



# 2022 Genealogy Series: 1950 Census

## Welcome!

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is pleased to present this educational series of lectures on how to do family research.

As one of the nation's premier genealogy institutions, it is our mission to inform the public about National Archives' holdings that relate to family history and to make those records available to you.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
**1950**  
CENSUS  
EXPLORE & COLLABORATE



# About the Lecture Series

These lectures will demonstrate how to use records from the 1950 Census and other federal resources for genealogical research. Our presenters include experts from the National Archives and Records Administration and the U.S. Census Bureau. Sessions are intended for beginners to experienced family historians – all are welcome!





# Join the conversation!

Participate with the presenters and other family historians during a session's premiere.

Live Chat on **You** 

Log in and type your questions and comments.

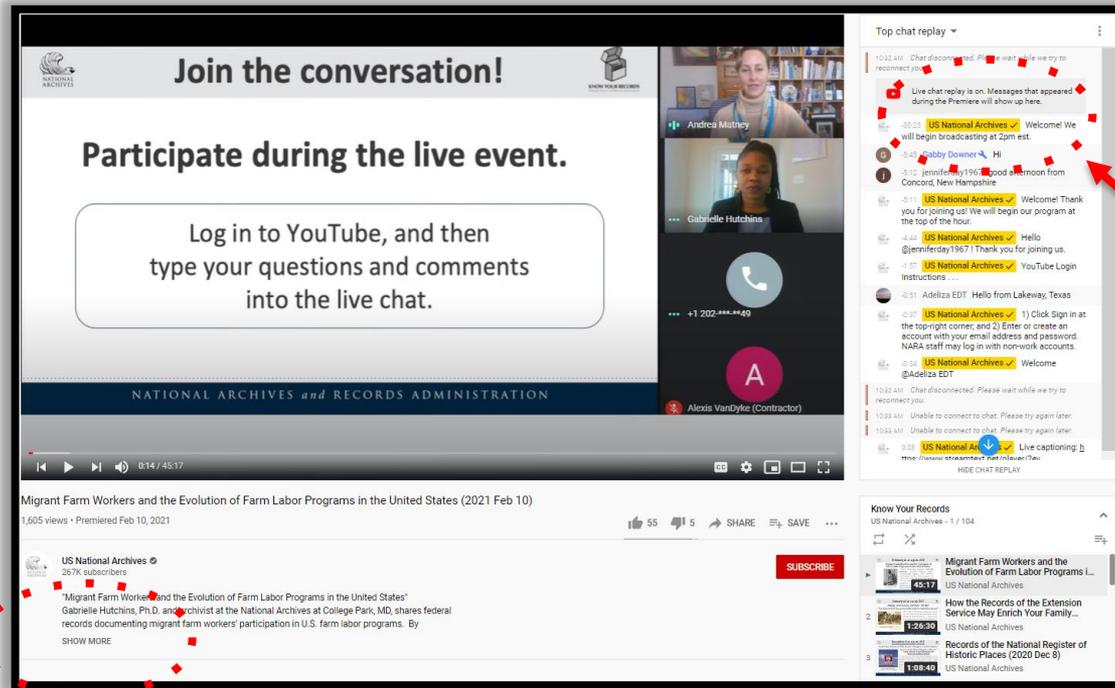
Join us at **@USNatArchives** on 



# Instructions

## Show More

- captioning
- handout
- evaluation



## Chat

- log in
- participate
- ask questions

After the broadcast, the video presentation and handout will remain available.





# March-April Schedule

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>March 2</b><br>1 p.m. ET  | <b>Overview of What's on the 1950 Census</b><br><b>Claire Kluskens</b> - Genealogy/Census Subject Matter Expert and digital projects archivist<br>National Archives in Washington, DC                                   |
| <b>March 16</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>Mapping the 1950 Census: Census Enumeration District Maps at the National Archives</b><br><b>Brandi Oswald</b> - Supervisory archivist, Cartographic Branch<br>National Archives at College Park, MD                 |
| <b>March 30</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>The 1950 Census Website: Design, Development, and Features to Expect</b><br><b>Michael L. Knight</b> - Web Branch Chief, Office of Innovation (Digital Engagement Division)<br>National Archives at College Park, MD |
| <b>April 27</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>The Story of the 1950 Census P8 Indian Reservation Schedule</b><br><b>Cody White</b> - Native American-Related Records Subject Matter Expert and archivist<br>National Archives at Denver, CO                        |





# May Schedule

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>May 11</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>From Parchments to Printouts: History of the Census from 1790 to 1950</b><br><b>Sharon Tosi Lacey</b> - Chief Historian<br>U.S. Census Bureau   |
| <b>May 18</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>History of Census Records and the National Archives</b><br><b>Jessie Kratz</b> - Historian of the National Archives<br>National Archives in Washington, DC                            |
| <b>May 25</b><br>1 p.m. ET | <b>Historic Census Bureau Sources for Filipino, Guamanian and Chamorro, American Samoan, and Native Hawaiian Research</b><br><b>Christopher Martin</b> – Historian<br>U.S. Census Bureau |





# History of Census Records and the National Archives

Join our Historian, **Jessie Kratz**, as she presents the history of census records in relation to the history of the National Archives. She will discuss census records before they came to the National Archives, their transfer upon the creation of the National Archives, and the history of their availability and use.



# Presenter Biography



**Jessie Kratz**

**Jessie Kratz** is the Historian of the National Archives. She speaks regularly at academic and history conferences, gives lectures, and writes articles on the history and importance of the National Archives. She is the editor of the National Archives blog Pieces of History and runs the agency's Oral History Program. Before becoming Historian in 2013, Jessie worked for 13 years at the Center for Legislative Archives.





# History of Census Records & the National Archives

JESSIE KRATZ • AGENCY HISTORIAN

## Before the National Archives



Before the creation of the National Archives in 1934, individual federal departments kept their own records. While some federal departments were good stewards of their records, others stored records in areas that exposed them to theft, neglect, vermin, water, and fire damage.

