



FOREVER
DEAR

The Irish Land Division: A Guide for Ancestry Researchers

PROVINCE



4 Cultural Provinces

Ireland has 4 cultural provinces and 32 traditional counties, split between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

COUNTY



32 Traditional Counties

Split between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

BARONY



Obsolete units, based on clan territories. Vital for mid-19th-century land surveys and taxation.

POOR LAW UNION (PLU)



Established in 1838



Primary units for registering Births, Death, and after 1864.

Division Level

PLU

DED

Primary Research Value

Civil Registration (Birth/Death/Marriage)

1901 & 1911 Census Organization

CENSUS



DISTRICT ELECTORAL DIVISION (DED)

Essential units for searching the 1901 and 1911 Irish Censuses.

Expert Tip:
If you can't find a family in 1801, try searching by the DED (District Electoral Division) instead of just the townland.

PARISH



ECCLESIASTICAL PARISH

Church boundaries. Often do not align with Civil Parishes.

CIVIL PARISH

Government tax boundaries.



TOWNLAND



Smallest official unit (60,000+). Small, specific land units.

Expert Tip:
Always check if your record is Civil or Ecclesiastical - they often differ!

SUB-TOWNLAND



Unofficial "aliases" found in local lore. Specific locations within a townland.