

## U.S. Census Records

The Federal Census has been undertaken every ten years since 1790. Census records can provide snapshot descriptions of families, including names, ages, places of birth, and occupations. While the census does not usually provide the names of ancestral towns, it often includes data that are necessary for locating immigration and naturalization records containing that information. It is important to note, however, that information found in a census may not be completely reliable, since people sometimes reported inaccurate information and census officials did make errors. U.S. Census returns from 1790-1940 have been microfilmed and are available for viewing at National Archives branches. Several commercial companies have scanned these microfilms and the images and indexes are now available online. Indexes for the 1940 census have not been issued, but are being prepared and will be available in late 2012.

All censuses through 1930 have been indexed at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) and extracts of the data are available either through a general search or by looking for specific censuses; however the images are not available. Links are provided to the various commercial sites which have the images. A list of all censuses can be found by going to [www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list](http://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/list) and entering "census" in the search box.

Most of the 1890 census was destroyed in a fire. Fragments exist for Alabama, D.C., Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota and Texas.

### 1900 Census

The 1900 census schedules give for each person: name; address; relationship to the head of the household; color or race; sex; month and year of birth; age at last birthday; marital status; if a wife is listed within the household, then the number of years married, number of children born of that marriage, and number of children living; places of birth of each individual and of the parents of each individual; citizenship; if the individual is foreign born, then the year of immigration and the number of years in the U.S.; the citizenship status of foreign born individuals over age 21; occupation; whether or not person can read, write, and speak English; whether home is owned or rented; whether or not home is a farm; and whether or not home is mortgaged.

### 1910 Census

The 1910 census schedules record the following information for each person: name; relationship to head of household; sex; color or race; age at last birthday; marital status; length of present marriage; if a mother, number of children and number of living children; place of birth; place of birth of parents; if foreign born, year of immigration and citizenship status; language spoken; occupation; type of industry employed in; if employer, employee, or self-employed; if unemployed; number of weeks unemployed in 1909; ability to read and write; if attended daytime school since September 1, 1909; if home is rented or owned; if home is owned, free, or mortgaged; if home is a house or a farm; if a survivor of Union or Confederate Army or Navy; if blind in both eyes; and if deaf and dumb.

### 1920 Census

The 1920 census schedules record the following information for each person: name; relationship to head of household; sex; color or race; age at last birthday; marital status; place of birth; place of birth of parents; if foreign born, year of immigration and citizenship status; year of naturalization; mother tongue; language spoken; occupation; type of industry employed in; if employer, employee, or self-employed; ability to read and write; if attended daytime school since September 1, 1919; if home is rented or owned; if home is owned, free, or mortgaged; if home is a house or a farm.

### 1930 Census

The 1930 Federal Census includes information about place of abode, name of each person living there, relationship of each person to the head of the family, information about the home (including value if owned), personal data (including sex, age, marital status and age when first married), education, place of birth of the person and the person's parents (usually the country), mother tongue, citizenship (including year of immigration and naturalization status), occupation, employment, veteran status, and farm schedule (if applicable).

## 1940 Census

The 1940 Federal Census was released on April 2, 2012. This is the first census to be released directly to the public in digital format over the internet. The schedules are not indexed and it is necessary to know the address of the person being researched to determine the Enumeration District (ED) in order to locate the record. 1940 was the end of the Depression and many of the questions relate to the economy and employment. Data includes address, whether home is rented or owned and rent or value of property, name, relationship to head of household, sex, race, age, marital status, highest grade in school, country or state of birth, citizenship status, residence in 1935, occupational and employment status and type of work, and amount of salary or wages in 1939. In addition, 5% of the respondents were asked parents' place of birth, language spoken at home, veteran status and wars fought, and Social Security and usual occupation data. A blank form with all questions and codes is at <http://1940census.archives.gov/downloads/1940-census-schedule.pdf>.

Some information useful to genealogists which was included in previous censuses is missing in 1940 including parents' place of birth for all but the 5% sample and year of immigration.

Since the 1940 Census is not indexed, the Enumeration District must be determined from the address by using the "Unified 1940 Census ED Finder" at [stevemorse.org](http://stevemorse.org). If the address is unknown, it may be possible to find it from city directories, telephone books, or in some cases Draft Registration records

Once the ED is determined the census schedule may be obtained from the US National Archives website <http://1940census.archives.gov> or [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com). Each site includes detailed instructions.

## Later Censuses

Census records less than 72 years old are available, but access is restricted for reasons of privacy. Personal information from the restricted schedules can be provided by the Census Bureau only to the person to whom the information relates or to a legal representative of that person. If the record relates to a deceased person, a certified death certificate must be provided. For additional information and application instructions, see [www.census.gov/genealogy/www/](http://www.census.gov/genealogy/www/).

## The U.S. Census Online

The Center for Jewish History subscribes to **Ancestry Library Edition** and **Heritage Quest Online**, two fee-based web sites that have searchable indexes (through 1930) and images of the US Census. Both databases are provided free of charge to patrons on-site at the Center for Jewish History. The unindexed 1940 census is available online free to everyone at <http://1940census.archives.gov/>.

## State Censuses

New York, New Jersey, and other states conducted additional censuses in off years, such as 1855, 1905, 1915, and 1925. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has digitized many state census records and have recently added the 1892 (only Kings County, Brooklyn, in NYC) and 1905 New York censuses. Check their collection at <http://familysearch.org>. For more information, see the reference books below.

## Sources

### Websites

National Archives and Records Administration genealogy home page, with links to the addresses of regional facilities <http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>

Catalog of the Federal Population Censuses on microfilm <http://www.archives.gov/publications/microfilm-catalogs.html#census>

## Books

Dollarhide, William. *The Census Book*. Heritage Quest, 2000.

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Douglas, Marilyn. *NYS Census Records – 1790-1925, Bibliography Bulletin 88*. NYSED, 1981.

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Greenwood, Val. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy* (Genealogical Publishing Co, 2000).

**Genealogy Institute CS 47 .G79**

Lainhart, Ann S. *State Census Records*. Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992.

**Genealogy Institute Z 5313 .U5 L37**

National Archives and Records Administration. *Guide to Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*. NARA, 2000.

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Silverman, Marlene. *Poles and Russians in the 1870 Census of New York City*. Landsmen Press, 1993.

**Genealogy Institute F 128.9 .P7 S57 1993**

Thorndale, William and William Dollarhide. *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920*. Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987. **Genealogy Institute G 1201 .F7 T5**

## National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

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[www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html](http://www.archives.gov/contact/inquire-form.html)

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