*Photograph of Bureau of Aeronautics Records, Naval Torpedo Station, Alexandria, Virginia, 1935. (National Archives Identifier: 18519697)*





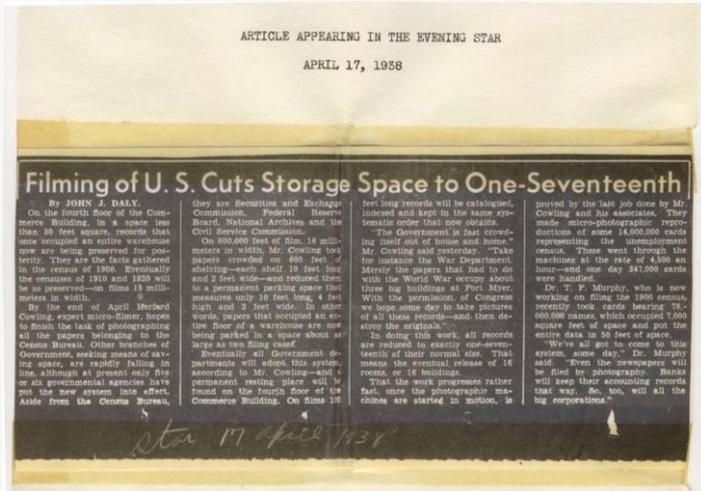
The original census records were maintained by the federal departments that had jurisdiction over censuses throughout history—first the Department of State, then the Department of Interior, and later the Census Bureau within the Department of Commerce.

*Census volumes from Rhode Island, close-up, 1940. (National Archives Identifier: 74228254)*



On January 21, 1921, the Department of Commerce building caught fire. Nearly the entire 1890 population census was either destroyed by fire or damaged by water, smoke, and fire.

*Damage to census records in the Commerce Department Building fire, 1921. (National Archives Identifier: 18519812)*



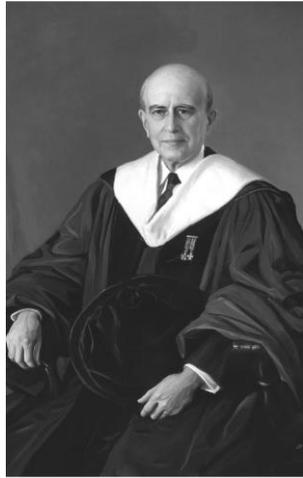
After the fire, the Census Bureau took steps to increase the safety of its records and began an extensive microfilming program to produce copies of their original records.

Washington Evening Star article on microfilm efforts at the Census Bureau, April 17, 1938. (Records of the National Archives)

# Creation of the National Archives

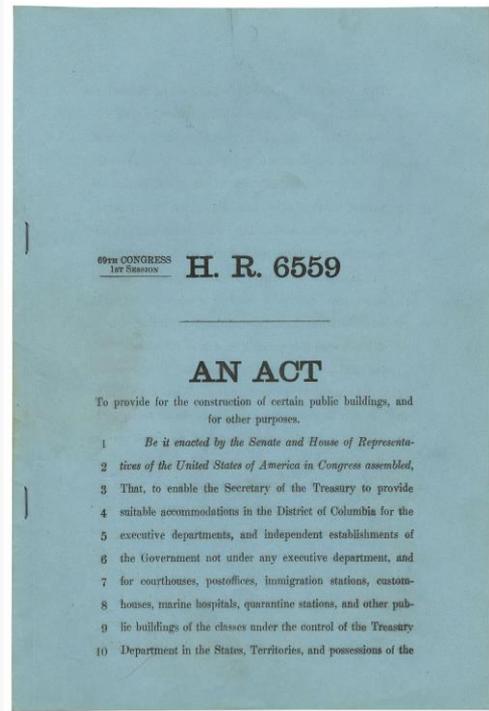


*J. Franklin Jameson*  
(National Archives  
Identifier: 74229227)



*Waldo G. Leland*  
(National Archives  
Identifier: 74228983)

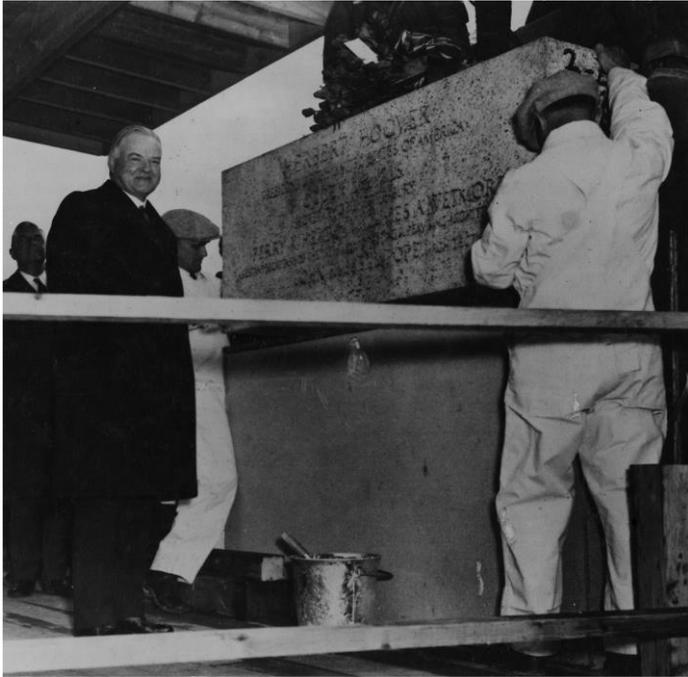
In the late 19th century, J. Franklin Jameson, Waldo G. Leland, and the American Historical Association began a campaign for the creation of a national archives where the federal government's records could be concentrated, properly cared for, and preserved.



In 1926 Congress passed the Public Buildings Act, which provided for the construction of several federal government buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue—what’s known as Federal Triangle.

One of these buildings was to be the National Archives.

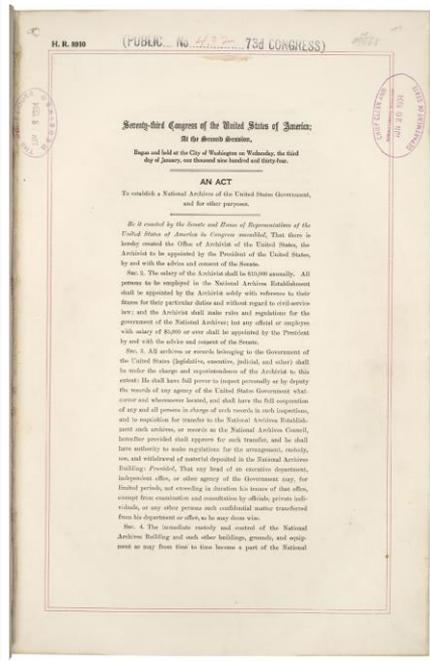
*The Public Buildings Act, 1926. (Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, National Archives)*



Ground was broken for the new National Archives Building on September 5, 1931.

