

A Timeline of Census History

Legend
 Staff Population Geography Economy Technology and Innovation Research and Methodology

Census Supervisors

Thomas Jefferson
 (U.S. Secretary of State)
 Population: **3,929,214**
 Under the leadership of the Secretary of State, U.S. Marshals conduct the nation's first census, which asks six questions.
 New York is the nation's largest city with a population of 33,131.

John Marshall
 (U.S. Secretary of State)
 Population: **5,308,483**
 Temporary census headquarters moves from New York City, NY, to Washington, DC.

Robert Smith
 (U.S. Secretary of State)
 Population: **7,239,881**
 U.S. Marshals collect data on U.S. manufacturers while conducting the 1810 Census.

John Quincy Adams
 (U.S. Secretary of State)
 Population: **9,638,453**
 U.S. Marshals make the first agriculture inquiries by collecting data on families' "agricultural pursuits."

Martin Van Buren
 (U.S. Secretary of State)
 Population: **12,860,702**
 U.S. Marshals use uniform, printed schedules to collect census data. They do not collect manufacturing data due to its poor quality in 1810 and 1820.

William Augustus Weaver (1840-1842)
 Population: **17,063,353**
 1849 Congress establishes a census board to oversee data collection.
 U.S. Marshals resume collection of manufacturing data, as well as data on mining and fisheries.
 1849 The U.S. Department of the Interior assumes control of census operations from the Department of State.

Joseph C. G. Kennedy (1850-1853)
 Population: **23,191,876**
 The census records the names of all free persons in the household.

J. D. B. DeBow (1853-1855)
 Population: **23,191,876**
 Superintendent J. D. B. DeBow publishes the first map in a census publication.
 Six questionnaires collect population, slave, mortality, agriculture, manufacturing, and government data.

Joseph C. G. Kennedy (1860-1865)
 Population: **31,443,321**
 The census enumerates American Indians not living on tribal lands in own racial category.

Francis Amasa Walker (1870-1872)
 Population: **38,558,371**
 The census records the name of every person living in a household.
 1872 Charles W. Seaton introduces a mechanical tabulating machine to speed tabulation of census data.
 1874 Census Office publishes first *Statistical Atlas of the United States*.
 1878 Census Office publishes the first annual *Statistical Abstract*.

Francis Amasa Walker (1879-1881)
 Population: **50,189,209**

Charles W. Seaton (1881-1885)
 Specially trained supervisors and enumerators replace U.S. Marshals to collect census data.

Robert Percival Porter (1889-1893)
 Population: **62,979,766**

Carroll D. Wright (1893-1897)
 Herman Hollerith's electric tabulator speeds tabulation of data.
 First use of administration records to collect data on the recorded indebtedness of private corporations and individuals.

Census Directors

William Rush Merriam (1899-1903)
 Population: **76,212,168**
 1902 The U.S. Census Bureau becomes a permanent agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior. The next year it moves to the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor.
 1905 First inter-decennial census of manufacturing establishments

Simon Newton Dexter North (1903-1909)
 Population: **92,228,496**
 1913 The Census Bureau stays in the Department of Commerce after its split from the Department of Labor.
 1917-1918 Census Bureau conducts "emergency censuses" of vital industries including steel, wool, leather, and explosives to support the war effort.

Edward Dana Durand (1909-1913)
 Population: **92,228,496**

William J. Harris (1913-1915)
 Population: **106,021,537**
 1921-1927 Economic growth and need for economic data result in biennial censuses of manufacturing in 1921, 1923, 1925, and 1927.
 First time majority of U.S. population lives in urban areas.

Samuel Lyle Rogers (1915-1921)
 Population: **106,021,537**

William Mott Steuart (1921-1933)
 Population: **123,202,824**
 1933 Census of selected service industries conducted as part of the New Deal programs.
 1937 The Census Bureau studies the use of statistical sampling and conducts a census of unemployment.

William Lane Austin (1933-1941)
 Population: **132,164,569**
 1942 Census Bureau headquarters moves to Suitland, MD.
 1945 Introduction of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) manual for classifying industries.

