

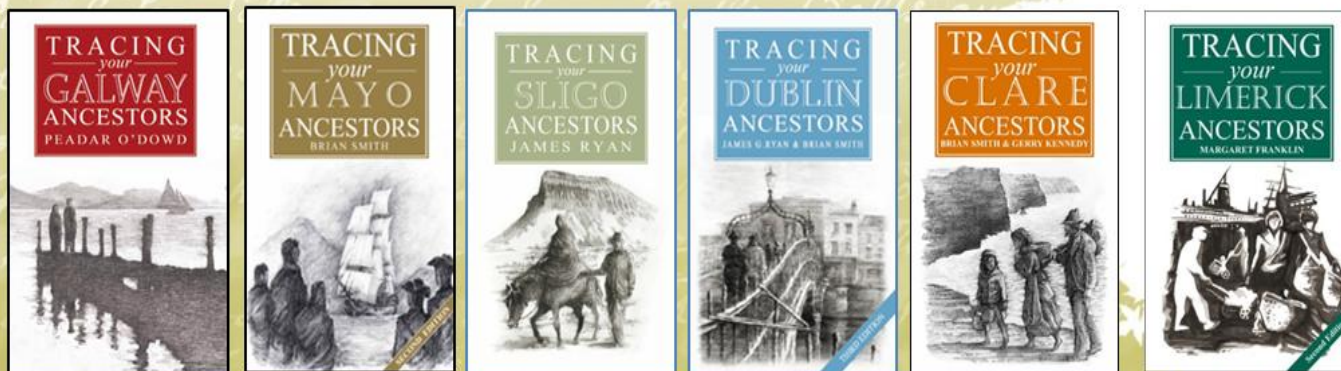
# *Understanding Irish names and placenames*

Dr Jim Ryan  
Flyleaf Press

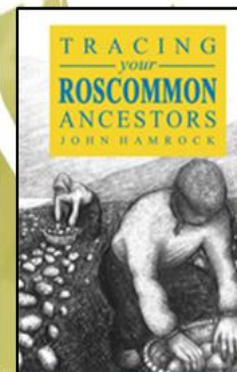
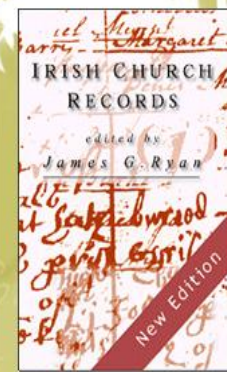
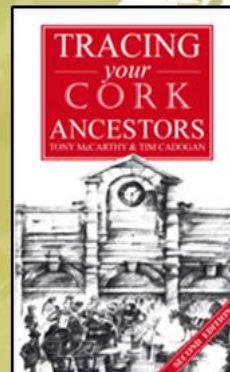
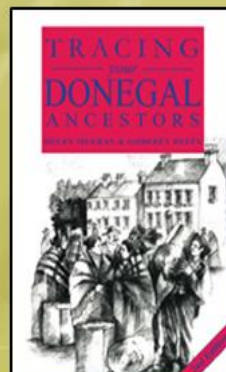
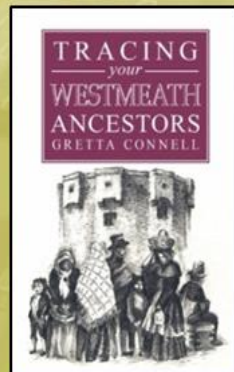
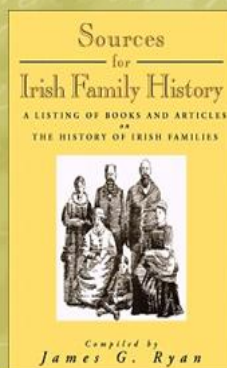


Sons of the American Revolution  
Genealogy Conference  
Dublin – May 2014





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PRESS

# Outline of talk

## **Placenames**

- Origins
- Sources of confusion
- Sources of information

## **Family Names**

- Name origins & variations
- Naming Practices & Traditions
- Sources of information





# Place-names

# Land Divisions

Unit	No. (1)	Value	Comments
Townland	64,000	***	Major 'address' in rural communities – very variable in size from 10 acres to thousands
Civil Parish	2,500	****	Vital for record purposes
Barony	273	*	Used for only a limited number of record types – not essential
County	32	***	Major and consistent land division – vital
Province	4	*	Useful for some record types – knowing the county will determine the province

