

US CENSUS RECORDS: BEYOND THE NUMBERS

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SESSION OUTLINE

- Extracting everything; finding hidden clues
- Your ancestors' FAN Club
- Other schedules
- Census substitutes
- Clues to going further
- Always examine original document

BEYOND THE CENSUS

- Land records
- Tax records
- City directories
- Employment/occupation records
- Immigration
- Yearbooks

CENSUS RECORDS

- Began 1790
- Every 10 years since
- Some states had their own census
- Created for different purposes
- Never intended to be used for genealogy

WHO? HOW?

- **1790-1870** census takers were US Marshals
- Little training/instruction on how to collect census data
- Limited instructions from census acts
- Spelling

INSTRUCTIONS

- Beginning 1880 - hired, trained census-takers replaced marshals
- Primary method door-to-door by temporary census-takers
- Information from neighbors
- 1960 began mailing questionnaires

GENEALOGICAL IMPORTANCE

- Age (year of birth); 1900 only census with month/year of birth
- Birthplace, parent birthplace
- Establish family units
- Locate extended family
- Evolving spelling of surname

ALWAYS EXAMINE ORIGINAL!

- May be indexed incorrectly
- Additional facts not merged into ancestry or software
- In-laws
- Neighbors
- Exact date

EARLY CENSUS (1790-1840)

- Only head of household by name
- How many people in household
- Listings free and slave categorized in groups by
 - ✓ Age
 - ✓ Gender

BEFORE 1830

- No pre-printed forms!
- Enumerators drew up their own
- Pages without headings, line tallies, or column totals
- Not necessarily less reliable than subsequent censuses, but may require more work by researcher

STRATEGY

- Compare names/ages of household members for shifts in members
- Check neighbor names – relative?
- Find heads of household in **old newspaper records** - mention of family members
- Obituaries, wedding/birth announcements – names/ages

EVERY CENSUS

- Exact date of enumeration
- Location: state, county, and municipality
- Remember that state and county lines may have changed from one census to next
 - ✓ Verify location with historical maps
 - ✓ Records will be filed in municipality of date of event

ARE YOU MISSING CLUES?

- Always examine **original document**
- Check page before and after
- Potential problems
 - ✓ Bottom/top of page
 - ✓ Ditto marks
 - ✓ Information not merged (into online tree and/or software)

WHAT TO FIND

- Head, how many in household:
1790-1840
- Gender, age: 1850-1950
- Occupation: 1850-1950
- Relationships: 1880-1950
- Birthplace, individual and parents:
1880-1950

MARRIAGE

- 1870-1880 (if married previous year)
- 1890 (number of years)
- 1900 (number of years)
- 1910 (years in present marriage)
- 1930 (age at first marriage)

FAMILY FACTS

- **1900:** how many marriages
- **1900, 1910, 1940:** how many children woman had
- **1900, 1910:** number of children still living
- **1940:** where living 5 years ago

IMMIGRATION-RELATED

- Immigration: 1880-1940
- Year immigrated to US
- Whether naturalized citizen or not
- Native language
- Can speak English

PERSONAL INFO

- Level of schooling
- Occupation
- Address
- Read or write
- Disability
- Property owner
- Wealth

1880 CENSUS DISTRICTS

- Supervisors of census
- Presidential appointments
- In charge of
 - ✓ Organizing district
 - ✓ Finding enumerators
 - ✓ Supervising enumerators' work

1880 CENSUS

- Not home? Info from neighbor
- First time for family units, and **relationships**
- Occupation
- Read, write
- Defectives

1880 CENSUS: DISABILITIES

- Questions 16-20 - if person was blind, "deaf and dumb," idiotic, insane, or "maimed, crippled, bedridden or otherwise disabled"
- If any column checked, **Special Schedule of Defective, Dependent, & Delinquent Classes**

1890 CENSUS

- Administered by Department of Interior
- 47,000 enumerators (political patronage)
- Herman Hollerith's electrical tabulation system
- Damaged by water (after fire)
- Destroyed by act of congress

FRAUD, POLITICAL INTRIGUE

- Accuracy + undercounting concerns
- NY – bolstered numbers
- St. Paul/Minneapolis
 - ✓ 19 indictments – Minneapolis businessmen (added 1,100 phony names)

