

Geography:

***Barony** – A territorial division of a county often based on medieval Gaelic lordships and used as administrative units for taxation and other administrative purposes until the late 19th century. There are 331 baronies in Ireland. Some baronies overlap more than one county. The local government no longer uses baronies. (Taken from Find My Past explanation of terms)

Province: From ancient times, Ireland was divided into four sections or provinces. A pre-Norman king ruled each province. Today the Provinces have little genealogical value.

***County** – The principal unit of local government, created by the English between the Norman invasion and 1606. They often reflected older Gaelic territorial boundaries. There are thirty-two counties on the entire island of Ireland. (Taken from Find My Past explanation of terms)

***Parish** – The use of the word Parish in the valuation refers to the Civil Parish not to be confused with the Ecclesiastical Parish. The Civil Parish is an administrative unit of the government. Civil parishes number about two thousand five hundred. Each Civil Parish contains an average of twenty-four townlands.

***Poor Law Union** – In 1838, due to the high level of poverty throughout Ireland, the Poor Law Union was introduced, creating a workhouse system. Each workhouse served an area comprising several civil parishes. That area was called a Union.

***Townland** – A Townland is the smallest official government administrative division of land. There are more than Sixty-four thousand townlands in Ireland. They range in size from a few acres to thousands of acres. The average size of a townland is three hundred and twenty-five acres.

Valuations:

Townland Valuation: The Townland Valuation was the result of Acts of Parliament passed between 1826 and 1836. The tax system was considered by many to be unfair. A valuation of every piece of property throughout Ireland was to be conducted. Individual occupiers were not named unless they held a house that was valued at more than £5. When the Tenement Valuation of 1844 replaced the Townland Valuation, it reduced the property level to be valued to £3.

Tenement Valuation: The Tenement Valuation began in 1844 with the counties of Cork, Dublin, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary, and Waterford. Individual tenements or holdings were valued, and the occupiers' names were recorded in the Field Books. The Tenement Valuation was extended to cover the entire country by 1852. Valuers went over the townland valuations and valued holdings of £3 or over.

Exploring Griffith's Valuation
St. Louis Genealogical Society Irish SIG
26 April 2021

Valuation Office Notebooks from 1830 to the mid-1850s included:

- Field Books (for rural areas)
- House Books (for urban areas)
- Check Books
- Tenure Books
- Quarto Books

***Field Books**, according to the National Archives of Ireland, pre-printed notebooks for each Parish. The following information was recorded in columns in each notebook:

- County, Barony, Parish, and Townland
 - Lot number (refers to the divisions of the townland made by the valuator)
 - Technical description of the land
 - Quantity or square area of the lot in statute measure (acres, roods, and perches)
 - Rate per acre
 - Amount of valuation of land and houses expressed in pounds, shillings, and pence
- Occupiers' names are given for some parishes, for most parishes, or all parishes, depending on the county.

***House Books** - notebooks that contained the occupier's name and the description of houses valued over £3. In 1836 the threshold value was changed to £5 when the Tenement Valuation replaced the Townland Valuation. House Books may be separate books or bound to Field Books. For the most part, the information collected during the Townland Valuation and the Tenement Valuation remained the same.

- Number of the property
- Name of the occupier and description of the property
- Quality letter
- length, breadth, and height (in feet and inches)
- Number of measures
- Rate per measure
- Amount of valuation in money (pounds, shillings, and pence)

The above definition was taken from the national archives.ie, webpage.

* **Check Books** – In 1836, a system was set into place checking the previous valuation and was called the Check Valuation. Valuators revalued Portions of valuations, and the information collected was entered into a separate book.

***Tenure Books** started in 1846 with the start of the Tenement Valuation. These books were sometimes called perambulation books since the valutors walked or perambulated around the holding, collecting the information. The books contain lease information, including the name of the occupier and lessors, and the size of the tenement.

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***Quarto Books** are the valuation books of houses in towns dating between 1838 and 1853. They contain the name of the occupier, a description of the property, and the valuation by tables from the house book. (The Archives of the Valuation of Ireland 1830 – 1865 by Frances McGee p. 8)

***Revision Books, Cancelled Books, and Current Land Books**

• All refer to the same group of documents combined in book form. The Valuation Office noted any change to the occupier, landlord, size of holding, or value for each plot. Each time a change occurs, it appears in a different color ink or pencil, and the color depicts the year the change was made. The color version of these books are not available online for the Republic of Ireland, but the books are available to view at the Valuation Office, Abbey Street, Dublin. The Family History Library has microfilmed these books; however, they are filmed in black and white, not in color.

Terms you may encounter researching Griffith's Valuation Books:

***As Lessor** – indicates, the person owns the holding outright

***Bog** - a wetland of dead plant material that accumulates peat that would be used as fuel.

***Cess** – County tax

***Cottier** – landless laborer

***Currency:**

• Pound £ - 20 Shillings

• Shilling s. – 12 Shillings equals 1 Pound (£1)

• Pence d. – 12 Pence equals one Shilling (1s.)

• Guinea – 1 Pound one Shilling

***Free** - The Griffith's Valuation valuers were instructed that "persons who hold by right of possession, and recognize no landlord, their tenure shall be entered as free." The person would be living there without the rights to do so or, in other words, squatting.

***Freehold** – outright ownership of land

***Garden** – usually a vegetable plot

***Glebe** – cultivable land belonging to a church or Parish and not taxable

***House** – a structure used as a dwelling as well as public buildings

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***Immediate Lessor** – the person who was leasing the holding to the occupier. Immediate Lessor does not necessarily mean landlord or owner of the property. It could mean a middle man who sublet the property to the occupier.

***In Chancery** – indicates a legal dispute concerning the land

***In Fee** – indicates the holding is owned outright and was obtained through a grant from the crown

***In Perpetuity** – forever

***Land** – the property being rented measured in acres, roods, and perches.

***Lease** – an agreement to rent land or property. A lease of years would last for a period of 21 or 31 years. A lease of lives usually named three people in the lease. For example, the father and his youngest son and the second youngest son would be named. The lease and the amount of rent to be paid would remain in force until all three named in the lease were deceased. Some leases lasted for a hundred years or more. However, the majority of leases were renewable each year.

***Measurement of land:**

- Statute Acre - statute acre equals 4840 square yards
- Rood – ¼ of an acre or 1210 square yards
- Perches – 140th of a rood or 30 square yards

***Occupier** – the person responsible for paying the tax on the tenement (land and buildings) that person is usually the leaseholder – the person occupying the tenement.

***Quality Lot** –houses were valued at the annual rate they would bring, less one-third.

***Reps of," an abbreviation for "Representatives of,"** an indication that the individual named was dead at the time of the valuation and his or her legal interest in the holding was being represented by a family member or by an executor. (This definition was taken from the Ask About Ireland Website)

***Tenant** – the person renting the dwelling or land and paying rent to an owner or a middle man. Some tenants paid their rent in the form of labor.

***Tenement** – "The 1846 act used the definition of 'tenement' in the 1838 Poor Law Act, where a tenement was a hereditament that was liable for rates, including houses and land." The archives of the valuation of Ireland, 1830 by Frances McGee page 138.