

Get Ready for the 1950 US Census!

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Learn about the treasure trove of genealogical clues in this mid-century Census, due to be released to the public on April 1, 2022, without indexing. Also find out about important quirks and assumptions built into the enumeration process. See, step by step, how to prepare in advance so you can browse the population schedule for ancestors (or search for yourself!) and interpret what you find when you go through the pages of Census records.

Resources are included on next page.

Answers to Census questions will add to your knowledge of family history.

For the 1950 Census, every person in every household was asked about residential address (farm or ranch? apartment number?), name, specific relationship to HH head, race, age (full year or for infants under one, month of birth), sex, marital status (married, separated, divorced, widowed, or never married), birthplace (state or country/naturalized?).

Respondents over 14 were asked: Last week, were you working/keeping house/unable to work/other? Looking for work? Occupation (specific industry and job description)? Private employer, government, own business, or work without pay on family farm or in family business?

One in five answered “sample” questions: Were you living in the same residence a year ago (1949)? Living on a farm a year ago? What county/state/country were you living in a year ago? Where were mother and father born? School attendance, highest grade achieved. Work questions, including 1949 earnings. If head of HH, work earnings and non-work income of relatives in HH? If male, military service in WWI/WWII/other period. (Quirk: asked only of males despite large number of women in WWII serving as WACs, WAVES, etc.)

Additional “sample” questions for one person per page: Work in last job? If ever married, how many years since this person was most recently married OR widowed OR divorced OR separated? If female and ever married, how many children in all? (Quirk: Not supposed to ask this question of women who have children but were never married.)

How to find ancestors before 1950 Census is indexed:

- ✓ **Step 1:** List full names of key ancestors you want to find. Include spelling variations, nicknames, maiden names, and other names that these ancestors might have used in 1950. Ideally, create a sortable, searchable table.
- ✓ **Step 2:** Find each ancestor's 1950ish home address. Possible sources and starting points: Family address books, vital records, letters and diaries, city/phone directories, travel/naturalization records, school/yearbook records, photos/captions/scrapbooks, land/deed records, religious records, newspapers, military records (such as WWII draft cards or pension records), 1940 Census address, etc.
- ✓ **Step 3:** Use the home address to find 1950 Enumeration District using the Unified Census ED Finder at <https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>. Enter ED in your list and sort by ED for efficient browsing of unindexed population schedules. Remember, no index means you have to browse each page of the ED in search of your ancestor's street address and name. **NOTE:** After April 1, when you find an ancestor on a Census page, download that page and note the citation so you can review later. In the same ED, you may find members of the FAN (friends, associates, neighbors) with a close connection to your ancestors!

1950 Census Resources:

“How to” and background on 1950 Census (by Steve Morse & Joel Weintraub):

<https://stevemorse.org/census/1950census.htm> and
<https://stevemorse.org/jdw.html>

Cyndi's List links to 1950 resources:

<https://www.cyndislist.com/us/census/1950/general/>

Family Search updates on 1950 Census (or to volunteer to index):

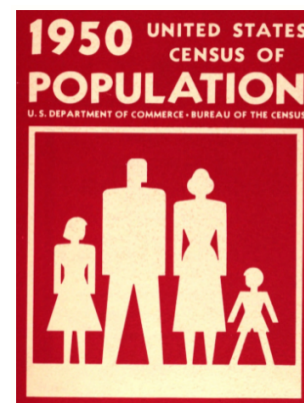
<https://www.familysearch.org/info/us-census/1950-census/>

Population schedule questions, in order:

<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/items1950.shtml>

Other 1950 Census publications:

<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/pubdocs/1950/pubvols1950.shtml>



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