# Co. Monaghan

## Civil Parishes

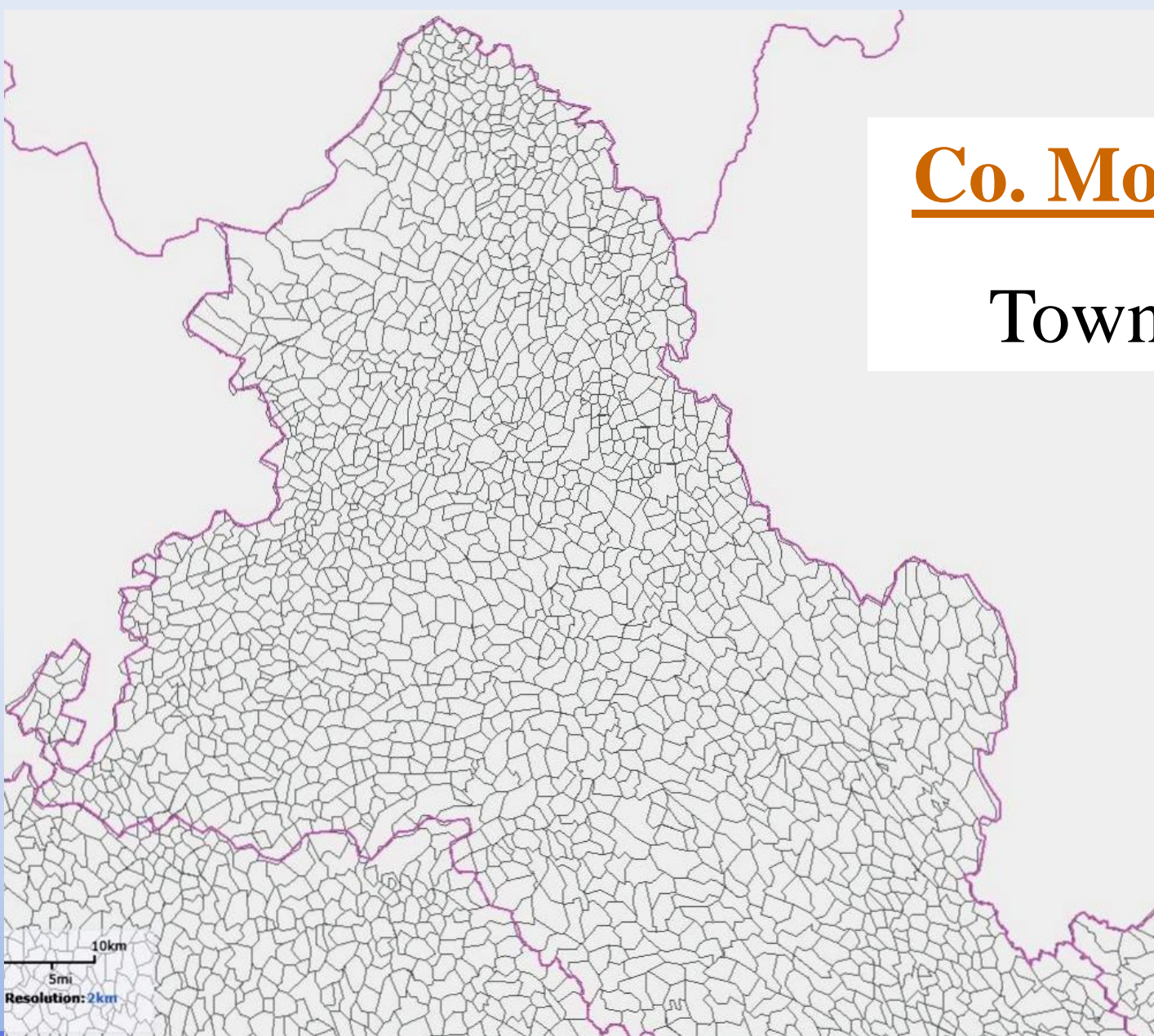


Each Civil parish is  
composed of approx.  
20-30 townlands



# Co. Monaghan

## Townlands



# Placenames

Vast majority are anglicised versions of Gaelic original names:

Ballydesmond

Gortahork

Doonbeg

Minority English: Monkstown

Newbridge

A very few Norse: Leixlip

Wexford

Waterford





Ard Mhacha  
Aontroim  
Baile Átha Cliath  
An Cabhán  
Cill Chainnigh  
Cill Dara  
Ceatharlach  
Ciarraí  
An Clár  
Cill Mhantáin  
Corcaigh  
Dún na nGall  
An Dún  
Doire  
Fear Manach  
Gaillimh  
An Iarmhí  
Laois  
Loch Garman  
Liatroim  
Luimneach  
An Longfort  
Lú  
Maigh Eo  
An Mhí  
Muineachán

Armagh  
Antrim  
Dublin  
Cavan  
Kilkenny  
Kildare  
Carlow  
Kerry  
Clare  
Wicklow  
Cork  
Donegal  
Down  
Derry  
Fermanagh  
Galway  
Westmeath  
Laois  
Wexford  
Leitrim  
Limerick  
Longfort  
Louth  
Mayo  
Meath  
Monaghan

# Name variations

- **Anglicisation**

*' the rendering of Irish placenames into English represented a record of the changes that Irish words undergo in the mouths of English speaking peoples'.*