On February 20, 1933, President Herbert Hoover attended the cornerstone-laying ceremony of the National Archives Building. In his remarks, he dedicated the building to the people of the United States.

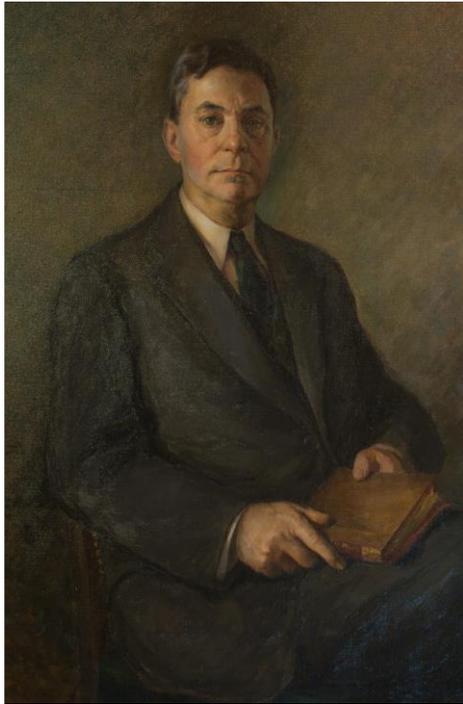
*President Herbert Hoover attending the National Archives Building's cornerstone-laying ceremony, February 20, 1933. (National Archives Identifier: 12168464)*



Although construction of the National Archives Building was well underway, no federal agency existed to occupy it.

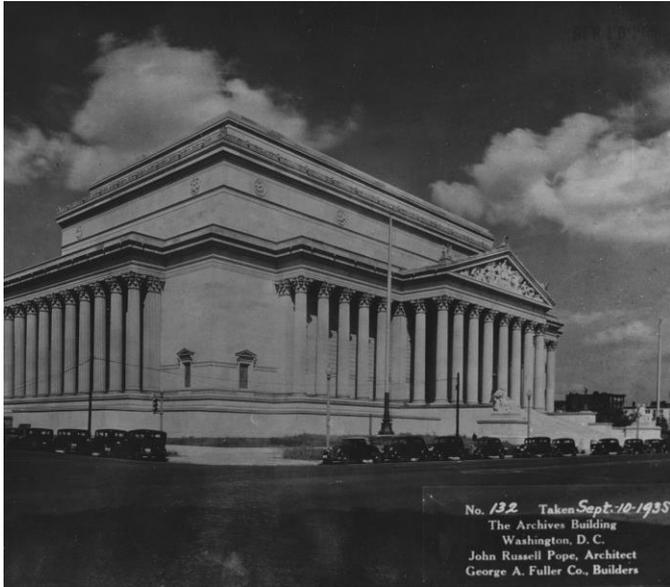
This changed on June 19, 1934, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation creating the National Archives as an independent agency to oversee federal record keeping.

*The National Archives Act, June 19, 1934. (National Archives Identifier: 299840)*



Franklin D. Roosevelt selected Robert D. W. Connor to be the First Archivist of the United States in 1934. The U.S. Senate confirmed Connor the following year.

*Portrait of Robert D. W. Connor. (National Archives Identifier: 12167705)*



A staff of 80 moved into the nearly completed building in the fall of 1935. But it was empty—there were no records.

*The National Archives Building, September 10, 1935. (National Archives Identifier: 26326891)*

WPA Form 578A

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
SURVEY OF FEDERAL ARCHIVES

State Massachusetts  
City or town Hingham

Report No. 8  
Sheet 1  
of 1 sheets

**REPORT ON ROOMS**

1. Name of building Administration Building

2. Address Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot, Hingham, Mass. Room number 15

4. Use of the room Store-room for confidential files.

5. Check the following menaces applicable to archives in this room:

(1) Lack of protective devices against fire	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(6) Presence of rodents	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Proximity of highly inflammable materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	(7) Presence of vermin	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Other fire hazards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(8) Presence of dirt, soot, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Lack of protection against theft	<input type="checkbox"/>	(9) Excessive heat or sunlight	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Exposure to moisture	<input type="checkbox"/>	(10) Carelessness and careless handling	<input type="checkbox"/>
	(11) Exposure to direct sunlight	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Describe other menaces or give details of above menaces Wooden building. Shingled roof.  
Valuable confidential papers stored in a 20 minute fire resisting sheet steel,  
asbestos-lined safe, made by Van Dorn Iron Works Co., Cleveland, Ohio.

7. Check the following impediments to use of archives in this room: None.

(1) Inaccessible	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) Crowded	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Lack of adequate ventilation	<input type="checkbox"/>
(4) Lack of heat	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) Inadequate facilities for use of archives	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Describe any other impediments or give necessary details on above None.

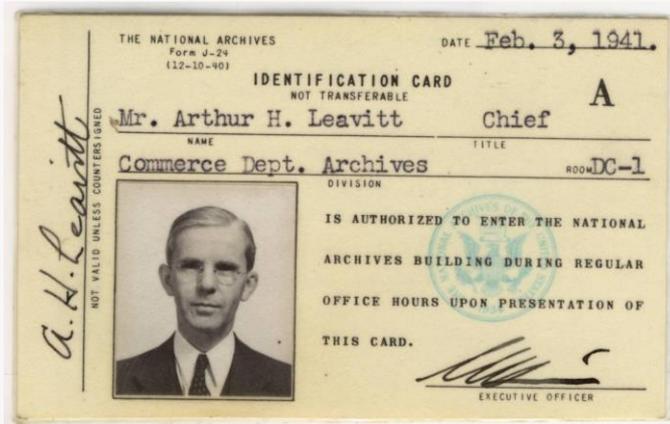
9. Comments This room 15' 9 1/2" long, 5' 3" wide, 9' 4" high, has plaster walls and  
ceiling, wooden floor, electric lights, one window and one door.

SIGNED BY W. M. Whiting APPROVED BY J. W. McElroy  
*Project Superintendent.* *Regional Director.*

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 16-5247 DATE June 10, 1936

The new agency's first task was locating permanently valuable records stored with federal agencies. National Archives staff led the efforts in the Washington metro area, and Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers led the effort for the rest of the country.

