

# The Census of Ireland Returns for 1851 Reflects the Dire Effects of the Famine in the Parish of Lorrha

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The Census of Ireland in 1851 recorded the dramatic decline in the population of Ireland as a result of the Famine from 8.175 million in 1841 to 6.55 million in 1851. In fact, the decline was even more dramatic as it is estimated that the population of the country had climbed to 8.7 million by 1846. The decline was accounted for by the death of one million people and the emigration of 1.25 million, two-thirds of whom went to the U.S. The general perception was that the famine decimated the countryside, but it had a severe effect on the towns as well. Of the twelve hundred towns in the country only one-fourth managed to maintain or increase their populations between 1841-1851, and those that did increase were mostly port cities and coastal towns. Three quarters of the towns had sizeable losses of between one and two thousand of their populations. In County Tipperary Cashel and Roscrea lost one-third of their populations. One of the results of the Famine, apart from death and emigration, was a slump in marriage rates and a decline of two-thirds in the birth rate.

The 1851 Census was part of the Census of the United Kingdom and was taken on March 30. It is of historical interest in the U.K. because it was the first census to record the considerable shift from the countryside to the town, showing just over half the population residing in urban centres for the first time.

The census was also a major improvement on previous ones. It was the first to record the parish or town of the person, the marital status, the exact age – it was to be used in 1909 to determine age, when the old age pension was introduced - occupation and whether the person was blind, deaf or an imbecile.

## Previous Censuses

The first attempt to take an official census in Ireland was in 1813. The supervision of the enumeration was entrusted to the Grand Juries, but they proved inadequate to the task and the attempt was abandoned.

A second attempt was made in 1821 under the superintendence of the Magistrates at Quarter Sessions and the Assistant Barristers. In spite of many difficulties including open hostility in some districts and an undefined state of boundaries in other places, the census was completed and presented to the public in 1823.

The next enumeration of the people was taken in 1831 but it was unsatisfactory. It didn't start simultaneously in all parts of the country, and it extended over a considerable period. More importantly, the enumerators were under the impression that they would be paid in proportion to the numbers they enumerated which, apparently, was so in many cases.

The Census of 1841 was a major improvement. For the first time the Ordnance Survey maps were available. As well there was a regularly organised police force, the Irish Constabulary, not yet the Royal, from which a corps of enumerators could be selected. This census was the first to employ Forms of Family Return to be filled by the head of the family. Overall, this census was regarded as a model and was to be improved on by additional information such as school attendance, etc in later censuses.

## The 1851 Census

Part 1 of the census showed Area, Population and Number of Houses by Townsland and Electoral Divisions. The results for the Parish of Lorrha and Dorrha are given in the Barony of Lower Ormond, and they also include the population in each townsland in 1841.

Twenty-seven townslands are listed in Lorrha Parish and the total area is given as 15,679 acres 3 roods and 26 perches. The number of people residing there in 1841 was 4,742, comprised of 2450 males and 2292 females. The number residing there in 1851 was 2,860 comprised of 1,455 males and 1,405 females. The number of houses in the parish in 1841 was 775 and this had declined to 501 in 1851.

Abbeyville is first on the list of townslands and it had a population of 213, 109 males and 104 females, in

1841. This was reduced to 106, 63 males and 43 females, in 1851. The number of houses was reduced from 39 to 17.

Annagh had a population of 237, 131 males and 106 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 86, 44 males and 42 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 42 to 16.

Ashpark had a population of 63, 36 males and 27 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 42, 18 males and 24 females, in 1851. The number of houses was the same, 7, in both censuses.

Ballincor had a population of 124, 65 males and 59 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 56, 27 males and 29 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 21 to 11.

Ballymacegan had a population of 484, 250 males and 234 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 278, 135 males and 143 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 74 to 49.

Ballymacegan Island had no inhabitants.

Ballyquirk had a population of 313, 161 males and 152 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 173, 90 males and 83 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 45 to 28.

Bredagh had a population of 307, 160 males and 147 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 110, 54 males and 56 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 48 to 18.

Curraghglass had a population of 366, 181 males and 185 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 167, 89 males and 78 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 61 to 29.

Derrybreen had a population of 10, 7 males and 3 females, in 1841. This had increased to 11, 8 males and 3 females. In 1851. The number of houses, 1, was the same.

Grange had a population of 314, 162 males and 152 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 203, 107 males and 96 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 54 to 37.

Hayes' Island had no population in 1841. It had a population of 6, 2 males and 4 females, in 1851. It had 1 house in 1851.

