



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Federal Census Records

at

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

The Federal Population Census enumeration, taken every ten years since 1790, can provide some of the most rewarding information for genealogical and historical research. The collections of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania include the 1790-1900 Federal Census returns for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (with the exception of 1890, as explained below), as well as those for a number of additional States. The collections of The HSP also contain a number of special census records compiled over the years such as the *Special Census of Indians*, taken in 1880 (see MFilm E 98 .C3 P7 1994). The information gathered in each U.S. Census becomes progressively more detailed. For example, the 1790-1840 schedules note only heads of households, with other family members and boarders tallied simply by age group, sex and race. By 1850, census returns finally begin to record individuals in a given household by name, age, occupation, value of real estate, and place of birth. Beginning in 1880, census data includes the relationship between household dwellers and the head of each household, as well as the birthplace of the parents of each resident. Unfortunately, most of the 1890 Pennsylvania Federal census schedules were destroyed by fire; the only census record of value for that year is a special enumeration of Civil War Veterans and Widows. Perhaps the single most informative census schedule ever taken was that for 1900. In addition to names and occupations, these returns give the birth month and year for each individual, the number of years a couple has been married, number of children born to the couple (both living and deceased), as well as years of immigration and naturalization. Federal census records are kept confidential for 72 years from the time they were compiled. Accordingly, the 1940 census records will become available in 2012. The following list notes specific holdings for census records at The HSP. Both census indexes and records are available for review in the Albert M. Greenfield Microform and Media Center. For more information on specific state or county census records, search the Online Catalog (available at our website, www.hsp.org) under the heading. Various census-related volumes can be found on the shelves in the Greenfield Center.

Please note: Quite often, the collections of The HSP contain various census indexes but not the corresponding records on microfilm. For a complete set of Federal Census Records (1790-1920), visit the National Archives Mid-Atlantic Branch, located at 9th & Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19107 (215) 606-0112.

CENSUS INDEXES

The indexes for Pennsylvania census records are available in book format from 1790 to 1870. The contents of each volume are arranged alphabetically by individual. While the specific information provided by these indexes varies, in each case the information is sufficient to locate the correct reel of film.

"SOUNDEX"

The 1880 and 1900 census records are indexed by a special system known as "Soundex." Under this system, surnames are assigned a code number (see reverse). The entries are then arranged on microfilm numerically by code number and alphabetically by given name. It is important to note that the 1880 Soundex index includes entries for only those households with children ten years old or younger. The 1900 Soundex index includes entries for all known heads of households as well as individuals with different surnames living in the same dwelling.

Please use the following key to locate surname code numbers:

Soundex Coding Guide

1	b,p,f,
2	c,s,k,g,j,q,x,z
3	d,t
4	l
5	m,n
6	r

The letters *a, e, i, o, u, y, h* and *w* are not coded; neither is the first letter of the surname.

Every Soundex code must be a 3-digit number. For names with less than 3-digits, 0s are added. Conversely, surnames that exceed 3-digits, stop at three [e.g.-Lee: L000 (not L0); and Ebelson: E142 (not E1425)]. Also, when two identical letters appear together in a surname (e.g.-Kelly), the letter is counted only once [e.g.- K400].

Examples:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Letters Coded</u>	<u>Code Number</u>
O'Brien	b,r,n	O165
Allricht	l,r,c	A462
Zita	t	Z300

Note: For further instructions, please refer to *The Soundex Reference Guide* located in both the Greenfield Center and Reference Desk (CENSUS CS 49.S64 1990; also at RDESK).

FURTHER READING

Clarke, Jane Adams. "Research Tip: Some Census Substitutes for Philadelphia (City and County)," *Penn In Hand*, vol. 10 no. 4 (Summer 1989).
(UPA F 146 .G3)

Dilts, G. David. "Censuses and Tax Lists," *Printed Sources: A Guide to Published Genealogical Records*.
(RDESK Z 5311 .P75 1998)

Lainhart, Ann S. *State Census Records*.
(CENSUS Z 5313 .U5 L37 1992)

Stock, Walter and Nesheena Pickron. *An Urban Finding Aid for the 1880 Federal Population Census of Philadelphia*.
(CENSUS UPA F 157 .P56 S76 1993)

Thorndale, William and William Dollarhide. *Map Guide to the Federal Censuses, 1790-1920*.
(CENSUS G 1201 .F7 T5 1987)

Woodrooffe, Helen. *A Genealogist's Guide to Pennsylvania Records*
(RDESK F 148 .W66 1994)

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