

Ticked Off!! Those Pesky Pre-1850 Tic Marks

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Most genealogists researching American ancestors love the detailed censuses taken between 1850 and 1930. Yet our eyes glaze over and our head starts hurting when we take on the columns and head counts of the pre-1850 census enumerations. Many researchers go so far as to avoid them altogether, or use them only as a source for the head of household. When used together, however, these early U.S. census records can often provide important clues to early American families. Kimberly T. Powell

The census records from 1790-1840 only list the free heads of households, not the names of other family members. The family members were tallied, but not named.

These earlier censuses can help to point us in a different direction that we may not have considered before, and therefore use new record sources. They may help us discover the county of residence using a census index. All pre-1850 census records have been completely indexed.

1840 Census Headers – Census Day; 1 Jun

Written page number	Printed page number	Name of Head of Family	Free White Persons (including heads of families)																						
			Males										Females												
			under age 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100 & up	under age 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80

1830 Census Headers – Census Day; 1 Jun

Written page number	Printed page number	Name of Head of Family	Free White Persons (including heads of families)																						
			Males										Females												
			under age 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	100 & up	under age 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80

1820 Census Headers – Census Day; 7 Aug

Written page number	Printed page number	Name of Head of Family	Number of Free White Males					Number of Free White Females					Number of foreigners not naturalized	Number of persons engaged in agriculture	Number of persons engaged in commerce	Number of persons engaged in manufacture	Number of Free Colored Persons								All other persons	Slaves
			Including heads of families					Including heads of families									Males				Females					
			to age 10	10 to 16	16 to 18	16 to 26	26 to 45	45 & up	to age 10	10 to 16	16 to 18	16 to 26					26 to 45	45 & up	to age 14	14 to 26	26 to 45	45 & up	to age 14	14 to 26		


1800 or 1810 Census Headers – Census Day; 4 Aug and 6 Aug

1810 U.S. Census Schedule of the whole number of Persons within the division allotted to													Family: _____	Town: _____	City: _____
County: _____ State: _____ Page #: _____ Ancestry pg #: _____															
Line #	Names of Heads of Families	Free White Males					Free White Females					All other free persons, except free Indians not taxed	Slaves		
		Under 10	10 thru 15	16 thru 25	26 thru 44	45 & over	Under 10	10 thru 15	16 thru 25	26 thru 44	45 & over				


1790 Census Headers – Census Day; 2 Aug

Page	Name of Head of Family	Free White Males 16 years & upwards including heads of families	Free White Males under 16 years	Free White Males including heads of families	All other free persons	Slaves	Dwellings/ other information
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Census Checklist – download from www.familytreemagazine.com



Note which US census records you've researched for each ancestor.



Name	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
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1810 Floyd Co., KY Census, Adam Carehart – Find the differences!

ancestry.com | 1810 United States Federal Census for Adam Carehart

Kentucky > Floyd > Floyd

Floyd County		William	Thomas	?	Adam	Adam	James	Samuel C.
Christ	Castin	Carehart	Carehart	Carehart	Camron	Coburn		

LN	Firstname	Lastname	Free White persons										Not Tax	Slv	
			Male					Female							
			0	10	16	26	45	0	10	16	26	45			
1	William	Christ						1		1			1		
2	Thomas	Castin		1	2		1		4	1	1	1			
3	?	Carehart		1			1		2		1				
4	Adam	Carehart		1		1					1				
5	Adam	Carehart			1	1		1	1	1	1			1	
6	James	Camron		1	1			1	3					1	
7	Samuel C.	Coburn		2			2	1	1	1		2			

Table 2. Data in each census year 1790 to 1840

The early census data contained the name of the head of the household, plus the numbers of the following:	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840
Free white males under/over 16 years old	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free white females						
Slaves owned						
Free white persons in five or more specified age groups	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slaves in specified age groups	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foreigners, not naturalized	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Deaf, dumb and blind; insane/idiotic; literacy	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Name and age of each person receiving a military pension	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Persons attending school						

Table 3. Availability of Population Schedules 1790 to 1840

State	Statehood	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840
Delaware	1787	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Jersey	1787	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	1787	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Connecticut	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Georgia	1788	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maryland	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Hampshire	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New York	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
South Carolina	1788	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Virginia	1788	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	1789	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	1790	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vermont	1791	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kentucky	1792	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tennessee	1796	No	No	Fr	Yes	Yes	Yes
District of Columbia	1800	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ohio	1803	-	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Louisiana	1812	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Indiana	1816	-	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mississippi	1817	-	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Illinois	1818	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alabama	1819	-	-	-	No	Yes	Yes
Maine	1820	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Missouri	1821	-	-	No	No	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	1836	-	-	-	No	Yes	Yes
Michigan	1837	-	-	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Florida	1845	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Iowa	1846	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Wisconsin	1848	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes

-	State or Territory did not exist, or no census was taken.
No	Census was taken, but schedules were destroyed.
Yes	Schedules are available for most counties.
Fr	Fragments only exist

Selected Bibliography

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Dollarhide, William and William Thorndale, *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920*, Genealogical Publishing Company, 1995.

Greenwood, Val D., *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*, Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000, 3rd ed., pgs. 233-307.

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Szucs, Loretto Dennis and Sandra Hargreaves Luebking. *The Source: A Guide book to American Genealogy*. 3rd ed. (Provo, UT: Ancestry, 2006.)

Taylor, D. Joshua, *Bridging the Gap, Tracing U.S. Ancestors Between 1780 and 1830*, 43rd Annual Conference, Family History and Genealogical Research, Brigham Young University, Conference Syllabus, p. 183-186, 2011.

Helpful Websites

Digging Details from Pre-1850 Census Records: <https://www.thoughtco.com/digging-details-from-us-census-records-1421771>

Measuring America: The Decennial Censuses from 1790-2000:
<https://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/pol02marv-pt2.pdf>

National Archives, Clues in Census Records 1790-1840:
<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1790-1840.html>

Persi/Heritage Quest Library:
<https://www.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/help/censusbook/Section%205.pdf>

Powell, Kimberly, *Digging Details From the Pre-1850 Census Records*:
<https://www.thoughtco.com/digging-details-from-us-census-records-1421771>

US Census Headings: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/0/0e/US_Census_Headings_1790-1860.pdf

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/img_auth.php/b/b8/US_Census_Headings_1870-1930.pdf

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/1940_Census_United_States_%E2%80%93_Census_Form_Headings