*Works Progress Administration report on the condition of records storage rooms, 1936. (Records of the Works Progress Administration, National Archives)*



For the Commerce Department, which included the Census Bureau, Deputy Examiner Arthur Leavitt was assigned to complete a preliminary survey of census records.

*Arthur Leavitt's Identification Card, 1941. (National Archives Identifier: 12091292)*

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
DIVISION OF ACCESSIONS

Department

Office

Examiner

Inspector

Finder

8-1

Preliminary Survey

Deputy Examiner's Name: A. H. Leavitt (5) Date: June 26-27, 1935

Archives of Dept. of Commerce Subdivision: Bureau of the Census  
Commerce Bldg., 14th St. between Constitution Ave. and E. St.

Location of Depository: Room 6019, Tel. ext. 2752 Sheet 1 of 1 Sheets

Persons contacted and their titles: Jesse T. Hirsche, Asst. Chief Clerk;  
Miss Mary C. O'Connell, Asst. to the Inspector; Miss Elsie  
W. Fleming, Asst.; Joseph W. Shellen, colored assistant.  
Charles E. Gresham, Inspector

1. Volume of Archives in depository? 961 cu. ft.  
482 Census files.  
the remainder

2. Impediments to work in depository?  
None.

3. Menaces to archives in present depository? Radiation on the ceiling during  
one storm strike. Spays sometimes come in through window  
when it rains. Heavy volumes stacked upright topple over  
when a few are removed. Rough handling, broken covers,  
frayed edges. Accumulation of dust. Danger of theft  
of small volumes of early originals. (One 1790 volume left in safe)

4. Proportion of total volume which will be: (a) Transferred to Archives Bldg. 100%  
(b) Retained none.  
(c) Now classed as "Useless Papers" none.

5. When should transfers begin? As soon as possible.

6. Volume of proposed shipments? 961 cu. ft.

7. Forms in which archives are maintained? 99% are in bound volumes,  
of which about 37% are about 14 x 19" and 38% are  
about 17" x 21"; the largest are 20" x 24" and the smallest  
about 10" x 12"; thickness varies from 1" to 4", mostly  
between 2 and 3".  
The 1790 census volumes and about 8 cu. ft. of  
photostat copies of various schedules and other loose  
papers are tied up in brown paper bundles.

Leavitt surveyed a myriad of Census Bureau files, and on June 26–27, 1935, he surveyed the population schedules housed on the sixth floor of the recently constructed Department of Commerce Building in Washington, DC.

Arthur Leavitt's Preliminary Survey for population schedules at the Census Bureau, page 1, June 26-27, 1935. (Records of the National Archives)



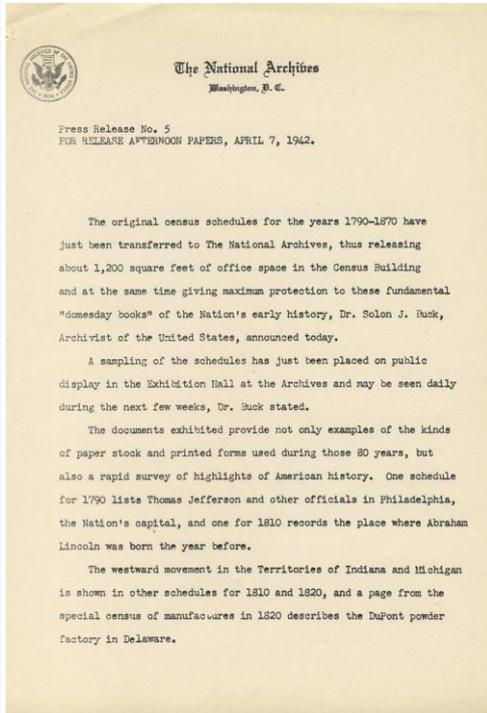


After Leavitt was promoted, Deputy Examiner Herman Kahn took over the survey of Census Bureau records.

The Census Bureau was hesitant to transfer its records to the National Archives primarily due to confidentiality concerns.

*Herman Kahn, undated. (National Archives Identifier: 74229601)*

# Census Population Schedules at the National Archives



Despite its hesitancy, the Bureau of the Census agreed to send records to the National Archives. In 1942 the Census Bureau transferred the 1790–1870 census population schedules to the National Archives.

*Press release announcing the transfer of census population schedules to the National Archives, April 7, 1942. (Records of the National Archives)*

Market Street  
130

			249	1196	399	302	69
Amos Leonard	Boiler	250		3	3	3	
James Dalton	Boiler	251					
Abelus Emrick	Boiler	252	1	2	6		
Abraham Schults	Boiler	253	4		3		
Elizabeth Cook	Boiler	254				1	
John Smith	Boiler	255	1	2	3		
Thomas Murgatroyd	Boiler	256					
David Brunelle	Boiler	257	1	3	1	2	
Thomas M. W.	Boiler	258	2	1	3		
Amos Spickard	Boiler	259				2	
John M. W.	Boiler	260		1	2		
John M. W.	Boiler	261					
Abraham M. W.	Boiler	262	1		3		
Abraham M. W.	Boiler	263	1	3	1	1	
Henry M. W.	Boiler	264	1	4	1		
Henry M. W.	Boiler	265					
Henry M. W.	Boiler	266					
Henry M. W.	Boiler	267	2		1		
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	268					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	269	6		5		
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	270					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	271	1	4	4		
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	272					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	273					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	274	1		2		
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	275					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	276					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	277	1		2		
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Joseph M. W.	Boiler	298					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	299					
Joseph M. W.	Boiler	300					

Ben Boshel, Secretary of the Board of Commissioners of the City of Philadelphia, 1790  
 John M. W. of the City of Philadelphia, 1790  
 Edmund Randolph, 1790

Upon receiving the records, the National Archives displayed a selection of the census population schedules in its exhibition hall in Washington, DC.

Among the items exhibited was the 1790 Census listing for Thomas Jefferson and other officials in Philadelphia while the city served as the nation's capital.

1790 Census page showing Market Street in Philadelphia including Thomas Jefferson. (Records of the Census Bureau, National Archives)



In 1942, the National Archives received about 6,000 research requests on census records.

*Sandra Irwin examines a volume of returns for the 1860 population census, 1968. (National Archives Identifier: 23855367)*



The issue of public availability for future census records was unresolved when Congress passed the 1950 Federal Records Act. The legislation imposed a 50-year limit on restricting access to executive agency records unless the Archivist determined they should be closed for a longer period.

