

Letters 1916–1923

Ordinary Lives – Extraordinary Times



Part II

Researching the 1916-1923 Period

For these case studies, you will use, in addition to Letters 1916-1923, other digital resources such as the 1911 Irish census records. For this part of the treasure hunt, you will need to figure out where to find the information you need.

Case study – Rebecca Shackleton and her family

Use the Letters 1916-1923 database, the Irish testamentary records (link below) and the Irish Cesus of 1911 to answer the following questions about a woman who witnessed the Easter Rising of 1916.

1) Go to "the Letters 1916-1923 search engine" and find the letter sent from Lucan. Try to guess why the letter was so long and written on several consecutive days?

2) The letter was written by Rebecca Shackleton. Which family members and members of her own household does she mention?

3) Use the 1911 Irish Census records (National Archives of Ireland website) and try to find out more about Rebecca Shackleton's household at the time of the Easter Rising. How many people were residents of her home in 1911, and what was her relationship to them?

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4) In her letter, Rebecca is very critical of the “Sinn Féiners” and expresses support for the British government and army. She also criticizes the way in which Catholic priests take sides with the insurgents during and after the Rising. What is her own religious affiliation, and in how far may her religious views have influenced her political stance?

5) Another digital resource to find out more about Irish families in the 19th and early 20th centuries are the wills and testamentary records:

<http://www.willcalendars.nationalarchives.ie/search/cwa/index.jsp>

Use this database to find out about the financial situation of the Shackleton family and the profession of Rebecca’s brothers.

6) How is the social status of the Shackleton family reflected in Rebecca’s description of the Easter Rising?
