

# Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

<http://archives.dickinson.edu/>

## Documents Online

**Title:** "Spirit of Britain" Section 12, by Montagu F. Modder

**Date:** circa 1950

**Location:** MC 2002.1

### Contact:

Archives & Special Collections  
Waidner-Spahr Library  
Dickinson College  
P.O. Box 1773  
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-245-1399

[archives@dickinson.edu](mailto:archives@dickinson.edu)



# The Romantic Age

A

t the dawn of the Nineteenth century, King George III was still on the throne of England, and he was strangely popular with that element of English society of unenfranchised citizens which Edmund Burke called "the swinish multitude". With that multitude His Majesty hob-nobbed and was quite at home, partly because, in happy contrast to his immediate predecessors, George III was thoroughly English, good-natured, affable and easy of access. In character, habits and diet, says the historian Goldwin Smith, the king was a John Bull; his prejudices, notably his political feelings against the Catholics, were the prejudices

of the masses. His domestic virtues had given His Majesty a popularity which his "malady" only increased.

For some time, as every subject well knew, George III had a malady---brief attacks of delirium. In 1788, when there was a violent recurrence of the malady, a regency was appointed during the





sovereign's illness. The Prince of Wales acted as regent. In six months, the King recovered and resumed his interest in politics.

The enthusiasm of the whole population was unbounded when His Majesty and Family went in Royal Procession to St. Paul's Cathedral to return thanks to the Almighty for the King's recovery.

The malady, however, it is pitiful to relate, returned in 1801, when George III's mind---shaken by the political troubles in Ireland, no doubt---once more gave way. Thereupon, William Pitt very patriotically and generously offered to renounce any intention of reviving the question of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland during the lifetime of the King, and---to cut a long story short---resigned his office as Prime Minister. Over the King's prejudices, which the masses seemed to support, not even the able and patriotic Pitt could prevail!



At this point, mention should be made of one of the most important events in the history of the nation. For once, the opening of a century marks a real mile-stone

George (IV),  
Prince of  
Wales,

Painted  
on Glass  
by  
ROSENBERG

[His Royal  
Highness,  
wearing his  
Garter Star,  
gives a  
fine example  
of graceful  
hat-  
doffing,  
no easy  
matter  
one would  
imagine,  
considering  
the size  
of the hat.







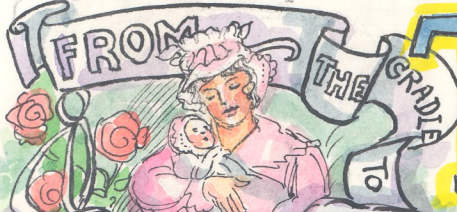
in the development of a people.  
For it was in 1801 that the first  
British Census was taken.

In the Middle Ages, the  
bond of society was found in local  
ownership and in mutual obli-  
gations. Everybody knew  
everybody else in  
the village. (The  
King was only a  
great landowner  
who lived far  
away). But now, the  
greater dimensions  
and complexity of  
modern life called  
into being a Body of  
People so large, that

all personal acquaintance even between all  
the important persons was impossible. Objective knowledge must be  
called into being as an agent of common feeling!  
Now, the workman no longer saw his master, and  
the spinner did not know the weaver. The  
manufacturer no longer counted  
his own goods. The merchant  
did not cross the ocean, but  
depended on reports from for-  
eign agents. Government, trade,  
education---all a complicated part of National life---must now



depend upon impersonal agencies. And the basis of this impersonal relationship is exhibited in the Census.



