

1950 Census Records

The 1950 U.S. Federal Census

Enumerating the 1950 U.S. Federal Census, which covered the continental U.S. and several territories and possessions took from April 1 to May 30, 1950. The census is a snapshot of the population on April 1, 1950. This means it does not include those who were born after April 1 or died in January, February, or March that year.

Form P1—1950 Census of Population and Housing

Form P1 is the most common 1950 census form. This is where most individuals are listed, with some exceptions.

Asked of Head of Household:

1. Name of street, avenue, or road
2. House (and apartment) number
3. Serial number of dwelling
4. Is this house on a farm (or ranch)?
5. Is this house on a place of three or more acres?
6. Agricultural Questionnaire Number

Questionnaires no longer exist, but results are compiled [here](#).

Asked of All Persons:

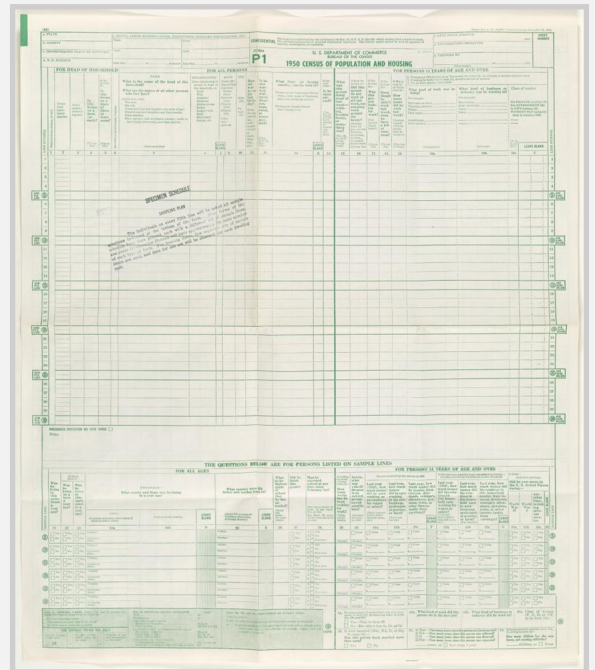
7. What is the name of the head of this household? What are the names of all other persons who live here?
8. Relationship (to head of the household)
9. Race
10. Sex
11. How old was he on his last birthday?
12. Is he now married/widowed/divorced/separated/never married?
13. What State (or foreign country) was he born in?
14. If foreign born – Is he naturalized?

Asked of All Persons 14+ Years of Age:

15. What was this person doing most of last week – working, keeping house, or something else?
16. If keeping house or other – Did this person do any work at all last week, not counting work around the house?
17. If No – Was this person looking for work?
18. If No – Even though he didn't work last week, does he have a job or business?
19. How many hours did he work last week?
20. If employed or if looking for work:
 - a. What kind of work was he doing? b. What kind of business or industry was he working in? c. Class of worker?

Sample Lines 21-31, asked of six people on each page

Sample questions captured additional information about changes in residence, education, birthplace of parents, occupation, income, military service, economic mobility, marriage, and children.



View [blank forms](#) from the National Archives.



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Additional Forms and Special Populations

Form P1 page 71 and above - Reserved for those enumerated out of order, who: were not at home for an enumerator's first visit, completed a Form P2 (Individual Census Report), or were missed before enumeration ended in May.

Self Enumeration testing - In select Michigan and Ohio counties, self enumeration was tested for the first time on a large scale. These forms vary in format but contain the same questions as Form P1.

Form P4 (Crews of Vessels Report) - Trifold brochures, containing the same questions as Form P1, were supplied to members of the U.S. Coast Guard. This information was later transcribed into P1 forms for the location where *the vessel* was located at the time of enumeration.

Form P3 (Infant Cards) - Used to study the issue of undercounting of babies in prior censuses, these cards collected useful genealogical details but no longer exist. Results of the study may be read [online](#).

College students - For the first time, college students were enumerated at their college address in 1950. In previous years, the address of the student's parents was recorded. This is still the rule today.

Transients - In 1950, there was a concerted effort to capture those traveling, experiencing homelessness, etc. through two special "T-Nights." Enumerators targeted Hotels, YMCAs, campgrounds, missions, and "flophouses" (cheap motels).

Form P8 (Indian Reservation Schedule) - Used on many, but not all, Native American reservations, this form asked different questions than Form P1. Many Native Americans will be recorded using both Form P1 and P8.

U.S. Territories and possessions - Covering American Samoa, Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, Panama Canal Zone, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Virgin Islands, these locations were enumerated with forms similar to Form P1, with some questions adjusted based on local conditions

Military and civilians overseas - Many Americans overseas were not captured in surviving 1950 census records. Records exist for only four Pacific Islands: Canton/Kanton, Johnson, Midway, and Wake.

Accessing the 1950 Census

The 1950 census is available digitally only, but is freely available through the [Ancestry](#) and [FamilySearch](#) databases. Alternatively, the full 1950 census dataset may be downloaded from the [National Archive's website](#).

Upon receiving records from the National Archives, Ancestry began work on an initial automated and searchable index, allowing you to search for ancestors' names. As each state's index is completed, that index becomes immediately available for researchers. This imperfect initial index will be reviewed and corrected by volunteers for accuracy over time.

Preparing for Research

If a searchable index is not yet available for your ancestor's location, or you are having trouble finding them using the initial index, you can look for them manually. This census collection is organized by state, county, city, and enumeration district (ED). If you know your ancestor's approximate location or, ideally, their address, you can more easily locate the relevant section of the collection to look for them. To get started:

- Research as much as you can using other records and build a solid foundation prior to exploring the 1950 census
- Check the 1940 census. If your ancestor is listed, where were they living 10 years prior to 1950?
- Speak with family members who may have information to share
- Consult other resources/records (city directories, vital records, etc.)

Once you know an ancestor's address, use the [Unified Census ED Finder website](#) where you can enter the state, county, and city to learn your ancestor's ED in 1950. From there, you can narrow in on the correct selection of census records, page through that ED section until you find your ancestor's street name, then find the correct house number.

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