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RELEASE OF 1950 CENSUS

In April, the 1950 U.S. Census will be released. Census records are not published until 72 years after the survey was taken.

“The U.S. Constitution requires only that the decennial census be a population count. Since the first census in 1790, however, the need for useful information about the United States' population and economy became increasingly evident.

The decennial census steadily expanded throughout the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century, the demographic, agricultural, and economic segments of the decennial census collected information on hundreds of topics. The work of processing these data kept the temporary Census Office open for almost all the decades following the 1880 and 1890 censuses.

Recognizing the growing complexity of the decennial census, Congress enacted legislation creating a permanent Census Office within the Department of the Interior on March 6, 1902. On July 1, 1902, the U.S. Census Bureau officially "opened its doors" under the leadership of William Rush Merriam.

In 1903, the Census Office was moved to the newly created Department of Commerce and Labor. It remained within Commerce when Commerce and Labor split into separate departments in 1913.

For a summary history of the Census Bureau, see Factfinder for the Nation: History and Organization [PDF 159KB]. (<https://www.census.gov>).

The first U.S. Census was taken in 1790. Only the head of family was listed, and members of the

family were listed by sex and approximate age. The 1850 Census was the first in which all members of a family were listed by name. The 1880 Census was the first to list the states or countries in which the parents of individuals listed were included. Most of the 1890 Census was destroyed in a fire.

Stephen P. Morse has prepared on his website special tools for searching for our family members in the U.S. Census before the names index is created. “This article was written October 2019. This article is based on a similar article for the 1940 census that appeared in the Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly (December 2011)”.

“When the 1950 census is released in April 2022, it will not have a name index. So finding people in the census will involve searching by location instead. Even when a name index becomes available, there will still be many reasons for doing locational searches.

The census is organized by Enumeration Districts (EDs), so the location needs to be converted to an ED before the census can be accessed. The One-Step website (<https://stevemorse.org>) contains numerous tools for obtaining EDs. This paper will present the various tools and show circumstances in which each can be used. Stephen P. Morse and Joel B. Weintraub, “Getting Ready for the 1950 Census: Searching With and Without a Name Index, . (The One-Step website, (<https://stevemorse.org>))

“In the 19th Century, some states, such as Illinois, Kansas, and Iowa, began taking state census records five years after the Federal Census was taken. (1855, 1865, etc.)

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Al Morse

Rich Hill, Bates County, Missouri was a village established in 1868 because coal mines were being developed in the area. Because of the mines, the village was moved about 2 miles south. One of the stories of how the town got its name was that several men were standing on top of a coal mine. They were trying to come up with a name for the new town. One of the men said, "We are standing on a rich hill". So that was the name given to the new town.

Land was donated, and plans were made to develop the town. Plans were made for streets, parks, and the downtown business area. The town was officially founded on July 8, 1880. The first mayor was Dr. William H. Allen. The town prospered and grew dramatically fast because of the many coal mines established in Bates County, especially around Rich Hill.

Here are some quotes from early area newspapers that appeared later in local newspapers. The column was "Historical Happenings" by Eddie Herman. "November 21, 1880 from the New York Trade Journal: 'We presume few persons know where Rich Hill, MO. Is located, or why it is so named. You cannot find it in the atlases, as it's only five months old, but it's a lively town that ships out 2,000 tons of coal a day.'"

Another says in November 1890: "In 1880, Rich Hill's population was 36. Today it is 4007, an increase of 3971 people." In January, 1883: "In the annual report of Marshall L. Wolfe, Bates County Coal Mine Inspector, there are 195 mines operating and 95,000 acres of workable coal lands. 90% of the coal shipped out of Bates County is mined within 3 miles of Rich Hill."

The coal mines became mined out and the area became a farming area. Many small towns that popped up during the coal mining era vanished. Rich Hill's population declined over the years. The

2010 census reported a population of 1396.

