



Using the Registry of Deeds for family history research in Ireland



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Irish Special Interest Group – Family History ACT



What we will cover today



- What is the Registry of Deeds
- Why is it of interest for family history
- What is the Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland
- How to access the records at home
- How to make the most of the Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website and its links to the images on familysearch.org
- Some strategies for furthering your family (or local) history using these resources
- How you can help yourself and others submit entries



What is the Registry of Deeds



- Originally set up in 1708 to enforce the rules of land ownership under the penal laws
- The aim of the penal laws was to make things difficult for Roman Catholics
- The incentive for registration was that registered deeds took precedence over unregistered ones
- Over time over time registration became a way of proving title to land
- While predominantly about land transactions there are also ones (financial instruments and partnerships)



What is the Registry of Deeds – What was registered



- Anything that could involve claims of land
- Wills
- Leases, releases, agreement, sales, conveyances
- Rent charges, mortgages, other financial instruments
- The forms of deeds registered were indentures and deeds poll
 - A deed poll was written out once and given by the grantor to the grantee
 - An indenture was written out as many times as there are parties to the deed on a single piece of parchment which were then separated by a wavy cut



What is the Registry of Deeds – Memorials and registration



- The registration process was:
 - One of the parties made a memorial of the deed which might be a verbatim copy or summarised version of the deed
 - This was then witnessed by at least two people one of whom also witnessed the original deed
 - One of the witnesses to the memorial made a oath before a Deputy Registrar at the Registry in Dublin or if sufficiently remote from Dublin before a judge or a commissioned for affidavits
 - The memorial was then given a registration number and copied into the memorial transcription books (tombstone volumes)
 - While most memorials were registered within a few months of execution, some were registered many years after the event



What is the Registry of Deeds – Memorials and registration



- Entries were then made in the indexes maintained by the Registry
- **Grantors Index**
 - Grantors were people giving up a claim to the land
 - In the case of a simple lease a grantor would be the lessor
 - Their index gives the full name of the grantor and up to 1832 only the family of the grantee
- **Townland index**
 - Organised by county and in later years by county and barony
 - It gives the family of one of the grantors and on of the grantees



What is the Registry of Deeds – Memorials and numbers



- By 1833 there were over 600,000 memorials of deeds registered
- By the mid 1800s there were over a million
- Each memorial had at least one grantor and at least one grantor and at least two witnesses
- The project website has indexed 15 memorials with more than 100 names and two with more than 1000 names
- So at the very least there are 2.4 million names included upto 1833 and well over 4 million by the mid 1800s



Why is it of interest for family history



- There are three types of data held in the Registry of Deeds of interest and often these are not available elsewhere
- Names
 - Parties, witnesses, occupiers (adjacent, current and previous), lives
- Dates
 - Transaction, birth, death and marriage
- Places
 - The land in the deed and residences of other people



Why is it of interest for family history – Who registered deeds



- Until the late 1800 most deed involved middle level landlords and middle-class merchants
- Even before the removal of the ownership rules in 1782 many Catholics and representatives of Catholic families appear in the memorials
- Catholic occupiers are sometimes mentioned



Why is it of interest for family history – marriage settlements




- An important class of deeds for family historians are marriage settlements
- These perform a role similar to the pre-nuptial favoured by the rich and famous today
- They guarantee some rights and limit others
- They may provide a wealth of family information going back a number of generations



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website





Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland

Number of index entries

4	5	2	6	0	4
Update of 07 Nov 2021					
106,548 townland index entries last updated 04 Nov 2021					
44,003 grantor index entries last updated 10 Nov 21					

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This is the home page of the Registry of Deeds Index Project

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide finding aids for the records held at the Registry of Deeds in Dublin. There are three sets of indexes produced by the project:

- The main index is building a name index for the memorial transcription books held at the Registry of Deeds
- The grantors index consists of transcriptions of the Registry of Deeds' grantors indexes
- The townland index consists of transcriptions of the Registry of Deeds' townland indexes

Each of these index databases can be searched on a number of fields. None, of course, is complete. Each has those index entries contributed by the project volunteers.



