

Primary Valuation of Ireland or Griffith Valuation

Background

The Primary Valuation, also known as Griffith's Valuation, was the first, full-scale valuation of property in Ireland and details of property with valuations were published between 1847 and 1864. The Tenement Act of 1842 sought to apply a uniform method of taxation based on the productivity or income of real property. All the land of Ireland was surveyed for the purpose of establishing the level of rates (local tax) to be paid by each landholder or leaseholder. The rates were used to determine liability to pay the Poor rate, for the support of the poor and destitute within each Poor Law Union. Griffith's Valuation lists each landholder or householder (occupier) in the country giving the townland and description of the property (eg. land; house, house and land, or house, out offices/ out buildings and land). It also lists the landlord (or Immediate Lessor) and the annual valuation.¹²³

Richard John Griffith (1884-1878) a Dublin born geological surveyor and chairman of the Irish Board of Works was engaged to survey all of Ireland with respect to boundaries and land values in the 1820's as Ireland attempted to reform local taxation and implement the Poor Law rate. He strictly managed a team of valuers who scoured the country gathering the requisite information and publishing it on a county by county basis.⁴ The Griffith Valuation was undertaken in County Clare 1855. Numbers and references in the first column can be identified on a map which had been prepared by the Ordnance Survey.⁵

Clarecastle was known as Claretown at the time of the Griffith Valuation. The town occupied the townlands of Clare Commons and Clarehill. At the 1851 census, there were 892 people living in 149 houses in Clare Town while there were 382 people living in 73 houses living in Clare Commons or 1,274 people in 222 houses. The 1851 also had 952 people in an auxiliary workhouse but this was not present by 1855.

The page Claretown Griffith Valuation sheets were set out as follows:

- Clare Commons number 1-4 (all land)
- Clare Commons Town of Clare- Main Street numbers 5.1- 5.38 (Main Street included present day Patrick St)
- Clare Commons Killadysert Road numbers 1-6 (present day Lissane Road)
- Clare Commons Ennis Road lots 1-60 includes part of present day Barrack Street, Maddens and St Michael's Terraces
- Clare Commons Fair Green Lane Lots 1-42 includes the present day Old or Pound Road houses and land now occupied by Church Drive and the old Fair Green
- Clarehill Lots 1a-32
- Clarehill Town of Clare Main St numbers 33.1- 33.34 which is the right side of the road facing Limerick.

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(<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/reading-room/history-heritage/irish-genealogy/what-is-griffiths-valuation/index.xml>) (1 June 2020).

² James Ryan, Irish records: sources for family and local history (Salt Lake City, 1988) p. xxv11.

³ (<https://www.nli.ie/en/griffiths-valuation.aspx>) (1 June 2020).

⁴ (<https://www.irish-genealogy.com/griffiths-valuation-1847-1864.html>) (1 June 2020).

⁵ (<http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/>) (10 May 2019).

- Clare Hill Quay Road numbers 1- 13.
- Creggaune Lane numbers 1-16.

The ledger headings listed the townland and occupier, the immediate lessor, description of the tenement (house, land etc), area of land and the rateable valuation of the land and house. The spreadsheet in our series includes the total annual valuation of rateable property. More information can be accessed by viewing the original ledgers at www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation.

The Griffith Valuation is a valuable historic document for local and family historians as it lists occupiers (sometimes the head of the household) present in 1855. Griffith's Valuation provides information about economic conditions in which people lived at the time. The occurrence of the same surname may indicate family members living close to one another. Occasionally where there is someone with the same name an occupation may be listed or senior and junior may be used to distinguish two occupiers with the same name.

The Cancelled or Revision books are handwritten ledgers, maintained by the Valuation Office, recorded changes to individual tenements, occupiers and immediate lessors the year the Valuation Office was notified. Previous entries were stuck out or cancelled and a new ledger or revision book was created. The Cancelled or Revision books for Claretown in this series follows the history of a tenement from the original occupier and immediate lessor 1855-1934. The revision books' notation tell us when a property fell into ruins, when a new house was constructed and when a lot such as a field was sub-divided to build new houses.

Unlike the Griffith Valuation, the cancelled or revision books are not available on line.

More information including background information and the process of carrying out the Primary Valuation of Ireland (Griffith's Valuation) is available at www.askaboutireland.ie , the National Archives of Ireland www.nationalarchives.ie and the National Library of Ireland www.nli.ie.