf of the parish was raised largely from the parish cess, a local tax on householders, and from a lesser extent from the sale of seats in the parish church. The applotment, or assessment, of the parish cess, which appears periodically in the churchwardens' account books or the vestry minute books, is a valuable record of the local community. Following the abolition of the penal laws, membership of the general vestry was open to all householders in the parish irrespective of their religion although its proceedings were effectively controlled by the Protestant minority since all officers had to be members of the Church of Ireland.

The records of the transactions of the vestries, essentially vestry minutes and churchwardens' accounts, provide an important and much under-used resource for the local communities and their inhabitants. They complement the basic information which can be obtained from registers of baptisms, marriages and burials by providing additional details of the activities and circumstances of the residents of the parish. They often record, for example, the names of the poor and widowed who were supported by the parish and the names of the overseers of the poor and of the roads. Inevitably, vestry records are richest for the cities and large towns; vestry records for rural parishes tend to be less rewarding.

Many of the vestry minute books only cover the last 100-150 years. There are, however, exceptions such as the Parish of Shankill in Lurgan, whose minutes go back to 1672 (**PRONI Ref MIC1/18**) and the vestry minute books for Christ Church Cathedral, Lisburn, which date back to 1675 (**PRONI Ref MIC1/4**). In order to identify which records exist for a particular area and for what dates you should consult the *Guide to Church Records* available in PRONI and online. The Guide lists, alphabetically by parish, all the churches within that parish and for each church it gives details of the records copied or deposited in PRONI.



Local History: 3

ORDNANCE SURVEY MEMOIRS



In 1824 a House of Commons Committee recommended a survey of Ireland at a scale of six inches to one statute mile to facilitate a uniform valuation for local taxation purposes. The survey was directed by Colonel Thomas Colby who had available to him officers of the Royal Engineers and three companies of sappers and miners. In addition to this, civil servants were recruited to help with sketching, drawing and engraving maps, and eventually, in the 1830s, the writing of the Memoirs.

The Memoirs, compiled between 1830 and 1840 under the general direction of Lieutenant (later Sir) Thomas Larcom, were written descriptions intended to accompany the Ordnance Survey maps. They are a unique source for the history of the northern half of Ireland before the Great Famine. Arranged on a parish basis, they generally follow a particular pattern and record - natural features (hills, lakes, bogs, woods, climate, etc); modern topography (towns, public buildings, mills, gentlemen's seats, bridges, roads, markets and fairs, etc); the social economy (local government, dispensaries, occupations, the poor, religion, emigration, habits of the people - dress, food, customs, etc); and ancient topography (antiquities and ancient monuments). They therefore document a great wealth of information about the landscape and about society in the 1830s and provide much more detailed information on the daily life of the inhabitants than any census could hope to do.

However, the detail recorded in the memoirs varies enormously. They are particularly extensive for Counties Antrim and Londonderry but for parts of Cos Armagh and Down the information is very scanty and there is no memoir at all for Belfast or Armagh city. The memoirs for parishes in Counties Londonderry and Antrim will even record, for instance, the names of individuals known to have emigrated, including the townland they lived in and their occupation and age. This was at a time when the pressures of growing population, reduced employment opportunities and especially the decline of farmers' income from domestically-spun yarn (which was now being done mechanically) induced many people in Ulster to emigrate. The majority of those recorded in the Memoirs are cited as having gone to Canada, though many subsequently migrated from there to the

United States. The variation in detail arose not only from the pressure of combining surveying with memoir writing, but because individual reporters were not always very conscientious and some ignored their memoir writing duties entirely.

It became obvious fairly early on that the detailed memoir work could not be sustained along with the surveying and eventually the work virtually ceased in 1840. By this time only the Province of Ulster had been covered (included some parishes in Counties Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan) as well as some parishes in Counties Leitrim, Louth and Sligo.

The original copies of the Ordnance Survey Memoirs are in the Royal Irish Academy but PRONI holds microfilm copies for Counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone as well as for Counties Cavan, Donegal, Monaghan, Queen's County, Roscommon, Sligo and Tipperary (**PRONI ref MIC6C**). Complementing the Ordnance Survey memoirs are the Name Books of John O'Donovan containing details of the origin and meaning of townland names arranged by parish. These are available on microfilm (**PRONI ref MIC6A**) for Counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone, with some material for Counties Cavan and Monaghan. This is an invaluable source for the student of placenames. Researchers should also consult **T2383** which includes copies of topographical drawings that were originally prepared in connection with the projected publication of the Ordnance Survey Memoirs at the time of their compilation.

