

# Records for children in care: pre 1952 'adoptions'

*Fiona Fitzsimons*



# 1952 Adoption Act - legal adoption in Ireland

## **Where an adoption order was made:**

- a) the child shall be considered with regard to the rights and duties of parents and children in relation to each other as the child of the adopter... born... in lawful wedlock.
- b) The mother or guardian [lost] all parental rights with respect to the child.

## **Children who could be adopted had to**

- i) Reside in the state
- ii) Be aged between 6 mts and 7 years at doa
- iii) Be illegitimate\_or orphaned

# Legislation to regulate children in care

- 1838 Poor Law Relief (Ireland) Act
- 1908 Children & Young Persons Act
- 1925 Order, for the adaptation of Children's Act 1908
- 1929 Children Act
- 1934 Children Act (amended Part 1 of 1908 Act).
- 1939 Public Assistance Act (chps 44, 45)
- 1941 Children Act

# Administrative reforms to regulate children raised in care

- 1838 Poor Law Relief (Ireland) Act
- 1872 Local Government Board (Ireland) Bill
- 1898 Local Government (Ireland) Act
- 1924 Department of Local Government & Public Health estb.
- 1947 Department of Health and Department of Social Welfare estb

# Records of central or local government

## 1840s-1899 Board of Guardians, PLU

- Minutes of Board of Guardians – Indoor & Outdoor relief
- Births in the Union Workhouse – Admissions registers

## 1899-1925 Minutes of the County Councils

## 1925-1940s, Co. Boards Health & Public Ass.

- County Homes
- Minutes of the county Boards

## 1940 – 1952, individual Health Boards (HSE).

# Records of the Courts

- 1820s to ca. 1925 Petty Sessions
- District Court records
- Court records can be supplemented by newspapers.

# Records of the care institutions

- Records for infant hospitals, mother and baby homes, and adoption societies kept by the individual organisations. Previously could only contact the archivist of the order or institution, under FoI, to trace specific records.
- In the last 15 years many of these records were transferred to the HSE, and now constitute A.I.R.R.

# A.I.R.R.

- Access to Institutional & Related Records
- Contact the Records Management Unit, in Hawkins House
  - 01 6354190.
- These records are only accessible by people looking for information about themselves