

# LOOKING AT NAMES JOHN MURPHY & MARY MURPHY JOHN KELLY & MARY KELLY FROM THE CENSUS OF 1911 OF IRELAND

Compiled by Frank O'Donovan

We saw from my document entitled "*SAMPLE OF SURNAMES FROM THE CENSUS OF 1911 OF IRELAND*" that **Murphy** was the most common surname in Ireland. There was a total of 55,673 instances of the Murphy name and next common was Kelly with 45,741 occurrences. See <http://bmdnotices.com/Census1911Surnames.pdf>

Similarly from the document called "*SAMPLE OF FIRST NAMES FROM THE CENSUS OF 1911 OF IRELAND*" we saw that **Mary** was the most common first name with 449,480 occurrences or over 10% of all first names in the country at that time. Next most common was John with 347,676 occurrences. See <http://bmdnotices.com/census1911firstnames.pdf>

So from the above one ponders:-

- how popular in Ireland were the names:-
  - **Mary Murphy**
  - **John Murphy**
  - **Mary Kelly**
  - **John Kelly**
- what was the distribution of each by County.

The number of occurrences of the name **Mary Murphy** by county are shown in Table 1 below.

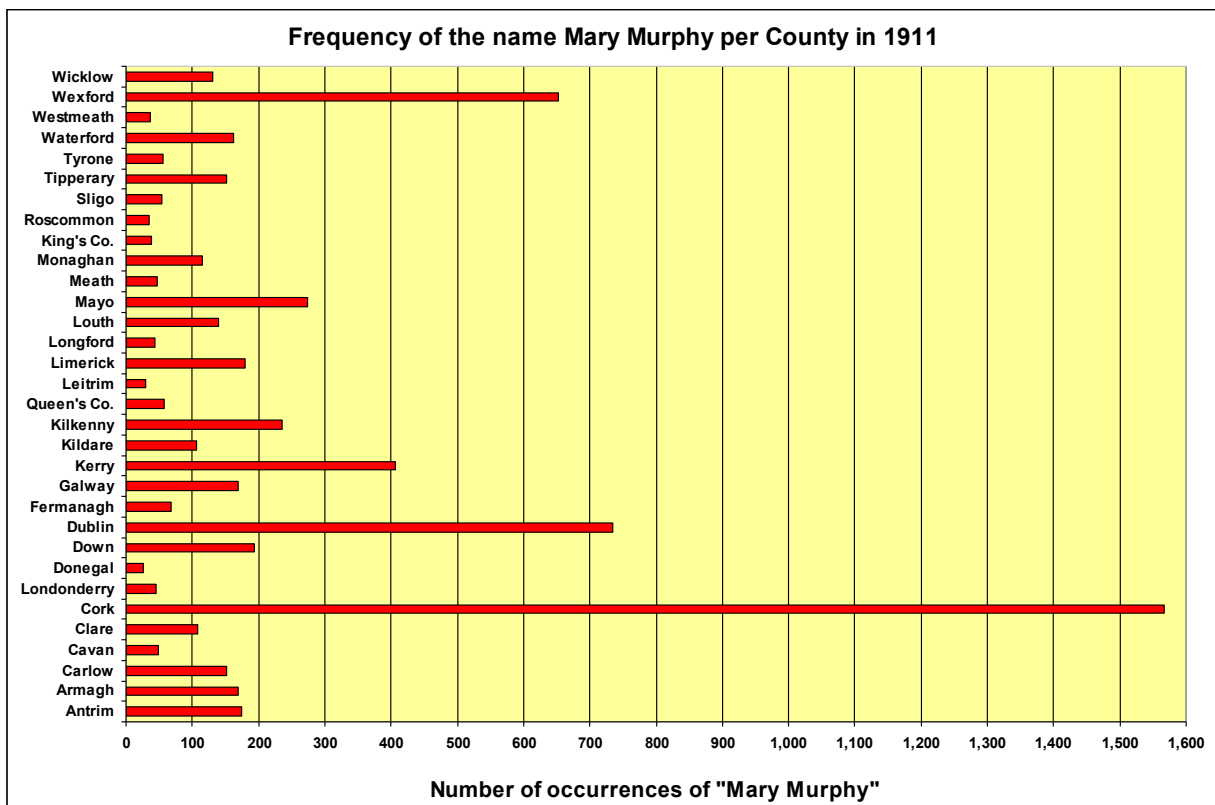
These results are easily viewed on the chart, Fig 1

**Table 1**

**Mary Murphy**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>
Antrim	174	Leitrim	30
Armagh	170	Limerick	179
Carlow	151	Longford	43
Cavan	49	Louth	140
Clare	109	Mayo	274
Cork	1,566	Meath	47
Londonderry (Derry)	46	Monaghan	116
Donegal	26	King's Co. (Offaly)	39
Down	194	Roscommon	35
Dublin	734	Sligo	54
Fermanagh	68	Tipperary	151
Galway	170	Tyrone	55
Kerry	406	Waterford	163
Kildare	106	Westmeath	37
Kilkenny	235	Wexford	652
Queen's Co. (Laois)	58	Wicklow	131

**Total for the country = 6,408**



**Fig 1**

Clearly the name **Mary Murphy** was exceptionally popular in:-

- County Cork with 1,566 occurrences and over double its nearest rival
- County Dublin on 734 which is closely followed by
- County Wexford with 652 occurrences
- County Kerry is just over half of the Dublin figure
- County Mayo and County Kilkenny were over the 200 figure

Having seen the popularity of the **Mary Murphy name** by County then we wonder as to the numbers under each age by year.

This breakdown by year of age is shown in Table 2 and graphically in Fig 2 below

**Table 2**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
0	132	34	83	68	39
1	105	35	104	69	47
2	139	36	97	70	77
3	126	37	73	71	35
4	121	38	101	72	78
5	146	39	77	73	53
6	122	40	177	74	49
7	124	41	44	75	45
8	99	42	72	76	32
9	113	43	56	77	21
10	109	44	48	78	24
11	119	45	84	79	11
12	111	46	59	80	23
13	111	47	44	81	5
14	114	48	69	82	8
15	119	49	42	83	2
16	117	50	142	84	7
17	115	51	28	85	3
18	113	52	44	86	4
19	107	53	48	87	6
20	116	54	47	88	1
21	108	55	63	89	1
22	98	56	51	90	3
23	85	57	24	91	0
24	94	58	40	92	0
25	100	59	24	93	1
26	100	60	75	94	0
27	88	61	18	95	0
28	116	62	34	96	0
29	81	63	33	97	0
30	168	64	38	98	0
31	62	65	56	99	0
32	82	66	52	100	0
33	75	67	39	N/R	12

Note: a total of 12 records did not indicate any age so these are shown as N/R in Table 2

The one striking item from Fig. 2 is the significantly large numbers for ages 30, 40, 50 and 60 years of age. We will look at this later.

