



25 in 2 years!

North Carolina Library Association
Government Resources Section

Come to Your Census:

the development of
the U.S. Census
from its inception to
the present



Bryna Coonin
Joyner Library, ECU

What is a census?

- A count of the population of a country as of a fixed date
- Is population growing, stable, declining?
- Population characteristics



Numbers 1:1-3

New International Version (NIV)

The LORD spoke to Moses ... in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: ² **“Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one.**

³ You and Aaron are to count ... all the men in Israel who are twenty years old or more and able to serve in the army.”

'Name' Census and 'Data' Census

Name Census

A historical census form titled "POPULATION SCHEDULE" with multiple columns for demographic data. The form includes fields for name, sex, age, race, and marital status. It is a detailed record of individual households and their members.

Census Data



The First Census (1790)

FIRST CONGRESS. SESS. II. CH. 2. 1790.

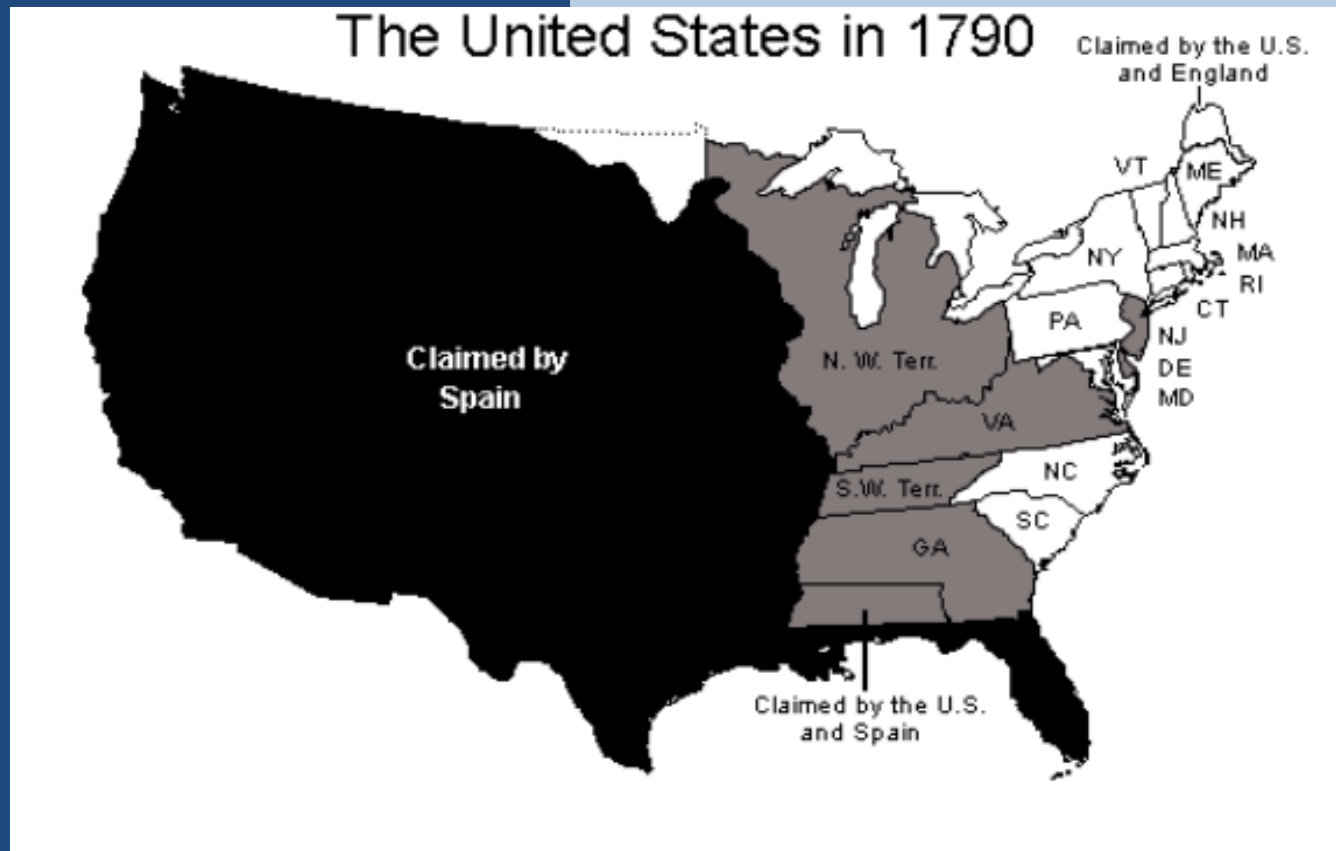
Fredrick Augustus Muhlenberg Speaker of the House of Representatives.
John Adams, Vice-President of the United States, and President of the Senate.

