

*THE LETTER CARRIER WITH
LITERARY LINKS
BY ROSEMARY FINAN*

At first glance, the life story of Robert Thompson, letter carrier, seems unexciting. It is strongly rooted in a sense of place and of family. However, like every life, it acts as a prism through which one may distinguish broader elements of history such as employment, health, war...and there are a few surprising literary links!

Born in Articlave circa 1837, Robert lived his whole life in this small village; as seems likely to have been true for both his father and grandfather too (also both called Robert). Articlave had an important past, having been founded in 1612 by the Clothworkers Company as part of the Plantation of Ulster. This may help explain why Robert and most of his ten children retained a strong bond with their birthplace. During Robert Thompson's working life the post was distributed from Coleraine (which had also been rebuilt with fortifications as part of the Plantation) via nearby Castlerock by train. From there it would be taken to Articlave (one and a half miles away) for local distribution.



Figure 1: A map showing the Articlave region, c.1842. © ONS Ireland. Source: PRONI.

However before this part of the railway line was opened in 1853, the post had to be transported directly to and from Coleraine (presumably by 'a two-wheeled car drawn by one horse' as stipulated in similar advertisements of the time). A newspaper article of 1911 describes how Robert had to undertake this journey to Coleraine on horseback with the mailbags on one occasion, during 'a great snow storm'. Since he had only begun his Post Office employment in 1852, this showed commendable dedication to duty – other outlying

areas were without mail for three days due to the inclement weather conditions. At this time, Anthony Trollope was employed as a superintendent by the Post Office in Belfast and would have made regular visits to the area.

Robert's diligence was exemplary throughout his career; in 1898 he was awarded three extra good conduct stripes for 'good conduct and efficient service'. A newspaper report at the time described him as being 'one of a very small number in Ireland entitled by long and faithful service [...] to this honour'. The extra stripes also brought the benefit of additional pay, and an increased pension upon retirement of £70 18s (by which time he had covered approximately 150,000 miles on his rounds). Given that he still had four daughters unmarried in 1898, the additional revenue would have been a real boon for him.

Robert married Ellen O'Dowd in 1862 and they had a large family as mentioned – eight girls and two boys. However, he still found time to pursue his main hobbies of gardening and trout fishing throughout his working life and well into retirement, according to a newspaper article of 1911. His name occurs regularly among the prize-winners in the annual Castlerock Agricultural Show, both for flowers and vegetables – the latter must surely have been useful in feeding his ever-growing family!

At the time of the 1911 census, six of Robert's children and fourteen grandchildren were living in Articlave. One daughter lived with her family in the neighbouring townland of Bannbrook Upper, and two were in Londonderry (or Derry), some thirty-odd miles away. The only child who moved any significant distance was Robert's second son Joseph (b.1872) who immigrated to the US (Philadelphia) in 1883, according to the 1910 census form.

Employment opportunities would undoubtedly have been fairly limited for Robert's daughters. Since four were already married by the time of the 1901 census, it is perhaps unsurprising that no occupation was listed for them – except for Minnie (christened Mary, birth date unknown), who was identified as a seamstress (as was his unmarried sister Anne). Tillie (christened Mathilda, b.1884) was still recorded as a scholar, but Sarah (b.1874) was a "shirt and collar" worker; and both girls were thus employed in 1911. Annie's (b.1876) eldest daughter Nellie was listed as a dressmaker in 1911.

As mentioned earlier, Articlave was created under the auspices of the Clothworkers' Company during the Plantation of 1609 onwards. Due to its subsequent links with the linen industry, there was a tradition of skilled needlewomen which the Thompson females were clearly continuing. This skilled labour pool provided a strong base for the shirt making industry that developed in Londonderry (Derry) in the second half of the nineteenth century. By the early twentieth century this industry employed nearly 8,000 workers (predominantly women) - circa 20% of the city's population - in thirty-eight large factories. Tillie and Henderson's was the biggest factory in the world when it opened in 1890, earning it a mention in Marx's *Das Kapital*; and it also features in Leon Uris's novel *Trinity* (1976). As well as 1500 people working in the factory itself, it employed up to 9,000 outworkers who worked in their own homes. Other factories in the town also practiced this custom. It is quite likely that Robert's female family members were employed in this manner.

