

# The Civil Records

By

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## Introduction

The civil registration of Catholic births, marriages and deaths were required beginning in 1864. These records through about 1920 are available on line at <https://irishgenealogy.ie>. The birth and marriage records of the McGrath and Long families in the Thurles and Cashel registration districts were extracted from the civil records. The results are presented in a series of four papers: McGrath in Thurles and Cashel; Long in Thurles and Cashel. Each paper has its own table of contents so that it's possible to easily navigate these data intense papers. The primary areas of interest are the civil parishes of Upperchurch, Moyaliff and Holycross but it was decided to use a larger net and to transcribe all the McGrath and Long birth and marriage records in both of the above registration districts.

The number of families for whom birth and marriage records were extracted from the civil registration database of the Thurles and Cashel districts are shown in the table below. The marriage records with no associated birth records are kept separately while the others are grouped into families with their children's birth records. Male and female in the table refer to the parents.

	<b>Thurles</b>	<b>Cashel</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>McGrath (Male)</b>	46	31	77
<b>McGrath (Female)</b>	26	27	53
<b>Long (Male)</b>	39	20	59
<b>Long (Female)</b>	21	4	25
<b>TOTAL (w/ birth recs)</b>			<b>214</b>
<b>McGrath Marriages</b>	25	27	52
<b>Long Marriages</b>	42	15	57
<b>TOTAL (no birth recs)</b>			<b>109</b>

The McGrath and Long families of most interest to my research resided in an area where three RC parishes came together: Upperchurch & Drombane, Ballycahill & Holycross and Clonoulty. On many occasions people would cross boundaries to receive the sacraments in other nearby churches for reasons of convenience and so the church records for a family might be spread across two or three RC parishes. The Registration Districts (actually the Superintendent Registrar Districts) are the old Poor Law Unions (PLU), each centered on a market town. The Thurles PLU didn't always respect the civil parish boundaries. For example, Upperchurch RC parish consists of the three civil parishes: Upperchurch, Moyaliff and Templebeg. The civil parish of Moyaliff appears in both the Thurles and Cashel Registration Districts. Adjacent

Holycross civil parish is in the Ballycahill & Holycross RC parish and it also appears in both the Thurles and Cashel Registration Districts.

In addition to assembling the records into family groups an attempt was made to decipher the sometimes obscure residence information included in these records. The IreAtlas, Townland Database ([www.thecore.com/seanraud](http://www.thecore.com/seanraud)) has been used to identify the correct spelling of the townland name and to place that townland in the correct administrative context, i.e. civil parish, barony, county and Poor Law Union (now the Superintendent's Registrar District). Another web site that is useful for finding the location and shape of the townland is: [www.townlands.ie](http://www.townlands.ie). The IreAtlas is more useful for working out the correct spelling since it allows the entry of partial names and the specification of where the string is to be found in the townland name: At the End, At the Beginning, or Anywhere in the name.

## **Childless Couples**

Based on the marriage and birth records found in the civil record database evidence is presented here for a combined total of 323 McGrath or Long families in the Thurles and Cashel Registration Districts over the 1864-1920 time period. Approximately one-third of these families had no children based on the birth records that were found. This seems like a large number of Irish couples to be childless in a country known for large families. Could it be a consequence of lingering memories of the great Famine?

These civil records don't include any estimate of the number of individuals who chose not to marry. However, some insight can be gained by examining the 1901 and 1911 census records. It can't be taken as a definitive examination of the question but personal observations of these census records for this area of Co. Tipperary has shown a larger than expected number of single adult children still living with their parents.

## **The Pre-Birth Baptism**

These observations have been made while searching the civil records for two surnames: McGrath and Long, in two Registration Districts: Thurles and Cashel. Depending on the RC parish, the parish register records available online overlap the civil records for about a 15 year period. Upon comparing the civil and church records in this overlap period the existence of a "Pre-Birth Baptism" phenomenon has been discovered. This phenomenon is characterized by a birth date in the civil record which occurs after the baptism date found in the church record.

Why an informant would purposely give the wrong date of birth on the civil registration can't be known with certainty. The three events (birth, baptism, and registration) were usually found to occur within a 3-4 week period, so a bad memory seems an unlikely excuse. In the majority of the birth registrations that I have seen (over 1000) the informant was either the mother or father. Those were two persons who should have remembered the actual birth date with no problem.

Perhaps these discrepancies are examples of Irish civil disobedience: compliance with the requirement to register but providing incorrect birth dates. The Irish experience has been one of government information gathering exercises seldom having beneficial consequences for the respondents. In the US there are stories of some early Irish immigrants hiding in the woods or on a nearby hill until the census takers left their neighborhood.

