The decennial UKCensus began in 1801, but from 1801-1831 it was merely statistical in nature (no personal names were required) so it is of little value to family historians. Beginning with the 1841 census, however, an effort was made to list every resident of each building by name.

The Enumeration

To minimize duplicate entries, the census was planned to be a data "snapshot" of each household as of a particular night—that is, it was meant to enumerate each person who spent the night in the household, regardless of the reason for his being there.

Each enumerator was required to note any uninhabited buildings in his district, and for buildings that were inhabited, to drop off, before the census night, a blank census schedule form for each family to complete as of the census date. Then, he was supposed to swing round after census night and pick up the completed schedules, and "fair copy" them onto his own consolidated forms. The original schedules themselves were later destroyed; the UKCensus as we know it is the enumerators' fair copies.

It appears that the official "census date" was meant to fall on a Sunday—specifically (after the first census in 1841) with the Sunday of the first week in April. Here is the complete list of official "census dates: 6Jun1841, 30Mar1851, 7Apr1861, 2Apr1871, 3Apr1881, 5Apr1891, and 31Mar1901.

Although many descriptions of the enumeration process provide the official "census date" for each year, none that I have found address the ambiguity of a date that is suppose to represent a "night" (which in ordinary usage spans *two* dates—hence the term "midnight"). However I have assembled several pieces of evidence that collectively appear to resolve this question.

I found a note on an 1861 enumerator's completed fair copy, written into a line devoted to an uninhabited building, which reads "family left after schedule was delivered and before Sunday 7th." This would seem to imply that Sunday was the day the completed schedules would normally have been picked up, and one would, in fact expect that drop off on Saturday night, and pickup on Sunday morning, would have the best chance to find people at home. So chalk one up for census night being the night of Saturday-Sunday. But this hypothesis is controverted by all the other evidence.

For the first, 1841 census, when Census Sunday was 6Jun, the enumerator entered his fair copy into booklets, at the end of which he entered his completion date. Thanks to Steve Paver, I have a copy of the 1841 census for Leeds, and I've done a seat-of-the-pants frequency study of these 100 or so booklets, except for the 10 or so that were illegible. About 75% of the remaining 90 were completed by the enumerator between the 8th and the 10th, with the 8th being the most frequent single date. Exactly 9 were completed on the 7th, and none on the 6th. This supports the hypothesis that "census night" was the night of Sunday-Monday. Unfortunately the enumerator's dates do not seem to have been filmed for the later censuses.

I did find, though, for the 1861 census (with a census date of 7Apr), a special form for enumerating persons aboard vessels. Preprinted language on this form would seem to resolve the ambiguity. First, there is a field requesting the "Position of the vessel by midnight April 7th, 1861", and second, the instructions, "This paper must be properly filled up ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 8th."

From all this I conclude that "census night" referred to the instant of midnight at the *end* of the Sunday appointed as the census date.

In 1841 Census Sunday was 6Jun. Thus, the 1841 enumeration was meant to have captured every one who woke up in that household Monday morning. According to one source (which I cannot now identify), when, in the aftermath of the 1841 census, it was realized that in June of the year there were many people (migrant workers and paupers) "sleeping rough" out-of-doors, it was decided to

move Census Sunday back into the winter months for 1851 and thereafter. It may be that the specific hour of midnight was appointed at the same time, for the same end.

The otherwise excellent *Ancestral Trails*, has little to say about the specifics of the enumeration process, just as it fails to show any awareness of the ambiguity of the census dates it proffers. To be fair, it does cite as a more specialized source on the UKCensus that I have not seen: E. Higgs *Making Sense of the Census: the Manuscript Returns for England and Wales, 1801-1901*.

The Census Records, and their Organization

The country was organized hierarchically for the collection of the UKCensus, as follows:

Registration District (Superintendent Registrar)
Sub-Registration District (Registrar)
Enumeration District (Enumerator)

The enumerator made his returns to the Registrar, who returned to the Superintendent Registrar. An analysis of data from 1861 Hunslet Registration Sub-District in Leeds, for example, shows that there were 28 Enumeration Districts (EDs) in the Sub-District.

