

Irish Collections

The Newberry holds several thousand items relating to Irish and Irish-American history and literature. There is an abundance of material on all key events, movements and individuals associated with Irish history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, though the library's particular strength is in the nineteenth century. Researchers with an interest in military and political history are particularly well catered for, as are those concerned with the Irish literary tradition. There is also a strong collection relating to Irish-America, particularly focused on the Chicago area, and the library has numerous resources which are invaluable to all those with an interest in genealogy.

A bibliography of the Newberry's Irish collections is available as a PDF document. This bibliography is not exhaustive, but does provide an overview of the Newberry's holdings in this subject area. Check our **online catalog** for items added to the collection after this bibliography was compiled. To explore the online catalog, select the Search by Subject option and type or paste in:

Ireland – Civilization

Irish – [locality]

Irish Americans

Irish–United States

For genealogy research, see our **Irish Genealogy** guide.

Scholars interested in Irish poetry, literature and drama will find a wealth of primary and secondary material at the Newberry. There are a substantial number of books by and about individuals including Dion Boucicault (1820-1890), author of *The Shaughraun* and *The Colleen Bawn*; Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1854-1900), best known for his plays *The Rivals* and *School for Scandal*, and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), poet, playwright and wit. The writers associated with the Celtic Revival of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries are also well represented with publications by the poet and playwright W.B. Yeats (1865-1939); J.M. Synge (1871-1909), author of *The Playboy of the Western World* and *Riders to the Sea*; George Russell (AE) (1867-1935), editor, poet and artist; Seán O'Casey, (1880-1964) author of *The Shadow of a Gunman*, *Juno and the Paycock*, and *The Plough and Stars*; and Lady Gregory (1852-1932), best known for her re-workings of Irish folklore and mythological tales, and founder, with Yeats, Synge, AE and Edward Martyn, of the Abbey Theatre. The library has a number of first and rare editions alongside some copies of works signed by the author. These included many first editions, particularly American editions, of the works of James Joyce (1882-1941) and Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) and also a copy of *Company* autographed by Beckett.

In the seventeenth-century collection there are many texts that focus on the 1641 Rebellion, Oliver Cromwell's (1599-1658) campaign in Ireland in the 1640s and Thomas Wentworth (1593-1641), 1st Earl of Strafford and Lord Deputy of Ireland in the 1630s. There are a number of books which are concerned with the Jacobite/Williamite war of 1689-91. The most significant of these are a series of accounts and recollections published in the 1690s, including *An Exact Account of the Total Defeat of the Irish Army at Antrim [Aughrim] in...1691* and a collection of seventeenth-century accounts, published

in the mid-nineteenth century, which include, among other things, descriptions of the Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry.

The eighteenth-century collection covers a range of topics including the Penal Laws, Wood's half-pence controversy, the Volunteers and Free Trade. There are also significant holdings by and about Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), politician, novelist and Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral. The publications relating to Swift include copies of *Gulliver's Travels*; *Directions to Servants*; and *A Tale of a Tub*. There are a number of texts relating to the 1798 and 1803 Rebellions, including books by the Irish Republicans Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798), Thomas Addis Emmet (1764-1827) and Robert Emmet (1778-1803). There are copies of many Acts passed by the Irish Parliament or by the British Parliament about Ireland which date from the sixteenth century through to the end of the eighteenth century. There is also material concerned with the Act of Union of 1800 which united the parliaments of Britain and Ireland. This includes a number of speeches and pamphlets including Lord Minto's speech on the Act in 1799, an address to the people of Ireland against Union by 'A friend to Ireland' and the periodical *The Anti-Union* which was published in Dublin in 1796-7.

The nineteenth-century collection is primarily concerned with land rights, agrarian outrages, political and religious issues and contains several pamphlets by politician and founder of the Catholic Association and the Repeal Association, Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847). There is a considerable secondary collection relating to the Great Famine of the 1840s. In addition to this, those interested in conducting research on their ancestors who left Ireland during, and after, the Famine will find many resources to assist their search in the library. The Home Rule campaign of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century is well represented, as are many of the events, organisations and individuals related to it including the Land War of 1879-1881 and the Land League. In the library's collection of manuscripts there are a small number of letters from leading Irish nationalists including the leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891), John Dillon (1851-1927) and John Finerty, a leading Irish nationalist in Chicago. These letters are primarily to or about the Mayor of Chicago, Carter Harrison.