Two of Robert's children became teachers. Henry Edward (b.1865) spent most of his career teaching in Articlave National School (NS), having returned to teach there in 1908, after the death of his only son (d.1904) and then his first wife (d.1906). He was highly thought of and played an active role in many aspects of local life. Interestingly, he appears to have re-married after retirement to Mary Kennedy, forty-five years his junior. The marriage took place at Henry's own residence, by special dispensation of the Bishop of Down & Connor and Dromore. Lily Maud, Robert's second youngest child (b. 1880, christened Elizabeth), was an 'assistant school teacher' according to the 1911 census. She also worked in Articlave (NS) for a time and was well regarded; her departure c.1908 was marked by the presentation of a gold bracelet. It has not been possible to find out any further definite information on her after this time.

Robert died aged ninety-two in 1928, having outlived five of his children; and at least three of his grandchildren died very young. Looking at some of the causes of death listed for his children can provide a glimpse into prevalent health issues of this period.

Tillie (twenty-six) and Sarah (thirty-seven) died within two months of each other, shortly after the 1911 census. Both death certificates gave the immediate cause of death as "influenza" but also recorded "heart disease, some years". Tillie's final illness lasted only two days; her sudden demise was recorded in the local press as having caused "painful surprise ... she was held in the fullest esteem ... Mr Thompson and family are very popular in the district". As his youngest child and the first to die, this must have been heart-breaking for Robert and his wife, and was no doubt compounded by the tragedy of Sarah's death almost exactly two months later. Sarah was ill for two weeks before her death. Heart disease of various kinds still accounted for approximately 7.6% of deaths in Sarah's 35 – 44 age range in 1915, but only 4.5% in the age bracket 25 – 34, of which Tillie was at the lower end. Only eighteen months later Joseph died of "phthisis [a form of TB] and exhaustion" in Philadelphia, aged thirty-nine. Between 1901 and 1915 phthisis/ pulmonary TB accounted for over 31% of deaths in the 35 – 44 age bracket in Northern Ireland, where Henry's first wife Margaret had succumbed to pulmonary TB in 1906, aged 36.

Minnie (d.1924) and Catherine (d.1928) also pre-deceased their parents. One can't help thinking that the stoicism exemplified throughout Robert's working life in his quiet dedication to duty must have stood him in good stead when faced with these losses. And I also wonder if his experience of outliving so many of his children brought back to mind childhood experiences of parents burying their children during the Famine years of 1845 -49.

No account of Robert's life would be complete without mention of what I found to be one of his most fascinating links with broader history – his connection with the American Civil War. Robert had an elder brother John (born c.1834) who immigrated to the US, possibly during the Famine. He enlisted in the US Army in September 1856 for five years. As a private in the Union army (Company E, 1st US Artillery), he was involved in the Battle of Fort Sumter - the engagement which marked the beginning of the American Civil War. John wrote two letters home to his father about his experiences which were published in local papers at the time. The first, dated 14th February 1861, described the Union garrison's initial occupation of the fort, and a second in April described its bombardment by Confederate forces. They are

remarkable for their lucidity, detail and well-phrased description of events, using a range of vocabulary well beyond what might be expected of a “labourer”, which was John’s recorded occupation on his enlistment form. Fortunately for him, his army service ended in September 1865, so he presumably escaped most of the horrors of the Civil War, but it has proven impossible to track his later history.

Robert’s story leaves me with the sense of a quietly dutiful man who was a pillar of strength in his community and who raised his family to emulate him. His life spanned almost a century, encompassing the Irish Famine, the US Civil War, and the wholesale industrialisation of shirt making in north-west Ireland, among other things. One thing that strikes me is that Robert’s occupation of “letter carrier” belies the man’s innate ability and his brother John’s account of his role in the earliest battle of the US Civil War confirms my sense that these unassuming natives of Articlave were men of unrecognised depth and ability who may well have appreciated their story’s literary links!

SOURCES

Websites

- Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland, *PRONI Historical Maps*. [Link](#).
- “The Shirt Industry – The Textile Industry in Derry”, *Culture Northern Ireland*. [Link](#).
- Causes of death Northern Ireland 1901-1935. [Link](#).