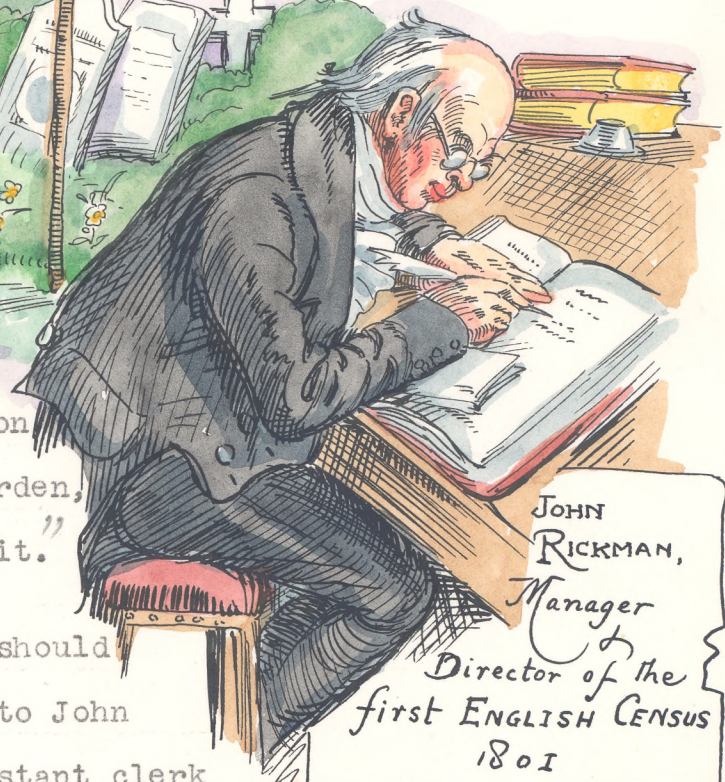
**T**

he Census is the tacit acknowledgment that every individual counts. The Census cannot allow the meanest being born to appear or disappear without the tribute of a modest record. In the Census gives every man, woman, and child a new value; for here at least, all are fellows, and all are equal!

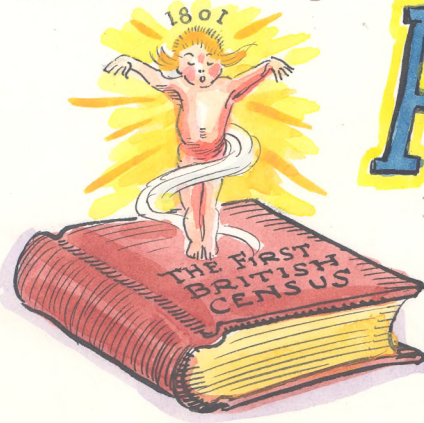
"Implicit in this bureaucratic invention of the Census," says the economist Perris, "was the unbureaucratic idea (slowly and painfully to be realized) that every child born on British soil has a claim upon the nation, and must in turn take, in proportion to his ability, a share in that burden, with all the rights attaching to it."

**A**

ll honor should be given to John Rickman, assistant clerk



JOHN RICKMAN,  
Manager &  
Director of the  
first ENGLISH CENSUS  
1801



of the House of Commons, who managed the first Census of England. A very imperfect beginning was made in 1801; Ireland, though just united

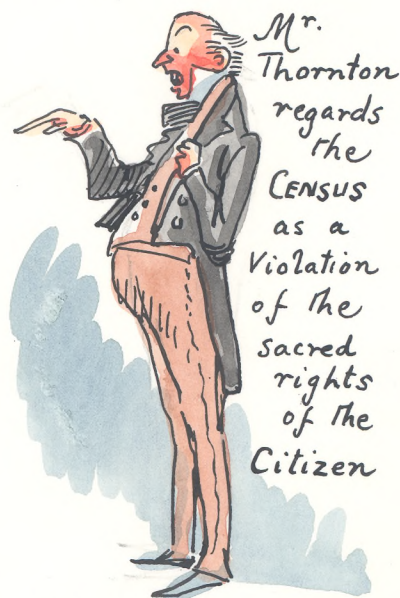


to Great Britain, was not included. The enumeration was attended by the usual hardships imposed upon a new venture. Mr. Thornton, M.P for

York declared that "this project is totally subversive of the last remains of English liberty", and that "an annual register of our people will acquaint our enemy (meaning Napoleon) with our weakness. But the parish schoolmasters in Scotland and the parish overseers in England carried on with the difficult task, while some of the population "looked upon the Census-taker as



The First Census makes the Lion roar.



Mr. Thornton regards the CENSUS as a Violation of the sacred rights of the Citizen

Ominous", and "feared lest some Public Misfortune, or an Epidemic Distemper should follow the numbering"...