P.W.Joyce

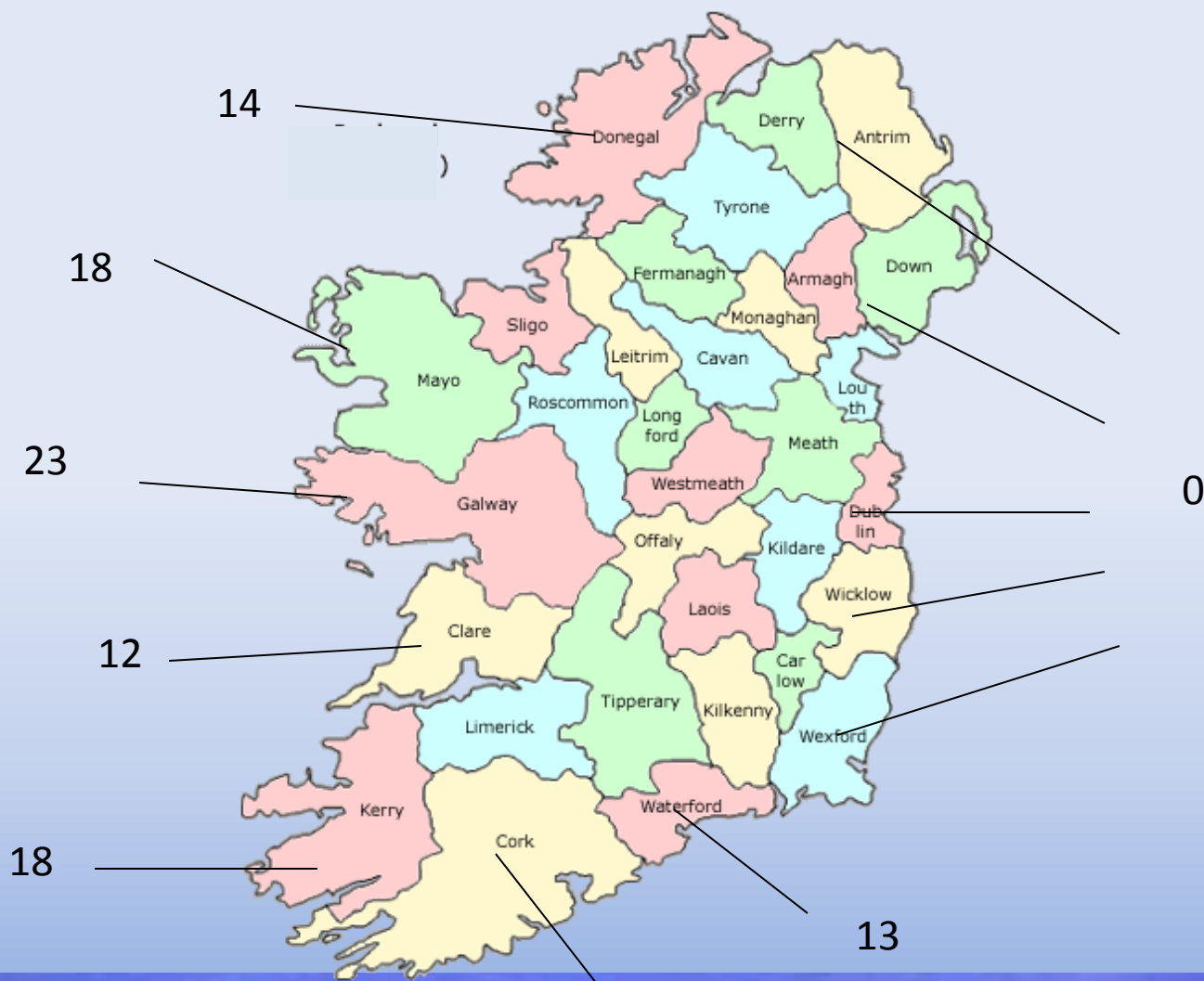
- **'political' changes**

- **Simplification**

Gaelic	English
Cill Airne	Killarney
Tuaim	Tuam
Béal an Átha	Ballina
Leitir Ceanainn	Letterkenny
Durlas	Thurles
Carraig Mhachaire Rois	Carrickmacross
Dún Dealgan	Dundalk
An Srath Bán	Strabane
Cúil Raithin	Coleraine
An Baile Meánach	Ballymena
Sionainn	Shannon
Bré	Bray
Leamhcán	Lucan
An Lorgain	Lurgan
Béal Átha Conaill	Ballyconnell
Beannchar	Bangor
Inis Ceithleann	Enniskillen
An Muileann gCearr	Mullingar
Inis Córthaidh	Enniscorthy



