

Beginners' Family History Research Guide

For the Irish county of DOWN

Irish Special Interest Group of the Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc.



Absque Labore Nihil (Latin) – 'Nothing Without Labour'.

Background

County Down is named after its county town, Downpatrick. It is one of the six counties that form Northern Ireland and is within the province of Ulster. County Down is situated in the northeast of the island of Ireland.

The county was originally called **Downshire**. It borders County Antrim to the north, the Irish Sea to the east and south, County Armagh to the west, and County Louth across Carlingford Lough to the southwest. In the east of the county is Strangford Lough and the Ards Peninsula.

The largest town is Bangor, on the northeast coast. Three other large towns and cities are on its border: Newry lies on the western border with County Armagh, while Lisburn and Belfast lie on the northern border with County Antrim. Down contains both the southernmost point of Northern Ireland (Cranfield Point) and the easternmost point of Ireland (Burr Point).

It is currently one of only two counties of Ireland to have a significant proportion of the population from a Protestant background, according to the 2011 census. The other is County Antrim. However the most religion in *south* Down is Catholicism.

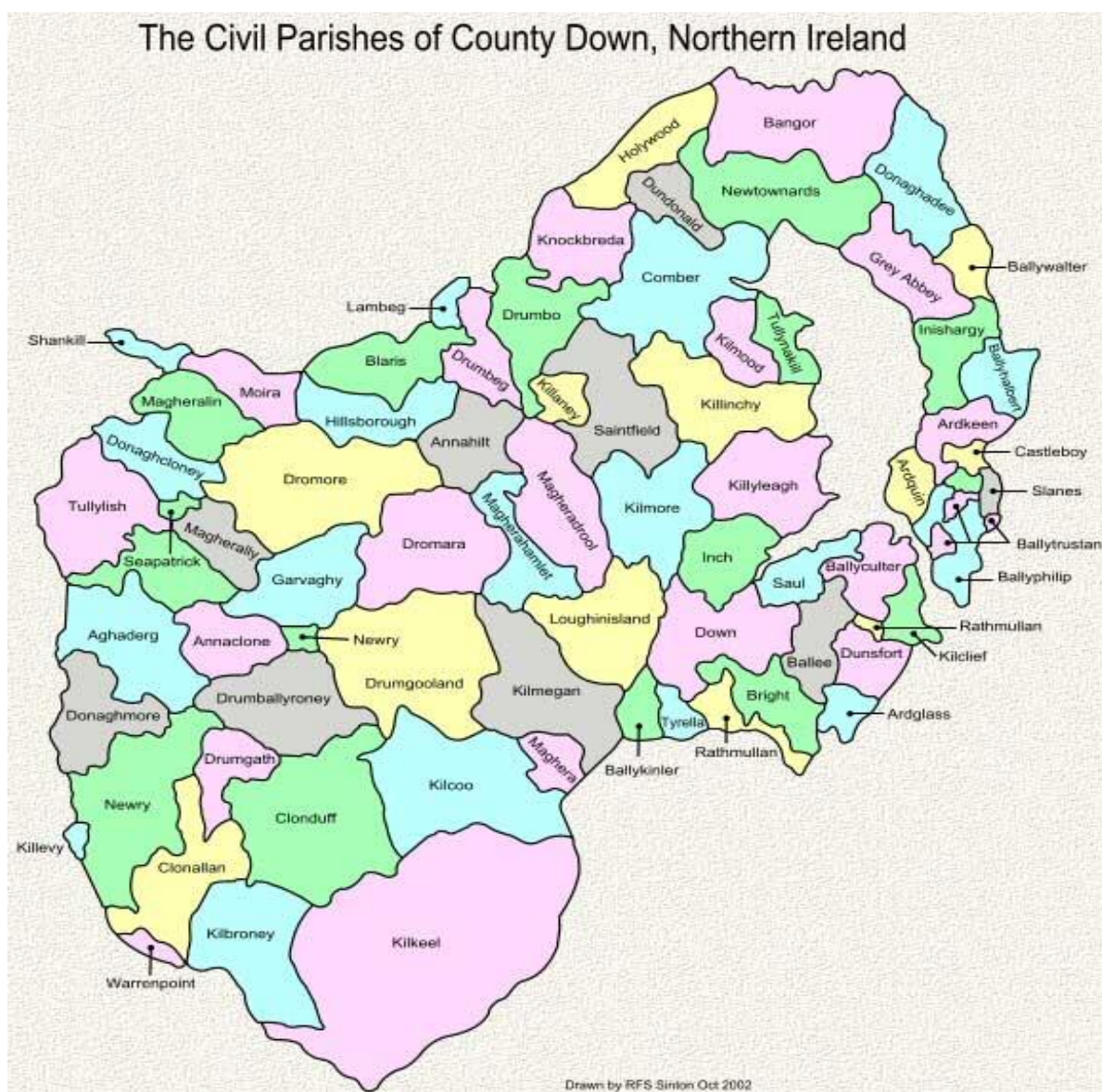
Genuki page on County Down www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl/DOW/ - a lot of information here
Searchable townland database www.thecore.com/seanruad/

