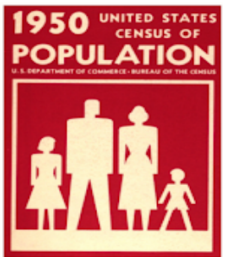

Find Your American Ancestors in the 1950 US Census

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Mid-century life in America. Every person at every residential address in the 48 US states (at that time, Hawaii and Alaska were not yet states) and in US territories was listed by name, relationship to household head, race, age, sex, marital status (*married, separated, divorced, widowed or never married*) and birthplace (US state or country). Census enumerator noted whether the residence was a farm, whether home was on three-plus acres. Household members were listed in a specific order, with non-relatives last. Babies not yet named were recorded as *Infant*. Children under one year old were listed with birth month (not year). College students living at school were enumerated there. Enumerators held separate count of people in hotels, hostels and other temporary accommodations. Millions of people answered 'sample questions' about income, residence, schooling and military service (asked only of males). See all 1950 Census questions in order: https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1950/questions-asked

Browse (or search) the 1950 US Census for free at:

- **My Heritage: www.myheritage.com/census/us/1950census/**
- **Ancestry: www.ancestry.com/c/1950-census**
- **Find My Past: https://search.findmypast.com/search-world-records/1950-us-census-image-browse**
- **Family Search: www.familysearch.org/1950census/**

The 1950 US Census is free on the US National Archives (NARA) site:

https://1950census.archives.gov/

The United States has conducted a population census every 10 years since 1790. The 1950 Census was the 17th Census conducted and is now the most recently released to the public. Artificial intelligence and OCR technology were applied to create a basic name and location index that can be searched by US state, county/city/town, Enumeration District (ED) and name.

How to identify an ancestor's Enumeration District

An **enumeration district (ED)** is the geographic area that an enumerator (a census taker) could complete within two weeks in cities or within 30 days in rural areas. Each ED has a two-part number, such as 10-15. Some EDs have an alphabetical suffix, such as 10-15A. Knowing the ED for an ancestor's residence can help when you're browsing the Census before indexing is complete, or for a more specific search. Note: Households were not visited in order of street address.

Step 1: Find your ancestor's 1950ish home address. Possible starting points: Family address books, vital records, letters/diaries, city/phone directories, travel/naturalization records, school/yearbook records, photos/captions/scrapbooks, land records, religious records, newspapers, military records (such as WWII draft registration cards), cousins' memories, etc.

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Step 2: Use Ancestry's 1950 Census District Finder tool. Just type in a street address, city/town, state. Ancestry will show you the ED number and link to the ED map for that location. You can browse or search that ED's population schedule on Ancestry, for free (see https://www.ancestry.com/c/1950-census).

Tips for searching/browsing the 1950 US Census on NARA website

- Search for head of household by location (state, county, city, and ideally *Enumeration District*) plus name (enter **Surname** only or enter **Surname Given** such as **Wood Marian** with no commas). Search result will be one page of that ED with the name.
- To browse multiple pages within that ED, remove name and only search by state, county and ED number.
- Click 'population schedules' to browse the Census pages for your search result. The residential street is listed in column at far left of questionnaire.
- Check whether your ancestor was listed on a line chosen to answer sample questions (look for circled number at either end of that entry). If so, look at bottom of page for that line number. No names are shown on responses to sample questions.
- Check the "notes" section for any comments jotted by enumerators. Some noted where specific households would be listed on later pages of that ED. Others noted that when a non-family member provided information about someone on that page.
- If an ancestor wasn't home when the enumerator visited, look for 'sheet #71' at end of each relevant ED to see whether that person was listed during a call-back visit. In large EDs, enumerators may have recorded call-backs on sheets 71-81, for instance.
- Download Census page for later research and review.

Additional 1950 Census Resources

US National Archives Census resources, including 1950 questionnaires, enumerator instructions, Enumeration District maps, statistical analyses and links to extra information:

https://1950census.archives.gov/howto/

FamilySearch.org updates on 1950 Census (or to volunteer to help with index review):

www.familysearch.org/1950census/

Facebook group - 1950 US Census for Genealogists (learn more or ask a question):

www.facebook.com/groups/634847774579022

US Census Bureau page about 1950 US Census:

http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/decade/1950/census-records.html

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