The returns for each ED have been entered onto pages numbered 1-n for each ED. Several EDs were then gathered into a numbered "piece"—numbered both in the sense of being assigned a unique sequential piece#, and in the sense that collectively they were assigned a new sequence of *folio* meta-numbers from 1-n for each piece. The word "folio" is from the Latin for "leaf", and we may say that the elements being numbered for each piece are its leaves, rather than its pages. A folio in this sense consists of two pages—a "recto" (or front side page), and a "verso" (or back side page). The piece folio number was stamped onto the top right corner of the recto side of each folio.

These details are important because it is the folio#s, not the page#s that have been indexed, and which should be cited, or, to be more specific, the folio and the side. One could say "folio 123, recto", but I have adopted the shorthand "123r" (the verso side would be "123v") for my own citations. My convention, in effect, converts a folio-(in the sense of leaf-) numbering scheme, into a page-numbering scheme, and I shall label such numbers "page" numbers, even though they are usually referred to as "folio" numbers. I do this deliberately to avoid an ambivalence inherent in the term "folio." There is, unfortunately, an important secondary sense of "folio" that denotes the left and right sides of an open accountant's ledger. And this alternate kind of folio numbering is encountered often enough in old manuscript books that the distinction is not an empty one.

In fact, to digress for a moment, in the USCensus, especially in the earlier decades, both kinds of folio numbering are encountered. Folio numbering (in the accountant's sense) is the order of the day for the 1830 and 1840 USCensuses, but folio (=leaf) numbering was officially adopted as of 1880 with a combination of pre-printed forms lettered "A, B, C, D, A, B, C...", and a series of meta-numbers hand-stamped sequentially on every right-side page. Then, in 1900 and subsequently the lettering sequence was simplified to just "A, B, A, B...", where "A", in effect, designates the recto side of the leaf, and "B", the verso. To bring some order and standardization to the manifold confusions of early USCensus numbering (the earliest USCensuses also sport true page numbering schemes—sometimes more than one!), I have extrapolated the "A" and "B" nomenclature back to all previous USCensuses, *except* for 1830 and 1840 USCensuses that have true folio numbering (but in the accountant's sense). I have thus arbitrarily assumed or imposed a consistent folio(=leaf)-numbering scheme wherever the accountant's sense of folio was not evidently intended. One can be thankful that the designers of the UKCensus anticipated and obviated all these potential confusions.

Format of, & Citation to, the Original UKCensus Returns

The original of the enumerators' fair copies reside at the National Archive, where they are accessible on microfilm. The original records have been meta-numbered and indexed to facilitate this. *Ancestral Trails* has a lot of material on how to find the piece corresponding to a particular geographic area. Hopefully all this will soon become irrelevant, as the censuses, and corresponding every-name indexes come up on line.

The PRO# found on a strip inserted to the right of each image constitutes the major part of the citation, eg. PRO# Rg9 9-3966, where the Rg9 identifies the records group of the 1861 census, and the 3366 represents a particular piece in that census for part of Hunslet Registration District. The first page of listed names for this piece (skipping past the prefatory pages) is folio 4r. It happens also to be the first page of Hunslet ED6, and although EDs have been subsumed by this method of organization, there is yet reason to include them in any census abstract, because each ED is prefaced by a written-out geographic description of the bounds of the district, and this can be of considerable importance in determining the actual location of a particular household or neighborhood, when the area description is correlated with a street address or house name found amidst the entries themselves.

The 1841 census forms a special case, in that the returns were copied into separate pre-printed booklets, each corresponding to an ED and including a bounds description in the prefatory material (though there may be cases where multiple booklets were required to record an ED. This census also appends a suffix number (after a "/") to the PRO#; this suffix is *not* a booklet number, it is merely part of the piece#.

Examples of My UKCensus Abstracts Format
(a variation on my USCensus format)

