Prehistory

305 Joyce, Patrick Weston. *A social history of ancient Ireland: treating of the government, military system, and law, religion, learning, and art; trades, industries, and commerce; manners, customs and domestic life, of the ancient Irish people.* 2d ed. London: 1913. 2 v.  
"List of authorities consulted and quoted or referred to throughout this book": v.2., p. 587-608.  
Vol. 1 covers the monarchical system, warfare, societal structure, Brehon laws, land laws, justice, paganism, Christianity, education, language and literature, art, music, and medicine. Vol. 2 deals with family, housing, food, fuel and light, dress, agriculture, crafts, corn mills, clothing industries, weights and measures, locomotion and commerce, sports, social customs, and death and burial. Joyce covers a wide range of topics in an interesting style, but has little historical criticism.

Reprint of a work first published in 1927.  
A fairly complete summary of material for the study of druidism. Kendrick's point is that a general knowledge of the racial history and prehistory and social atmosphere of early Gallic and British civilization is necessary for such a study. A useful appendix gives passages on druidism from classical sources in the original Greek and Latin. This work has stood up remarkably well to modern scholarship.

Deals with the critical basis of pre-Christian Irish history and with the social and political framework of early Christian Ireland. Chapters are taken from several publications in which MacNeill's writings have appeared. MacNeill was one of the first to place the history of ancient Ireland on a basis of sound historical criticism.

Includes bibliographical references.  
An extremely significant book based on O'Curry's lectures, in which he pictures Irish manners and customs as exhibited in the ancient laws and described in the poems and prose tales of the Irish mss. Vol. 1 contains Sullivan's lengthy introduction, in which he discusses archaeology and topics related to the ancient Irish - language, ethnology, territorial divisions, classes of society, land, the family, gilds, government, architecture, burial, houses, food, dress, weapons and music. These are topics covered by O'Curry and those he had intended to include before his death. Sullivan puts the subjects into a European perspective.

O'Rahilly discusses his theories on Ptolemy's geography of Ireland, the Fir Bolg, the Laginian and Goidelic invasions, euhemerism in the accounts of ancient history, and various mythological topics. O'Rahilly departs from the ideas of Rhys and MacNeill in certain aspects, rejecting more than MacNeill did of the historicity of early writings. Also has an interesting chapter on the language of the Picts.

Bibliography: p. 189-200.  
Powell employs as sources the languages and traditions of the modern Celtic peoples, classical descriptions, and archaeology. He moves from an analysis of the Celtic barbarian nation to their socio-economics, their trade with Greeks and Etruscans, and the rise of La Tene art. The Celtic attitude toward the supernatural, the Druidic power, and the
tradition of oral learning are also among the topics considered by Powell, an eminent authority on early British languages and archaeology.


Purports to prove, by an analysis of place-names and religion, that a Phoenician colony once came to Ireland and established dominion. The translator's work is marred by his obsession with "Persians" and "Buddhists." Also contains the series of correspondence between O'Brien and the Royal Irish Academy, in which he accuses the academy of unjustifiably awarding a medal to Petrie rather than to himself.


Supports the view that bardic history is fantasy, but based on actual events. The "inquiry" concerns the population, tribal divisions, laws, morality, arts, and sciences of the ancient Irish. Footnoted, with translations of Greek and Latin quotations added.

To 1172


Irish texts society, vols. 4, 8-9, 15.

This first comprehensive Irish history written in Irish established the standard for modern Irish. Drawn uncritically from ancient sources (many of which are now lost) the work was written to "vindicate" Irish history. Covers the period from the legendary earliest inhabitants to the coming of Henry II.

Keating has a pleasant style, and an extensive knowledge of Irish literature which he frequently uses for historical illustration. Keating was a popular priest and gave sermons in many parishes. He was educated in Bordeaux, and was a poet as well as an historian.

