

Celtic Connections Conference 2020

Saturday, August 1st, 2020

Question & Answer Log: Chat with Donna Moughty

QUESTION: Is there a naming pattern that families might have used for female children? My 2nd great grandmother had 4 girls and I am wondering if it might be a possible clue.

ANSWER: Yes there is a naming pattern and it is very similar to the one used for males. The eldest son is named after the paternal grandfather and the second son after the maternal grandfather. With girls it is just a little bit different, the oldest daughter would be named after the maternal grandmother and the second girl after the paternal grandmother. With all naming patterns in Ireland please keep in mind that these are not “locked” in place and you will find variations and deviations from the pattern. With females there were lots of Bridgets and Marys.

As for whether this naming pattern continued for Irish-Americans once they arrived in America, most immigrants did continue using a naming pattern with which they were familiar in the “old country.” Another clue is to look at the naming pattern used for an ancestor’s siblings and see if they continued the same naming pattern.

QUESTION: Donna's strategy for when you only know the county is so helpful. I only know that my 2nd great grandmother Mary Keeney was from SW Co Donegal based on my Ancestry DNA. From several 170 cM matches, she may have been from the Killaghtee Parish. US records have her born anywhere from 1847 to 1852. I am still trying to get church records from the Cleveland, Ohio Diocese. My question is, would writing to the church in Ireland be of benefit and if so, suggestions for what to write?

ANSWER: First, do the records for the Killaghtee parish even exist? Always try to look the parish up at the John Grenham website Irish Ancestors (<https://johngrenham.com>) and look for the church records. See if they exist by 1847. If they don't start until 1870, then you have your answer and there is no sense writing to the parish priest.

Here's a [link](#) that explains how to use the website to find out about church records.

I assume these are records for Roman Catholics and these records can start in the late-1700s or as late as the 1880's. Try to get all immigration records here in the US and check the name of the sponsors for marriages, baptisms etc – all about collateral research.

For writing for records, it depends upon the parish priest. A Church of Ireland or

Presbyterian church you will likely get an answer. However, many Roman Catholic parishes either won't respond or respond that the records are private.

Consider writing to the local [Heritage Center](#) as well. (There may be a fee.). Most of their records are transcribed and available at [RootsIreland.ie](#). Make sure you check their online sources to see what years are online.

QUESTION: A relative did extensive research in County Leitrim, Carrigallen area on our McPartlin family this was about the 1950's. I was wondering if she might have submitted her findings to a Library or Society in that area. Do you have any suggestions on where to begin looking?

ANSWER: Google the name of the county and the parish plus "genealogy" and you can find these records and books. Leitrim also has a [Heritage Center](#). However, these centers didn't come into existence until the late 1980s. Also check the [county library](#) – the county libraries are amazing in Ireland. Also don't be shy about sending a copy of your research to one of these local libraries or upload it to Ireland Reaching Out (<https://irelandxo.com/>). Also check for a local genealogical society or for Facebook Groups for the locality you're searching.

QUESTION: You mentioned during the presentation that burial records are usually not available in the church records. Do burial records ever exist in any format or location? I know that my relatives are buried in church yards so does this mean there are no records available?

ANSWER: Burial records are not usually kept for Roman Catholic parishes. The Church of Ireland burial records DO exist, but two-thirds of the records were lost in the fire of 1922. In addition, Roman Catholics didn't consider burial a sacrament so they frequently didn't bother to keep records. Try checking on the [John Grenham](#) site to see if the burial records exist. (This is an example from County Down)

QUESTION: Donna talked in her presentation about how records are now showing up online so now a person doesn't always have to go to the GRO every time they visit Dublin. I am curious as to what is her impression is of the way these records are now becoming digitized and does she see any stumbling blocks in Irish research as these records show up more online? Does that change our method of research?

ANSWER: Today we have all GRO records except for death records from 1864 to 1877 – they are all imaged and indexed now. The quality of records is excellent. There are occasionally instances where events were never registered. [IrishGenealogy](#) covers all of Ireland until 1921, then only the Republic. The site is free. There are also records for the six counties now in Northern Ireland beginning in 1922 through the [General Register Office of Northern Ireland](#). Searching is free, but there is a fee for the records images.