My father, Albert Frank Morse, was born and lived all of his life in Bates County. My mother, Mildred Catherine Janssens, was born in Parkville, Missouri. Her family came to Bates County in 1917 when she was 7 years old. She graduated from Rich Hill High School in 1929. My parents were married in Rich Hill on November 6, 1940. They made their home there for the rest of their lives. Rich Hill had no hospital, so Dr. Claude Allen had his patients go to Fort Scott, Kansas for hospital stays, so I was born in Fort Scott. I understand that Mom and I were there about 2 weeks and then Dad brought us home to their rented house in Rich Hill. Later that year, my folks bought a two story house in Rich Hill. My brother, Carl, was born in Nevada, Missouri. Carl and I both attended all 12 years of school in the same building, which I believe, was the same building that our mother graduated from. My father died in the hospital in Nevada on June 18, 1972. My mother died in St. Joseph Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri on March 18, 1982. They are buried in Rich Hill's Greenlawn Cemetery.

Rich Hill has been known for years for its 4th of July celebration. The first time it was celebrated was in 1883. I can remember that, on Rich Hill's 75th anniversary in 1955, the celebration was bigger than normal. Dad grew a beard, and Carl and I had special hats. In 1980, Rich Hill celebrated its 100th anniversary. I was living in Independence, Missouri. But Mom was still living at home in Rich Hill. We went down to Rich Hill to celebrate. My wife, Dorothy, and our sons came. The boys enjoyed the carnival.

When Dorothy and I retired, we moved to 5 miles west of Rich Hill and lived there for 10 years. We became involved with some of the activities in Rich Hill and enjoyed going to town for the 4th of July. We were reacquainted with some friends and enjoyed making new ones. I still enjoy driving through the town. The downtown is hardly being used, and many of the old two story buildings have collapsed. However, the two parks are still used. The circular park downtown is used for the 4thth of July celebrations and other activities during the year. The

east park, only one block east of where I grew up, is used for family reunions and other activities. I have enjoyed doing some research on the town where I grew up.

RECOMMENDED READING

"January 27, 2022: International Holocaust Remembrance Day" By Jenny Ashcraft, Fold3 Blog - <https://blog.fold3.com/january-27-2022-international-holocaust-remembrance-day/>

"100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: November 11, 2021" by Jenny Ashcraft, Fold3 Blog
<https://blog.fold3.com/100th-anniversary-of-the-tomb-of-the-unknown-soldier-november-11-2021/>

RESEARCHING THE U.S. Census

Marjorie Slavens

U.S.Census records have always been a very important part of our genealogical research, but these records have not always been easy to obtain. Now, we can search various sites on the net to look for these records; Ancestry.com, Genealogy.com, and Familysearch.org have provided much better access on the net than what was available to us when my mother, Mildred Welty Slavens, began her family history research in the mid-1970s.

Mother lived in St. Louis when she began her family research in the mid-1970s. She first worked at the St. Louis Public Library, and their records were very good for that time. She was able to access Census records on microfilm at the Library, but there were not many available microfilm readers, and both at the Library and the Family History Centers, one needed to sign up for limited periods of time to use the equipment. When she visited my sister in Blue Springs, she could also find books and microfilm at the Mid-Continent Library on 24 Highway. We told her she needed to move to the Kansas City area and

purchase a house near the library; she frequently had difficulty leaving her research in the library while it was still light enough for her to drive. In St. Louis, she tried to take the bus because parking was difficult in the downtown area, and she did not want to have to keep going out to put money in the meters.

At the St. Louis Public Library, she began researching her Welty family. She knew her grandfather, Henry Welty, came to Jasper County, Missouri from Ohio following the Civil War, but her father, Edward Alonzo Welty, told her his father came from Lancaster County, Ohio. There is no Lancaster County; Lancaster is the county seat of Fairfield County, which is southeast of Columbus. The 1850 Census had been published with an index, but she did not find her grandfather in that index. There were many other Weltys in the state, but she did not know how they were related to us. She searched the 1850 microfilm, but she could not find them. Her brother, Edward Charles Welty, ordered a copy of the microfilm from the National Archives, That copy was much better than the library copy, and she finally found the family. Henry Welty was born in 1837 on a farm near Bremen, a small town near Lancaster. His father was John Welty, but his mother, Mary Magdalene (Polly) Miller (1801-1844) was no longer living in 1850.

