

Genealogy Basics – Irish Records, Griffith’s Valuation on Ask About Ireland; Occupier Name Records, Original Page and Maps

By Joe Petrie

BACKGROUND:

Two genealogy volunteers at the Friends of Irish Research in Brockton MA educated me about Irish research. I had been researching my wife’s Irish roots in Cork, Galway and Waterford Counties long before I met them at the Library of the Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICCNE) in Canton MA. Until I was tutored by them on Friday evenings, I was content with validating information provided by my wife’s cousins. I validated using Family History Library, FamilySearch and Ancestry Library. My two tutors provided insights and introduced me to new resources, to new approaches, and especially to Irish history. I learned about the potato famine (1845 – 1850), famine cemeteries, work houses, estates, tenant farming etc. I learned why families and individuals left Ireland and emigrated to Canada, USA and elsewhere. I learned why the population decreased from about 8.5 Million in 1840 to about 6.5 Million in 1850. As always, I thank my tutors Bernie Couming and Judy Barrett for their friendship, for sharing, for good counsel, for persistence, for patience and for perseverance.

I found Ask About Ireland (askaboutireland.ie) one Friday evening at the ICCNE Library. I was waiting for a client. I decided to research Richard Griffith’s Valuation. Just about everything I read pointed to Ask About Ireland as a valuable resource. Ask About Ireland is a web site that was developed by Ireland’s Libraries. It is an educational project.

INTRODUCTION:

I’ll cover the default Griffith’s Valuation Occupier report, specifically records for a few families that may be on my wife’s direct line. My wife’s McGrath grandmother was from the Ballyphilip East townland of Kilcockan, Waterford County. Also, I’ll cover the content of the original Griffith’s Valuation page, I’ll display a fragment of the original page. In addition, I’ll cover the seven columns on Griffith’s Valuation original page. Finally, I’ll cover one of the maps that were added later by Ask About Ireland.

The following is the default Occupier Name Search Criteria Screen.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Ask about Ireland' website. The browser's address bar shows 'www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/'. The website has a green header with the 'Ask about Ireland' logo and a search bar. Below the header are navigation links for 'About Us', 'Links', 'Contact Us', and 'Accessibility'. The main content area features a blue banner with the title 'Griffith's Valuation' and a descriptive paragraph: 'The Primary Valuation was the first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland. It was overseen by Richard Griffith and published between 1847 and 1864. It is one of the most important surviving 19th century genealogical sources.' Below the banner are several navigation tabs: 'Griffith's Names', 'Griffith's Places', 'Name Books', 'Thoms', 'Search Tips', 'Upload', 'About GV Maps', and 'Read More'. A search form is present with the instruction 'Use this form to search for a particular family name in Griffith's Valuation'. The form has two sections: 'Step 1 - Mandatory' and 'Step 2 - Optional'. The 'Step 2 - Optional' section includes the text 'Then choose a county, and (optionally) a Barony, Poor Law Union, and/or a Parish'. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 7:08 PM on 3/10/2017.

Two lines above the Step 1 and Step 2 data entry items line are eight tabs (links to pages in the software); The eight are: Griffith’s Names (the default to Occupiers of the lots); Griffith’s Places; Name Books (under development); Thoms (Thoms is short for Thom’s Directory); Search Tips; Upload; About GV Maps (a help document) and Read More (more Help). I have found the site’s tabs helpful, especially the About GV Maps Tab.

About the Griffith's Valuation Maps: Maps have been a challenge. Maps have been a failing. Bob Murphy of ICCNE and Friends of Irish Research has tried to teach me how to use the Ordinance Survey Maps. I can use the Ask About Ireland Griffiths Valuation Maps. They are my default.

