

GENEALOGY 101 – CENSUS RECORDS

Burke Historical Society – 4 Oct. 2016

Burke Centre Library

General Tips

- **Assume Nothing!**
- Raise as Many Questions as Answered
- Enumerator Instructions – see http://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/
- Undercounts Happened
- Records were Lost (1890)
- Take it all with a Grain of Salt
- **Use Census Records to Find Other Records**

Where to Find

Date of Birth – Other Birth Records

- 1900: month and year of birth
- 1850-1880 and 1910-1940: age, which can be helpful in tracking a person from one Census to the next, and for finding other records
- 1870 and 1880: give month if born "within the year"¹

Place of Birth – Birth Records

- 1850-1940: state or country of birth, useful in finding other records

Date of Marriage – Marriage Records

- 1850 -1880: whether the person had married within the year
- 1900: the number of years of marriage for each married person.
- 1940: supplemental questions for women on age at first marriage, and if she has been married more than once.²

¹ "Within the year" means during the year before the official census day

² The 1940 Supplemental Questions were asked of 5% of population.

Number of Children – Birth and Death/Cemetery Records (have any children been missed?)

- 1900 and 1910: how many children were **born** to each woman, how many of those children were **still living** on Census day.
- 1940 Supplemental Question for Women: How many children born.

Immigration – Passenger Records

- 1900 – 1930: year of immigration to the United States

Naturalization – Naturalization Records

- 1870: check mark for "Male Citizens of the U.S. of 21 years of age and upwards." If the person was a foreign-born citizen, this means that he had become naturalized by 1870.
- 1900 – 1930: naturalization status. The answers are "Al" for alien, "Pa" for "first papers," and "Na" for naturalized.
- 1920: year naturalized.

Foreign-born Parents – Immigration Records

- 1870: check marks if the person's parents were "of foreign birth"
- 1880, 1900 – 1930: parents' birthplace (1940 Supplemental Question)

Military Service – Service/Pension Records

- **Service in Union or Confederate Army/ Navy**
 - 1910: whether the person was a "survivor of the Union or Confederate Army or Navy." The answers are "UA" for Union Army, "UN" for Union Navy, "CA" for Confederate Army, and "CN" for Confederate Navy.

1930: Civil War veterans with the abbreviation "CW"
- **Military Service, 1898-1918, in Major Wars**
 - 1930: military service in other wars with "Sp" for Spanish-American War, "Phil" for Philippine Insurrection, "Box" for Boxer Rebellion, "Mex" for Mexican Expedition, and "WW" for World War I (1940 Supplemental).