

# United States Federal Census Pathfinder

© 2012 Michael Hait, CG

[michael.hait@hotmail.com](mailto:michael.hait@hotmail.com)

<http://www.haitfamilyresearch.com>

## Table of Contents

### [General Information](#)

<a href="#">1790</a>	<a href="#">1800</a>	<a href="#">1810</a>	<a href="#">1820</a>
<a href="#">1830</a>	<a href="#">1840</a>	<a href="#">1850</a>	<a href="#">1860</a>
<a href="#">1870</a>	<a href="#">1880</a>	<a href="#">1890</a>	<a href="#">1900</a>
<a href="#">1910</a>	<a href="#">1920</a>	<a href="#">1930</a>	<a href="#">1940</a>

### [Educational](#)

## Introduction

The United States Constitution established for apportioning the U. S. Congress based on population in each state. A decennial census of the nation's population would provide the data to periodically reapportion Congress according to population changes. While the first census in 1790 provided little personal information, by 1800 more details about the composition of individual households were included. The census grew more detailed with each subsequent enumeration and by 1850 the census reported the name, age, occupation, and birthplace of every one of the nation's free residents.

The U. S. Census provides a unique opportunity for genealogists. No matter what occurred between enumeration years—migration, economic growth or downfall, births, marriages, and deaths—genealogists can generally count on their ancestors appearing every ten years. It has therefore become arguably the most important tool in the genealogist's toolbox.

The purpose of this Guide is to collect, in one place, online material for using these census records to their greatest potential. This includes, where available, the authorizing statutes, enumeration instructions, blank forms, statistical compendia, maps, as well as references to the surviving manuscript copies, microfilm editions in multiple locations, and online digital images.

The compiler hopes that genealogists of all skill levels will use these resources to get more from the federal census than just a list of names.

— — General Information — —

[Historical Census Browser \(University of Virginia Library\)](#)

[1790-1890 Federal Population Censuses: Catalog of NARA Microfilm](#)

[Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000 \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Twenty Censuses: Population and Housing Questions, 1790-1980 \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[200 Years of U. S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790-1990 \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[“Availability of Census Records About Individuals” \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Boundaries of the United States and the Several States, Bulletin 1212 \(U. S. Geological Survey\)](#)

[“Agriculture Schedules: 1850 to 1900” \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[“Growth & Distribution of Cities 1790-2000” \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[“Nonpopulation Census Records” \(National Archives and Records Administration\)](#)

[Special Collections and Special Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[U.S. Census Bureau Library \(Internet Archive\)](#)

[Richard L. Forstall, comp., \*Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990\* \(Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1996\) \(Google Books\)](#)

[U. S. Bureau of the Census, \*Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915\* \(New York: Arno Press, 1968\) \(Google Books\)](#)

[Campbell J. Gibson and Emily Lennon, “Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990” \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[“US Census Forms” \(Ancestry.com\)](#)

[“Descriptions of Census Enumeration Districts, 1830-1890 and 1910-1950,” Descriptive Pamphlet, NARA Microfilm Publication T1224](#)

[“Enumeration District Maps for the Twelfth Through Sixteenth Censuses of the United States, 1900-1940,” Descriptive Pamphlet, NARA Microfilm Publication A3378](#)

[Application for Search for Census Records, Form BC-600 \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

Michael Hait, *The Family History Research Toolkit* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2008): These PDF forms can be filled out and saved with unique file names as a convenient means of recording and sharing details about your family history. For more information, see <http://www.genealogical.com/products/The%20Family%20History%20Research%20Toolkit/7545.html>.

Individual forms can be downloaded using the following links:

**Extraction Forms:** These forms allow for the extraction of household details using the familiar format of a “family group record.” For the 1850–1870 census records that do not provide family relationships, the forms allow for the recording of each household’s inhabitants.

- [1850 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1860 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1870 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1880 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1900 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1910 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1920 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)
- [1930 Census Extraction Family Group Record](#)

**Analysis Forms:**

- [Household Tracker 1790–1840](#): Allows for viewing household composition from the 1790 through 1840 federal census enumerations side-by-side.
- [Household Tracker 1850–1870](#): Allows for viewing household composition from the 1850 through 1870 federal census enumerations side-by-side.
- [Household Tracker 1880–1900](#): Allows for viewing household composition from the 1880 and 1900 federal census enumerations side-by-side.
- [Census Neighbors](#): Allows for recording the names of neighboring heads of households, to practice “cluster genealogy.”
- [Household Estimator](#): Allows for easily reconstructing the household composition of the 1800 through 1840 federal censuses based on known birthdates of family members.

