

**Evidence and Enquiry: Using the 1901 and 1911 census forms in the History classroom,  
2016**

**Examining the 1911 census record of Grace Gifford**

**Section One: Locating the census record.**

To find the census form for Grace Gifford in 1911.

1. Go to [www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie).
2. Click on “Search the census records for Ireland 1901 and 1911”.
3. Choose the census year, 1911.
4. Write in the name *Gifford* on the surname line.
5. Write in *Grace* on the Forename line.
6. Click the name *Dublin* in the drop-down list on the county line.
7. Write in the name *Rathmines* in the DED line.
8. Click search.
9. Click on the name *Grace Gifford*
10. To see all of the personal information about her 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 her 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 Grace Gifford

The following is a transcript of the information on *Grace Gifford* on the 1911 census form, under the heading, “Residents of a house 97 in Palmerston Road (Rathmines & Rathgar East, Dublin)”

Surname	Christian name	Age	Sex	Relation to head	Religion	Birthplace	Occupation
Gifford	Frederick	75	Male	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Dublin	Solicitor
Gifford	Isabella Julia	63	Female	Wife	Member of Church of Ireland	Dublin	-
Gifford	Helen Ruth	30	Female	Daughter	Member of Church of Ireland	Dublin	-
Gifford	Muriel Enid	26	Female	Daughter	Member of Church of Ireland	Dublin	-
Gifford	Grace Eveline	23	Female	Daughter	Member of Church of Ireland	Dublin	-
Gifford	Sidney S K	21	Female	Daughter	Member of Church of Ireland	Dublin	-
Moore	Julia	30	Female	Domestic Servant	Roman Catholic	Ireland, Queens Co.	Domestic Servant

Surname	Christian name	Education	Irish Language	Marital Status	Specified Illnesses	Years Married	Children Born	Children Living
Gifford	Frederick	Read and write	-	Married	-	38	12	11
Gifford	Isabella Julia	Read and write	-	Married	-	-	-	-
Gifford	Helen Ruth	Read and write	Irish and English	Single	-	-	-	-
Gifford	Muriel Enid	Read and write	Irish and English	Single	-	-	-	-
Gifford	Grace Eveline	Read and write	Irish and English	Single	-	-	-	-
Gifford	Sidney S K	Read and write	Irish and English	Single	-	-	-	-
Moore	Julia	Read and write	Irish and English	Unmarried	-	-	-	-

### Section Three:

#### What can we learn about Grace Gifford's family from the 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? Why is there no occupation listed here?
- 3 In what year did they marry? *Isabella Gifford* gave birth to twelve children. What percentage of them were still alive in 1911? [The information on *Isabella's* children "born alive to present Marriage" is not filled in on the "Married Woman" line.]
- 4 How many daughters were at home on the "census night"? How many other family members were not listed on this form on the "census night"?
- 5 What was the religion of the daughters in the Gifford family? What was the religion of the parents? Why was this unusual for a marriage in Ireland?
- 6 Where were all of the Gifford children born? What was unusual about the manner in the father recorded this information on the original census form?
- 7 All of *Frederick Gifford's* daughters could "read and write", and also were listed under the heading "Irish and English". Is there any other information on the form to show that the Gifford family placed great value on the importance of education?
- 8 All of *Frederick Gifford's* daughters were listed under the heading, "Irish and English". *Frederick Gifford* and his wife were not. What does this say about education in Ireland in the late nineteenth century?
- 9 *Frederick Gifford* wrote in that all of his daughters were single, but that *Julia Moore*, the domestic servant, was "unmarried". Can you suggest any reason why he uses a different word with the same meaning when giving the information for *Julia Moore*?
10. *Julia Moore* was born in Queen's County? What is the name of this county today?
11. Look at all of the information given about *Grace*, and other members of the family unit, as listed by *Frederick Gifford*, the "head of household". What can we learn about *Grace Gifford* and her family from their census information?

Look at the original census form filled in by Frederick Gifford

**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. 97

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 (see Birthdays) and SEX.		RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION.	PARTICULARS AS TO MARRIAGE.			WHERE BORN.	IRISH LANGUAGE.	If Dead and Dumb; Blind; Imbecile or Idiot; or Lunatic.	
				Insert Age opposite each name—the Age of Males in column 6, and the Age of Females in column 7.	For Infants under one year state the age in months, as "under 1 month," "1 month," "2 months," &c.		Whether— "Married," "Widowed," "Single."	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one."	Children born alive to present Marriage. If no children born alive, write "None" in column 11.				Total Children born alive.
Christian Name.	Surname.			6	7.		9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
Frederick	Gifford	Head	Roman Catholic	Road Cart	75	Solicitor	Married	38	12	11	Edinburgh		None
Isabella Julia	Gifford	Wife	Member of the Church of Ireland	do	63	do	Married (annulled)	40			Edinburgh		
John Paul	Gifford	do	do	do	30	do	Single				Dublin	Irish & English	
Michael David	Gifford	do	do	do	26	do	do				"	Irish & English	
Elizabeth	Gifford	do	do	do	23	do	do				"	Irish & English	
Edmund	Gifford	do	do	do	21	do	do				"	Irish & English	
James	Moore	Domestic Servant	Roman Catholic	do	30	Domestic Servant	Married				London (Australia Co)		

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.

