
Prairie Gold – Researching in Iowa Records

Allen County Public Library

July 28, 2022

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Iowa Genealogical Society

- **Iowa Census Records**

- Special ones
- Mid-decade ones
- Neither Ancestry nor FamilySearch have complete sets
 - But between the two of them, all censuses are scanned and indexed
- Mid-decade censuses have wonderful extra information
- Ancestry collection *Iowa, US, State Census Collection, 1836-1925*
- FamilySearch *Iowa Indexed Historical Records* collection
- See pages 4-6 for detailed lists

- **Iowa Vital Records**

- Remember this date – July 1, 1880
- All vital records originate on the county level
- Marriage records
 - Were recorded on the county level as soon as a county was created. FamilySearch has transcribed and indexed these early county records
 - The state did not get copies until July 1, 1880
 - Beginning July 1, 1880 extensive information included
 - County records available in FamilySearch *Iowa Indexed Historical Records* collection

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- Transcribed copies of county records also available on Ancestry
 - Indexed images of state copies in Ancestry collection - *Iowa, US, Marriage Records, 1880-1945*
 - Death records
 - Do not begin until July 1, 1880
 - Compliance was spotty until WW I era
 - County records available in FamilySearch *Iowa Indexed Historical Records* collection
 - Transcribed copies of county records also available on Ancestry
 - Indexed images of state copies in Ancestry collection— *Iowa, US, Death Records 1880-1904, 1921-1952*
 - Birth records
 - Do not begin until July 1, 1880 (except for delayed birth registrations)
 - Compliance was spotty until WW I era
 - County records available in FamilySearch *Iowa Indexed Historical Records* collection
 - Transcribed copies of county records also available on Ancestry
 - Indexed images of state copies in Ancestry collection— *Iowa, US, Births (series) 1880-1904, 1921-1944 and Delayed Births (series) 1856-1940*
 - Adoptee Birth Records
 - Major law change in 2021
 - Adoptees 18 and over can request copy of original birth certificate
 - Biological parents can ask for names to be redacted

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- Request application form from the Iowa Department of Public Health <https://idph.iowa.gov/health-statistics/Open-Adoption>
 - **Military Records**
 - GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) post records
 - Indexed images available in FamilySearch collection *Iowa, Grand Army of the Republic Membership Records 1861-1949*
 - WW II Veterans Bonus Records
 - Ancestry Iowa, US, WW II Bonus Case Files, 1947-1954
 - Ancestry Iowa, US, WW II Bonus Case Files for Beneficiaries, 1947-1959
 - FamilySearch collection Iowa, Armed Forces, Graves Registrations c 1835-1998
 - **Free Newspapers Online**
 - TheAncestorHunt.com/newspaper-research-links
 - Iowa Genweb Project
 - www.IAGenWeb.org
 - Check out each county's website
 - Special Projects Tab on opening page
 - WPA Graves index
 - State Census templates
<https://iagenweb.org/census/ictempla.htm>
 - Iowa Genealogical Society
 - www.iowagenealogy.org
 - Follow us on Facebook
 - Special Interest Groups for members – meet monthly virtually- German, Norwegian, Irish, African-American; FamilyTreeMaker, Legacy and RootsMagic software; Ancestry; DNA; Publishing and Printing.

State Censuses of Iowa 1836-1897

The Special Ones

Year	Counties - Town	
1836	Dubuque & Des Moines (Heads of household only)	1,2
1836-1840	Sac & Fox Nation (Every name)	1
1838	Van Buren (Heads of household only)	1
1844	Keokuk (Heads of household only)	1
1846	Louisa, Polk, Wapello. (Heads of Household only)	1
1847	Clinton, Davis, Louisa, Marion, Scott, Van Buren, Wapello. (Heads of household only)	1
1849	Benton, Boone - original images. (Heads of household only)	1
	Clinton, Jackson, Louisa, Madison, Poweshiek, Scott, Van Buren, Washington - typed index and original images. (Heads of household only)	
1850	Van Buren Lick Creek Township only, typed. (Heads of household only)	1
1851	Cedar, Clinton, Decatur, Johnson, Madison, Mahaska, Page, Scott, Washington. (Heads of household only)	1
	Guthrie, Iowa, Pottawatomie. (Every name)	1
	Jackson (Statistical summary only)	
1852	41 Counties (Heads of household only)	1
1853	Warren (Heads of household only)	1
1854	50 Counties (Heads of household only)	1,5
1859	Carroll, Palo Alto, Plymouth, Pocahontas, Sac. (Heads of household only)	1
	BlackHawk, Buchanan, Montgomery, Scott, Union, Washington. (Statistical summaries only)	
1860	State version for all 99 counties, some with special schedules	1
1870	Van Buren Lick Creek Township only, typed. (Every name)	1
1881	Cerro Gordo - Mason City (Every name)	1,3
1882	Lee-Keokuk.	4
1888	Kossuth - Algona (Every name)	1,3
1889	Cherokee - town of Cherokee, Polk - town of (North)Des Moines. (Every name)	1,3
1891	Clay - Spencer, Emmet - Emmetsburg, Montgomery -Villisca. (Every name)	1,3
1892	Carroll-Carroll, Wright-Eagle Grove, Emmet-Estherville, Green-Jefferson, Tama-Tama (Every name)	1,3
1893	Franklin-Hampton, Story-Ames & Nevada, Davis-Bloomfield. (Every name)	1,3
	Appanoose-Mystic, Fayette-West Union.	3
1896	Fayette - town of Oelwein. (Every name)	1,3
1897	Chickasaw - town of New Hampton. (Every name)	1,3