Books

- Karl Marx, Frederich Engels (ed) *Das Kapital vol 3* (Hamburg, 1894). [Link](#).
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894-c3/index.htm>
- Leon Uris, *Trinity* (New York: Penguin, 1976)

Fact Sheet: Robert Thompson

| Pensioner Details |
|---|
| <i>Pensioner name:</i> Robert Thompson |
| <i>Person ID:</i> IR1013 |
| <i>Your name:</i> Rosemary Finan |
| <i>USA group:</i> Foyle, Northern Ireland |
| Part One: Birth and Family |
| 1: When and where was your pensioner born? |
| Robert Thompson was born c1837, probably in Articlave, Co Londonderry (near Coleraine). |
| 2: Who were your pensioners' parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write) |
| <p>His father was also Robert Thompson, a labourer, born c1805. In the 1859 Griffith Valuation (this was the first full scale valuation of property carried out in Ireland, between 1847 and 1864), father and son are listed as living next door to each other. Robert senior died in 1886; the cause was recorded as 'debility, four months, uncertified' His mother Ann was born c1806, and died 1891: the cause was recorded as 'debility, six weeks, certified'. Both deaths were registered by Robert.</p> <p>There is also a Robert Thompson listed in the 1831 census for Articlave Lower, probably a grandfather. The return lists two families comprising two males and four females in the residence. Given that Robert's parents were in their mid-twenties at this time, they may well have been one of the two family groups, living with Robert senior's parents. The remaining two females may have been his father's sisters but more likely were elder sisters of Robert, (who was not born until 1936 or 1837). The occupants' religion was given as Presbyterian.</p> |
| 3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation) |
| <p>As mentioned above, it is possible that he had two older sisters but there is no way of verifying this.</p> <p>He apparently had a brother, Joseph who immigrated to the USA. Joseph enlisted in the US army in 1856 and fought in the first engagement of the American Civil War in Charleston in 1861, the siege of Fort Sumter. He wrote two letters home to his father which were published in a local paper at the time, describing events.</p> <p>It is unclear whether Joseph was older or younger than Robert.</p> <p>He had a younger sister Anne, who remained single, probably born c1839. She seems to have remained in the family home and was listed as a seamstress in both the 1901 and 1911 census forms. She was listed in the Valuation Revision books as one of the committee of Articlave Orange Hall until her death in 1926.</p> |

Part Two: Marriage and children

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation)

Robert Thompson married Ellen O'Dowd on 2nd July 1862, in the First Presbyterian Church, Articlave in the parish of Dunboe. Robert's occupation was "letter carrier" and his father was recorded as 'labourer'. Ellen's father was named as Edward O'Dowd, an architect. Although Ellen's place of residence at the time of the wedding was given as Castlerock, the newspaper announcement of the wedding stated that she was from Sligo. Her mother was Ellen O'Neill (from a census search form).

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

Robert and Ellen Thompson had ten children.

1) Henry Edward

Henry Edward was born in 1865 and died in 1952, aged 87. His father Robert is recorded as a 'letter carrier'. Henry Edward was married in 1892 to Margaret Moore of 'Tubbermore' (Tobermore), daughter of William Moore, caretaker. Henry Edward, a teacher, was apparently living in Tubbermore at this time also. Interestingly his father, Robert is recorded as being a 'farmer' – the only certificate where this is given as his occupation. The marriage took place in the Church of Ireland parish church of Kilcronagher and in subsequent census returns Henry Edward's religion is given as "Church of Ireland".

The couple had one son, Robert Henry, who was born in 1897 but died in 1904 at the age of six, with the cause of death listed as "Bronchitis, two years, certified". Sadly, his wife died less than two years later, in 1906, of "Pulmonary tuberculosis, two years, certified" at her father's home.

Henry Edward was very active in many areas of community life. He was involved in the setting up of the Articlave Boys' Brigade in 1908 and maintained a key role in it for many years. As the teacher in Articlave National School, he also encouraged elocution classes. He played Cricket for the Articlave Cricket Club, and helped re-establish it in the 1920s, when it had lapsed during the war years. He was involved in organising a function for returned veterans and prisoners of war from World War One. He also had many other interests, including Esperanto. He was named as member of the Easter Vestry of his local Presbyterian church on more than one occasion. It would appear Henry Edward subsequently remarried in 1931: his wife's name was Mary Kennedy, aged 25. He died in 1952.

2) Annie

Annie was born in 1867 and died in 1950, aged 82. Her father Robert is recorded as a "postman". She married James McCloskey, a farmer from Bannbrook Upper, Co Londonderry (a townland to the east of Articlave). James appears to have been some years her senior: their ages were given as 28 and 39 respectively in 1901 (Annie was 33); and in 1911 Annie was listed as 40, with James as 58. A possible death certificate for

James in 1927 lists his age as 77. The marriage took place in the Church of Ireland parish of Dunboe, with Henry Edward acting as one of the witnesses.