In addition to incorrect birth dates, I have seen one case of registering the child's birth under a given name different than that used for the baptism. These events (baptism and birth registration) occurred within days of each other. There was another example where two registrations were made for the same person, about a month apart, with reported birth dates about two weeks apart and both later than the baptism date.

There must have been time limits requiring the timely registration of births. However, several cases show the baptism, birth and registration all occurring within 30 days of each other so the incorrect birth date was not motivated by an effort to comply with a time constraint. The overlap with church records, at least the portion that I have been able to access via online sources, only covers about 15 years. For birth records found within this overlap period it is always possible to defer to the baptism record as a proxy for the birthdate but the concern is whether the behavior persisted after this 15 year overlap period. As the civil registration process became part of the status quo, hopefully people became more truthful as they got accustomed to the routine.

Examples of these phenomena should be found in these papers in Sections 1 and 4 (see document description in the Process section of this paper). Many of the families in these sections contain both birth records and baptism records. The names in the baptism records that exhibit these phenomena are underlined along with the corresponding name in the birth records. The date of the birth record is highlighted in yellow when there are matching records (same person) in the birth records and baptism records. Some of the baptism records came from a previous project and are summarized by just names and dates while for some families the baptism records were newly transcribed from the National Library of Ireland site and appear in more detail. (<https://registers.nli.ie/>)

## **Pre-Birth Baptism Records**

In summary there were 39 families that demonstrated 81 examples of this Pre-Birth Baptism phenomenon.

### **McGrath - Thurles**

William McGrath & Margaret Byrne - Bouladuff, Inch - 4  
Maurice McGrath & Mary Dwyer - Mealiffe, Moyaliff - 1  
Philip McGrath & Honoria Stapleton - Drumminphilip, Moyaliff - 2  
Michael McGrath & Mary Fanning - Pallashill, Inch - 4  
Matthew McGrath & Margaret Costello - Pallashill, Inch - 5

Dennis McGrath & Bridget Ryan - Thurles - 2  
John McGrath & Anto Lowry - Killinane, Thurles - 1  
Michael McGrath & Bridget Corbitt - Dooree, Moyaliff - 1  
Daniel McGrath & Margaret Long - Coolkill, Moyaliff - 1  
John McGrath & Catherine Dempsey - Cormackstown, Holycross - 5  
Thomas McGrath & Mary Purcell - Thurles - 1  
John Hayes & Honora McGrath - Cormackstown, Holycross - 1  
Charles McGrath & Margaret Murphy - Clehile, Inch - 2  
James Dwyer & Joanna McGrath - Drombane, Moyaliff - 2  
Thomas Ryan & Winifred McGrath - Coolnamoney, Moyaliff - 1

### **McGrath - Cashel**

John McGrath & Winifred Connell - Turraheen, Clogher - 1  
Patrick McGrath & Catherine Ryan - Clonoulty, Clonoulty - 4  
John McGrath & Johanna Hayes - Upper Turraheen, Clogher - 2<sup>nd</sup> birth registration & 1 example of different baptism and birth record names.  
John McGrath & Catherine Duggan - Turraheen, Clogher - 2 & 1 example of different baptism and birth record names.  
Michael Quirk & Bridget McGrath - Clonoulty - 1  
William Ryan & Johanna McGrath - Clonoulty - 4  
John Ryan & Judith McGrath - Clonoulty - 1  
Daniel Ryan & Margaret McGrath - Turraheen - 1  
Cornelius Shanahan & Sarah McGrath - Brockagh - 3

### **Long - Thurles**

Michael Long & Anne Cahill - Ballypatrick, Inch - 1  
Patrick Long & Catherine Long - Fertiana, Fertiana - 3  
Thomas Long & Bridget Ryan - Tubrid, Holycross - 1  
James Long & Johanna Fogarty - Killeenyarda, Holycross - 3  
Richard Long & Ellen Ryan - Glenreigh, Holycross - 3  
Patrick Long & Margaret Doyle - Knockalough, Templebeg - 2  
John Coonan & Johanna Long - Curraghduff, Upperchurch - 4  
Michael Maher & Mary Long - Athnid, Thurles - 2  
Jeremiah Lowry & Margaret Long - Dovea, Inch - 1  
Patrick Ryan & Bridget Long - Cormackstown, Holycross - 3  
Patrick Tuohy & Bridget Long - Grange, Holycross - 1  
Daniel McGrath & Margaret Long - Coolkill, Moyaliff - 1

### **Long - Cashel**

Pat Long & Mary Ryan - Clogher, Clogher - 2  
Michael Long & Bridget Fogarty - Rathkennan, Rathkennan - 3  
Patrick Long & Julia Boyle - Rathkennan, Rathkennan - 1

## Church Records

The church records for the McGrath and Long families had already been compiled as part of an earlier project involving Irish Families in Ireland for the RC parishes of Ballycahill and Holycross, Clonoulty, Drom and Inch, Thurles, and Upperchurch and Drombane.