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION FOR BALLYPHILIP EAST, KILCOCKAN, WATERFORD:

I'll focus on my wife's maternal grandmother's family. Ellen McGrath is enumerated in the Census of Ireland 1901 as follows:

| Surname | Forename | Townland/Street | DED | County | Age |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| McGrath | Ellen | Ballyphilip East | Kilcockin | Waterford | 12 |

Oral history was that Ellen's parents were William McGrath and Margaret (Veale) McGrath. The Census of 1901 validated all but the Veale. The oldest son was John Joseph McGrath who settled in Boston, Massachusetts in 1902. His marriage record validated that his mother's maiden name was Veale Their oldest daughter was Ellen McGrath who married Robert O'Brien from Cork in 1910. Their eldest daughter was Helena (O'Brien) Connolly who married in Boston in 1938. My wife Ellen was Helena's youngest child. My wife was named for her grandmother Ellen (McGrath) O'Brien. Her brother was named for Robert O'Brien his grandfather.

My wife's grandmother Ellen (McGrath) O'Brien is buried with her parents, William McGrath and Margaret (Veale) McGrath in Knockanore, Waterford. Some of her siblings are buried with them. In the 19th Century, the burial site was in Kilcockan which was consolidated (united) into Knockanore in the 20th Century.

Oral history was that Margaret Veale was the daughter of John Veale and Ellen (Clancy) Veale. Ellen's uncle Tom O'Brien provided a Family Group Sheet for Margaret's parents and siblings. I have not validated the records.

Oral History was that William McGrath was the son of John McGrath and Anastasia Geary. Oral history was that John McGrath's grandmother was a Hennessy. I have not validated any of these items yet.

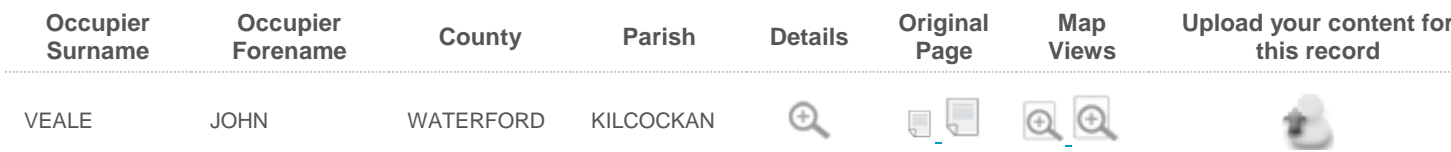
In Griffith's Valuation Occupier Name software, I searched for McGrath and Veale in Ballyphilip East, Kilcockan for a snapshot of the tenants' surnames. (Remember that Griffith's Valuation was taken nearly 50 years earlier in 1853.) Please note that the Kilcockin and Kilcockan are the same place. (Essentially Irish Names and Places often had different spellings.)

The following is the result for the McGrath search.