# Proportion of people speaking Irish ONLY per county 1851 Census



# ALPHABETICAL INDEX TO THE TOWNLANDS AND TOWNS OF IRELAND.

No. of Sheet of the Ordnance Survey Maps.	Townlands and Towns.	Area in Statute Acres.	County.	Barony.	Parish.	Poor Law Union in 1857.	Townland Census of 1851, Part I.	
		A. R. P.					Vol.	Page
98, 99	Gorteenawillin .	218 0 12	Galway .	Kilconnell .	Killallaghtan .	Ballinasloe .	IV.	41
125	Gorteenayanka .	214 2 31	Galway .	Leitrim .	Ballynakill .	Loughrea .	IV.	51
93	Gorteen Beg .	83 0 19	Mayo .	Costello .	Bekan .	Claremorris .	IV.	139
123	Gorteenboy .	420 0 10	Galway .	Kiltartan .	Kilbeacanty .	Gort .	IV.	47
18	Gorteenboy .	163 0 12	Longford .	Moydow .	Ballymacormick .	Longford .	I.	160
39, 41	Gorteenbrack .	94 0 16	Roscommon .	Athlone .	Fuerty .	Roscommon .	IV.	181
87, 88	Gorteencahill .	88 2 26	Galway .	Clonmacnowen .	Clontuskert .	Ballinasloe .	IV.	24
26	Gorteenclareen .	644 2 15	Longford .	Ratheline .	Shrule .	Ballymahon .	I.	165
41	Gorteenclough or							
	Corra More .	682 2 6a	Roscommon .	Athlone .	Athleague .	Roscommon .	IV.	179
48	Gorteenclin .	19 1 21	Wexford .	Forth .	Kilscoran .	Wexford .	I.	311

Note townlands  
with same name



		A.	R.	P.		
29	Kildress Lower	198	3	31	Tyrone	Dungannon Upper
29	Kildress Upper	82	0	25	Tyrone	Dungannon Upper
16	Kildrimeen	98	0	2	Wexford	Gorey
12, 13, 17	Kildrinagh	474	1	27	Kilkenny	Crannagh
16	Kildrinagh	69	3	17	Queen's Co.	Upperwoods

Kildrimeen

*Co. Wexford Kildrimeen James.*  
*Late Ryan. contains 60. a.p. 117. Sent to 2 years from*  
*the 25 March 1770 for the Lives of James Ryan late Sepree*

Kildrimeen

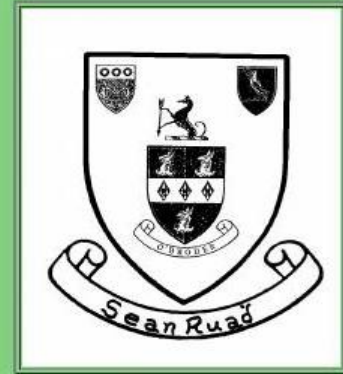
<u>Kildermain</u>	do	7	third	45	..	..	26	3	..
98	do	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	do	23	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	do	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	do	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
99	Rich <sup>d</sup> Boyce	13	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
..	do	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

Kildermain



## THE IreAtlas

# TOWNLAND DATA BASE



*The data base was last updated on June 14, 1999*

This page has been accessed **666925** times since August 6, 1996

form a search of the *IreAtlas* Townland data base, and return all lines that meet the screening requirements. By entering a Townland and a County, it will return all Townlands in that County. Be aware, this is a VERY LARGE data base. If you only enter a County, the search engine will return EVERY Townland in that County. This will

s, enter your search keyword(s) and then press the SUBMIT button

Field Name	Search Data	Sort By	Search Method
Townland:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Must match exactly Anywhere in field End of Field Beginning of field
County:	All <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Barony:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Civil Parish:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Poor Law Union:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
Province:	All <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>		<input type="button" value="Reset"/>	





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## ENTER A PLACE NAME :

[Simple](#)

[Advanced](#)

You can use wildcards:

- \* (asterisk) represents any sequence of letters.
- ? (question-mark) represents any individual letter.

The single most important item of information for Irish family history research is a precise place of origin. The most important tool in identifying Irish placenames is the 1851 *General Alphabetical Index to the Townlands and Towns, parishes and Baronies of Ireland*.

From here you can search the entire *Index*, together with street listings from Dublin, Cork and Belfast cities, more than 65,000 entries in all.

Remember you can search for a placename either in the whole of Ireland ("Simple") or confine it to a particular area ("Advanced").

<http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer>





THE  
ORIGIN AND HISTORY  
OF  
IRISH NAMES OF PLACES

BY  
P. W. JOYCE, LL.D.  
*One of the Commissioners for the Publication of the Ancient Laws of Ireland*  
AUTHOR OF  
"A SHORT HISTORY OF IRELAND"  
"A CHILD'S HISTORY OF IRELAND" "OLD CELTIC ROMANCES"  
"ANCIENT IRISH MUSIC"  
AND OTHER WORKS RELATING TO IRELAND

VOL. I.