It was intended that once the memoirs had been compiled they would then be published but only one was ever published before the whole project came to an end in 1840, that of Templemore Parish, Co. Londonderry. However, in recent years all of the memoirs have been published by the Institute of Irish Studies and a set of these is available for consultation in PRONI.

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Local History: 4

THE BOOKS OF SURVEY AND DISTRIBUTION



The Books of Survey and Distribution were compiled around 1680 as the result of the wars of the mid-seventeenth century when the English government needed reliable information on land ownership throughout Ireland to carry out its policy of land distribution. They were used to impose the acreable rent called the Quit Rent, which was payable yearly on lands granted under terms of the Acts of Settlement and Explanation. It is possible to discover to whom, if anyone, the confiscated lands were granted so that we have a record of landowners for 1641 and 1680. As a result it is possible to determine the amount of lands lost by the 1641 owners and to discover the names of the new proprietors.

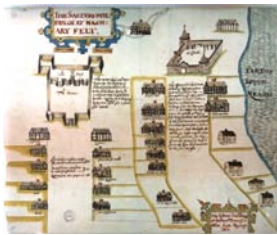
Although the original books were destroyed, manuscript copies had been made. One set of these manuscript copies can be found in the Annesley Papers (**MIC532/1-13**). They consist of 22 volumes and each volume includes an 'alphabet' which is an index of denominations. The text includes a physical description of each barony, with details of woods, bogs, rivers, soil, etc. The information is laid out in tabular form on a barony and parish basis. The details include: 'Proprietors in 1641 by the Civil Survey'; 'Denominations of lands by the Downe Survey'; 'Number of acres distributed', 'persons to whom distributed'; and 'Rent per annum payable to His Majesty'.

The surviving volumes cover the following counties: Kilkenny, Waterford, Kerry, Kildare, Carlow, Wexford, Longford, Louth, Mayo, Tipperary, Monaghan, Armagh, Limerick, Westmeath, Clare, Roscommon, Galway, Cork, Down, Antrim, Leitrim, Sligo, Cavan, Fermanagh, King's and Queen's Counties, Wicklow, Donegal, Londonderry and Tyrone.

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Local History: 5

NATIONAL EDUCATION RECORDS



In the early years of the 19th century there were numerous schools in Ireland but many were in poor condition and were badly conducted. The Province of Ulster, for example, had 3,449 schools in 1821 (Counties Antrim and Down had over 1,000 schools between them). However, they were fragmented in structure with numerous types of schools, including ‘charter’ schools, schools of the London Hibernian Society – to which Roman Catholics did not want to send their children because they were all of a proselytising character - and ‘pay’ or ‘hedge’ schools.

Grant-aid Applications

It was against this background of haphazard educational provision that the Irish system of National Education was founded in 1831 under the direction of the Chief Secretary, E.G. Stanley. The national schools which resulted were built with the aid of the Commissioners of National Education and local trustees. Some 2,500 schools came into existence in Ulster between 1832 and 1870. Schools could apply to the National Education Board for a grant to cover the cost of, for example, books, an additional teacher or a new classroom. To do so they had to make an application in the form of a questionnaire. These grant-aid applications, 1832-1889, arranged by county, are to be found in **ED/1** but should be ordered out under **MIC548**. They provide much information about the establishment of the schools, the names of the teachers, the number and size of the classrooms and the number of enrolled pupils. They are occasionally accompanied by correspondence.

Inspectors’ Reports

School inspection was very much part of the national school system from the beginning. In **ED/5** there are inspectors’ district books and notebooks detailing the reports of their school visits. These reports can be particularly revealing to the local historian as they can include details of the standard of education in a particular area; the attitude of the local landlord and of local people to the state control of education; and the rivalry between neighbouring townlands. The attitude of the local clergy towards the national school system is also of interest. Due to the fact that the newly established primary school system was to be non-denominational, all of the main churches were united in their dislike of the separation of the religious from the academic. On occasion this clerical opposition resulted in the establishment of rival schools in the area.

You will also find Inspectors’ observation books in the archive of each individual school (**PRONI Ref SCH**).