Approved March
The first 1790

George Washington President of the United States.

The First Census (1790)

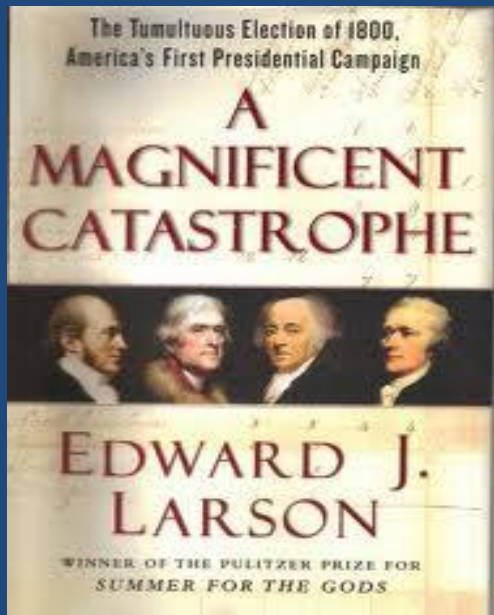
Pop. 3,929,625



The 2nd Census (1800)

Pop. 5,308,483

- Election of 1800



The 3rd Census (1810)

Pop. 7,239,881



- Cost of taking the 1810 census
- \$178,444.67

The 4th Census (1820)

Pop. 9,638,453

For the 1st time principal activities were recorded:

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Commerce



The 5th Census (1830)

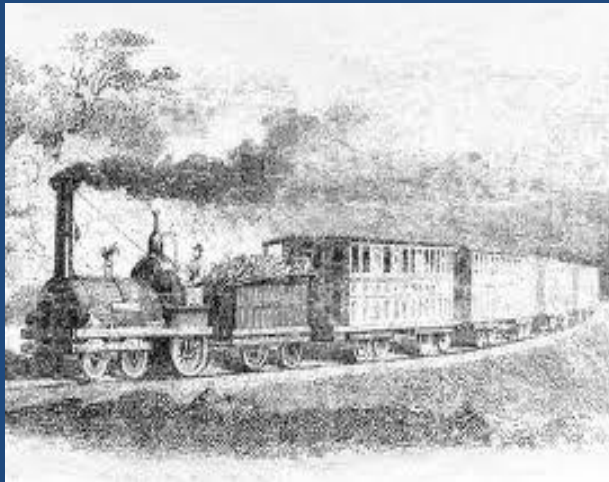
Pop. 12,866,020

**Data gathered on
the numbers of
deaf, dumb, and
blind, sorted by
race**



The 6th Census (1840)

Pop. 17,069,453



- A new inquiry added:
Number of
“insane and
idiots”

The 7th Census (1850)

Pop. 23,191,876

For the first time:

Schedules listed the
names of every
person in a
household

TO BE SOLD. on board the
Ship *Bance-Island*, on tuesday the 6th
of *May* next, at *Ashley-Ferry*; a choice
cargo of about 250 fine healthy



NEGROES,
just arrived from the
Windward & Rice Coast.
—The utmost care has
already been taken, and
shall be continued, to keep them free from
the least danger of being infected with the
SMALL-POX, no boat having been on
board, and all other communication with
people from *Charles-Town* prevented.
Austin, Laurens, & Appleby.

N. B. Full one Half of the above Negroes have had the
SMALL-POX in their own Country..



Taking the Census, 1854. Francis William Edmonds (American, 1806–1863)
Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC

U.S. Census 1850 Slave Schedule

270
SCHEDULE 2. Slave Inhabitants in *Crop Roads Plant* **in the County of** *...*
of *Georgia*, **enumerated by me, on the** *28th* **day of** *August*, **1850.** *...*

1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	2	DESCRIPTION.			6	7	8	1	NAMES OF SLAVE OWNERS.	2
			3	4	5						
1		1	37	m	B				1	<i>James Philips</i>	
2		1	27	f	B				2		
3		1	25	m	B				3		
4		1	23	m	B				4		
5		1	21	f	B				5		
6		1	18	f	B				6		
7		1	8	m	B				7		
8		1	4	m	B				8		
9	<i>Samuel Potts</i>	1	60	f	B				9		
10									10		

