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THE 1910 CENSUS AS A GENEALOGICAL RESOURCE

One of the most useful genealogical tools is the Federal Census of the United States. Originally, as stated in the U.S. Constitution, its purpose was to determine the number of inhabitants of the several states to apportion representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Every ten years since 1790, the census has been taken and more and more data has been gathered to assist the United States Government. It is valuable not only to count the number of people within the states but also to assemble a host of demographic data to assist in the apportionment of Federal programs such as Revenue Sharing.

By order of the Federal Privacy Act these records are kept from the public for a period of seventy-two years. The 1910 Census was taken in April 1910 which made it available for public review in the spring 1982. Initially, the 1,784 microfilm rolls were only available for inspection in the National Archives, Washington, D.C. Presently, copies of the film may be purchased through the Archives' Publication Sales Branch. It is expected that the eleven regional archives branches will have films for use by the public this fall. (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Fort Worth, Kansas City, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Seattle.)

The 1910 Census schedules are organized by state and thereunder by county; heavily populated counties are further divided by cities and sometimes by wards. Unfortunately only twenty-one states have been indexed by either the Soundex or Miracode System. The twenty-one states including Florida whose census schedules are indexed on 4,642 rolls are listed below:

Alabama - S	Kentucky - M	Oklahoma - M
Arkansas - M	Louisiana - M	Pennsylvania - M
California - M	Michigan - M	South Carolina - S
Florida - M	Mississippi - S	Tennessee - S
Georgia - S	Missouri - M	Texas - S
Illinois - M	North Carolina - M	Virginia - M
Kansas - M	Ohio - M	West Virginia - M

What type of genealogical information can be extracted from the 1910 census? All sorts of pertinent, personal data are detailed on this enumeration which marks the first census for ancestors who immigrated, to the U.S. between 1900 and 1909. Additionally, 1910 census takers were the first to pass a written exam and in most cases were not appointed by congressmen. They gathered the data of April 15, 1910 on the names of persons, relationships, exact address, languages spoken, race, color, facts about the parents, the years of naturalization and immigration, and occupation.

The 1910 census will prove to be a valuable tool for genealogists who speculate about their ancestors at the beginning of the 20th century. Doubts will be cleared up and yet other speculation will begin. Information contained in the census may also lead to other genealogical directions such as immigration passenger lists and naturalization records which prolong the never ending search.

The editor traveled to the National Archives in July 1982 to view personally the 1910 census data. The NARS clerks were extremely helpful. If your state is not indexed it is possible to find your ancestors systematically if you know their street address. The editor knew the addresses of all his ancestors in an unindexed state and was able to locate 67% of them in a reasonable period of time, but he never located the other 33%. Also do not be discouraged by the indexing systems. If you know the county and city of your ancestor do not be totally discouraged if their names are not on the index. Search anyway. It certainly was possible for a government indexer to miss a name.

SOURCES

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"Census for 1910 now available" in *Genealogy a Publication of the Family History Section Indian Historical Society*, May 1982, p. 5.

Interview with Barbara Dalby, Genealogist and Past President State Genealogical Society, August 24, 1982.

Interview with Mary Mobley Kitchen, Instructor of Genealogy, St. Petersburg Jr. College, July 2, 1982, in the National Archives, Washington, D.C.