National Education Board Registers

Also of interest to local historians are the National Education Board registers (continued by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education) summarising the Commissioners' dealings with particular schools. They exist in an almost complete series from 1855 to 1948 and will give details of where the school was located, when it was established, when it first came under the authority of the Board and financial details. The names and religious denominations of the patrons and of any clerical or lay correspondents are also given. (**PRONI Ref ED/6/1**) Originally the volumes were arranged by province and then by county but from 1855 by education district. Ireland was divided into 61 education districts. The district volumes were later discontinued and a new series of county books was begun and continued by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education. In addition to the information in the original series, the books often provide information on the standard of instruction of the schools and the state of repair of school buildings. Some of these registers are held in the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. Those in PRONI can be found under the **PRONI Ref ED/6/2**

Teachers' Salary Books

If you want to find out who taught in particular schools you should consult the Salary books kept by the National Education Board and continued by the Northern Ireland Ministry of Education. The volumes held in PRONI only date from 1899 and are incomplete up to 1905 but thereafter run continuously up to 1927. The pre-1899 volumes and the missing ones between 1899-1905 are in the National Archives of Ireland in Dublin. These salary books will give the names of the teachers, their academic qualifications and their date of appointment and resignation in addition to particulars of their salaries. Salary Books can be found under the **PRONI Ref ED/7**.

National School records

PRONI holds the records of over 1,600 national schools which are of primary importance both for the local and family historian. They consist almost entirely of registers and inspectors' observation books. Their earliest records begin in the 1860s; there are only a few schools with any registers earlier than this date. The registers will record the names of the pupils, their date of entry into the school, their age, their address and the fathers' occupation. If a child attended a previous school then this will also be recorded and will allow you to trace the movement of families, including those who moved into Northern Ireland from Scotland or England.

For a fuller description of education records in PRONI see the *Guide to Educational Records* available in PRONI and online.



Local History: 6

SOLICITORS' ARCHIVES



Solicitors' records are an invaluable source of local history comprising title deeds, testamentary papers, inventories, valuations, etc. Since its foundation the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has been collecting papers from solicitors offices in all parts of the Province. Not only do such collections provide numerous copies of destroyed Irish public records but they provide one of the larger quarries of material for the economic historian.

PRONI holds records of more than one hundred and forty Northern Ireland solicitor's practices. These include the records of L'Estrange & Brett, Belfast, which is the most important in the east of the Province. The variety of the material is staggering: linen manufacturers, distillers, chemical works, potato sales during the Great Famine, Belfast Improvement Schemes, the fortunes of the Belfast Philharmonic Society are just a few. **PRONI Ref D1905**

The records of Carleton, Atkinson & Sloan, Portadown, include the title deeds, legal papers, Irish Land Commission records, etc, relating to the Wakefield and Richardson families and their estates at Moyallen and Gilford, Co. Down and in the Lurgan and Portadown area, c.1780-c.1914. There are also letters and papers concerning a dispute over the Unionist nomination for the constituency of North Armagh, 1885. **PRONI Ref D1252**

The archive of Wilson & Simms, Strabane, has a similar importance west of the Bann. Consisting of more than 20,000 documents these include a number of political papers that reflect the firm's activities as election agents for Unionist candidates in the North Tyrone constituency, c.1885-1920, and which include printed election addresses, circular letters and accounts. **PRONI Ref D2298**

Solicitors' records fall into two broad types: those of the administration of a solicitor's office and then clients' papers. The clients' papers are of particular interest to genealogists and local historians as they include records of prominent families, landowners and estates – title deeds, testamentary papers, leases, rentals, maps and correspondence which bring together a corpus of information on a particular family or area



Local History: 7

PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS



Photographs provide invaluable pieces of evidence in helping to piece together accurate views of the past and are an obvious source for local historians. It may be said that photography was invented in 1839, when Louis Daguerre introduced a process which produced a permanent photographic image on a thin metal plate. On 6 August 1840 the Northern Whig reported that a local engraver, Francis Beatty, had made a 'photographic drawing' of the Long Bridge and two years later he opened the first photographic studio in Belfast. By the 1880s photography was well established in the province. The Ulster Amateur Photographic Society was founded in 1885. In the early years, most photographs were taken by professional photographers and the subjects tended to be the wealthy and famous. According to the census reports there were 74 professional photographers in Ulster in 1881 and by 1911 the number had risen to 223. As photography became less expensive, thousands of ordinary people had their likeness taken at home, on holiday or in a studio. The development of the 'Brownie' at the turn of the century made 'do-it-yourself' photography possible, and family photographs became much more common.