**T**he first Census showed Great Britain with over nine million inhabitants. The growth in population was chiefly in the North---in the cities of Liverpool, Manchester, and Bradford, where a vast number of workers grew up around the coalfields. The most desolate parts of the island became alive with struggling humanity. Boys and girls throughout the land seemed to marry early and have large families. The Queen herself had given birth to nine sons and six daughters; and

KING GEORGE III, QUEEN CHARLOTTE, and their SIX DAUGHTERS



Painted on Glass by Rought of Oxford.



it was no unusual thing to find fifteen and twenty children in a family---a rate which soon peopled the islands with amazing rapidity.

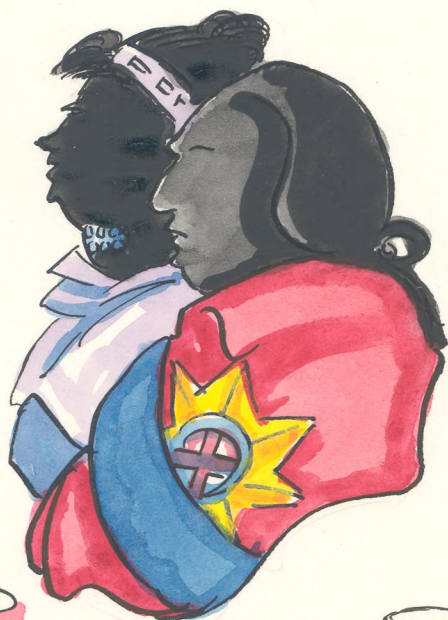


The Royal Household was---though a large one--- "the model of an Englishman's household". It was early, kindly, charitable, frugal, and orderly. According to Thackeray, "day after day was the same". At the same hour at night, the King kissed his daughters's cheeks, and the Princesses



King George  
the Third  
aquatint by  
Stadler  
1810

kissed their mother's hand; and Madame Thielke brought the royal night-cap. At the same hour, the equerries and women-in-waiting had their little dinner and cackled over their tea. The King had his backgammon or his evening concert. The Equerries yawned themselves

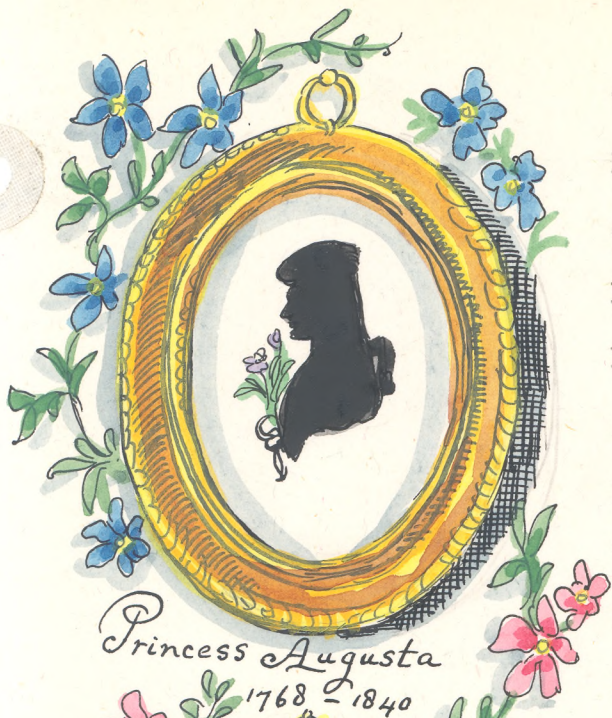


KING GEORGE III and  
QUEEN CHARLOTTE  
painted on Glass.



Charlotte  
Princess Royal  
1766 - 1816.





Princess Augusta  
1768 - 1840



Princess Elizabeth  
1770 - 1840



Princess Sophia  
1777 - 1848

to death in the anteroom. Or the King and his family walked on the slopes of the gardens at Windsor---the King holding his darling little Princess Amelia by the hand---and the people crowded round quite goodnaturedly to see the Royal Household pass. by.