The family are listed as Church of Ireland in both 1901 and 1911 census returns. They had had eight children by the time of the 1911 census, of whom seven were still living. Both parents and the five eldest children were literate according to the 1911 census – but on each of child's birth certificates the father's 'mark' is given at the registration of the birth. In the 1911 census Robert's grandchildren are listed as:

- Nellie, aged 18, dressmaker
- Martha, aged 16, no occupation
- Sarah T, aged 15, scholar (Thompson, from 1901 census)
- Annie Kathleen, aged 13, scholar (Annie Cathlene in 1901 census)
- Mary Eliza, aged 10, scholar
- Maude, aged 6, scholar (but not able to read or write)
- James, aged 3, no occupation

Also listed in the 1911 census is a 'relation', Sarah Jane McCloskey, aged 68, a widow, born Co Donegal.

A child Alice was born in 1903 but died aged four months, "Erysepipalis, seven weeks, certified" (a form of cellulitis).

Nothing more is known of the remaining children of Annie and James. A possible death certificate was located for Annie in 1950.

3) Mary

Robert had a daughter Mary for whom no birth certificate could be located, but it would seem she may have been born c1869. She married John Blair Gardiner in 1897, also in the Church of Ireland Dunboe parish, with Henry Edward and Sarah as witnesses. On the marriage certificate, her age is given as 32, but on the 1901 census her age is given as 28; and in the 1911 census she is recorded as 42. In both 1901 and 1911, the family were living in Articlave, near Robert. Their religion is given as Presbyterian; and all were listed as able to read and write in 1911.

In the 1901 census, John is recorded as an "agricultural worker": in 1911, his occupation is "coachman". Mary is listed as a "seamstress" in 1901: in 1911, she has no occupation and is referred to as Minnie. They had three children listed in the 1911 census as:

- Ellen, aged 12, scholar
- Tillie, aged 10, scholar
- Robert, aged 5, scholar

Nothing more is known of these grandchildren of Robert. A possible death certificate for Mary was located from 1924.

4) Ellen

In 1870, Robert had a daughter called Ellen. In 1894, she married George Burnett Thompson, a Telegraph Clerk from 'Parkview House', Derry. The ceremony took place in the Church of Ireland church of St Paul's, Dunboe, and their religion was recorded in both

the 1901 and 1911 census returns as Church of Ireland. His father George Richard Thompson was listed in the marriage certificate as a “clerk”. In fact, he subsequently became Superintendent of the Post Office in Derry, a post which he held upon his retirement in 1917. George Burnett Thompson was one of 18 siblings, according to his father’s obituary in the Londonderry Sentinel in 1935; and followed in his father’s footsteps by also becoming Superintendent in the Post Office in Derry. The family were highly thought of in the city, with a number playing a significant role in the Northern Ireland Executive of the time. Eight of the twelve sons served in World War I, with three killed and two seriously wounded.

In the 1911 census, the occupants of the house were listed as:

- George Burnett, aged 34, Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist, Post Office
- Ellen, aged 39, no occupation
- Ellen, aged 15, scholar
- Elizabeth Maude, aged 14, scholar
- Kathleen Alexandra, aged 7, scholar
- Alice, aged 6, scholar
- George Burnett, aged 1
- Elizabeth Maud, aged 26, Assistant School Teacher, spinster, a visitor (presumably Ellen’s sister, whose was actually 30 years old at that time).

All were able to read and write except Alice (who couldn’t write) and the baby. The family were living in 48, Argyle St, Derry, in 1901 but had moved to No 68 by the time of the 1911 census. These were presumably rented houses , since the children’s birth certificates record other numbers in the same street in the intervening years – Nos 22, 56 and 70. Nothing more is known of these grandchildren of Robert. A possible death certificate was located for Ellen in 1949.

5) Joseph

In 1872, Robert had a son Joseph. A Joseph Thompson acted as a witness for Alice’s marriage in 1899 (along with Lily Maud) but it is unclear whether this is in fact he, since it would appear that he had gone to the USA where he married Mary McCusker in 1895. There are details in both the USA census returns of 1900 and 1910 which appear to match fit together with a death certificate of 1913, which indicate that he resided in the USA, so it seems likely that he emigrated before 1895. A notice in the Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser announced his death in Philadelphia on 4th March 1913. The cause of death recorded on his death certificate was “Phthisis” – a form of TB – with contributory “Exhaustion”, over a period of one year and eight days. His date of birth was mistakenly given as 08.05. 1874 rather than 08.05.1872. His marital status was “married” but his death was registered by Harry M Battersly.

