Census hints for the enumerators

HINTS RESPECTING THE NEW CENSUS, to be taken on Monday, the 7th of June, 1841.

1. The best mode of taking a census is by a map and a register. On the map, the situation of houses only should be marked. Every house should be numbered, and then a register of every inmate made. The commissioners have adopted the plan of a register, and arranged an expensive machinery for taking it, but the form is very imperfect. It is to be written in pencil. Ages above 15 are to be entered thus - at 29, put 25, if 34, put 30, and so on. If a person has two Christian names, only one is to be inserted. The county where born is to be recorded, but not the parish, which the Act also requires. Such a register will be of little use. At the same cost one might be taken which would ensure an accurate census, and might be useful for many purposes in a parish till the decennial enumeration of 1851. A register of this kind was prepared in 1831 for a large parish in this county, and has been of great service ever since.

2. The attention of the commissioners should be directed to the whole of the United Kingdom, including the Norman Isles. This is rarely the case in our statistical documents. France, though larger, always appears entire, whilst the British and Norman Isles are generally arranged in separate and detached parts.

3. Cornishmen should especially look to the area covered by 1. the county; 2. the archdeaconry; 3. the parliamentary districts; and 4, the poor law unions. This surface contains 209 entire parishes, of which 201 belong alike to each of these four general divisions. The remaining eight parishes on the line of the Tamar from north to south are 1. Bridgerule, 2. North Tamerton, 3. Boyton; 4. North Petherwin; 5. Werrington; 6. St. Giles in the Heath; 7. St. Budeaux; and 8, Maker. From want of attention to these eight parishes, it frequently happens that the description and statistics of all the four general divisions of Cornwall are inaccurately given. This provincial geography should be taught in our schools.

4. In the last official census of 1831 for Cornwall, there are the following errors and defects: - 1. the Cornish part of St. Budeaux is not noticed; 2. the parishes of Cuby and St. James, Tregony, are not distinguished; 3, the population of Landrake and St. Erney is not severed; 4. the proportion of Laneast in the hundred of East, and Lesnewth is not given; 5. there is a duplicate entry of 474 for the Lanlivery part of Lostwithiel Borough; 6. the population of the parishes of Creed and Probus cannot be ascertained, because the proportion of each in Grampound is not given; 7. the population of the hamlet of Trewarlet, near Launceston, is not shown, though it changes its parish every year. In the forthcoming census care

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should be taken to rectify these inaccuracies.

5. Inhabited rocks and small extra-parochial places are frequently overlooked, such as St. Nicholas Island, the Eddystone, Looe Island, the Longships, Launceston Castle, &c.

6. No provision seems to be made for ascertaining the population of small towns, such as Polperro, Bude, Boscastle, Porthleaven, and Wadebridge; nor of larger ones not having a municipal or parliamentary franchise, such as Redruth, Camborne, St. Austell, &c.

7. Greater attention should also be paid to the area of towns, by showing within what space the population is congregated. Take for instance the towns of Launceston, Liskeard, and Bodmin. From the last census you cannot discover which town had the denser population; we believe that at Launceston more persons were then living within a square mile than at either Bodmin or Liskeard. But the public documents do not show this, as the fact as to Launceston must be gathered from the retun of three parishes. These circumstances might be shewn on a statistical map, which the government or the literary societies in each county should prepare to accompany and elucidate the census of the 7th of June.

7 MAY 1841, Friday WEST BRITON

HINTS for the CENSUS (continued from our last)

16. A circular has been addressed by the commissioners to the clergy, requesting their co-operation in taking the census. Though it comes late, it will, no doubt, meet with due attention. A short note on the subject appeared in the last Ecclesiastical Gazette, and from the extensive circulation of that paper many may be lead thereby to examine the plan proposed, and to aid it by their advice and direction. No time should be lost; the business should be undertaken at once, during the next week, through the medium of committees, or by giving personal assistance to the enumerators.

17. The boundaries of the county and arch deaconry in Hamoaze should be attended to, and the population of the ships moored on the western side of the Tamar. The water must form part (though seldom recognized) of the parishes of Maker, St. John, and Antony. Cawsand-bay is situated between Rame and Maker. The flag ship and the ordinary in Hamoaze are both lying within the archdeaconry of Cornwall. Had the suspension bridge over the Tamar at Saltash been completed at the estimated cost of 60,000, it would have stood wholly within the county of Cornwall. It does not appear what measures have been adopted for taking the population on the water in rivers and harbours.

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28 MAY 1841, Friday WEST BRITON

Census Content:

The forms used to transcribe the information vary from one census to another. The 1841 census returns contain less information than the later ones, and, as they were written on blue paper, the microfilms are usually difficult to decipher.

Schedule (original form)
Place (street name, house name or number).
Houses. 1841, 1861 onwards distinguish uninhabited houses.
Names. Surname and forename of those resident on census night.
Relation to head of family (wife, son, lodger etc). From 1851.
Marital condition (married, unmarried, widowed). From 1851.
Age and sex. Ages over 15 rounded down to nearest five years in 1841.
Occupation (rank,profession, employment).
Where born. County or country if outside England and Wales 1841, parish and county from 1851.
Whether blind, deaf or dumb. From 1851.
Whether imbecile or idiot. From 1871.
Employment status. From 1891.

Number of rooms. From 1891. Institutions such as prisons, workhouses, boarding schools, hospitals and also ships have special forms.

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