

## **Sample study five**

**Title: A study of census material to portray life in the village of Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow in 1901.**

### **Outline Plan:**

This research study will examine a past village community at local level. Local history is becoming ever more important and more popular, and is contributing significantly to our knowledge of national history. The 1901 census was a very detailed survey of every part of Ireland and provides an excellent primary source for a local research study. This study will use primary source material from that census and will examine data regarding various households in Dunlavin, Co Wicklow. The research study includes a lot of primary source information and will add to the body of historical knowledge about Dunlavin and about the local history of Co. Wicklow.

### **Evaluation of sources:**

The principal source used for this study was the Census of 1901. This census information is available in the National Archive of Ireland in Bishop St., Dublin. Both household and street return forms (forms A and B) were examined. They are accurate primary sources. The main disadvantage of the censuses is that they contain a huge amount of information. The study will only concentrate on information regarding six sample households. One of the skills that I learned while doing this research study was to use only the information that I needed and interpret it in a historical way, in light of the general situation in Ireland at this time, which I found out about from the secondary sources listed at the end. The secondary sources gave a good overview, but were very general for a local study such as this one.

## Extended Essay

This research study will examine part of a village community from the past. Census returns from the 1901 census will be used to build up a picture of this community.

The research study centres on the village of Dunlavin, a village in west Wicklow. The full village would be too big to include in this study, so it will concentrate on the inhabitants of one row of houses along the main street. The census enumerator had to fill in a form called 'Form B' to show the returns for the street and each individual household had to fill in a 'Form A' to show the situation in their own house. This study uses both forms A and B to form a partial picture of Dunlavin village in 1901.

The census forms offer a personalised form of local history, and reading them (in the original handwriting) is like opening a window onto another age. Rather than do a full report on the town in 1901, this study concentrates on one street (Main Street) and then looks at six randomly chosen household case studies. Form B (i.e. the street form) from 1901 gives us much information. Seventeen houses are marked in for the street (all built – none building). All the houses are either first or second class. No third or fourth class houses existed here in 1901, which was a big improvement on the pre-famine situation, when there were many third and fourth class houses. The following table summarises the Main Street situation in 1901.

Head of Family	Type of House	No. of Rooms	No. in Family	Class of House
Sarah Lawler	Public House	8	10	1
William Byrne	Shop	7	2	1
Joseph Waldron	Private House	3	2	2
Kerry L. Supple	Private House	10	2	1
Henry Hoey	Hotel	17	3	1
John Hawkes	Bank	8	4	1
Henry Coleborn	Shop	6	6	2

Peter A. Doran	Hotel	10	7	1
Peter B. Coleman	Private House	8	3	2
James Gordon	Private House	2	0	2
James Keogh	Lodging House	4	6	2
Edward Wall	Private House	4	4	2
Philip Doran	Private House	4	8	2
James Kelly	Shop	6	13	2
John Thomas	Private House	6	2	2
Michael Moore	Private House	2	6	2
Peter Masterson	Private House	2	6	2

Every house on the street reported that only one distinct family lived there – again this was an improvement on the pre-famine situation, when houses were often occupied by more than one family in an over-populated village.

The study will now concentrate on a random sample of half a dozen Household Return Forms (Form A) and examine them in detail. These are the households headed by Sarah Lawler, Joseph Waldron, John Hawkes, Henry Coleborn, Peter A. Doran and Edward Wall on that census night in 1901.

<b>HOUSEHOLD OF SARAH LAWLER</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to Head</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Sarah Lawler	Head	54	Widow	Co. Wicklow	Catholic	Merchant
James Lawler	Son	29	Married	"	"	Merchant
Marie Lawler	Daughter	24	Married	"	"	-
Agnes Lawler	Daughter	26	Single	"	"	-
Nicholas Lawler	Grandson	2	Single	"	"	-
John Lawler	Grandson	9 mth	Single	"	"	-
Sarah Mapes	Servant	23	Single	"	"	Domestic
Maggie Fay	Servant	17	Single	"	"	Nurse
John McGough	Shop Assistant	17	Single	"	"	Shop Assistant
Eddie Whittle	Servant	20	Single	"	"	Porter

HOUSEHOLD OF JOSEPH WALDRON						
Name	Relationship to Head	Age	Married	Born	Religion	Profession
Joseph Waldron	Head	50	Yes	Co. Wicklow	Church of Ireland	Plasterer
Frances Waldron	Wife	52	Yes	"	"	