Age distribution of name Mary Murphy in Ireland in 1911

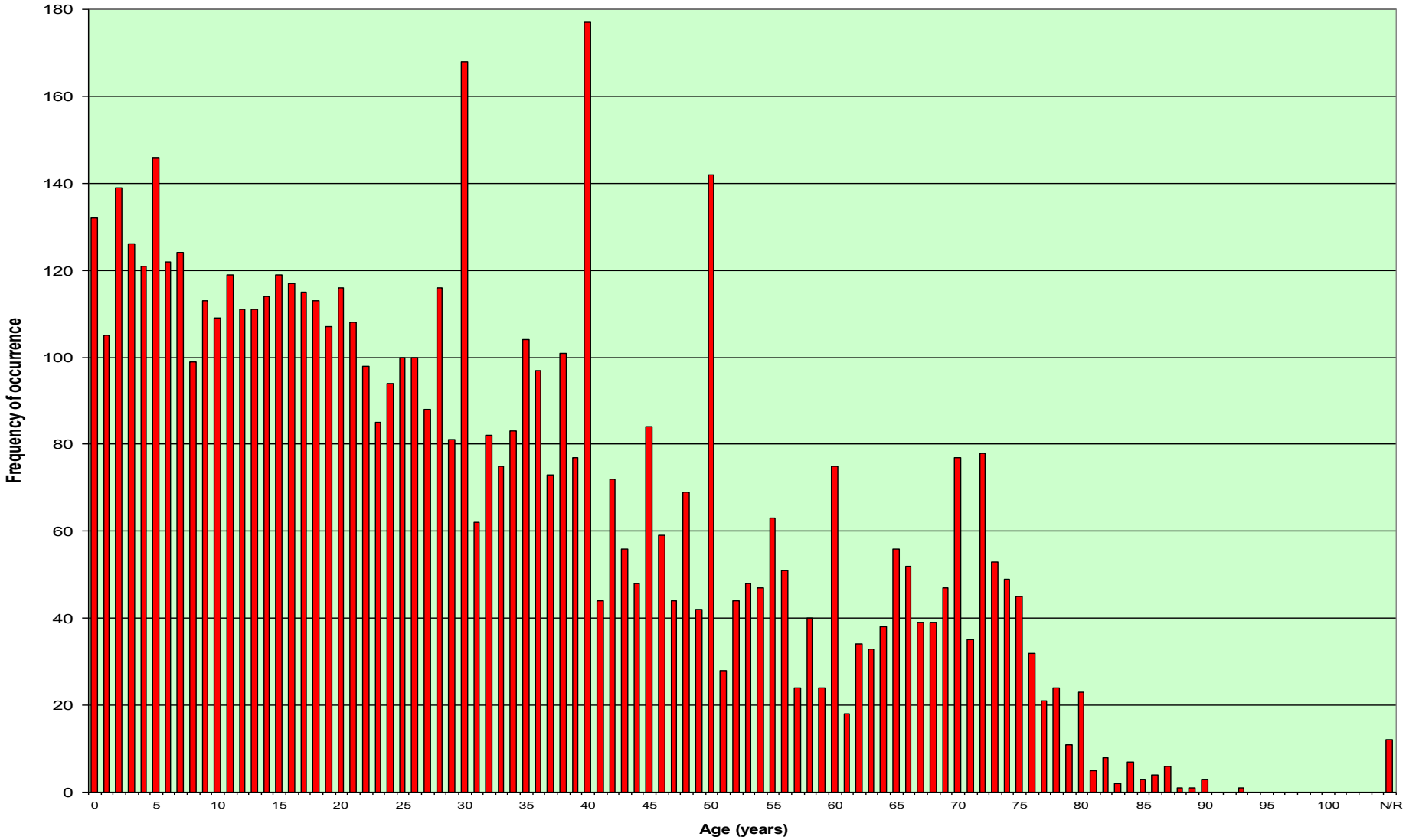


Fig 2

The number of occurrences of the name **John Murphy** by county are shown in Table 3 below.

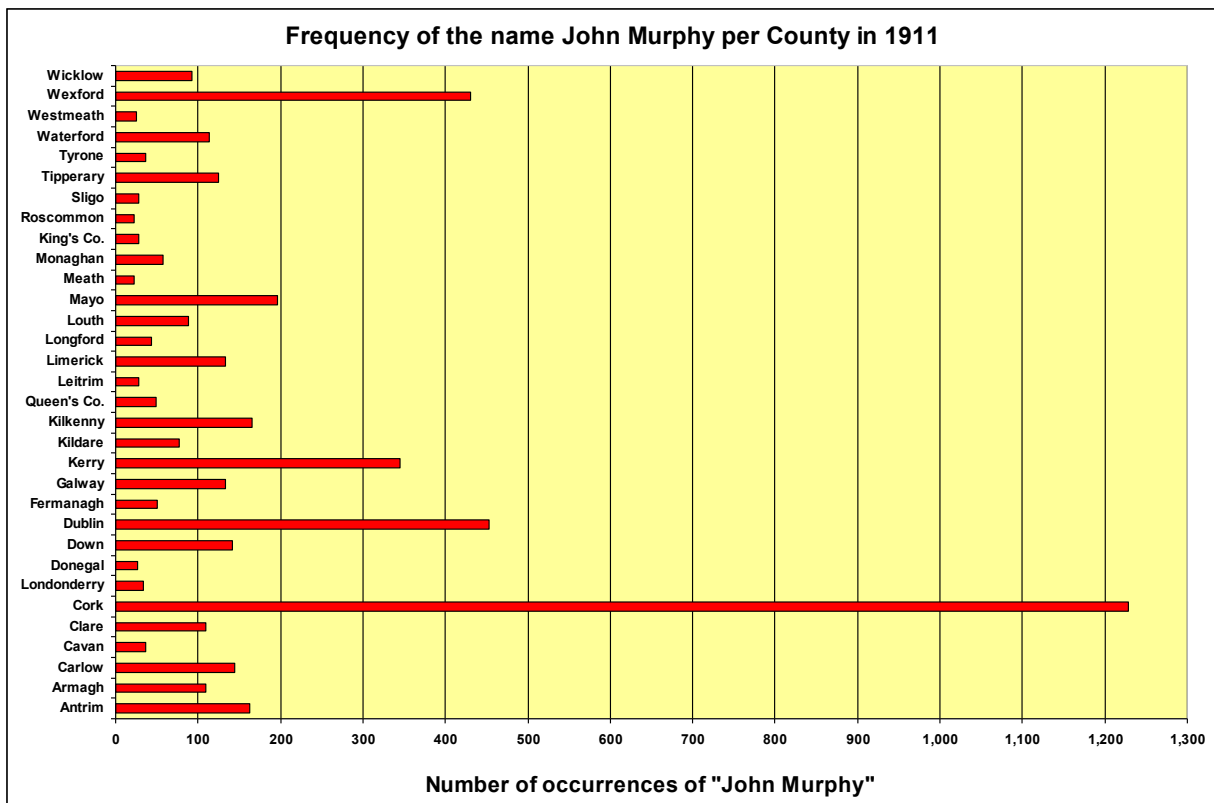
These results are easily viewed on the chart, Fig 3

**Table 3**

**John Murphy**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>
Antrim	162	Leitrim	28
Armagh	109	Limerick	133
Carlow	145	Longford	43
Cavan	37	Louth	89
Clare	109	Mayo	196
Cork	1,228	Meath	23
Londonderry	33	Monaghan	57
Donegal	27	King's Co.	28
Down	142	Roscommon	23
Dublin	453	Sligo	28
Fermanagh	50	Tipperary	125
Galway	133	Tyrone	36
Kerry	345	Waterford	114
Kildare	77	Westmeath	25
Kilkenny	166	Wexford	431
Queen's Co.	49	Wicklow	93

**Total for the country = 4,737**



**Fig. 3**

As we saw with Mary Murphy earlier, we now see that John Murphy is most popular in County Cork, followed by Dublin, Wexford and Kerry.

