

Census records are a great way to narrow down searches for ancestors in the U.S.

(may read better at: <http://www.kuzmich4.com/Facebook/Census Records.pdf>) (Parts 1 for information & 2 for on-line tutorials)

Part 1: U.S. Census Information

A census is a count and description of the population of a country, state, county, or city for a given date. Census lists are also called "schedules." In the United States a nationwide census has been taken every ten years since 1790. A well-indexed census is one of the **easiest ways to locate where an ancestor lived** and when they lived there.

Specifically what are the United States census records?

- The Federal Population Census is an inventory of everyone living in the United States, taken for the purpose of determining representation in the House of Representatives.
- A census is a count and description of the population of a country, state, county, or city for a given date.
- A census took a "snapshot" of a family on a certain day.
- Every individual contacted by a government representative is required by law to answer truthfully.
- Census lists are also called population schedules.

What time periods do they cover?

- The Federal Census has been taken every 10 years from 1790 to the present.
- Because of privacy laws, a census is not released until 72 years after it is taken. Currently, the most recent census available is for 1940.
- The 1890 census was destroyed by fire and only a [few fragments remain](#).
- Censuses start from the beginning of statehood, with some territorial censuses earlier.

What can I find in them?

- The 1790--1840 censuses are more limited, naming only the head of household and headcounts. Beginning in 1850, the census records began asking for more information.
- Notice in the following chart additional information helpful for genealogists added each year.

Basic Family Information Found in the U.S. Census by Year (other smaller details also given but not listed here)	
Year of census	Useful Information
1850	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, age, and gender of each family member • Occupation • Birthplace • If married that year
1860	
1870	Adds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether father and mother are of foreign birth
1880	Adds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital status • Relationship to head of household

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place of birth for father and mother
1900	<p>Adds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of years in current marriage Month and year of birth Mother of how many children Number of children living Naturalization status: alien, papers submitted, or naturalized Year of immigration to U.S. How many years lived in U.S.
1910	<p>Drops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Month and year of birth Number of years in U.S. <p>Adds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether Civil War Veteran
1920	<p>Drops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of years married Mother of how many children and number of children living Whether Civil War Veteran <p>Adds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Year of naturalization Native language Native language of father and mother
1930	<p>Drops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native language of father and mother <p>Adds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age at first marriage Military veteran, which war
1940	<p>Drops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age at first marriage Father's and mother's birthplaces Military veteran, which war Year of immigration Native language

For an excellent overview of what constitutes U.S. Census records, go to https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Beginning_Research_in_United_States_Census_Records#What_are_the_United_States_census_records.3F

United States Wiki Topics



Beginning Research

- [Research Strategies](#)
- [Record Finder](#)

Record Types

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- [Bible Records](#)
- [Business Records](#)
- [Cemeteries](#)
- [Census](#)
- [Church Records](#)
- [Colonial Records](#)
- [Correctional Institutions](#)
- [Court Records](#)
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- [Funeral Homes](#)
- [Genealogies](#)
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- [Military Records](#)
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- [Newspapers](#)
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- [Religious Records](#)
- [Taxation](#)
- [Town Records](#)
- [Vital Records](#)
- [Voter Records](#)

United States Background

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- [Church History](#)
- [Gazetteers](#)
- [History](#)
- [Maps](#)
- [Migration](#)

- [Handwriting](#)
- [For Further Reading](#)
- [Historical Geography](#)

Ethnicity

- [African Americans](#)
- [American Indians](#)
- [Minorities](#)

Local Research Resources

- [Archives & Libraries](#)
- [Societies](#)
- [US Family History Centers](#)

US Census

Topics

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- [Analyzing/Using Data](#)
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- [Census Substitutes](#)
- [Abbreviations and codes](#)

Non-Population Federal Schedules

- [Agricultural Schedules](#)
- [Defective Schedules](#)
- [Indian Schedules](#)
- [Institutions](#)
- [Manufacturing or Industrial Schedules](#)
- [Merchant Seamen](#)