James W. Byrne, Signature of Enumerator.

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.  
Frederick Gifford, Signature of Head of Family.

Image 8 - Census 1911, Gifford Grace (form A) family information

12. What was the date for the 1911 census?
13. Who signed the form, at the bottom, stating that the return was "correct"?
14. Who signed the form, at the bottom, as "Head of Family", saying that it was a "true" return?
15. Why were two people needed to sign the form?
16. "James W. Byrne" signed the form as an Enumerator. Do a search for his census form. Why is it difficult to locate his census record?

#### **Section Four: Grace Gifford’s witness statement for the Bureau of Military History**

Grace was 23 years of age in 1911.

In 1916, after the 1916 rising, when she was 28 years old, she married Joseph Plunkett in Kilmainham Jail on 4 May, within hours of his execution.

She provided a statement of her activities during the period 1913 to 1916.

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

Find her record by clicking the letter P for Plunkett, and then clicking on the line, *Plunkett, Grace*.

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.

She gives an account from the point of view of a witness to some of the events that took place in Ireland between 1915 and 1916.

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 Grace’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 Grace Gifford's witness statement, covering the events of the period 1915 to 1916.

1) Examining the title page

**ORIGINAL**

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21 BUREAU STAIRS MILITARY 1013-21 W.S. 257
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ROINN  COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 257.....

Witness  
Mrs. Grace Plunkett,  
11 Nassau Street,  
Dublin.

Identity  
Widow of Joseph Plunkett (executed 1916)  
Nee Gifford.

Subject  
Account of Plunkett's activities 1915-16;  
Reference to document published in Holy Week 1916.

Conditions, if any, stipulated by Witness  
Nil.

File No. S.395.....

Form B.S.M. 2

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

- 1) What was the name of the group who interviewed her?
- 2) What is the number of her witness statement (W. S.)?
- 3) What was her "identity" (or role) in the events of 1913 to 1916?
- 4) What are listed as the subjects of her witness statement?
- 5) What is the file number of her witness statement?

6) Why is all of this information included on the first page of her statement? Why are these elements important for a historian?

**2) Examining the signatures**

On the last page of her statement, Grace Gifford signed her statement.

SIGNED: Grace P. Gifford Lt  
DATE: 1<sup>st</sup> June 1949

WITNESS: B. McAllister

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21  
BUREAU STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21  
No. W.S. 257

- 1) Why, in your opinion, did Grace Gifford sign this form?
- 2) What date was it signed on?
- 3) Why was the army rank of the person who witnessed Grace Gifford's signature not given here?
- 4) What was his name? The name of the officer who witnessed the statement of Bernard McAllister was printed underneath his signature. However, the name of this officer is not printed here. Why is this additional information of importance to a historian?
- 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) Look at the file number on Bernard McAllister's form, and compare it to that of Grace Gifford. What does it tell us about the work of the Bureau of Military History during the period 1948 to 1949?
- 8) Why is this type of information important for an historian?

### 3) Examining Grace Gifford's statement

Read page one of her witness statement, and the first section on page two, and answer following questions:

- 1) How much did Grace say that she knew about the "military side" of Joe's (Joseph Plunkett's) life?
- 2) How did Plunkett disguise himself before going to Germany in 1915?
- 3) How did Grace know the countries that he visited on his way to Germany?
- 4) Why did Plunkett go to Italy?
- 5) Plunkett met up with another Irish republican in Germany. What was his name?
- 6) Grace Gifford writes that "never lived a normal person's life. I have always been in the thick of things." What does she mean by this?

Grace Gifford goes on to describe in detail her relationship with Joseph Plunkett, who was one of the signatories of the 1916 proclamation. She converted to Catholicism in April 1916. In her witness statement, she describes buying her wedding ring, and the wedding ceremony in Kilmainham Jail:

I was just a few moments there to get married, and then again a few minutes to say good-bye that night; and a man stood there, with his watch in his hand, and said: "Ten minutes"

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*Activity one:*

Read through the remainder of her 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 her experiences?

*Question:*

What benefit is it for a historian to have access to the census records, and a 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 Grace Gifford, available online, or in the file, "CSO 2015 J History 1901 Forms Bailey Gifford Hackett McAllister"

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



*Activity three:*

Read *Grace Gifford's* biography in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. This is available as an online database in public libraries, as well as in schools through the *Scoilnet.ie* website.

*Question:*

What additional personal details about Grace Gifford's life up to and including 1911 are available in this source?