INACCURATE WORK OF CENSUS TAKERS

- 1920 census: Homestead District in Pittsburgh - Henry Silverstein
 - ✓ House numbers didn't exist on blocks
 - ✓ Entire blocks that never existed
 - ✓ Probably made assumptions about house numbers on streets hadn't visited

1900 CENSUS

- Street name, house #
- Month/year of birth
- Years in present marriage
- For women: birthed # of children
+ # children living
- Year of immigration
- Education; home ownership

INDUSTRY SCHEDULE

- Also called manufacturing schedule
- Separate schedule: 1820, 1850-1880
- Type of product made
- Raw materials used
- Type of power implemented
- Gender and wages of employees

WHERE TO FIND

- Some on familysearch
 - ✓ Check FS catalog for availability
- Some on ancestry in “Selected U.S. Federal Census Non-population Schedules, 1850-1880”
- Also on microfilm at larger libraries and state archives

HIDDEN CENSUS CLUES

- 1840 military pensioners
- 1850-1870 – mortality; agriculture and manufacturers
- 1880 disabilities
- 1910 Civil War service
- 1940 – X in circle

State NEW YORKIncorporated place NEW YORKWard of city 2Unincorporated place _____
(Name of unincorporated place having 100 or more inhCounty QUEENSTownship or other
division of county SUNNYSIDE A D 2Block Nos. ABInstitution _____
(Name of institution and lines on which entries are m

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-11576

1940

Line No.	Street, avenue, road, etc.	House number (in cities and towns)	HOUSEHOLD DATA			NAME	RELATION	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION				EDUCATION		PLACE OF BIRTH	CITI- ZEN- SHIP	IN WHAT PLACE For a person who, on April 1, Col. 17 "Same house," and town, enter, "Same place," For a person who lived in a directed in the Instructions mail address.)
			Number of household in order of visitation	Home owned (O) or rented (R)	Value of home, if owned, or monthly rental, if rented			Does this household live on a farm? (Yes or No)	Sex—Male (M), Female (F)	Color or race	Age at last birthday	Marital status— Single (S), Married (M), Widowed (Wd), Divorced (D)	Attended school or college any time since March 1, 1940? (Yes or No)			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	3965	144	R	60	No	DANIN ESTHER	HEAD	F	W	66	WD	No	8	RUSSIA	NA	SAME PLACE
2						VICTORIA	DAUGHTER	F	W	35	S	No	H4	RUSSIA	NA	SAME PLACE
3						ELIZABETH	DAUGHTER	F	W	30	S	No	CH	CONNECTICUT	SS	SAME PLACE
4	3963	145	R	55	No	MCGVERN JOSEPH	HEAD	M	W	34	M	No	CH	NEW YORK	CI	SAME PLACE
5						MARIE	WIFE	F	W	30	M	No	H4	NEW YORK	CI	SAME PLACE
6						MARY ANNE	DAUGHTER	F	W	5	S	No	0	NEW YORK	CI	SAME PLACE
7						SARAH E	DAUGHTER	F	W	1	S	No	0	NEW YORK	JB	—
8		146	R	55	No	KAMPF LEO	HEAD	M	W	33	M	No	CS	NEW YORK	SB	SAME PLACE
9						ETTA	WIFE	M	W	29	M	No	CS	NEW YORK	SB	SAME PLACE
10						BARBARA	DAUGHTER	F	W	4	S	No	0	NEW YORK	JB	—
11						HLADON ANN	HOUSEKEEPER	F	W	22	S	No	8	NEW JERSEY	CI	SAME PLACE
12	3959	149	R	55	No	DOBA STEVEN JR	HEAD	M	W	31	M	No	C2	NEW YORK	CI	SAME PLACE
13						RUTH	WIFE	F	W	31	M	No	CI	NEW YORK	SB	SAME PLACE

AGRICULTURE & MANUFACTURERS

- 1850-1870 censuses - additional agriculture + manufacturers (industry) schedules (1880)
- Farmer or occupation manufacturing
 - ✓ Check manufacturers' schedule anyway - sideline business, such as tanneries or sawmills

AGRICULTURE

- 1850 -1880 and for states with 1885 census
- Very few filmed and/or indexed
- Same order as population schedules
- FHL - very few - Use **Place** to locate
 - ✓ **Search** for state
 - ✓ Select **Census** and year

MORTALITY SCHEDULES

- 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1885
- Deaths in year prior to census
(1 Jun - 31 May)
- 1885 – Colorado, Florida, Nebraska