Triallam timdeall na Poibla

SEVENTH EDITION

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
LONDON, NEW YORK, AND BOMBAY  
DUBLIN: M. H. GILL AND SON  
1901

*'The Origin and  
history of Irish  
names of  
Places'*

by P.W. Joyce  
McGlashan  
and Gill,  
Dublin 1871

## BUNACHAR LOGAINMNEACHA NA HÉIREANN Placenames Database of Ireland

Educational

### SEARCH

x

»

☒ Include street names

Type a placename in Irish or English  
How to search »

Explore Ireland's placenames with our  
interactive map »

### BROWSE BY COUNTY



Aontroim/Antrim

▼

»

### Welcome

Placenames Database of Ireland, developed by Fiontar (DCU) and The Placenames Branch  
(Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

#### Placename of the day

« 07/05/2014



**Cill Scíre**

gin. *Chill Scíre*  
validated name



**Kilskeer**

population centre  
County: *Meath*

#### Archival records



scanned records available (13)



text records available

[More information...](#)



#### Announcement

##### Vacancies:

Research internships (6 positions)

[More information >>](#)

Deadline for receipt of applications: 23 May 2014





# Family Names

# Irish Name Origins

**Gaelic.** Vast majority are of Gaelic origin - O', Mac etc

**Norman:** French via England, arrived from 1169 – settled widely and became '*more Irish than the Irish*' Fitzgerald, Roche, Burke ..

**English/Scottish:** Arrived mainly from mid 1500s – series of (mainly unsuccessful) plantations. Ulster plantation of early 1600s brought huge numbers of Scots to Ireland

**Huguenot.** French Anglicans brought to Ireland from mid 1600s. Mainly Dublin, Portarlinton, Cork. E.g. Guerin, Millet, Trench

**Palatines:** German Anglicans immigrants from 1709. Settled in Limerick. E.g. Bovenizer, Bowen, Shouldice, Switzer, Rapple

# Most Common names in Ireland 1890

	Surname	Number	Percent in			
			Leinster	Munster	Ulster	Connaught
1	Murphy	62,600	34	44	14	8
2	Kelly	55,900	34	17	22	27
3	Sullivan	43,600	6	90	2	2
4	Walsh	41,700	25	42	6	27
5	Smith	33,700	31	8	55	6
6	O'Brien	33,400	21	58	11	10
7	Byrne	33,300	80	7	7	6
8	Ryan	32,000	25	66	2	7
9	Connor	31,200	26	37	16	21
10	O'Neill	29,100	31	27	35	7

Estimated population of Ireland 1890: 4.7 million.

Source: Matheson, Special Report on Surnames in Ireland.

# Irish Name Forms

## Gaelic Name Forms:

'O' Descended from...

Mac/Mc      Son of ...

Giolla      Servant or follower of ...

Maol      Follower of ...

O'Caoimh

MacCartaigh

McGiollaEaspaigh

MaolCathaigh

O'Keefe

McCarthy

Gillespie

Mulcahy

## Norman Name Forms

Fitz      Fils - son of ...

De      of or from . . .

Fitzgerald, Fitzmaurice

Delahyde, Devereux

**Note:** Most names beginning with De.. are Gaelic - eg Dennehy, Delaney etc.  
Also FitzPatrick is Gaelic, not Norman. And Fitzell is Huguenot.



# Anglicisation of names

- **Phonetic or 'sound-alike' change**

– O'Súilleabháin	O'Sullivan
– O'Riain	O'Ryan
– MacCárthaigh	McCarthy
– O'Cofaigh	Coffey
– MacUillain	McQuillan

- **Translation & Pseudo-translation**

– Sionnach	Fox	Sionnach = fox
– Deeney	Peoples	Daoine = people
– McGowan	Smith	Gabhan = smith

- **Sound-alike assimilation**
  - Sullihan to Sullivan
  - Quirke to Kirk
  - Downey/Dineen to Downing
- **Distortion**
  - Maolbearaigh to Mulberry
  - Gillespie to Glashby
- **‘Mc’ removal caused strange name forms**
  - McGorman became Gorman ..... BUT
  - McAnna became Kenna

