The Mannion Emigrant Records Collection: Data, Digitisation and Democracy

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Why is such a project important?

- Promotion of family history and genealogical tourism
- Health-related genetics research
- Democratization of research
  - public accessibility: research records in query-based analytical databases
  - use in more student-focused learning environments
Background

• Dr. John Mannion, Professor of Geography (retired), Memorial University

• One of Canada’s leading historical geographers, and an expert on Newfoundland settlement history

• Collection contains detailed information on all known Irish connections with Newfoundland ranging from 1675 to 1850

• Migrants, merchants, ships and sea captains
Personal Connection?

Research Partnership, 2015-18

- Memorial University
  - Principal Investigator
  - Dr. Sean Cadigan
  - Professor of History/Associate Vice-President (Academic)

- Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency
  - Technical Lead
  - In-Kind Support
CCRI Atlantic, 2004-08

Canadian Century Research Infrastructure

- a CFI pan-Canadian university initiative:

- Local partners:
  - NL Statistics Agency
  - Provincial Archives, Rooms Corporation
  - Population Therapeutics Research Group (MUN)
Atlantic CCRI Outcomes

• National: linked, sample-based databases for 1911-51 Census of Canada (Atlantic Region)
• Provincial: complete oversample 1911-45 NL census, History Accounts
• Provincial: Population Therapeutics Research Group (PTRG)’s Heritability Analytics Infrastructure
A Dream: Retrospective Proxy Census Research Infrastructure (RPCRI)

- RPCRI database:
  - Digitized images of records for 19th-century history.
  - Microdata files for 19th-century NL founder populations.
- Integration of data into History Accounts.
- Construction of pre-1911 proxy censuses database for NL.
- Integration of data into the Heritability Database
Funding: $475K

• 2017-18 Phase III. Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme (total budget: $155,307.00)
• 2016-17 Phase II. Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme (total budget: $120,000.00)
• 2016 GNL, Depart. Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development (total budget: $80,000).
• 2015-16 Phase I. Irish Government Emigrant Support Programme (total budget: $120,000.00)
Project

**Phase 1**

2016 - Preservation (All)

- Scan
- Verify

**Phase 2**

2017 - Development (Migrants Only, Name and Location)

- Data entry
- Cleaning, coding and geo-locating
- Preliminary web tool
Phase 3

2018 – Development (Migrants Only, Additional Features)

• Additional features to locate and evaluate cards
  - Date
  - Relation
  - Source
  - Occupation or Title
  - Ethnicity
  - Religion
  - Gender
  - Event

• Enhanced web tool
Why Digitize?
1. Preservation
Risk: Fire
Risk Flood
2. Benefits
Just starting out on your Irish genealogy adventure? There are lots of useful resources that can help:

- Tracing your Irish Ancestors Conference (June, Sept, Oct) [12]
- Back To Our Past Show, Dublin (Oct) [12]
- Genealogy events at PRONI, Belfast [12]
- Genealogy events at the National Library of Ireland [12]

If you’re one of the incredible 70 million people in the world who claim Irish ancestry, the good news is that genealogy in Ireland is pretty straightforward. More and more resources are available online, and there’s plenty of advice and support out there from official organisations, genealogy experts and enthusiastic amateurs who are on a similar journey.
Health-related genetics research

PTRGL’s Heritability Analytics Infrastructure
3. Access: Democratization
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</table>

Note: At the request of Dr. Mannion, also included Literacy (3,000).
Irish Migration and Settlement in Newfoundland, 1750 to 1850

Digitizing the Records of Dr. John J. Mannion

The information presented in this tool may be of interest to people of Irish ancestry researching their own family history. It allows for search and retrieval of affiliation and place data, with specialized maps and features and access to digital images.

To get started with a basic search, try searching by a last name or occupation from the "Search Records" link above.


Data provided through an initiative of

- Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Government of Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
More student-focused learning environments
Background: “The Humanities Are in Crisis”

English, History, Philosophy, and Languages as Percent of All Degrees From American Universities

Source: IPEDS, HEGIS, and “Earned Degrees” surveys, Dept. of Education • Get the data • Embed

Total Enrolment by St. John's Campus and Unit, 2005-19

Source: University Fact Book (Tables 1, 2 & 5)
Interdisciplinary Studies and A Sense of Mission:

“While History, English, and the rest have faded, only one set of humanities fields without a foot in the sciences has clearly held its own: the much newer (and smaller) disciplines the statistical agency joins together as ethnic, gender, and cultural studies…. Relatedly, I’ve only found one large class of schools where humanities enrollments have held steady: historically black colleges and universities. HBCUs are also the only institutional class where a majority of students say they’re dedicated to crafting a philosophy of life [emphasis is mine].”

Benjamin Schmidt, The Atlantic, 23 Aug. 2018
The Arts (HSS) Trend, MUN
…. Numbers and Perceptions

Schmidt’s subtitle: “Students are abandoning humanities majors, turning to degrees they think yield far better job prospects. But they’re wrong.”

1. “….students fled the humanities after the financial crisis because they became more fearful of the job market…. The fields that have risen in the past decade are almost entirely STEM majors…."

2. “Students aren’t fleeing degrees with poor job prospects. They’re fleeing humanities and related fields specifically because they think they have poor job prospects.”
Multiple Levels of Vocational Aspiration

• General: searching for a sense of purpose or calling, or of being prepared to meet challenges related to such senses.

• More specific: “The means by which a person makes a living; a person's employment or main occupation, esp. regarded as requiring dedication. More generally: a trade or profession; an occupation.” (OED)

• Skills and numeracy
Mannion Project: What was, can be….

• Enlisted students in courses 1972-2006 to study Irish migration to NL.

• Result:
  • 86,000 note cards + mercantile records = 150,000 digital images.
  • Student research essays at MUN libraries and archives
  • Data for Mannion’s & others’ published scholarship

• An example of integrating teaching and research in HSS that may have a significant economic, health, and democratic impact.

• A collective enterprise: student-focused mission and vocation.
Thank You