We will now examine the numbers of **John Murphy** under each age by year.

This breakdown by year of age is shown in Table 4 and graphically in Fig 4 below

**Table 4**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
0	93	35	81	70	44
1	91	36	83	71	20
2	107	37	53	72	37
3	91	38	67	73	32
4	91	39	46	74	32
5	89	40	137	75	28
6	76	41	36	76	19
7	102	42	49	77	16
8	88	43	36	78	24
9	93	44	32	79	5
10	83	45	71	80	15
11	81	46	42	81	5
12	90	47	27	82	2
13	89	48	54	83	1
14	103	49	34	84	3
15	93	50	99	85	6
16	82	51	27	86	0
17	77	52	33	87	3
18	93	53	27	88	3
19	75	54	31	89	1
20	77	55	40	90	4
21	90	56	54	91	1
22	76	57	25	92	1
23	73	58	36	93	0
24	76	59	20	94	0
25	87	60	58	95	0
26	70	61	15	96	1
27	66	62	29	97	0
28	76	63	25	98	0
29	66	64	35	99	0
30	99	65	33	100	0
31	39	66	21	101	0
32	65	67	27	102	1
33	61	68	38	N/R	16
34	62	69	26		

Note: a total of 16 records did not indicate any age so these are shown as N/R in Table 4

Like for Mary Murphy the one striking item from Fig. 4 is the significantly large numbers for ages 30, 40, 50 and 60 years of age, which we will look at later.

We see one person aged 102 years.

