

Sources for Historical Census Data

Census Data for Genealogy Research

The following two commercial products provide fairly comprehensive images of every individual tilled-in Census return from 1790-1930. (Federal privacy laws protect decennial Census for 72 years after the original enumeration.) These commercial products are searchable by decade, personal name, geographic location, family relationship, and ancestry.

Ancestry.com

<http://www.ancestry.com>

HeritageQuest Online

<http://www.heritagequestonline.com/prod/genealogy/index>

Data Sources: Subscription-Based

Social Explorer

<http://www.socialexplorer.com>

A fee-based service from Queens College (City University of New York). Allows users to create data tables and thematic maps based on decennial Census data from 1790 to present.

Historical Statistics of the United States Millennial Edition Online

<http://husus.cambridge.org>

Summary data from over 37,000 U.S. statistical series, including decennial Censuses, with extensive source notes. Results can be viewed in html or PDF format and can be downloaded in Excel or CSV formats. Users can also create customized tables which combine data from difference sources. Published by Cambridge University Press. Also available as a five-volume printed set, published in 2006.

GeoLytics, Inc.

<http://www.geolytics.com/>

Commercial repackager of Census data on CD-ROM, including historical data from 1970-1990.

Data Sources: Free on the Internet

Historical Decennial Censuses

<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial>

Scanned PDF images from printed Census reports, 1790-2000. Each decade's file also provides a brief summary of the types of data collected.

Population Census Counts, 1900-1990

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/cencounts.html>

State and County level only, but presented in easily-exported tabular form.

Selected Historical Decennial Census Population and Housing Counts

<http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/hiscendata.html>

A variety of historical reports in PDF format, including *1990 Population and Housing Unit Counts (CPH-2)*, which provides comparative decade-by-decade data for total population, housing unit counts, and population density at the state, county, and Incorporated Place level, from 1790 to 1990.

National Historical Geographic Information System (NHGIS)

<http://www.nhgis.org>

Extractable data files for decennial Census, 1790-2000. Historical data available at national, state, or county level. Data can be downloaded in multiple formats and imported into spreadsheets or statistical files. A federally-funded project from the Minnesota Population Center, University of Minnesota.

IPUMS-USA

<http://usa.ipums.org/usa>

The IPUMS consists of high-precision samples of the American population drawn from 15 censuses and the American Community Survey, spanning 1850 to 2005. The data and documentation are harmonized, making it easy to use multiple census years simultaneously.

Historical Census Browser

<http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus>

Users can easily create tables comparing multiple topics of multiple geographies within a Census decade, or create tables which compare data across decades. Can also tabulate percentages and rank results. Maintained by the University of Virginia Library's Geostat Center.

Demographic Profile Products (Missouri Census Data Center)

http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/dp3_2ktmenu/us/

Compares selected 1990 and 2000 data for the nation, states, counties, metropolitan areas, places of 10,000+ population, and ZIP Code Areas.

County Population Trends: 1960-1995

<http://www.oseda.missouri.edu/cgi-bin/uiccont?/mscdc/reports/poptrends@secure>

Collection of brief files for every county in the U.S., reporting trends in total population from 1960-1995. Compiled by the Missouri Census Data Center.

Statistical Abstract of the United States

<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/statab.html>

Scanned PDF images from every annual *Abstract*, 1878 to present. Also provides a scanned version of the landmark "Bicentennial Edition," entitled *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*.

Data Sources: Printed Compendia

Andriot, Donna. *Population abstract of the United States*. Revised edition.

McLean, VA: Documents Index, Inc., 1993.

Total population for every state, county, and city in the U.S., from 1790 to 1990.

First edition was published in 1980.

Dodd, Donald B. *Historical Statistics of the States of the United States: Two Centuries of the Census, 1790-1990*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Abstract of population, housing, and economic Census data at the national and state levels, 1790-1990, as well as population for large cities, 1790-1990.

Moffat, Riley. *Population History of Eastern U.S. Cities and Towns, 1790-1870*.

Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1992.

Covers 30 states in the eastern U.S, plus the District of Columbia. Provides total number of inhabitants for cities, towns, and villages for all available federal and state censuses, 1790-1870.

Moffat, Riley. *Population History of Western U.S. Cities and Towns, 1850-1990*.

Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1996.

Identical in format to the companion volume, covering the remaining states but for a different span of years.

Shupe, Barbara, Janet Steins, and Jyoti Pandit. *New York State Population, 1790-1980: A Compilation of Federal Census Data*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1987.

Total population counts from 1790 to 1980 for every county, town, city, village, and CDP in NYS, including founding dates.

Kane, Joseph Nathan. *The American Counties: Origins of County Names, Dates of Creation and Organization, Area, Population including 1980 Census Figures, Historical Data, and Published Sources*. Fourth Edition. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1983.

For every U.S. county, provides establishment date, origin of the name, population figures for 1950-1980, and other miscellaneous facts.

Census Questionnaires: Indexes and Guides

Gauthier, Jason G. *Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/pol02-ma.pdf>

Describes the questionnaires and instructions for each decennial Census, provides a concise history of each enumeration, and lists availability of historical records.

