

This is a vast archive, which covers the whole country. Although set up to enable to new settlers to assert their rights to land, it is evident that it was used from the beginning to help people of very modest means, of all religions, to register transactions. There was no compulsion for deeds to be registered, so large landowners often didn't bother. However, poorer people, with much depending on the deed, would register, in order to make their transaction as safe as possible.

Three years ago, FamilySearch uploaded all the 2686 films they had taken in the 1950s at the Registry of Deeds, free to view, from the beginning of the Registry in 1708, up to 1929 at: <https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/185720?availability=Family%20History%20Library>
This has made any searches very much easier.

In addition, extensive indexes have been prepared to enable the reader to navigate the various films, & these have been uploaded to Nick Reddan's site (see below). Here is an example - note that cities & corporation towns are indexed separately from country townlands:

Roscommon 1739-1810			Sligo 1739-1810			Tipperary 1739-1810			Tyrone 1739-1810		
Film No	100391		Film No	100402		Film No	100413		Film No	100411	
Letter/Town	From	To	Letter/Town	From	To	Letter/Town	From	To	Letter/Town	From	To
A	313	322	A	114	118	A	6	17	A	118	128
B	322	336	B	119	127	B	18	76	B	129	140
C	336	366	C	127	151	C	77	136	C	141	159
D	367	375	D	152	157	D	136	143	D	159	173
E	376	378	E	158	159	E	144	147	E	173	176
F	379	382	F	160	162	F	148	156	F	177	180
G	383	390	G	163	166	G	156	184	G	181	189
H	391	392	H	167	167	H	189	191	H	190	191
IJ	392	393	IJ	168	169	IJ	191	194	IJ	192	193
K	394	409	K	169	176	K	194	224	K	193	202
L	409	420	L	176	182	L	224	239	L	203	213
M	420	425	M	182	186	M	239	253	M	214	227
N	426	427	N	186	186	N	253	259	N	228	230
O	427	428	O	187	188	O	259	261	O	231	234
P	428	430	P	188	189	P	261	271	P	235	236
Q	430	430	Q	190	190	Q	272	273	Q	237	237
R	431	434	R	190	194	R	273	289	R	238	242
S	435	442	S	184	198	S	290	301	S	242	250
T	442	451	T	198	203	T	302	314	T	250	260
UV	452	452	UV	203	203	UV	314	315	UV	261	262
WX	453	454	WX	204	204	WX	315	316	WX	262	263
YZ	nil	nil	YZ	nil	nil	YZ	317	318	YZ	264	264
Boyle	455	457	Sligo	205	223	Carrick	318	330	Augher	265	265
Roscommon	457	459				Cashel	330	338	Clogher	266	266
Tulsk	460	460				Clonmel	339	363	Dungannon	267	271
						Fethard	363	365	Strabane	271	280

Before attempting a search of the deeds themselves, do check the free database, set up by Nick Reddan, at www.irishdeedsindex.net There are 436,699 names already indexed by his band of volunteers, drawn from 45,975 deeds. In addition, there are currently 105,409 Townland Index entries & 43,323 Grantor Index entries. As well as to regular updates, Nick is constantly adding search aids. Here is the current Home page, with the name search opened:

The screenshot shows the website for the Registry of Deeds Index Project Ireland. The page has a green header with the project name and a navigation menu. A sidebar on the left lists search options like 'Main index by number', 'Main index by name (alternative)', 'Main index by name', 'Summary by volume', 'Our forum', 'Coverage of townland transcriptions', 'Example transcriptions of memorials', and 'Large memorials'. The main content area includes sections for 'Purpose', 'Background', 'FamilySearch Films on-line', and 'Guidance'. A 'Number of index entries' counter shows 43,669. A thumbnail image of a deed document is visible on the right side of the page.

WILLS: See Beryl Eustace's three on all wills registered at the Registry of Deeds. These are can now be downloaded free from the Irish Manuscripts Commission website:
http://www.irishmanuscripts.ie/servlet/Controller?action=digitisation_backlist

MARRIAGES: To see my growing index to marriages noted in the Registry of Deeds, as well as other non-parish register sources, see the website of The Irish Genealogical Research Society, - linked from www.irishancestors.ie/early-irish-indexes/ Note that my index includes any mention or evidence of a marriage, & not just marriage settlements. The index currently stands at 115,988, with an update due shortly. Of this total, some 13,500 marriage entries are from the Registry of Deeds. The index freely available to all researchers.

BIRTHS & DEATHS: In addition to the marriage index, I have also started both a birth & a death index along similar lines. The Birth index currently stands at 44,800, & the Death Index at 32,000. These are readable in the members' section of the IGRS website. Like the Marriage Index, the period covered is from 1660 to 1863, just before the launch of full Civil Registration.

Notes:

Memorial: The copy deed taken to the Registry of Deeds for lodgement. At least one of the original parties to the deed will have signed this copy.

Transcript: Before filing the memorial in the basement, the clerks made a précis of it, & wrote it into the current book. The précis is usually less than a page long in the book, while the memorial itself may be very extensive.

Numbering of memorials: At any one time, some four or five clerks will have been on duty, each writing into a different abstract book, and so the memorial numbers won't necessarily follow in sequence through any one volume.

Main Types of Deeds: Leases; Mortgages; Marriage Settlements; Wills; Annuities.

Books & Articles:

You will find a good introduction to the subject in: **Tracing Your Irish Ancestors**, by John Grenham. Published in Dublin: Gill and Macmillan

There is an excellent & very comprehensive article about the Registry of Deeds, written some thirty years ago by the late Miss Rosemary ffollott, & published in **Irish Genealogy, A Record Finder** ISBN 0 9502455 7 7