Owner name

Age, Sex, Color

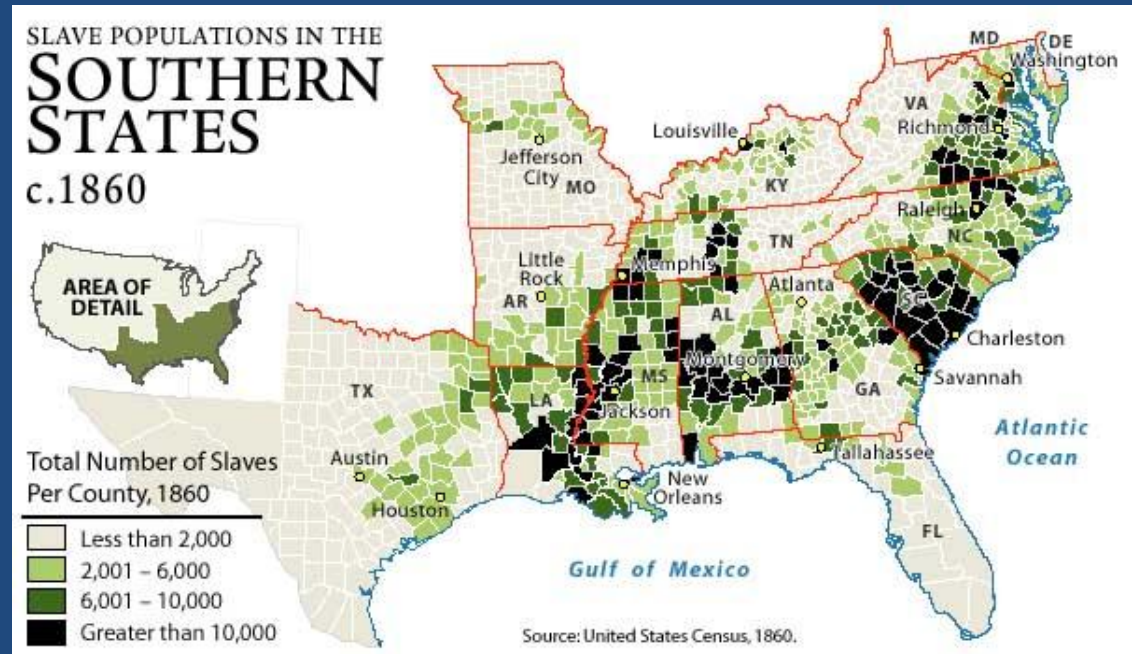
Owner name

Age, Sex, Color

The 8th Census (1860)

Pop. 31,443,321

Population of enslaved individuals: 3,953,760





THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

CENSUS MARSHAL.—“I jist want to know how many of yez is deaf, dumb, blind, insar and idiotic—likewise how many convicts there is in the family—what all your ages ar especially the old woman and the young ladies—and how many dollars the old gentlem is worth!”

Saturday Evening Post, 1860

Some of the questions asked about sensitive topics such as ages, family wealth, or deaf, dumb, blind, idiotic, insane, or convicts in the family.

The 9th Census (1870)