Historical Decennial Census Data

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/cenhis.html>

A guide to print and electronic resources relating to retrospective decennial Censuses. Includes indexes by subject and geographic level of coverage. Compiled by the staff of the University of Michigan Library's Documents Center.

Historical United States Census Questionnaires

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/census2/cenhis9u.htm>

Tabular guide to variables used in each decennial Census, 1790-1840. Compiled by the University of Michigan Library.

IPUMS USA Variable Groups

<http://usa.ipums.org/usa-action/variableGroups.do>

Tabular guide to variables present for each decennial Census, 1850 to present. Compiled by the Minnesota Population Center.

Population and Housing Items on the General Census Schedules: 1790-2000

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/census2/censubj.pdf>

Detailed chart listing the topics covered by each decennial Census.

Compiled by Grace York, Documents Librarian, University of Michigan.

Bohme, Frederick G. *200 Years of U.S. Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790-1990*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1989.

Reproduces the questionnaires for each decade.

Schulze, Suzanne. *Population Information in Nineteenth Century Census Volumes*.

Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1983.

Schulze, Suzanne. *Population Information in Twentieth Century Census Volumes, 1900-1940*.

Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1985.

Schulze, Suzanne. *Population Information in Twentieth Century Census Volumes, 1950-1980*.

Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1988.

Catalogs of Census Publications

Census Index (Ohio State University Library)

<http://library.osu.edu/sites/reference/govdocs/census/aboutci.htm>

Searchable database listing all printed volumes of the decennial Census from 1790-1997.

Cook, Kevin L. *Dubester's U.S. Census Bibliography with SuDocs Class Numbers and Indexes*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1996.

Reprints Dubester's original catalog (1790-1945), with additional indexes.

Dollarhide, William. *The Census Book: A Genealogist's Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules, and Indexes*. Bountiful, UT: Heritage Quest, 2000.

Detailed guide to federal and state censuses and supporting documentation, including lists of Soundex name indexes.

Dollarhide, William. *New York State Censuses & Substitutes: An Annotated Bibliography*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 2006.

Detailed guide to state censuses, census substitutes, and selected name lists in print, on microform, or online. Includes state census examples and forms from 1825-1925.

Dubester, Henry J. *Catalog of United States Census Publications, 1790-1945*. Reprint edition. New York: Greenwood Press, 1975.

Comprehensive annotated catalog of all Census Bureau publications through 1945, originally published in 1950.

Dubester, Henry J. *State Censuses: An Annotated Bibliography of Censuses of Population Taken After the Year 1790 by States and Territories of the United States*. New York: Burt Franklin, 1969.

State-by-state description of every non-federal census. Reprints original catalog published in 1948.

Stemmons, John D. *The United States Census Compendium; A Directory of Census Records, Tax Lists, Poll Lists, Petitions, Directories, etc. which Can Be Used as a Census*. Logan, Utah, Everton Publishers, 1973.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Bureau of the Census Catalog of Publications, 1790-1972*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974.

Reprints the original 1950 Dubester catalog, with updates from 1946-1972.

General Works

Anderson, Margo 1. *The American Census: A Social History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

A well-written and fascinating history of the decennial Census and its ties to political and social events.

Encyclopedia of the U.S. Census, edited by Margo 1. Anderson. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2000.

Virtually every article in this one-volume encyclopedia discusses the historical context of its topic. Concise, readable histories of each decennial enumeration can be found in the section entitled "Decennial Censuses" (pp. 115-163).

Hobbs, Frank and Nicole Stoops. *Demographic Trends in the 20th Century*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/censr-4.pdf>

Analyzes broad demographic trends at the national level from 1790 to present.

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Censuses Conducted by New York State

Printed volumes of the various state census tabulations are rare, but can be found in major research libraries such as the New York State Library, the New York Public Library, and the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. The entire collection (from 1795-1925) is also reproduced in a microfiche set, available in many academic libraries:

State Censuses. Millwood, NY: KTO Microform, 1971. (112 fiche)

Electoral Censuses

Tabulations are for counties, incorporated places, and towns, except for 1801, which covers counties only. Data are limited to the number of "electors" (white male citizens of voting age.) 1814 Census also tabulates all free white males and females by age group, and number of slaves.

1795
1801
1807
1814
1821

Decennial Enumerations

Tabulations for counties, incorporated places, and towns. Cities are further broken down by Wards, and for larger cities, by election districts. Subject coverage varies by census, usually becoming more detailed with each subsequent decade. IN some decades, data include birth, death, and marriage statistics for the year. Other decades include data on housing, agriculture, manufactures, and schools. The 1892 Census includes a separate report enumerating the Six Nations of the Iroquois.

Year	Published data
1825	published as an appendix to the Senate Journal
1835	56 folded tables
1845	305 pp.
1855	525 pp.
1865	743 pp.
1875	465 pp.
1892	160pp.
1905	783 pp.
1915	1,379 pp.
1925	113 pp.

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