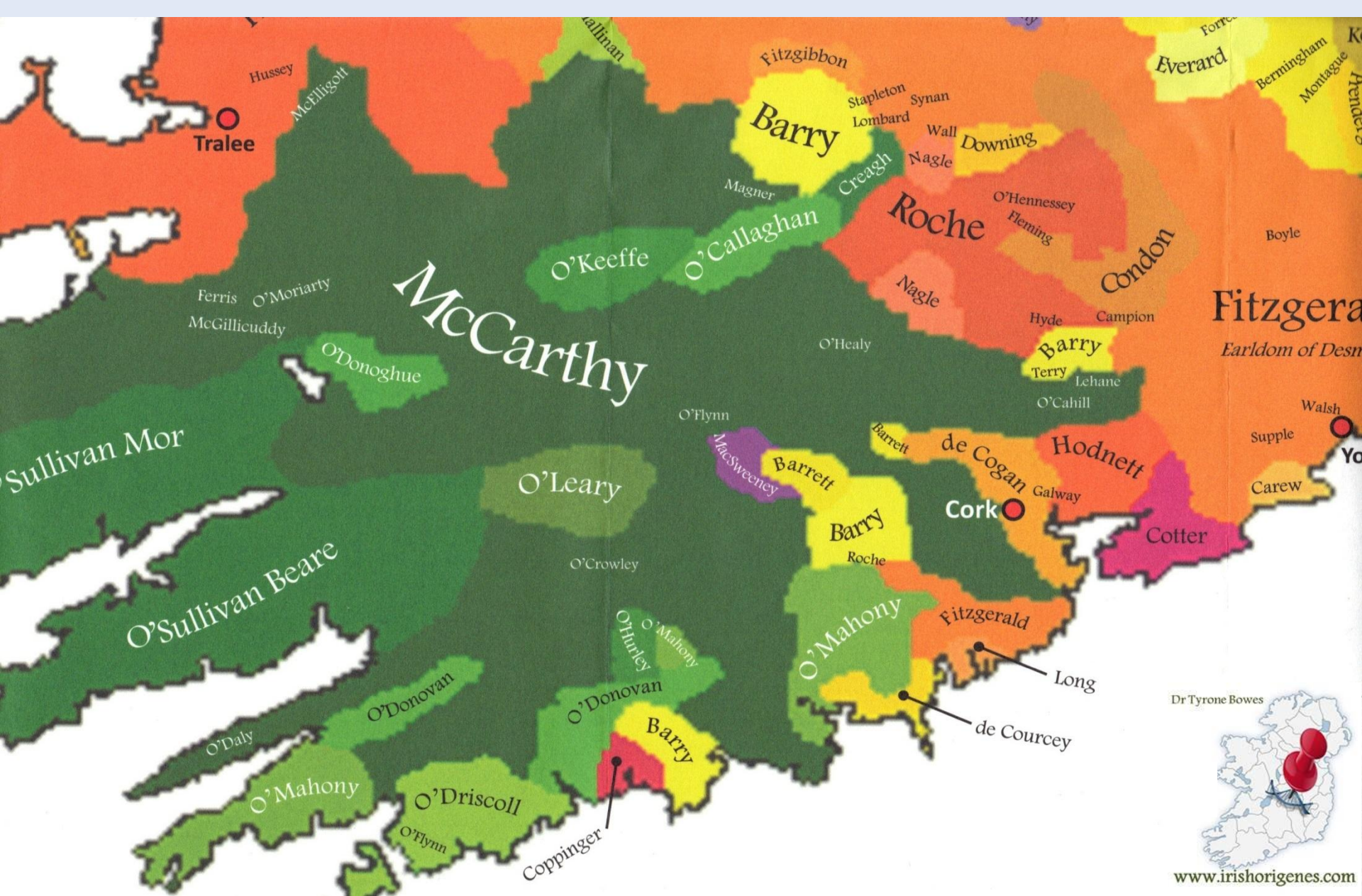
# Irish Names - Points to watch.1

- Be creative with spelling variations
  - Different accents produced different phonetic spellings
  - Administrators in different areas used particular name-forms
- Search with & without the O' and Mc' - many dropped these in the early 1800's & replaced them later
- There is no distinction between Mac and Mc



# Irish Names - Points to Watch. 2

- G & K interchanges – e.g. Gil- and Kil-
  - Gilbride / Kilbride
  - Gilfoyle/Kilfoyle etc
  - McKeever/McGeever
- *o* - *u* - *a* interchanges
  - Noonan - Nunan / McDonough - McDonogh - McDonagh
  - Toohey - Tuohey
- *K* prefixes
  - Knowlan and Nowlan
- '*gh*' and '*h*'
  - Gallagher & Gallaher







Dr Tyrone Bowes



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



# Griffith Valuation Survey

## VALUATION OF TENEMENTS.

25

### PARISH OF CLONMANY.

No. and Letters of Reference to Map.	Names.		Description of Tenement.	Area.	Rateable Annual Valuation.		Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property.
	Townlands and Occupiers.	Immediate Lessors.			Land.	Buildings.	
	<b>CLOONTAGH—con.</b>			<b>A. R. P.</b>	<b>£ s. d.</b>	<b>£ s. d.</b>	<b>£ s. d.</b>
c	Susan M'Loughlin (Owen),		House, office, & land,		1 10 0	0 15 0	2 5 0
d	Rd. M'Loughlin (Dick)		House, office, & land,		1 5 0	0 15 0	2 0 0
e	Cecily M'Gonigle (James),		House, office, & land,		1 10 0	0 15 0	2 5 0
f	DI. M'Gonigle (James)	Ellen M'Clintock,	House, office, & land,	142 1 20	1 10 0	0 15 0	2 5 0
g	John M'Loughlin,		House, office, & land,		1 10 0	0 15 0	2 5 0
-	Edward Tolan (Ard),		House, office, & land,		0 15 0	0 10 0	1 5 0
h	Charles Noone (Ard),		Land,		4 5 0	—	4 5 0
-	Richard M'Loughlin (Dick),		Office and land,		1 10 0	0 10 0	2 0 0
-	Charles Doherty,		Land,		0 15 0	—	0 15 0
i	Unoccupied,	Same,	Land,		0 15 0	—	0 15 0
11	Patk. Doherty (Anthony) & thirty-eight partners	Same,	House and office,	—	—	0 15 0	0 15 0
12	John Doherty (Dudley) & fourteen partners	Catherine & Grace Ball and Thomas Torrens,	Mountain,	474 1 20	3 0 0	—	3 0 0
13			Mountain,	282 2 10	3 0 0	—	3 0 0
			Water,	14 2 8	—	—	—
			<b>Total,</b>	<b>1938 3 2</b>	<b>150 15 0</b>	<b>35 15 0</b>	<b>186 10 0</b>
	<b>ARDAGH.</b>						
	(Ord. S. 3 & 10.)						
a	Denis Doherty (Smith)		Hard's house & land				

