



Who Needed it Anyway? Finding Your Family Without the 1890 Census

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1890 Census Facts and History:

First single household enumeration of the United States and recorded 62,979,766 people.

In March 1896, fire damaged the Special Schedules: Mortality, Crime, Pauperism and benevolence, special classes (*e.g.*, deaf, dumb, blind, insane), and portions of the transportation and insurance schedules. These damaged records were subsequently destroyed by order of the Department of the Interior.

On 10 January 1921, a fire at the Commerce Building in Washington D.C. led to a portion of the 1890 Population Schedules being damaged. The destruction of the surviving records was authorized by Congressional order in 1933, and this order was carried out by 1934.

Surviving Records:

The “1890 United States Federal Census Fragment Collection” at Ancestry.com contains the records of 6,160 individuals across 1233 pages or fragments of pages. Records survive for the following locations:

Alabama—Perry County

District of Columbia—Q, S, 13th, 14th, RQ, Corcoran, 15th, SE, Roggs Sts, and Johnson Ave.

Georgia—Muscogee County (Columbus)

Illinois—McDonough County: Mound Township

Minnesota—Wright County: Rockford

New Jersey—Hudson County: Jersey City

New York—Westchester County: Eastchester; Suffok County: Brookhaven Township

North Carolina—Gaston County: South Point Township, Ricer Bend Township; Cleveland County: Township No. 2

Ohio—Hamilton County (Cincinnati); Clinton County: Wayne Township

South Dakota—Union County: Jefferson Township

Texas—Ellis County: S.P. no. 6, Mountain Peak, Ovila Precinct; Hood County: Precinct no. 5;

Rusk County: Precinct no. 6 and J.P. no. 7; Trinity County: Trinity Town and Precinct no. 2;

Kaufman County: Kaufman.

1890 Veterans Schedules:

Census enumerators were instructed to record Union Veterans of the Civil War on a separate schedule. Widows of Union veterans were also listed and a few Confederate veterans were enumerated despite the instructions. The following information was recorded for each person:

Names of surviving soldiers, sailors, and marines, and widows; rank; the name of regiment or vessel; date of enlistment; date of discharge, length of service; post office address; disability incurred; and any remarks.



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1890 Veterans Schedules survive for the following locations:

Washington DC	Minnesota	New Jersey	Oregon	Utah
Kentucky	Mississippi	New Mexico	Pennsylvania	Vermont
Louisiana	Missouri	New York	Rhode Island	Virginia
Maine	Montana	North Carolina	South Carolina	Washington
Maryland	Nebraska	North Dakota	South Dakota	West Virginia
Massachusetts	Nevada	Ohio	Tennessee	Wisconsin
Michigan	New Hampshire	Oklahoma and Indian Territory	Texas	Wyoming

Alternate Records:

State Census: Enumerated every 10 years, in years ending in 5. Many states have started digitizing these records or have allowed 3rd parties such as Ancestry and FamilySearch to do so. Not all states took their own census, and the information collected varies by year and by state.

Estate Records: Look for clues in land deeds, where fathers are leaving land to a married daughter you didn't see in a census. Wills and probate files may also reveal a daughter who was married before 1900. Guardianship records, often housed with probate files, may exist for children who were minors when their father died.

Vital records: Records of births, deaths, and marriages were often created at the town or county level before being required by the State. Churches may have baptismal, marriage, and burial records.

Newspapers: Social columns are a goldmine for information about births, deaths, marriages, family vacations, legal matters, and relocations. The legal section often records court actions including probate, business, divorce, and naturalizations.

Tax records: Taxes were collected annually and most people had to pay them. Tax books were often created from the previous year's collections and edited with changes of the household for the next year.

City Directories: Usually published yearly, these books are an excellent resource for tracking your family. Keep in mind that the information for the directories was gathered the year before publication. If your family does not appear in a book, check at least one or two more years before deciding they have moved away. Check with the Public Library in the area you're researching.



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School Census: Usually taken yearly to capture the enrollment for the coming year, these are often at state or county archives and vary by location. Some school census enumerations included all the children in the household, even if they weren't of school age.

County Histories: These were published from the 1870s to 1890s as a way to mark the Centennial of the United States. Individuals could pay to have their biographies published in these books.

Cemetery Records: Have the potential to reveal children who were born and died between 1880 and 1900. Contact cemetery offices to inquire about record availability.

Tips:

Use clues from the 1880 and 1900 enumerations to create a research plan for locating the family.

Were they living in the same location in both census enumerations? If they are in the same state but a different county, use the *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920* to determine if the family moved or if the boundary moved around them. Use changes in residences to follow the family in yearly records such as city directories and tax lists.

Did the head of the household have an occupation which might have required migration, such as working for a railroad? Research the employers' name or the profession in general to identify potential migration paths.

In the 1900 census, women were asked how many children they had given birth to, and how many of them were still living. Compare these numbers against the number of children in the household in 1880.

Make a note of the children's ages and birth locations in the 1880 and 1900 census records, noting places of birth and gaps in birth years long enough to accommodate another pregnancy.

If your ancestors are in the same location in both 1880 and 1900, compare the neighborhoods against each other, noting all changes but focusing on additional men and women aged 17-21 heading their own households. These are likely the sons and daughters born after 1880.

Do not assume that the children are leaving the household in chronological order! A 21-year-old son may be in his parent's household while his 23-year-old and 18-year-old sisters had already married and moved out.

Search databases using parents' names rather than the child's name. This will help you find women who were born after 1880 and married before 1900, whose maiden name was lost to the census; children who were born or died between 1880 and 1900, and marriages of men who moved away from home. Father's first and last name with the mother's first name only is most effective as many records do not record the mother's maiden name.



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Resources and References:

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Ann S. Lainhart, *State Census Records*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc.), 1922.

Family Tree Magazine Vital Records Chart. This lists the years US States began recording births, marriages and deaths at a State Level. Download the free pdf at:

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/freeforms/recordworksheets/>

FamilySearch Research Wiki: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Main_Page

Internet Archive <https://archive.org/> Free digitized records including books, city directories and county histories.

Kellee Blake, "First in the Path of the Fireman the Fate of the 1890 Population Census Part 1," *Prologue*, Genealogy Notes, Spring 1996, Vol. 28, No. 1; (<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1996/spring/1890-census-1.html> : Accessed 5 July 2018).

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