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What is a Census?

My Oxford English dictionary defines a census as an official numbering of population, however my experience of censuses tells me it is more than this.

During my research into the Diviani family I examined the United Kingdom censuses taken in 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881 and 1891. Where an address is known one can view microfilmed copies of the census and extract details of the occupants resident on census night to find out their name, age, and relationship to other members of the same household, occupation and place of birth. The 1881 census has also been indexed by name for the whole of the UK so it is possible to search on a name e.g. Diviani or Brentini, and obtain addresses to research further for the above information.

My earlier researches were into addresses in London obtained as a result of members of the Diviani and Brentini families placing entries in a trade directory that advertised their business. Typical business occupations were confectioner, ginger beer maker, restaurateur; the latter were the forerunners to the "Swiss Café" establishments that were popular in London around the turn of the century. There are also entries for a looking glass frame maker and photographer.

Switzerland also takes a 10 yearly census of its population. When I consulted a copy of the 1808 census of the Commune of Calpiogna, which then included Campello (taken of men only!) I discovered that Andrea **Diviani** (of the Bala branch, who was baptised in St Atanasio, Calpiogna, Switzerland on 10 February 1803 the youngest son of Giovanni **Diviani** and Caterina **del Pietro**) was shown with his father and 2 elder brothers Giuseppe aged 17 and Giovanni aged 16. He married Maria Giuseppa **Brentini** (Giovanitt) in 1833 and had 2 sons who survived infancy, Guglielmo (William) born 1841 and Daniele born 1844.

"Hello" to Fernanda **Lopez** of São Paulo in Brazil, she has contacted me requesting information about her great grandfather Luiz (Luigi) **Diviani** born 1862 in Piacenza in Italy. We are working on the research but can anyone help with ideas or information?

Guglielmo was recorded in the UK census of 1861 working at the premises in Euston Road of his cousin (Giovanni [John] **Diviani**), the entry records his age (20) his occupation as a confectioners shopman and that he was born in Campello, Switzerland. Daniele appears in the 1871 census for Pentonville Road, where Andrea died in 1876 and also in 1881 where he is listed with his wife Eletta **D'Alessandri** and their London born children Emilia, Giovanni and Virginia.

As many of you will know 2001 was a census year in the UK (Switzerland held its last census in 2000) and census forms were delivered to every household during April. The information gathered reflected the household's circumstances on 29 April 2001 and will be used for forward planning and information. It was certainly not just "a count of the population" and will be publicly available to researchers in 100 years time. I hope the information will be as useful to a family researcher of the 22nd century as the previous ones have been to me.

Reunion

There are less than 2 years to the proposed reunion of Diviani and Brentini families. It will span the 1 August 2003 (Swiss National Day) celebrations to be held in Campello and surrounding villages. Some contacts have already indicated their wish to attend. A questionnaire will be sent with the next newsletter (February 2002) to find out what people want or expect from such a gathering. It will help us to make the event as enjoyable as possible for everyone if I receive some feedback. There will be no obligation to attend at this point but numbers will be very useful. Campello is a small village with limited accommodation. It will also enable us to plan events and make provision for translation services- not all of us can speak Italian or French!

If you would like to submit a photograph and a short paragraph regarding yourself. I will try and feature it in the newsletter. Who knows, in 2003 people who you have never met before may be able to recognise you and introduce themselves to you as a long lost cousin!