## [Integrated Public Use Microdata Series \(IPUMS-USA\)](#)

“The Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS-USA) consists of more than fifty high-precision samples of the American population drawn from fifteen federal censuses and from the American Community Surveys of 2000–2011. Some of these samples have existed for years, and others were created specifically for this database. These samples, which draw on every surviving census from 1850–2000, and the 2000–2011 ACS samples, collectively constitute our richest source of quantitative information on long-term changes in the American population. However, because different investigators created these samples at different times, they employed a wide variety of record layouts, coding schemes, and documentation. This has complicated efforts to use them to study change over time. The IPUMS assigns uniform codes across all the samples and brings relevant documentation into a coherent form to facilitate analysis of social and economic change.

“IPUMS is not a collection of compiled statistics; it is composed of microdata. Each record is a person, with all characteristics numerically coded. In most samples persons are organized into households, making it possible to study the characteristics of people in the context of their families or other co-residents. Because the data are individuals and not tables, researchers must use a statistical package to analyze the millions of records in the database. A data extraction system enables users to select only the samples and variables they require.”

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(1 Stat. 101\)](#) (PDF)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1790 Census, 1790-1790”](#) (ARC Identifier 2353521)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M637\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**Transcript (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States in the year 1790](#)

**Statistical Compendium (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States...](#) (PDF)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(2 Stat. 11\)](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1800 Census, 1800-1800” \(ARC Identifier 2353529\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M32\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**Statistical Compendium (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States...](#) (PDF, 54MB)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(2 Stat. 564\)](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1810 Census, 1810-1810” \(ARC Identifier 2353533\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M252\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**Statistical Compendium (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Volume 2: A statement of the arts and manufactures of the United States of America, for the year 1810 ...](#) (PDF)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(3 Stat. 548\)](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1820 Census, 1820-1820” \(ARC Identifier 2353535\)](#)

[“Schedules of Census of Manufacturing Establishments, 1820-1820” \(ARC Identifier 2790959\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

Population Schedule

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M33\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

Census of Manufacturers

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M279\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

Population Schedule

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**Statistical Compendium (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Census for 1820](#) (PDF)



[Authorizing Act of Congress \(4 Stat. 383\)](#)

Enumeration Instructions

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1830 Census, 1830–1830” \(ARC Identifier 2353541\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M19\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**Statistical Compendium (U. S. Census Bureau):**

[Abstract of the returns of the Fifth Census, showing the number of free people, the number of slaves, the federal or representative number, and the aggregate of each county of each State of the United States](#) (PDF)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(5 Stat. 331\)](#)

Enumeration Instructions

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1840 Census, 1840-1840” \(ARC Identifier 2353564\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M704\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(9 Stat. 428\)](#)

[Enumeration Instructions \(typescript\)](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1850 Census, 1850-1850” \(ARC Identifier 598246\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M432\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants)

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

Schedule 2 (Slave Inhabitants)

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

Schedule 3 (Persons who died . . . (“Mortality Schedule”))

[FamilySearch](#)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(9 Stat. 428\)](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1860 Census, 1860–1860” \(ARC Identifier 2353568\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M653\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants)

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

Schedule 2 (Slave Inhabitants)

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

**[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)**

[Agriculture of the United States in 1860 \(U. S. Department of Agriculture\)](#)

[Map Showing the Distribution of the Slave Population of the Southern States of the United States - 1860](#)

[Authorizing Act of Congress \(16 Stat. 118\)](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1870 Census, 1870–1870” \(ARC Identifier 2353570\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M593\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

**[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)**

[Statistical atlas of the United States based on the results of the ninth census 1870 ... \(Library of Congress\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

[Census Act of 1879 \(20 Stat. 473\)](#)

[Enumeration Instructions \(typescript\)](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1880 Census, 1880–1880” \(ARC Identifier 2353572\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T9\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (FREE)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only; Soundex index cards digitized)

**[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)**

[Scribner's statistical atlas of the United States, showing by graphic methods their present condition and their political, social and industrial development \(Library of Congress\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

**For more information, read:**

[Claire Prechtel-Klusens, “The WPA Census Soundexing Projects,” online reprint, from \*Prologue\*, Spring 2002, Vol. 34, No. 1](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1890 Census, 1890-1890” \(ARC Identifier 2353580\)](#)

