



Press Release
3 December 2004

Original 1881 Census goes online

As family history becomes more popular than ever - thanks to BBC2's TV series Who Do You Think You Are? - a new initiative by The National Archives and MyFamily.com Inc will make it even easier to research your family history online.

MyFamily.com and The National Archives have come together to launch a new co-branded online service. For the first time, fully searchable indexes and scans of original documents from the 1881 and 1891 censuses for England and Wales are available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/census. And over the next two years all historic censuses from 1841 to 1891 will be made available online in the same way providing a wealth of information about everyone living in the country, including their ages, occupations and places of birth.

"This is the first time that you can view the original 1881 census books online" says Mark Pearsall, family historian at The National Archives. "The indexes are already available online, but it's exciting to see the original pages as they were written 123 years ago. They are also useful because they can help give you the context for the family and the street they lived on. For example, a friend found that her cousin had married her neighbour.

"Searching the index of names is free and if you want to see the full original entry you can do that on a pay-per-view basis, which means it's easier than ever to get started in family history.

"If you're a celebrity spotter, these records also provide a glimpse into the lives of the 19th century's rich and famous."

Celebrities from 1881 include:

- Winston Churchill, as a 6 year old living with his parents in Oxford
- Queen Victoria, living at Windsor Castle with other members of the Royal Family including Eugenie, the 'Ex-Empress of the French'
- Charles Darwin, living with his large family at Down House in Kent
- Karl Marx, living in St Pancras, his occupation given as 'Author, Political Economy'
- Mrs Pankhurst, recently married and living in Stretford with her husband and daughter Christabel

Colourful characters include a man called Donald Duck; a GP called Dr Robert De'ath; William Neal, who had no occupation because he was "too idle", and the Munslow twins called "Bank" and "Holiday".

James Strachan, Head of Online Services at The National Archives, said:

"We are delighted to have this co-branded service with MyFamily.com as they have a superb track record of running genealogical websites. We are committed to making more and more documents available online; this service complements the records we have already put on the web with Documents Online and the 1901 Census."

Andre Brummer, Chief Development Officer of MyFamily.com, Inc. said:

"We are excited to work with The National Archives and provide online access today to the 1881 and 1891 Census records and eventually many more census records. This new service will make it easier to find your ancestors and discover the information that brings these people to life. As more and more information is available online, it is easier every day for people to discover who they are and where they come from."

If the family history bug has bitten and you don't know where to start, you can go to any of the BBC's 40 family history events taking place nationwide on the weekend of 4 / 5 December. For details, go to www.archiveawareness.com or phone 08700 100 150.

The London event will be held at the National Archives in Kew on 4 December from 10am to 4pm. This free event organised by BBC London, in conjunction with The National Archives, supports the highly successful "Who Do You Think You Are?" series on BBC2. You will have the chance to follow in the footsteps of the 10 celebrities and begin your own personal voyage of discovery. Activities, all of them free, and suitable for people of all ages, include: talks and demonstrations on reading old handwriting and looking after family photos; "meet the experts" sessions; and behind the scenes tours; as well as music, food and competitions!

Notes for Editors:

The total number of people in the 1891 census for England, Wales and the Channel Islands is 28,978,515 and for the 1881 census is 26,496,716.

Pay-Per-View works on a pre-paid credit system where £6.00 provides 20 page view credits to use within 7 days. Credits can be used to view digital images of the original returns or a transcript. Subscription packages offering unlimited access to all data within Ancestry's UK & Ireland Collection (more than 185 million names and 3.5 million images of census, marriage and baptism records are included) are also available at £59.95 annually and £24.95 quarterly. All prices are exclusive of VAT payable by all E.U. residents. You can pay by credit card.

The co-branded service is operated under an 'enhanced' licensing arrangement which builds on The National Archives' existing licence with MyFamily.com. The MyFamily.com Inc. proposal was selected following a competitive evaluation process and demonstrates The National Archives' commitment to putting its most popular record series online.

The National Archives, Kew, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk has one of the largest archival collections in the world, spanning 1000 years of British history, from Domesday Book to newly released government papers. The free museum and research rooms in Kew, west London, are open to the public 6 days a week.

MyFamily.com, Inc. provides the largest and most popular collection of online information for connecting families with their histories and with one another. The MyFamily network of web-based products includes MyFamily.com, Ancestry.com, Ancestry.co.uk, Genealogy.com, and RootsWeb.com. The company also publishes Family Tree Maker, the #1 selling family tree software, Ancestry Magazine, Genealogical Computing Magazine, over 50 book titles, and numerous databases on CD-ROM.

The National Archives' Document Online website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline was launched earlier this year, when Shakespeare's and Jane Austen's wills were made available online. The site provides access to The National Archives' collection of digitised public records, including family history sources such as wills, First World War Army medal cards and Second World War Seamen's medal records.

QinetiQ plc, under a private finance initiative contract with The National Archives, manages the 1901 Census website and this contract will run to 2012. The 1901 Census is also available at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/census.

For press enquiries, images or interviews, please contact
The National Archives Press Office on 020 8392 5277 or e-mail
clea.reilly@nationalarchives.gov.uk