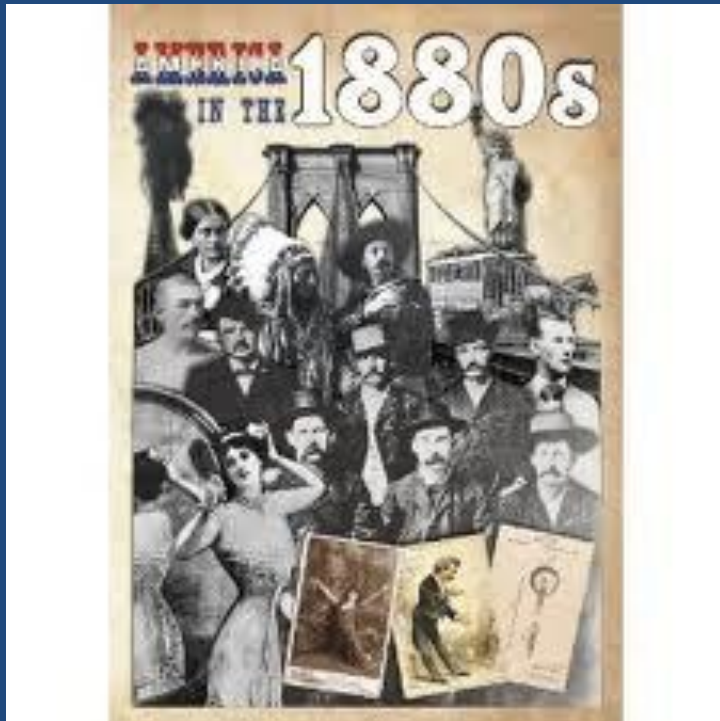
Pop. 38,558,371



- Complete information recorded for newly freed blacks

The 10th Census (1880)

Important
administrative
changes



“Defective,
Dependent,
Delinquent Classes”
(1880 only)

The 11th Census (1890)

Herman Hollerith's Tabulating Machine



The 11th Census (1890)

Pop. 62,947,714

- Fire destroyed 25% of the 1890 Census
- Government ineptitude destroyed the rest



The 13th Census (1910)

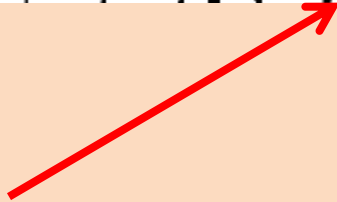
Pop. 91,972,266



STATE Kansas } DEP. THIRTEENTH
COUNTY Douglas }
TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY X
NAME OF INSTITUTION _____

LOCATION.		NAME	RELATION.	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION.				
Street	Number (if in city)	of each person whose place of abode on April 15, 1910, was in this family.	Relationship of this person to the head of the family.	Sex	Age	Marital Status	Color	Place of Birth

87	722	219	222	Langston Mary L.	Head	F	73	Wd	+	North Carolina
88				Hughes Langston	Grandson	M	9	cl		Missouri



The 15th Census (1930)

Pop. 122,775,046

**Included Guam,
Hawaii, the Panama
Canal Zone, Puerto
Rico, Samoa, Virgin
Islands**

- **New questions:
Homemaker
status and
television sets**

The 16th Census (1940)

Pop.131,669,275

- Entering the war years:
Enumerating military and their families

Page No. 32

Inquiries numbered 7, 16, and 17 are not to be asked in respect to merely by

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enumerated by me on the 10th 11th day of

Archives.gov 1940 Census Home Getting Started Census Search About the 1940 Census Help

Welcome to the 1940 census

The 1940 census records were released by the US National Archives April 2, 2012, and brought online through a partnership with Archives.com. This website allows you full access to the 1940 census images, in addition to 1940 census maps and descriptions.

Please visit [Getting Started](#) to determine the best way to begin your search.

Get Involved!

Interested in helping to index the 1940 census? We invite you to join the 1940 census community indexing project at [The1940Census.com](#) and start creating a name index for the 1940 census today!

How It Works

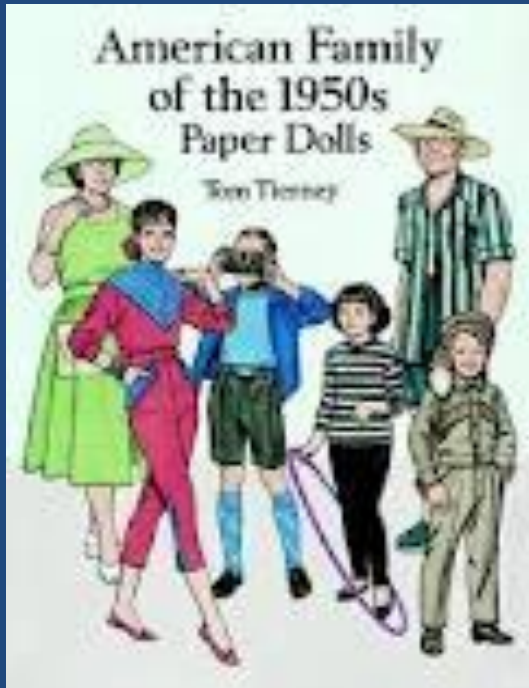
- **Find census maps and descriptions to locate an enumeration district.**
To find a person in the census, you first need to determine the appropriate enumeration district number. This can be found by searching census district maps and descriptions.
- **Browse census images to locate a person in the 1940 census.**
Census images are organized by enumeration district number. Once you've located the correct one, you can begin to browse census images to look for your ancestor.
- **Save, share, and download images to save your work and share with family members.**
When you locate a census image, you can easily save, share, or download the image for future reference. This image can be a great keepsake, or addition to your family tree!