Family Search Wiki https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/County_Down lots of links

Ireland Reaching Out lists 58 Parishes – each with individual link www.irelandxo.com/search-communities?name=&field_county_tid=5016&=Show+Communities

Irish Ancestors, John Grenham's site, 69 civil parishes, each with a link, www.johngrenham.com/browse/county_civil.php?county=Down

Irish Ancestors, John Grenham's map of Catholic parishes in County Down www.johngrenham.com/browse/counties/rcmaps/downrc.php#maps



Records Offices and Archives for this county

Births and deaths registration commenced in 1864. Marriages (registration for non-Catholic marriages, including Registry marriages from 1845; Catholic marriages from 1864. There is a privacy period of 100 years for births, 75 years for marriages and 50 years for deaths.

A general search of the index of historical civil registrations of births deaths and marriages can be completed at

Genuki's links to archives and libraries for County Down, Linen Hall and PRONI

www.genuki.org.uk/big/irl/DOW/

General Register Office Northern Ireland <https://geni.nidirect.gov.uk/> and www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/introduction-groni-and-its-records Historical civil registration in what is now Northern Ireland, located in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) www.proni.gov.uk the official Northern Ireland office for archives

Public Record Office downloadable information on various topics: Family Tree Series, Local History Series, Emigration Series, Conflict-related Court and Inquest Records, Historical Topics Series, General Information Series

www.proni.gov.uk/index/research_and_records_held/catalogues_guides_indexes_and_leaflets/information_leaflets.htm

Main library in Belfast containing many genealogical records for the area including Co. Down. Irish and Reference Collection with various publications, maps etc. www.linenhall.com/

National Archives of Ireland (Republic) links to many searchable databases, some include people from Co. www.genealogy.nationalarchives.ie/

Birth, marriage or death certificates available at Registrar's Offices.

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/family-and-local-history-records

General Register Office Northern Ireland (GRONI) to buy credits and register for an account www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/leisure-home-and-community/family-history-heritage-and-museums/research-family-history-at-the-general-register-office-ni-groni.htm

Professional genealogy research services in the Province of Ulster, which includes County Down, located in Belfast (website colour scheme is hard to read) <http://familyulster.com/Default.aspx>

Northern Ireland District Registrars' addresses at FamilySearch Wiki [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Northern_Ireland_District_Registrars_Addresses_\(National_Institute\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Northern_Ireland_District_Registrars_Addresses_(National_Institute))

Family History Societies

Family Search Wiki - lots of links to family history societies https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/County_Down

Federation of Family History Societies listing of family history societies in Ireland www.ffhs.org.uk/members2/ireland.php

North of Ireland Family History Society, membership based organisation like WA Genealogical Society, 12 branches running their own program, one in Bangor, Co. Down, links to various resources www.nifhs.org/

Lecale and Downe Historical Society – lots of links www.lecalehistory.co.uk/

Irish Genealogy Toolkit's links to Irish family tree research societies www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Irish-family-tree-research.html

Ulster Historical Foundation, including County Down, free search, buy credits to view content www.ancestryireland.com

Parish Registers

Roots Ireland's interactive map to find available online resources available www.rootsireland.ie/map/

Roots Ireland site of the Irish Family History Foundation Subscription site, 1 day to 12 months available www.rootsireland.ie

Family Search Wiki with historical information about county Down
https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/County_Down,_Ireland_Genealogy

Catholic Parish Registers includes Fermanagh <http://registers.nli.ie/> includes an interactive map of Fermanagh parishes. Free and browseable. Free access to indexes at Ancestry and FindMyPast, though you must login.

Ireland Church Directories https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland_Church_Directories
Church Records, searchable by name and location www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/

Find My Past's list of Irish record sets, subscription required or access via WAGS
www.findmypast.co.uk/articles/world-records/full-list-of-the-irish-family-history-records

Ros Davies's site at Rootsweb with links to various databases
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~rosdavies/>

UKBMD's coverage of where to find County Down birth, death and marriage records in parish and civil records
www.ukbmd.org.uk/index.php?county=195&form_action=county&classification=16384&no_ons=NO_ONS&ShowOnly=Apply+Filter

Family Search Wiki about Church of Ireland records. Church of Ireland is a Protestant church, equivalent to the Church of England. https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Church_of_Ireland_Records

Non-conformist births and baptisms, searchable, but subscription required to view, or access via WAGS <http://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/ireland-non-conformist-births-and-baptisms>

Family Search Wiki about Presbyterian church records
https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Ireland_Presbyterian_Church_Records

Irish Genealogy Projects for Co Down www.igp-web.com/Down/index.htm

County History

Oracle Ireland – brief history of County Down
<http://oracleireland.com/Ireland/Countys/down/history.htm>

