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University of Dublin

The Six Inch Ordnance Maps of Ireland (1:10,560)

The Ordnance Survey came to Ireland in 1824 in order to carry-out a precise admeasurement of the country's 60,000 or so townlands as a preliminary to the larger task of reforming Ireland's local taxation system. The townland boundaries were demarcated by a Boundary Commission, and the Ordnance Survey had the task of measuring them. In addition to boundaries the maps are truly topographical in content. Drawn at the large scale of six inches-to-one-mile (1:10,560) it was important to mark all buildings, roads, streams, placenames, etc, that were required for valuation purposes. Ultimately the maps were used as a basis for the rateable valuation of land and buildings in what became known as Griffith's Valuation.

Working from north to south, the survey began in Antrim and Derry in 1829 and was completed in Kerry in 1842. It was published as thirty-two county maps between 1832 and 1846, the number of sheets per county varied from 153 for County Cork to 28 for Dublin, each of the 1,994 sheets in the series depicting an area 21,000 by 32,000 feet on the ground. Each county was projected on a different central meridian and so the maps of adjacent counties do not fit neatly together at the edges. Map content stops at the county lines.

The First Edition

The early Ordnance Survey maps are an unrivalled source for the period immediately before the Great Irish Famine (1847-50) when the population was at the highest level ever recorded. The maps depict a densely settled, highly articulated landscape. Content of the six inch maps is summarized in the table below.

The Second Edition

When the original survey began it did not include field boundaries and they did not appear on the maps. This policy was reversed in 1838 after a number of northern counties had been published. Therefore when the country was completed in 1846 the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Derry, Donegal, Down, Fermanagh, Monaghan, and Tyrone were resurveyed to add field boundaries. Subsequently this general revision was extended to other counties because of change in the post-Famine landscape. Survey work was curtailed in 1887 when the government agreed to survey the country at the larger scale of 1:2,500.

The Third Edition

After the initiation of the 1:2,500 series most new editions of the six inch map were reduced from the larger scale maps. In counties in the south of Ireland both the second and third editions were produced by this process.

Later Revisions

Only a small number of six inch maps were produced by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland from 1930 to 1955 and most of these were for parts of counties, usually areas around the larger towns.

The Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland did revise a number of counties up to the mid 1950s when they changed from the old county framework to a new national grid format eventually moving to the 1:10,000 scale.

Holdings in the Map Library, Trinity College Library

The Map Library holds one of the most comprehensive collections of Irish six inch maps, including complete sets of the first edition in colour and in black and white (see the table below). Holdings of the second edition in the nineteenth century are complete except for the revisions of five of the northern counties in the 1850s. Holdings for the third edition are comprehensive but not complete. Note that revisions dating from the 1930s, 40s or 50s are unlikely to cover entire counties and consist of only a few sheets for the larger urban areas. Additional sheets are regularly added to the collection.

Further Reading

Andrews, J.H. *History in the Ordnance map: an introduction for Irish readers*. (Dublin 1974; revised edition Pentre, Kerry, 1993).

Andrews, J.H. *A paper landscape: the Ordnance Survey in nineteenth-century Ireland*. Oxford, 1975.

Classification of Content in the Irish Six-inches-to-One-Mile Maps

Boundaries

Townlands, civil parishes, baronies, counties, municipal wards.

Topographical Features

Rivers, streams, lakes, waterfalls, rapids, cliffs, rock outcrops, hill tops, caves.

Height Information

Bench marks, spot heights, contours on later editions.

Vegetation Features

Fir plantation, mixed wood, brushwood, rocky heathy pasture, marsh, bog, furze, the limit of cultivation.

Agricultural Features

Farm houses and buildings, field boundaries, blacksmiths, lime kilns, demesnes, orchards, gardens, plant nurseries, drainage channels, sluices, fish ponds.