*Miss Blaisdell viewing census records in the Central Search Room. ca. 1942. (National Archives Identifier: 74228254)*



**Wayne Grover**  
(National Archives  
Identifier: 12167496)



**Roy V. Peel**  
(Harry S. Truman Library  
& Museum, National  
Archives)

On October 10, 1952, Wayne Grover, Archivist of the United States, and Roy V. Peel, the Director of the Bureau of the Census, made an agreement to put in place a 72-year period of closure for population census records transferred to National Archives.

October 10, 1952

Dr. Roy V. Peel  
Director, Bureau of the Census  
Department of Commerce  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Dr. Peel:

This is in reply to your offer to transfer periodically to the National Archives and Records Service the original schedules of each decennial population census when these are no longer needed for active statistical use, the negative microfilm of those population census schedules for which the Bureau of the Census possesses adequate positive microfilm copies, and the positive microfilm copies of those population census schedules which the Bureau of the Census no longer desires to retain for reference use.

In view of the established policy of the National Archives and Records Service to relieve agencies of records accumulations no longer needed for current use, and to preserve those records deemed to be of permanent value, I am, in principle, in agreement with the transfer policy stated in your letter of August 26, 1952.

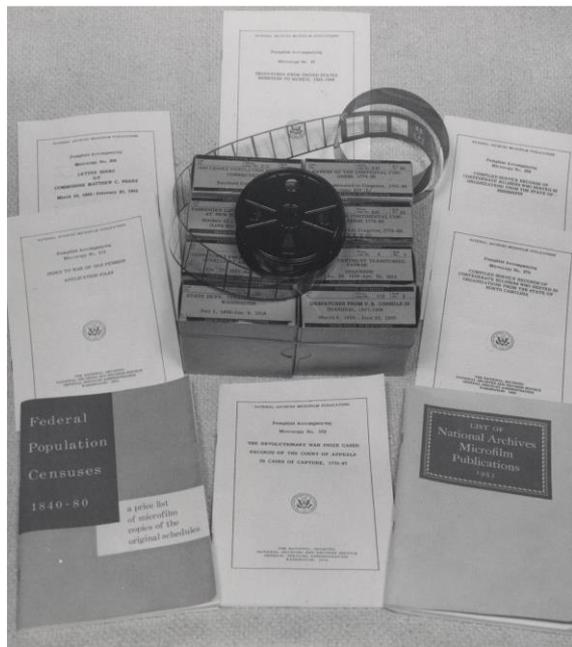
I am also in agreement with the conditions you state with respect to the use and maintenance of these records, (1) that the master set of negative microfilm to be transferred shall be preserved as the permanent records of the decennial population census schedules, and that the master negatives and the positive microfilm copies shall not be kept in the same city; (2) that the National Archives and Records Service will furnish the Bureau of the Census with positive prints of the negative microfilm whenever requested, and that the charge for such service shall not exceed the cost of the positive film and its development plus an overhead of not more than ten percent, provided, however, that the provision of the initial set of positive microfilm copies of a decennial population census shall be the responsibility of the Bureau of the Census; and (3) that after "revisions" years from the enumeration date of a decennial census, the National Archives and Records Service may disclose information contained in these records for use in legitimate historical, genealogical or other worthwhile research."

Per the agreement, after 72 years the National Archives could make census population schedules available to those with a legitimate research interest, defined by:

- the researcher's reputation as a professional researcher or genealogist
- the researcher's connection with an established institution of learning or research
- the researcher's connection with the person or family in the records
- the time elapsed since the appearance of possibly detrimental information, considered in conjunction with the legitimacy of public or scholarly interest

*Peel-Grover agreement, October 10, 1952. (Records of the National Archives)*





To assist researchers, the National Archives produced a number of finding aids and publications related to the available census population schedules.

*National Archives publications including census microfilm , 1961.  
(National Archives Identifier: 12170061)*



With an increase in interest in genealogy records, including census population schedules, in 1971 the National Archives opened a new Microfilm Research Room on the 4th floor of the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

*Opening of the new Microfilm Research Room in Washington, DC, June 24, 1971. (National Archives Identifier: 23856415)*



In 1972, just before the National Archives was to release the 1900 Census records, the Census Bureau took the position that the 72-year agreement was invalid because it conflicted with Title 13's promise of confidentiality.

The 1900 Census records release was therefore delayed until the Department of Justice could decide whether the Federal Records Act took precedence over Title 13.

*Microfilm Research Room in Washington, DC, packed full of researchers, 1972. (National Archives Identifier: 35810076)*



On June 14, 1973, the Attorney General decided the records could be opened, and in late 1973 the National Archives opened the 1900 Census records to qualified researchers.

*Researcher Tom Scott using a microfilm reader while studying the 1900 census for his dissertation, August 29, 1974. (National Archives Identifier: 35810522)*

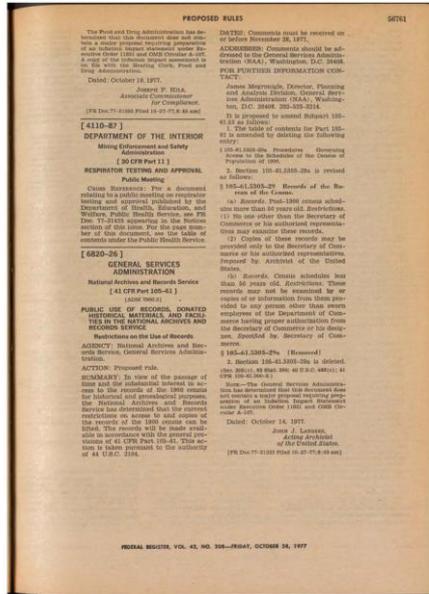


**RUSH FOR ROOTS**—After the *Roots* series, a mail outpouring was inevitable. Here Carolyn Alexander of Central Reference looks at one day's crop. The high was 7,000 inquiries in one week, 4,500 of which required specific research and written answers from harried staff. It was the same in the Microfilm Reading Room, with full houses some days, and in the Regional Archives, where the combined demand for microfilm soared to 10,000 rolls a month, more than twice normal. Hard work for many, but with this benefit: the National Archives is becoming far better known—and valued—as a resource by Americans.

