

## QUICK TIP

### How can census records help with your U.S. family history research?

A census is a count and description of the population of a country, state, county, or city for a given date. Census lists are also called schedules. The U.S. Constitution requires that a census be taken every ten years. The census is used for the apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives and for other federal and state purposes.

Census records can be invaluable in your family history research. The first Federal Population Census was taken in 1790, and has been taken every ten years since. For privacy reasons, there is a 72-year restriction on availability of the censuses. Most of the 1890 censuses were burned in a fire but there are a few fragments available that can be found on Ancestry.com. Go to the Ancestry catalog. In the drop-down menu under *Search*, select *Census and Voter Lists*. In the upper right under *Narrow the Category*, select *US Federal Census Collection* and then scroll down and click on *1890 United States Federal Census Fragment*.



State censuses were often taken in the years between the federal censuses, such as 1875 or 1892. To see what state censuses are available, go to the FamilySearch Wiki and type in *State Census Records*.

Questions in the Census have changed over the years. From 1850 to 1950, six basic questions asked in each census remained the same: name, age, gender, race, occupation, and place of birth. Here is the specific information you might find in different years of the censuses:

Federal Census Questions	Years of Census
Names, ages, birthplaces	1850-1950
Birthplaces of parents	1880-1940
Relationships	1880-1850
For a mother: number of children born and number of children still living	1900-1910
Family and neighbors	All Years
Immigration year	1900-1930
Citizenship	1910-1950

U.S. Census records can be easily searched on databases such as Ancestry or FamilySearch. It is a way of not only tracking where your ancestors lived but also can give a lot of information about your ancestors' lives, such as determining family relationships.

When viewing a census transcription, don't stop there. Make sure you look at the image to glean additional information.

For additional information: [FamilySearch Wiki: United States Census](#)

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