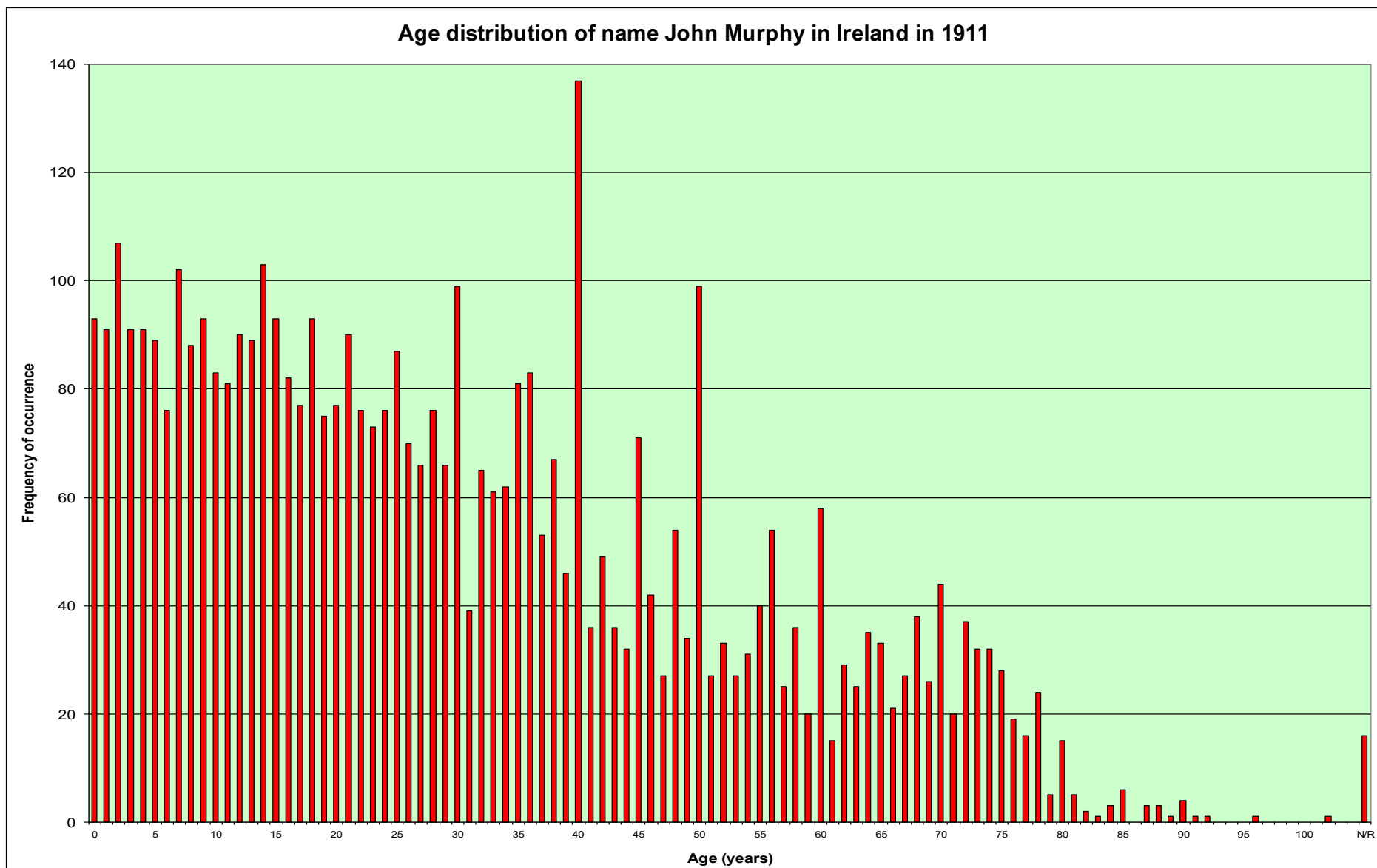


Fig. 4

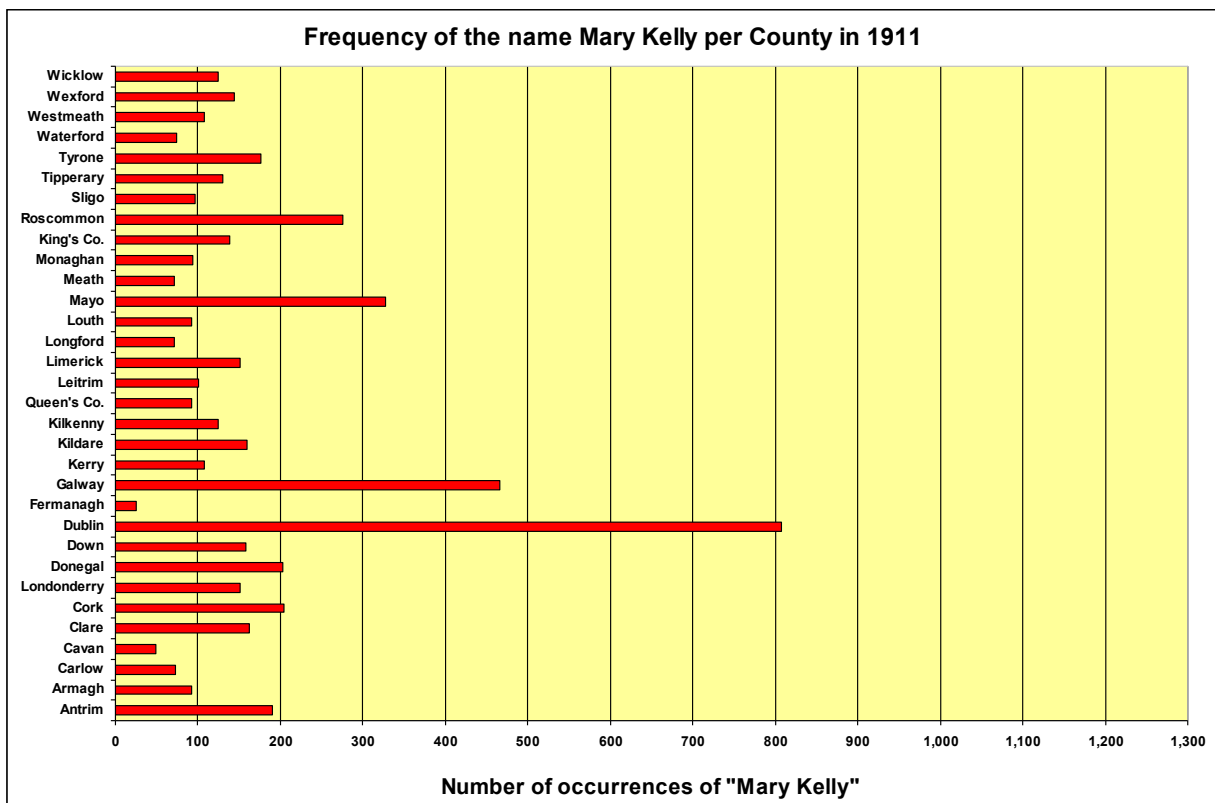
The number of occurrences of the name **Mary Kelly** by county are shown in Table 5 below.

These results are easily viewed on the chart, Fig 5

**Table 5**

**Mary Kelly**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>
Antrim	190	Leitrim	101
Armagh	92	Limerick	151
Carlow	73	Longford	71
Cavan	49	Louth	93
Clare	163	Mayo	328
Cork	204	Meath	72
Londonderry	151	Monaghan	94
Donegal	203	King's Co.	139
Down	158	Roscommon	275
Dublin	807	Sligo	96
Fermanagh	25	Tipperary	130
Galway	466	Tyrone	176
Kerry	108	Waterford	74
Kildare	159	Westmeath	108
Kilkenny	124	Wexford	144
Queen's Co.	93	Wicklow	125
<b>Total for the country = 5,242</b>			



**Fig. 5**

Here we see Dublin with the major share followed by Galway, Mayo and Roscommon



We will now examine the numbers of **Mary Kelly** under each age by year.

This breakdown by year of age is shown in Table 6 and graphically in Fig 6 below

**Table 6**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
0	97	35	75	70	53
1	100	36	63	71	35
2	112	37	62	72	52
3	109	38	76	73	66
4	112	39	50	74	43
5	127	40	128	75	39
6	109	41	29	76	26
7	108	42	43	77	12
8	89	43	50	78	19
9	85	44	44	79	7
10	111	45	60	80	13
11	103	46	47	81	3
12	114	47	33	82	6
13	92	48	44	83	2
14	91	49	31	84	4
15	89	50	108	85	3
16	113	51	22	86	1
17	90	52	28	87	1
18	91	53	33	88	0
19	94	54	35	89	0
20	111	55	35	90	3
21	73	56	51	91	0
22	108	57	26	92	1
23	84	58	34	93	0
24	86	59	20	94	1
25	77	60	85	95	0
26	85	61	15	96	1
27	80	62	23	97	0
28	90	63	31	98	0
29	59	64	29	99	1
30	116	65	42	100	1
31	41	66	35	101	0
32	61	67	27	102	0
33	60	68	39	N/R	11
34	63	69	55		

Note: a total of 11 records did not indicate any age so these are shown as N/R in Table 6

Like for Mary Murphy and John Murphy earlier, again the one striking item from Fig. 6 is the significantly large numbers for ages 30, 40, 50 and 60 years of age, which we will look at later.

We see one person 99 and also one person 100 years.