314 O'Halloran, Sylvester. A general history of Ireland, from the earliest accounts to the close of the 12th century, collected from the most authentic records. In which new and interesting lights are thrown on the remote histories of other nations as well as of both Britains. London: 1778. 2 v.

Now outdated. Much of the more accurate parts of it is also found in Colgan and O'Flaherty. The work is characterized by great patriotism, but the topographical descriptions have since been revised by modern investigators.


Bibliographical footnotes.

According to the author, this volume is the "naked truth" about Irish early history, a story of "arrested evolution." Us. Clerigh tends to accept a great deal of fiction as history, or at least semi-history; he also romanticizes his descriptions. The book is nevertheless useful as a summary of pre-20th century antiquarian thought in various areas, and as an indication of Us Clerigh's own historical ideas.


Bibliography: p. 77-79.

An interesting, but in some ways outdated account of the Norse in Ireland (795-1014): intercourse between "Gaill and Gaedhil" during the Viking period, growth of
seaports, towns, expansion of Irish trade, shipbuilding and seafaring, linguistic influences, Vikings and the Celtic Church, and literary influence.

1172-1603


Covers the Scandinavian element and the reign of Henry II and summarizes the intervening years to the time of Henry VII; details the dealings of England with Ireland during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I. Much reliance for this history was placed on the state papers and other original sources.

318 Cecil, Sir Edward. *The government of Ireland under the honorable, just, and wise governor Sir John Perrot, knight, one of the Privy Councell to Queene Elizabeth, beginning 1584, and ending 1588. Being the first booke of the continuation of the historie of that kingdome, formerly set forth to the yeare 1584, and now continued to this present 1626...* London: 1626. 34, 136, 3 p.

Contains the history of the government of Sir John Perrot, whom Cecil believed to have been innocent and falsely condemned; Perrot's opinion on the suppression of the rebellion and on government in Ireland; and a history of Ireland from 1584-1588.


Valuable to student of medieval Ireland, "this book is the most vivid picture that has come down to us of the life of medieval Ireland at war." Possibly written by a son of Rory Magrath during the reign of Dermot O'Brien (1345-1360), or by John MacRory Magrath, historian of the Dalcassian race, in 1945. Appendices give genealogical data on Burkes, Butlers, Geraldines, and O'Briens.


A collection of excerpts from the major sources of Irish history during the 16th and early 17th centuries, with an historical introduction. Intended as a handbook for students and teachers. Beginning with the Irish policy of Henry VIII, these documents trace the dark period of the Reformation, the Elizabethan conquest, the Tudor plantations, and the Colonization of Ulster. Also describes the social and economic conditions of the time.

321 Moore, Thomas. *The history of Ireland; commencing with its earliest period, to the great expedition against Scotland in 1545*. Philadelphia: 1843-46. 2 v.

As Moore himself later realized, he was not qualified to write a history of Ireland, being unfamiliar with many necessary ancient documents and annals. His history begins with the earliest period, which he places at B.C. 1000, and continues to 1545 and Lord Lennox's expedition against Scotland.


First published 1911.

Detailed study of the Anglo-Norman period 1169-1333. Orpen emphasizes the domination of the English crown during the 13th century, previously recognized as being much less complete. He concludes that the major effect of the Anglo-Norman occupation was not turmoil, but peace and prosperity.

Includes bibliographical references.
This volume contains Tome 2, Book 4 ("on the various vicissitudes of Ireland under Elizabeth"), and Tome 3, Books 1-8 ("on the Fifteen Year's War") of Don Philip O'Sullivan-Beare's history of Catholic Ireland, which extended from Henry VIII through Elizabeth.

Bibliography: p. 409-422.
This book covers Irish history from the coming of the Normans to Poynings and the beginnings of Tudor Ireland. A well documented volume, it does not claim to be the definitive work - but it supplies much information on Ireland of the Middle Ages.

