

U.S. 1880 Census: Instructions to Enumerators

Department of Interior, Census Office,
May 1, 1880.

Under the provisions of the act approved March 3, 1879, amended by the act approved April 20, 1880, a census of the population, wealth, and industry of the United States is to be taken on, or of the date, June 1, 1880. The period of enumeration is by law limited to the month of June, and in cities having 10,000 inhabitants and over, according to the census of 1870, is still further limited to the first two weeks of June.

One hundred and fifty supervisors of census have been, or will be, appointed; one or more for each State or Territory.

The supervisor of census is by law charged with the following duties:

First. To propose to the Superintendent of the Census the apportionment of his district into subdivisions most convenient for the purpose of enumeration. These subdivisions are not allowed by law to exceed 4,000 inhabitants, according to the census of 1870, and can be made as much smaller as the good of the service may require. Administratively, the census office has favored the plan of small subdivisions; and of the 15,000 subdivisions reported up to the present date, the average estimate of population is not in excess of 2,000. Generally speaking, each existing civil division, whether a town, township, military district, "beat," or precinct, has been constituted one or more enumeration districts. In comparatively few cases two townships or more, of small population, have been constituted one enumeration district. It is anticipated that the total number of enumeration districts for all the States and Territories will be closely in the neighborhood of 28,000.

Second. To designate to the census office suitable persons, and, with the consent of the superintendent, to employ such persons as enumerators—one for each subdivision. It is provided by law that enumerators shall be selected solely with reference to their fitness, and without regard to their political or party affiliations. Enumerators are required to be residents of their respective districts, with the following exception to wit: That "in case it should occur in any enumeration district that no person qualified to perform, and willing to undertake, the duties of enumerator resides in that district, the supervisor may appoint any fit person, resident in the county, to be an enumerator in that district."

Third. To transmit to enumerators the printed forms and schedules issued by the census office, in quantities suited to the requirements of each subdivision.

Fourth. To communicate to enumerators the necessary instructions and directions relating to their duties, and to the methods of conducting the census, and to advise with and counsel enumerators in person and by letter, as freely and fully as may be required.

Fifth. To provide for the early and safe transmission to his office of the returns of enumerators, embracing all the schedules filled by them in the course of the enumeration, and for the due receipt and custody of such returns ending their transmission to the census office.

Sixth. To examine and scrutinize the returns of enumerators, in order to ascertain whether the work has been performed in all respects in compliance with the provisions of law, and whether any town or village or integral portion of the district has been omitted from enumeration.

Seventh. To forward to the Superintendent of the Census the completed returns of his district in such time and manner as shall be prescribed by the said superintendent, and in the event of discrepancies or deficiencies appearing in the returns from his district, to use all diligence in causing the same to be corrected or supplied.

Eighth. To make up and forward to the Superintendent of the Census the accounts required for ascertaining the amount of compensation due under the provisions of this act to each enumerator of his district.

APPOINTMENTS OF ENUMERATORS

Each enumerator will receive from the supervisor of his district a commission signed by said supervisor, and bearing the approval of the Superintendent of Census, authorizing him to perform all the duties and exercise all the functions of enumerator under the law. Upon the receipt of his commission (which should be promptly acknowledged to the supervisor on Form 7-333), the enumerator will proceed to take and execute the oath required by Section 7 of the act approved March 3, 1879, as amended by section 6 of the act approved April 20, 1880. A printed form of oath (7-174) will accompany each commission, upon which will be found full instructions relative to the taking and certifying of the same. Enumerators must strictly comply with the requirements therein contained.

The oath, duly filled, subscribed, and certified to, will then be forwarded to the supervisor, who will transmit the same to the census office. Enumerators should distinctly understand that, by accepting their commissions and qualifying thereunder, they bind themselves to carry the work on to completion, unless prevented by reasonable cause from doing so. They can not throw up the work from dissatisfaction or indolence.

DUTIES OF ENUMERATORS

It is by law made the duty of each enumerator, after being duly qualified as above, to visit personally each dwelling in his subdivision, and each family therein, and each individual living out of a family in any place of abode, and by inquiry made to the head of such family, or of the member hereof deemed most credible and worthy of trust, or of such individual living out of a family, to obtain each and every item of information and all the particulars required by the act of March 3, 1879, as amended by act of April 20, 1880.