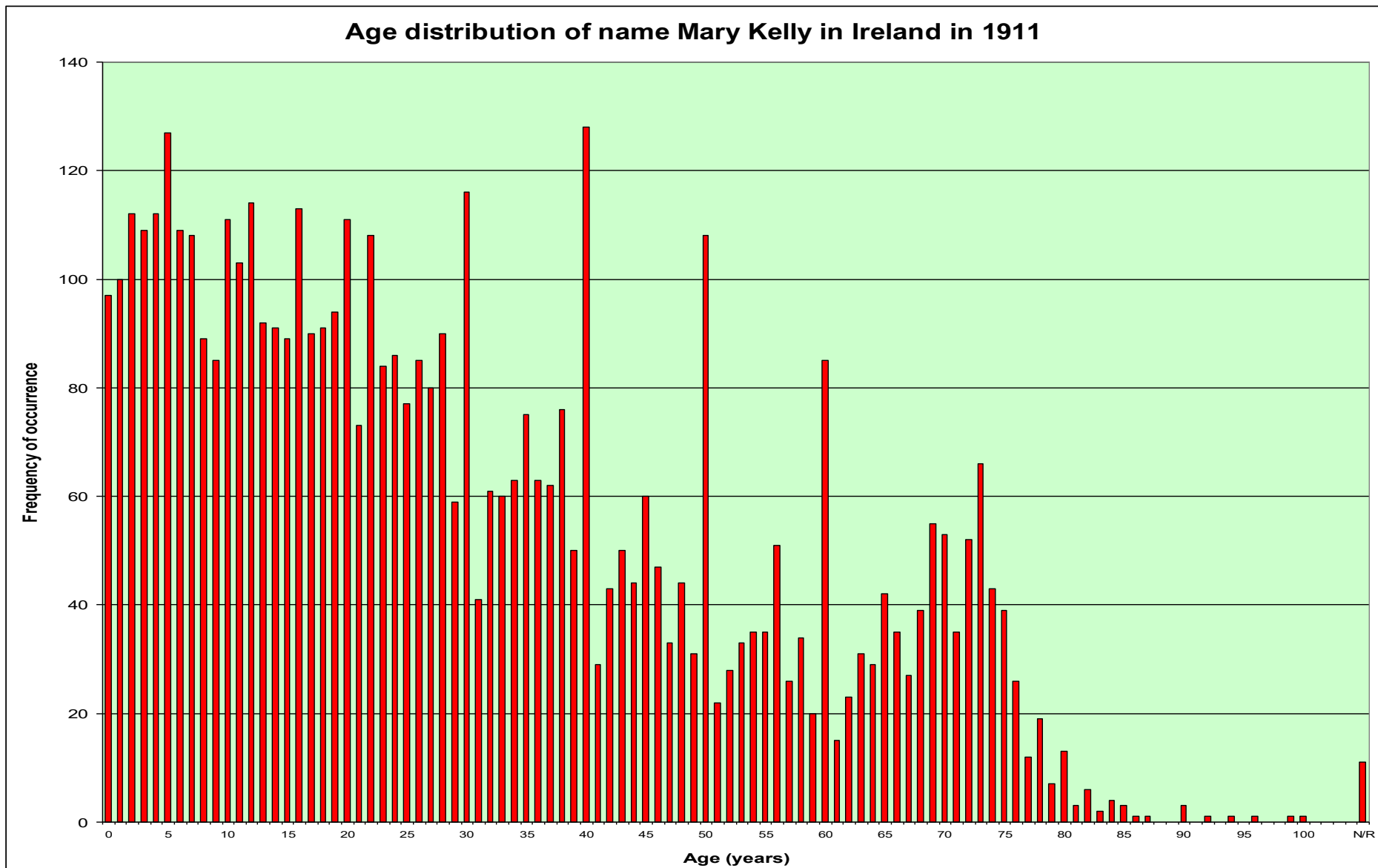


Fig.6

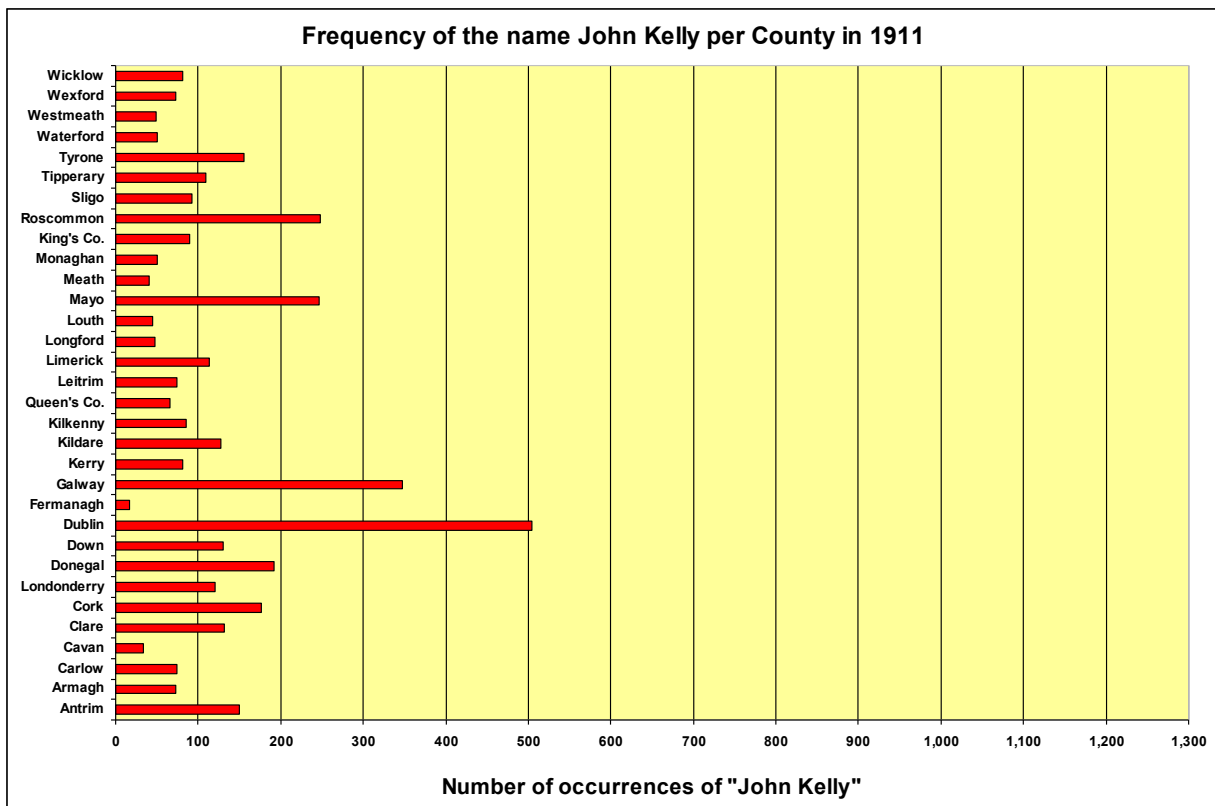
The number of occurrences of the name **John Kelly** by county are shown in Table 7 below.

These results are easily viewed on the chart, Fig 7

**Table 7**

**John Kelly**

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>
Antrim	150	Leitrim	74
Armagh	73	Limerick	113
Carlow	74	Longford	47
Cavan	33	Louth	45
Clare	131	Mayo	246
Cork	176	Meath	40
Londonderry	120	Monaghan	51
Donegal	192	King's Co.	90
Down	130	Roscommon	248
Dublin	504	Sligo	92
Fermanagh	17	Tipperary	109
Galway	348	Tyrone	156
Kerry	81	Waterford	50
Kildare	127	Westmeath	49
Kilkenny	86	Wexford	73
Queen's Co.	66	Wicklow	81
<b>Total for the country = 3,872</b>			



**Fig. 7**

Again, here we see Dublin with the major share followed by Galway, Roscommon and Mayo

We will now examine the numbers of **John Kelly** under each age by year.

This breakdown by year of age is shown in Table 8 and graphically in Fig 8 below

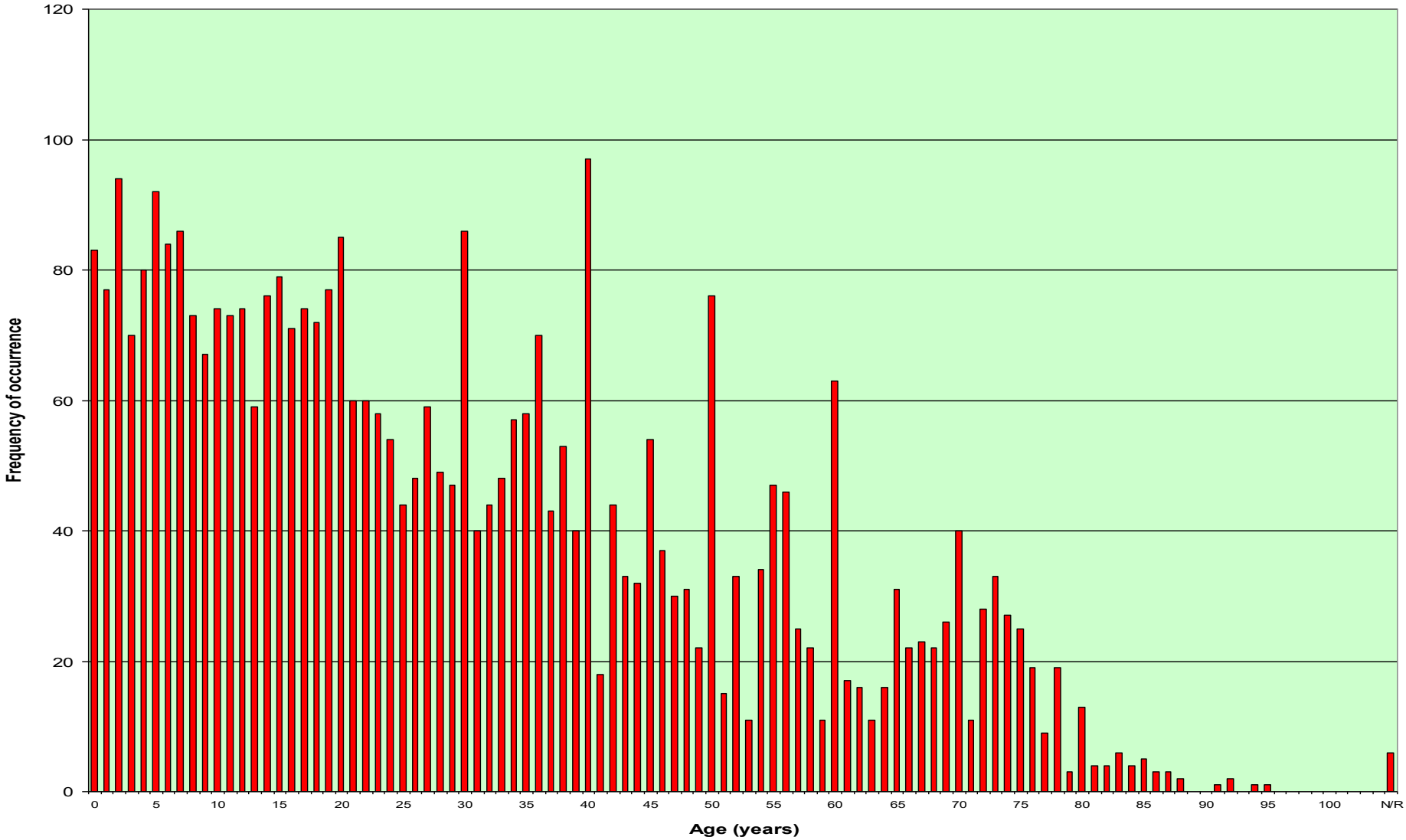
**Table 8**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>
0	83	34	57	68	22
1	77	35	58	69	26
2	94	36	70	70	40
3	70	37	43	71	11
4	80	38	53	72	28
5	92	39	40	73	33
6	84	40	97	74	27
7	86	41	18	75	25
8	73	42	44	76	19
9	67	43	33	77	9
10	74	44	32	78	19
11	73	45	54	79	3
12	74	46	37	80	13
13	59	47	30	81	4
14	76	48	31	82	4
15	79	49	22	83	6
16	71	50	76	84	4
17	74	51	15	85	5
18	72	52	33	86	3
19	77	53	11	87	3
20	85	54	34	88	2
21	60	55	47	89	0
22	60	56	46	90	0
23	58	57	25	91	1
24	54	58	22	92	2
25	44	59	11	93	0
26	48	60	63	94	1
27	59	61	17	95	1
28	49	62	16	96	0
29	47	63	11	97	0
30	86	64	16	98	0
31	40	65	31	99	0
32	44	66	22	100	0
33	48	67	23	N/R	6