Based largely on the Ormonde papers and others in the Carte Collection. Covers the plantation of Ireland from Henry II to Cromwell, the Rebellion of 1641 (in which Prendergast takes issue with the argument that the Irish Catholics massacred Protestants at the beginning of the war), the companies of Adventurers, the transplantation, officers and soldiers, and clearing of towns. Includes list of Adventurers for Lands and the Sea Service, transplanters' certificates, and dispensation from transplantation petitions.

17th Century

Bagwell was hampered by a lack of access to several extant mss., but his work is still useful. He follows Hickson's arguments concerning the depositions of the '41 rebellion, and views Cox as a "strong partisan, but ...not a liar." As in the volumes on the Tudor period, much is taken from the state papers.

Sources for the lordship of MacCarthy Mor: p. 297.
The chapter on the lordship of MacCarthy Mor illustrates Gaelic chieftainship and the organization of the Gaelic state, and includes information on the clans of south Kerry and west Cork. The section titled "The lordship of MacCarthy Reagh" shows how an Irish territory stood when the process of adapting to new conditions was completed during the Stuart era. How this evolution was brought about is described for the whole of Ireland from the Tudor period to Cromwell in the chapter on the policy of "Surrender and Regrant," and the Cromwellian confiscation is discussed in detail for the Barony of Muskerry.

Bibliography: p. 263-278.
Clarke shows the character, problems and policies of the old English group on the eve of its decline - the period of its intense self-awareness - and demonstrated that the rebellion of 1641 was not so extreme and profound as has been supposed. He argues that the participation of the old English in it was due to their loyalty to the King, and that their struggle for survival was a struggle to convince the government of the virtues of compromise and moderation.

Bibliography: p. 344-359.

A comprehensive account of the Catholic Confederacy in its 17th century context. Coonan finds striking similarity between the ideas of the Confederacy leaders on Anglo-Irish constitutional relations and those expressed later by American colonial leaders on Anglo-American constitutional relations. Includes an extensive bibliography.


A history of the revolution, which Echard considered to be "a great deliverance." Also includes reviews of the reigns of Charles II and James II; and a history of the Establishment from the vacancy of the throne to the succession of William and Mary.


Bibliographical footnotes.

Written to refute various misrepresentations about the rebellion of 1641, such as the alleged "massacre," which Fitzpatrick calls a "stupendous falsehood." The first paper examines the massacre of "The Bloody Bridge" in light of evidence from depositions. The second paper refutes the idea of a massacre at Newry using similar evidence. Fitzpatrick covers other allegations about the rebellion, his major attack being misuse by antagonistic historians and politicians of the depositions.

332 Gilbert, Sir John Thomas. *A contemporary history of affairs in Ireland, from 1641 to 1652. Now for the first time published, with an appendix of original letters and documents.* Dublin: 1879-80. 3 v. in 6.

Gives original contemporary materials which illuminate the important period of Irish history from 1641-52, including the remarkable work, "An Aphoristical Discovery of Treasonable Faction," written by an unknown Irish Royalist. Multi-volume appendix gives supplementary documents on the period.


In Latin only, by George Horn, Professor at the University of Leyden. A history of events in England, Scotland, and Ireland in 7 books, from the year 1645. Also contains the Articles of Peace (1646), the speech of Louden (1646), the itinerary of Fairfax, and tables showing the parts of several counties controlled by the King and by Parliament.

334 King, William, abp. of Dublin. *The state of the Protestants of Ireland under the Zate King James's government; in which their carriage towards him is justified, and the absolute necessity of their endeavoring to be freed from his government, and of submitting to their present majesties is demonstrated. With an appendix of acts of Parliament, proclamations, Zetters and original papers, etc.* Dublin: 1730. 16, 124 p.

A justification of Protestant opposition to the government of James II in Ireland. Attacks the doctrine of Passive Obedience, and argues that since James "oppressed" the Irish Protestants, William and Mary were entitled to interpose themselves as protectors.