By individuals living out of families is meant all persons occupying lofts in public buildings, above stores, warehouses, factories, and stables, having no other usual place of abode; persons living solitary in cabins, huts, or tents; persons sleeping on river boats, canal boats, barges, etc., having no other usual place of abode, and persons in police stations having no homes. Of the classes just mentioned, the most important, numerically, is the first, viz.: those persons, chiefly in cities, who occupy rooms in public buildings, or above stores, warehouses, factories and stables. In order to reach such persons, the enumerator will need not only to keep his eyes open to all indications of such casual residence in his enumeration district, but to make inquiry both of the parties occupying the business portion of such buildings and also of the police. A letter will be addressed from this office to the mayor of every large city of the United States, requesting the cooperation of the police, so far as it may be necessary to prevent the omission of the classes of persons herein indicated.

It is further provided by law that in case no person shall be found at the usual place of abode of such family, or individual living out of a family, competent to answer the inquiries made in compliance with the requirements of the act, then it shall be lawful for the enumerator to obtain the required information, as nearly as may be practicable, from the family or families, or persons or persons, living nearest to such place of abode.

It is the prime object of the enumeration to obtain the name, and the requisite particulars as to personal description, of every person in the United States, of whatever age, sex, color, race, or condition, with this single exception, viz.: that "Indians not taxed" shall be omitted from the enumeration.

INDIANS

By the phrase "Indians not taxed" is meant Indians living on reservations under the care of Government agents, or roaming individually, or in bands, over settled tracts of country.

Indians, not in tribal relations, whether full-bloods or half-breeds, who are found mingled with the white population, residing in white families, engaged as servants or laborers, or living in huts or wigwams on the outskirts of towns or settlements are to be regarded as a part of the ordinary population of the country for the constitutional purpose of the apportionment of Representatives among the States, and are to be embraced in the enumeration.

SOLDIERS

All soldiers of the United States Army, and civilian employees, and other residents at posts or on military reservations will be enumerated in the district in which they reside, equally with other elements of the population.

COURTESY ON THE PART OF ENUMERATORS

It is the duty of an enumerator, in the exercise of his authority to visit houses and to interrogate members of families resident therein as provided by law, to use great courtesy and consideration. A rude, peremptory, or overbearing demeanor would not only be a wrong to the families visited, but would work an injury to the census by rendering the members of those families less disposed to give information with fullness and exactness. It would doubtless be found in the long run to be an injury to the enumerator himself and to retard his work.

By the above remark it is not intended to imply that the enumerator need enter into prolix explanations, or give time to anything beyond the strictly necessary work of interrogation. It is entirely possible for the enumerator to be prompt, rapid, and decisive in announcing his object and his authority, and in going through the whole list of questions to be proposed, and at the same time not to arouse any antagonism or give any offense.

THE OBLIGATION TO GIVE INFORMATION

It is not within the choice of any inhabitant of the United States whether he shall or shall not communicate the information required by the census law. By the fourteenth section of the act approved March 2, 1879, it is provided:

"That each and every person more than twenty years of age, belonging to any family residing in any enumeration district, and in case of the absence of the heads and other members of any such family, then any agent of such family, shall be, and each of them thereby is, required, if thereto requested by the superintendent, supervisor, or enumerator, to render a true account, to the best of his or her knowledge, of every person belonging to such family in the various particulars required by law, and whoever shall willfully fail or refuse shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall forfeit and pay a sum not exceeding one hundred dollars."

Enumerators will, however, do well not unnecessarily to obtrude the compulsory feature of the enumeration. It will be found in the vast majority of cases that the persons called upon to give information will do so without objection or delay. No people in the world are so favorably disposed toward the work of the census as the people of the United States. With the high degree of popular intelligence here existing, the importance of statistical information is very generally appreciated; and if the enumerator enters upon his work in a right spirit, he will generally meet with a favorable and even a cordial response.

It is only where information required by law is refused that penalties for non-compliance need be adverted to. The enumerator will then, quietly but firmly, point out the consequences of persistency in refusal. It will be instructive to note that at the census of 1870 the agents of the census in only two or three instances throughout the whole of the United States found it necessary to resort to the courts for the enforcement of the obligation to give information as required by the census act.

It is further to be noted that the enumerator is not required to accept answers which he knows, or has reason to believe, are false. He has a right to a true statement on every matter respecting which he is bound to inquire; and he is not concluded by a false statement. Should any person persist in making statements which are obviously erroneous, the enumerator should enter upon the schedule of facts as nearly as he can ascertain them by his own observation or by inquiry of credible persons.

