

1911 UK Census Goes Live and Direct!

WHEN DOING RESEARCH in the US, we get spoiled with the availability of the census up to 1930. Due to UK privacy laws, there is typically a 100-year moratorium on releasing census records, which meant that the 1911 census would not be released to the public until 2012! Public demand and some very hard work allowed the census to be digitized and released earlier — it is now available at www.1911census.co.uk. This was personally exciting to me, since this would be the first UK census where I might find my grandmother (born 1907) and my grandfather (born 1909) and could also continue tracking extended family.

GENERAL INFO

Before doing any research, let's first talk about the website. It is operated by FindMyPast, www.findmypast.com, and also provides access to the 1841-1901 UK census, amongst other record groups) in association with the National Archives. You can search for free and then purchase any found records. Remember that it is a work in progress and that not all counties are yet included — click on "See which counties are available" to learn what is, or is not yet, available. Note that the records included are for England, Wales, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Royal Navy (ships at sea at time of census) and Military Establishments (overseas) — Scotland is not included.

The census was completed by all householders in England and Wales on Sunday, 2 April 1911, and the census records show the name, age, place of birth, marital status and occupation of every resident in every home, as well as their relationship to the head of the household. There is additional information reported, records of

infirmity as listed on the records (e.g. 'deaf', 'dumb', 'blind', 'lunatic' etc.), though it has been obscured and will not be available to view until January 2012.

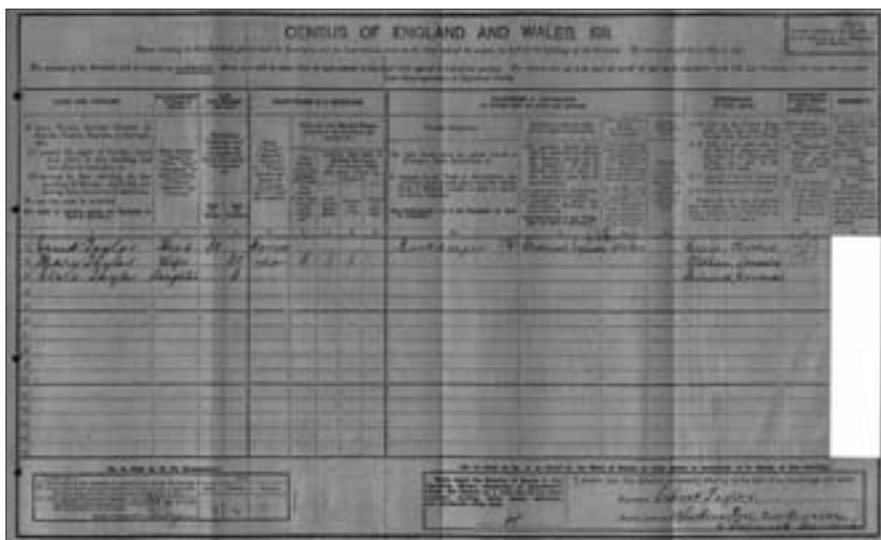
The options for a basic search are very simple: First names, surname, place of residence, year of birth — only a surname is required to get started. If you want to do a narrower search,

shipping (vessel name), or military (name of institution), you can also enter that information.

For found entries, there are two pay tiers for obtaining the information — Transcripts cost 10 credits each and a digital image of the original page cost 30 credits.

You can purchase credits in the following quantities:

- £6.95 (\$9.50 US) — 60 credits



The 1911 UK census entry for Elsie Taylor with parents Ernest and Mary, Failsworth, Lancashire.

choose "full person search." This includes additional search options where you specify place of birth, county where living and first/last names of others in the household. And, you can do an even more "advanced search" where you can put in even more details to narrow the results.

If through other sources you have specific information on place — which includes any of these fields: street (required), county, district, registration sub district, residential place, or these specific census references — exact reference (e.g. RG14 PN8600 RG78 PN445 RD167 SD3 ED11 SN200),

(expire after 30 days)

- £24.95 (\$34.50 US) — 280 credits (expire after one year)
- £49.95 (\$69 US) — 600 credits (expire after one year)

Based on my experience, unless you know that you will only seek a couple of census entries, that you will find perfectly, and/or are happy with transcripts, I suggest that if you can, purchase more credits (which also last longer).

SEARCHING

Now let's do some searching! Since I know from playing around with the website previously that

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there was more than one Elsie Taylor, born 1907, in the UK (there were 36), I next specified her father's name (Ernest), hoping it would narrow the results. That still gave me 13 results. Next, I narrowed to Lancashire — since she was born in Failsworth though by 1911 purportedly lived in New Moston — both near Manchester. This narrowed the results to three.

Given the price of checking out the records, I wanted to see if I could narrow the results further and so I also entered her mother's name, Mary; this yielded one result. With fingers crossed, I purchased an image of the page. It was a match — Ernest was listed as a bookkeeper born in Crewe, Cheshire, Mary was born in Oldham and Elsie in Failsworth and the family lived at the address I had for them in 1911, which ends up being 29 Eastwood Road, New

likely that the information is accurate in that an "enumerator" was not transcribing the information and possibly introducing errors (e.g. for the 1901 census, my great-grandfather was listed as living in Oldham Lincolnshire instead of Oldham Lancashire ...it took awhile to find him!)

With this success, it was time

county of Yorkshire). This yielded two results:

FOUNTAIN, JOHN CHARLES, M 1909 2 Leigh Lancashire

FOUNTAIN, JOHN R, M 1910 1 Oldham Lancashire

Given that John Richard was born in Chadderton in 1909, adjacent to Oldham, this suggests that the second entry was probably

appropriate. I purchase this image and it was a match — the occupation of the father as a skipmaker, the parents, the younger sister Rachel and the address all matched other information. Again, a delight to now see this great-grandfather's handwriting and signature!

Given the above success locating my grandparents with my great-grandparents — I will now have to look through my records and identify any other ancestors still alive in

1911. My great-great grandfather George Fountain lived until 1919 and great-great grandmother Sarah (Wolfenden) Taylor lived until 1923 — what about my great-grandmother Sarah (Torkington) Nelson who lived until 1916 ... I can't wait to track all of them down and more!

If you have ancestors alive in England and Wales in 1911 — you might want to check this out. Though it costs about \$5 per census page downloaded, if you are impatient like me and would love an excuse to revisit the UK branches of your family tree, and don't want to wait until 2012 — it can be worth the cost — especially, if, like me, these are the only hand-written documents you might ever see for your ancestors!

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Diane L. Richard has been doing genealogy research for 20+ years. She currently does professional research in NC and she can be found online at www.mosaicrpm.com/Genealogy



Top Right: A skip constructed by John Frederick Fountain which is still in the possession of a grandson. Above: A photograph of Elsie Taylor at the corner of Eastwood Road and Moston Lane, near where she lived in 1911 — she is the little girl to the right of the pram.

Moston, W Failsworth, Manchester.

An unexpected bonus is that the census was signed by my great-grandfather — it is the first time that I have seen his handwriting and signature! Each head of household filled out a census sheet for his/her family and this is the first census for which these original schedules have been preserved — this also makes it more

to see if I could find my grandfather — John Richard Fountain.

First I searched on John Richard Fountain, born 1909, Lancashire — no results.

Recognizing that it was more typical to not include a middle name, I searched on John Fountain, born 1909, Lancashire (counting on the fact that Fountain was not a typical Lancashire name as its roots were in the adjoining