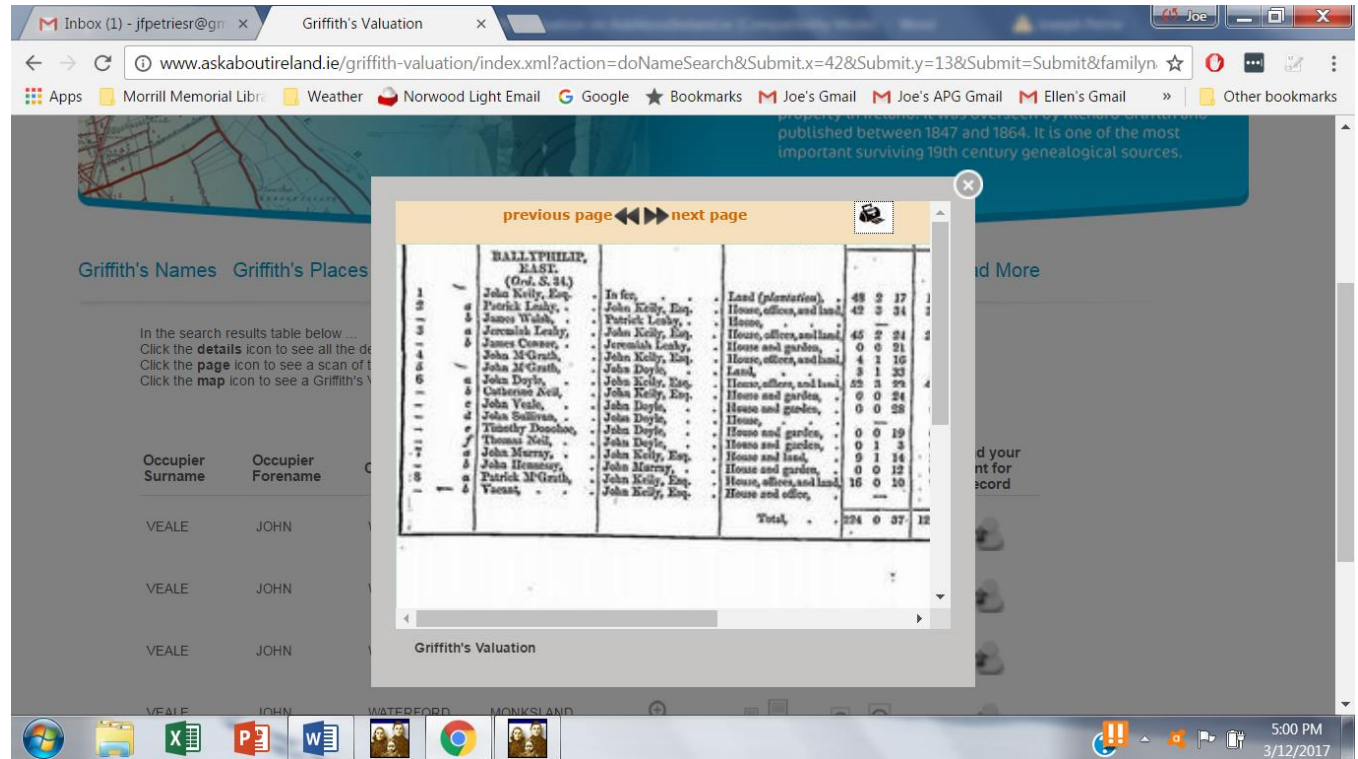
| Occupier Surname | Occupier Forename | County | Parish | Details | Original Page | Map Views | Upload your content for this record |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| MCGRATH | JOHN | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |
| MCGRATH | JOHN | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |
| MCGRATH | PATRICK | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |
| MCGRATH | PATRICK | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |
| MCGRATH | ANASTASIA | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |

Please note that all the Given Names were given to William and Margaret (Veale)'s children. The Irish Naming pattern is important. Their eldest son was John Joseph who moved to Massachusetts and who married Bridget Cuddihy. They named a daughter Anastasia. (Everyone called her Ann.). John Joseph had a brother Patrick.

The following is the result of the Veale search;



In askaboutireland.ie for Ballyphilip East for John Veale, I selected the first Original Page icon. I zoomed in to show the list of owners and tenants. The following is the result of the zoom. Please note that only a fraction of the Griffith's Valuation original page is displayed in the following.



The first column identifies the lots. John Veale's lot number is 6c. John McGrath's lots are 4 and 5. Patrick McGrath's lot is 8a. John Hennessey's lot is 7b.

Why include John Hennessey? I believe that a John McGrath and Anastasia (Hennessey) McGrath are on my wife's direct line. I believe that they were William McGrath's ancestors. So far there is no proof. No Oral proof!

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION ORIGINAL (RECORD) SHEET

The Original Sheet is often referred to as the record sheet. I like the Rootsweb explanation that follows. The URL is <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~irlker/griffexp.html>. There are seven columns. Column B identifies the Occupier and the Lessor (usually the tenant.)