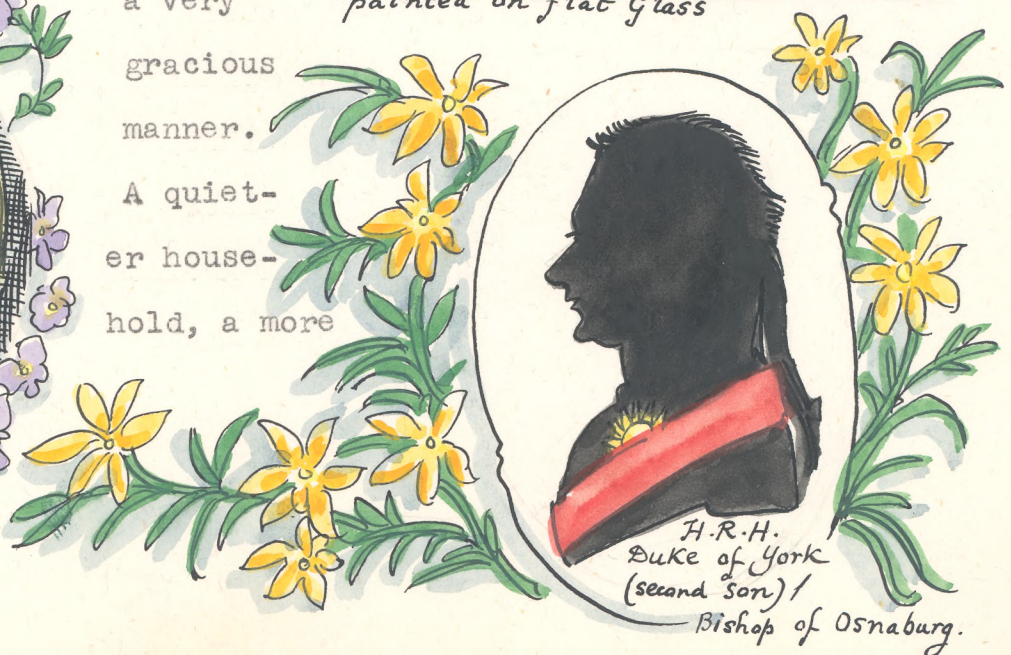
The concert over, the King never failed to take his enormous cocked hat off, and salute his band, and say, "Thank you, gentlemen!" in

a very gracious manner. A quieter household, a more



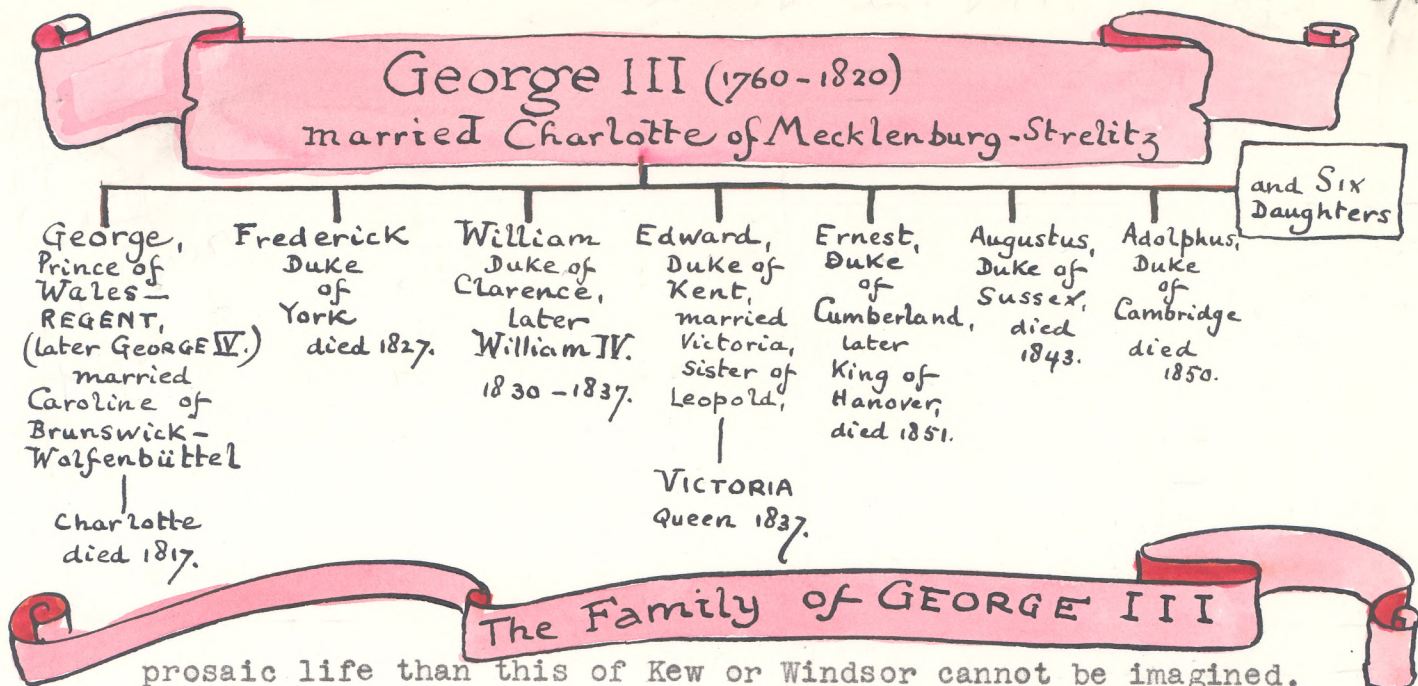
Queen Charlotte  
with a pet dog  
by Walter Jorden

