

Genealogy Basics – Finding Irish Catholic Females with a Given Name of Unity

By Joe Petrie

INTRODUCTION:

One of my favorite unique given names (first names) was Picabo. Remember the famous female skier, Picabo Street?

For over fifty years, I have been fascinated with unique given names. I'd guess that it started when I was a teaching fellow at Boston College taking attendance in a new class at the Nursing School one afternoon. I stumbled on a few surnames. One given name was different. The given name was Prince. He was a registered nurse studying for a degree in Nursing. He may have been my only male student in the class. I collected nicknames from my students – only when they preferred to be addressed that way. Prince wanted to be called Prince.

My latest unique given name is Unity.

BACKGROUND:

In the next section, I will cover my search in Ancestry Library for Irish Catholic females named Unity.

This section identifies how I got fascinated with the given name Unity.

Currently, I conduct free 2 hour individual genealogy consultation sessions at Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood MA and at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England (ICCNE) in Canton MA. At the former, the next set is scheduled for September, 2016. Appointments are scheduled by calling 781-769-0200 Extension 110.

At ICCNE, I volunteer on most Friday evenings at 7 PM from April to January. My appointments are scheduled by the Friends of Irish Research by email to friendsofirishresearch@gmail.com.

Peggy, the client, has been to both sites. She is researching her ancestors: Unity (Doherty) Duffy and Hugh Duffy. Hugh was born about 1815 in Ireland. Unity Doherty was born about 1819 in Ireland. They married in Boston, Suffolk, Massachusetts on 29 July 1837.

Ordinarily, Massachusetts Marriage Registers shows Parents Names (Given and Surname – Maiden name for Mothers). For Hugh and Unity, there were only given names. I assume that the priest did not collect the surnames.

In the 1850 US Census, Hugh, Unity (enumerated as Eunice) and their 4 children was family Number 1888. Family Number 1889 (Surname was Driver) looks like they were living with the Duffy Family. The last name on the family list was Margret Doherty age about 70. This may be a clue to the Doherty family in Ireland. It may be of interest to Peggy, the client.

In the Massachusetts State Census for 1865, there were 3 more children enumerated for Hugh and Unity.

MY APPROACH TO FINDING IRISH FEMALES WITH A GIVEN NAME OF UNITY:

Ancestry's Catholic Parish Registers 1655 -1915 was the starting point.

As shown below, I entered only Unity in the First & Middle name field and Ireland in the Location field. It was the first time that I entered a First (Given) name without a Surname.

From my background in computers, it was sensible – unless there was an edit that required a last name (a Surname). I was surprised that there was no surname edit. Blank surname was accepted,

The screenshot shows the Ancestry search interface for 'Ireland, Catholic Parish Registers, 1655-1915'. The search criteria are: First & Middle Name(s) 'Unity', Last Name (blank), Location 'Ireland'. The interface includes a search bar, filters for birth, death, lived in, marriage, and any event, and options for exact matches and country location.

I expected very few records. Why? Catholics are given Saints Names. I surmised that Unity could be a Middle Name.

The Search results of 105 records filled 5 pages. There were three counties listed. The Counties were Atrim and Tyrone in Northern Ireland and Donegal in what is now the Irish Republic. Derry was on the listing. Derry is part of County Atrim.

There were 43 Baptisms. Two had Unity as a middle name. The earliest date was 1816. None of the records had the mother's maiden name. Some parent names were misspelled. Some were blank.

The Baptisms are below

Unity	Baptism	27 Oct 1855	Clonmany, Donegal	Danl, Mary
Unity Allen	Baptism	29 Mar 1863	Iskaheen, Donegal	Robert, Mary
Unity Barr	Baptism	4 Jul 1824	St Columb's, Derry city, Derry	Jas, Magey