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website – Search



Search	Submit
Main index entries	
Grantors index transcriptions	
Townland indexes	

- The first part of the website we will look at is the search pages
- We can search the main index of the index transcriptions
- We will go through the options available



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website – familysearch.org

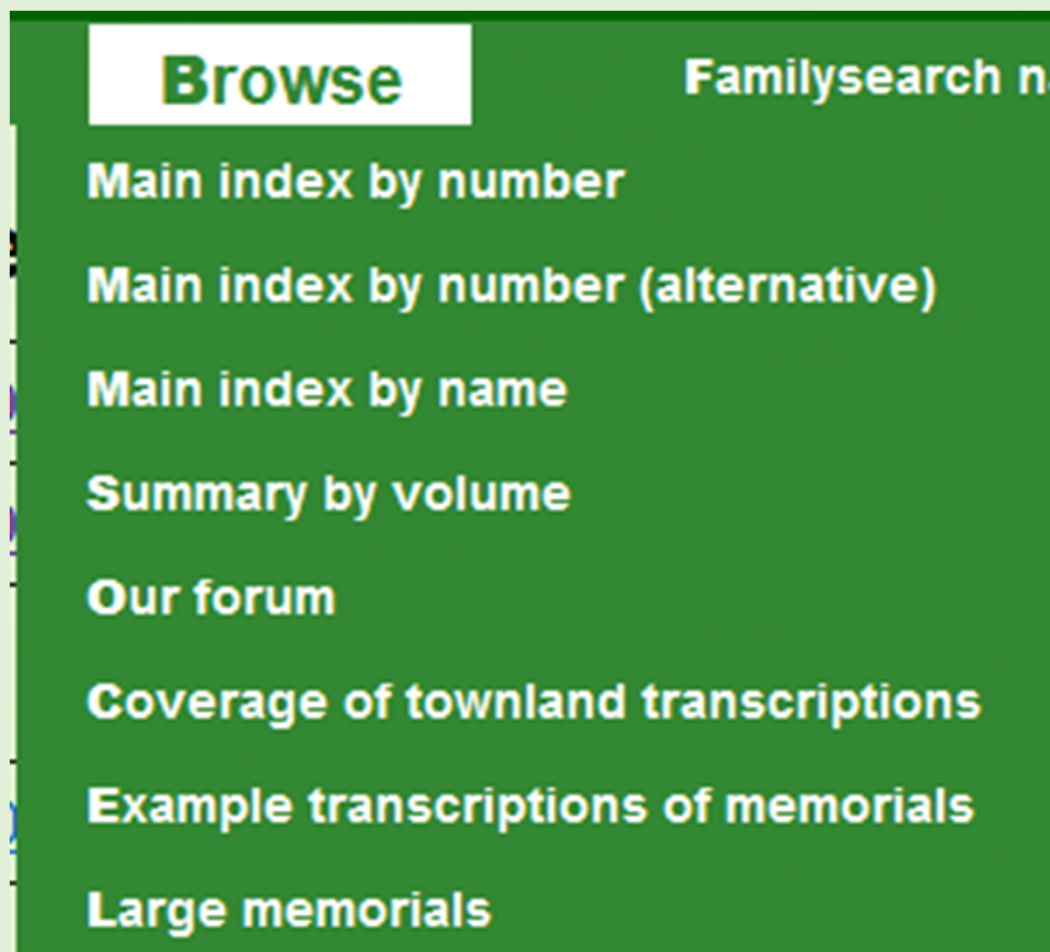


Familysearch navigation aids

- I have developed a number of tools to make accessing the images on familysearch.org easier
- We will go through each of them



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website – Browsing



- The browse tab lets you see the data in a variety of ways
- It will show you about the coverage
- It may help discover things you might miss by searching
- We will demonstrate the options



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland website – guides



- The site has a number of guides to both the site and the Registry of Deeds
- We will mention a few of them





Registry of Deeds – web resources



- <https://irishdeedsindex.net/index.php> Project home page
- <https://irishdeedsindex.net/blog/index.php> Project forum for asking and answering questions
- <https://mlarchives.rootsweb.com/listindexes/emails?listname=irl-deeds> Mailin list archives some answers to questions about the project – notification about project news
- <https://www.facebook.com/RegistryofDeedsIndexProjectIreland> the project Facebook page – notification about project news
- <https://www.prai.ie/> the Property Registration Authority Ireland



Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland – contributing



- Anyone can contribute to the project
- The simplest way is to transcribe grantors index entries
- The next simplest is to transcribe townland index entries
- Contributing index entries to the main index is not complicated and you can do it easily
- We will go through all these ways of contributing.



Thank you



- I look forward to getting some index entries from you in the near future