Note: a total of 6 records did not indicate any age so these are shown as N/R in Table 8

Like we saw in the earlier names, again the one striking item from Fig. 8 is the significantly large numbers for ages 30, 40, 50 and 60 years of age, which we will look at shortly.

**Age distribution of name John Kelly in Ireland in 1911**



**Fig. 8**

# Observations

The most striking feature, for me, about the above charts is the columns which stand out from the general trend. These are for the ages of 30, 40, 50, 60, and also 70 years of age. These ages are much more frequent than other nearby ages. Interesting too is the fact that age 31, 41, 51, 61 and 71 in all of the four names is much lower than the general trend.

Another striking fact from Fig. 2, Fig. 4, Fig. 6 and Fig. 8 is that the decreasing trend of **numbers living** versus **age** changed to increasing ages from the aged about 60 to aged 72 and decreasing again to aged 80 to meet the earlier decreasing trendline. This is more easily seen in Fig. 9 which is based on the totals for each age category for each name, so it covers over 20,000 people of names Mary Murphy, John Murphy, Mary Kelly and John Kelly.

To highlight the latter point I have added an averaging line in Fig. 10 below and this does clearly show the jump in the numbers of people living at aged 70 plus / minus about 9 years. In this I did ignore the spikes for aged 30, 40, 50 and 60 years.

