

# Valuation Records

## Introduction

PRONI holds records relating to the valuation of property in Northern Ireland from the 1830s to 1993. Following the valuations in the 1830s and 1860s, re-valuations were carried out in 1935, 1956, 1975 and 1993. The original purpose was, and still remains, a financial assessment of every building and piece of land. The valuation is, in theory, the amount that an owner would expect to receive if they hired out their property for one year. The valuation of a property is subsequently used in assessing the rates to be paid.

The levying of a rate in Ireland, to raise money to meet the costs of local government, dates from 1635. An Act of that year gave Justices of the Peace power to levy certain sums, known as the County Cess or Grand Jury Cess, upon the inhabitants of a locality for the execution of public works such as the building of roads and bridges. By 1824 Parliament recognised the need for a more equitable method of measuring liability for cess and rates. The First Valuation Act was introduced in 1826, and a valuation of the whole of Ireland was prepared. The information given in the valuation books usually includes the name of the tenant; the name of the person or organisation from whom they leased the land, the acreage and the rateable value. Not all land and property, however, was subject to rates: national schools, for example, and glebe land (land belonging to the Church), or land too poor or stony to be worth anything, were excluded.

## The Townland Valuation (VAL/1B)

The **Townland Valuation** of 1828-40 was primarily a valuation of land but included a valuation of certain houses, initially houses with an annual value of £3 or more. From 1838 this was changed to include only property of £5 or more. The majority of parishes in Ulster had been valued before 1838 so many more houses are included in the valuation of property in Ulster than for the rest of the country. Details of the ownership and nature of the buildings can be found at the end of the land valuation for each townland but more detailed descriptions of the buildings will be found at the end of each volume, arranged by townland.



Page from Valuation Revision book  
(PRONI Reference VAL/12 B)

properties, or in the names of occupiers or immediate lessors, and any differences in the acreage and value. The changes were recorded in different colours of ink, one colour for each year, and the alterations are usually dated. This can help to establish significant dates in family history, such as dates of death,

sale or migration. Associated maps at a scale of 6 inches to a mile are under **VAL/12D** and town plans under **VAL/12E**.

Also of interest are a series of valuers' note-books (**VAL/12A**). These first appeared in 1894 and record the details behind the revising valuer's decision to change, upwards or downwards, the valuation of those premises where an addition or other alteration had been made. There is an extensive catalogue of the series on the shelves of the Search Room.

### Revaluation of Belfast, 1900-6 (VAL/7B)

Belfast was the only council to exercise the revaluation option granted to local councils by the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898. The valuers' note-books, arranged by ward, not only give a detailed description of every property (e.g., age and size) but also record appeals against valuation. A 'Street Names' card index in the Public Search Room lists the volume number, and the page number within the volume, in which the street is recorded. This revaluation, carried out at a time when Belfast was reckoned to be the fastest-growing industrial city in the British Isles, is a particularly valuable source for any family historian. Associated maps can be found in **VAL/7A**.

### First Northern Ireland General Revaluation, 1935, and its Revisions (VAL/3)

The First General Revaluation came into force on 1 April 1936 – the first undertaken after the establishment of the government of Northern Ireland. It is an important source for historians interested in the more recent past. As well as the lists of the Re-valuation itself (**VAL/3B**), there are also the revision lists in **VAL/3C** detailing changes in the ownership of property etc. until 1957. Maps (6 inch to the mile) are available under **VAL/3A**, together with town plans under **VAL/3G**.

## Northern Ireland General Revaluation, 1956/7 (VAL/4)

As a result of World War II, the Second Revaluation did not take effect until 1 April 1957. PRONI only holds the revisions of this valuation (**VAL/4B**) and the associated maps (**VAL/4A**).

## Third General Revaluation, 1975, and Revisions up to 1993 (VAL/14)

This is the most recent valuation held in PRONI (**VAL/14A**); the subsequent revisions are to be found in **VAL/14B** and **VAL/14C** and the associated maps in **VAL/14D**.

## Using the Valuation Records

To use the valuation details for a townland you will need to know the following: county, poor law union, barony, parish and district electoral division. These administrative subdivisions can be found by consulting the *Topographical Index* on the Search Room shelves; some will also appear on PRONI's website. The place name index in the Search Room in PRONI will give you the exact reference number for valuation books in **VAL/2B** and **VAL/12B**.