The foregoing remark is of special importance with reference to the statements of the heads of families respecting afflicted members of their households. The law requires a return in the case of each blind, deaf and dumb, insane or idiotic, or crippled person. It not infrequently happens that fathers and mothers, especially the latter, are disposed to conceal, or even deny, the existence of such infirmities on the part of children. In such cases, if the fact is personally known to the enumerator, or shall be ascertained by inquiry from neighbors, it should be entered on the schedules equally as if obtained from the head of the family.

A second class of cases under this head concerns the reporting of the values produced in agricultural or other occupations. The enumerator is not bound by any statement which he knows or has reason to believe to be false. His duty is to report the actual facts as nearly as he can ascertain them.

The enumerator is prohibited by law from delegating to any other person his authority to enter dwellings and to interrogate their inhabitants. The work of enumeration must be done by the enumerator in person, and can not be performed by proxy.

CARE IN FILLING SCHEDULES

In making the entries, whether of names or figures, upon the schedules, enumerators should be careful to write clearly and neatly, without interlineations, erasures, or blots, inasmuch as no copy of the schedules is provided to be made by the existing census law, and the original schedules are to be returned to the census office at Washington for examination and compilation. Great care should also be exercised in making the entries upon the proper line and in the proper column. A little heedlessness in this respect will often produce the most serious confusion. The schedules to be used at the tenth census have been arranged to help the enumerator to find the proper place and column through the use of occasional heavy lines, both horizontal and vertical, by which the eye may be guided to find, easily and surely, the true place of entry.

The schedules, in number deemed sufficient for the enumeration, will be sent to enumerators in portfolios, designed to be used in the enumeration. So far as possible, the schedules should be kept habitually in the portfolios until the enumeration is finished, and then sent, in the portfolios, to the supervisor of the district. The portfolios will be cased in cotton sacks for greater security in transmission through the mails.

SCHEDULES

Five regular schedules are created by law for the enumeration of the several subjects of inquiry at the census, as follows:

Schedule 1.—Population [Census office Form 7-296].

Schedule 2.—Agriculture [Census office Form 7-306].

Schedule 3.—Manufactures [Census office Form 7-261].

Schedule 4.—Social Statistics.

Schedule 5.—Mortality [Census office Form 7-222].

In the exercise of the authority conferred by section 18 of the act of March 3, 1879, the superintendent has determined to withdraw Schedule 4—Social Statistics—entirely from the enumerators, and to collect all the statistics therein required to be taken through special agents and experts.

So far as yet appointed, these special agents are:

Pauperism and Crime.—Fred. H. Wines, Springfield, Ill.

Wealth, Debt, and Taxation.—Robert P. Porter, Chicago, Ill.

Churches, Libraries, and Schools.—Henry Randall Waite, New York.

This has been done partly as a relief to the regular enumerators, the statistics required by that schedule being of a very complicated and difficult nature, and the compensation heretofore allowed by law very inadequate to the labor involved in their collection, and partly with a view to the improvement of the statistics to be obtained through the employment of officers specially conversant with the several subjects concerned. The regular schedules, therefore, to be carried about by the enumerators, in their house-to-house and farm-to-farm canvass of their districts, are reduced to four, viz.: Schedule 1, Population; Schedule 2, Agriculture; Schedule 3, Manufactures; Schedule 5, Mortality. As the notes upon the schedules themselves contain explanations and directions for use, it is not necessary here to speak of them much at length.

SCHEDULE No. 1 [7-296].—POPULATION

Upon it is to be entered, as previously noted, the name of every man, woman, and child who, *on the first day of June, 1880* shall have his or her "usual place of abode" within the enumerator's district. No child born between the 1st day of June, 1880, and the day of the enumerator's visit (say June 5 or 15 or 25) is to be entered upon the schedule. On the other hand, every person who was a resident of the district upon the 1st day of June, 1880, but between that date and the day of the enumerator's visit shall have died, should be entered on the schedule precisely as if still living. The object of the schedule is to obtain a list of the inhabitants on the 1st day of June, 1880, and all changes after that date, whether in the nature of gain or loss, are to be disregarded in the enumeration.

DWELLING HOUSES

In column No. 1 of this schedule is to be entered the number of the dwelling house in the order of visitation. A dwelling house, for the purpose of the census, means any building or place of abode, of whatever character, material or structure, in which any person is at the time living, whether in a room above a warehouse or factory, a loft above a stable or a wigwam on the outskirts of a settlement, equally with a dwelling house in the usual, ordinary sense of that term. Wholly uninhabited dwellings are not to be taken notice of.

