

Another look at U.S. Census Records Or what we may have missed the first time

Whereas the 1790 to 1840 censuses record only heads of household by name (others were merely counted within age groups), enumerations from 1850 on provide personal details on every person in a household, from age to occupation. These details can help you identify an immigrant and where he or she came from. Here's a rundown by census year of the columns that can clue you in to immigrant origins:

- **1850:** country of birth
- **1860:** country of birth
- **1870:** checkmarks for foreign-born parents and men ineligible to vote (possible clue to a non-naturalized immigrant—only male citizens age 21 or older could vote)
- **1880:** place of birth, parents' birthplaces
- **1900:** place of birth, parents' birthplaces, citizenship status if over 21, year of immigration and number of years in United States for foreign-born residents
- **1910:** year of immigration to the United States, parents' birthplaces, whether naturalized
- **1920:** year of immigration to the United States, year naturalized, mother tongue (of the person and parents); parents' birthplaces
- **1930:** year of immigration to the United States, language spoken in home; parents' birthplaces

<https://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/tEnumInstr.shtml>

Notes:

- You should locate each ancestor in every U. S. Census between their birth and death.
- Compare people in the household from one Census to the next.
- The Censuses listed above give some clues that you should look at and use them to do more searching.
 - Example: If a head of household owns their home – look for a deed
 - Use their occupation to search other records such as railroad employment records
- The about web link will take you to a website that have the Enumerator Instructions for each Census year. This could be very helpful in understanding each Census.
- “The Genealogist’s Censes Pocket Reference” in another source you could use.