James Clyde Capt (1941-1949)
 Population: **151,325,798**
 1951 Census Bureau receives UNIVAC I, the first nonmilitary computer.
 1953 The Census Bureau develops the Film Optical Sensing Device for Input to Computers (FOSDIC) to replace punch cards.
 1958 The Data Processing Division opens in Jeffersonville, IN.

Roy Victor Peel (1950-1953)
 Population: **151,325,798**

Robert Wilbur Burgess (1953-1961)
 Population: **179,323,175**
 1963 First census of transportation

Richard M. Scammon (1961-1965)
 Population: **179,323,175**
 1967 Congress changes economic census years to those ending in "2" and "7".
 1967-1968 Development of Dual Independent Map Encoding (DIME) to enable computerized geography

A. Ross Eckler (1965-1969)
 Population: **203,302,031**
 1972 Introduction of the Survey of Minority-Owned Businesses
 All data products are available on magnetic computer tape.

George Hay Brown (1969-1973)
 Population: **203,302,031**
 Hispanic-origin asked of 5 percent of U.S. population.

Vincent P. Barabba (1973-1976)
 Population: **228,542,199**
 1977 Introduction of the Survey of Women-Owned Businesses

Manuel D. Plotkin (1977-1979)
 Population: **228,542,199**

Vincent P. Barabba (1979-1981)
 Population: **228,542,199**

Bruce Chapman (1981-1983)
 Population: **248,709,873**
 Hispanic-origin asked of all households.

John G. Keane (1984-1987)
 Population: **248,709,873**
 95 percent of U.S. households receive mailout/mailback questionnaires.

Barbara Everitt Bryant (1989-1993)
 Population: **248,709,873**
 1997 Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) system creates a digital geographic database of the nation.
 1997 The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) replaces the Standard Industrial Classification System.
 1998 The Data Processing Division in Jeffersonville, IN, changes its name to the National Information Center.

Martha Farnsworth Riche (1994-1998)
 Population: **281,421,908**
 1998 The Data Processing Division in Jeffersonville, IN, changes its name to the National Information Center.

Kenneth Prewitt (1998-2001)
 Population: **281,421,908**
 Multiple responses to the race question permitted. First use of a paid advertising campaign.

Charles Louis Kincannon (2002-2008)
 Population: **308,745,838**
 2005 The annual American Community Survey replaces the decennial census long form.

Steve H. Murdock (2008-2009)
 Population: **308,745,838**
 2007 Publication of first statistical atlas of the United States since 1920.

Robert M. Groves (2009-2012)
 Population: **308,745,838**
 Single questionnaire asks 10 questions.

John H. Thompson (2013-)
 Population: **308,745,838**
 The Census Bureau releases its first 5-year American Community Survey estimates.

1790
JANUARY 8, 1790 President George Washington gives the first State of the Union Address.
FEBRUARY 20, 1792 Establishment of U.S. Post Office Department
MARCH 14, 1794 Eli Whitney patents the cotton gin.
JULY 10, 1797 The United States launches its first naval ship, the frigate *USS United States*.

1800
APRIL 30, 1803 The United States purchases 828,000 square miles from France for the price of \$15 million.
MAY 14, 1804 Lewis and Clark Expedition begins.
1806 Noah Webster publishes the *Compendious Dictionary of the English Language*.
AUGUST 17, 1807 Robert Fulton makes the first steamboat journey up the Hudson River from New York City, NY, to Albany, NY.

1810
OCTOBER 11, 1811 Steam-powered ferry service between New York City, NY, and Hoboken, NJ, begins.
JUNE 18, 1812-FEBRUARY 18, 1815 War of 1812
SEPTEMBER 13-14, 1814 Francis Scott Key writes *The Star-Spangled Banner*.
APRIL 4, 1818 Congress adopts twenty stars and thirteen stripes configuration of the U.S. flag, with a star added for each new state.