Painted on flat Glass



H.R.H.  
Duke of York  
(second son) /  
Bishop of Osnaburg.





prosaic life than this of Kew or Windsor cannot be imagined.

His Majesty had a large family. There were <sup>nine</sup> ~~seven~~ sons and <sup>six</sup> ~~five~~ daughters (but none of the twelve <sup>who grow up to manhood & womanhood</sup> had legitimate offspring!) Two of the daughters were married and childless; three were unmarried. (The historian Howard Robinson reminds us that, in order that the virtues of the Hanoverian line should not be lost to an England that certainly was unappreciative, some ducal marriages became imperative. Accordingly, the Dukes of Clarence, Cambridge, and Kent married German princesses in 1818. In the next year, there was born to the Duke of Kent a daughter who was named Victoria. To her the throne was to come in 1847, after her uncles, the Prince Regent and the Duke of Clarence, had reigned and died childless).



Their Majesties were very sociable potentates. The Court Chronicler tells of numerous visits which George III and Queen Charlotte paid to their subjects, gentle and simple; with whom



6  
888  
892



A Worcester  
Vase (actual Size)  
Commemorating  
the Jubilee of  
King George III  
1809

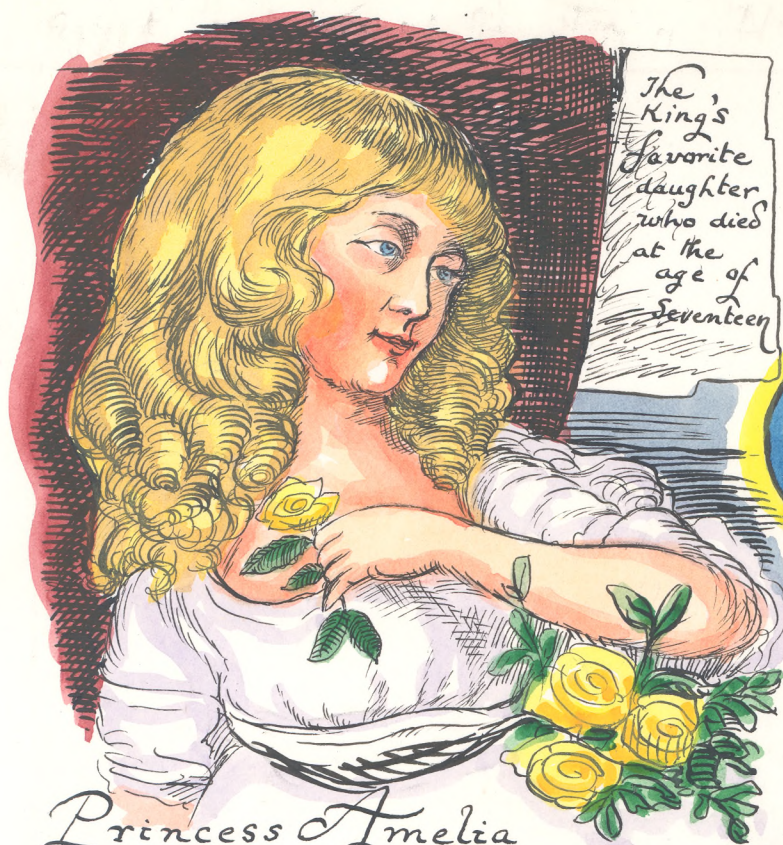
they dined; at whose  
great country-houses they  
stopped; or at whose poorer  
lodgings they affably partook of  
tea and bread-and-butter.