- [Military / Naval Forces](#)
- [Mortality Schedules](#)
- [Slave Schedules](#)
- [Social Statistics Schedules](#)
- [Veterans Schedules](#)

U.S. Census Types

- [Church Censuses](#)
- [Colonial Censuses](#)
- [Federal Censuses](#)
- [Indian Census Rolls](#)
- [School Censuses](#)
- [State Censuses](#)
- [Territorial Censuses](#)

Substitute Records

- [Directories](#)
- [Maps](#) (especially plat and insurance maps)
- [Taxation](#)
- [Voting Registers](#)

Beginners' Corner[\[edit source\]](#)

- [What are the U.S. census records?](#)
- [What time periods do they cover?](#)
- [What can I find in them?](#)
- [How do I access them?](#)
- [Search strategies](#)

For a more complete beginning introduction, see [U. S. Census Records Class Handout](#).

Key U.S. Census Indexes and Images Internet Links[\[edit source\]](#)

- [United States Census Online Genealogy Records](#) Internet links by year for FamilySearch, Ancestry.com, FindMyPast, and MyHeritage
- [AccessGenealogy - United States Census Records](#)
- [Census Finder](#)
- [CensusRecords.com](#) (\$) indexes & images 1790-1940
- [Fold3.com](#) (\$) index & images 1860 and 1930
- [Internet Archive](#) images 1790-1930
- [My Free Census](#) Find your ancestors in the U.S. census, and International census records
- [U.S. Census Bureau](#) images of published transcriptions of 1790 census for 12 states

- [Nonpopulation Census Records](#) Agriculture, mortality, and social statistics schedules are available for the census years of 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. Manufacturing schedules are available for 1820, 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. Schedules of business are available for 1935 for these industries: advertising agencies, banking and financial institutions, miscellaneous enterprises, motor trucking for hire, public warehousing, and radio broadcasting stations.
- [Census-Online](#)
- [GermanRoots.com](#)

Value of Censuses

A census is a count and description of the population of a country, state, county, or city for a given date. Census lists are also called "schedules." In the United States a nationwide census has been taken every ten years since 1790. A well-indexed census is one of the **easiest ways to locate where an ancestor lived** and when they lived there. You can also use censuses to:

- Follow the family over time.
- Determine family relationships.
- Find clues to other locations where the family lived
- [Show clues for finding other records.](#)

Contents of Federal Censuses [\[edit source\]](#)

- [US Census Headings 1790-1860](#)
- [US Census Headings 1870-1930](#)
- [US Census Headings 1940](#)
- [What You'll Learn in the Census Year by Year](#) Ancestry.com (\$) Comparison table of census headings
- [Historical Census Browser 1790-1960](#) (University of Virginia Library) [**Closed** Permanently]
 - "The University of Virginia Library's Historical Census Browser site is permanently closed. Our librarians recommend that you use [Social Explorer](#), a site that has current and correct data (along with additional data) and that allows mapping of search results. Another resource that has an accurate version of this data is the [National Historical Geographic Information System](#) site."

Contents by Federal Census Years [\[edit source\]](#)

after 1940	1910	1870	1840	1810
1940	1900	1860	1830	1800
1930	1890	1850	1820	1790
1920	1880			

[Blank forms for each U.S. census year](#)

Finding Census Records

Censuses in U.S. States

[\[edit source\]](#)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Alabama | • Kentucky | • North Dakota |
| • Alaska | • Louisiana | • Ohio |
| • Arizona | • Maine | • Oklahoma |

- [Arkansas](#)
- [California](#)
- [Colorado](#)
- [Connecticut](#)
- [Delaware](#)
- [District of Columbia](#)
- [Florida](#)
- [Georgia](#)
- [Hawaii](#)
- [Idaho](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Indiana](#)
- [Iowa](#)
- [Kansas](#)
- [Maryland](#)
- [Massachusetts](#)
- [Michigan](#)
- [Minnesota](#)
- [Mississippi](#)
- [Missouri](#)
- [Montana](#)
- [Nebraska](#)
- [Nevada](#)
- [New Hampshire](#)
- [New Jersey](#)
- [New Mexico](#)
- [New York](#)
- [North Carolina](#)
- [Oregon](#)
- [Pennsylvania](#)
- [Rhode Island](#)
- [South Carolina](#)
- [South Dakota](#)
- [Tennessee](#)
- [Texas](#)
- [Utah](#)
- [Vermont](#)
- [Virginia](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [West Virginia](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)
- [Wyoming](#)