Scattered throughout the collections deposited at PRONI are many photographic collections. The local historians should consult the records of the local landlord which may contain photographs of, and by, members of that particular family. For example, there are more than thirty photograph albums, c.1850-c.1906, in the Annesley Papers. Most of these were taken by Hugh, 5th earl of Annesley, who was an enthusiastic amateur photographer. The earliest photographs date from his service with the Scots Fusilier Guards in the Kaffir War, 1851-53 and in the Crimean War. The photographs include: family, friends, servants and tenants at Donard Lodge, Newcastle, and Castlewellan, including the building of the present castle and gardening improvements beside the castle. **PRONI Ref D1854 and T3774/1-9.**

There are also major collections containing the work of the Province's leading professional photographers. Of particular interest are c.200,000 glass plate negatives which are almost exclusively the work of J.W. Burroughs and his successor, H.F. Cooper, commercial photographers working in Strabane between c.1900 and c.1960. The great majority are taken up with routine family, wedding and passport

photographs; but c.20,000 cover a wide range of events, etc, largely in Counties Tyrone and Donegal, such as political meetings, Orange processions, Ulster Volunteer Force demonstrations in Strabane in particular, 'B' Specials, sporting functions, circuses, street scenes, mill and factory interiors, agricultural shows, harvesting, markets, railways and railway stations, etc. New prints have been made of many of the glass plates and it is these that are listed in the catalogue under the **PRONI Ref D1422**.

Another important collection of photographs is the work of the Allison family over a period of fifty years. At one time there were studios at Dundalk, Armagh, Newry and Warrenpoint, but Armagh remained the centre of the business. The Allison collection constitutes a good photographic account of provincial (urban and rural) life from the early 1900s until the Second World War. The photographs include street scenes; historic and commercial buildings; churches, shops, schools and country houses; the workplace and transport; and above all, the people of Armagh, city and country. **PRONI Ref D2886**.

The Lawrence photographic collection, late 19th and early 20th century, in the National Library of Ireland is an invaluable source for the local historian. c.700 photographic prints selected from the Lawrence collection of stereoscopic negatives and relating to Northern Ireland are available in PRONI. As well as landscape scenes, such as the Antrim coast and the Giant's Causeway, there are photographs of buildings, particularly churches, and of street scenes. **PRONI Ref T2418**

c.300 glass plate negatives and c.100 photographic prints, c.1890-c.1920, largely the work of W.R. Henderson, press correspondent and photographer of Newtown Stewart, Co. Tyrone. Included are views of a number of towns and villages in Cos Tyrone and Donegal; Newtown Stewart figures most frequently but there are also views of Ardstraw, Plumbridge, Omagh, Bundoran, etc. **PRONI Ref D2618**

c.60,000 negatives, prints, sortie plots and traces of aerial surveys of Northern Ireland made by the RAF between 1944 and 1959. **PRONI Ref AM/1**

In **INF/7** there is also a wide selection of photographs of a more formal nature, taken for government purposes and including Ulster Covenant Day in 1912, the air raids on Belfast in 1941, and Royal visits to Northern Ireland.



Local History: 8

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPS



PRONI has the most extensive holdings of maps for Northern Ireland, including the published Town Plans for the major towns in the Province.

Before the nineteenth century various parts of Ireland had been mapped by landowners in the interests of estate management. Surveyors were employed to measure and plot each part of the estate in varying degrees of detail depending on the amount of money available. It was not until the early nineteenth century, when the idea of having a new land tax was introduced, that the Government decided that it required the whole of Ireland to be mapped on a large scale in order to show the land boundaries more accurately.

Maps on the scale of six inches to one statute mile were completed for the whole country by 1842 (**PRONI Ref OS/1 and OS/6**). This massive undertaking ensured that Ireland was surveyed and mapped with a degree of thoroughness and accuracy unique for its time in the world. It is particularly opportune that the mapping programme was undertaken shortly before the Great Famine when the country had its maximum recorded population.

By 1846, when the publication of the first edition of the six-inch map was completed, revision of the early six-inch maps had already begun. The Ordnance Survey maps are a faithful record of the landscape for this period of the nineteenth century. For the first time the boundaries of all townlands, civil parishes, baronies and counties were delineated. Man made items such as field outlines, roads and settlement features are shown on these maps. The nineteenth century interest in antiquities was reflected in the care taken to mark the location of such sites as castles, medieval and early Christian churches and raths. **OS/6**

After the 1950s the system changed, covering Ireland as a whole and not on a county basis. This new series has superseded the six inch county maps and is known as the Irish Grid (**OS/7**) For the index to the Irish Grid which shows both Ordnance Survey sheet numbers and the corresponding Irish Grid number consult the appropriate map in the Public Search Room.

