

The Family of David Archibald living in William Street, Londonderry, 1901

1901 Census [Londonderry No. 4 DED (West Ward)] [PRONI: MIC354/5/26]

House No. in Census	Forename	Surname	Relationship	Religion	Education	Age	Sex	Profession	Marriage	Where Born
1	David	Archibald	Head of Family	Presb.	Read only	55	M	Labourer Farm	Married	Co. Derry
1	Rebecca	Archibald	Wife	Presb.	Read only	54	F	Housewife	Married	Co. Tyrone
1	Thomas	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	24	M	Carpenter	Not married	Co. Donegal
1	David	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	20	M	Plumber	Not married	Co. Donegal
1	Robert J.	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	17	M	Coach Painter	Not married	Co. Donegal
1	William J.	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	15	M	Upholsterer	Not married	Co. Donegal
1	Margaret	Dufdan	Boarder	Presb.	Read & write	83	F	Cook	Not married	Scotland
1	Frank	Deeney	Boarder	Roman Catholic	Read & write	17	M	Shirt Cutter	Not married	Co. Donegal

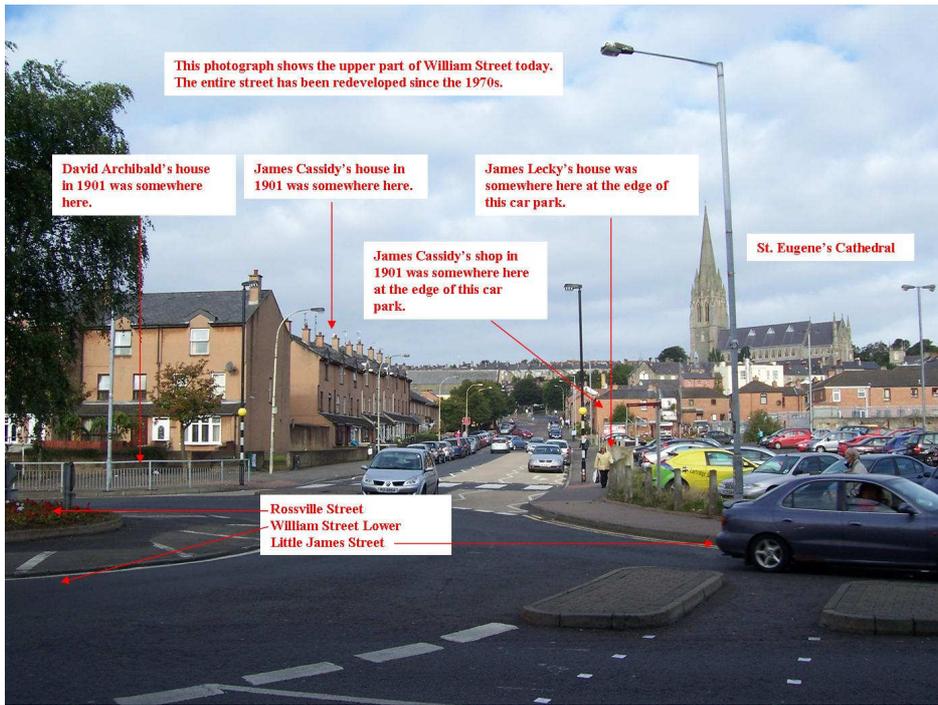
This particular census form is interesting because of where the various members of the family were born. The occupation and birthplace of the father suggested a rural background and, given the fact that his wife was born in Co. Tyrone would suggest that both had come originally from the other side of the Foyle. The fact that the four sons had been born in Co. Donegal between 1877 and 1886 suggested that the family had probably lived in a rural area of Donegal before moving to Derry.

When did the family arrive in William Street and where, exactly, did they live?

I know from maps and valuation records that in 1901 David Archibald and his family lived on the left-hand side of the street as you look up towards St. Eugene's Cathedral from Waterloo Place. As the map shows it was on the corner with Rossville Street. This map also shows the houses of other families included in the case studies.



Today this area has been completely redeveloped and the area where the house once stood is now part of the road and footpath - see photograph on the next page.



The number of the house in the 1901 Census is 63 in the West Ward part of the street. West Ward covered the left-hand side of the street from Chamberlain Street to the top of the street. The number assigned by the enumerator to each house in the Ward is simply the order in which the houses are entered in Form B1 - the House and Building Return - and this order usually reflects the route that the enumerator followed as he made his way up and down the street.