I have abstracted below, the same household, for Henry Paver of Leeds, for the years 1841, 1851, and 1861.

```
Henry Paver household, 6Jun1841 UKCensus, YORW, Leeds(city), Hunslet chap, Pittsfield st
(Leeds, Hunslet, ED2, p15), PRO#: HO107/1345/1. page 31v(10-13), Ancestry.com image 8.
BNDS: btw Accommodation rd & Atkinson's Bridge; Low rd; N of Wakefield rd.
                                                         Born         Born
                     Aged        Occupation           in County  I)re, S)co, F)or

Paver, Henry         20[-24]    machine m[aker?] j[ourneyman]    Y
  "  , Mary          20[-24]                                     Y
  "  , George        1                                          Y
Stead, Ann           30[-34]    flax reeler                     Y

Henry Paver household, 30Mar1851 UKCensus, YORW, Leeds(city), Hunslet, 12 Low rd,
(Hunslet, Hunslet, ED2, p41), PRO# HO107-2318, page 53v(07-11), Ancestry.com image 41.
BDS: ...Low rd N of Wakefield
                        Rel2  Marr
                    Aged Head Stat Occupation                     Born-------------- Dsblty
Paver, Henry         34   head marr mechanic fitter               [YOR] Milford
  "  , Mary          33   wife marr                               [YOR] Leeds
  "  , Caroline      8    dau        scholar                      [YOR] Hunslet
  "  , Elizabeth     5    dau                                     [YOR  Hunslet]
  "  , Richard       3    son                                     [YOR  Hunslet]

Henry Paver household, 7Apr1861 UKCensus, YORW, Leeds (city), Hunslet StMary, 2 Low rd
(Hunslet, Hunslet, ED26, p5), PRO# Rg009-3369, page 73r(14-22), Ancestry.com image 5.
BNDS: Hunslet twp S of Waterloo rd & Hunslet st frm Greenwood st to the E sid of Glaphouse st.
                        Rel2  Marr
                    Aged Head Stat Occupation                     Born-------------- Dsblty
Paver, Henry         43   head marr master broker-employ of 2 men[YOR]  Ledstone
  "  , Mary          42   wife marr                               [YOR]  Leeds
  "  , Caroline      18   dau  unm  in flax mill                  [YOR]  Hunslet
  "  , Elizabeth     14   dau       [in flax mill]                [YOR   Hunslet]
  "  , Richard       12   son        scholar                     [YOR   Hunslet]
  "  , Isabella      7    dau        [scholar]                    [YOR   Hunslet]
  "  , Henry M       4    son        [scholar]                    [YOR   Hunslet]
Huston, George       21   ldgr unm   cabinet maker                LINC
Greenwood, Ann       28   rltv* unm  in flax mill                 YOR    Leeds

*Ann's relationship is said to be "relative"
```

UKCensus Abstracting Conventions

Editorial [square brackets] are used to enclose text that is as much inferred as read; where the interpretation is substantially questionable, such text will be suffixed with a "?". Otherwise, editorial comments in square brackets will be prefixed by the "`" (Ascii grave accent character) to distinguish them from interpolated text.

Square brackets are also used to represent dittoed text in full, in place of the "Do." convention.

Unreadable text will be represented by "*" characters, one for each unreadable letter.

The dot that in modern conventions terminates an abbreviation will always be omitted in my abstracts. The old form of abbreviation, shown by superscripting the terminating part of the word, will be shown, eg. "W^m".

Some of the fields in my abstracts I have standardized, while others are rendered literally (I indicate which is which below). Occasionally, I will standardize a field that is normally transcribed literally; the text of such standardized fields will appear within <angle brackets>.

All names of persons are rendered literally. Place names are standardized as found in Youngs' *Guide to the Local Administrative Units of England*, 2 vols. (1979,1991), *except* that the most subordinate text of the address for each household, and the birth place field for each person will be rendered literally. In most cases, the actual census document has not unequivocally shown the actual EP, so in all cases I have consulted Youngs' to determine the correct extant EP as of 1861.

My UKCensus Abstract Format

The 1st line of the abstract heading identifies the household, the date the census was taken (as of midnight at the end of that day), and the location of the household. Usually, the household will be identified as shown above, *e.g.* "Henry Paver household," but occasionally, where the household is an institution, I may characterize it as, *e.g.* "Henry Paver school"; in such cases, I may also elect to abstract not the whole membership, but just the individual(s) of interest.

The components of the location place name are:

```
  <county code>
[ <city name> "(city") ]
  <ecclesiastical parish (EP) name>  |  <extra-parochial area name> "ex par"
[ <EP subdivision name> "chap" | "twp" | "civ par" etc. ]
[ <address> "st" | "av" | "ct" | "ln" etc. ]
```

where optional elements are in [square brackets],
alternative elements are separated by the Ascii "|" character,
and where the city component will appear only where the parish is part of a city and this is not shown by *e.g.* "York St Saviour".