Kilcarren had a population of 88, 38 males and 59 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 73, 38 males and 35 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 15 to 13.

Kilgask had a population of 201, 112 males and 89 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 118, 55 males and 63 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 31 to 19.

Kilregane had a population of 172, 84 males and 88 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 134, 66 males and 68 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 33 to 24.

Lehinch had a population of 286, 149 males and 137 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 197, 113 males and 84 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 51 to 38.

Lissernane had a population of 183, 82 males and 101 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 140, 68 males and 72 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 34 to 24.

Lissagadda had a population of 59, 38 males and 21 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 16, 10 males and 6 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 7 to 5.

Long Island had no population.

Lorrha had a population of 162, 87 males and 75 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 90, 47 males and 43 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 28 to 16.

Ploverhill had a population of 15, 8 males and 7 females, in 1841, This was reduced to 12, 6 males and 6 females, in 1851. The number of houses, 3 remained the same.

Portland had a population of 207, 111 males and 96 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 129, 57 males and 72 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 33 to 23.

Portland Island had no population.

Portland Little had a population of 34, 21 males and 13 females, in 1841. This number was reduced to 23, 13 males and 10 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 4 to 2.

Redwood had a population of 592, 308 males and 284 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 344, 177 males and 167 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 88 to 58.

Lorrha Town had a population of 312, 150 males and 162 females, in 1841. It increased to 346, 168 males and 178 females, in 1851. The number of houses had increased from 56 to 62.

### **Percentage Decline**

The percentage decline in the parish as a whole was just under 40%. All but two places had declines and in some cases the decline was substantially more than 40%. The biggest decline was in Lissagadda, which registered a 73% decline. Bredagh was another place with a serious decline, 64%, closely followed by Annagh with 63% Ballincor and Curraghgloss townlands had a 54% decline. Two of the most populous townlands, Redwood and Ballymacegan, had declines of 41 and 43 percent, respectively. At the other end of the scale Kilcarren (sic) had a 17% decline.

There were two places that registered increases, Derrybreen, the least populous, showed a 10% increase, and Lorrha Town had a similar increase.

### **Dorrha Parish**

Thirty townlands are recorded in the Parish of Dorrha, which was given an area of 15,750 acres 2 roods and 15 perches. The number of people residing there in 1841 was 4,267, 2,186 males and 2081 females. The number residing there in 1851 was 2,662, 1,348 males and 1,314 females. The number of houses in the parish in 1841 was 674 and this had declined to 442 in 1851.

Annagh had a population of 295, 163 males and 132 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 242, 127 males and 115 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 43 to 33.

Annaghanerrig had a population of 68, 38 males and 30 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 51, 28 males and 23 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 8 to 7.

Arbourhill had a population of 43, 16 males and 27 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 17, 8 males and 9 females, in 1851. The number of houses declined from 4 to 3.

Ballyea had a population of 253, 121 males and 132 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 147, 71 males and 76 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 36 to 24.

Ballyduff had a population of 224, 121 males and 103 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 134, 68 males and 66 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 38 to 30.

Ballyoughter had a population of 155, 81 males and 74 females, in 1841, It was reduced to 129, 66 males and 63 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 26 to 23.

Clongowna had a population of 64, 30 males and 34 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 42, 20 males and 22 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 8 to 6.

Clonmona had a population of 221, 98 males and 123 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 128, 56 males and 72 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 37 to 25.

Coolross had a population of 519, 281 males and 238 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 254, 121 males and 133 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 97 to 32.

Cullagh had a population of 96, 54 males and 42 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 66, 32 males and 34 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 15 to 11.

Culleen had a population of 63, 36 males and 27 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 44, 24 males and 20 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 8 to 7.

Derrinsallow had a population of 82, 46 males and 36 females, in 1841. It was increased to 102, 58 males and 44 females, in 1851. The number of houses increased from 12 to 15.

Derry had a population of 409, 204 males and 205 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 277, 141 males and 136 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 70 to 49.

Graigue had a population of 140, 67 males and 73 females, in 1841. This was reduced to 74, 36 males and 33 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 24 to 14.

Gurteen had a population of 81, 38 males and 43 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 74, 35 males and 39 females, in 1851. The number of houses increased from 12 to 13.

Killenaule had a population of 70, 36 males and 34 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 43, 21 males and 22 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 11 to 7.

Lelagh had a population of 70, 36 males and 34 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 42, 22 males and 20 females, in 1851. The number of houses declined from 9 to 6.

Lehinch had no population.

Lisballyard had a population of 209, 103 males and 106 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 125, 64 males and 61 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 34 to 19.