I found the Archibald house by using the Griffith's Valuation Records. The Griffith's [Tenement] Valuation dates from 1858 when all properties in the street were valued, given a number, and this number then put on a street map, thereby showing the exact location of each property within the street. The house in which David Archibald and his family lived in 1901 had been given the number 68 in William Street [without] in 1858. A copy of this map is shown opposite.



PRONI: VAL/2/D/5/11B

From 1860 onwards valuers visited the street and noted any changes. However, it is 1901 before David Archibald's name appears for the first time - more on this later.

By 1873 the valuers were using a new, very large scale map and over time the numbering on this map changed. A copy of this map covering the area where the Archibald house was situated, is shown below. It is easy to pick out the house at the corner of Rossville Street. The house has three sets of numbers - the original 68 [in black] from the 1858 map which is stroked out and replaced by 48 [in red], which is also stroked out and replaced by 42 [in purple]. This map covers the period 1873 to 1910. By 1910 the number of David's house on the map had changed to 42. Such renumbering of streets during this period was not uncommon in towns throughout the county.



PRONI: VAL/12/E/157/1/10

As mentioned above the name David Archibald first appears in William Street in 1901 in the Griffith's Revisions. This would suggest that the family were recent arrivals to the street. However the Griffith's Revisions only record a change after it has taken place, not when it occurred. The fact that three of the sons had occupations that were clearly urban suggests that they had probably been in the city for a number of years before 1901. A search of other streets in the Griffith's Revisions might have proved useful here.

The question still remains - where did the mother and father come from and how did they get to William Street via Donegal? To answer this question required some marriage and birth details. Given that the family had moved around a lot I sought the help of Brian Mitchell at the *Derry Genealogy Centre*, as it was called at the time I was researching this family. I knew that his database of marriages and births [not online at that time] also included some parishes in Donegal. Fortunately, searches of the *Derry Genealogy Centre* databases produced some interesting information.

Marriage of David Archibald and Rebecca Dixon

Before looking for a civil marriage certificate it is useful to do some age calculations from the 1901 census entries for the father, mother and children. It looks as if the father and mother were born in 1846 and 1847 and the four children in 1877, 1881, 1884 and 1886 respectively. It is also worth noting the forename of the wife, in this case Rebecca, which is a reasonably distinctive name. It is also worth remembering that ages given particularly in the

1901 census can often be inaccurate. In general 1901 ages often underestimate the actual age of a person. If the couple married in their twenties then they are likely to have married some time in the 1860s and, if this was the case, then there have to be older children that are not listed in the 1901 Census Returns.

Armed with this information, a search of the *Irish Genealogy: Central Signposting Index* brought up the marriage of a David Archibald and a Rebecca Dixon in 1869. This seemed to match the facts in the previous paragraph. If you are currently online you can try the search for yourself. When you reach the website type the name Archibald in the surname box and Rebecca in the spouse first name box, select Derry in the county box and click on the Search button. Notice I have not included the first name David. Often it is better not to put too much information into a search. The result should be one marriage.

The couple were married on 23rd December 1869 in 2nd Glendermott Presbyterian Church. This means that their ages at marriage were approximately 23 and 22. Both gave their occupations as servants and their respective fathers, James Archibald and Robert Dixon were both servants. The witnesses to the marriage were James Robinson and Sarah Jane Love. David Archibald gave his place of residence as Drumcorkin and Rebecca her place of residence as Kilnappy. As servants, David and Rebecca were probably living in a farmer's house.

There is no such townland as Drumcorkin in the area. Is it Drumconan or Derryarkin? Drumconan is in the parish of Clondermot, south east of Newbuildings. Derryarkin Lower and Upper are in the parish of Faughanvale, south of the village of Muff [Eglinton] Derryarkin is in the area where the surname Archibald is most prominent in the Barony of Tirkeeran and not far from the townland of Kilnappy which is also in the parish of Faughanvale.

