

Diving Between the Decades, Part 2

Finding U.S. Territorial and State Census Records

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Using the Record

To make the most of the record, read every column in each Territorial and State Census that your ancestors are in. To help you with this, you can transcribe the document word-for-word. Always view the original image if it is available since indexes usually don't include all the information and might have transcription errors.

Locate your ancestors in every census, including Federal, Territorial, and State Census records. As you do, work backward in time. This means, starting with the census records closest to their death date and moving towards their marriage and birth. This will bring out clues to help you find the next census.

Searching Tips

Many of these censuses are indexed, so they will be name-searchable, but you might still struggle to find your ancestors. As you search for them, consider applying the following tips:

- Search with variations of spellings. The indexer or enumerator might have misspelled the name.
- Use multiple websites where the census is found.
- Search for all known family members or neighbors, and not just one ancestor.
- Search for your ancestors in nearby localities.
- Locate other records in the last-known locality to discover hints of their location the year of the territorial or state census records.
- Create a timeline to help track your ancestors and see what gaps are in your research.

Expanding Research

In order to expand your research from the census records, make sure you are reading every column. As you do, examine the entire household and the neighborhood and evaluate all information and clues. You know you are properly using the census records if you are following those clues to other records. They also should be adding evidence to your research and confirming or clarifying what you already know.

Finding the Record

There are many places to go to find the Territorial and State Census Records. To help with your search, understanding the basic facts of your ancestors will help you know if you are looking for the correct person. You will likely need to use many resources to locate your ancestors. Not everything is online, so be prepared to use offline resources as well.

Websites

FamilySearch Research Wiki – United States Census

[www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United States Census](http://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Census)

FamilySearch Catalog – Search by a Place search and locate Census records

www.familysearch.org/search/catalog

FamilySearch Historical Records – Find a Collection - Browse all collections

www.familysearch.org/search/

Ancestry.com – Card Catalog - Filter by state and census

www.ancestry.com/

Cyndi's List – State and Territorial Censuses

www.cyndislist.com/us/census/state/

Google – to find local and state archives, libraries, historical societies, universities, etc. (i.e. “Missouri 1803 territory census” or “Wisconsin state and territorial census records online”)

www.google.com

Books

State Census Records by Ann S. Lainhart

Census Substitutes & State Census Records An Annotated Bibliography of Published Name Lists for All 50 U.S. States and State Censuses for 37 States by William Dollarhide

State Censuses: An Annotated Bibliography of Censuses of Population Taken After the Year 1790 by States and Territories of the United States by Henry J. Dubester