Censuses in U.S. Territories

[\[edit source\]](#)

- [American Samoa](#)
- [Cuba](#)
- [Guam](#)
- [Panama Canal Zone](#)
- [Philippines](#)
- [Puerto Rico](#)
- [U.S. Virgin Islands](#)

Key Reference Sources [\[edit source\]](#)

- Map Guide to U.S. Federal Censuses 1790-1920 ^[1] Shows county boundary changes in each state from 1790 to 1920, and which census areas were lost or still exist.
- The Census Book: a Genealogist's Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules and Indexes: with Master Extraction Forms for Federal Census Schedules, 1790-1930 ^[2] An online edition is at [HeritageQuestOnline](#). Discusses indexes, regular, and non-population schedules.
- Censuses and Tax Lists ^[3] Strategies for finding elusive ancestors, and history of indexing.
- Census Class Video ^[4]
- State and Special Census Video ^[5]
- Heads of Households Only Video ^[6]
- [United States Census, 1890 - FamilySearch Historical Records](#)

References [\[edit source\]](#)

1. Jump up↑ William Thorndale, and William Dollarhide, *Map Guide to U.S. Federal Censuses 1790-1920* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publ., 1987) [FHL Book 973 X2th].
2. Jump up↑ William Dollarhide, *The Census Book: a Genealogist's Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules and Indexes: with Master Extraction Forms for Federal Census Schedules, 1790-1930*. (Bountiful, Utah: Heritage Quest, 1999)[FHL book 973 X27d].
3. Jump up↑ G. David Dilts, "Censuses and Tax Lists" in Kory L. Meyerink, ed., *Printed Sources: a Guide to Published Genealogical Records* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry, 1998), 300-52. [FHL Book 016.9293 P96m]
4. Jump up↑ Tiffany Perkins, *Tiff's Census Class* (27 minute online video) [FamilySearch Research Classes Online](#)Mid-Continent Public Library, Midwest Genealogy Center, 2010.

5. Jump up↑ Gary Toms, [*State and Special Census Records*](#) (36 minute online video) [FamilySearch Research Classes OnlineMid-Continent Public Library, Midwest Genealogy Center](#), 2010.
6. Jump up↑ Angela McComas, [*Heads of Household Only: Analysis of Pre-1850 Federal Census*](#) (19 minute online video) [FamilySearch Research Classes OnlineMid-Continent Public Library, Midwest Genealogy Center](#), 2010.

Topics	Search Strategies · Record Finder · Adoption Research · African Americans · American Indians · Homes · Gazetteers · Genealogy · Handwriting · Historical Geography · History · Land and Property Records · Societies · Taxation · Vital Records · Other Records · For Further Reading
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Territories	American Samoa · District of Columbia · Guam · Northern Mariana Islands · Puerto Rico · U.S. Virgin Islands
Major Repositories	National Archives I · National Archives II · National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) · Allen County Public Library · England Historic Genealogical Society · New York Public Library · Newberry Library
Migration Routes	Canals · Ports · Railroads · Rivers and Lakes · Trails and Roads

For more US Census resources with links, go to:

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Beginning_Research_in_United_States_Census_Records#What_are_the_United_States_census_records.3F.

Part 2: On-line U.S. Census Tutorials

The Family History Guide:

The Family History Guide contains a host of pertinent tutorials to learn how to effectively use U.S. Census Records at: <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesc1.html> and especially <https://www.thefhguide.com/project-9-united-statesc1.html#goal-c1>

There are three kinds of tutorials offered at this web site, plus training exercises for each tutorial.

Choices:

1. Learn about the U.S. census and how it can be used for research
2. Learn how to find your ancestors in various census records.
3. Explore state census records to find clues for your ancestors.