Raymond's County Down website on genealogy and history
www.raymondscountydownwebsite.com

Irish Abroad provides links to various Heritage Centres in Ireland www.irishabroad.com/

Culture Northern Ireland gives links to North Down heritage attractions
www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/heritage/north-down-heritage-centre

Somme Association has a link to the Somme Heritage Centre site, covers Ireland's role in the Great War <http://www.sommeassociation.com/>

Ireland's Eye link to the Burren Heritage Centre, Co Down
www.irelandseye.com/aarticles/travel/attractions/museums/bur_heri.shtm

Saint Patrick Centre www.saintpatrickcentre.com/

Royal Irish Academy's website for Irish History online www.ria.ie/research-projects/irish-history-online

Joint Journal of the Irish Historical Society and Ulster Society for Irish Historical Studies

www.irishhistoricalstudies.ie/

History of County Down by Books LLC at Google Books though much now available at Wikipedia or other free online sources <http://tinyurl.com/j6s6cjt>

New History of Ireland, Theodore William Moody et al, Volume 1, covers Co. Down at Google Books <http://tinyurl.com/juyysmz>

History from Headstones - large collect of online gravestone inscriptions in Northern Ireland www.historyfromheadstones.com/

Bangor Historical Society, Bangor. Co Down www.bangorhistoricalsocietyni.co.uk/

Other resources

Wikipedia covers changes to county boundaries over time https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COUNTIES_of_Northern_Ireland

Wesley Johnston's site includes Irish place names_evolution_geography_settlement www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/geography/index.htm

Historical Counties Trust www.historiccountiestrust.co.uk/descriptions.html including a map of historical counties www.historiccountiestrust.co.uk/map.html

Historical Borders Project www.county-borders.co.uk/

Clare Santry's Irish Genealogy Toolkit includes links relating to Northern Ireland genealogical research www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com/Northern-Ireland-genealogy.html

Emerald Ancestors covers North Ireland Genealogy and Ulster Ancestry www.emeraldancestors.com/

Tourism Ireland's County Down Homepage, handy if you intend to travel over, events, places of interest - churches, abbeys, cathedrals, museums www.ireland.com/en-au/destinations/northern-ireland/county-down/

Tourism Ireland's links to genealogy and ancestry hints and tips www.ireland.com/en-au/what-is-available/genealogy-and-ancestry/

WA Genealogical Society's Irish Special Interest Group <https://membership.wags.org.au/special-interest-groups-mainmenu-47/irish-sig>

WAGS Links Page, find over 100 links related to Ireland <http://membership.wags.org.au/membership-mainmenu-44/genealogy-links>

WAGS Electronic Document Repository – Seamen's Crewlists 1851 <http://membership.wags.org.au/membership-mainmenu-44/library/edr-cds>

Tithe Applotment Books at the National Archives of Ireland which are searchable for this county <http://titheapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie/search/tab/>

Griffith's Valuation at Ask About Ireland – searchable for this county www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/

Griffith's Valuation Revision Books which cover changes to land tenure since the original valuation, searchable www.irishgenealogynews.com/2013/03/griffiths-valuation-revision-books-for.html

Libraries in County Down www.ukwebindex.co.uk/category/County-Down/Libraries/

National Library of Australia – licensed e-Resources include Northern Ireland papers, free access from home with a National Library of Australia reader's card

www.nla.gov.au/app/eresources/search?id=newspapers+northern+ireland

State Library of WA holds various resources for Co Down, searchable catalogue

http://encore.slwa.wa.gov.au/iii/encore/search/C_Scount%20down_Orighresult_U?lang=eng&suite=def

FindMyPast includes the George Bassett, Co Down Guide and Directory 1886, Access by subscription or free to members at the WA Genealogical Society Library

Cyndi's List covers many links for Co Down genealogy, directories etc

www.cyndislist.com/directories/uk/?page=2

CoraWeb includes numerous links to Co Down websites

www.coraweb.com.au/Search?q=County+Down

Co Down Genealogy Group on Facebook

<http://findingourancestors.com/county-genealogy-group-now-facebook/>

Roots Web has various Down links including message boards <http://home.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>

Ards and North Down Borough Council www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/

Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for statistics and social research on Northern Ireland www.nisra.gov.uk/

Wesley Johnston's site covers Irish place names and their history

www.wesleyjohnston.com/users/ireland/geography/placenames.html

The Book of Irish Families, Great & Small, Michael C O'Laughlin at Google Books

<http://tinyurl.com/jghyayn>

UK Wow search engine enter County Down with various words e.g. historical; history brings up a wealth of links http://uk.wow.com/?s_chn=70&s_pt=aolsem

Peter J Meaney's Co Down Stuff

http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~meaneypj/Co_Down_Stuff/Co_Down_Stuff.htm

Down County Museum <http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/heritage/down-county-museum>

Industrial Heritage of Co Down www.culturenorthernireland.org/features/heritage/industrial-heritage-co-down