1940 Census – Connecting with the Past

After 72 years the 1940 census records are now available for public access. On April 2, 2012, the National Archives and Records Administration, NARA, released the digital images of the 1940 Unites States Federal Census online. These handwritten images of actual census schedules are available to view or download for free. http://1940census.archives.gov

Frequently asked questions about the 1940 Census http://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/faqs.html

The 1940 United States Census included several standard questions, such as: name, age, gender, race, education, and place of birth. But the census also introduced some new questions. One example is that the enumerator was instructed to mark (with a circled x) who in the household responded to the census questions. Other questions included whether the person worked for the CCC, WPA, or NYA the week of March 24-30, 1940, and the income for the 12 months ending December 31, 1939.

New, interesting questions were asked:

- Where people lived 5 years before
- Highest educational grade achieved
- Detailed income and occupation

As part of the census, 5% of respondents (two names per page) were asked supplemental questions, which included the place of birth of the person’s father and mother, the respondent’s usual occupation (not just for the week of March 24-30), and questions related to marriage for all women who were or had been married. The enumerators asked women if they had been married more than once, the age at first marriage, and the total number of children to whom they had ever given birth.

Here are the specific questions, as contained on the NARA website:

Location:

- Street, avenue, road, etc.
- House number (in cities and towns).

Household Data:

- Number of household in order of visitation.
- Home owned (O) or rented (R).
- Value of home, if owned, or monthly rental, if rented.
- Does this household live on a farm? (Yes or No).
Name:

- Name of each person whose *usual place of residence* on April 1, 1940, was in this household. Be sure to include:
  - Persons temporarily absent from household. Write “Ab” after names of such persons.
  - Children under 1 year of age. Write “Infant” if child has not been given a first name.
  - Enter X after name of person furnishing information.

Relation:

- Relationship of this person to the head of the household, as wife, daughter, father, mother-in-law, grandson, lodger, lodger’s wife, servant, hired hand, etc…

Personal Description:

- Sex – Male (M), Female (F).
- Color or race.
- Age at last birthday.
- Marital status – Single (S), Married (M), Widowed (Wd), Divorced (D).

Education:

- Attended school or college any time since March 1, 1940? (Yes or No)
- Highest grade of school completed.

Place of Birth:

- If born in the United States, give State, Territory, or possession. If foreign born, give country in which birthplace was situated on January 1, 1937. Distinguish Canada-French from Canada-English and Irish Free State (Eire) from Northern Ireland.

Citizenship:

- Citizenship of the foreign born.

Residence, April 1, 1935:

IN WHAT PLACE DID THIS PERSON LIVE ON April 1, 1935? For a person who, on April 1, 1935, was living in the same house as at present, enter in Col. 17 “Same house,” and for one living in a different house but in the same city or town, enter “Same place,” leaving Cols. 18, 19, and 20 blank, in both instances. For a person who lived in a different place, enter city or town, county, and State, as directed in the Instructions. (Enter actual place of residence, which may differ from mail address.)
- City, town, or village having 2,500 or more inhabitants. Enter “R” for all other places.
- County.
- State (or Territory or foreign country).
- On a farm? (Yes or No).

**Persons 14 Years Old and Over – Employment Status:**

- Was this person AT WORK for pay or profit in private or nonemergency Gov’t. work during week of March 24-30? (Yes or No).
- If not, was he at work on, or assigned to, public EMERGENCY WORK (WPA, NYA, CCC, etc.) during week of March 24-30? (Yes or No).

If neither at work nor assigned to public emergency work. (“No” in Cols. 21 and 22).

- Was this person SEEKING WORK? (Yes or No).
- If not seeking work, did he HAVE A JOB, business, etc.? (Yes or No).
- For persons answering “No” to question 21, 22, 23 and 24.
- Indicate whether engaged in home housework (H), in school (S), unable to work (U), or other (Ot).
- If at private or nonemergency Govt. work. “Yes” in col. 21.
- Number of hours worked during week of March 24-30, 1940.
- If seeking work or assigned to public emergency work. (“Yes” in Col. 22 or 23).
- Duration of unemployment up to March 30, 1940 – in weeks.

**Occupation, Industry and Class of Worker:**

For a person at work, assigned to public emergency work, or with a job (“Yes” in Col. 21, 22, or 24), enter present occupation, industry, and class of worker. For a person seeking work (“Yes” in Col. 23): a) if he has previous work experience, enter last occupation, industry, and class of worker; or b) if he does not have previous work experience, enter “New worker” in Col. 28, and leave Cols. 29 and 30 blank.

- Occupation: Trade, profession, or particular kind of work, as frame spinner, salesman, laborer, rivet heater, music teacher.
- Industry: Industry or business, as cotton mill, retail grocery, farm, shipyard, public school.
- Class of Worker.
- Number of weeks worked in 1939 (Equivalent full-time weeks).

**Income in 1939 (12 months ended December 31, 1939):**

- Amount of money wages or salary received (including commissions).
- Did this person receive income of $50 or more from sources other than money wages or salary? (Yes or No).
- Number of Farm Schedule.
Supplementary Questions 35-50:

For persons enumerated on lines 14 and 29 [about a 5% sample of the population]

- Name.