The 1858/59 Griffith's [Tenement] Valuation lists a number of Archibalds living in the parish of Faughanvale and one family of Dixon in the townland of Muff [Eglinton]. Rebecca was born in Co. Tyrone and there is no evidence on the marriage certificate of her father's place of residence. He could have been living in either county in 1869. I have not been able to connect either David or Rebecca with any Archibald or Dixon names in this general area. If you want to see these names for yourself, carry out a search of the Griffith's Valuation database which can be accessed in the left-hand menu of the CD and if you want see the actual printed pages that these names are recorded on, go to the askaboutireland.ie website. To see all of the Archibalds on this site you will need to search for Archibald and then Archbold. You should also try both Dixon and Dickson. In both instances restrict your search to Co. Londonderry.

Because the families of labourers did not hold land and tended to move around a lot, they frequently go unrecorded in valuation records which are one of the main sources for identifying householders in the middle of the nineteenth century. Often, as you will see below, evidence of their whereabouts can only be gleaned from their children's birth certificates.

Births of the children of David and Rebecca Archibald

The couple's first child, Elizabeth, was born 28th December 1871 and the pair were now living in the townland of Templetown which is not too far away from the townland of Kilnappy. David was still listed as a labourer. The child's sponsor was Sarah Dixon. Does this mean that a family of Dixons was living in Kilnappy at this time or was Sarah a sister of Rebecca and was also a servant living nearby in a farmer's house? Elizabeth was not listed in the 1901 Census Returns. She would have been 41 by then and was either married, dead or had emigrated.

The next child that we were able to pick up in the Derry Genealogy database was Thomas Alexander born on the 13th November 1876. This must be the Thomas listed in the 1901 Census Returns, aged 24. Thomas was born in the townland of Drumskeellan in the parish of Muff in Co. Donegal and his father was listed as a land steward. Thomas was christened in Knowhead Presbyterian Church on 28th November 1876. The townland of Drumskeellan is situated about two miles to the north of Muff in Co. Donegal.

The next child was David, born 23rd April 1880, christened 28th September 1880 in Knowhead Presbyterian Church. The couple were still living in Drumskeellan and David was still a land steward. The sponsor was a Catherine Gallagher of Drumskeellan.

The next child was Robert John, born 2nd May 1883, christened 15th July 1883 in Knowhead Presbyterian Church. The couple were still living in Drumskeellan and David was now listed as a labourer. The sponsor listed was David Archibald.

The next child was William James, born 30th October 1885, christened 25th February 1886 in Knowhead Presbyterian Church. The couple were still living in Drumskellan and David was still listed as a labourer. The sponsor was Jane Hamilton of Mitchelstown, a nearby townland..

The next child was Maggie, born 23rd November 1887. There was no record of her christening in the database. The couple were still living in Drumskellan and David was still listed as a labourer. The sponsor listed was David Archibald. Maggie is not listed in the 1901 Census Returns. I looked up the "Ireland, Civil Registration Indexes", that is part of the Church of Latter Day Saints website, and found Maggie had died sometime during the second quarter of 1888 [April to June]. I have not actually seen the death certificate but I'm certain that this is the same Maggie.

I was fairly certain that there must have been a child born between the births of Elizabeth in 1871 and Thomas Alexander in 1876. Since no birth of c.1874 turned up in the DGC database I assumed that the child was probably born in Co. Donegal, but not in Drumskellan. Recently the databases of *Donegal Ancestry* have come online. I searched the *Birth Records for Co. Donegal* for a child of David Archibald as shown below.

2 matches for the search criteria: **Archibald (plus variants) 1870-1878**

Action	Source	Surname	First Name	Year	County
VIEW	Church Baptism	Archibald	Sarah	1874	Co. Donegal
VIEW	Civil Birth	Archibald	Sarah Anne	1874	Co. Donegal

Free Index Search for Co. Donegal

Type*:

Surname*:

Firstname:

Year*: +/-

Father Surname:
Only enter if different from child's surname

Father Firstname:

Parish / District:

Surname Match*: 2

[CLEAR](#) [SEARCH](#)

I then viewed the civil birth record and the result was this.