1 Available on Ancestry.com. *Iowa, State Census Collection 1836-1925.*

2 *The First Census of the original counties of Dubuque and Demoinis Taken in July 1836 2 Vol*
Available on FamilySearch.org. Search in catalog - Keywords Dubuque 1836

3 Available on FamilySearch.org. Search in catalog - Place - name of town

4 Available on FamilySearch.org, only at Affiliate libraries or Family History Centers
Search in catalog - Place - Lee, Keokuk

5 Available on FamilySearch.org. Search in catalog - Keywords 1854 Census of Various Counties
Adams - Lee, Page, Polk, Pottawatomie & Poweshiek online. Remaining on microfilm only.

State Historical of Iowa Library in Des Moines has microfilm copies of all years.

The Iowa Genealogical Society Library has 1851-1852-1853-1854 censuses on microfilm.

State Censuses of Iowa 1856-1925

The Mid-Decade Ones

In addition to the normal questions of name, age, sex, marital status, birth place, occupation and literacy, each census asked questions which help to give a better picture of your ancestor and which may provide clues to other places to search.

The Iowa State Historical Library and the Iowa Genealogical Society have all censuses on film.

- 1856 Complete except for Warren County
Online at Ancestry.com *Iowa, State Census Collection 1836-1925*
Column 9, Years Resident in Iowa
Columns 20-43, Agricultural Schedules
Columns 44-45, Manufacturing Schedules
- 1885 As of January 1, 1885
Online at Ancestry.com *Iowa, State Census Collection 1836-1925*, (missing some townships)
Online at FamilySearch.org (missing some townships)
Column E, Age at birthday in 1884
Column D, Address if in town
Column D, Section description (SE 1/4 of SW 1/4) in country
Column J, County if born in Iowa
Column K, State if not born in Iowa
Column L, Country if foreign born
Columns M-N, Parents foreign born
Column P, Entitled to vote
Column Q, Alien who has taken out 1st papers
Column R, Alien who has not taken out 1st papers
- 1895 As of January 1, 1895
23 incomplete counties online at Ancestry.com *Iowa, State Census Collection 1836-1925*
Complete census at FamilySearch.org
Column 13, Place of birth. Iowa County, US State, Foreign Country
Columns 14-15, Parents foreign born
Column 17, Religious belief
Column 19, Entitled to vote
Column 23, Foreigners not naturalized
Column 24, Births in 1894
Column 25, Deaths in 1894
Columns 29-32, Military Service in the Civil War
Columns 33-34, Soldiers in the Mexican war
Residents of State Institutions are in separate section on FamilySearch
- 1905 Individual card for each resident
Ancestry.com does not have images of the cards. Has list by location by card #
Complete census at FamilySearch.org
Own home or farm?

Value of home or farm
How much incumbrance (mortgage) on home or farm
If foreign born, naturalized?
Years in US
Years in Iowa
Months unemployed in 1904
Military Service - Civil War, Mexican War, Spanish War

1915 Individual card for each resident
Complete census on both Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org
Months unemployed in 1914
Total earnings for 1914
Extent of education
Own home or farm?
Value of home or farm
How much incumbrance (mortgage) on home or farm
If foreign born, naturalized?
Years in US
Years in Iowa
Military Service - Civil War, Mexican War, Spanish War
Church affiliation

1925 Complete census on both Ancestry.com & FamilySearch.org
Taken January 1, 1925
Page 1
Column 1, Street address if in town
Column 4C, Age at last birthday
Column 5A, House owned or rented?
Column 5B, If owned, free or mortgaged?
Column 5C, Value of home
Column 5D, Amount of mortgage as of Jan 1, 1925
Column 5E, If rented, monthly rent
Column 5G, Amount of insurance on home
Column 6A, If foreign born, naturalized?
Column 6B, Years in U.S.
Column 6C, Years in Iowa
Column 7, Education including highest grade reached
Page 2
Columns 8B, 8C, 8D, Name, birthplace & age of father
Columns 8E, 8F, 8G, Name, birthplace & age of mother
Column 8H, Place of marriage of parents
Page 3
Column 9, Military Service - Civil War, Spanish War, World War
Column 11, Church affiliation