Why Can't I Find My Ancestors?

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1. The records do not exist

Parish Records

Late start dates, Start dates for Heritage Centres (www.rootsireland.ie) and NLI microfilm and Registers in local custody may all differ.

Registers yet to be discovered

Gaps

Missing Entries

Individuals could not afford the high cost of marriage ceremony

People converted temporarily – check other denominations

2/3rds of Church of Ireland registers destroyed in 1922
https://www.ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/AboutUs/library/registers/ParishRegisters/PARISHREGISTERS.pdf- where to find COI Registers, Microfilm, Transcripts etc

Civil Records

Non-compliance especially in the first 20 years from 1864. 10-15% not registered

Records lost between local register office and GRO in Dublin

Census Returns

Few Census returns survive prior to 1901. Some destroyed by order of the British Govt and due to a shortage of storage or confidentiality issues. Some returns were pulped shortly after they were collected. Remainder destroyed during Irish Civil War in 1922.

1901 and 1911 census – There are missing areas eg Trimabaths Lane, Cork city Knockmourne DED and Reagnellagh, Dripsey.

2. Inconsistencies & Human error

Parish Records

Precision was required initially when <u>entering</u> information in the original record, secondly in <u>transcribing</u>, <u>data entering</u> and possibly <u>standardising</u> that information and finally in <u>extracting</u> the information from the source.

Never presume that every record was impeccably entered originally with 100% accuracy

Transcription errors, poor spelling and omissions

Poor handwriting

Poor quality of paper and ink

Random pages which were not originally microfilmed by the NLI ➜ omissions on the NLI microfilm and accordingly on www.irishgenealogy.ie and http://registers.nli.ie/

Page omissions on www.irishgenealogy.ie despite the fact that they were originally microfilmed.

First Name and Surname Variants

COI Baptism Parish Registers – frequently mothers maiden name not provided

Civil Records

Ages eg at Death can be inaccurate by as much as 20 years. (Children –most accurate)

Errors and omissions – due to number of times the records are copied – secondary and tertiary sources

Civil index on www.familysearch.org, for example was sometimes compiled by individuals not familiar with Irish handwriting, Irish language, Irish surnames and placenames. Microfilm copies -may have been out of focus and difficult to read. Potential for errors and omissions

Census Returns

http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/

Very loose standardisation of names eg Check Sweeny, Swiney, Mac Sweeney, Mc Swiny

Irish entries eg Daniel Buckley found under the Irish spelling of Domhnall Úa Buachalla.

Initials and not full names entered for individuals in Institutions etc

Surname and First Name – Reversed

Creative Thinking

Online Database - search under surnames only, initially and add and remove information to the search fields step by step. Frequently the less information entered the better

Wildcards on online databases – eg Ah*n or Ah*ne for Ahern, Ahearn, Aherne, Ahearne etc

Check for less common siblings names first eg Rose, Isabelle, Nicholas, Andrew

Census – If you know the geographical location search under Browse function ie DED and Townland first, rather than surname due to lack of standardisation of Surnames and then sort under Surname order.

3. Administrative and religious land divisions

Catholic Parish records   Catholic Parish

Church of Ireland records   Civil/ COI Parish

Tithe Applotments   Civil Parish

Griffiths Valuation   Civil Parish

Civil Records   Superintendent Registrars District (Poor Law Union)

Census Records   District Electoral Division

Parish Records

Changing Parish Boundaries – always check neighbouring parishes if you cannot find what you're looking for.

Civil Indexes

Each PLU or Superintendent Registrars District covered a radius of approximately 10 to 12 miles from the workhouse.

Remember if you locate an index for Cork on the likes of familysearch.org, ancestry.com etc this is only covering the SRD of Cork and not all of Co Cork.

Census Returns

DEDs - subdivisions of Registrars Districts

Many DEDs take their name from one of the townlands within the DED

Urban areas - streets may be divided between more than one DED. Broad Lane, Cork city is located in both Cork Urban No 4 and in Cork Urban No 7.

http://www.thecore.com/seanruad/

http://www.irishancestors.ie/search/townlands/index.php

Conclusion

Look at Source Lists for the various records - Start and finish and possible gaps in records

Look at alternative sources, such as civil records for parish records, looking at census substitutes such as Tithe Applotment Books, Griffiths Valuation and Cancelled Books

Almost certainly no substitute to pre-1864 Catholic parish records in terms of information

Most burial records for the southern half of Ireland do not begin until the late 19th or early 20th century.

Look at graveyards and cemeteries, some of which have been indexed on www.historicgraves.ie

A large amount of gravestone inscriptions have been documented in various publications eg **O'Kief Coshe Mang** & the **Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society** etc

Look at death notices in newspapers. (20th century)

COI Parish Records - 2/3 of original Church of Ireland parishes had their records destroyed in 1922. However, a large volume of these records were transcribed prior to 1922 and survive in one form or other.

 Search Tip and Help Sections of the various websites – underutilised

Familiarise yourself with Administrative and Religious Land Divisions

Look at maps and sources such as **Townlands in Poor Law Unions** and **A Directory of Townlands, District Electoral Divisions and Ancient Baronies in the County of Cork.** This will help place records in greater context.

Be logical, systematic and thorough in investigating records. Always source where you have got records and indexes from. Make note of what you have searched so far, to avoid duplication of research and finally it is futile to employ the same search techniques each time and expect to get different results.