

## BRITISH AND IRISH ACCESSIONS AT THE TORONTO FAMILY HISTORY CENTRE

*James Thomson*

It has been exciting, as a patron of the Toronto Family History Centre (FHC) in Don Mills, to see changes at the FHC in recent years, not least the introduction of a digital microform scanner, the launch of a very useful *List of All FHC Resources* (below), the arrival of new computers, and a steady enhancing of their collection. Gwen Armstrong and the volunteer staff make doing research at the FHC a real pleasure, and many items located there are not accessible online or at any other repository in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

The purpose of this brief article is to mention a few of the items which have been added to the FHC collection in recent months, and which may be of help in British or Irish family history research. Among the relatively new arrivals are:

- Baptism, marriage or burial indexes for several English counties, chosen because they supplement the coverage provided by the IGI (International Genealogical Index). These include the just-published 3rd edition of the *National Burial Index*
- A large number of indexes (not available online or elsewhere in the GTA) to pre-1858 wills and administrations recorded by various church courts in England. These complement the 1858-1957 national probate calendars, pre-1858 death duty indexes and Prerogative Court of York indexes already available at the FHC.
- A compilation of indexes to pre-1858 Irish wills and administrations, which may help establish a date and place of death even if the will referred to no longer exists. This index complements the 1858-1920 Irish probate calendars and pre-1858 Prerogative Court of Armagh and Inland Revenue indexes already held at the FHC.
- Five volumes of indexes to other Irish material, as described at [www.eireindex.com](http://www.eireindex.com).
- For Scottish research, the entire set of 1781-1868 sasine abridgements, and the related place and person indexes, described at: [http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/sasine\\_abbs\\_topic.htm](http://www.scan.org.uk/knowledgebase/topics/sasine_abbs_topic.htm)
- Indexes to services of heirs, which are used when researching the inheritance of land in Scotland.
- The 1870 and 1894 Slater's national commercial directories of Ireland.
- Lists of owners of one acre or more of land, be it in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland, as at the date of the respective surveys in the 1870s.
- Materials useful for British Army and related research, including a limited number of digitized (though unindexed) medal rolls; an index to the Army of Reserve, 1803 (England and Wales); an index to service returns, 1806, for the 1<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> regiments of foot; a post-First World War absent voters list for Dorset; and a 1908-1933 Surrey recruitment register.
- For merchant navy research, indexes to seamen's crew lists of 1851 for vessels registered at Scottish or Irish ports.
- Medical directories for the period 1846-1940 (at five year intervals, more or less)

- Records of the Bishop of London pertaining to British overseas births or baptisms, marriages or deaths in areas within his jurisdiction. These records span the period between 1816 and 1891.
- Issues of Walford's *County Families*, for various years between 1860 and 1920, which complement the holdings of the Toronto Reference Library

There are now more than ten thousand items (films, fiche, CDs and books) at the Toronto FHC – far too many to keep track of without consulting the FHC's *List of All FHC Resources*, which lists all of the items at the Toronto FHC arranged by the geographic areas to which they relate. This invaluable guide is the product of the heroic labours of Helen Billing, who also edits the *Toronto FHC Bulletin* (below), and no amount of praise could do justice to what she has achieved in making the FHC's holdings so accessible to patrons. A paper copy of the *List*, which is updated quarterly, is at the FHC, and a free .pdf copy of the current version can be obtained as an e-mail attachment; to request a copy, contact the FHC at [Toronto\\_FHC@bellnet.ca](mailto:Toronto_FHC@bellnet.ca) I cannot imagine why any genealogist in the GTA would not want to ask for a .pdf copy of the *List of All FHC Resources*.

A *Toronto FHC Bulletin* is sent out by e-mail every week (contact the FHC to be added to the circulation list). The *Bulletin* is free and lists new acquisitions and films borrowed from Salt Lake City by patrons, as well as providing genealogical news and a forum through which one can seek suggestions with respect to research challenges. Reading it regularly is the best way to learn of new resources at the FHC.

The Toronto FHC is at 24 Ferrand Drive, close to the intersection of Don Mills Rd. and Eglinton. Call 416 422 5480, Ext. 111, for opening hours and directions.