FAMILIES

In the column numbered 2 is to be entered the number, in the order of visitation, of each family residing in the district. The word family, for the purposes of the census, includes persons living alone, as previously described, equally with families in the ordinary sense of that term, and also all larger aggregations of people having only the tie of a common roof and table. A hotel, with all its inmates, constitutes but one family within the meaning of this term. A hospital, a prison, an asylum is equally a family for the purposes of the census. On the other hand, the solitary inmate of a cabin, a loft, or a room finished off above a store constitutes a family in the meaning of the census act. In the case, however, of tenement houses and of the so-called "fiats" of the great cities, as many families are to be recorded as there are separate tables.

NAMES

In column numbered 3 is to be entered the name of every person whose "usual place of abode" on the 1st day of June, 1880, was in that family.

The census law furnishes no definition of the phrase, "usual place of abode," and it is difficult, under the American system of a protracted enumeration, to afford administrative directions which will wholly obviate the danger that some persons will be reported in two places and others not reported at all. Much must be left to the judgment of the enumerator, who can, if he will take the pains, in the great majority of instances satisfy himself as to the propriety of including or not including doubtful cases in his enumeration of any given family. In the case of boarders at hotels or students at schools or colleges, the enumerator can, by one or two well-directed inquiries, ascertain whether the person concerning whom the question may arise has, at the time, any other place of abode within another district at which he is likely to be reported. Seafaring men are to be reported at their land homes, no matter how long they may have been absent, if they are supposed to be still alive. Hence, sailors temporarily at a sailors' boarding or lodging house, if they acknowledge any other home within the United States, are not to be included in the family of the lodging or boarding house. Persons engaged in internal transportation, canal men, express men, railroad men, etc., if they habitually return to their homes in the intervals of their occupations, will be reported to their families, and not where they may be temporarily staying on the 1st of June, 1880.

In entering names in column 3, the name of the father, mother, or other ostensible head of the family (in the case of hotels, jails, etc., the landlord, jailer, etc.) is to be entered first of the family. The family name is to be written first in the column, and the full first or characteristic Christian or "given" name of each member of the family in order thereafter. It is desirable that the children of the family proper should follow in the order of their ages, as will naturally be the case. So long as the family name remains the same for the several members, it need not be repeated, provided a distinct horizontal line or dash be drawn in the place it would occupy, thus:

Smith, John.
____, Elizabeth.
____, J. Henry.

PERSONAL DESCRIPTION

The columns 4, 5, and 6, which relate to age, sex, and color, must in every case be filled. No return will be accepted where these spaces are left blank.

Ages.—The exact age in figures will be inserted in column 6 whenever the same can be obtained; otherwise, the nearest approximation thereto. Children who, on the 1st day of June, 1880, were less than a year old, will have their age stated by the fractional part of the year, as (one month), 1/12; (three months), 3/12; (nine months), 9/12, etc. In all other cases months will be omitted.

Color.—It must not be assumed that, where nothing is written in this column, "white" is to be understood. The column is always to be filled. Be particularly careful in reporting the class mulatto. The word is here generic, and includes quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood. Important scientific results depend upon the correct determination of this class in schedules 1 and 5.

OCCUPATION

In the column numbered 13 is to be reported the occupation of each person 10 years of age and upward.

Occupation.—The inquiry "profession, occupation, or trade," is one of the most important questions of the schedule. Make a study of it. Take especial pains to avoid unmeaning terms, or such as are too general to convey a definite idea of the occupation. Call no man a "factory hand," or a "mill operative." State the kind of a mill or factory. The better form of expression would be, "Works in a cotton mill," "Works in paper mill," etc. Do not call a man a "shoemaker," "bootmaker," unless he makes the entire boot or shoe in a small shop. If he works in (or for) a boot or shoe factory, say so.

Do not apply the word "jeweler" to those who make watches, watch chains, or jewelry in large manufacturing establishments.

Call no man a "commissioner," a "collector," an "agent," an "artist," an "overseer," a "professor," a "treasurer," a "contractor," or a "speculator," without further explanation.

When boys are entered as apprentices, state the trade they are apprenticed to, as "apprenticed to carpenter," "apothecary's apprentice." Students or scholars should be reported under those names.

When a lawyer, a merchant, a manufacturer, has retired from practice or business, say "retired lawyer," "retired merchant," etc. Distinguish between fire and life insurance agents. When clerks are returned, describe them as "clerk in store," "clerk in woolen mill," "R.R. clerk," "bank clerk," etc.