Researchers interested in town plans should consult **OS/8**. The collection is made up of printed plans of 163 towns in Northern Ireland and two towns in the Republic; it complements **OS/9** a collection of manuscript town plans which frequently contain older unpublished maps of the towns found in the published maps in **OS/8**. For the index to the Borough of Belfast consult the appropriate map in the Public Search Room.

A copy of the 'Conventional Signs used on The Six Inch Maps of the Ordnance Survey' can be found at the end of **OS/2**.

Researchers interested in maps with valuation markings can locate these under the **PRONI ref VAL** as the Ordnance Survey sheets do not contain valuation details.



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Local History: 9

THE COMMISSIONERS CHURCH TEMPORALITIES IN IRELAND (FIN/10/10)



When the Church of Ireland was disestablished by an Act of Parliament in 1869, it was the largest landlord in Ireland. Its lands were occupied by some 11,000 tenants on 900 different estates throughout the island at a value of £227,000. On disestablishment its property was transferred to the Commissioners of Church Temporalities in Ireland, previously known as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. This responsibility was in turn transferred in 1881 to the Irish Land Commission and, when the Northern Ireland administration came into being in 1921, to the Land Commission (NI).

Irish Church Act, 1869

The main provisions of the Irish Church Act reflect the various responsibilities which the Commissioners were to discharge. They included:

The granting of compensation to all persons, lay and clerical, who were deprived of their income by the operation of the Act.

The undertaking of the charges on the public revenue in respect of the *Regium Donum*, (the annual endowment granted to the non-conformist clergy by Charles II) and the college of Maynooth.

The commutation of the annuities which had been awarded to persons deprived of income.

The granting of compensation of private endowments which had been vested in the Commissioners.

The granting of compensation to lay patrons for loss of advowsons (clerical incomes).

The disposal of churches, school-houses, burial grounds, ecclesiastical residences and the mensal lands (home-farms) attached to these.

The disposal of national monuments of church lands.

The management and sale of tithe rent charges, church lands and the creation of a body of small proprietors. A tithe rent charge was defined as 'any annual sum payable to the Church Temporalities body under the 1869 Act'.

Immediate Compensation

One of the first duties of the Church Temporalities Commission was to arrange compensation for vested interests. A holder of an ecclesiastical benefice was to be entitled to his net income for life so long as he continued to perform the duties attached to the benefice. A permanent curate, so long as he held his curacy, was entitled to his salary. Diocesan schoolmasters, parish clerks and sextons were to be paid provided they continued to carry out their duties. Non-permanent curates, organists and vergers were to receive gratuities, lump sums fixed by the Crown. By January 1871 the Church Temporalities Commission had gained full possession of the different sources of income out of which almost all classes of annuities had previously been paid, that is, the revenue of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. They dealt with 8,000 claims for compensation, from archbishops to organists. Both the *Regium Donum* and the grant to Maynooth were terminated. Instead, every minister of any Protestant non-conforming congregation was paid an annuity equal to the amount to which he had previously been entitled. The trustees of Maynooth College were paid a capital sum equal to fourteen times the annual amount they had previously received out of the Consolidated Fund.

Commutation of Interest

The Commissioners were also responsible for the complex and laborious process of commutation. For example, all annuitants were entitled to commute their annuities for a capital sum, and all persons holding church lands were entitled to commute their life interest in their lands for a capital sum or commutation money. The Commissioners needed to establish that each annuity was unencumbered. Where non-conforming clergy were concerned this process was straightforward and almost all of them took advantage of this scheme. Dealing with the income of disestablished Church of Ireland clergy was more problematical. For instance, where a commuting clergyman was the life owner of his lands as well as an annuitant, the annual value of his land let to tenants had to be calculated separately and added to the annuity in lieu of the tithe rent charge he already possessed. The whole amount was then to be reckoned as one annuity and commuted for a capital sum.