1820
NOVEMBER 20, 1820 A whale sinks the whaling ship *Essex* inspiring Herman Melville's 1851 novel, *Moby Dick*.
DECEMBER 2, 1823 President James Monroe's "Monroe Doctrine" considers future European attempts to recolonize North America as hostile.
OCTOBER 26, 1825 The first boat leaves Buffalo, NY, en route to New York City, NY, via the Erie Canal.
FEBRUARY 28, 1827 The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad becomes the first to provide rail transportation for people and goods.

1830
MARCH 19, 1831 Edward Smith commits the first bank robbery in the United States when he steals \$245,000 from the City Bank of New York.
JULY 24, 1832 The first wagon train crosses the Rocky Mountains at Wyoming's South Pass.
FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 6, 1836 The Battle for the Alamo waged in San Antonio, TX.
FEBRUARY 11, 1839 University of Missouri in Columbia, MO, becomes the first college west of the Mississippi River.

1840
AUGUST 9, 1842 The Webster-Ashburton Treaty formalizes the U.S.-Canadian border east of the Rocky Mountains.
MAY 24, 1844 Samuel B. Morse sends the message, "What hath God wrought" over the first telegraph line from Washington, DC, to Baltimore, MD.
SEPTEMBER 1845 The "Great Potato Famine" begins, resulting in a surge of Irish immigration to the United States.
JANUARY 24, 1848 A worker discovers gold at Sutter's Mill in California.

1850
MARCH 20, 1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe publishes the anti-slavery masterpiece, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
JULY 8, 1853 Commodore Matthew Perry lands in Edo Bay, Japan, and negotiates a trade agreement.
MARCH 23, 1857 Elisha Otis installs the first elevator in a building at 488 Broadway in New York City, NY.
OCTOBER 16, 1859 John Brown leads a raid on the armory at Harper's Ferry, VA (now WV).

1860
APRIL 3, 1860 The first Pony Express riders leave St. Joseph, MO, heading west and San Francisco, CA, heading east.
APRIL 12, 1861-MAY 9, 1865 U.S. Civil War
MARCH 30, 1867 The United States buys Alaska from Russia.
DECEMBER 10, 1869 Wyoming becomes the first state to give women the right to vote.

1870
MARCH 30, 1870 The 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gives the right to vote to all men, regardless of race.
OCTOBER 8-10, 1871 A fire kills 300 people, destroys more than 3 square miles, and leaves 100,000 homeless in Chicago, IL.
MARCH 1, 1872 Yellowstone Park, which covers parts of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, becomes the first national park.
JUNE 25-26, 1872 Sioux and Cheyenne Indians defeat George Custer and the 7th U.S. Cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

1880
JULY 4, 1881 Booker T. Washington opens the Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Tuskegee, AL.
SEPTEMBER 4, 1882 Thomas Edison's Pearl Street Station in New York City, NY, begins generating electricity for public use.
JUNE 17, 1885 The Statue of Liberty arrives in New York Harbor from France.
MAY 31, 1889 A flood in Johnstown, PA, kills more than 2,200 people after rain destroys the South Fork Dam.

1890
JANUARY 1, 1892 The Ellis Island Immigration Station in New York Harbor opens as the main immigration center on the east coast.
MAY 1-OCTOBER 30, 1893 More than 25 million people visit the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, IL.
NOVEMBER 5, 1895 George B. Selden received the first U.S. patent for the automobile.
APRIL 25-AUGUST 12, 1898 The Spanish-American War

1900
SEPTEMBER 8, 1900 The deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history strikes Galveston, TX, when a hurricane kills 8,000.
DECEMBER 17, 1903 The Wright Brothers successfully fly a controlled, powered, and sustained heavier-than-air airplane at Kitty Hawk, NC.
APRIL 18, 1906 An earthquake kills 3,000 people and destroys 80 percent of San Francisco, CA.
OCTOBER 1, 1908 Ford Motor Company begins production of the Model T.