The popularity of the novel *Roots*, and the subsequent miniseries, increased interest in census records, resulting in an unprecedented demand for National Archives resources.

In 1977 the Microfilm Reading Room in National Archives Building in Washington, DC, had wait lines for the first time in its history, and the volume of reference letters increased exponentially, with a high of 7,000 letters in just one week.

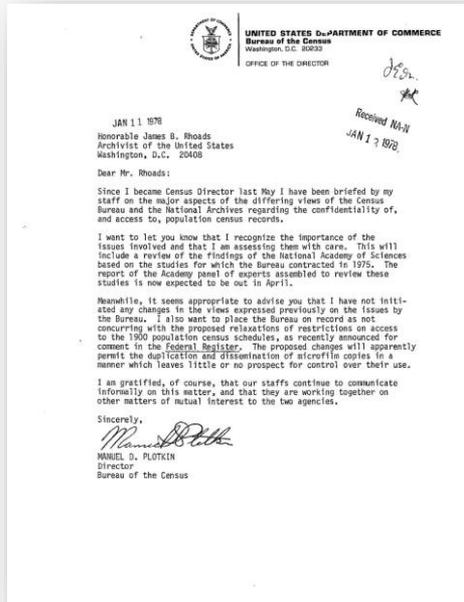
*National Archives staff member Carolyn Alexander with piles of genealogy research requests, May 1977. (Records of the National Archives)*



Restrictions still applied, however, including research had to be conducted at a National Archives facility and reproductions were prohibited with few exceptions.

After a 90-year-old genealogist George Roberts, asked to use 1900 Census microfilm in his local library rather than at a Regional Archives branch, the National Archives proposed a rule lifting restrictions on the 1900 Census.

*Federal Register Notice proposing fully opening the 1900 Census, October 14, 1977.*



During the late 1970s, the Census Bureau and National Archives continued to disagree on access to census population schedules. The National Archives wanted to expand access; the Census Bureau wanted more restrictions.

*Letter from Census Bureau Director Manuel Plotkin to Archivist of the United States James B. Rhoads expressing his disagreement over the National Archives' decision to remove access restrictions on census records, January 11, 1978. (Records of the National Archives)*

Public Law 95-416  
95th Congress

An Act

To amend chapter 21 of title 44, United States Code, to include new provisions relating to the acceptance and use of records transferred to the custody of the Administrator of General Services.

Oct. 5, 1978  
[S. 1285]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That chapter 21 of title 44, United States Code, is amended as follows:

(a) in section 2103 delete the words "thirty years" and substitute in lieu thereof the words "thirty years";

(b) Section 2104 of title 44, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "(4)" immediately before "The Administrator";

(2) by striking out the third and fourth sentences therein and inserting in lieu thereof the following "Except as provided in subsection (1) of this section, when the head of a Federal agency states, in writing, restrictions that appear to him to be necessary or desirable in the public interest with respect to the use or examination of records being considered for transfer from his custody to the Administrator of General Services, the Administrator shall, if he concurs, and in consultation with the Archivist of the United States, impose such restrictions on the records so transferred, and may not relax or remove such restrictions without the written concurrence of the head of the agency from which the material was transferred, or of his successor in function, if any. In the event that a Federal agency is terminated and there is no successor in function, the Administrator is authorized to relax, remove, or impose restrictions on such agency's records when he determines that such action is in the public interest. Statutory and other restrictions referred to in this subsection shall remain in force until the records have been in existence for thirty years unless the Administrator of General Services by order, having consulted with the Archivist and the head of the transferring Federal agency or his successor in function, determines, with respect to specific bodies of records, that for reasons consistent with standards established in relevant statutory law, such restrictions shall remain in force for a longer period," and

(3) by adding at the end thereof the following new subsection:

"(b) With regard to the census and survey records of the Bureau of the Census containing data identifying individuals enumerated in population censuses, any release pursuant to this section of such identifying information contained in such records shall be made by the

release of information from records agreement with GSA.

Census Bureau.

release of information from records agreement with GSA.

In October 1978 Congress settled the disagreements between the two agencies and codified the 1952 agreement between the Archivist and the Director of the Bureau of the Census to open census records after 72 years.

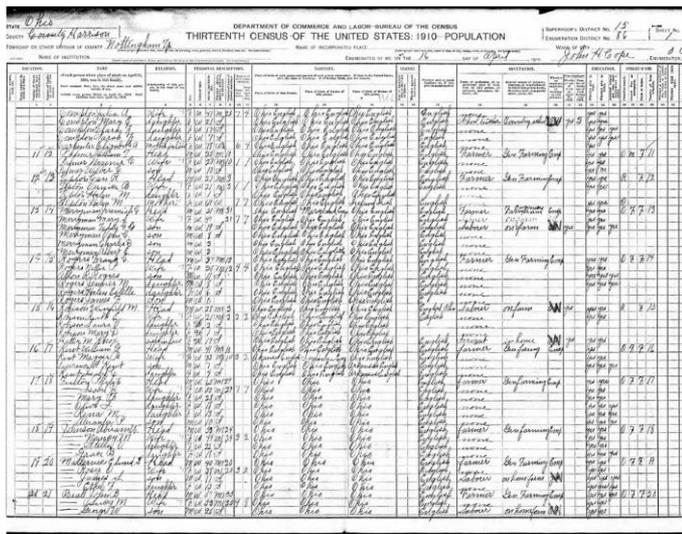
*Public Law 95-416 codifying the 72-year rule, October 5, 1978. (Government Publishing Office)*

## Public Openings of Census Population Schedules



Once the National Archives lifted access restrictions on census population schedules that were 72 years old, census openings at the National Archives became major events.

*Researchers waiting in line to see the 1920 Census, March 2, 1992. (Records of the National Archives)*



On April 15, 1982, the National Archives opened the 1910 Census to researchers at the National Archives in Washington, DC, and for sale through the Archives' Publications Sales Branch.

Archivist of the United States Robert Warner's mother-in-law found her six-year-old self listed in the census.

*1910 United States federal census page showing Helen Bullock née Helen Estelle Rogers (line 73). (Records of the Bureau of the Census, National Archives, courtesy of Ancestry.com)*



The National Archives opened the 1920 Census on March 2, 1992, at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC.

