

By the Kansas Historical Society

Understanding the Census

What is a census? A census is a systematic way to collect and record information about people in the U.S. This is done every 10 years in years ending with a zero. In Kansas a census is also made every 10 years, but in years that end with five instead of zero. Census records are still made today.

Why take a census?

The federal government records census information because the U.S. Constitution requires it. Information collected for a census is used to determine representation from the states in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Censuses record other important information such as how many people work in what occupations and how many children live in the household. All of this information helps planners see trends in population changes. This information is helpful to plan for where schools will be built and to see the make-up of our population.

For historians the census is an important set of records that are useful for understanding the past.

Taking a census in the 1800s

Long ago census takers would go from house to house to collect the information and write it into ledger books. Each household was recorded separately. Every person living in the household was counted. In some census records the names of all of the people living in the household were recorded. Sometimes this included grandparents and unrelated people who helped in the house or on the farm. In other censuses only the head of the household had his or her name recorded and other members were just counted. Most censuses ask for the name of the country or state where a person was born. Some even record the country or state where the individual's parents were born.

1	Elizabeth	W F 28	Wife	1	Keeping house	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
2	Bauer, Andrew	W M 13	Boarder	1	Work on farm	Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
3	63 68	Schneffer, Peter	W M 58	1	Farmer	Bavaria	Bavaria	Bavaria
4	Theresa	W F 44	Wife	1	Keeping house	Bavaria	Bavaria	Bavaria
5	Samuel	W M 23	Son	1	Work on farm	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
6	John	W M 19	Son	1	Work on farm	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
7	Mary	W F 17	Daughter	1	At home	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
8	Theresa	W F 15	Daughter	1	At home	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
9	Frank	W M 12	Son	1	Work on farm	Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
10	Philomena	W F 9	Daughter	1		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
11	Anthony	W M 7	Son	1		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
12	Peter	W M 4	Son	1		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
13	Francisca	W F 1/2	Daughter	1		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria

German Speakers in Kansas in 1880

1880 Federal Census
Inhabitants in Eudora Township in the County of Douglas

Name	Color	Sex	Age	Relationship	Profession	Place of birth	Place of birth of father	Place of birth of mother
Schoenhofer, Peter	W	M	58	head	farmer	Bavaria	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Theresa	W	F	44	wife	keeping house	Bavaria	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Samuel	W	M	23	son	works on farm	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, John	W	M	19	son	works on farm	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Mary	W	F	17	daughter	at home	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Theresa	W	F	15	daughter	at home	Missouri	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Frank	W	M	12	son	works on farm	Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Philomenia	W	F	9	daughter		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Anthony	W	M	7	son		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Peter	W	M	4	son		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria
Schoenhofer, Francisca	W	F	1 mo	daughter		Kansas	Bavaria	Bavaria

1880 Federal Census
Inhabitants in Hanover Township in the County of Washington

Name	Color	Sex	Age	Relationship	Profession	Place of birth	Place of birth of father	Place of birth of mother
Barttles, Chas	W	M	45		farmer	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Kastin	W	F	35	wife	keeping house	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Hetty	W	F	17	daughter	at home	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Louisa	W	F	12	daughter		Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Mary	W	F	9	daughter		Illinois	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Frederica	W	F	7	daughter		Illinois	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Carolina	W	F	5	daughter		Illinois	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg
Barttles, Chas	W	M	3	son		Illinois	Mecklenburg	Mecklenburg