Contains 1) Spenser's "View of the state of Ireland." Spenser, the great poet, was a resident of Ireland for many years; this essay in dialogue form adds depth to the record of the Elizabethan struggle. 2) Davies' "Discovery of the true causes why Ireland
was never entirely subdued ...until the beginning of his Majesty's happy reign." Davies was the Attorney-General for Ireland. Of Welsh origin, he was also a poet, statesman, and lawyer; his view of the present growing out of the past can be seen in the "Discovery," and in 3) a letter from Davies to the Earl of Salisbury, 4) his letter on the state of Ireland, and 5) his speech to the Lord Deputy of Ireland. 6) "A Description of Ireland" by Moryson, Secretary to Lord Mountjoy, relates what Moryson considers to be the illbreeding and uncouth habits of the Irish.

   Bibliography: p. 374-394.
   Emphasizes the importance of the Ulster plantation to Scottish history and the Scottish settlers during the first quarter of the 17th century. The author examines the society which produced these settlers, the conditions they encountered, why they left their homeland, why they failed or succeeded, and the extent to which James I promoted the Plantation.

   A work written without detail of fact and in an interesting style for the "ordinary man." Woodburn deals with the Ulster Scots, or Scoto-Irish, most of whom live in the northern province and are Presbyterian. He relies on both Protestant (Froude) and Catholic (D'Alton) sources, but especially on Lecky's account of the 18th century.

18th Century

   First published in 1930.
   Bibliographical footnotes.
   The Sir George Watson Lectures, 1928-9, expanded and rearranged. Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to the "Irish Revolution": the 1st phase, from 1762 to 1780; and the 2d phase, from 1780 to 1783. Other aspects of Irish history in the years 1760-1820 are covered in remaining chapters.

   An initial selection of letters from the richest period of voluminous correspondence. Includes letters from a succession of agents 1736-1810; from the 8th Earl, 1745-1783; from the agent Matthew Hood, 1796-1806; and from the agent, Sir John James Burgoyne, 1807-1816. Edited for clarification.

   A standard biographical work of the movement and its participants in the rebellions of 1798 and 1803, and a large store of information relating to Ireland's greatest attempt at freedom. More extensive biographies have since been written for many of the characters; nevertheless, these volumes are valuable as a full account. Includes numerous engravings, a chronological outline, and extensive bibliography.

341 Musgrave, Sir Richard. *Memoirs of the different rebellions in Ireland, from the arrival of the English; also, a particular detail of that which broke out the XXIIIID of May MDCCXCIII;
with the history of the conspiracy which preceded it, and the characters of the principal actors in it. To this edition is added, a concise history of the reformation in Ireland, and considerations on the means of extending its advantage therein. 2d ed. Dublin: 1801. 636, 210, 8 p.

A partisan Protestant view of the Rebellion of 1798. Begins with an attempt to discredit Rome's part in Christianizing Ireland, followed by attacks on various medieval popes and papal policies; traces the origins of the White Boys and Right Boys, the Defenders, the Orangemen, the Catholic Committee, and the United Irishmen; discusses the organization, civil and military of the United Irishmen, the causes of the Rebellion, and negotiations with the French. The major part of the work is devoted to the various attacks and battles of the '98 wars. A large number of documents are contained in the appendices, including letters, affidavits, a list of massacred Protestants, and various United Irishmen tracts.


   A history of '98 as seen in the context of the war between Britain and France and the Jacobin Revolutions which swept Europe, i.e., the context of ideological war to the death. Pakenham feels the rebellion resulted from Pitt's failure to have an Irish policy. The author tries to be impartial, but is hampered by a lack of rebel source material.

19th Century


   Barker surveys the period 1866-1918 in general, then gives particular attention to the Irish church and Irish education; the agrarian problem (soil, landlords, legislation, land purchase, congested districts, the I.A.O.S., and labor); the government of Ireland (central and local); and Ireland during the war (including Sinn Fein, the Irish Labour Party & the Convention). A Pro-Commonwealth view.


   Bibliography: p. 123.