Now free on [www.askaboutireland.ie](http://www.askaboutireland.ie)

# IRISH PEDIGREES;

OR,  
THE ORIGIN AND STEM

OF  
THE IRISH NATION.

BY  
JOHN O'HART,

ASSOCIATE IN ARTS, QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND; FELLOW OF THE ROYAL  
HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND; MEMBER  
OF THE HARLEIAN SOCIETY, LONDON; AUTHOR OF "IRISH  
LANDED GENTRY WHEN CROMWELL CAME TO  
IRELAND," ETC.

"Where are the heroes of the ages past?  
Where the brave chieftains, where the mighty ones  
Who flourished in the infancy of days?  
All to the grave gone down."  
—HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

"Man is but the sum of his Ancestors."  
—EMERSON.

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GLASGOW: HUGH MAROY, 14 GREAT CLYDE STREET.

NEW YORK: BENZIGER BROTHERS, 36 & 38 BARCLAY STREET.

1892.

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# Sloinnnte Saédeal ir Sall IRISH NAMES AND SURNAMES

COLLECTED AND EDITED  
WITH  
EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL NOTES

BY

REV. PATRICK WOULFE

*Priest of the Diocese of Limerick  
Member of the Council, National Academy of Ireland*

£



# The SURNAME of IRELAND

MACLYSAGHT

Edward MacLysaght

## IRISH FAMILIES

*Their Names, Arms and Origins*



245 Coats of Arms illustrated in full colour



TABLE showing the SURNAMES IN IRELAND having Five Entries and upwards in the Birth Indexes of 1890, together with the Number in each Registration Province, and the Registration Counties in which these Names are principally found—*continued*.

Names.	NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN BIRTH INDEXES FOR 1890.					Counties in which principally found
	IRELAND.	Leinster.	Munster.	Ulster.	Connaught.	
*McErlain (11)—McErlan (8), ..	21	-	-	21	-	13 in Antrim and 8 in Derry.
*McEvoy (85), ..	99	54	6	36	3	Dublin, Louth, Armagh, and Queen's.
*McFadden (72), ..	79	2	1	73	3	Donegal, Antrim, and Londonderry.
*McFall (20), ..	24	1	-	23	-	16 in Antrim and 7 in Londonderry.
McFarland, ..	46	2	-	44	-	Tyrone and Armagh.
*McFarlane (7), ..	12	4	-	8	-	—
*McFeeters (6), ..	7	-	-	7	-	Londonderry.
McFerran, ..	7	1	-	6	-	6 in Antrim.
*McPetridge (8), ..	9	-	-	9	-	6 in Antrim and 3
McGahan, ..	13	7	-	6	-	7 in Louth.
*McGahey (12), ..	13	-	-	13	-	Antrim and Monag
*McGann (18), ..	21	9	2	3	6	
*McGarry (64), ..	79	21	-	29	29	Antrim, Dublin, R
*McGarvey (28), ..	30	1	-	29	-	very few elsewh
McGaughey, ..	7	-	-	7	-	18 in Donegal and
McGeady, ..	5	-	-	5	-	3 in Antrim and 3
McGeary, ..	8	1	-	7	-	All in Donegal.
*McGeehan (7), ..	11	-	-	11	-	Tyrone.
McGeough, ..	11	3	-	8	-	9 in Donegal.
McGown, ..	19	2	-	17	-	Monaghan and Lou
McGettigan, ..	10	-	-	10	-	12 in Armagh.
McGillcuddy, ..	6	-	6	-	-	All in Donegal.
*McGilloway (8), ..	10	-	-	10	-	All in Kerry.
McGimpsey, ..	8	-	-	8	-	5 in Londonderry a
McGing, ..	10	-	-	-	10	7 in Down and 1 in
*McGinley (45), ..	47	-	-	46	1	7 in Mayo and 2 in
*McGinn (17)—Maginn (13), ..	31	4	-	25	2	57 in Donegal.
*McGinty (10); ..	12	-	1	9	2	Generally distribute
McGirr, ..	12	1	-	9	2	Donegal.
*McGivern (17), ..	18	-	-	18	-	Tyrone.
McGivney, ..	6	-	-	6	-	7 in Armagh, 7 in
McGlade, ..	8	1	-	7	-	All in Cavan.
*McGlinchey (17), ..	22	-	-	22	-	Antrim and Lond
*McGloin (14), ..	16	1	-	7	8	Tyrone and Donega
McGlone, ..	12	-	-	11	1	Donegal and Sligo.
*McGlynn (26), ..	39	9	3	16	11	Tyrone.
McGoey, ..	5	2	-	1	2	
*McGoldrick (34), ..	41	3	1	26	11	Tyrone, Fermanagh
*McGonigle (24), ..	38	-	-	38	-	Donegal and Londo
McGookin, ..	7	-	-	7	-	5 in Antrim and 2
*McGough (8), ..	11	2	-	1	8	Mayo.
McGourty, ..	5	-	-	2	3	Leitrim.
*McGovern (92), ..	102	13	1	65	23	Fermanagh, Cavan, and Leitrim.
*McGowan (112)—Magowan (28), ..	152	5	2	91	54	Donegal, Leitrim, and Sligo.
McGrady, ..	6	-	-	6	-	
*McGrath (233)—Mcgrath (31), ..	266	49	131	60	26	3 in Antrim and 3 in Down.

