

US Census Research - 1850 to 1930

Dave Thaler

dthaler@microsoft.com

Why use the census? You can use the census to --

- ↗ Find birthplace of head of household, his children and parents
- ↗ Identify family relationships
- ↗ Find ancestor as a child to identify his parents.
- ↗ Learn year of immigration, naturalization status, and birthplace of parents.
- ↗ Learn veteran status to request pension records which can give birth and death dates, proof of marriage and children's births, and much more.
- ↗ Learn ancestor's address so that you can visit ancestral house.

U.S. Census History

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~census/help/history.html>

- 1780s** US Constitution requires a census every 10 years for apportioning representatives. States may have additional ones as needed.
- 1790** First census taken, over a period of 18 months. Records of six states destroyed during War of 1812, but reconstructed from tax records.
- 1800-1820** First Monday in August designated as Census Day.
- 1830-1900** June 1st designated as Census Day. All but 6160 names in the 1890 census were later destroyed in a fire in 1921
- 1910-1930** Other specific dates designated as Census Day

Tips for census research

- ↗ Information was to be recorded as of the official census day, not the day the enumerator came. However, the information might have been given as of any time in that range. This can result in the same people being enumerated in different locations.
- ↗ It wasn't unheard of to get the information from a neighbor or sometimes the only person at home would be one of the kids who "thinks maybe he was born in....".
- ↗ Not everyone in the household is necessarily a family member, and a blank surname doesn't necessarily mean it's the same as the head of household.
- ↗ Another thing to watch for is what was known as "padding the census". Enumerators were usually paid by the number of households (sometimes per person) they visited. If it was a very rural area they were paid a little more per household as the dwellings were much fewer. E.g., see Ira and Fleming Twp's at:
 - <ftp://ftp.us-census.org/pub/usgenweb/census/ny/cayuga/1860/notes.txt>
- ↗ To get the best quality print from an online image, first save it to disk locally. Then open it locally and send to the printer.
- ↗ Remember Occam's razor: "the simplest explanation is the most likely one". Explanations with fewer assumptions are better.
- ↗ A Census Tracker form (shown in Advanced class notes) is useful to:
 - ↗ Determine middle names / nicknames
 - ↗ Suggest where to look for someone
 - ↗ Narrow down birthdate
 - ↗ Identify possible recording errors
 - ↗ Determine which entry is most likely

Family History Expo VI

	1-Jun 1850	1-Jun 1860	1-Jun 1870	1-Jun 1880	1-Jun 1890	1-Jun 1900	15-Apr 1910	1-Jan 1920	1-Apr 1930
Place/address					n/a				
Name					n/a				
Relationship to head of household	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a				
Sex					n/a				
Race/color					n/a				
Month of birth	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Month of birth, if born within the year	n/a	n/a			n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Year of birth	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Age					n/a				
Marital status	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a				
Age at first marriage	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Number of years of present marriage	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	n/a
Whether married within the year					n/a			n/a	n/a
Number of children born	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	n/a
Number of children now living	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	n/a
Place of birth					n/a				
Mother tongue	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		
Father foreign born	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Father's place of birth	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a				
Father's mother tongue	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Mother foreign born	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mother's place of birth	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a				
Mother's mother tongue	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Year of immigration	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				
Number of years in the US	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a
Naturalized or alien	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				
Year of naturalization	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Whether male citizen of age 21+	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Right to vote denied other than crime	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Occupation					n/a				
Industry	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Employer, employee, or self-employed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			
Whether at work previous day	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	
Number of weeks/months out of work	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a			n/a	
Sickness or disability	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Line number for unemployed	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Veteran status	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a	
Whether blind, deaf, dumb					n/a	n/a		n/a	n/a
Whether idiotic, insane, crippled					n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Whether pauper, convict				n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Attended school within the year					n/a				
Whether able to read, write					n/a				
Whether able to speak English	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				
Home owned or rented	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				
If owned, whether free or mortgaged	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a				n/a
Value or monthly rental	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Value of real estate owned				n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Value of personal estate	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Radio set	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Whether on a farm	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			n/a	
Number of farm schedule	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			