<http://mcgrathsearch.com/FamiliesInIreland/FamiliesInIreland.htm>

The McGrath family church baptism records:

<http://mcgrathsearch.com/FamiliesInIreland/McGrath/McGrathFamilies.htm>

The Long family church baptism records

<http://mcgrathsearch.com/FamiliesInIreland/Long/LongFamilies.htm>

The years of church records availability on the NLI site - <https://registers.nli.ie>

<b>RC Parish</b>	<b>Superintendent Reg Dist</b>	<b>Years for Baptism Records at NLI</b>	<b>Overlap Years</b>
Thurles	Thurles	1795 - 1870	1864 - 1870 (6)
Ballycahill & Holycross Holycross Civil Par.	Thurles & Cashel	1835 - 1878	1864 - 1878 (14)
Upperchurch & Drombane Upperchurch Civil Par. Moyaliff Civil Par.	Thurles Thurles & Cashel	1829 - 1876	1864 - 1876 (12)
Borrisoleigh	Thurles	1814 - 1881	1864 - 1881 (17)
Drom & Inch	Thurles	1827 - 1881	1864 - 1881 (17)
Clonoulty	Cashel	1804 - 1881	1864 - 1881 (17)

## Superintendent Registrar Districts

These districts originally had the same boundaries as the old Poor Law Unions, centered on market towns.

**Co. Kilkenny:** Callan, Carrick-on-Suir, Castlecomer, Kilkenny, New Ross, Thomastown, Urlingford, Waterford.

**Co. Offaly (King's):** Edenderry, Mountmellick, Parsonstown (Birr), Roscrea, Tullamore.

**Co. Tipperary:** Borrisokane, Callan, Carrick-on-Suir, Cashel, Clogheen, Clonmel, Nenagh, Parsonstown, Roscrea, Thurles, Tipperary, Urlingford.

**Co. Laois (Queen's):** Abbeyleix, Athy, Carlow, Donnaghmore (dissolved after 1887 and split between Roscrea and Urlingford), Mountmellick, Roscrea, Urlingford.

Registration District	County	Dispensary Districts
<a href="#">Borrisokane</a>	Tipperary	CloghJordan, Borrisokane, Terryglass
<a href="#">Callan</a>	Kilkenny, Tipperary	Callan, Kilmaganny, Ballingarry, Mullinahone
<a href="#">Carrick on Suir</a>	Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford	Carrick on Suir, Garrangibbon, Pilltown, Portlaw, Rathgormuck Carrick on Suir, Garrangibbon, Portlaw, Rathgormuck
<a href="#">Cashel</a>	Tipperary	Cashel, Fethard, Killenaule, Kilpatrick, Tullamain/Tullamaine
<a href="#">Clogheen</a>	Tipperary, Waterford	Ardfinnan, Caher, Clogheen
<a href="#">Clonmel</a>	Tipperary, Waterford	Clonmel, Kilsheelan, Kiltinan, Marlfield, Ballymacarbry, Saint Mary's
<a href="#">Nenagh</a>	Tipperary	Nenagh, Newport, Portroe, Silvermines, Toomyvara/Toomavara
<a href="#">Parsonstown</a> [Birr]	King's Co., Tipperary	Banagher, Ferbane, Frankford, Killyon, Kinnitty, Parsonstown, Riverstown
<a href="#">Roscrea</a>	Tipperary, King's Co., Limerick, Queen's Co.	Borris-In-Ossory, Roscrea No. 1, Roscrea No. 2, Shinrone No. 1 & 2, Bourney Bourney, Roscrea (x2), Shinrone (x2)
<a href="#">Thurles</a>	Tipperary	Borrisoleigh, Holycross, Littleton, Moyne, Templemore, Thurles
<a href="#">Tipperary</a>	Tipperary, Limerick	Bansha, Cappagh, Emly, Golden, Grean, Tipperary
<a href="#">Urlingford</a>	Kilkenny, Tipperary	Balleen, Johnstown, Urlingford, Kilcooly

<https://www.swilson.info/regdistmap.php>

## The Process

This is the description of a process found to work efficiently for the collection of McGrath and Long birth and marriage records from the civil registrations on the Irish Genealogy web site ([www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)). The birth records run from 1864 to about 1920. From 1864 to 1899 the birth records are only indexed under the father's surname. After 1900 the birth records are indexed under both the father's surname and the mother's maiden name. From 1870 on, the marriage records are indexed under both the parents' surnames. The lack of a birth index under the mother's maiden name (1864-1899) creates a significant amount of extra work to extract the children's birth records of the female McGraths from the database. The civil marriage records are important because, unlike the church marriage records, they contain the fathers' names of the persons being married. This information is useful for making connections among the various families. A few death records were transcribed based on the person's old age or somewhat less common given names. Male and Female in the table refer to the parents. No attempt has been made to make the extraction of the death records anywhere near as complete as the birth and marriage records. The process described below assumes that McGrath is the target surname.

