

Finding Irish Origins: A County is Not Enough!

Class 3: Strategies for Determining Origins

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Cluster Research (Use the F.A.N.)

1. Family Members-
 - a. Those with the same surname
 - b. Others too: In-Laws, Cousins, Grandparents, Great-Grandparents, and step siblings
2. Associates-
 - a. Persons: politics, religion, education, and occupation
 - b. Places: place of birth or death
3. Neighbors-
 - a. Persons who share the same address
 - b. Persons from the same neighborhood, town, or county
 - c. Same cemetery plot or neighboring church pews

Witnesses and Sponsors

Look for members of your ancestor's F.A.N.

- Witnessing a legal document (ex. land deed, will)
- Witness to a wedding
- Godparents at a baptism
- Providing an affidavit for a military file or homesteading claim
- Providing sworn testimony in court (ex. naturalization petition)

Keeping Organized

- Five generation charts
- Family group sheets
- Family tree software
- Annotated research log
- FAN Club Spreadsheet

TIP: Check out the webinar “Setting Yourself Up for Success: Organizational Tools and Tips to Break Down Brick Walls” -

<https://www.americanancestors.org/video-library/setting-yourself-success-organizational-tools-and-tips-break-down-brick-walls>

Using Cluster Research for Immigrant Origins

- Step #1 – Start with the known
 - Gather as much information found in the U.S. as possible
 - Review vital records, census records, naturalization records, draft registration cards, etc.
- Step #2 – Pull together family members
 - Use census records to identify any family members that immigrated to the U.S. besides your ancestor (siblings, parents)
 - Examine neighbors
 - Identify maiden name of mother
 - Review church records for godparents/sponsors/witnesses
- Step #3 – Track siblings forward
 - Research where siblings migrated to
 - Use newspapers, probate records, land deeds to locate details
- Step #4 – Research in Ireland
 - Use web sites like RootsIreland and IrishGenealogy.ie to locate vital records, baptisms for family members identified

Identify and Research Candidates

- When the paper trail goes cold, identify candidates with same surname living within the same townland or county of your ancestor
- Consider other candidates who had a similar migration pattern from Ireland
- Identify the candidate's family members
- Track their children forward
 - Look for those that emigrated. Where did they end up?
- Look for marriages on sites like www.irishgenealogy.ie and rootsireland.ie

TIP: Use wildcards in your searches to identify different surname variants

- Wildcards:
- Asterisk (*) for one character
- Ex. Cl*rkin will bring up results for Clarkin, Clerkin, Clirkin, Clorkin, Clurkin, etc.
- Question mark (?) for more than one character.
- Ex. Cl*rk*n will bring up results for Clarken, Clarkin, Clerkin, Clarkyn, etc.
- Use databases like Boston Pilot: Irish Immigrant Advertisements (Search for Missing Friends), 1831-1920 to search for potential relatives -
<https://www.americanancestors.org/search/databasesearch/510/boston-pilot-irish-immigrant-advertisements-search-for-missing-friends-1831-1920>

RootsIreland.ie Tips

- In addition to searching by county, search by parish (if known) to narrow results
- Enter an approximate year or leave blank to see all results
- If no baptism or birth record found, search for marriage records to help verify parents
- Note: These are transcriptions. Always seek out the original record.

IrishGenealogy.ie Tips

- This site has the civil records for births, marriages, and deaths. For church records, use RootsIreland first.
- Use the more search options feature for an advanced search screen
- Search by mother's surname for births
- Search by 2nd party to locate a specific marriage if you know of one party's surname
- Click on image to see the original – has more details than the transcription. If the image is not available, you can purchase a copy from the General Register Office. See the web site for details.
- Use the 1851 townland index to identify registration district for searches
- Link: <https://www.irishancestors.ie/search/townlands/index.php>

Publications

Belmonte, Jeanne. *Using Catholic Records*. (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2017)

Daly, Marie E. *Genealogist's Handbook for Irish Research*. (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2016). Available for purchase at <https://shop.americanancestors.org/collections/ethnic-resources/products/genealogists-handbook-for-irish-research>

Daly, Marie E. *Problem solving in Irish research* (Boston, New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2013)

Grenham, John. *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors, 5th Edition* (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2019)

Harris, Ruth-Ann M. *The Search for Missing Friends: Irish Immigrant Advertisements Placed in the Boston Pilot, Volume I: 1831-1850* (New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2020 reprint of 1989 original). Multiple volumes available for purchase at <https://shop.americanancestors.org/collections/ethnic-resources>

Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Quicksheet : the historical biographer's guide to cluster research (the FAN principle)* (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2012)

Websites

- American Ancestors www.americanancestors.org
- American Ancestors External Databases <https://www.americanancestors.org/search/external-databases>
- Ancestry www.ancestry.com
- ArchiveGrid <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>
- FamilySearch www.familysearch.org
- RootsIreland – rootsireland.ie