This name is found in every county, but more than 50 per cent. are in Tipperary, Cork.

Robert E. Matheson  
*'Varieties and Synonyms of Surnames .. in Ireland'*  
 Dublin  
 1901, and 'Special Report on Surnames in Ireland' 'Dublin 1909, both reprinted as 'Surnames in Ireland' Baltimore, Maryland, 1982.

#### REGISTRATION PROVINCE OF CONNAUGHT.

Galway, ..	KELLY 119, Burke 89, Conneely 89, Joyce 85, McDonagh 80, Walsh 80, Fahy 63, Mannion 59, Flaherty 48, Murphy 47, Connolly 46, Keane 40, King 36, Forde 35, Connor 33, Lyons 30, Mullin 30, Egan 28, Kenny 27, Toole 25.
Leitrim, ..	KELLY 30, Reynolds 30, Flynn 20, McLoughlin 20, McHugh 19, Rooney 18, McMorro 18, McTernan 17, Keany 16, McGowan 16, Moran 16, Reilly 16, Maguire 15, Dolan 14, Beirne 13, Gallagher 13, McDermott 13, McGovern 13, McSharry 13, Mulvey 13.
Mayo, ..	WALSH 134, Gallagher 92, Kelly 89, Malley 78, Moran 77, Duffy 55, McHale 50, Gibbons 47, Joyce 46, Connor 45, Conway 40, Higgins 39, Murphy 39, Burke 36, Reilly 36, Durkan 35, Doherty 34, McHugh 34, Sweeney 33, Lyons 32.
Roscommon, ..	KELLY 68, McDermott 45, Beirne 38, Regan 35, Flanagan 32, Connor 30, McDonagh 26, Quinn 25, Murray 24, Brennan 22, Higgins 22, Towey 22, Kenny 21, Flynn 20.
Sligo, ..	BRENNAN 31, McLoughlin 28, Gallagher 26, Kelly 23, Harte 20, McGowan 18, Walsh 18, Kennedy 16, Durkan 15, Henry 15, Flynn 14, Gilmartin 14, Leonard 14, Scanlon 14, Connolly 13, O'Hara 13, Feeney 11, Stenson 11, Conway 10, Sheridan 10.

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# Sources for Irish Family History

A LISTING OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES  
on  
THE HISTORY OF IRISH FAMILIES



Compiled by  
*James G. Ryan*

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FIRST NAMES	VARIANTS
<b>Females:</b>	
Ann(e)	Annie, Nancy, Nan,
Bridget	Bride, Bridie, Bedelia, Delia, Biddy, Birdie, Bee
Catherine	Katherine, Kate, Kitty, Kathleen, Catty
Elizabeth	Eliza, Liz, Liza, Lizzie, Betty, Beth, Bessie
Ellen	Nellie, Helen, Eleanor, Ellie,
Jane/Johanna	Jean, Jennie, (Joan, Johanna, Hannah)
Margaret	Mag, Maggie, Peg, Peggy, Margarita, Madge, Rita
Mary	Marie, Maria(h), Molly, Minnie, Maire
Rose	Rosie, Rosanne, Rosa, Rosina
Sarah	Sal, Sally, Sadie,
<b>Males:</b>	
Daniel	Dan, Danny, Donal
Edward	Eddie, Ned, Ted, Edmond
James	Jim, Seamus
John	Jack, Johnny
Joseph	Joe, Joey
Matthew	Matt, Matty, Mahon
Michael	Mick, Mike, Mihael
Patrick	Pat, Paddy, Pdraig, Patsy
Thomas	Tom, Tommie, Tomas
William	Will, Willie, Bill, Liam

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Patrick Brosnahan	452
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The 'Second Name'

# Questions ?

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