

Researching your police ancestors

Over 100,000 men served in either the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) or the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) from 1816-1925. Most of their records are in the UK, but some are in Ireland or available via the subscription websites, www.ancestry.co.uk and www.findmypast.ie. Records on individual police officers include date of joining force; height and religion; age at joining; previous trade; marital status and native county of wife (but usually not her name); the location in which he was stationed; details of any promotion; length of service; date of retirement and/or death.

Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP)

A police force for Dublin City and adjoining townships was set up in 1786; it was independent from the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) that policed the rest of the country. Its records are held in National Archives UK. The original numerical service register of the 12,566 members of the DMP, is housed at the Garda Museum and Archives, The Record Tower, Dublin Castle. There is an incomplete alphabetical index to it. The records include the county of origin, height, previous occupation, age at entry, religion, date of marriage, the native county of wife, and the postings and ranks held during their career with the DMP. A microfilm copy of the register and index is in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) (Reference No. MFA 6/3). The museum can be visited by appointment. The DMP general register entries up to 1925 have been digitised and made available online at <https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:53467>

Royal Irish Constabulary

The first Irish police force was the Irish Peace and Preservation Force, set up in 1814. In 1836, the Irish Constabulary was formed, later renamed the Royal Irish Constabulary in 1867 to honour its loyalty against the Fenians, one of several groups campaigning for Irish freedom. The records of all 90,000 members of the RIC are in the National Archives UK (Ref: Home Office 184.43). A microfilm copy is available in NAI, Dublin (Ref: MFA 24/1-16). The information on individual police officers includes age and date of entry, height, religion, native county, trade, marital status, county of wife, postings, promotions and punishments and dates of same. It also specifies when discharged, dismissed, resigned, died, or pensioned.

The Royal Irish Constabulary Museum established at Police Headquarters in Belfast in 1983, has microfilm copies of the RIC Registers of Service. It has an archive of photographic material and documents dating back to the early nineteenth century, a reference library and research facility. Individuals and groups can visit by arrangement.

Herlihy, Jim. *The Dublin Metropolitan Police. A complete alphabetical list of officers and men, 1836-1925.* Four Courts Press. Dublin, 2001.

A complete list of the 12,566 members of the DMP from its foundation to dissolution shows a clear prominence of Kildare and Wicklow as the major counties of origin for the recruits. Includes the members' registration numbers, 1836-1925, which can identify the period during which members joined.

Herlihy, Jim. *The Dublin Metropolitan Police. A short history and genealogical guide.* Four Courts Press. Dublin, 2001.

A companion book to the above, it lists medals and decorations and gives a short biographical sketch on awardees. Includes select lists of DMP men killed in the line of duty who transferred from the London Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary to the DMP, as well as those who joined the new Police force of the Irish Free State, the Civic Guard, and subsequently the Garda Síochána, on its amalgamation with the DMP in 1925.

Herlihy, Jim. *The Royal Irish Constabulary. A complete alphabetical list of officers and men, 1816-1922.* Four Courts Press. Dublin, 1999.

A complete list of the 83,521 men - name and registered number - from 1816 to 1922; 1,507 names of officers from 1817 to 1921. List of records in: PRO, Kew; Family History Library of the Church of the Latter Day Saints; NAI, Dublin; Garda Museum and Archives, Dublin Castle; PRO, Northern Ireland.

Herlihy, Jim. *The Royal Irish Constabulary officers. A biographical dictionary and genealogical guide, 1816-1922.* Four Courts Press. Dublin, 2005.

A list of 1,700 officers of the RIC giving a brief history of their careers, including birth, marriage and death dates; native county, and service (if any) in the British army, yeomanry and militia; dates of appointment and retirement, resignation, discharge or dismissal. It also includes a list of officers who later served as lawmen elsewhere. Eighteen entries relate to Co. Kildare.

Herlihy, Jim. *The Black and Tans, 1920-1921. A complete alphabetical list, short history and genealogical guide.* Four Courts Press. Dublin, 2021.

From 6 January 1920 recruiting to the Royal Irish Constabulary was extended outside of Ireland to candidates with military experience. This new force was called the RIC Special Reserve. From 3 September 1920 a second and separate group of 'temporary constables' were recruited and attached to the motorised division of the RIC. A third group, known as the Veterans and Drivers Division, were also recruited.

Lists alphabetically every individual member of these three distinct groups, including RIC registered number, birth year, native country and county, religion, the recruiting office where they enlisted, whether they had served as a soldier or sailor, previous occupation and whether they resigned (with the given excuses), were discharged or dismissed, pensioned, or disbanded, or killed or died in the service. There are twenty-five entries with Kildare connections.