The census record of 1900 names his wife as Mary, (no occupation) and lists two children:

- Nellie, aged 4
- Lilly, aged 2

The census return of 1910 lists Joseph and Mary, together with:

- Nellie, aged 14

- Robert, aged 6
- Nellie McCusker, sister-in-law, 22, worker in shoe factory
- Annie McKeown, lodger, 53, working with a private family

Since Lilly was not mentioned, it must be assumed that she died, but no death certificate could be located.

6) Sarah

In 1874, Robert had a daughter Sarah, registered as 'Unknown' Thompson – not uncommon when a name had not yet been chosen. She did not marry and was listed as a member of her father's household in the 1901 census. She was residing with her brother Henry Edward at the time of the 1911 census but died a few months later, in August 1911 - only two months after her younger sister. The cause of death was listed as "Heart disease, some years, Influenza, 2 weeks, certified". The death was registered by her sister Minnie Gardiner. Her religion is listed in both census returns as Church of Ireland.

7) Catherine

In 1876, Robert had another daughter, Catherine. In 1897 she married John Morrison, a carpenter from 'The Glebe, Articlave', whose father was named in a marriage notice in the Coleraine Chronicle 1897 as James Morrison of Manitoba, Canada. Her sister Alice Thompson and Stephen Thorpe (who subsequently married each other) acted as witnesses. The wedding took place in the Church of Ireland, Dunboe Parish. At the time of the 1901 census, the couple had two children and were residing at 53, Glendermott Road, Waterside, Derry. Their religion was listed as Presbyterian and no occupation was given for Catherine (who was listed as Katie). There were also two boarders listed, both aged 15, both of whose occupations were given as 'Engine Cleaner' and religion as 'Episcopalian' (i.e. Church of Ireland).

By the time of the 1911 census, the family were living in Articlave and were listed thus:

- Catherine, aged 34, wife
- Henry John, aged 13, scholar
- George Thompson, aged 11, scholar
- Robert Thomas, aged 9, scholar
- Eileen, aged 6, scholar
- Kathleen Maud, aged 4, able to read
- Joseph, aged 2

John was not listed at this address. In the 1911 census, he was listed as a boarder living in 102, Strand Road, Derry; his occupation was listed as 'joiner'. A possible death certificate for Catherine in 1928 was located.

8) Alice

In 1878, Robert's sixth daughter, Alice, was born. She got married in 1899, to Stephen Thorpe, a saddler whose place of occupation was given as Ballycastle Co Antrim. Stephen's father was Andrew Thorpe, who rented quite a sizeable property – c180 acre, with a rateable value of over £150 in the 1880s and 1890s. It would appear that Stephen ran a

business in Ballycastle and the couple are listed in Ballycastle in the 1901 census, together with their baby Nellie. Their religion was 'Church of Ireland'. Stephen Thorpe, saddler was listed in the Street Directory of Ballycastle in 1907 and 1910, when it was under joint names with D Thomson but not in 1912.

Stephen and Alice were living in Articlave by the time of the 1911 census, together with their children, listed as:

- Nellie, aged 10, scholar
- Annie, aged 9, scholar
- Johnnie, aged 6, scholar
- Tillie, aged 3
- James, aged 1

Stephen's occupation was given in 1911 as 'harness-maker'. Both parents and the three older children were all literate, according to the return.

A child registered as Henry Edward was born in 1905 but died after a month of 'convulsions, 24 hours, certified'. The death was registered in the name of Charles Henry Thorpe. The couple had two further children, Sarah (Sally) born June 1911, and Mary Anne, born 1914.

Stephen joined the army 22nd November 1915 in Birmingham and was appointed to the Army Service Corps. He served in Mesopotamia from September 1916 to March 1919. On 2nd July 1919, he was discharged to the reserve. He applied for an army pension on the grounds of "rheumatism in arms & legs" and "nervous debility, but his application was turned down.

Alice died in 1932 "at her husband's residence, Craigantlett, Co Down", according to a death notice in the Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser. No more information was found about this family.

No further information was found about this family.

9) Elizabeth

In 1880, Robert had another daughter, Elizabeth. She was listed in the 1901 census along with her parents, under the name Lily Maud and her occupation as "National School Teacher". In the 1911 census she was listed as a visitor in the home of her sister Ellen (see above). A family tree in Ancestry.com suggests she died in 1947 but no death certificate could be located in the GRONI records. Nor was there evidence of her having married.