For Persons of All Ages:

Place of Birth of Father and Mother

If born in the United States, give State, Territory, or possession. If foreign born, give country in which birthplace was situated on January 1, 1937. Distinguish: Canada-French from Canada-English and Irish Free State from Northern Ireland.

- Father.
- Mother.

Mother Tongue (or Native Language):

- Language spoken in home in earliest childhood.

Veterans:

Is this person a veteran of the United States military forces; or the wife, widow, or under-18-year-old child of a veteran?

- If so, enter “Yes.”
- If child, is veteran-father dead? (Yes or No)
- War or military service.

Social Security:

- Does this person have a Federal Social Security Number? (Yes or No)
- Were deductions for Federal Old-Age Insurance or Railroad Retirement made from this person’s wages or salary in 1939? (Yes or No)
- If so, were deductions made from (1) all, (2) one-half or more, (3) part, but less than half, of wages or salary?

Usual Occupation, Industry, and Class of Worker:

Enter that occupation which the person regards as his usual occupation and at which he is physically able to work. If the person is unable to determine this, enter that occupation at which he has worked longest during the past 10 years and at which he is physically able to work. Enter also usual industry and usual class of worker. For a person without previous work experience, enter “None” in column 45 and leave columns 46 and 47 blank.
• Usual occupation.
• Usual industry.
• Usual class of worker.

For all women who are or have been married:

• Has this woman been married more than once? (Yes or No)
• Age at first marriage.
• Number of children ever born (do not include stillbirths).

Symbols and Explanatory Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMN NUMBER AND HEADING</th>
<th>CODES USED</th>
<th>CODE MEANING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Column 10: Color or Race</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>White</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neg</td>
<td>Negro</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hin</td>
<td>Hindu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kor</td>
<td>Korean</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Column 11: Age at Last Birthday | 11/12 | April 1939 |
|                                  | 10/12 | May 1939   |
|                                  | 9/12  | June 1939  |
|                                  | 8/12  | July 1939  |
|                                  | 7/12  | August 1939|
|                                  | 6/12  | September 1939|
|                                  | 5/12  | October 1939|
|                                  | 4/12  | November 1939|
|                                  | 3/12  | December 1939|
|                                  | 2/12  | January 1940|
|                                  | 1/12  | February 1940|

| Column 14: Highest Grade of School Completed | 0 | None |
|                                              | 1 to 8 | Elementary School, 1st to 8th |
|                                              | H-1 to H-4 | High School, 1st to 4th year |
|                                              | C1 to C4 | College, 1st to 4th year |
|                                              | C-5 | College, 5th year or more |

| Column 16: Citizenship of the Foreign Born | Na | Naturalized |
|                                           | Pa | Having First Papers |
|                                           | Al | Alien |
|                                           | Am Cit | American Citizen Born Abroad |

| Columns 30 and 47: Class of Worker | PW | Wage/Salary Worker in Private Work |
|                                    | GW | Wage/Salary Worker in Gov’t Work |
|                                    | E  | Employer |
|                                    | OA | Working on Own Account |
The NARA website currently does not have a name index, so you will need to know the address and enumeration district of the person you are attempting to locate. If you only know the state, city and street you will select option 1 – which asks for the location where the person lived.
If you know the street name you may click on the One–Step link below the Search button which provides a street index provided by the work of Stephen Morse and Joel Weintraub.
Unified 1940 Census ED Finder
(Obtaining the Enumeration District for a 1940 Location in One Step)

Stephen P. Morse, PhD & Joel D. Weintraub, PhD

Enter as much of the 1940 location as you know

If you select your city from the list of cities displayed, you will be able to enter street-level information.
If you select "other" from the city list, you will be able to type in your city or town name

State: [Alabama]  County: [Select County (optional)]  City or Town: [ ]

House Number: [ ]  Street: [ ]

If you know the 1930 ED for this location, enter it here

State: [Alabama]  ED: [ ]

1940 ED numbers corresponding to your location
After clicking on the Enumeration District (ED) link provided there are several viewers available for accessing the images of the census schedules. The Street names are handwritten in the first column of the Location box (2nd column from the left) of the form. The street number is in the next column to the right.

There may be numerous pages associated with each ED. You will need to scroll through the images to find the street name and street number you are looking for or look at the names in the Name column to identify the person(s) of interest.

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<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>TOWNSHIP</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>RELATION</th>
<th>PERSONAL DESCRIPT</th>
<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>PLAZ OF BRT</th>
<th>PLACE OF DEATH</th>
<th>BAD KNOWN IN APRIL 1, 1940</th>
<th>OTHERS IN APRIL 1, 1940</th>
<th>PERSONS 15 YEARS OLD AND OVER</th>
<th>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</th>
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<td>John</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUPPLEMENTARY CONDITIONS**

- Pre-Presence of All Race
- Pre-Presence 12 Years Old and Over
- Pre-Presence 15 Years Old and Over
- Pre-Presence 15 Years Old and Over
- Pre-Presence 15 Years Old and Over

**REMARKS**

- Additional notes on family members and employment status.