The Griffiths Record Sheet lists the Parish and Townland above the Columns A - G:

| (A) | (B) | | (C) | (D) | (E) | (F) | (G) |
|---------|----------|--------|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------|---|
| Lot No. | Occupier | Lessor | Description of Tenement | Area | Rateable Annual Valuation | | Total Annual Valuation of Rateable Property |
| | | | | | Land | Building | |
| 1A | name | name | type of property | acres-roods-perches | pounds-shillings-pence | | |

- Lot Number (A) - Number and Letters of Reference to the Griffith's Valuation Map

- **(B) – Occupier and Lessor**

The only genealogical information in the data is found when a surname was common, and the father's name is cited in parentheses. So, the entry *John Aherne (Maurice)*, John is the son of Maurice, and in *John Aherne (Cornelius)*, John is the son of Cornelius Aherne. Tracing land ownership records through the use of the cancelled [Valuation Maps](#) is the most valuable genealogical purpose served by Griffiths.

Immediate Lessors. Often the lessor (almost always a male) is a lessee in his own right. Occasionally, the lessor may be a major landowner. In this case, one might consult the IGI or the IGSI Estate Records information to see if there are *Estate Records* available to research information on that Townland. Generally, this type of record is available only in Ireland.

- **(C) - Description of Tenement - is a property description**

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Land | Land (plantation) |
| House (Ho. | House, office & land (HOL) |
| Garden (Gar.) | House, office & garden |
| Pound | House & garden (detached) |
| School-house | House & two gardens |
| R.C. chapel & yard | Office (off.) & land (Office means out-building or maybe privy) |
| Church | Glebe (property dedicated for the support of the Church of Ireland local parish) |
| Corn-mill | Constab. barrack & gar. (Royal Irish Constabulary barracks and garden) |
| Forge | Waste under houses, yards, streets & small gardens |
| Tolls of Bridge | Ruins |
| Moss House | Half river |
| Water and waste | Gravel Pit (waste) |
| Waste | |
| Water | |

- **(D) - Area - in acres - roods - perches**

Webster Dictionary says

Acre: Originally, the amount plowed by a yoke of oxen in a day, and hence very variable. Legally, the area of a piece 40 poles long by 4 broad; that is 160 square rods (43,560 square feet).

This the English and U.S. acre. Griffiths uses this dimension. The *Irish acre* is 1.62 times the size, or 70,567.2 square feet. This dimension might be used by locals in conversation and descriptions of their property.

Rood: one-fourth of an acre; or 40 square rods; 10,890 square feet

Perch: one rod; 5.5 yards; 16.5 feet. One square perch equals 1 square rod, or 272.25 square feet

- **(E) - Rateable Annual Valuation of Land - cited in Pounds - Shillings - Pence**

12 pence to the shilling

tuppence

thruppence

half crown

20 shillings to the pound

21 shillings to the "guinea"

- **(F) - Rateable Annual Valuation of Buildings in Pounds - Shillings - Pence**

- **(G) - Total Annual Valuation of Ratable Property in Pounds - Shillings - Pence**

GRIFFITH'S VALUATION MAP VIEWS:

