

Searching the US Census

Created by the History & Genealogy Department, St. Louis County Library

Missouri Learning Standards/GLE

Social Studies: 9-12 American History

1. History: Continuity and Change

Theme 1: Tools of Social Science Inquiry

D. Using an inquiry lens, develop compelling questions about United States history post c. 1870 to determine helpful resources and consider multiple points of view represented in the resources.

Introduction

The US Federal Census is an important historical record for learning about the movement of individuals and groups of people throughout US History. Starting in 1790, the United States has taken a federal census every ten years. The 1940 Census is the most recent census that the public has access to, and the 1950 census will be released to the public in 2022.

Accessing US Census Records

Researchers can access US Census Records through the following online resources:

- Heritage Quest Online- St. Louis County Library Website (may be accessed in library or with a SLCL card)
- Fold3 - St. Louis County Library website, 1860 and 1930 only (may be accessed in library or with a SLCL card)
- FamilySearch.org – 1880 and 1930 only (free database accessible from any location)
- Ancestry Library Edition- In library Use Only (accessible from any SLCL library branch)

Materials

- Census Research Log 1940 (See Attached)
- Census Research Log 1930 (See Attached)

Recommended Reads

- Historical US Censuses- Heritage Quest Online
<https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/Content/researchAids/HistoricalCensuses.pdf>
- Start Your 1940 Census Research- National Archives
<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1940/start-research.html>
- Clues in the Census Records, 1850-1930- National Archives
<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/1850-1930.html>

Activity

Part 1: Find **Stan Musial** in the 1940 Census

1. Research Stan Musial for some background information. A great resource for biographies is **American National Biography Online**.-Accessible through the SLCL website.
2. Search and Record the Following:
 - a. Birth Date
 - b. Birth Place
 - c. Father's Name
 - d. Mother's Name
 - e. Full Name- Check for different spellings and nicknames
3. Record the biographical information found on Stan Musial.
4. With the recorded biographical information on Stan Musial, go to **Heritage Quest Online** and begin searching the **1940 US Census**. *Be sure to enter at least a birth year and birth place before clicking **search!**
5. Complete the **Census Research Log** with the information from the 1940 Census.
6. Make sure to look at the actual record and not just the index page.

7. Record the source information for citing the census record.
8. Create a list of new questions for further research.

Part 2: Find Stan Musial in the 1930 Census

1. With the information you recorded from your search for Stan Musial in the 1940 Census, begin searching for him in the 1930 US Census.
2. Working backwards, from 1940-1930, helps researchers piece together a pattern of movement for people over a period of time. This approach is also used for other genealogical and family history research, in which researchers usually start with themselves and then work backwards through time to connect the pieces of the puzzle.
3. Spelling Counts! Note the spelling of Stan Musial's name in the 1940 Census. You should have recorded his name as Stanley F. Musial. The spelling of a name can greatly impact your search results. To see an example of how the spelling of names is important for census research, search both Stan Musial and Stanley Musial in the 1930 Census. You should find that it is much easier to locate him in the 1930 census if you use the spelling found for him in the 1940 Census (Stanley Musial).
4. 1930 Census Questions: Take a look at the 1930 census record for Stanley Musial once you have found the correct record. See how the questions have or have not changed from the 1940 census. Record all questions and answers for him in the 1930 census.
5. Also note his family members listed on the same census record.
6. Click on each of his parents' names to learn more!
7. Make sure to write down any questions that come to mind while reviewing the 1930 census.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ What major historical events occurred during the time period between 1930 and 1940?
- ❖ How do the questions on the 1940 census about income and place of residence in 1935 reflect society's experiences with the Great Depression and Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal program?
- ❖ What other historical records could you search for with the information found in the 1930 and 1940 census records?

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