Buildings

The law provided that all ecclesiastical buildings used for public worship at the date of enactment should be vested in the Representative Church Body (a body formed at disestablishment to hold the church's property and manage its finances) without any

payment, together with the school-houses and lands belonging to them. Burial grounds granted by a private donor, for the use of the congregation and not separated from the church by a road, were also handed over. The remainder were to be vested in the Guardians of the Poor Law Union where they were situated. Disused or ruined ecclesiastical structures regarded as national monuments and deemed to be worthy of preservation, were handed over to the Board of Works with a sum of money which was to be spent on their upkeep. Bishops' palaces and glebe houses with demesnes attached were also sold off to the Representative Church Body, frequently at a considerable loss to the church fund because the price of the house was fixed by the Act, usually at a nominal sum. The price of the land was determined by arbitration, not by competition.

Sale of Church Lands

The last aspect of the work of the Commissioners was the sale of church lands and the creation of a body of small proprietors under Section 34 of the 1869 Act. Before they offered this church land for sale to the public, each of the 11,000 tenants was given the opportunity to buy his holding at a fair price set by the Commissioners that is, one quarter of the asking price and the balance by instalment mortgages.

FIN/10/10

These mortgages go to make up the great bulk of PRONI's holding of Church Temporalities documents, **PRONI Ref FIN/10/10**. They range from as little as £47 (**PRONI Ref FIN/10/10/CT/6766**) to £2000 (**PRONI Ref FIN/10/10/CT/6875**). The first part of the archive is made up of orders merging tithe rent charges (**PRONI Ref FIN/10/10/CT/5917-6340**). These are followed by conveyances, often between a purchaser, that is, a tenant and a member of the clergy. Conveyances in perpetuity relate to the sale of lands held in perpetuity by renewable leases (before the passing of the Church Temporalities Act) by bishops and ecclesiastical corporations. Some tenants had converted their renewable leases into perpetual leases during the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' tenure; few tenants could afford to do so because it was expensive. The Commissioners felt it was important to remove this 'embarrassing and intricate tenure' (renewable leasehold) and accordingly reduced the cost to the tenant. So successful was this that 1,002 perpetuities were taken up leaving only 191 not taken up. The tithes and purchase monies, along with the proceeds of other church properties, were paid into a Church Temporalities Fund, managed up to 1881 by the Commissioners and subsequently by the Irish Land Commission up to 1921.



Local History Series: 10

SOURCES FOR STUDYING LOCAL HISTORY



PRONI holds a unique combination of private and public records that are essential for anyone wanting to know the history of their local community, town or village. Because there is such a wealth of material in PRONI, this handout is designed to give you an overview of just some of the sources you can consult.

MAPS

These are an essential starting point for almost every local history study. PRONI holds maps that date from the 17th century right up to the present day, allowing you to document the changes in the landscape over the years. We also hold localised maps for almost all of the major estates in Northern Ireland. (See *Guide to Landed Estates* for details of the maps available.) The **Ordnance Survey** starting publishing maps in the 1830s. PRONI holds the various editions of these maps. As they mapped the entire country they are therefore an essential tool for studying the growth of towns and the changing face of the countryside no matter where you live. **(PRONI Ref OS)**

ORDNANCE SURVEY MEMOIRS

A unique source of information for the pre-Famine period. They were compiled to accompany the 1st edition of the 6 inch Ordnance Survey maps. They provide information for each parish on a wide range of subjects from roads, schools, and public buildings, to mills, canals, antiquities, employment, farming and churches. The *Memoirs* have now been published and are available in PRONI.

TRANSPORT RECORDS

It is impossible not to include transportation in a local history study. Whether you are interested in roads, railways, canals or shipping, you will find a wealth of information in the Grand Jury Records (**ANT, ARM, DOW, FER, LOND and TYR**), in the Ulster Transport Authority archive (**UTA**), and in the records of the various canal companies. Other useful sources include: the Ministry of Home Affairs (**HA**) and the Ministry of Development (**DEV**), and the Church of Ireland vestry minute books.

EDUCATION RECORDS

Educational institutions form an important part of any community. PRONI holds the records of over 1,500 schools, national, public elementary and primary, ranging from the mid-19th century to c.1940.

Information on national schools can be found in the grant-aid applications to the Commissioners of National Education which will give you details of the numbers of pupils attending a school, the size and condition of the schoolhouse and the classrooms, the names of the teachers, the date of foundation, etc (**ED/1**). Many private archives, including estate and family archives, will often include records of private, endowed and charitable schools. (*See Guide to Educational Records*)

PHOTOGRAPHS

These are a wonderful resource for the local historian, giving an immediate impression of life and work in the past. Of particular interest are: the photographic collections of H.E. Cooper, who worked in Strabane, Co. Tyrone (D1422); the Allison family in Armagh (D2886); W.R. Henderson, who worked in the north-west (D2618); and the Annesley family of Castlewellan, Co. Down (D1854).

