

# 8. Is there a Tartan in Your Tree?

## Discovering Scottish Roots

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**General Scottish Research Websites** Unless marked (\$,) sites are free to use, but may require the user to set up an account to view documents. *All website links were accessed 4 January 2022.*

### **Getting Started with U.S. Records**

- Research your immigrant ancestor, all descendants and other relatives **thoroughly** in U.S. records to look for clues for his/her Scottish home
- Use a research log to document your searches and discoveries (positive and negative) to avoid repeating your work
- Learn as much as you can about the ***time period of Scotland*** in which your ancestor lived to learn *why* he/she emigrated
- Search U.S. databases to search for Scottish records
  - FamilySearch.org – <https://www.familysearch.org/> *free* account required to view documents; some Scottish collections must be viewed only at a family history center or affiliate library
    - FamilySearch wiki-
      - After logging in, select “wiki” under “Search”
      - Click on map or type in location to research “Scotland”
    - FamilySearch Scottish Webinars – *free*
      - Click on (?) in upper right-hand corner of screen, then type “Scotland” or “Scots-Irish” in the search box for the webinars
  - Cyndi’s List for Scotland - <https://www.cyndislist.com/uk/sct/>
  - Ancestry.com \$ - <https://www.ancestry.com/> (World edition) access available at some genealogical societies and public libraries
- Consider using DNA and cousin matches to help narrow down your search area(s) in Scotland

**Church of Scotland** – National church with early records of baptisms, marriages and burials (prior to 1855) (Use **Old Parish Records (OPRs)** on ScotlandsPeople).

**Structure: Kirk Sessions** handled early administrative duties for local church parishes including care for the poor and judicial functions. More severe issues were referred to **Presbytery** meetings (consisting of various representatives of local kirk sessions). Presbytery cases were referred to “regional” **Synod** meetings (consisting of representatives of various presbyteries – no longer in existence). Highest level for Church of Scotland is the **General Assembly**. Records exist for all levels, but not all are digitized or available online. Most records held by National Records of Scotland (NRS). Kirk session records are available online as of 2021 on ScotlandsPeople, but are **not indexed** (browse only).

- Regular Marriage – performed by minister (usually Church of Scotland)
- Irregular Marriage – announcement of marriage made in front of witnesses, but not with approved clergy present. Records of such marriage may be noted in parish kirk session records (Church of Scotland) as well any punitive fine(s) levied against couple and witnesses involved in the irregular marriage. Legal up until 1940.
- Divorce has been permitted in Scotland since 1560.

**Privacy laws** limit access to:

*Births* -100 years after birth

*Marriages* - 75 years after marriage

*Deaths* -50 years after death

*Census* - 100 years after date of census (latest available is 1911; release of 1921 was delayed in 2021)

### **Online UK and Scottish Websites and Repositories**

- Findmypast.com \$ - <https://www.findmypast.com/> (*suggestion: use on a monthly subscription basis and “lump” research into a month’s time; or as needed*); access to early British newspapers among its many US and UK record collections
  - Searches may be saved
  - Most collections are browsable with images to download and save
- Genuki UK & Ireland Genealogy - <https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/sct>
  - ScotlandsPeople.gov.uk - <https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk>  
Set up *free* account
  - Searches may be saved to online account
  - Purchase credits to view/download images. Purchases are saved to your account, but it is best to download images and save to your computer as you purchase them.
  - Indexed collections include pre-1855 church records (Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, others), wills and testaments (1513-1955), valuation rolls, statutory records, census, and more. Kirk sessions are browse only accessed through “Virtual Volumes”.
- Scottish Indexes - <https://www.scottishindexes.com/> *free* to search with transcriptions. Option to order records (\$)
- National Records of Scotland - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/>

- ScotlandsPlaces.gov.uk - <https://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/> Information on various shires in Scotland with links to map images, valuation rolls (pre-1855), tax lists and more. *As of January 2022, website is down for maintenance.*
- The Statistical Accounts of Scotland 1791-1845 - <https://stataccscot.edina.ac.uk/static/statacc/dist/home>
- Scottish Genealogy Society – [www.scotsgenealogy.com](http://www.scotsgenealogy.com) Family history files, downloads, links to indexes
- Guides for locating Registration Districts in Scotland – 2 pdfs to download and save
  - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//research/statutory-registers/parishes-and-registration-districts-by-name.pdf>
  - <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//research/statutory-registers/parishes-and-registration-districts-by-number.pdf>
- Scottish Post Office Directories - <https://digital.nls.uk/directories/>
- National Library of Scotland – maps - <https://maps.nls.uk/>
- Scottish Handwriting.com – <https://www.scottishhandwriting.com/index.asp>
- Dictionaries of the Scots Language - <https://dsl.ac.uk/>

### **Written Resources/Books**

- *The Family Tree Scottish Genealogy Guide* – by Amanda Epperson
- *Scottish Immigration to Colonial America 1607-1785* (and others)– by David Dobson
- *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors - The Official Guide* – by NRS (7<sup>th</sup> Edition – 2020)
- *Tracing Your Scottish Family History on the Internet* – Chris Paton (2020)
- *Genealogical Atlas of Scotland: Compiled from Original Maps* – by Derek & Frank Smith (Compilers); David E. Gardner and Derek Harland, (Authors)
- *Surnames of Scotland* – by George F Black

### **“Scots-Irish” Websites & Repositories- Northern Ireland**

- Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) (Belfast) – <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni>
  - Select “Search Archives Online”
  - Choose links applicable link(s) - Can view and download some images
- General Register Office of Northern Ireland (GRONI) (Belfast) \$ – BMDs, more recent records <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/go-groni-online>; must register; can search for free, but you must purchase credits in advance to see more and order records
- Ulster Historical Foundation \$ – [www.ancestryireland.com](http://www.ancestryireland.com) - Most databases only available to “guild members”; books available for purchase

### **Republic of Ireland (Irish Free State) Websites & Repositories (may hold records related to those in NI from Scotland)**

- National Archives of Ireland (Dublin) - <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>
  - Select “Genealogy”, then “Researching family history”, scroll down to select links to the left for areas of interest to search. May require download of free software to download document images
- National Library of Ireland (Dublin) – [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)
  - Select “Catalogues and Databases”, then select from list
- Quaker Records (Dublin): <https://quakers-in-ireland.ie/historical-library/>

**Hire a Genealogist** – Can’t visit Scotland to research or obtain a record? Look for those who specialize in the area of interest or live near the repository of the record you wish to obtain. Do as much research as you can from home before seeking overseas assistance. Ask friends/other researchers for references.

- **The International Commission for the Accreditation of Professional Genealogists (ICAPGen)** <http://www.icapgen.org/>

### **Webinars for British Research**

International Society for British Genealogy and Family History - <https://www.isbgfh.com/> - Most webinars are free with advanced registration.

### **Just for Fun**

- Scottish Register of Tartans: <https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/index>
- Association of Scottish Games and Festivals: <https://www.asgf.org/>
- Robert Burns Night Supper (Jan 25): <https://www.visitscotland.com/about/famous-scots/robert-burns/burns-night/>
- ScotsConnection for Clan Information: [https://www.scotsconnection.com/klan\\_crests/klan-crest-viewer-abercrombie-to-erskine.htm](https://www.scotsconnection.com/klan_crests/klan-crest-viewer-abercrombie-to-erskine.htm)
- Conduct an internet search for your Scottish surname to see what’s available online