Unity Barr	Baptism	27 May 1875	Desertegney, Donegal	Patrick, Fanny
Unity Boyle	Baptism	15 May 1877	Ardara, Donegal	Roger, Anne
Unity Brennan	Baptism	Jan 1853	Killaghtee, Donegal	Patrick, Catherine
Unity Burke	Baptism	15 Oct 1837	St Patrick's, Belfast city, Antrim	Chas, Barbara
Unity Craig	Baptism	19 Sep 1879	Ardara, Donegal	Denis, Unity
Unity Crossan	Baptism	28 Jul 1870	St Columb's, Derry city, Derry	John, Catherine
Unity Doherty	Baptism	3 Jul 1860	Clonmany, Donegal	Michl, Caty
Unity Doherty	Baptism	7 Mar 1868	Clonmany, Donegal	John, Mary
Unity Doherty	Baptism	27 Oct 1868	Clonmany, Donegal	Dan, Mary
Unity Doherty	Baptism	1 Sep 1869	Clonmany, Donegal	Hugh, Anne
Cecilia UnityDonaghy	Baptism	24 Feb 1878	Desertegney, Donegal	James, Nancy
Unity Duffy	Baptism	13 Jan 1808	St Patrick's, Belfast city, Antrim	
Unity Duffy	Baptism	16 Dec 1855	Carndonagh, Donegal	James, Hanna
Unity Fullerton	Baptism	11 Apr 1873	Desertegney, Donegal	John, Nelly
Unity Fullerton	Baptism	27 May 1875	Desertegney, Donegal	Andrew, Jane
Unity Gellepy	Baptism	13 Sep 1857	All Saints, Donegal	Robert, Cate
Unity Hamel	Baptism	8 Feb 1849	Kilcar, Donegal	John, Brigid
UnityKeenan	Baptism	20 Oct 1872	Termonamongan, Tyrone	Thomas, Mary
Unity Kenny	Baptism	20 Aug 1869	Ardstraw East, Tyrone	Patrick, Jane
Unity Logue	Baptism	8 Feb 1874	Termonamongan, Tyrone	James, Sally
Unity Lynch	Baptism	13 Nov 1870	Termonamongan, Tyrone	James, Hannah
UnityMcCahill	Baptism	4 Jul 1880	Ardara, Donegal	John, Mary

UnityMcClosky	Baptism	17 Oct 1851	Banagher, Derry	Robert, Betty
UnityMcCullagh	Baptism	15 Sep 1816	St Patrick's, Belfast city, Antrim	
UnityMcAuley	Baptism	Apr 1862	Conwal and Leck (Letterkenny), Donegal	Edward, Cecilia
UnityMcDade	Baptism	27 Jan 1861	Coleraine, Derry	James, Margt
UnityMcDermott	Baptism	20 Sep 1875	Clonleigh (Lifford), Tyrone and Donegal	John, Bridgid
UnityMcElwane	Baptism	29 Jun 1879	All Saints, Donegal	Pat, Margaret
UnityMcGonigle	Baptism	19 Feb 1871	Clonca, Donegal	Philip, Betty
UnityMcHugh	Baptism	13 Dec 1874	Termonamongan, Tyrone	Bernard, Magy
UnityMcKage	Baptism	8 Nov 1850	Culdaff, Donegal	Asihy, Bidy
UnityMcLaughlin	Baptism	22 May 1870	Moville, Donegal	Patk, Cate
UnityMcLaughlin	Baptism	24 Apr 1873	Desertegney, Donegal	Henry, Nancy
UnityMcNelly	Baptism	23 Apr 1855	Kilcar, Donegal	Patrick, Nancy
UnityMeehan	Baptism	30 Jan 1874	Kilcar, Donegal	Patrick, Unity
Unity M'Are	Baptism	5 May 1873	Langfield, Tyrone	John, Mary
UnityMcCallion	Baptism	1 Apr 1860	Moville, Donegal	Neal, Mary
Unity Moore	Baptism	8 Dec 1878	Ardara, Donegal	James, Mary
Unity O'Neill	Baptism	17 Apr 1855	St Patrick's, Belfast city, Antrim	John, Margaret
Agnes UnityRobinson	Baptism	26 Mar 1860	St Patrick's, Belfast city, Antrim	Edward, Ann

SUMMARY:

Peggy learned a lot. She learned that her Duffy ancestors may have been from Donegal, Atrim or Tyrone.

Peggy also learned that Hugh and Unity had at least 7 children. There were 3 more than she previously knew of.

I learned one thing. This was my first search with a single Given Name and a single country. It was a first with that combination. It worked.

Since then, I searched for Unity as the only value in Ancestry Library. In the 1940 US Census, there were over 100 records. There were a few in the 1921 Census of Canada.

Please note that I have taught seminar attendees and individual consultation clients that I often use Ancestry Library Search with two fields filled and two blank. I had never used that combination of Given Name and Country before. I have always used Last Name (Surname) and Country before.

Also, I had never searched Ancestry Library with one value. Since then, I searched for Unity as the only value in Ancestry Library. In the 1940 US Census, there were over 100 records. There were a few in the 1921 Census of Canada.

Finally, a special thanks to the management and staff of Morrill Memorial Library, Norwood, MA and to the Library volunteers at the Irish Cultural Centre of New England for all their support. By hosting Peggy and I, they contributed to this and other articles.

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Your corrections, comments and suggestions are appreciated. Please Email me at joe-apg@norwoodlight.com.

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