

Census (Ireland)

Full censuses were taken every 10 years from 1821 to 1911 in Ireland. However, fate intervened and so access to other records is sparse. Those that were taken in 1821, 1831, 1841 and 1851 were mainly destroyed by a fire at the Public Records Office in 1922. There are some fragments available, which are noted below. Those taken in 1861 and 1871 were destroyed by the Government soon after they were taken, with those for 1881 and 1891 being pulped during the First World War.

Apart from 1901 and 1911, the surviving census records are mainly as follows:

1821 – just a few volumes for Counties Cavan, Fermanagh, Galway, Meath and Offaly

1831 – a few fragments for County Londonderry

1841 – one set of the original returns survived, which is for the parish of Killeshandra in County Cavan.

1851 – most of the surviving returns relate to County Antrim.

When was the census taken?

1821 – 28th May

1831 – 30th May

1841 – 6th June

1851 – 30th March

1861 – 7th April

1871 – 2nd April

1881 – 3rd April

1891 – 5th April

1901 – 31st March

1911 – 2nd April

What will you find on them?

1821:

- name;
- age;
- occupation;
- relationship to the head of the household;
- acreage of land holding;
- number of storeys of house.

1831:

As above, plus religion

1841:

As above plus

- date of marriage;
- literacy;
- absent family members;
- family members who died since 1831

1851 to 1891:

As above. Each census recorded family members who had died since the previous census.

1901 and 1911:

The above except family members who had died since the previous census were no longer recorded but the additional information was:

- county of birth;
- ability to speak English or Irish.

Where can they be found?

The complete 1901 and 1911 census records may be viewed free of charge at National Archives of Ireland website. Some fragments of the earlier censuses are available from Pay Per View/Subscription websites, but the National Archives of Ireland and Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) also hold some.

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It may be that you are not sure of how to go about finding records for an ancestor. Well, two – or more – heads are better than one! Register for FREE at <http://www.genealogy-specialists.com/> and post details of your hard to find ancestor. The members will do their utmost to track them down for you!

If you would like to find out more about Censuses, how they were taken and the best ways of finding your elusive forebears, listed below are some products that will certainly help you along your way and all of them are available from [www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com). Just pop the reference number in the website search box to see the details.

- Pre-Census Sources for Irish Demography Ref: MCH-23

Parish Chest also has a complete section dedicated to censuses, which is broken down by county. Log on to [www.parishchest.com](http://www.parishchest.com) and take a look at the Irish census records.