Rain or shine, observes the satir-  
ist Thackeray, the king rode every  
day for hours; poked his red  
face into hundreds of cottages  
round about, and showed that

shovel hat and Windsor uniform to farmers, to pig-boys, to old women  
making apple-dumplings; to all sorts of people, about whom many tales  
are told. When Haroun Alraschid visits a subject  
incog., the latter is sure to be very much the bet-  
ter for the Calif's magnificence. Old George show-  
ed no such royal splendor. He used to give a guinea  
sometimes; sometimes feel in his pockets and find  
he had no money. Often asked a hundred questions,







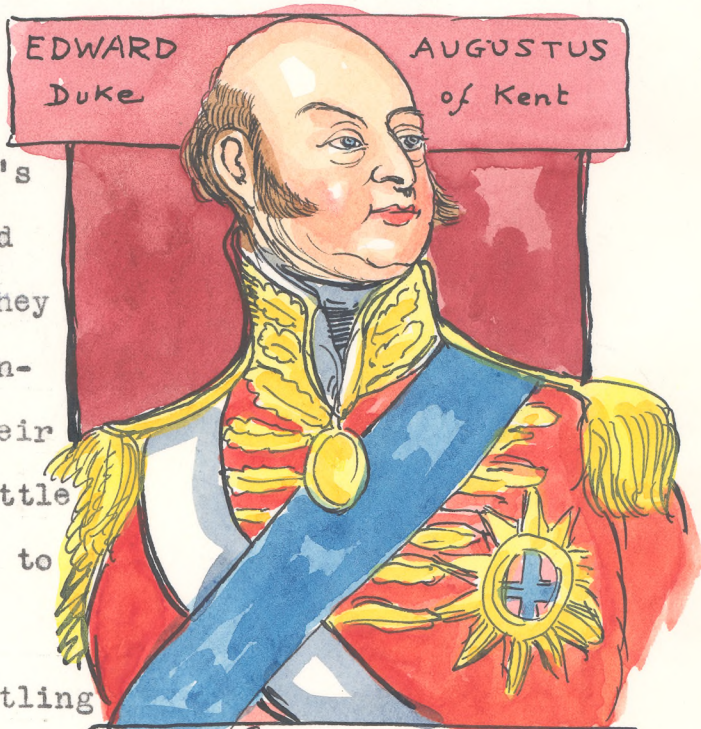
*Princess Amelia*

about the number of the subject's family, about his oats and beans, about the rent he paid for his cottage and land, and ride on.

**O**f all the figures in that large family group which surrounds King George and his Queen, the prettiest ("I think so too", says Thackeray) is the father's darling, the Princess Amelia, pathetic for her beauty,

her sweetness, her early death. This was his favorite amongst all his children. Of his sons, he loved the Duke of York best.

But the dullness of the old king's court stupefied the Duke of York and the other big sons of George III. They scared equerries and ladies, frightened the modest little circle, with their coarse spirits and loud talk. Of little comfort, indeed, were the king's sons to the king.



**B**ut while we have been prattling about old George's household, we have been neglecting matters of state.

*The fourth son of King George III, 1790-1820.*

In 1800, the Acts of Union were passed whereby, in 1801, the first Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland met





at Westminster.

Twenty-eight Irish peers, chosen for life, were added to the British House of Lords, and one-hundred Irish representatives joined the House of Commons.

In its political aspect, the Union of the Irish and English parliaments was equal. It followed generally the analogy of the Union with Scotland. Ireland got her share of the representation both

in the Commons, on the mixed basis of population and property, and in the Lords. However, with regard to the church, the example of the treaty of union with Scotland was followed with a fatal difference. The two established churches were combined as the United Church of England and Ireland. But the pledges to the Irish Catholics were ignored, and their grievances (with those of the Protestant Dissenters) remained unremedied.