Civil Birth Record

Name:	Sarah Anne Archibald	Date of Baptism / Birth:	21/06/1874
Address:	Castruse Allsaints	Parish / District:	KILLEA
Gender:	Female	County:	Co. Donegal
		Denomination:	Civil Record
Father:	David Archibald	Mother:	Rebecca Dickson
Occupation:	Land Steward		
Sponsor 1 / Informant 1:	Matilda Mulberry	Sponsor 2 / Informant 2:	
Notes:	<input type="text"/>		

Much of the above information is self-explanatory. Castruse was in the parish of All Saints which was part of the barony of Raphoe. The townland lies to the south west of Derry City, about halfway between the city and the town of Newtowncunningham. Clearly this birth certificate is important because it confirms that the family came to Co. Donegal some time between 1872 and 1874. It also shows that David Archibald had already been a land steward before he came to Drumskillan..

By 1876, when Thomas their third child was born, they had moved to the townland of Drumskillan in the parish of Muff which lies to the north of the city. David Archibald was still a land steward but clearly had moved to a different estate or large farm. Interestingly during the years 1883-1887 he was listed as a labourer on the birth certificates. I don't think too much should be read into this - occupations given on birth certificates, etc. were often far from accurate.

The family lived in the townland of Drumskillan from 1876 until at least 1890. Some time after 1890 they moved to Derry. David, now 55, listed himself in the 1901 census as a labourer farm. This is a strange way of saying that you are a farm labourer. It's as if he put down labourer first and then added farm afterwards. Given that three of his sons were listed as a plumber, a coach painter and an upholsterer, they must have been in the city for a reasonable amount of time before 1901 to have acquired these trades. Thomas, the eldest son, was a carpenter and could have acquired that trade before arriving in the city.

1911 Census Returns [Londonderry No. 4 DED (West Ward)]

The recent arrival of the Online 1911 Census allowed me to search for the family in 1911. The only member of the family that I could find anywhere in the city or the county was Robert John. Robert John had married Maud Cooke in First Derry Presbyterian Church on 13th April 1903 and was still living in William Street. I'm not exactly sure if he was still living in his father's house or further up the street towards Abbey Street. Maud Cooke would have lived up there. The fact that the house number in the census is 29 suggests that he may moved up the street. The details from the census form for Robert John's family are shown below.

House No. in Census	Forename	Surname	Relationship	Religion	Education	Age	Sex	Profession	Marriage	Where Born
29	Robert John	Archibald	Head of Family	Presb.	Read only	28	M	Coach Painter	Married	Derry City
29	Maud	Archibald	Wife	Presb.	Read only	3	F		Married	Derry City
29	Robert John	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	8	M	Scholar	Single	Derry City
29	Jeannie	Archibald	Daughter	Presb.	Read & write	7	F	Scholar	Single	Co. Donegal
29	Henry James.	Archibald	Son	Presb.	Read & write	2	M		Single	Derry City
29	Margaret	McGowan	Boarder	Presb.	Read & write	74	F		Single	Derry City

Married 9 years – children born alive 4 – 3 still alive in 1911.

Obviously Robert John has forgotten that he was born in Co. Donegal. The child who died must have been born between Jeannie and Henry James. I have not investigated this matter. It should be relatively easy to find the birth in the *Ireland, Civil Registration Indexes*.

His brother David married Margaret Jane Gallagher in Great James Street Presbyterian Church on 3rd June 1903 and was living in Argyle Street. I could not find any other members of the family of David and Rebecca Archibald in the 1911 Census. I presume that the father and mother were dead by 1911.

Conclusion

Clearly there are still many questions about this family that have not been answered. Who did David work for in Co. Donegal? After moving to the city did the family always live in William Street? Can we find out any more about the couple's early life? I have not been in contact with any possible descendants of this family, if there are any, and therefore lack any personal knowledge of the family. I have adopted this approach because I wanted to demonstrate what could be achieved without any personal knowledge of a family.

Using the *Derry Genealogy Centre* database in the initial stages of researching this family was crucial to tracking down the family. The recent addition of the *Derry ~ Londonderry Genealogy* and *Donegal Ancestry* databases to the *IFHF Online Genealogy Databases for Ireland* web site is an important new development for anyone searching for their ancestors in the North West. In particular, the addition of the Donegal Ancestry databases has meant that I was able to find the missing birth in the case of this family.

It is clear that these online databases will prove invaluable to family historians and a vast improvement on the earlier pay-per-view databases. These databases, allied with the Online 1901 and 1911 Census Database, should make searching for elusive ancestors much easier. However, a word of caution, not every single marriage, birth or death is on these databases, so it is still necessary to use more traditional methods and sources.

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