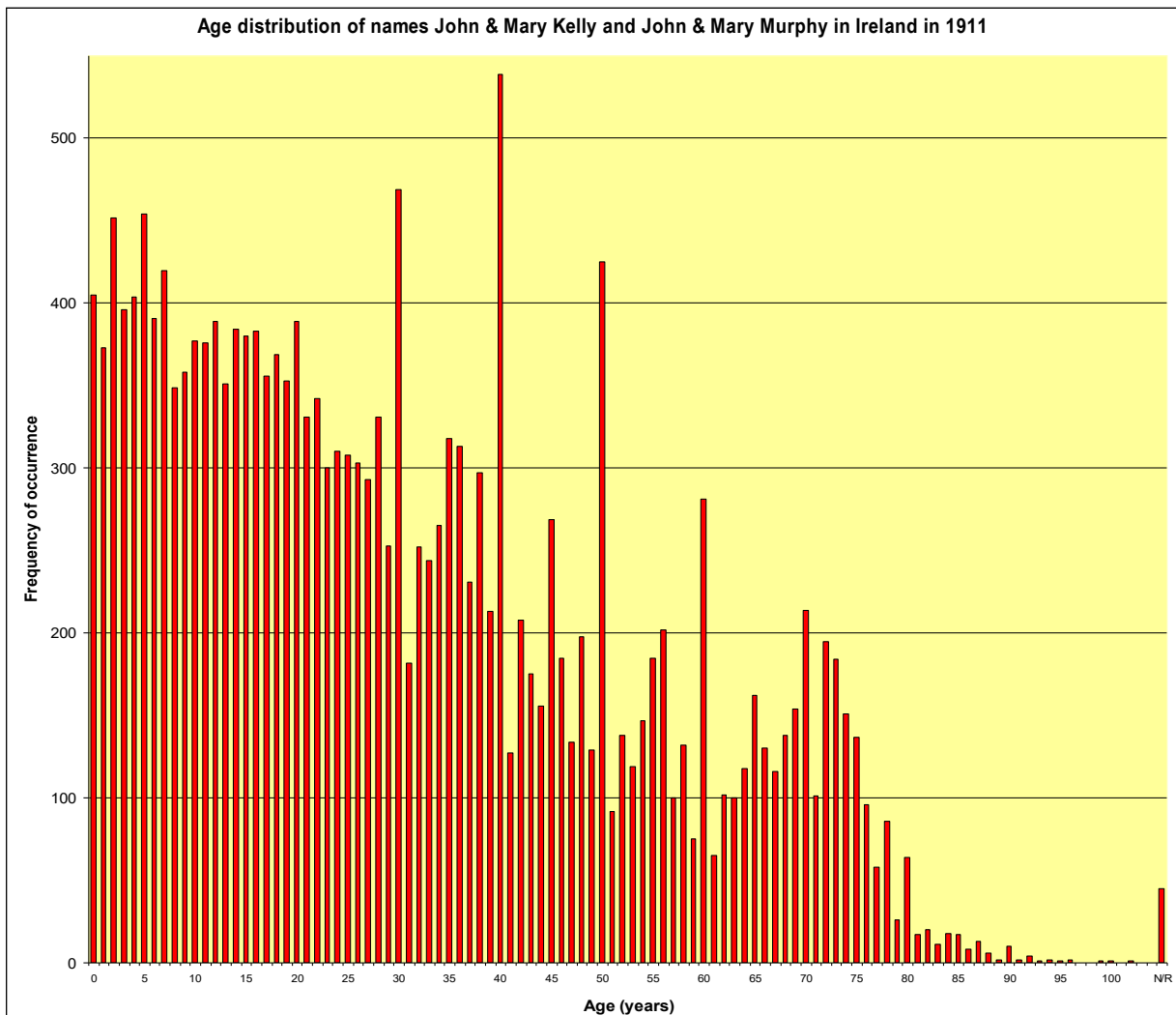


Fig. 9

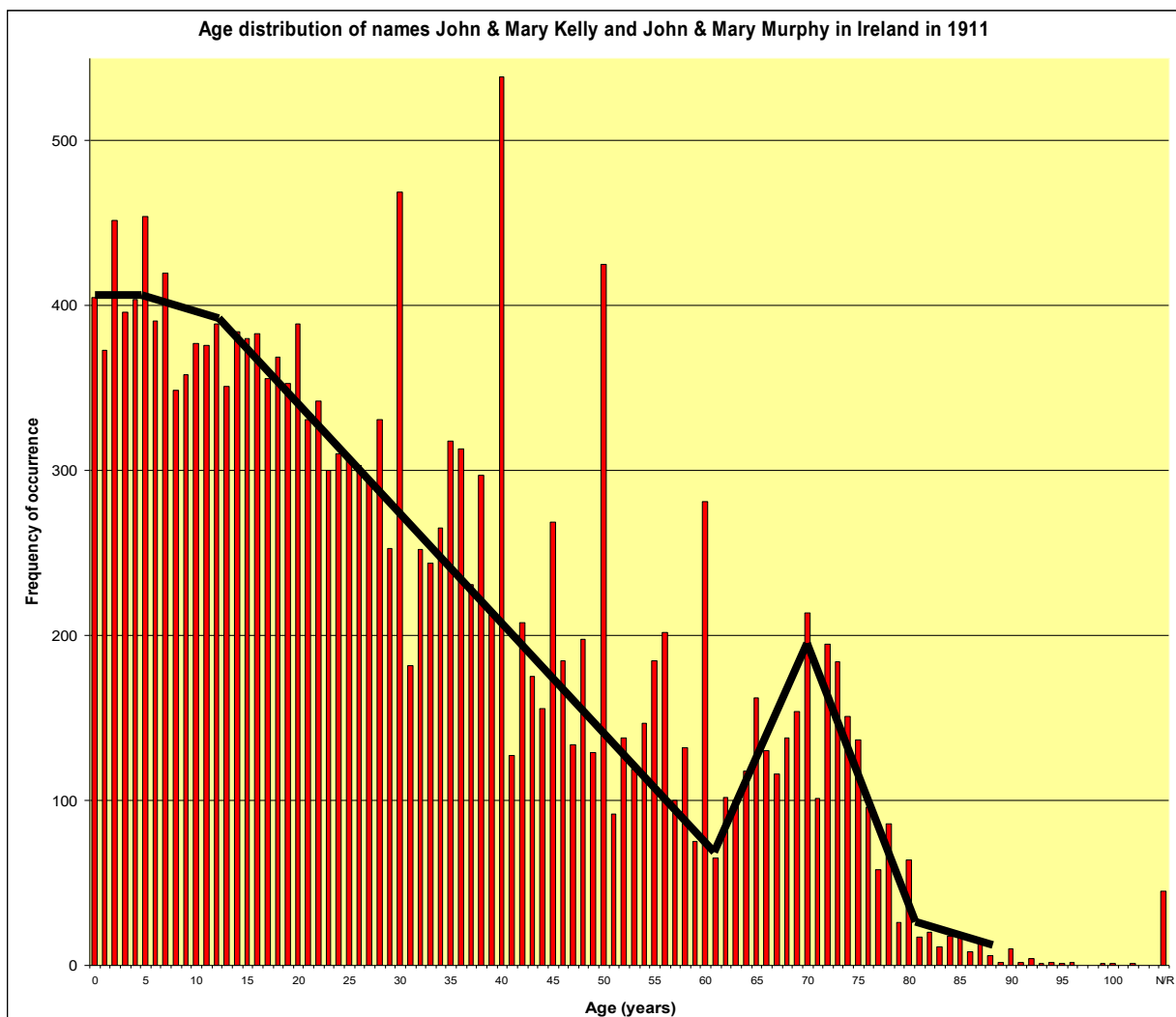


Fig. 10

In browsing the Census of 1901 of Ireland and comparing the age of particular people with their age in the 1911 Census we see large variations between the two years. Some people aged just a few years in that 10 year period while others aged anything up to 18 years. This of course makes it very difficult to judge a persons date of birth. Presumably many people were unsure of their age.

If one can locate people on Church baptism records or post 1864 on the State Birth records then it does give a reliable birth date. In such cases where I have been able to check birth / baptism dates I did find that the age indicated in 1911 was generally much more accurate than in 1901; but also there were the exceptions!

And of course we wonder if my claim that the ages quoted in the 1911 Census were more accurate for many of the people than they indicated in the earlier 1901 Census, then why the noticeable spike in ages for a few years either side of age 70 years? The obvious thing is to do a similar exercise for the names Mary Murphy, John Murphy, Mary Kelly and John Kelly for all of Ireland in the Census of 1901.

The result of the above exercise is shown graphically on Fig. 11 using the cumulative total for the selected names in Ireland.