Lisheen had a population of 11, 8 males and 3 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 8, 4 males and 4 females, in 1851. The number of houses, 2, remained the same.

Newtown had a population of 10, 6 males and four females, in 1841. It increased to 16, 9 males and 7 females, in 1851. The number of houses, 3, remained the same.

Rath had a population of 31, 16 males and 15 females, in 1841. It increased to 36, 22 males and 14 females, in 1851. The number of houses increased from 5 to 6.

Redwood had a population of 646, 339 males and 307 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 350, 184 males and 166 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 91 to 58.

Rockview had a population of 70, 30 males and 40 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 39, 17 males and 22 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 12 to 9.

Roden had a population of 69, 35 males and 34 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 13, 8 males and 5 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 10 to 2.

Ross had a population of 91, 51 males and 40 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 47, 25 males and 22 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 14 to 8.

Roughan had a population of 19, 10 males and 9 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 10, 7 males and 3 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 4 to 3.

Sraduff had a population of 42, 22 males and 20 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 36, 15 males and 21 females, in 1851. The number of houses declined from 7 to 6.

Sharragh had a population of 118, 57 males and 61 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 54, 32 males and 22 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 16 to 7.

Walshpark had a population of 98, 43 males and 55 females, in 1841. It was reduced to 62, 27 males and 35 females, in 1851. The number of houses had declined from 18 to 10.

### **Percentage Decline**

The percentage decline in the parish as a whole was less than 38%, approximately 2% less than in the Parish of Lorrha. As in the case of Lorrha Parish, the decline in some of the townlands was substantially more.

Roden saw the biggest reduction in population, from 69 to 13 or 81%. Arbourhill also suffered a severe



decline, 42 to 17, or 60%. Sharragh had a 54% reduction. Townslands with large populations, such as Coolross and Redwood, experienced substantial falls, 51 and 46 percent, respectively. In contrast Ballyoughter had the lowest decline, 17%. Three townslands showed increases, Derrinsallow 24%, Newtown 60%, Rath 16%. In the last two cases the numbers were small but in Derrinsallow there was an increase in numbers from 82 to 102. This may have been due to the existence of a large cornmill in the place from 1830, which was expanded in 1850, and provided employment.

## Results of the Famine

John O'Donovan, the noted scholar, who translated and edited the Annals of the Four Masters, gave this view of the country after the Famine: 'You will see nothing to cheer or please you, not a song is heard from the ploughman or a whistle from the ass driver; but solemn and awful stillness reigns, which seems to forbode dreadful reaction and frightful commotion.'

I don't have specific results for Lorrha and Dorrha other than the declines given above. In the county as a whole the level of emigration between 1841 and 1851 was between 10 and 12.4%. People emigrated from many different ports to the U.S. and the fare was usually £3-10-0. Because this was beyond the means of the poorest emigrants, they went to England instead.

If emigration followed the pattern in other places in Tipperary, it was mostly the poor who disappeared from the land through emigration or into the workhouses. This disappearance into the workhouses precipitated the departure from the land because anyone with a quarter acre or more, who wished to go into the workhouse, had to give up the tenancy. It is estimated that four-fifths of those in fourth-class houses, usually on a quarter-acre, were cleared from the landscape. One-fifth of those in third-class houses were cleared.

Another factor in the clearance of the poor from the land was the bankruptcy of estates. Many of the purchasers were local speculators who were determined to make a return on their investments by focusing on sheep and dry cattle. Many tenants were evicted as a result, which led to the Tenant League in August 1850. The level of evictions in Tipperary was the highest in the country at 10.4%. The county lost 37.5% of its holdings between 1847 and 1853 because of landlord consolidation.

## Robberies and Disturbances

We read in the Nenagh Guardian on January 7, 1847, of a case at Lorrha petty Sessions: 'Information's were taken against James Short, Wm. Nevin and John Kennedy for being riotously assembled with a number of other persons at Carrick on the 26th ult. and stopping five loads of flour, the property of William Hogan of Borrisokane, and stealing a bag of said flour . . .'

It was reported on January 8, 1848, that 'Two sheep, the property of Thos. Farrell, esq. of Lorrha, were stolen on New Year's Day.'

Another report on February, 9, 1848 stated: 'On Saturday evening, while William Darcy, Thomas Biggs, and others, were landing a boat at the Quay, Belleview, near Lorrha, they were suddenly attacked by four men, who assaulted them with sticks and attempted to take away the boat, which contained a large quantity of Indian meal, some fish and other eatable commodities, On the boatman shouting: 'Robbers!', the men made off.'