   Covers Irish history, politics and government, and economic conditions from the Protestant Ascendancy and Grattan's Parliament to the Ulster crisis in 1971-1972 in summary form. Included are lists of prime ministers, a table of dates, sketches of principal figures' lives, and a glossary.


   Emmet's eloquent speech before his execution as a rebel in 1803. It contains the often quoted line, "When my country taker her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not til then, let my epitaph be written."


   This volume begins with the momentous return of Gladstone to power in 1880. It attempts to review events in the Empire from that year to Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Of use to the student of late 19th century Irish history.


   Bibliography: p. 137-142.

   This book, aimed at synthesis, centers on the Act of Union,
subsequent disaffection, nationalism of Ireland, and modern
economic forces. A small volume with large themes and obviously
much selectivity. Nonetheless, provocative and interesting.

348 O'Hegarty, Patrick Sarsfield. A history of Ireland under the union, 1801 to 1922. With an
epilogue carrying the story down to the acceptance in 1927 by de Valera of the

O'Hegarty subordinates economic and social history to political history. The
volume is based on a large bibliography (which the author does not include,
unfortunately), and from 1902 onwards, on his personal knowledge of the men and of
the evolution of the Separatist movement. The chapters on the 20th century are by far
the more valuable part of the book.

349 Woodham Smith, Cecil Blanche (Fitz Gerald). The great hunger: Ireland 1845-1849. 1st

Includes bibliography.

The author attempts to apportion the responsibility for the suffering during the
Irish potato famine of the 1840's between the then unknown disease which destroyed
the potato, the"Irish landlords, and the lack of comprehension at the British Treasury in
London.

20th Century


A history of Sinn Fein and its place in Irish nationalism from its origin to after
the Rising. The author shows the aim of Sinn Fein to be the political, economic, moral,
and intellectual independence of Ireland, and recounts the slow process by which the
movement came to be Ireland's chief source of hope. An impartial history.

351 Lieberson, Goddard, ed. The Irish uprising, 1916-1922. With a

Includes chapters taken from Thomas P. O'Neill, Padraic
Pearse, James Connolly, Sean T. O'Kelly, and Benedict Kiely.

This volume seeks to honor the men who gave or risked their
lives during the Easter Uprising that Ireland might be free, as
de Valera states in his preface. Includes many contemporary
photographs, portraits, and facsimiles.

352 Macardle, Dorothy. The Irish Republic: a documented chronicle of the Anglo-Irish conflict
and the partitioning of Ireland, with a detailed account of the period 1916-1923. With a
pref. by Eamon de Valera, including a note for the American ed. 1st American ed. New

Bibliography: p. 993-1002.

A complete history of the struggle from the Easter Rising and the proclamation
of the Republic in 1916 to the cease fire of 1923. The author's approach is political
rather than military, and she begins by reviewing the fight for Home Rule and the
evolution of Sinn Fein. The view is pro-Irish, the author having lived through the period,
but citations to British authorities are provided.

353 MacDonagh, Oliver. Ireland. New York: 1968.

MacDonagh regards the Act of Union as the most important single factor in
shaping Ireland as a modern nation; he begins his history at that point, and discusses
the consequences - the new nationalism, the new state, and the new economy. One of
the best histories of modern Ireland.
The story of O'Connor's first association with the volunteers and his involvement in the fight for freedom thereafter. He gives accounts of the Rising; his arrest, imprisonment, and deportation; Sinn Fein and O'Connor's friendship with Collins; the arrival of the Black and Tans; the truce and the surrender of Dublin Castle; and finally Collins' death and the example he set for O'Connor.

O'Connor sees the Act of Union of 1800 as a spurious "bargain" made by a minority in Ireland, and doomed because of inherent spiritual differences. He traces the numerous injustices of the following years, showing how oppression breeds "war mentality" and self-deception. He also recognizes Irish propaganda as being part false and part true; a fairly non-partisan and useful work.