

**Evidence and Enquiry: Using the 1901 and 1911 census forms in the History classroom,
2015 edition**

Examining the 1911 census record of Bernard McAllister

Section One: Locating the census record.

To find the census form for Bernard McAllister in 1911.

1. Go to www.census.nationalarchives.ie.
2. Click on “Search the census records for Ireland 1901 and 1911”.
3. Choose the census year, 1901.
4. Write in the name *McAllister* on the surname line.
5. Write in *Bernard* on the Forename line.
6. Click the name *Dublin* in the drop-down list on the county line.
7. Write in the name *Donabate* in the DED line.
8. Click search.
9. Click on the name *Bernard McAllister*.
10. To see all of the personal information about his family, click on the box for the heading, “show all information”.
11. Below the typed family information, you can view the four original forms relating to McAllister’s family - the household return (Form A), the enumerator’s abstract (Form N), the house and building returns (Form B1), and the Out-Offices Return (Form B2).
12. If the number 2 appears underneath any of these forms, click on the number. It will open up the reverse side of the form.

Section Two: The 1911 census form of Bernard McAllister

The following is a transcript of the information provided by *Christopher McAllister*, the “head of household”, on the 1911 census form, under the heading, “Residents of a house 28 in Beaverstown (Donabate, Dublin)”.

<i>Surname</i>	<i>Christian name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Relation to head of family</i>	<i>Religion</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
McAllister	Christopher	53	Male	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Farmer
McAllister	Mary	47	Female	Wife	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	-
McAllister	John J	19	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Working on Farm
McAllister	Bernard	16	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Working on Farm
McAllister	Charles E	15	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Ellen M	13	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	William P	12	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Philip J	10	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Mary B	8	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Jane J	7	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Christopher	5	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Scholar
McAllister	Dymphna	3	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	-
McKenna	Mary	50	Female	Servant	Roman Catholic	Co Dublin	Servant

<i>Surname</i>	<i>Christian name</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Irish Language</i>	<i>Marital Status</i>	<i>Specified Illnesses</i>	<i>Years Married</i>	<i>Children Born</i>	<i>Children Living</i>
McAllister	Christopher	Read and write	-	Married	-	20	11	10
McAllister	Mary	Read and write	-	Married	-	20	11	10
McAllister	John J	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Bernard	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Charles E	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Ellen M	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	William P	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Philip J	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Mary B	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Jane J	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Christopher	Cannot read	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McAllister	Dymphna	Cannot read	-	Single	-	-	-	-
McKenna	Mary	Read and write	-	Single	-	-	-	-

Section Three:

What can we learn about the McAllister family from this census information?

- 1 What is the name of the “head of family”? What was his occupation?
- 2 What is the name of the mother? What is her occupation?
- 3 In what year did they marry? *Mary McAllister* gave birth to eleven children. What percentage of them were still alive in 1911?
- 3 How many sons were at home on the “census night”?
- 4 How many daughters were at home on the “census night”?
- 5 What was the religion of the McAllister family?
- 6 Where were all of the McAllister children born?
- 7 All members of *Christopher McAllister’s* family over the age of five could “read and write”, according to the form. Is there any other information on the form to show that the McAllister family placed great value on the importance of education?
- 8 Why was the occupation of Mary McKenna written on the form while that of Mary McAllister was not?
9. What was the occupation listed for Bernard McAllister?
10. Look at the information given about Bernard, and other members of the family, as listed by Christopher McAllister, the “head of household” by his father. What can we learn about Bernard McAllister and his family from this census information?

Activity:

Write in any two questions that you can also ask about this information or any other census information that is available for Bernard McAllister.

A.

B.

Look at the original census form filled in by Christopher McAllister

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1911.
Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.

FORM A.

No. on Form B. 78

RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 2nd of APRIL, 1911.

NAME AND SURNAME.	RELATION to Head of Family.	RELIGIOUS PROFESSION.	EDUCATION.	AGE (last Birthdays) and SEX.		RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.				WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If Deaf and Dumb; Dumb only; Blind; Imbecile or Idiot; or Lunatic.	
				Male.	Female.		Whether Married, Widowed, or Single.	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year, write "under one."	Children born alive.	Children still living.				
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Christopher M. Allister	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	53		Farmer	Married	20	11	10	Co. Dublin			
Mary M. Allister	Wife	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	48	48		Married	20	11	10	Co. Dublin			
John J. M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	17		Working on Farm	Single				Co. Dublin			
Bernard M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	16		Working on Farm	Single				Co. Dublin			
Charles M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	15		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Ellen M. M. Allister	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	13		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Margaret M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	12		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Philip J. M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	10		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Mary B. M. Allister	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	8		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Joseph J. M. Allister	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	7		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Christopher M. Allister	Son	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	5		Scholar	Single				Co. Dublin			
Sybil M. M. Allister	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	3		Servant	Single				Co. Dublin			
Mary M. M. Allister	Servant	Roman Catholic	Head & Clerk	50		Servant	Single				Co. Dublin			

I hereby certify, as required by the Act 10 Edw. VII. and 1 Geo. V., cap. 11, that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.
David M. Doyle Signature of Enumerator.