[Get Started](#)

[Learn more about the 1940 census »](#)

The 17th Census (1950)

- Pop. 150,697,361
- 48 States and the District of Columbia



- Greater urbanization of population
- “Sub”-urbia

The 18th Census (1960)

Pop. 179,323,175



The 19th Census (1970)

Pop. 203,302,031

- First mail back census
- Summary tape files

The image shows a scan of a 1970 US Census form, likely a Summary Tape File (STF). The form is a grid of data fields, organized into sections. The top section contains demographic information such as sex, race, and marital status. The middle section contains economic information such as occupation, industry, and income. The bottom section contains summary statistics for the population. The form is filled with data, and the columns are labeled with various demographic and economic variables.

The 1980 Census

Pop. 226,545,805

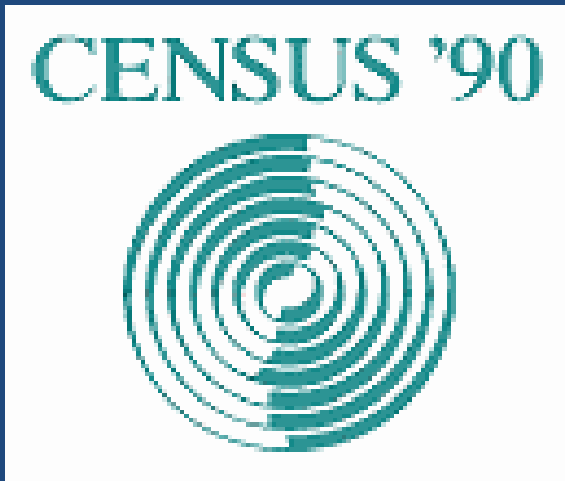
PL 94-171

- Mandates provision of data at census block level; census block numbering becomes universal



1990 Census: a technological triumph

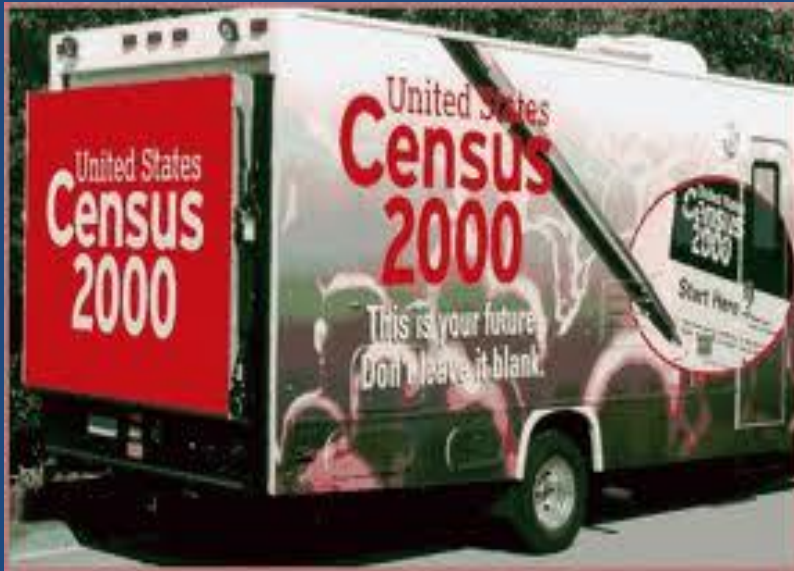
Pop. 249,632,692



- Computerized mapping system (TIGER)
- TIGER became the basis for GIS
- Data available on CD-ROM (“democratized” data)

The 2000 Census

- Pop. 281,421,906
- Addition of the multiple race option
- Major, paid advertising campaign instituted



2010 Census

Pop. 308,745,538

The challenge
going forward.....



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Session Evaluation

<http://tinyurl.com/nclagrs25>

Please fill out our survey and let us know what you think!

Upcoming Accidental Librarian Webinars

- **May 14: “Legal Research...Without the Law Library”**
 - **(Jennifer Behrens)**
 - **June 12: Census and AFF (Katharin Peter)**
 - **Coming soon: Congressional research basics, another patent session!**
-
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