

The 1950 Census: It's New, It's Old, It's Out!

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Census are the building blocks of your genealogy

- Started in the US in 1790 and created every 10 years
- In 1850, they start listing every person in the household
- 1890 census was destroyed and not available.
- They are not released to the public for 72 years
- Last one released was 1950 in April 1, 2022
- And many of us are in it!

What's new

- First appearance of the baby boom generation in the census
- First census post World War II
- Only 20 questions asked of everyone compared to 34 in the 1940 census
- Only digital access. Paper copies destroyed after microfilming and microfilm not available for public use.

What's old?

- It is an attempt to count and name all the people of the us
- It also tries to count every living abode
- People are counted regardless of age, race, housing, etc.

What does it look like?

- About the same as 1940
- Form used had 30 persons per page
- 6 persons per page answered additional sample questions
- 1 person per page answered more additional questions
- The bulk of the variations from 1940 are in the sample questions

How do you find your family?

- After being out a year, [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) led the way having the best user-friendly index using sophisticated artificial intelligence and handwriting recognition technology. It saved time by creating an initial index from digital census images. My first choice
- [familysearch.org](https://www.familysearch.org) has built on this technology and volunteers are reviewing the automated index to ensure that every name is included and indexed correctly. My second choice.
- National Archives <https://1950census.archives.gov/> - also used artificial intelligence to index the census but it wasn't as slick as Ancestry's and the search can be more frustrating on this site. Still useful, though - easy to get to and totally free with no login needed.

Ancestry.com

- <https://www.ancestry.com/>
- You can use and search the 1950 census for free.
- Don't need subscription but will need to sign in.

- Go to search, then census, narrow by US census, then 1950 census

Familysearch.org

- <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>
- Familysearch.org
- Always free.
- You can use and search the 1950 census for free; don't need subscription but will need to sign in.
- Go to search
- Then census, narrow by US census, then 1950 census

National Archives

- <https://1950census.archives.gov/>
- Always free; no login needed
- Search tool is not as helpful. Index was machine-created and full of errors, but you can submit corrections

Can't find family using indexes?

- Try searching where you think they lived. City directories can be helpful to locate addresses in towns.
- Enumeration districts – you can search for them on
 - Steve Morse's website <https://stevemorse.org/census/unified.html>
 - or on ancestry.com's website –Explore Maps link at 1950 census page - <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/district-map/62308>
- Then you have to go page-by-page, using address on the side of the page to locate the residence.

Want more detail?

- Lots of information online
- Overview of many other sites and general information: <https://libguides.utsa.edu/census/1950>
- National archives website - <https://1950census.archives.gov/>
- Ancestry's website - <https://www.ancestry.com/c/1950-census>
- Familysearch.org - https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/united_states_census,_1950_-_familysearch_historical_records
- Videos:
 - 1950 census in a minute – Crista Cowan
 - <https://youtu.be/v6fxlax-jom> - overview of 1950 census
 - <https://youtu.be/ktwapsjzlc0> - tips for searching names that you can find
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hxcnwd4fkf0> – using ancestry.com's district finder
 - 3 minute overview of 1950 census by ancestry.com - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzlmulpunaw>
 - National Archives series of tutorials - https://youtu.be/5awhjwvm_k