

Your Family Tree Series: 4



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 done in 1935, 1956, 1975 and 1993. The original purpose was, and still remains, the assessment of every building and every piece of land and an estimation of its financial value. 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. 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 all excluded. The information given in the valuation books usually includes the name of the tenant, the person or organisation from whom they leased the land, the acreage and the rateable value.

The Townland Valuation (VAL/1B)

The **Townland Valuation** of 1828-40 was primarily a valuation of land but with a valuation of certain houses, initially houses with an annual value of £3 or more. From 1838 this was increased to £5. The majority of parishes in Ulster had been valued before 1838 so many more houses were 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. The Townland Valuation should not, therefore, be ignored by family historians. Containing as it does many personal names, it is an invaluable source of information on the nature and physical condition of buildings, including mills and factories, and on the nature and scope of pre-Famine agriculture. The maps that accompany this valuation are available under reference **VAL/1A**.

changes in the ownership of property etc. until 1957. The maps, on the scale of 6 inches to one mile that accompany this valuation are also 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**.