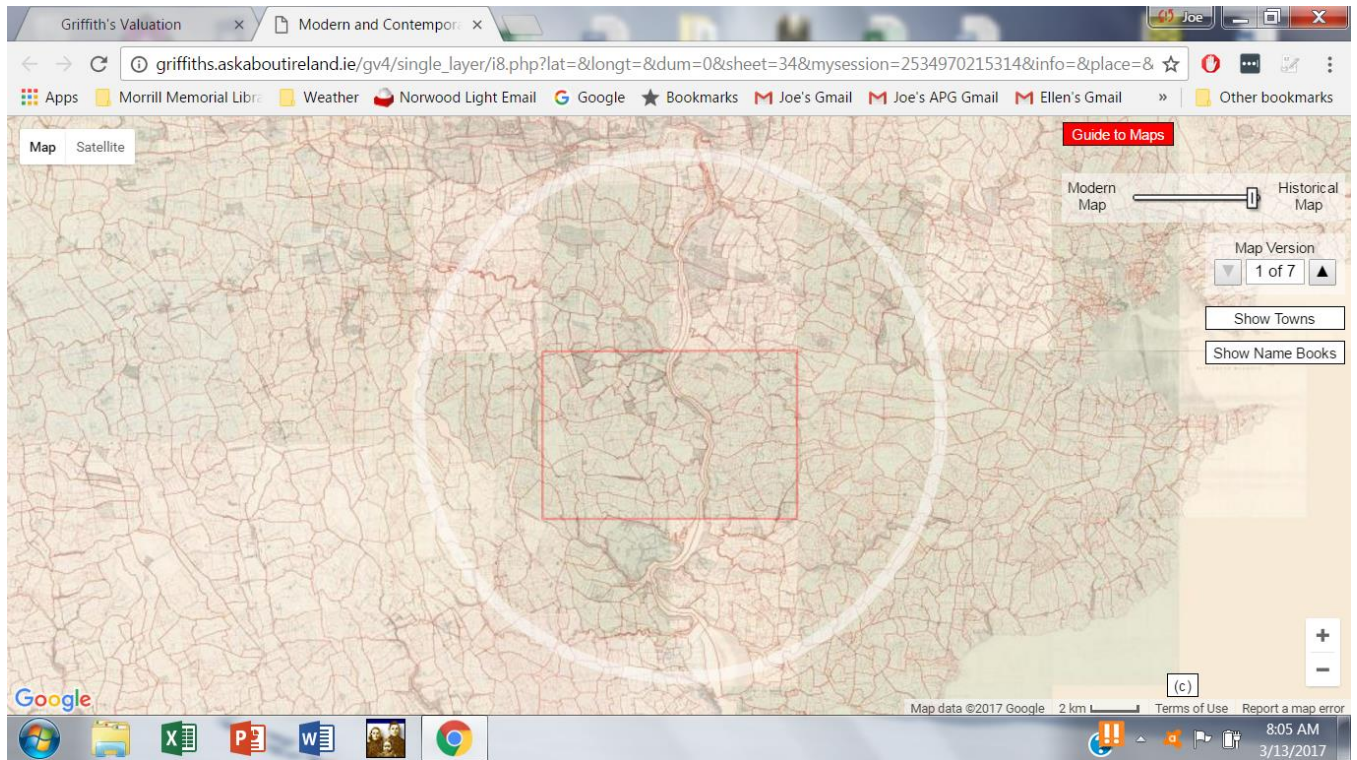
Once again, the following was the result of the Veale search:

| Occupier Surname | Occupier Forename | County | Parish | Details | Original Page | Map Views | Upload your content for this record |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| VEALE | JOHN | WATERFORD | KILCOCKAN | | | | |

On the far right, there are two map views. They were added later – probably by the libraries.

I prefer to use the larger icon because it produces the map as a new tab on my browser.