There is a report of a threatening notice on April 20, 1850: 'William Hogan, residing near the village of Lorrha, received the following threatening notice: 'William Hogan, you are doomed to an untimely death for taking and keeping the window Cleary's place – our jury has sat on you and found you guilty of the greatest injustice to her. I therefore charge you on the peril of your life to give up your claim in this, or you will get the death of Mr. Hall in the noonday. If you do not I will send a messenger to you that will not fail to deliver his commands.' Signed: Captain J. T. Brushwood.

Apparently breaking into houses became an everyday occurrence. The owners in many cases armed themselves and we learn that the sale of guns increased. Also, strong farmers defended their turnip crops, sheep, and cattle, with the assistance of armed watchmen, who were housed in field huts.

The Quaker Grubb family in the Clogheen area exported flour and sent it by cart to ports in the south-east.

Many of these deliveries were attacked on the way. At the same time some of the women in the family organised relief in the form of soup kitchens on the estate!

**Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan**

This distinguished gentleman, who features as plain Trevelyan in the Fields of Athenry, epitomises the callous and indifferent attitude of the British government to the plight of the Irish in the famine. As assistant secretary to the Treasury, he had responsibility for administering relief during the famine. He implemented the government’s controversial policies of minimal intervention and attempting to encourage self-reliance. He was slow to disburse direct government aid to the Irish due to his strong belief in laissez-faire economics and the free hand of the market. Added to this belief was an anti-Irish conviction that the ‘judgment of God sent the calamity to teach the Irish a lesson.’

His philosophy was best summed up in his statement that ‘permanent good has been produced out of transient evil.’ The surplus mass of the population has been reduced. The system of minute division of land has ‘been happily got rid of.’ The class of pauper holdings rapidly gave way to large sized grazing farms ‘which from time immemorial have produced the cattle exports, the great source of wealth in this country.’ The Encumbered Estates Act ‘placed land within the power of a comparatively solvent proprietary class.’

Of course, the cost of all this was a matter of no importance!

No. 19  
 Net Annual Value, £ 16 15 s. d. *Lesbalyard*  
 No. in Rate Book. \_\_\_\_\_ House, &c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 RECEIVED the 10 day of *March* 1886, from  
*Mary Meara* Pounds, 11 Shillings,  
 and 2 Pence, of the Poor's Rate for the Graigue Electoral Division,  
 made the 31st day of October, 1885, as stated on the back of this receipt.  
 £ : 11 : 2 Rate  
 £ : 11 : 2 Arrears *B. Crookan* Collector.

**Parsonstown Union.**  
 DUPLICATE FOR LANDLORD.

No. 19  
 Net Annual Value, £ 16 : 15 s. d. *Lesbalyard*  
 No. in Rate Book. \_\_\_\_\_ House, &c. \_\_\_\_\_  
 RECEIVED the 10 day of *March* 1886, from  
*Mary Meara* Pounds, 11 Shillings,  
 and 2 Pence, of the Poor's Rate for the Graigue Electoral Division,  
 made the 31st day of October, 1885, as stated on the back of this receipt.  
 £ : 11 : 2 Rate  
 £ : 11 : 2 Arrears *B. Crookan* Collector.

Rent & Poor Rate Receipt 1886 Source: Nelius O'Meara.

PLEASE PRODUCE THIS RECEIPT AT NEXT PAYMENT

No. 40 Received from *Mary Meara*

The Sum of *Six* Pounds *five*  
 Shillings and *Six* Pence for *three* half Years  
 Rent due to the Messrs *Parson*  
 out of *Lesbalyard*  
 Ending the first day of *November* 1873 (three)  
 Dated the 11<sup>th</sup> day of *March* 1874  
 For the Rent of \_\_\_\_\_ made \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount of *6 5 6* 187  
 £ 6 5 6 *Nelius O'Meara*

PLEASE PRODUCE THIS RECEIPT AT NEXT PAYMENT

No. 40 Received from *Mary Meara*

The Sum of *Six* Pounds *five*  
 Shillings and *Six* Pence for *three* half Years  
 Rent due to the Messrs *Parson*  
 out of *Lesbalyard*  
 Ending the 1<sup>st</sup> day of *Nov* 1873 (three)  
 Dated the 24<sup>th</sup> day of *Oct* 1873  
 For the Rent of \_\_\_\_\_ made \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amount of *6 5 6* 187  
 £ 6 5 6 *Nelius O'Meara*

Rent receipt 1874 Source Nelius O'Meara.