We called Information for a phone number of Weltys in Bremen, and one of the three listed was John P. Welty. Mother wrote to him, but he had died four years before that time. However, his wife, Bessie Welty, answered her letter and invited us to come to Bremen. We visited her in the summer of 1977, and she showed us a book on the Miller family, which included John P. Welty's family. We discovered that his grandfather, Abraham Welty, was the youngest brother of Mother's great grandfather, John Welty, the father of her grandfather, Henry. John P. was the great grandson of Barbara Miller Biery, the older sister of Henry Welty's mother, Mary Magdalene (Polly) Miller Welty. In fact, the Miller book, published in 1912, included her father, Edward Alonzo Welty and his brothers and sisters. Without the better copy of the 1850 Ohio U.S. Census, we would not have been able to make this contact. Because we made this

Bremen contact, we went to York County, Pennsylvania and discovered the wills of Peter Welty, our immigrant ancestor who came to this country in 1727 from Germany, and his son, John (Johannes) Welty, Sr. Son of Peter and great grandfather of Henry Welty.

Once, when we were reviewing Census records at the National Archives in Washington, D. C., Mother encountered another microfilm that was not clear. To solve the problem, they told her they could show her the original book with the text in a special room so she could read the original entry, and she found the information for which she was looking.

After Mother moved to Blue Springs in 1990, she visited the Mid-Continent Library two or three times a week. She generally went to the library in mid-afternoon because visitors from out of town were beginning to prepare to leave, and microfilm readers were much more available.

I gave Mother her first computer in 1996 for her 86th birthday. I did not live here, and my sister worked, so I gave her a Dummies book so she could learn to use her new computer without much help. My sister and I could answer questions but she had to work diligently to know what questions to ask and to learn to use the device. She began using the Internet as soon as she could, and by the time we moved to Foxwood Springs in 1998, she was one of our best Foxwood Springs Internet users and did some of the research for our Website Committee as we prepared in 1999-2000 to create a residents' site, which went online in March, 2000.

Mother used Census records on both Ancestry.com and Genealogy.com. Originally, the Ancestry records were more complete, but the Genealogy records were easier to read. On the net, she could read the records and print them immediately without additional cost. She occasionally helped another Foxwood resident, who was helping friends prepare their records for the S.A. R.

When she started her research, she knew who her grandparents were. She did not meet Henry Welty, but her grandmother, Catharine Mary Eppright Welty, was born in 1848, and she and her family

were in Jasper County, Missouri in the 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880 Census records. Her maternal grandfather, Charles Merlin Kerr, was born in 1863, but she had his first wife's family Bible, in which she found records to trace his older 15 brothers and sisters, finding most of them in Census records. She never met her great grandmother, Elzina H. Heape Kerr (1869-1895), but she was able to trace her Heape and Tefertiller families from the 1850 to the 1920 Census where Ella's mother, Derrinda Tefertiller Heape died in 1922. The Kerrs lost contact with the Heape family by the time Ella died in New Mexico in 1895. Although Mother was 12 years old when her great grandmother died, she and her mother, Hattie Lee Kerr Welty, did not know at that time where the Heapes lived. Mother found this information in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 Census records.

The 1880 Census was especially helpful because it was indexed by the Soundex, and some misspellings could be corrected. The 1880 Census also included the states or countries where the parents of people included in the Census were born, improving the tracing of families who did not come west before that time.

We were not able to find our family in the 1940 Census; we were not in the index. For the Census, I should be in the records for 9 different Census records; I lived in 5 cities with 6 addresses when those records were taken. I was probably in the 1960 Census in two places, Tallahassee, Florida, where I was attending Florida State University, and at my parents' home in Missouri. My voting address was still in Missouri, and my mother probably reported me at that address, although the Florida Census taker insisted that I should be counted in Florida. I will probably never know the answer to the question of whether I counted twice in the 1960 Census, which will be published in 2032.

**FURTHER READING ON
THE 1850 CENSUS**

"Ancestry® to Apply Handwriting Recognition Artificial Intelligence to Create a Searchable Index of the 1950 U.S. Census" by the Ancestry Team" <https://www.ancestry.com/corporate/blog/ancestry-apply-handwriting-recognition-artificial-intelligence-create-searchable-index-1950-us>

"How Indexing the 1950 Census Will Be Different" by Jason Wright, FamilySearch Blog <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/indexing-1950-census>

"Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About the 1950 Census" by the National Archives <https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1950/faqs>

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