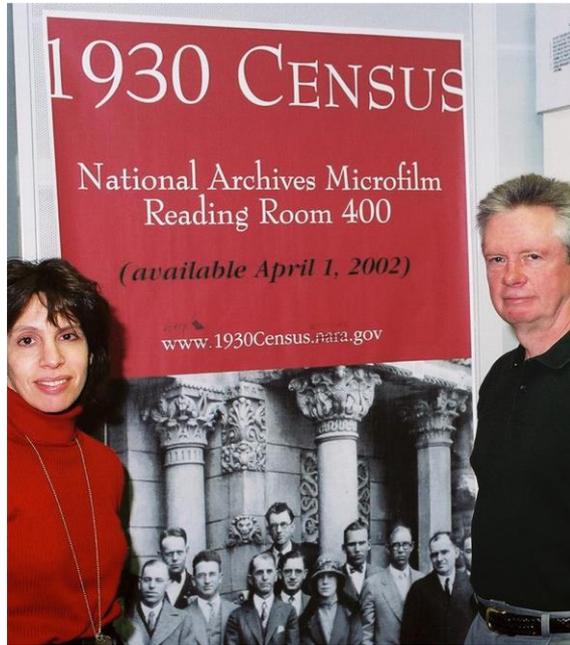
Archivist of the United States Don Wilson presented Director of the Bureau of the Census Barbara Bryant copies of census schedules documenting her family.

*Archivist of the United States Don Wilson and Director of the Bureau of the Census Barbara Bryant, March 2, 1992. (Records of the National Archives)*



Microfilm readers at the Regional Archives were booked months in advance. Some Regional Archives locations even opened at midnight the night of the release.

*"Midnight Madness" 1920 Census opening at the National Archives Southwest Region in Fort Worth, March 2, 1992. (Photo Courtesy of Meg Hacker)*



On April 1, 2002, the National Archives opened the 1930 Census in person at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, and at its Regional Archives facilities around the country.

*National Archives staff Stacey Bredhoff and Michael Jackson pose in front of draft banner for the opening of the 1930 Census. (National Archives Identifier: 66776993)*

National Archives and Records Administration NARA

To begin your search, select a State or U.S. Territory:

Alabama

Continue

What can I learn from this site?  
 Frequently Asked Questions  
 What questions were asked on the 1930 census?  
 Search Strategies  
 Search Index  
 Records Lists  
 Microfilm Locations  
 How to View, Rent, or Buy the Microfilm  
 NARA Regional Archives  
 1930 Census Microfilm  
 Contact Us

### How to Research the 1930 Census Microfilm

This web site will help you begin your family history research in the 1930 census. It will tell you:

- what questions were asked by the census
- which States had some indexes prepared
- how to search those States and the ones without some indexes
- where to view, rent, or buy the microfilm containing the original records

Use the step-by-step instructions prepared by NARA census experts and the 1930 Census Microfilm Locator on this web site to begin your research. You also will find detailed search strategies as well as specific tips and hints throughout the site. There are two search methods you can use, as shown below:



**TWO BASIC METHODS FOR LOCATING 1930 CENSUS DATA**

**Surname Search**  
 Search by 12 surnames for 13 locations.

**Geographic Search**  
 Available by all states and territories.

Use the method for which you have the most specific information. You will find more details on each method by clicking on the headings below:

**Finder Note:** The locator is an online database listing every roll of microfilm in the 1930 census, searchable by over 120,000 geographic locations. It is **not a family or individual name index or a digital version of the microfilm.**

The census is available for viewing on microfilm at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, and at our 13 regional facilities. It is **NOT** available at the Presidential Libraries.

**Surname**

In the 1930s, the Work Progress Administration (WPA) prepared **Surname indexes** of names for only 12 southern states. If you are looking for someone in those states, you can use this locator to find the roll of Surname microfilm you need.

**Geographic**

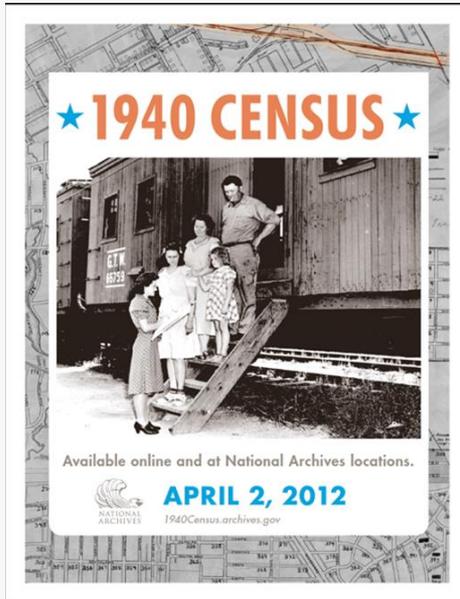
This locator also supports searching **geographic details (ED)** descriptions by state, county, city, and place names to determine the ED and **schedule** microfilm roll number. Places include names of towns, streets, post offices, rural townships, election precinct and ward numbers, and rivers and lakes. You may also search for institutions names such as schools, prisons, and institutions.

**About the Microfilm**

The 1930 census microfilm has been reproduced by the National Archives and Records Administration from the highest quality master negatives available from the Bureau of the Census. The original film includes defects that affect the legibility of some frames. The original paper schedules no longer exist. [View samples of microfilm.](#)

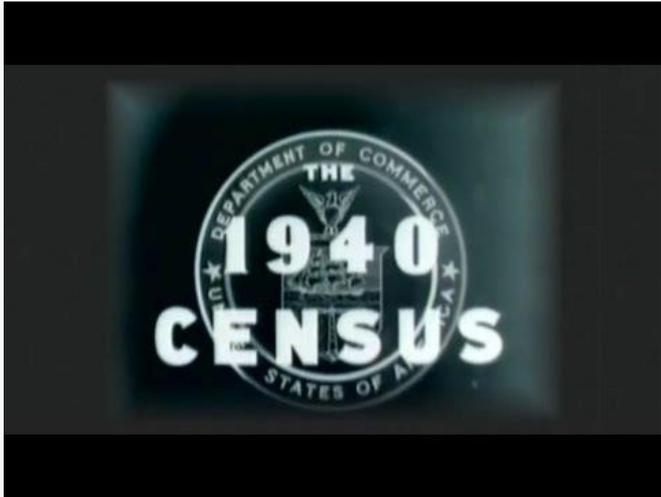
For the first time ever, the National Archives created a special census website with information on how to view, rent, or buy the microfilm. The website also included numerous background materials on the census compiled by National Archives staff.