<b>Section No.</b>	<b>Document Structure</b>
1	<b>McGrath Families (Males)</b> Marriage + 1 or 2 Birth records
2	<b>McGrath (Male)</b> Single Birth records
3	<b>McGrath (Females)</b> Single Birth records
4	<b>McGrath Families (Female)</b> Marriage + 1 or 2 Birth records
5	<b>McGrath Marriage Records.</b>
6	<b>McGrath Deaths</b>

**Step 1** - Pull out every McGrath birth record in the period (1864 - 1920). These records initially go into Section 2. After 1900, when the birth index contains the mother's maiden name, these McGrath records are sorted accordingly into Sections 2 and 3. As soon as a 2<sup>nd</sup> birth record is found for a given family that family's birth records are moved to Section 1 (Male, i.e. Father) or Section 4 (Female, i.e. Mother). When additional records are moved to Sections 1 and 4 they are appended at the bottom of that section, after the previously appended records, maintaining the family structures. This creates a quasi-chronological order to the family records. Since the record's movement to Section 1 or 4 is determined by the appearance of a 2<sup>nd</sup> birth record it isn't possible for the families to be in a strictly chronological order. As new McGrath birth records are found they are either placed in Section 1 or 4 if the family is found there, or else placed in Section 2 or 3, the holding pens for the single birth records.

**Step 2** - At this point the first pass through the birth records has been completed and there are families in Sections 1 and 4 and single birth records in Sections 2 and 3. During this step a search is made for marriage records, mainly for the families appearing in Sections 1 and 4, but also Sections 2 and 3. The other way out of the holding pens is to find a matching marriage record for any of the single birth records. The usual rule to get out of the holding pens is two birth records but one birth record plus a marriage record will also work.

**Step 3** - Section 1 should now be complete, however Section 4 (female McGraths) is missing the birth records between 1864 through 1899. The first step in solving this problem is a search for McGrath marriage records from 1870 to 1920. These will be placed in Section 5. The marriage records already found, that have been previously placed in Sections 1 and 4, can be omitted in this search of the marriage records. Any McGrath marriage records not already in Section 1 will have no birth records associated with them or they would have already been found in Step 1. These McGrath marriage records will be included in Section 5 but will not need to later be searched for birth records, as explained above. This additional search will only be needed for the female McGraths found in this marriage record search.

**Step 4** - With the list of marriage records completed in Section 5 it is necessary to search the birth records once more. The nominal search range is 1864 - 1900 but the process is slightly different this time as the search is on the female McGrath's husband's surname. Given that a marriage record has already been found, if a single birth record is found during this search then the female McGrath family (marriage record plus birth record) is placed in Section 4. The placement of the family is based on the approximate order by the year of marriage. This approach will help to maintain the approximate chronological order already established. Most of the surnames searched in this step will not have very many birth records. However, there are exceptions such as Ryan and Bourke which were not searched for McGrath related birth records. The extensive search time required for these surnames wasn't worth the effort since the results weren't needed for the primary purpose of this whole exercise. The marriage records themselves provide the names of the married couple's fathers and that is usually enough to connect the couple with their families. The double underscore appended to the beginning of the word "Marriage," in Section 5, indicates those families for which birth records were not searched in the 1864-1899 time period. Only the subinterval of that time period from the marriage date to 1899 would actually need to be searched.

The search for birth records is only extended for 10-15 years past the date of the marriage, under the assumption that if a couple had no children in the first 10-15 years after their marriage then they probably never had any children. Below each marriage record in Section 5, for which a birth record search was conducted, a notation is made that gives the final year searched.



**Step 5** - The earliest female McGrath families (Section 3, starting at 1900) need to be searched for birth records between the marriage date (or estimated date) and the first birth record found for that family up to this point in the process.

**Step 6** - Use the parish baptism records for the female McGrath and Long individuals, the ones that reach into the overlap region, to pull out more female McGrath and Long birth records.

**Logistics** - The creation of a document of this type is not possible, from a practical sense, without a familiarity with the use of the Navigation Panel which requires the use of the Heading styles in the document. This then allows for the creation of a much needed table of contents that will permit the reader to efficiently navigate the final document.