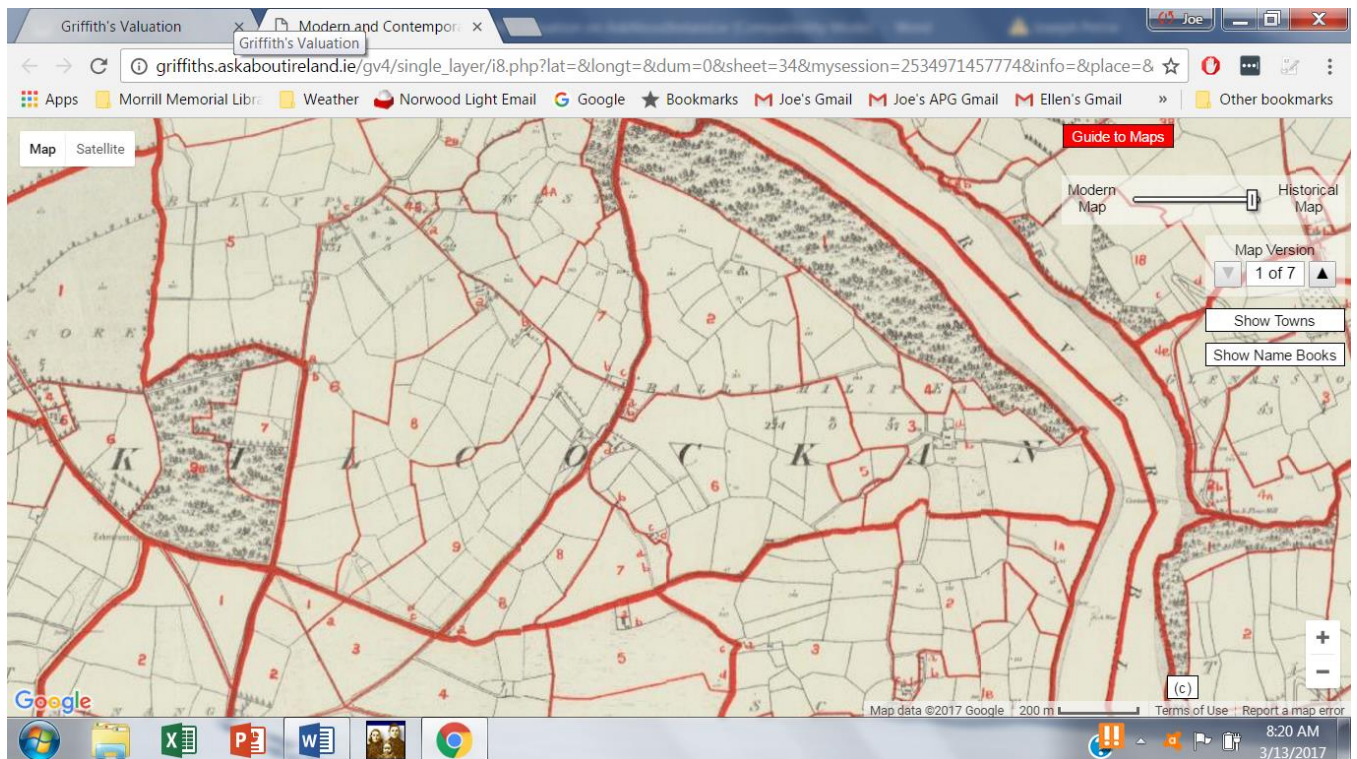
The following is a screen print of the result for John Veale's large Map View.



I used the Plus Sign (on the bottom right) a few times to Zoom in.

The following is a map of Ballyphilip, Kilcockan: It is the triangular shaped piece along the river with 8 lots. Most of the woods is in the triangle. Look closely and you'll see BALLYPHILIP EAST above the letters CKAN.

There were about a dozen tenants. Lots 6 – 8 are partitioned: Remember that John McGrath was the tenant in lots 4 and 5. John Veale had lot 6c. Patrick McGrath had lot 8a. John Hennessy had lot 7b.



SUMMARY:

When I give individual consultations at the Morrill Library in Norwood and at the ICCNE in Canton, I am often asked: where in Ireland did my ancestor(s) come from? Ask About Ireland adds another tool to my Irish Toolkit.

I deliberately did not cover all of Ask About Ireland. For example, I skipped Thom's Directory. It is a subject that requires an article by itself. Please note that FindMyPast has a digitized database covering 1844 to 1900. Ancestry has the digitized 1904 Directory.

Also, I deliberately did not cover Revision Books, Cancelled Books and Current Land Books. They are not in Ask About Ireland. One review indicated that Revision Books, Cancelled Books and Current Land Books are resources for advanced study of Griffith's Valuation.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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