10) Mathilda

In 1884, Robert's tenth child, Mathilda, was born (although again she was registered as "Unknown"). In the 1901 census she was listed with her parents, aged 16, "scholar". In the 1911 census, she was part of Henry Edward's return form: her occupation was listed as "Shirt & Collar worker". Tragically, she died within months of the census – in June 1911. Her death, according to a newspaper report at the time, was quite sudden, after only a

few days illness. In the article, Tillie as she was known, was described as being “noted for her many good acts” and “held in the fullest esteem”. She was a member of the Articlave Church choir. The article also noted that “Mr Thompson and his family are very popular in the district” and that the funeral was attended by a large crowd.

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

According to a newspaper article published in 1911, Robert Thompson began his work in 1852, at a time when the railway line to Derry had not been completed and it was necessary to carry the mail from Articlave to the nearest town of Coleraine (approximately four miles). The novelist Anthony Trollope was a Superintendent in the district at that time.

He was awarded three additional stripes in 1898, giving him the maximum number of six, which meant that he retired in August 1911 on a full pension plus a bonus (his pay was £70 18s, and his pension was £47 5s). An article produced in the paper on that occasion estimated that he had walked over 150,000 miles in the course of his career.

In the census return of 1901, his occupation was given as “postman” and his age as 60. In the census return of 1911, he was listed as “Ex- Letter Carrier (Postman)”, aged 76.

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

In the census return of 1901, the other occupants of the house were listed as:

- Ellen, aged 54, no occupation
- Sarah, aged 25, Shirt & Collar Agent
- Lily Maud, aged 19, National School Teacher
- Mathilda, aged 16, Scholar

In the 1911 census, his wife Ellen, aged 67, was the only other resident.

Part Four: Anything Else

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner

Robert was mentioned in numerous accounts of local horticultural shows from 1866 onwards, and won many prizes both in the flower and vegetable categories, as well as for the neatness and appearance of his house and garden. In 1877 he was awarded first prize for “neatest and cleanest kept cottage and garden”, as well as first for the best collection of vegetables. He also won several prizes in individual vegetable categories, as well as for various flowers, cut flowers, window plants and hanging baskets. In 1879 he won a special award for vegetables “fit for table” of a “suit of all wool tweed clothes”, and came first in this category the following year also. In 1880, he also won ten shillings for the “best home-made shirt, washed and ready for wear”; and in 1882, his wife won four shillings when she came second for the “best Washed and Ironed Shirt”.

As mentioned earlier, both Robert and his father were listed in the Griffith’s Valuation of 1859 as occupying dwellings 47 and 48 respectively in the village of Articlave. Robert was

listed in Valuation Revision books as the immediate lessor of No 47 until 1887, when it changed into the hands of his sister Anne. She was still the lessor in 1910, but the Valuation Revision book of 1910-29 recorded a lot of changes in the numbering of buildings in the village so it is unclear whether she remained in the same property subsequently. Robert was also listed as the lessor of No 1 from 1880/85 up until 1929 when the lessor became his widow Ellen.

Robert lived to the age of 91, so he enjoyed a long retirement. During his working life, he was a keen gardener, and this continued into retirement, according to the newspaper article of 1911 in the *Northern Constitution* which gave trout fishing as his other keen interest.

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

SOURCES FOR ROBERT THOMPSON:

1862 marriage certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1862/09627/5491394.pdf

1901 census: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000604243/>

1911 census: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801028/>

1928 death certificate: GRONI Death Certificates Ref No D/1928/93/1008/9/254

Richard Griffith, General Valuation of Rateable Property in Ireland: Union of Coleraine (Part of) – Valuation of the Several Tenements comprising that part of the above named Union situate in the County of Londonderry, p107 (Dublin, Ireland, 1859)

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Valuation Revision books:

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| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| 1862 – 1864 | VAL/12/B/30/3A |
| 1865 – 1879 | VAL/12/B/30/3B |
| 1880 – 1888 | VAL/12/B/30/3C |
| 1888 – 1894 | VAL12/B/30/3D |
| 1894 – 1901 | VAL12/B/30/3E |
| 1901 – 1910 | VAL12/B/30/3F |
| 1910 – 1929 | VAL12/B/30/3G |

Newspaper notice of Robert's marriage: *Belfast Morning News* 08 July 1862, p2, col 6

Newspaper articles about Robert Thompson's participation in Horticultural shows:

- *Londonderry Sentinel* 24 July 1866, p1, col 6

- *Coleraine Chronicle* 28 July 1877, p4, col 4
- *Coleraine Chronicle* 18 Aug 1877, p8
- *Londonderry Sentinel* 6 Sept 1879, pg2
- *Londonderry Sentinel* 12 Aug 1880, p3
- *Derry Journal* 16 Aug 1882, p8, col 5
- *Coleraine Chronicle* 14 Aug 1886, p8

