



Guide to Using Census Records at the Maryland Historical Society

The first censuses taken which provide useful information for genealogists are the Maryland censuses of 1776 and 1778. Federal censuses for Maryland from 1790 through 1930 (excluding 1890, which was destroyed by fire) are available on microfilm (Micro 462-1195). For 1890, there does exist a special census of veterans and widows. Slave schedules (1850 and 1860) and mortality schedules (1850-1880) are also available. Records on microfilm can be printed at a cost of \$0.50 per page. Samples of blank census sheets can be photocopied by patrons for easier note-taking.

Published indices exist for the federal censuses from 1790 through 1860 (and 1870 for Baltimore City and County), although it is important to note that published indices have a high rate of error. For most of the remaining censuses, indices are available on microfilm. The 1880, 1900 and 1920 censuses utilize the Soundex method of indexing. Guide sheets to Soundex indices are available on top of the microfilm cabinets. Neither the 1910 nor the 1930 census have been indexed; however, if the person being researched lived in Baltimore, patrons can use the 1930 Baltimore City Directory to locate the address of an individual and then use the microfilm to find an "Enumeration District" (ED) number for that address.

The 1776 Maryland Census (MF180.C293 1776) includes head of household and household members broken down by sex, race, and child/adult; also published in *Maryland Records: Colonial, Revolutionary, County and Church* by Gaius M. Brumbaugh (MF180.B89 1967)

Not until 1880 did census takers record the relation between household members and the head of household. Census records from 1850-1870 provide names and ages of those living in the household, but other sources are necessary to verify whether a woman is indeed the household head's wife or simply an unwed sister living with him, and who any children actually belonged to. Researchers must remember that censuses are incomplete and spelling is often very irregular.

Many censuses for all U.S. states are now available on-line through Heritage Quest. The public computers in the Library all have access to Heritage Quest. Census records viewed through Heritage Quest can be printed at a cost of \$0.25 per page.

Specific Census Information:

- **1790** – includes general breakdown of household members’ sex and ages, as well as whether the head owned slaves
- **1800** – not taken for Baltimore County; includes same information as 1790
- **1810** – includes age group distribution of free white males and free white females, plus number of slaves and the number of other free persons except Indians
- **1820** – includes same information as 1820 plus the number of foreigners not naturalized, occupational classifications (agriculture, manufactures, commerce), age group distribution of male slaves, female slaves, free male Negroes, and free female Negroes
- **1830** – Montgomery, Prince George’s, Queen Anne’s, Saint Mary’s, and Somerset have been lost; includes age distribution of free white males, free white females, free colored males, free colored females, male slaves, and female slaves, as well as whether any whites or any colored persons in the household were disabled
- **1840** – includes same information as 1830, plus occupational information for the household, whether any were pensioners for Revolutionary or military service, and information about schooling.
- **1850** – first Maryland census to list all household members and their sex, age, occupation, place of birth, and value of real estate. Also includes categories for those persons over 20 who could not read and write and for those who were deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, paupers, or convicts.
- **1860** – same as 1850 plus includes value of personal estate.
- **1870** – same as 1860 plus also includes boxes for noting whether the individual’s father and mother was of foreign birth, if the individual was born within the census year, if he or she was married within the year, whether the person attended school during the year, the number of male U.S. citizens at least 21 years of age, and whether the male’s right to vote had been denied or abridged for reasons other than rebellion or other crime
- **1880** – includes color, sex, age, and relationship of each individual to the head of household; included marital status, whether married during census year, profession, number of months employed during the current year, whether the person (on day of enumeration) was sick or temporarily disabled so as unable to attend to ordinary business or duties, whether the individual was blind, deaf, dumb, idiotic... or otherwise disabled, whether he or she attended school, if the person was not able to read or write, the individual’s place of birth plus the place of birth of his or her father and mother.
- **1890** – destroyed in fire
- **1900** – most of what’s included in 1880 census plus month and year of birth, number of years married, number of children born and the number of children living, year of immigration, whether naturalized or not, whether the individual spoke English (or if not, what other language), whether the person owned or rented and whether he owned free or mortgaged, whether the property was a farm or a house, and the number of farm schedule.
- **1910** – not indexed; contains roughly the same information as the 1900 census, plus whether the individual was an employer, employee, or was self-employed; the number of weeks out of work in 1909, and whether he was a Union or Confederate survivor.

- **1920** – contains roughly the same information as the 1910 census.
- **1930** – contains basically the same information as the 1910 and 1920 censuses but also includes the value of the house owned or monthly payment if renting, whether the individual owned a radio set, whether the individual was at work on the last business day or his line number in unemployment, and whether he was a veteran and if so of what war.