[“Special Census Schedules of Surviving Union Civil War Veterans or Their Widows, compiled 1890-1890” \(ARC Identifier 2602585\)](#)

[“Records Concerning the Special Census Schedules of Union Civil War Veterans or Their Widows, compiled 1890-1890” \(ARC Identifier 2602587\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet—Population Schedule Fragment \(M407\)](#)

[Family History Library—Population Schedule Fragment](#)

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet— Special Schedule of Union Veterans \(M123\)](#)

[Family History Library—Special Schedule of Union Veterans](#)

**Digital Images:**

Schedule 1—Population (Fragment):

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

Special Schedule (Union Veterans):

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Statistical atlas of the United States, based upon the results of the eleventh census by Henry Gannett \(Library of Congress\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

[Population Distribution Map \(German and African American populations\)](#)

**For more information, read:**

[Kellee Blake, “First in the Path of the Firemen’: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1,” online reprint, from \*Prologue\*, Spring 1996, Vol. 28, No. 1](#)

[Kellee Blake, “First in the Path of the Firemen’: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 2,” online reprint, from \*Prologue\*, Spring 1996, Vol. 28, No. 1](#)

[Kellee Blake, “First in the Path of the Firemen’: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 3,” online reprint, from \*Prologue\*, Spring 1996, Vol. 28, No. 1](#)



[Census Act of 1899](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1900 Census, 1900–1900” \(ARC Identifier 2353585\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T623\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only; Soundex index cards digitized)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

[“Descriptions of Census Enumeration Districts, 1900” \(NARA Microfilm Publication T1210\)](#)

[Thirteenth Census Act \(36 Stat. 1\)](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1910 Census, 1910–1910” \(ARC Identifier 2353588\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T624\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\):](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

— 1920 —

[The Act Providing for the Fourteenth Census \(P.L. 65-325\)](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1920 Census, 1920–1920” \(ARC Identifier 2353589\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T625\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

[Reapportionment Act of 1929 \(46 Stat. 21\)](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Manuscript Copies (NARA):**

[“Population Schedules for the 1930 Census, 1930–1930” \(ARC Identifier 598030\)](#)

[“Manuscript Schedules of the 1930 Census of Merchant Seamen” \(ARC Identifier 5634966\)](#)

**Microfilm:**

Population Schedule

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T626\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

Census of Merchant Seamen

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M1932\)](#)

[Family History Library](#)

Enumeration District Maps for the Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M1930\)](#)

Index to Selected City Streets and Enumeration Districts, 1930 Census

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(M1931\)](#)

**Digital Images:**

Population Schedule

[Ancestry.com](#) (\$)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Internet Archive](#) (images only—no index)

Census of Merchant Seamen

[FamilySearch](#)

Enumeration District Maps

[National Archives and Records Administration](#)

[Note: Search ARC for specific enumeration districts to find digital images of these maps.]

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

**For more information, read:**

[Claire Prechtel-Klusken, "Plans of Division': Describing the Enumeration Districts of the 1930 Census," online reprint, from \*Prologue\*, Fall 2003, Vol. 35, No. 3](#)

["How the 1930 Census Enumerators Were Appointed" \(NARA\)](#)

[An Act to Provide for a National Census of Housing](#)

[Instructions to Enumerators; Abridged Instructions \(Population\)](#)

[Census Questionnaires](#)

**Microfilm:**

[NARA Descriptive Pamphlet \(T627\)](#)

**Digital Images:**

[Ancestry.com](#)

[National Archives and Records Administration](#)

[FamilySearch](#)

[Statistical Compendia & Reports \(U. S. Census Bureau\)](#)

[Population Distribution Map](#)

For more information, read:

[“Finding Your Rural American Ancestor in the 1940 Census” video lesson \(FamilySearch\)](#)

[“How to Convert a 1940 Street Address to an Enumeration District Number” video lesson \(FamilySearch\)](#)

[“Converting a 1930 to a 1940 Census Enumeration District Number” video lesson \(FamilySearch\)](#)

— — Educational — —

[“Beginning Census Research and Record Keeping” \(FamilySearch\)](#)

[“Census Tracking for Beginners” video lesson \(FamilySearch\)](#)

[“Building a Probable Case by Census Tracking” video lesson \(FamilySearch\)](#)

[Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Censuses—Often-Overlooked Basics," \*OnBoard\* 4 \(January 1998\): 8. \(Board for Certification of Genealogists\)](#)