HOUSEHOLD OF JOHN HAWKES						
Name	Relationship to Head	Age	Married	Born	Religion	Profession
John Hawkes	Head	40	Yes	Co. Cork	Church of Ireland	Bank Manager
Lizzie Hawkes	Wife	35	Yes	Co. Tipperary	"	
May Hawkes	Daughter	12	No	Co. Cork	"	
Kate Rielly	Maid	18	No	Co. Wicklow	Catholic	Domestic

HOUSEHOLD OF HENRY COLEBORN						
Name	Relationship to Head	Age	Married	Born	Religion	Profession
Henry Coleborn	Head	40	Yes	Hants	Irish Church	Jeweller
Sarah Coleborn	Wife	40	Yes	Co. Wicklow	"	
Maud Coleborn	Daughter	18	No	Hants	"	
Walter Coleborn	Son	14	No	Co. Wicklow	"	Scholar
Mabel Coleborn	Daughter	6	No	"	"	Scholar
Henry J. Coleborn	Son	1	No	Co. Wicklow	"	

HOUSEHOLD OF PETER A. DORAN						
Name	Relationship to Head	Age	Married	Born	Religion	Profession
Peter A Doran	Head	26	Married	Co. Kildare	Catholic	Publican
Brigid Doran	Wife	22	Married	Co. Wicklow	"	Publican
Robert Miley	Assistant	45	Single	"	Protestant	Shop Assistant
Peter O'Toole	Assistant	24	Single	"	Catholic	"
Kate Archibald	Servant	24	Single	Co. Kildare	"	Domestic
Maggie Ennis	Servant	24	Single	Co. Kildare	"	"
Edward Yaul	Servant	35	Married	"	"	Servant

<b>HOUSEHOLD OF EDWARD WALL</b>						
<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship to Head</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Married</b>	<b>Born</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Edward Wall	Head	62	Yes	Co. Wicklow	RC	Car Owner
Kate Wall	Wife	60	Yes	"	"	
William Wall	Son	34	No	"	"	Car Driver
Edward Wall	Son	30	No	"	"	Car Driver

In all houses, all the adults were down as being literate. Education was obviously improving since the establishment of the national schools in the nineteenth century. Most of the people mentioned were born in Co. Wicklow. In those days home births were common and the local midwife would attend. Very few of the people from the sample households had moved any distance from the town – Dunlavin is only one mile from the border with County Kildare. One exception was the bank manager, John Hawkes, who was born in County Cork. His wife was a native of County Tipperary. They had probably moved into Dunlavin for professional (job) reasons. Another exception was the Englishman, Henry Coleborn, but he had obviously married a local girl.

Every household tells a story. The widowed Sarah Lawler, with her family ranging from her eldest son James (who probably ran the pub as he was described as a ‘merchant’) to her nine month old grandson; the middle-aged Waldrons in their three-roomed house; the professional Hawkes family; the Coleborns who had moved from England to start a new life in Dunlavin. On the other hand, the street also contained the young couple, the Dorans, with their premises listed as a hotel, but who describe themselves as ‘publicans’ (which gives rise to doubts as to which was their most lucrative line of trade), who had five servants all older than Brigid Doran – would they be classed as ‘upwardly mobile’ nowadays? Finally, the car-owning Wall family, whose two sons were in their thirties and unmarried. Perhaps this was a local example of a national trend, as the average age of marriage was increasing in Ireland at this time.

We can imagine all of these people walking the streets of Dunlavin at the turn of the last century. Their names are indelibly etched on Dunlavin – and on their census forms. The census certainly provides a vital source of information for local historical studies and this research study has re-created a small part of a past village community. The information from both street and household returns – forms A and B – has been used to provide information about the people of Dunlavin, their houses, their families, their religion and their occupations in 1901. The study has brought the pages of the census to life and has added to our knowledge of the small west Wicklow village of Dunlavin at this time, and to our understanding of the local history of Co. Wicklow.

### **Sources:**

1. Census of Ireland 1901, County Wicklow, (Dunlavin), Form A files.
2. Census of Ireland 1901, County Wicklow, (Dunlavin), Form B files.
3. F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland since the famine, London 1971.
4. R. F. Foster, Modern Ireland 1600-1972, London 1988.