LANDED ESTATE RECORDS

An invaluable source for any study of 18th and 19th century Ireland as the landlords were then the major employers. Our *Guide to Landed Estates* lists the estates alphabetically by landowner, and describes the range of records held, such as rent books, leases, wages books, correspondence, maps and plans and their covering dates.

POOR LAW RECORDS

Many market towns in Northern Ireland, as elsewhere in the island of Ireland, had a workhouse for the relief of the poor and destitute. The minute books, indoor relief registers, etc, document how the poor law was administered and give details on those who received relief and the impact of the Famine on the local population (**BG**).

Opening Hours

Mon-Wed and Fri 9:00am-4:45pm
Thurs 10:00am-8:45pm
(Please check in advance for
late evening opening)

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
2 Titanic Boulevard, Belfast, BT3 9HQ
Tel: (028) 9053 4800 Fax: (028) 9053 4900
Web-site: <http://www.proni.gov.uk>
e-mail: pronni@dcalni.gov.uk



Local History Series: 11

MARITIME RECORDS



PRONI holds a unique combination of maritime records relating to Northern Ireland, ranging from the business archives of shipbuilding companies like Harland & Wolf to Government records such as Customs and Excise.

Major collections relate to maritime companies, comprising ledgers, minutes, finances, maps and plans, and personnel records. The Harland & Wolf collection is one of the largest and most significant business archives held by PRONI. Comprising the Harland & Wolf archive (**PRONI Ref D2805**) and the Titanic Quarter Limited papers (**PRONI Ref D4413**), these collections can demonstrate how the industry has changed within Northern Ireland.

Other collections include the small canal navigation companies, the steamship companies, and records relating to families involved in the industry (including Lord Pirrie, Thomas Andrews, and Dr Rebbeck) – which provide an insight into the prominent individuals and the activities performed by the workers.

The following archives provide a starting point for your research:

Government Files

- HAR – Harbour Commissioners Papers
- CAB – Records of Cabinet Secretariat
- CUS - Records of Customs and Excise
- FIN – Ministry of Finance Papers
- COM – Department of Commerce Papers
- TRANS – Ministry of Transport Papers
- UTA – Ulster Transport Authority

Business Papers

- D2805 – Harland & Wolff archive
- D4413 – Titanic Quarter Limited Papers
- D4509 – The North of Ireland Shipbuilding Company
- D2889 – Belfast Ropeworks Papers
- D3605 – Records of the Belfast Steamship Company.
- D3920 – Business Records of the East Downshire Steamship Company
- D3094 – Newry & Kilkeel Steamship Company Papers

- D3095 – Frontier Town Steamship Company Limited Papers
- D3096 – Mercantile Steamship Company of Ulster Papers
- D3540 – Apprenticeship Indentures with Messer's Harland and Wolf
Belfast
- D3770 – Papers of William McCorkell & Co Limited
- T/2713 – J&J Cook/McCorkell Papers

Prominent Individuals

- D3655 – Andrews Family papers (Thomas Andrews Jnr – shipbuilder)
- D3704 – Testimonials of Robert Russell's apprenticeship employment
at Kerr's Marine Engineering & Math Academy.
- D4026 – Letters of James Greenan, a seaman with the Melbourne
Steamship Co Ltd.
- D1700 – Crawford Papers. – Engineering notes relating to Harland &
Wolff
- D2389 – Andrew Boyd Papers – Documents relating to Harland &
Wolff

Miscellaneous

- D3830 – Princess Victoria Investigation Papers
- D3140 – Printed advert for passage on the Clipper Ship.
- D2784 – Booklet entitled Presidential address on the Belfast
Shipyards by Denis Rebbeck.
- D1896 – Air photograph showing the German Bombing target at H&W
shipyard.

Books

- LIB/50 – Modern British Shipbuilding a guide to historical rewards. By
Ritchie, L.A
- LIB/3099 – The dynamic class ships, Olympic, Titanic & Britanic. By
Chirnside, Mark.
- LIB/3100 – Shipbuilders to the world, 125 years if H&W Belfast 1861-
1986. By Moss, Michael & Hume, John R.

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