

Land Occupancy

Your ancestor may have been one of the fortunate ones to have formal land tenancies. There are two main sources for such in the nineteenth century:

1. Tithe Applotment Books made out in the period 1823 to 1837 listing rural landholders for the purpose of the levying of a hated 'Tithe' or tax used to support the Church of Ireland. The originals of these are kept in the Irish National Archives with copies in the National Library of Ireland and partial copies in various Kerry libraries. Copies for some baronies are to be found in Vols 7 and 8 of *O'Kief, Coshe Mang, Slieve Lougher* by Dr A.E. Casey, Birmingham, Alabama, which may be found in major reference libraries worldwide. A small selection can be found online at www.rootsweb.com/~irlker/tithe.html
2. Griffiths Valuation, a survey of Kerry in 1851/2 listing the names of the landlords and tenants for each townland in each civil parish of the nine Kerry baronies. In the absence of nineteenth century censuses this is a very valuable substitute. Copies of the Kerry lists are available at the National Library of Ireland and different Kerry libraries have partial copies. The full survey is also available free online at http://griffiths.askaboutireland.ie/gv4/gv_family_search_form.php If an ancestor has been identified as a tenant in Griffith, on the same website under 'Place-name search' it is possible to identify the areas occupied on ordnance survey maps of the early 1840s. If one is particularly lucky the farmhouse occupied by your ancestor may be found. It also may be possible to trace the subsequent ownership of the land listed by consulting the 'Cancelled Valuation Books' in the Irish Valuation Office in Dublin www.valoff.ie These books show ownership of the land from the 1850s to relatively recently and can be very useful where land stayed in the possession of a family over a number of generations. The Valuation Office responds readily to requests and for a fee will send copies of ownership documents. However if at all possible a visit to their offices is preferable as the originals are easier to decipher. The 1840s ordnance survey maps in magnificent detail are separately accessible online at www.osi.ie and can be downloaded for a fee.

Land records in the eighteenth century are rare. The Register of Deeds in Dublin www.landregistry.ie/eng/Registry_of_Deeds_Services/ does hold a treasure trove of deeds back to 1707. Unfortunately these are catalogued under the surname of the lessor so unless he is known it is difficult to obtain data on tenants. In any event, records of Catholic tenants in this period are rare, they being restricted in land ownership by the anti Popery laws of these times of Protestant domination.