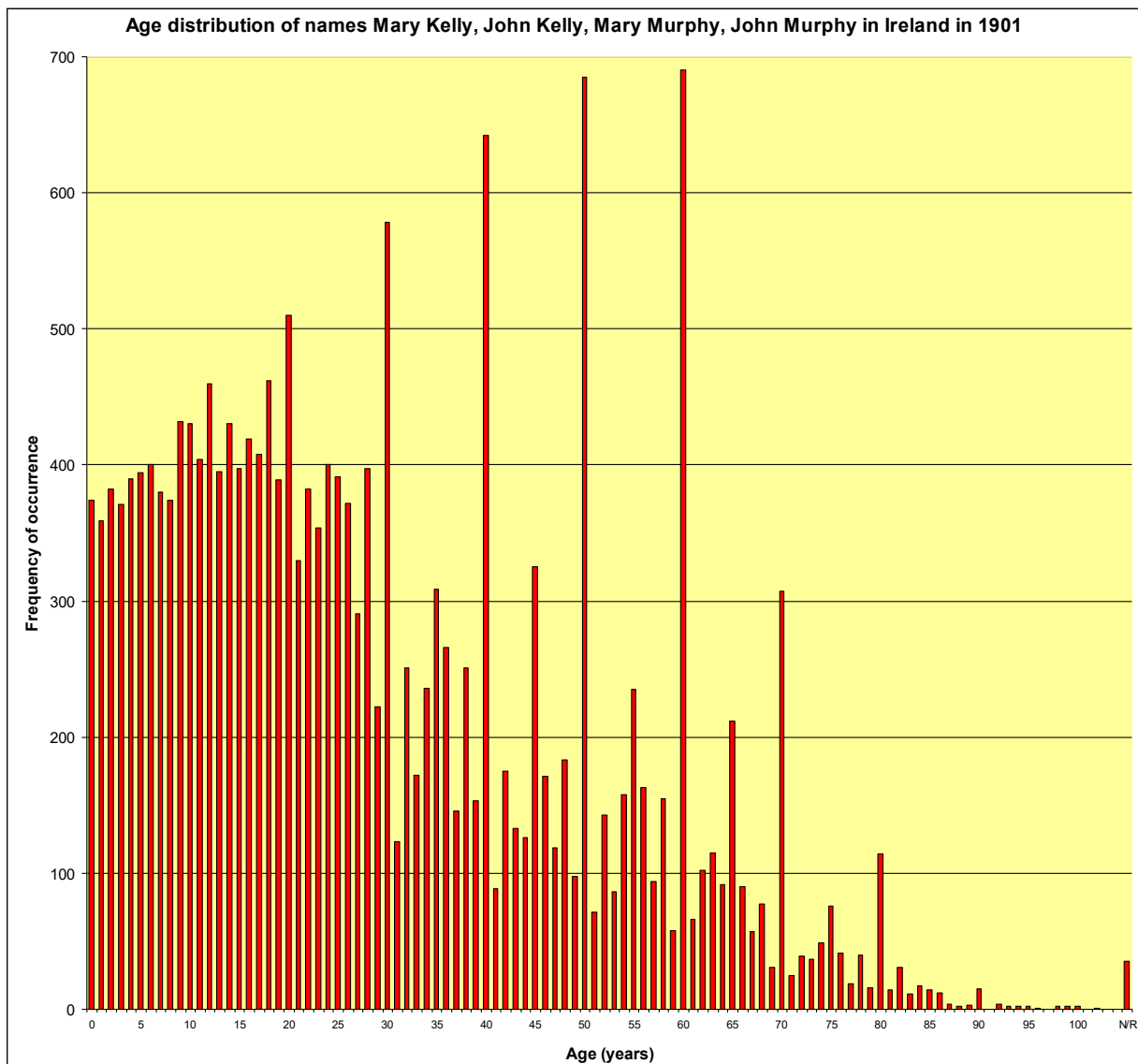


Fig. 11

Well, abnormal numbers are most prominent for the ages 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 and 80 years where aged 60 reached 690 people from a total sample of 20,564 people. Less prominent high numbers can be observed for aged 35, 45, 55, 65 and 75 years.

Clearly many people were not sure of their age and it seems they often picked a nearby round number to a multiple of 10 as their age, as examples 30, 40, 50, etc.

If we somewhat ignore the decade peaks and slightly apportion some to nearby ages then we can draw an approx. graph of **age v. frequency of occurrence** and this is shown in Fig. 12 as a thick black line. This follows an expected pattern with a decrease in frequency with increasing age. Interestingly there is no peak like what we saw in the similar exercise for the Census of 1911 where there was this peak plus/minus aged 70 years in Fig. 10. These would be people who were born in the 1830's to the late 1840's generally, and before the State record system commenced in 1864.

From our analysis of the 1911 data we note that this increase in frequency was prominent for each name sampled and indeed this was true too for names in 1911 which are not included in this document.



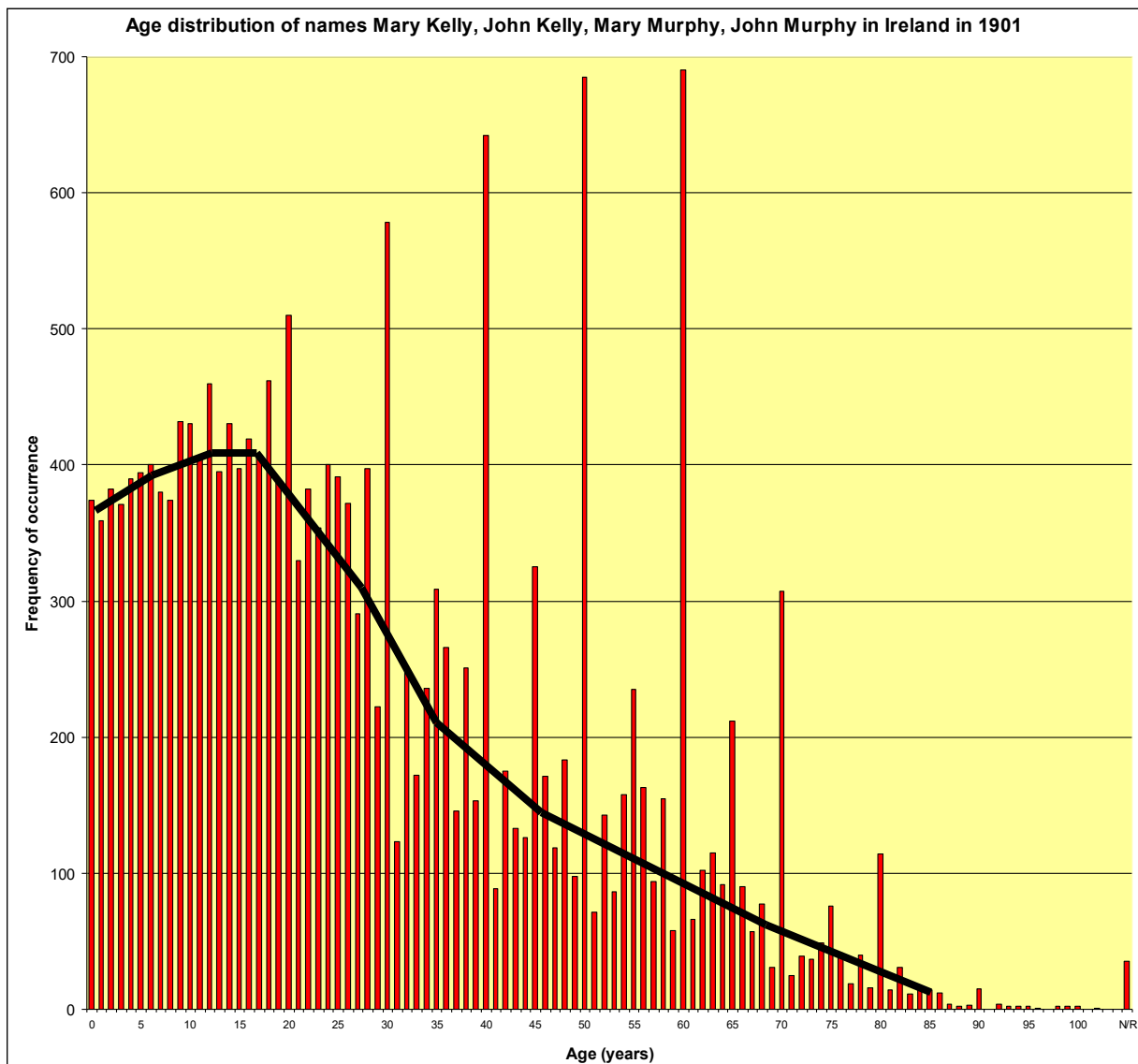


Fig. 12

One has to wonder if it was in any way related to the 1908 *Old Age Pensions Act* which was for 'eligible' people aged 70 and over.

The full pension was 5 shillings/week for a single person, or 7 shillings/week for a married couple, and it was available to those with an income of less than £21.00.00 /year. Payments commenced in January 1909. By 31 March 1910 a total of 180,974 Irish pensions had been granted. The level of take-up from those eligible was 98% in Ireland compared to 45% take-up in England and Wales.

*“would Irish people make themselves older to qualify for a pension?”*

Return to: <http://bmdnotices.com/history.aspx>