Industrial Features

Factories, foundries, mills (beetling, corn, flour, flax, gig, paper, and tuck), windmills, ponds, bleach greens, ropewalks, tanneries, breweries, distilleries, quarries, sand and gravel pits, colliers, mines, brick fields, weirs and dams, millraces, fisheries.

Settlement

Towns, villages, fair grounds, public buildings, schools, chapels (Roman Catholic and Presbyterian), churches, meeting houses, institutions, hospitals, workhouses, dispensaries, inns, wells, post offices, constabulary and army barracks, almshouses, gasworks, graveyards, spas, race courses, bathing places, antiquities (forts, raths, standing stones, moats, motes), ruined buildings.

Transport

Roads, lanes, bridges, fords, canals and locks, aqueducts, railways and stations, ferries, harbours, piers, mooring posts.

Placenames

Baronies, civil parishes, townlands, cities, towns, villages, bays and harbours, rivers, gentlemen's seats, bog names, loughs, woods, islands, hills, bridges.

Holdings of Six Inch County Series in the Map Library, Trinity College Library Dublin

<i>County</i>	<i>1st Ed.</i>	<i>2nd Ed.</i>	<i>3rd Ed.</i>	<i>Later Revisions</i>
<i>Survey and Revision Dates</i>				
Antrim	1831-3	1853-58 Pt.	1900-6	1920-2; 1931-7; 1945-6; 1950-1
Armagh	1835	1863-4	1905-9	1948-57 Pt.; 1952-4 Pt.
Carlow	1839	1873-4	1905-6	1938-9 Pt.
Cavan	1835-6	1876-80	1908-11	
Clare	1840-2	1893-7	1913-8 Pt.	1938 Pt. & 1951-2 Pt.
Cork	1841-2	1897-04	1926-37 Pt.	
Derry	1830-2	1849-53 Pt.	1904-6	1924/39-50 Pt.
Donegal	1834-6	1848 Pt.	1900-5	1948-54 Pt.
Down	1835	1862-3	1899-1904	1925/1938-9 Pt.
Dublin	1843	1871-5	1906-9	1935-8
Fermanagh	1835	1860-1	1905-7	
Galway	1838-9	1890-98	1915-20 Pt.	1925-34 Pt.; 1944-8 Pt.
Kerry	1841-2	1894-8 Pt.	1914-5 Pt.	1937-8 Pt.
Kildare	1837-8	1870-2	1907-9	1939 Pt.
Kilkenny	1839-40	1899-1902	1945-8 Pt.	
Laois	1838-41	1888-91	1906-7 Pt.	
Leitrim	1835-6	1882-7	1907-9 Pt.	1943-5 Pt.
Limerick	1840-1	1897-03	1918-24 Pt.	1937-38 Pt.
Longford	1836-7	1879-81	1911 Pt.	
Louth	1835	1861-4	1907-9 Pt..	1938-39 Pt.
Mayo	1837-9	1893-00	1913-7 Pt.	1923-5 Pt.
Meath	1836	1882-4	1907-11 Pt.	1958 Pt.
Monaghan	1834-5	1857-9	1909-10	1947-8 Pt.
Offaly	1838	1884-5	1909-10 Pt.	
Roscommon	1838	1889-95	1911-13	1923-5 Pt.
Sligo	1837	1885-88	1909-12 Pt.	1940-41 Pt.
Tipperary	1839-41	1901-2 Pt.	1938/50-4 Pt.	
Tyrone	1832-4	1857-9 Pt.	1905-6 Pt.	1935-39/50-53 Pt.
Waterford	1839-41	1897-05	1922-3 Pt.	1950 Pt.
Westmeath	1837	1874-6	1911-13 Pt.	1952-3 Pt.
Wexford	1839-40	1902-5	1921 Pt.	1939-41 Pt.
Wicklow	1838	1885-7	1908-9	1937 Pt.

Italic type edition not held
Pt. partial coverage held or only part revised

Additional maps and editions are regularly added to Map Library holdings.