1910
APRIL 14-15, 1912 *RMS Titanic* strikes an iceberg and sinks in the North Atlantic Ocean.
AUGUST 15, 1914 The *SS Ancon* makes the first official transit of the Panama Canal.
APRIL 6, 1917-NOVEMBER 11, 1918 United States involvement in World War I.
JANUARY 16, 1919 Ratification of the 18th Amendment which prohibits the "manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors."
AUGUST 18, 1920 Ratification of the 19th Amendment which gives women the right to vote.
FEBRUARY 14, 1924 IBM Corporation founded, in part from Herman Hollerith's Tabulating Machine Company.
MAY 21, 1927 Charles Lindbergh lands his airplane "Spirit of St. Louis" in Paris, successfully completing the first trans-Atlantic flight.
OCTOBER 29, 1929 Crash of the stock market signals the beginning of the Great Depression.

1930
MARCH 3, 1931 The *Star-Spangled Banner* designated as the national anthem.
DECEMBER 5, 1933 The 21st Amendment repeals the prohibition on the sale of alcohol.
MAY 6, 1937 The German airship *Hindenburg* bursts into flames over Lakehurst Naval Air Station, NJ.
JUNE 25, 1938 The Fair Labor Standards Act establishes a minimum wage, overtime pay, and regulates employment for minors.

1940
SEPTEMBER 28, 1941 Ted Williams is the last player to end the season with a .400 batting average.
DECEMBER 7, 1941-SEPTEMBER 2, 1945 United States involvement in World War II.
JANUARY 10, 1946 First meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.
OCTOBER 14, 1947 Chuck Yeager becomes the first man to break the sound barrier while flying the experimental Bell X-1 at Mach 1.

1950
JUNE 25, 1950-JULY 27, 1953 United States involvement in Korean War.
APRIL 15, 1955 Ray Kroc opens the first franchised McDonald's in Des Plaines, IL.
MAY 31, 1955 U.S. Supreme Court orders the integration of all public schools.
APRIL 9, 1959 NASA selects seven military pilots to be the first astronauts.

1960
AUGUST 13, 1961 The Berlin Wall isolates West Berlin from surrounding Communist-controlled East Germany.
OCTOBER 1, 1962 James H. Meredith becomes the first black student to attend the University of Mississippi.
FEBRUARY 9, 1964 The Beatles make their U.S. debut on "The Ed Sullivan Show."
JULY 20, 1969 Astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin are the first men to land on the moon.
OCTOBER 1, 1970 Walt Disney World opens in Orlando, FL.
JUNE 9, 1973 Secretariat wins the first Triple Crown of horse racing since 1948.
APRIL 30, 1975 The last American combat personnel—10 U.S. Marines—depart Vietnam.
JULY 20, 1976 *Viking 1* space probe lands on Mars and sends back color photos of the surface.

1980
APRIL 12, 1980 The United States Olympic Committee votes to boycott the Summer Olympics in Moscow in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
AUGUST 12, 1981 IBM introduces the first personal computer, the IBM 5150.
JANUARY 28, 1986 The Space Shuttle *Challenger* explodes 74 seconds after liftoff.
NOVEMBER 9, 1989 East Germany opens the Berlin Wall, allowing its citizens to move freely between East and West Germany.

1990
AUGUST 1, 1990-FEBRUARY 28, 1991 U.S. participation in Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.
DECEMBER 25, 1991 Dissolution of the Soviet Union.
APRIL 19, 1995 Domestic terrorists explode a bomb outside the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK, killing 168 people.
JULY 5, 1996 In Scotland, Dolly the sheep is the first cloned mammal.

2000
SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 Hijacked airliners crash into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and a field in Shanksville, PA. In response, United States and allies invade Afghanistan.
OCTOBER 23, 2001 Apple Computer debuts a digital music device called the "iPod."
MARCH 19, 2003 The Iraq War begins.
AUGUST 25-29, 2005 Hurricane Katrina, the costliest hurricane in U.S. history, hits the Gulf coast and Florida to Texas.

2010
MAY 7, 2012 Nevada grants the first testing license for a driverless car.
FEBRUARY 2013 Scientists at Cornell University grow a living human ear using cow cells and a 3-D printer.
NOVEMBER 2, 2016 The Chicago Cubs win the World Series for the first time since 1908.