Describe no man as a "mechanic," if it is possible to describe him more accurately.

Distinguish between stone masons and brick masons.

Do not call a bonnet maker a bonnet manufacturer, a lace maker a lace manufacturer, a chocolate maker a chocolate manufacturer. Reserve the term "manufacturer" for proprietors of establishments; always give the branch of manufacture, as cotton manufacturer, woolen manufacturer, etc.

Whenever merchants or traders can be reported under a single word expressive of their special line, as "grocer," it should be done. Otherwise say dry goods merchant, coal dealer, etc.

Use the word "huckster" in all cases where it applies.

Be very particular to distinguish between farmers and farm laborers. In agricultural regions this should be one of the points to which the enumerator should especially direct his attention.

Confine the use of the words "glover," "hatter," and "furrier," to those who actual make, or make up, in their own establishments, all, or a part, of the gloves and hats or furs which they sell. Those who only sell these articles should be characterized as "glove dealer," "hat and cap dealer," "fur dealer."

Judges (state whether Federal or state, whether probate, police, or otherwise) may be assumed to be lawyers, and that addition, therefore, need not be given; but all other officials should have their profession designated, if they have any, as "retired" merchant, governor of Massachusetts," "paper manufacturer, representative in legislature." If anything is to be omitted, leave out the office and put in the occupation.

The organization of domestic service has not proceeded so far in this country as to render it worth while to make distinctions in the character of work. Report all as "domestic servants."

Cooks, waiters, etc., in hotels and restaurants will be reported separately from domestic servants, as "cook in hotel," etc.

The term "housekeeper" will be reserved for such persons as receive distinct wages or salary for the service. Women keeping house for their own families or for themselves, without any other gainful occupation, will be entered as "keeping house." Grown daughters assisting them will be reported without occupation.

You are under no obligation to give any man's occupation just as he expresses it. If he can not tell intelligibly what it is, find out what he does and characterize his profession accordingly.

The inquiry as to occupation will not be asked in respect to infants or children too young to take any part in production. Neither will the doing of domestic errands or family chores out of school be considered an occupation. "At home" or "attending school" will be the best entry in a majority of cases. But if a boy or girl, whatever the age, or earning money regularly by labor, contributing to the family support, or appreciably assisting in mechanical or agricultural industry, the occupation should be stated.

PLACE OF BIRTH

In column numbered 24 is to be reported the "Place of birth" of every person named upon the schedule. If born within the United States the State or Territory will be named, whether it be the State or Territory in which the person is at present residing or not. If of foreign birth, the country will be named as specifically as possible. Instead of writing "Great Britain" as the place of birth, give the particular country, as England, Scotland, Wales. Instead of "Germany" specify the State, as Prussia, Baden, Bavaria, Wurtemberg, Hesse-Darmstadt, etc.

CIVIL DIVISIONS

In filling schedule 1 the enumerator should begin each township (if there be more than one in a district), borough, etc., with a new page. The population of villages within townships should be carefully distinguished on the schedules. The population of such a village should, in all cases, begin with a new page; and when the inhabitants of a village have all been entered the remainder of the page should be left blank, except with the remark "Here ends the village of _____."

So far as possible the population of small unincorporated villages and hamlets should be separately reported, as in the cases of incorporated villages and boroughs.

Wherever an institution is to be enumerated, as a hospital, an asylum, an alms-house, a jail, or a penitentiary, the enumerator will leave three lines blank, and enter the name of the institution (as "St. Mary's Hospital," "Protestant Orphan Asylum," "Insane Asylum," "City jail," etc.) above the names and the inmates. All persons having their "usual place of abode" in such institutions, whether officers, attendants, beneficiaries, or persons in

confinement, should then be entered consecutively on the schedules, and at the close of the list another space of three lines should be left blank.

NUMBERING PAGES

Each enumerator will number the pages of his population schedules in exact order as filled, and when filled: the first page (A) of the first sheet must be numbered 1; the second page of that sheet (B) 2, the third page (C) 3, the fourth page (D) 4, the first page of the second sheet 5, the first page of the third sheet 9, and so on throughout his entire subdivision.

The enumerator should never place one sheet with another, but fill always the four pages of one sheet (in the order of the letters A, B, C, D) before making any entries on the next sheet.

STREETS AND STREET NUMBERS IN CITIES

The first two columns (not numbered in series) on the population schedule require the entry, in cities, of the street and street number of each occupied dwelling house. The name of the stre