Newspaper article about his special award 1898: *Coleraine Chronicle* 25 June 1898, p9
"A Postman with Six Stripes"

Newspaper notice of his retirement 1901: *Coleraine Chronicle* 3 Aug 1901, p4, col 6

Newspaper profile of Robert Thompson 1911: *Northern Constitution* 14 Oct 1911, p10,
col 3

Newspaper death notice for Robert 1928: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser* 09 February 1928, p2

SOURCES FOR ROBERT THOMPSON'S PARENTS, WIFE & SIBLINGS:

1831 census return for Robert's father and grandfather: [007246492 00145](https://www.nationalarchives.ie/records/007246492_00145)
([nationalarchives.ie](https://www.nationalarchives.ie/))

1859 Griffith valuation for Robert's father, Robert Senior: see above

Death certificate for Robert senior, 1886:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1886/06253/4790601.pdf

[Newspaper death notice for Robert senior 1886:](#) *Northern Constitution* 05 June 1886 p8

Death certificate for Robert's mother Ann 1891:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1886/06253/4790601.pdf

Newspaper death notice for Robert's mother Ann 1891: *Coleraine Chronicle* 10 January 1891 pg1, col 1.

Death certificate for Robert's wife Ellen: D/1932/93/1008/9/424

Newspaper death notice for Robert's wife Ellen 1932: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser* 17 March 1932 WIFE p2, col 6

Newspaper articles with brother John's letters about the American Civil War:

1st letter *Ballymena Observer* 06 April 1861, p3, col 6 "The American Crisis"

2nd letter, reproduced in *Belfast Telegraph* 21 September 1961, p14, col 5 "The Siege of Fort Sumter"

Robert's sister Anne -1901 census: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000604276/>

1911 census: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801010/>

Valuation revision books: as above

SOURCES FOR ROBERT'S CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN:

HENRY EDWARD:

Birth certificate 1865:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1865/03589/2322900.pdf

Marriage certificate 1892:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1892/10632/5873733.pdf

Possible death certificate 1952: D/1952/97/1008/7/134

Birth Certificate for son Robert:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1897/02121/1806634.pdf

Death certificate for son Robert Henry:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1904/05628/4583182.pdf

Death certificate for wife Margaret:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1906/05574/4565481.pdf

Census return 1901: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000620009/>

Census return 1911: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801052/>

Newspaper articles for Henry Edward:

Death of son Robert 1904: *Northern Constitution* 26 March 1904 p8, col 7

Death of wife Margaret 1906: *Coleraine Chronicle* 10 February 1906, p5

Establishment of Articlave Boys' Brigade: *Coleraine Chronicle* 17 October 1908, p15, col 4

Involvement in Dunboe Cricket Club: *Northern Whig* 26 February 1912, p2, col 7

Involvement with Presbyterian Church vestry: *Londonderry Sentinel* 14 April 1923, p3, col 2

Organisation of event for returned veterans of the war: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser*, 06 February 1919, p3, col 5

ANNIE:

Birth certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/supp_births/2349721x.pdf

Marriage certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1892/10621/5869654.pdf

Possible death certificate 1950: D/1950/94/1008/35/206

Census 1901: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000604384/>

Census 1911: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801318/>

ANNIE'S CHILDREN:

Birth certificate 1893 Ellen (Nellie)

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1893/02308/1865178.pdf

Birth certificate 1894 Martha

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1894/02254/1847776.pdf

Birth certificate 1896 Sarah Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1896/02176/1823941.pdf

Birth certificate 1897 Annie Katherine

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1897/02110/1803022.pdf

Birth certificate 1900 Mary Eliza Wilson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1900/01978/1762133.pdf

Birth certificate 1903 Alice

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1903/01872/1728947.pdf

Death certificate 1903 Alice 4 months

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1903/05648/4590057.pdf

Birth certificate 1905 Maude

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1905/01799/1705425.pdf

Birth certificate 1907 James

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1908/01670/1664930.pdf

Newspaper notice of Annie's marriage 1892: *Coleraine Chronicle* 27 February 1892, p1, col 1

MARY

Marriage Certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1897/10460/5809030.pdf

Possible death certificate 1924:d/1924/93/1008/9/114

Census 1901: <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000604256/>

Census 1911: <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801048/>

MARY'S CHILDREN:

Birth certificate 1898 Ellen

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1898/02077/1792681.pdf

Birth certificate 1901 Mathilda Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1901/01969/1759046.pdf