*Screenshot of the 1930 Census website, 2002.*



On April 2, 2012, in a ceremony in the William G. McGowan Theater, Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero declared the 1940 Census officially open. This was the first-ever online census release.

*National Archives poster advertising the opening of the 1940 Census.*



To promote the opening, National Archives held events all around the country and produced a series of short documentary videos on its YouTube channel.

*National Archives video providing a "behind-the-scenes" view of staff preparations for the April 2, 2012, launch of the 1940 Census.*

NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
**1950**  
CENSUS  
EXPLORE & COLLABORATE

On April 1, 2022, the National Archives launched the 1950 Census online.

To view the 1950 Census, visit:

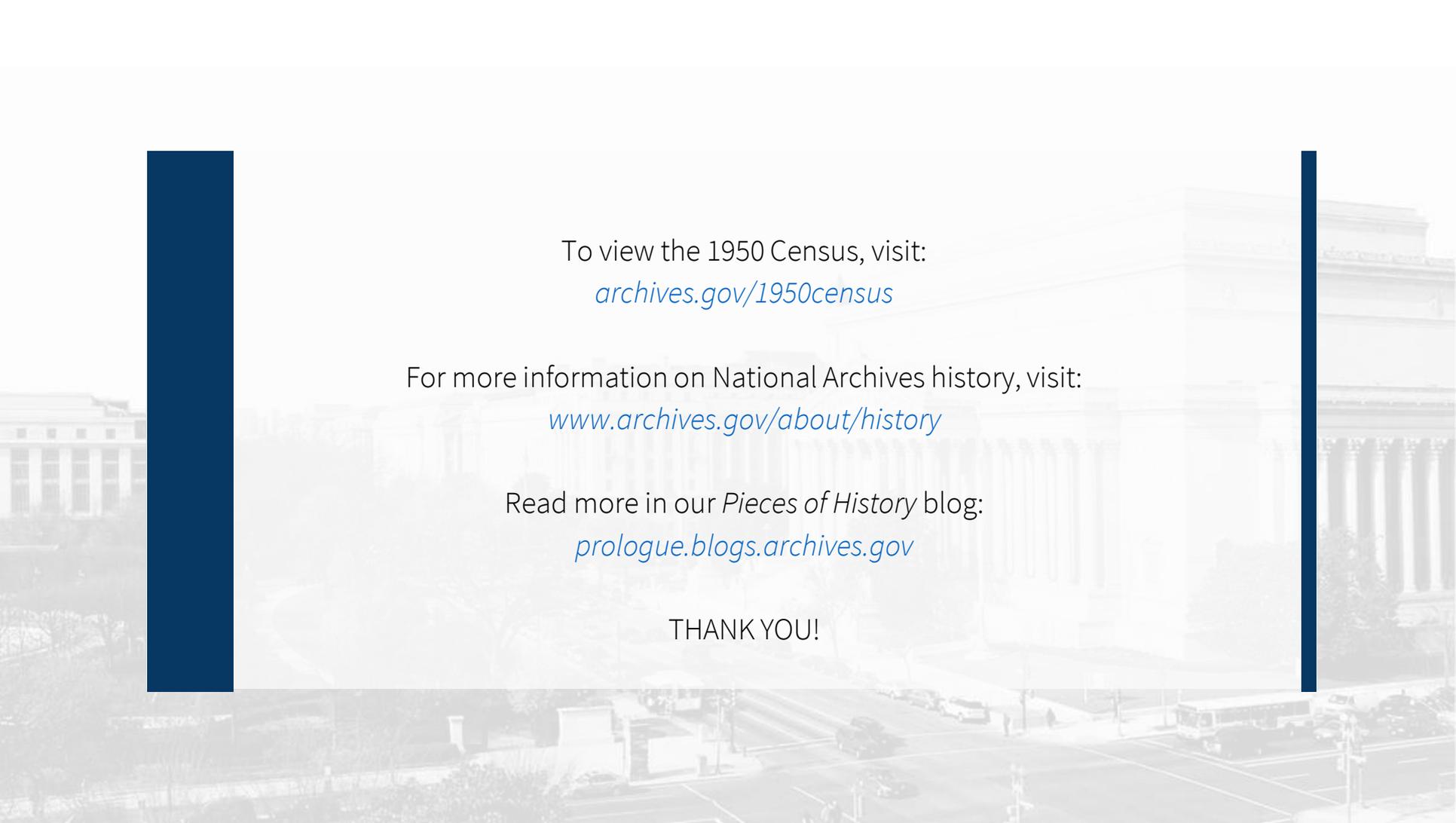
[archives.gov/1950census](https://www.archives.gov/1950census)

## Format of Census Population Schedules



*Microfilm storage in the National Archives Building, ca. 1960. (National Archives Identifier: 12170029)*

- 1790–1870 and 1890 exist in bound volumes.
- For 1880, the National Archives has them on microfilm only—the National Archives gave away the original volumes in the 1950s.
- 1900–1970 exist only on microfilm.
- 1980 and 1990 are data files that were transferred on magnetic tape cartridges.
- 2000 and 2010 are image files (TIFFs and JPEGs).



To view the 1950 Census, visit:

[archives.gov/1950census](https://www.archives.gov/1950census)

For more information on National Archives history, visit:

[www.archives.gov/about/history](https://www.archives.gov/about/history)

Read more in our *Pieces of History* blog:

[prologue.blogs.archives.gov](https://prologue.blogs.archives.gov)

THANK YOU!



# Feedback

## We value your opinion.

Please take a minute to complete a short evaluation. Your comments help us maintain the quality of our services and plan future programs.

Thank you!

### Event Evaluation:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval)





# After the broadcast . . .

Email questions to  
[\*jessie.kratz@nara.gov\*](mailto:jessie.kratz@nara.gov)

Video recordings of lectures and  
downloadable handouts  
will remain online at

[\*www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2022\*](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-series/2022)





# KNOW YOUR RECORDS

National Archives and Records Administration

Educational resources on how to access and do research using U.S. federal government records held at the National Archives and Records Administration.

## Know Your Records

[www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records](http://www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records)

Videos and Handouts on **You Tube**



# Thank You Genealogy Series Team!

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# Questions & Answers in Chat

**Please stay if you have questions.**

Although this concludes the video portion of the broadcast, we will continue to take your questions in **chat** for another 10 minutes.