FINDING NAMES

- May not be spelled correctly
- Unusual/foreign name, may have
 - ✓ Phonetically spelled name
 - ✓ If misheard; spelled totally wrong
- Don't give up on census
- Use unique search methods
- Also search different websites
(transcription differs from site-to-site)

UNIQUE SEARCH

- For searchable field with interactive index, such as ancestry.com and familysearch.org
- **With age range, gender, location**
 - ✓ First or last name only
 - ✓ No name
 - ✓ Place of birth, no name

GENEALOGY FAN CLUB*

- **Friends**
- **Associates**
- **Neighbors**

*Phrase “FAN Club” for
genealogy coined by
Elizabeth Shown Mills

FAN PROCESS

- Identify list of people who lived and associated with ancestor
- Research these *other* people
- Flesh out new hints
- Identifying ancestors FAN club can help overcome brick walls

NEIGHBORS - CENSUS

- Other people on page with same surname
 - ✓ Good chance could also be related
- Many neighbors intermarried, sold land to each other, moved to new locations together
- **Turn the page!** same page may not be neighbors (census taker order)

CONTEXT, CONTEXT

- Historical information like real estate
- True value of information unknown until put into historical community context
- Look at **original** census (and other) documents!
- Importance of jurisdiction

FAMILY

- Family living nearby
 - ✓ Census
 - ✓ Land records
 - ✓ Wills and probate
 - ✓ Cemetery records
- Brothers easier to track

ASSOCIATES

- Business partner, pastor, lawyer
- Witness on document
 - ✓ Baptismal/christening records
 - ✓ Marriage records
 - ✓ Probate, land, affidavits
- Associates often related
- Informant/witness relationship? Credibility?

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

- Vouchers/petitions for license (business associates)
- Trips out of area
- Visitors to community
- Funeral/wedding attendees
- Pall bearers

CENSUS SUBSTITUTES

- State censuses
- Church records
- Voter lists
- Alumni directories
- Death/cemetery records
- County history/biography books
- City directories
- Plat maps (dated)
- Tax records

CITY DIRECTORIES

- Adult residents
- Address
- Other adult members of household
- Occupation, work address
- Neighborhood church
- May have annual death index

SCHOOL RECORDS, YEARBOOKS

- Pictures, fraternities, activities, sports
- Education – professional groups
- School newspapers
- Finding:
 - ✓ Family papers
 - ✓ School itself
 - ✓ Local historical society collections

LAND RECORDS

- Earliest, most complete court records
- Land ownership (plat) maps
- Easily identify nearby neighbors
- Identify family members by land transfers
- Identify jurisdiction

FIRE INSURANCE MAPS

- Sanborn maps(\$) 1867-1970 – digitized
- Over 660,000 maps, 12,000+ cities and towns
- Some Sanborn maps available for free on other sites

PLAT MAPS

- Divisions of land in neighborhood
- Survey *maps* showing land and property owners
- Look for possible relatives and FAN club
- Cities and towns to county level

RANDYMAJORS.ORG

- Google maps to display county boundaries from historical date
- Type in present day US place and historical date
- Map of county boundaries then in effect
- Overlaid with current Google maps places, roads!



Washington, PA, USA

As of date:



1/1/1775



Go!

County Name: **W. AUGUSTA DIST. County, Virginia Colony**

Overlapping jurisdiction >>>

DETAILS: Effective 10/11/1773, West Augusta District (extinct) created by Virginia from AUGUSTA to provide jurisdiction of



Map

Satellite



- ☐ Show historical county labels
- ☐ Show chronology...
- ☐ Also show present-day county lines

Google

Map data ©2019

2 km

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TAXATION

- Taxes collected since colonial era
- Records vary according to purpose of assessment
- Annual tax lists establish ages, residences, relationships, year of death or time left area

WHERE TO FIND

- Familysearch **Catalog** - place search (county)
 - ✓ Federal Internal Revenue assessment lists tax records for 1862 -1866
 - ✓ **FHL** has some tax records
- County clerks (town clerks, in New England) maintain local tax records

WORK-RELATED

- School, college, training facilities
- Union, professional organization records
- Work-related accident reports
- Company records
- Use search engine to locate

CONFERENCEKEEPER.ORG

- Calendar of genealogy events anywhere
- Webinars, workshops, seminars, conferences, podcasts and more
- From genealogy societies, libraries, and other organizations all around the world
- Mostly free, but some for fee