

## **INTRODUCTION**

The census records are an important part of your genealogical research. The census evolved throughout the years to reflect the personal characteristics of the population and the changing economic, political, and technological environment of the United States. The first census was conducted in 1790 and then every 10 years.

After the end of World War II in 1945, the United States experienced an economic boom, a record number of births in 1946 sparking the baby boomers' generation, the Golden Age of Television, and an increase in suburban homes. This was also a time of conflict with the Cold War looming and the Civil Rights Movement ramping up.

## **HISTORY OF THE 1950 CENSUS**

### Authority

- United States Constitution
- Reapportionment Act of 1929
- Housing Act of 1949

### Purpose

The purpose of the Census is to determine Congressional representation and ensure Federal funding is appropriated as needed. Other individuals and organizations use the Census for:

- Schools and Public Services
- Labor Force and Unemployment
- Business and Market Product
- Housing
- Low-Income Families
- Agriculture
- Compare population changes

### Coverage

- Continental United States
- Territories of Alaska and Hawaii
- Possessions of the United States
- Population Temporarily Abroad

### Census Day

Census day was April 1, 1950. An individual was to be enumerated in their usual place of residence if the person was a resident of the United States as of April 1, 1950. Once the Census was completed it was restricted for 72 years due to privacy.

### **CENSUS FORMS**

The 1950 census forms took on a fresh look by using color and a portrait orientation. Form P1: Census of Population and Housing contains the list of individuals in the continental United States. The population schedule was on the front and the housing schedule was on the back. There are several different schedules that were used based on the area enumerated. See

<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1950/blank-forms> for a list of the population schedules.

Note: The completed Housing Schedule was not microfilmed and no longer exists.

### **SAMPLE PLAN**

The Bureau of the Census implemented a sampling plan as a way to collect additional data on the population. Since a smaller portion of the population was asked additional questions versus the entire population, the Bureau of the Census saved time and money.

- 20% Sample
- 3 1/3% Sample

### **NEW PROCEDURES AND STRENGTHENED PROCEDURES**

The Bureau of the Census developed new procedures and strengthened procedures already in place to achieve a more accurate and consistent census. Here are six ways this was accomplished:

1. Technical Training Program
2. Enumerator Qualifications
3. Reference Manuals
  - a. *Urban and Rural Enumerator's Reference Manual, 1950 Census of the United States*
    - i. View on Hathitrust.org: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015081273297>
  - b. *Urban Enumerator's Reference Manual, 1950 Census of the United States*
    - i. View of Hathitrust.org: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.b5004924>
  - c. *Supplement to the Enumerator's Reference Manual, 1950 Census of the United States*
    - i. View on Hathitrust.org: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112051420641>
  - d. *Crew Leader's Manual, 1950 Census of the United States*
    - i. View on Hathitrust.org: <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiug.30112051420401>
4. Newspapers
5. Infant Cards
6. T-Nights

### **POPULATION CENSUS QUESTIONS**

The questions asked on the population schedule reflected the history of the United States as well as provided insight into the characteristics and interests of the population at the time. The following questions were asked of the entire population as applicable:

#### **For Head of Household**

- Address
- Dwelling Serial number
- Ranch or Farm
- 3 acres or more
- Agriculture  
Questionnaire No

#### **For All Persons**

- Name
- Relationship to Head of Household
- Race
- Sex
- Age
- Marital Status
- Birthplace
- Naturalization

#### **For 14 Years and Older**

- Employment
- Occupation
- Industry
- Class of Worker

The next set of questions apply to the 20% Sample and the 3 1/3% sample:

#### **For All Ages**

- Residence in 1949
- Parents' Birthplaces
- Education

#### **For 14 Years and Older**

- Employment
- Household Income in 1949
- Military Service

#### **3 1/3 Sample Questions**

- Previous Employment
- Married More Than Once
- Number of Years Since Last Marital Status
- (Females Only) No of Children Born to Mother

### **ACCESS CENSUS IMAGES**

The 1950 Census was released on April 1, 2022. The National Archives has developed a dedicated website that you can access beginning on April 1. See <https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1950>.

### **ENUMERATION DISTRICTS**

An enumeration district is an area defined by the Bureau of the Census based on the density of the population and boundaries for towns, cities, counties, states, and other special areas like census tracts. The enumeration districts were sized so that one enumerator could canvas the area in 2 weeks, if urban, or 30 days, if rural.

### FIND AN ENUMERATION DISTRICT

There are three basic steps to finding an enumeration district for your ancestors.

1. Gather names
2. Find Addresses
3. Use [www.stevemorse.org](http://www.stevemorse.org) - "Unified 1880-1950 Census ED Finder" to locate enumeration district

### RESULTS

- 1950 Population: 154,233,234
- 1950 Kansas: 1,905,299
- 1950 Missouri: 3,954,653
- 1950 Johnson County: 62,783

The Bureau of the Census completed a Post Enumeration Survey and found that at least 1.4% or 2.1 million of the population was undercounted.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY AND FURTHER READING

#### Census Bureau Reports

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#### Other Reading

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