



Your Family Tree: 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**.

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION (VAL/2B)

The **Primary Valuation of Ireland**, 1848-1864, gives a complete list of occupiers of land, tenements and houses. Better known as **Griffith's Valuation**, it is arranged by counties and within counties by Poor Law Union Divisions and within Unions by barony and then by parish and townland. For each townland the following information is recorded:

- Occupier of the land or houses
- Name of the person from whom the property was leased
- Description of the property
- Acreage of the farm
- Valuation of the land and buildings

The Griffith's Valuation is a useful, if flawed, substitute for the 1851/1861 census returns, in that it only gives the name of the leaseholder, and does not list the other family members. It is available in manuscript form but a printed edition is available on the shelves of the Public Search Room. While this is much easier to use, it is not as detailed as the original field books which will give more information on mills and factories and will occasionally include plans. For information on how to use the Griffith's Valuation, see the leaflet on '*How to access Valuation Records*'. The **Householders' Index** (also available on the Public Search Room shelves) can be used as a guide to the surnames listed in the Griffith's Valuation. The maps accompanying Griffith's valuation are available under **VAL/2A**. The entire printed valuation has been digitised and indexed and can be accessed at www.irishorigins.com and at www.askaboutireland.ie

ANNUAL REVISION LISTS (VAL/12/B)

The First General Valuation was completed by 1863-4. Thereafter, properties were valued annually from 1864 until the early 1930s, the details of which are recorded in the annual revision books, with each volume covering approximately a ten-year period. Each year, valuers recorded any change in the quality or dimensions of the 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 can be found 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 revise, 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 Public 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 (for example, 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 wishing to trace ancestors who migrated to the city at this time. 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 Revaluation itself (**VAL/3B**), there are also the revision lists in **VAL/3C** detailing 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 Public Search Room shelves; some will also appear on PRONI's website. The place name index in the Public Search Room in PRONI will give you the exact reference number for valuation books in **VAL/2B** and **VAL/12B**.



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