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.
Chr. M. Allister Signature of Head of Family.

Image 10 - Census 1911, McAllister Bernard (form A) family information

11. What was the date for the 1911 census?
12. Who signed the form, at the bottom, stating that the return was "correct"?
13. Who signed the form, at the bottom, as "Head of Family", saying that it was a "true" return?
14. Why were two people needed to sign the form?
15. "David M. Doyle, Sgt" signed the form as an Enumerator. He was a member of the Dublin Metropolitan Police [DMP]. Why would a policeman be chosen to do this type of work?
16. Do a search for the 1911 census form of Sergeant David M. Doyle. Put in his personal information. Click the heading, "More search options". Write *constable* or *sergeant* into the *occupation* box. Why is it difficult to comment on his personal information?

N.B. Make sure that you delete the word *constable* or *sergeant* from the *occupation* box before you make any more searches.

Section Four: Bernard McAllister's witness statement for the Bureau of Military

History

Bernard was 16 years of age in 1911.

In 1916, he took part in the 1916 rising when he was 21 years old.

He provided a statement of his activities during the period 1913 to 1921.

Bernard McAllister's witness statement can be found at the [search page](#) for witnesses on the site of the Bureau of Military History.

Find his record by clicking the letter M, and then clicking on the line, *McAllister, Bernard*.

Click on the PDF icon on the right hand side to open the statement. You can save this to your device for your own personal study.

He gives an account from the point of view of a witness and participant who played a part in the events that took place in Ireland between 1913 and 1921.

Any historical document that assists us to understand the past can be examined in response to a simple series of prompts, called the 5 W's – who, what, why, where, when.

So, when you have finished your study of Bernard's witness statement, can you write a simple response to the following five questions -

- 1) Who supplied the information in the statement?

- 2) What was it about?

- 3) Why was it written down?

- 4) Where did the events it describes take place?

- 5) When was it produced?

Section Five: Examining Bernard McAllister's witness statement, covering the events of the period 1913 to 1921.

1) Examining the title page

Answer the following questions, using the information from the title page of her statement.

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BUIÓ STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21 NO. W.S. 147

ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21
STATEMENT BY WITNESS
DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 147

Witness
Captain Bernard McAllister

Identity
Member of 5th Battn. (Fingal) Dublin Bde. I.V.

Subject
5th Bn. (Fingal) I.V. 1913-1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness
Nil

File No. 8.1019

Form B.S.M. 2

Answer the following questions, using the information from this page.

- 1) What was the name of the group who interviewed him?
- 2) What is the number of his witness statement (W. S.)?
- 3) What was his rank in the Irish Volunteers?
- 4) What was his “identity” (or role)?
- 5) What is listed as the subject of his witness statement?
- 6) What is the file number of his witness statement?
- 7) Why is all of this information included on the first page of his statement? Why are these elements important for a historian?

2) Examining the signatures

On the last page of his statement, Bernard McAllister signed his statement.

Signed B. McAllister
Date 1-10-48

Witness Matthew Barry COMMANDANT.
M. BARRY.
Date 1-10-48

BUREAU OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BURD STAIRS BUILDING 1813-21 No. W.S. <u>147</u>

- 1) Why, in your opinion did Bernard McAllister sign this form?
- 2) What date was it signed on?
- 3) What was the army rank of the person who witnessed Bernard McAllister’s signature?
- 4) What was his name?
- 5) Why was it necessary for a second person to sign this form?
- 6) What is the purpose of the stamp in the bottom right-hand corner?
- 7) Why is this type of information important for an historian?

3) Examining Bernard McAllister's statement

Read **page one** of his witness statement, and answer the following questions.

- 1) Where did McAllister live when he gave his statement?
- 2) Where did he join the Irish Volunteers?
- 3) What was the function of Mr. McColum?
- 4) What experience did Mr. McColum have to lead this type of training?
- 5) What special event took place at Howth?
- 6) How did his Irish Volunteer group get to Howth from Donabate?

Bernard McAllister goes on to describe in detail his experiences during the 1916 rising.

Activity one:

Read through the remainder of his witness statement. Draw up a series of five questions that would help a reader of the document to understand the most important or significant material in the witness statement.

Then write a brief explanation giving your reasons for highlighting this material.

How is your understanding of the events of the 1916 rising changed as a result of reading about his ~~her~~ experiences?

Question:

What benefit is it for a historian to have access to the census records, and a Bureau of Military statement witness statement, from a person who has some connection to the events of Easter Week, 1916?

Activity two:

Examine the information available in the 1901 census form for Bernard McAllister, available online, or in the file, "CSO 2015 J History 1901 Forms Bailey Gifford Hackett McAllister"

Question:

What, in your opinion, is the most significant new information in this census return?