

# Navigating our Nation's Federal Records

## *Class 5: Other Federal Records*

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### **Census Bureau Records**

The U.S. Federal decennial census is a key tool in the genealogist's tool kit. But sometimes it pays to understand who collected the information and how it was collected. Between 1790 and 1870, U.S. Federal Marshals conducted the census with very little formal training. The instructions were deduced from the statute enabling the census. It wasn't until 1830 that a printed form was supplied to the Marshals for data collection. By 1860, a set of general instructions for the Marshals had been developed.

The year 1880 marked the beginning of specially hired and trained enumerators with detailed and explicit instructions on how to conduct the census.

### **Non-population schedule**

For genealogists, three non-population schedules may provide useful information. First is the mortality schedule which lists persons who died between 1 June of the previous year and 1 June of the census year. This schedule lists the name of the deceased person, along with age, race, gender, cause of death, and occupation. For regions of the country where vital record keeping did not begin until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these records may be the only documentation of an ancestor's death. The mortality schedule exists for the years 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880.

The manufacturing/industry schedule taken in 1820, 1850, and 1860 provides data about industry in your ancestor's community. The forms include the name and type of business, amount of investment, raw materials used, products created, type of power used and number and cost of employees. Some ancestors may be listed as "farmers" on the population schedule but appear as businessmen/manufacturers on the Industry/Manufacturing Schedule.

The agricultural schedule for 1850 and 1860 captures farms with at least \$100 worth of products. The agricultural schedules for 1870 and 1880 list farms with at least \$500 worth of products. Information includes name of owner or manager, number of improved and unimproved acres, livestock, agricultural goods produced during the preceding year and the cash value of the farm.

### **Library of Congress**

The Library of Congress includes four distinct sets of materials that are of value to family historians:

- Chronicling America – historical newspapers



**American Ancestors**  
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

- Maps
- Congressional Serial Set
- Local History Guides for Genealogy

### *Chronicling America*

Searching by name or place may reveal your ancestor's name in advertising, births and death announcement, legal notices and public announcements, lists (such as letters left at the post office), news articles, or community and social events.

### *Maps*

If you know where your ancestor lived, you have a clue about where to look for records. In addition, maps help place an ancestor in context and show how your ancestor's location relates to other perhaps better-known locations. Maps at the Library of Congress may be found in collections, such as "Civil War Maps," or "Sanborn Maps." But the easiest way to find a map at the LOC is to set search to "Maps," and then type in a place name.

### *Congressional Serial Set*

The U.S. Congressional Serial Set, commonly known as the Serial Set, is a compilation of journals, reports, and documents from House and Senate proceedings as well as documents from executive departments and independent agencies. Its value for genealogists include land claims, patent lists, relief petitions, military registers, lighthouse reports, and private petitions.

### *Local History and Genealogy*

The Library of Congress site, like the NARA side has a number of resources especially for genealogists. See below under Resources.

## **More NARA Records**

While the Census Bureau has information from census schedules and instructions for conducting the census, NARA holds the maps and documentation of Enumeration Districts which were implemented as part of the census process in 1880.

NARA also has a robust collection of maps, such as those prepared by government surveyors or the Army Corps of Engineers (which was founded in 1775).

Railroad maps provide clues about modes of transportation available to your ancestor. Land office maps

## Resources

### Census Bureau

*Instructions to Enumerators:*

[https://www.census.gov/history/www/through\\_the\\_decades/census\\_instructions/](https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/census_instructions/)

*Mortality Schedules:*

[https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other\\_resources/mortality\\_schedules.html](https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other_resources/mortality_schedules.html)

*Non-population Schedules:*

Non-population Records – article at Census Bureau

[https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other\\_resources/nonpopulation\\_records.html](https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/other_resources/nonpopulation_records.html)

Non-population Census Records – article at NARA

[https://www.archives.gov/research/census/nonpopulation?\\_ga=2.198841642.427505528.1611985884-832466707.1611985884](https://www.archives.gov/research/census/nonpopulation?_ga=2.198841642.427505528.1611985884-832466707.1611985884)

Research Guide to Nonpopulation Census <https://www.archives.gov/files/calendar/genealogy-fair/2016/session-7-kluskens-handout-1of2.pdf>

### Library of Congress

“Genealogical research at the library of congress”

[https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib\\_guid/research.pdf](https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/bib_guid/research.pdf)

*Chronicling America*

“Chronicling America – Historic American Newspapers” - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>

*Maps*

“Library of Congress Geography & Maps: An Illustrated Guide” <https://guides.loc.gov/maps-illustrated-guide/using-the-library/using-the-map-collections>

“Collections with Maps” <https://www.loc.gov/maps/collections/?st=gallery>

“Using Maps in Genealogy,” <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/mapsgenealogy.pdf>

*Congressional Serial Set*

Articles about the Serial Set

- Hartley, Jeffery. “Using the Congressional Serial Set for Genealogical Research” <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2009/spring/congressional-serial-set.html>



- Schamel, Charles E. "Untapped Resources: Private Claims and Private Legislation in the Records of the U.S. Congress." Prologue Spring 1995 Vol 27 (1)  
<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1995/spring/private-claims-1.html>

#### American State Papers

- <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwsplink.html>

#### Govinfo.gov portal for accessing the Serial Set

- General portal <https://www.govinfo.gov/>
- Selected Congressional Serial Sets <https://www.govinfo.gov/help/serial-set>
- Searching the Serial Set: <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/serialset>

#### Local History Guides

##### Local History and Genealogy Reference Services

- <https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/>
- Digitized Collection Materials for genealogists <https://guides.loc.gov/genealogy-research-online-resources/digital-primary-sources>
- Searching the Digital Collections for "Family History"  
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/?q=Family+History>
- "Tips for Locating Genealogical Resources in the Library of Congress Online Catalog  
<https://www.loc.gov/rr/genealogy/tips.html>
- "Genealogy and Family History Research: A Guide to Online Resources -  
<https://guides.loc.gov/local-history-genealogy-research-guides>

#### **National Archives**

##### Census Enumeration Districts

Enumeration District and Related Maps, 1880-1990 (RG29) - <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/821491>

Enumeration District Descriptions, 1850-1950 (RG29) - <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/721175>

Searching LOC maps by place

##### More Maps

"Maps at NARA of interest to Genealogists" <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/maps>

"Cartographic and Architectural Records at the National Archives in College Park, MD

<https://www.archives.gov/research/cartographic>