



# The Records of the Genealogical Office Dublin

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14 September 2024



# What is the Genealogical Office

- The oldest government administrative office
- Started as the office of the Ireland King of Arms in the late 1300s
- Ulster King of Arms created by Edward VI in 1552
- The 'modern' office followed the appointment of William Betham in 1820 (He is famous for his abstracts of the Prerogative Wills)
- The next Ulster was Bernard Burke who was a son of John Burke of London who created *The Peerage* and what became *Landed Gentry* publications



## What is the Genealogical Office

- Burke was succeeded by Arthur Vicars famous for his *Index to the prerogative Wills of Ireland*. He was dismissed as he was in charge when some insignia of the Order of St Patrick was stolen. He was murdered in a brutal way tied to a forced to watch his house burn down.
- Nevile Rodwell Wilkinson succeeded Vicars
- He was followed by Thomas Ulick Sadlier
- In the 1940s the Ulster Office was closed and the Genealogical Office formed as a Irish Government department



## Genealogical Office purpose

- Original purpose to grant arms
- Ulster herald
- Policing of use of arms
  - *Who could use armorial bearings*
- Order of St Patrick
- Large collection of genealogical material and information
- Focus on armorial families
- Landed gentry emphasis
- Wealthier merchants



## Other people associated with the Office

- Gerald Fortescue
- Sir Chitchester Fortescue
- Canon Henry Biddall Swanzy
- P Beryl Eustace
- William Henry Welply
- Irwin



# What is in the Genealogical Office

- Trees
- Will abstracts
- Abstracts of prerogative grants
- Abstracts of marriage licences
- Pedigrees
- Grants and confirmations of arms
- Funeral notices



## Cautions

- Many trees are drafts and contain errors
- Some series are more reliable than others
- Like all tertiary sources they need to be checked
- Can provide some insights
- Many predate the 1922 loss of public records
- May perpetuate family lore



## How do we access the information

- In person at the National Library of Ireland (as most are microfilmed they only let you see the microfilms)
- On the internet:
  - Family Search virtual black and white microfilms of most of the manuscripts – (only available at Family Search affiliated libraries such as our society's library at Cook)
  - National Library of Ireland catalogue colour images of some of the manuscripts – Viewable from home





## Finding aids

- Virginia Wade McAnlis, *The Consolidate Index to the Records of the Genealogical Office Dublin Ireland (1995-97)* – FHACT Library
  - Name index of the records
- GO image finder – [https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO\\_films/](https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO_films/)
- Some of the NLI images are returned by searches in FindMyPast.com with image number.
- John Grenham, *Tracing your Irish ancestors*



## Demonstration

- In what follows I will use my image finder and the McAnlis index to delve into the records
- [https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO\\_films/](https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO_films/)



## Other reading

- Frances Jane French, *Nepotists and sinecurists: a history of Ulster's Office 1552-1943*; *Irish Genealogist* 10 (2000)
- *Analecta Hibernica* 17(1949) will abstracts — NLA S 941.5 ANA
- The slides from this talk are at:
  - [https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO\\_2024.pdf](https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO_2024.pdf)
  - The image helper is here:
  - [https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO\\_films/](https://nickreddan.net/talks/GO_films/)