Birth certificate 1905 Robert Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1905/01788/1702037.pdf

ELLEN:

Birth Certificate 1870:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1870/03364/2233577.pdf

Marriage Certificate 1894:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1894/10568/5849932.pdf

Possible death certificate 1949: D/1949/93/1008/11/36

Census 1901: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000623295/>

Census 1911: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002837951/>

ELLEN'S CHILDREN:

Birth certificate 1896 Ellen

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1896/02183/1826302.pdf

Birth certificate 1897 Elizabeth Maude

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1897/02139/1812329.pdf

Birth certificate 1903 Kathleen Alexandra

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1903/01869/1727720.pdf

Birth certificate 1904 Alice

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1904/01806/1707508.pdf

Birth certificate 1909 George Burnett

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1909/01593/1640200.pdf

Newspaper notice of Ellen's marriage 1894: *Derry Journal* 20 August 1894, p1, col 1

Newspaper article referring to death of father-in-law 1935: *Londonderry Sentinel* 28 December 1935, p6, col 2

JOSEPH:

Birth Certificate 1872:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1872/03252/2191779.pdf

Marriage Certificate 1895 (USA):

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Fpal%3A%2FMM9.3.1%2FTH-267-11758-145997-12&parentid=FS%2FMAR%2F35917402%2F1>

Death certificate 1913 (USA):

Census return 1900 (USA):

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=USC%2F1900%2F004115196%2F00606&parentid=USC%2F1900%2F004115196%2F00606%2F001>

Census return 1910 (USA):

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=USC%2F1910%2F004973791%2F00348&parentid=USC%2F1910%2F004973791%2F00348%2F011>

Newspaper notice of death 1913: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser*
03 April 1913, p5, col 4

SARAH:

Birth Certificate 1874:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1874/03130/2147557.pdf

Death certificate 1911:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1911/05390/4504955.pdf

CATHERINE:

Birth Certificate 1876:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1876/03037/2113327.pdf

Marriage Certificate 1897:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1897/10452/5805776.pdf

Possible death certificate 1928: D/1928/166/1020/46/295

Census 1901: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai000637082/>

Census 1911: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002800996/>

Newspaper notice of marriage 1897: *Coleraine Chronicle* 17 April 1897, p1

CATHERINE'S CHILDREN

Birth certificate 1898 Henry John

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1898/02099/1799711.pdf

birth certificate 1900 George Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1900/02000/1769116.pdf

Birth certificate 1901 Robert Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1902/01926/1745855.pdf

Birth certificate 1904 Ellen

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1904/01827/1714237.pdf

Birth certificate 1906 Kathleen Maud

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1906/01730/1683729.pdf

Birth Certificate 1908 Joe Thompson

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1908/01638/1654748.pdf

ALICE:

Birth Certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1878/02957/2083105.pdf

Marriage Certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/marriage_returns/marriages_1899/10378/5778472.pdf

Census 1901: <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002800994/>

Census 1911: <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai002801030/>

Newspaper notice of marriage 1899: *Northern Constitution* 08 July 1899, p8

Newspaper notice of birth of a daughter 1902: *Northern Constitution* 22 February 1902, p8, col 7

Newspaper notice of death 1932: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser* 21 April 1932, p2 col 6

Husband Stephen's Military service record: The National Archives; Kew, Surrey, England; *War Office: Soldiers' Documents, First World War Wo363*

ALICE'S FAMILY

Birth certificate 1900 Ellen

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1900/01978/1762134.pdf

Birth certificate 1902 Annie

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1902/01926/1745856.pdf

Birth certificate 1904 John Irwin

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1904/01832/1715470.pdf

Birth certificate 1905 Henry Edward

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1905/01787/1701573.pdf

Birth certificate 1907 Mathilda

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1907/01679/1667758.pdf

birth certificate 1909 James

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1909/01605/1644287.pdf

Birth certificate 1911 Sarah

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1911/01522/1617802.pdf

Birth certificate 1914 Mary Ann

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1914/01415/1581450.pdf

Death certificate 1905 Charles Henry

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1905/05596/4572832.pdf

ELIZABETH MAUD:

Birth Certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1880/02854/2046094.pdf

MATHILDA:

Birth Certificate:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/birth_returns/births_1884/02706/1996217.pdf

Death certificate 1911:

https://civilrecords.irishgenealogy.ie/churchrecords/images/deaths_returns/deaths_1911/05390/4504955.pdf

Newspaper notice of death 1911: *Ballymoney Free Press and Northern Counties Advertiser*
06 July 1911, p3 col 6