

What To Do About the Missing 1890 Census?

Kenneth Marks 20 Feb 2023

FAMILY SCHEDULE—I TO 10 PERSONS.

[7-556.] Eleventh Census of the United States.
SCHEDULE No. 1.
POPULATION AND SOCIAL STATISTICS.

Supervisor's District No. _____ }
Enumeration District No. _____ }
Name of city, town, township, }
precinct, district, head, or }
other minor civil division. } County: _____ ; State: _____
Street and No.: _____ ; Ward: _____ ; Name of Institution: _____
Enumerated by me on the _____ day of June, 1890. _____ 1890
Enumerator.

A.—Number of Dwelling-house in the order of visitation.	B.—Number of families in this dwelling-house.	C.—Number of persons in this dwelling-house.	D.—Number of Family in the order of visitation.	E.—No. of Persons in this family.	
INQUIRIES.	1	2	3	4	5
1 Christian name in full, and initial of middle name.					
2 Surname.					
3 Whether a soldier, sailor, or marine during the civil war (U.S. or Conf.), or widow of such person.					
4 Relationship to head of family.					
5 Whether white, black, mulatto, quadroon, octoon, Chinese, Japanese, or Indian.					

A person who starts researching their family history very quickly runs into the question – “What Happened to the 1890 Census?”

The Census Bureau explains it best in this link:

[U.S. Census Bureau History: 1890 Census Fire, January 10, 1921](#)

In summary, a fire at the U.S. Commerce building in Washington DC destroyed a substantial percentage of the population schedules from the 1890 federal census. Either fire or water damage eliminated this valuable resource. All that is left is a mere fraction of the population schedules. From these states, only a part of one or two counties was saved: Alabama, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota, and Texas.

One significant item that was saved was the **United States Census of Union Veterans and Widows of the Civil War, 1890**. FamilySearch has this available at this [LINK](#)

Ancestry, MyHeritage, and FamilySearch have made available the 1890 Census “Fragments”:

- Ancestry’s version <https://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=5445>
- FamilySearch version <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1610551>
- MyHeritage version www.myheritage.com/research/collection-10130/1890-united-states-federal-census

But, what do we do for those people we are researching where information between 1880 and 1900 is essential?

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Try these alternate collections:

State Census Collections – here are several available for free online at FamilySearch and other sites:

- [Colorado State Census, 1885](#)
- [Florida State Census, 1885](#)
- [Iowa State Census, 1885](#)
- [Iowa State Census, 1895](#)
- [Kansas State Census, 1885](#)
- [Kansas State Census, 1895](#)
- [Michigan State Census, 1894](#)
- [Minnesota State Census, 1885](#)
- [Minnesota State Census, 1895](#)
- [Missouri State and Territorial Census Records, 1732-1933](#)
- [Nebraska State Census, 1885](#)
- [New Jersey State Census, 1885](#)
- [New Jersey State Census, 1895](#)
- [New York State Census, 1892](#)
- [New York City Police Census, 1890](#)
- [Oklahoma Territorial Census, 1890](#)
- [Rhode Island State Census, 1885](#)
- [South Carolina, State and Territorial Censuses, 1829-1920](#)
- [Wisconsin State Census, 1885](#)
- [Wisconsin State Census, 1895](#)

City Directories – generally annually; they will list an adult's name, including their spouse

Voting Registers – by virtue of being included in these lists, it establishes their residence for that particular year

Tax Lists and Records – similar to Voting Registers, they establish their residence for that particular year.

Newspapers – as always, newspapers can provide a great deal of information about an ancestor by virtue of their inclusion in an article. The location of the published title can tell you where your target ancestor may have resided.

The moral of the story is: "Don't Give Up". There are alternatives available to you.