The 2nd line of the abstract heading consists of the UKCensus organizational headings:

```
"("<Registration District> <Registration Subdivision> <Enumeration District> <ED page#>  "),"
```

The 3rd line of the abstract contains the citation information to the original records:

```
"PRO# " <records group id>  <piece#> ", page <folio-page#> "r" | "v"
"(" <line#s of the household> ")", "Ancestry.com image" <image#>
```

The 4th line (and if necessary the 5th) of the abstract heading is an abstract of the BOUNDS (or BNDS) - the boundary description of the Enumeration District. This item is optional, and will be included in full only for places of particular importance. For places where there are also many abstracted household, the BOUNDS will typically be factored out of the individual abstracts and located under the superior place heading.

The Household Member Lines

The column headings I have used for my abstract format do not correspond exactly to the verbiage found on the original UKCensus forms, but their meanings are synonymous and unambiguous.

Each line of the abstract itself corresponds to a line of the census form body, and represents an individual person, except that occasionally an additional line of abstract will be employed to accommodate the overflow where text doesn't quite fit into my purposefully narrow columns.

Surnames dittoed with "Do." in the original I ditto instead with the Ascii "(double-quote) so that variant surnames within a household stand out better (this is a lone exception to the rule given above that "Do." will be replaced with the full dittoed text in square brackets).

Age for both males and females appears in the same single column. For the 1841 census, uniquely, the age of each person over 15 was rounded down to the nest lowest 5-year increment. I have compensated for this by representing age as a range, e.g. the age of a person who was actually aged 23 would be rounded down to 20; in my abstracts, I would represent age 20, as 20[-24].

In rare cases where gender is not determinate from name or from relationship to head, I will suffix the age with "M"=male, or "F"=female. The age may also be suffixed by "m" to indicate that it is given in months instead of (or in addition to) years.

I use my own standard abbreviations for the "relation to head" and "marital status" columns; in the rare cases where it is not clear what is meant, the original text will be shown, quoted.

Occupation will be rendered literally, and may be expanded within square brackets to render the original notation less cryptic. Occasionally I will show the occupation in my own standardized form, within angle brackets (eg. "farmer <200a emp 3 labs>". When the male head's occupation is meaninglessly dittoed for his wife or children, eg. "land surveyors wife", the wife's occupation will generally be left blank.

In 1901 and after each person was asked whether he was an employer, a worker, or whether he worked on his own account; I have reduced the answeres to "Ownr", "Wrkr", and "Solo". He was also asked whether he worked at home: this column will be "yes" if this is so indicated.

In 1911, the number of children borne by each woman was recorded—the numbers born live, still alive, and now dead; I've reduced these three fields to "Children Tot/Living.

1911 also includes a citizenship category: British, British Naturalized ("BritN"), or foreign.

Finally, 1911 added "Postal Address", which I've entered on a separate header line, followed, in parentheses, by the # rooms in the dwelling.

The county (or country) parts of the birthplace will be abbreviated using my own set of 4-5 letter abbreviations. The rest of the birthplace field will be rendered literally (unlike the place headings for the household, which can usually be reliably standardized).

Any descriptive text in the Disabilities field will be rendered literally; a mere checkmark will be rendered "yes".

The 1861 form for Scotland has a couple of other fields ("Number of children attending school", and "Number of rooms with one ore more windows"). For censuses with other, non-standard fields for the household, the contents will be abstracted on a separate, following, line.

Not Included in my Abstracts:
    Any information on buildings or their occupancy
    The "Schedule Number" (because it adds no useful information and is unnecessary for citation)

UKCensus summary, 1841-1901

Enumeration Date	PROseries-piece	Peculiarities (taking 1851-1881 as the norm)
6Jun1841	Ho107-pppp/p	ages above 15 usually rounded down to the nearest year divisible by 5; no relationship data shown; birthplace in county (Y/N), or otherwise given as Ireland, Scotland, or Foreign
30Mar1851	Ho107-pppp	
7Apr1861	Rg009-pppp	
2Apr1871	Rg010-pppp	
3Apr1881	Rg011-pppp	
5Apr1891	Rg012-pppp	"Number of rooms occupied if less than five"; "Employer"/"Employed"/"Neither Employer nor Employed"
31Mar1901	Rg013-pppp	"Number of rooms occupied if less than five"; "Employer, Worker, or Own Account"; "If Working at Home"
2Apr1911	Rg078-pppp	"Total children born alive","Children still living" "Children who have died", "Postal Address"