

[Genealogical Guide to Monroe County, New York](#)

Census Records

The Constitution of the United States provides that the number of delegates to the House of Representatives would be determined by the population of the states. In order to determine the population of each state, the federal government began taking a population census of the country in 1790 and every ten years since. The purpose of the census was primarily statistical; therefore early census records list only the name of the head of household and the number of other individuals residing there in various age groups. These age groupings got more exacting between the 1790 and 1840 census. All of what is now Monroe County was Ontario County in the 1790 and 1800 census. In the 1810 and 1820 census, the towns west of the Genesee River were in Genesee County and the towns east of the River were still in Ontario County.

Beginning in 1850, the federal population schedules listed the name, age, sex, and relationship to the head of the household of **each** person, including boarders and servants. The census records are valuable tools for the genealogist as a replacement for vital records before 1880. Most of the 1890 population schedules, including all but a fragment of New York State schedules, were destroyed by a 1921 fire of a Commerce Department building. Federal census records are available only for government use for 72 years from “census day.” In 2012, the 1940 population schedules were first opened to the public. This is the most current federal census available for genealogical research.

All the federal census records are indexed and available online at most of the major genealogy websites, both commercial and free. Indexing quality varies from one website to another. Image quality often varies too so if you are having trouble making out a page image, try another website. Some public libraries have free access to some commercial websites as do most Family History Centers.

The [Local History & Genealogy Division](#) of Rochester Public Library also has typed alphabetical copies of the 1850 census for each town and each ward of Rochester. They also have a typed alphabetical booklet for the 2nd Ward of Rochester for 1860. The only reason to look at those is that whoever did the transcriptions may have interpreted spellings different than the online indexes.

New York State also took a census in 1825, 1835, 1845, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, 1905, 1915 and 1925. The census from 1825 to 1845 were similar to the federal census of the period in that they list only the name of the head of the household and age groupings for the rest of the family. These early censuses for Monroe County were either lost or destroyed so long ago that no one is sure of what happened to them. The originals of the NY State census for Monroe County beginning in 1855 are in the Local History & Genealogy Division of the Rochester Public Library. They ask that you first check online and only ask to see the originals if you can't read them online. Although some volumes have had some repairs in recent years, the originals are still in very delicate condition.

Beginning with the 1855 census, the state schedules list all individuals in the household, including boarders and servants. From 1855 to 1875 the state census has a unique field. The record lists the **county** of birth for a person that was born in New York State. The 1855 census also asks how long the person has lived in their place of residence. At the end of each election district or Rochester city ward there is a section of agricultural statistics for those engaged in agriculture. There is a card file index for the 1855 census for all the suburban towns of Monroe County, but does not include the City of Rochester. It is **only** in the Local History section of the Rochester Public Library. This file, alphabetical by the head of the household, was prepared by members of the *Genealogical Roundtable of Rochester*. The 1855 census is indexed and has online images on both [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#).

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I. Population. CENSUS of the Inhabitants in the First Ward Election District of the City of Rochester in the County of Monroe taken by me on the Fourteenth day of June, 1855.

Edw. H. Thurston Marshal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	VOTERS				20	21		
														15	16	17	18				
149	Female	4000	177	Robert King	62	M			Wife	1	1	39	Carver	1							
				Henry Bineman	38	M		Child	Wife	1		20	Levee	1							
				Sarah A. Bineman	37	F		Child	Levee	1		26									
				Elizabeth J. Bineman	7	F		Child	Monroe			7									
				Alma S. Bineman	4	F		Child	Monroe			4									
				Rebecca Childman	20	F		Servant	Other land			14									

1855 NY Census Sample

The 1865 NY census asks how many times the person has been married and asks women how many children they have had. If a man was currently or had been in the military, there are separate sections every few pages that give details of their military service. At the end of election districts or city wards there are sections that ask for marriages and deaths within the last year. Also at the end of sections are deaths in military and agricultural statistics for people engaged in farming. The 1865 NY census is indexed and has online images on both [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#).

The 1875 census has the marriages and deaths within the last year at the end of each election district or ward. It also has the section with agricultural statistics. [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#) both have indexes and images of the census pages.

The 1892 NY census was a big step backwards. There isn't any family number so it is sometimes difficult to tell where each family starts and stops. The only other information asked for on this census were; age, in what country born, citizen or alien and occupation. Both [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#) have indexes and page images available online.

The 1905, 1915 and 1925 NY census all are similar. They return those columns that ask for address and relationships that were left out of the 1892 census. The 1925 census also has a column for naturalized citizens to list the date they were naturalized. All three of these census are indexed on both [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#). The 1905 census also has images available on both [FamilySearch](#) and [Ancestry](#). If you do a search on [FamilySearch](#) on the [1915 census](#) or [1925 census](#), the images it links to are on [Ancestry](#). So if you have a subscription to [Ancestry](#), it is just as easy to do a search on [Ancestry](#) directly in the [1915 census](#) and [1925 census](#). Remember that if you don't subscribe to [Ancestry](#) than you can search for free at many libraries and local Family History Centers.

There is another way to get free access to **some** of the NY State census records on [Ancestry](#). Go to [this page](#) from the NY State Archives. It gets complicated to search off this web page so start by watching the video on that page. Next, you need to enter any zip code from New York State and then click the "Submit" button. You will be prompted to sign up for a free account if you don't already have one. That will send you to a special web page on [Ancestry](#) for searching the collection New York State records. Available records on this web page

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are the 1892, 1915 and 1925 census records besides some other records that came from NY State government agencies.

