Conclusion

With the submission of Isaac Huger’s returns for South Carolina on February 5, 1792, the sixteen U.S. marshals, Governor Blount, and their approximately 650 deputies completed the first census of the nation’s population—counting 3,929,214 people. When President Washington and Secretary of State Jefferson received the final census results they were disappointed in the final count. According to President Washington, he believed that the 1790 returns were so low because some people failed to complete the census for religious reasons, fears of being taxed, a general mistrust of the federal government, or because lazy deputies failed to count entire households. President Washington’s reasoning reveals some of the challenges that the marshals and their deputies experienced during the enumeration—some of which enumerators still experience today.

Since 1790, the U.S. Census Bureau has evolved into a complex federal agency that collects, analyzes, and interprets a vast amount of data related to the United States and its territories and island areas. While the scope of the Census Bureau’s mission has grown in scale, its primary objective, as specified in the U.S. Constitution, remains the foundational bedrock upon which the organization was built. Today, the United States has a population 327,167,434 people and encompasses a landmass of 3,531,905 sq. miles. The Census Bureau remains committed to expanding upon the legacy of public service that the first class of the U.S. Marshal Service established in 1789-1790.

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