There is a strong collection of nineteenth-century journals and newspapers. Not all are complete runs, but the library has a significant number of issues of many, including the *Dublin Penny Journal*, the *Irish Penny Journal*, the *Illustrated Dublin Journal*, *Duffy's Hibernian Magazine* and *Irish Fireside*. The library holds a complete run of *Fáinne an Lae*, an influential bi-lingual newspaper published between 1898 and 1900 as part of the Gaelic Revival. While a substantial portion of the periodical collection relates to nationalist and Catholic material, there are also a number of publications that represent unionist and Protestant perspectives, including the *Williamite Magazine or Protestant's Advocate for Civil and Religious Liberty*, the *Watchman, or Protestant Guardian*, and the *Protestant Penny Magazine*, which were all published in Dublin during the 1820s and 1830s. The library also has some important twentieth-century periodicals including *The Dublin Magazine* of the 1940s and 1950s and the popular satirical illustrated magazine *Dublin Opinion* (1922-1968).

There are also holdings of many Irish and Irish-American newspapers and periodicals, including John Mitchel's *The Citizen*, James McMaster's (New York) *Freeman's Journal*, and the *Boston Pilot*, edited by John Boyle O'Reilly. An American perspective on Ireland and the Irish is also represented in the collection. The library holds a range of American, and particularly Chicago-based magazines,

newspapers and journals, including the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily News*, which frequently commented on the Irish in America and the Irish in Ireland. This is particularly obvious in publications such as *America*, a newspaper published in Chicago in the late 1880s which delighted in editorials and illustrations portraying the Irish as an untrustworthy, unlawful and violent race. Alongside the periodicals the library has many books which illuminate Irish Chicago. Some of the most noteworthy include those by and about the journalist and creator of 'Mr Dooley', Peter Finlay Dunne, and Charles Ffrench's *Biographical History of the American Irish in Chicago* (1897). In addition, the library holds the papers of a number of Irish-Americans who rose to prominence in Chicago; most notably the papers of journalist and founder of the *Chicago Daily News*, Melville E. Stone (1848-1929); the reporter and author of the Studs Lonigan trilogy and the Danny O'Neill novels, James T. Farrell (1904-1979) and those of the journalist and war correspondent Robert R. Casey (1890-1962).

Scholars who wish to conduct genealogical research are well served by a large secondary collection of monographs relating to Irish history, genealogical research, immigration both general and region specific. The library also has access to useful research tools such as *Griffith's Valuation* of 1846 and a number of almanacs, registers and magazines relating to Dublin dating from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, which includes a full run of Pettigrew and Oulton's *Dublin Almanac* (1834-1848).

The library has a strong collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Antiquarian works, in addition to a considerable number of histories of Ireland and guides to Ireland from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The histories include those by James Ware, Edmund Spenser and Edmund Campion. The manuscript collection contains a number of relevant holdings including papers relating to Christopher Colles (1738-1816); a civil engineer who did pioneering work with highway planning, the development of the telegraph, and inland navigation in New York State. In addition to several editions of Moore's *Irish Melodies* and a collection of books on Irish music by Chief Francis O'Neill, the library has a substantial number of musical scores relating to Ireland.

Within its Irish collection the Newberry Library houses over three hundred Irish language related texts which were published from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The library holds a number of Irish language bibles and has the first Irish translation of the New Testament that was given by Queen Elizabeth to a family in Ireland in 1602. Other religious material in Irish include homilies, parts of a seventeenth-century catechism by Bonaventura O'Hussey and a 1639 catechism which was the first book published in Roman type in the Irish language.

Call our reference desk at (312) 255-3506 with questions on our holdings, or [contact a librarian](#) with research questions.