

Beyond Form A: Unlocking the Hidden Depths of the Irish Census

AGI Irish Census Records

Most people dive into the Irish 1901 and 1911 census returns looking for names — but often the real story lies in the forms they skip. Forms B1, B2, and N reveal how people lived, their dwelling place, and the shape of their communities. And there are other forms that deal with institutions and the sick. If you want to go beyond the basics and uncover the texture of Irish life in 1901 and 1911, these are the forms to explore.

Form A is the main census return form which many do not go beyond. See earlier resource sheets: [1901 Census of Ireland Information Sheet](#) and [1911 Census of Ireland Information Sheet](#).

Form N Enumerator's House and Building Return served as a master record for the area and documented every building in a given location, including inhabited and uninhabited dwellings, public buildings and ruins.

Form B1 House and Building Return captured data on the type of building, whether it was inhabited, the building materials used, number of windows and rooms. From this information it classified the houses from 1st down to 4th. The class is based on size and does not depict quality, as can be seen in many of the tenements that plagued the cities.

Form B2 Out-Offices and Farm-Steadings recorded the out-offices and farm buildings for each household — up to 20 types such as stables, dairies, piggeries, and fowl houses — revealing household scale, function, and economic activity.

Together, these four forms provide a rich picture of social, economic, and living conditions in early 20th-century Ireland — from national trends to the intimate details of households and communities. Apart from Form A, the Enumerator completed the others.

Example: 1 Dominick Street Lower, Dublin, 1911 Census

Using Form N and B1 we can see that 10 families or 58 people lived in this 15-roomed 1st class house at no. 1 Dominick Street Lower in 1911. Each family occupied either 1 or 2 rooms. This house would not have had an inside toilet or bathroom and reflects the conditions for many in Dublin at this time with over 20,000 families living in just one room, while another 5,000 had only two.

Enumerator Form N

| Number on Form B | DWELLING HOUSES | | | PERSONS | | | RELIGIOUS PROFESSION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-------------|----------|---------|--------|-------|----------------------|----|------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|-----------|---|-------------|---|---------|---|-------|---|-----------|---|
| | Inhabited | Uninhabited | Building | Male | Female | Total | Roman Catholic | | Protestant (Episcopal) | | Protestant (Presbyterian) | | Methodist | | Independent | | Baptist | | Other | | All other | |
| 1 | 1 | - | - | 10 | 15 | 25 | 24 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 2 | 1 | - | - | 10 | 27 | 37 | 46 | 26 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland

nationalarchives.ie/collections/search-the-census/view-pdf?doc=nai000090002

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