

Baseline Survey Census Research Lycoming County

The Federal population census is an important tool for understanding the history of a community and how that community has changed over time. The census provides data that can help us to better understand Pennsylvania's diverse racial and ethnic populations (referred to as underrepresented communities for purposes of this Baseline Survey effort), where these populations settled historically, and how they left their mark on the Commonwealth's landscape.

Pennsylvania has a history of being ethnically diverse in both the urban areas of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and in the commonwealth's smaller cities and rural areas. Native Americans have called Pennsylvania's lands home for centuries. Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish settlers moved to Pennsylvania in the late 17th century, and were quickly followed by English, German and other Europeans by the turn of the 18th century. Both enslaved and free Africans and African Americans lived in Pennsylvania as early as 1690 and the commonwealth's Black communities grew exponentially with the First Great Migration in the early 20th century. By the mid-20th century, people from almost all racial and ethnic groups had settled in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania's historical racial and ethnic diversity and the surviving older and historic places that embody that diversity is not well understood or well documented. By understanding what populations were present, when, and where they lived, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) can identify and document the older and historic places associated with these underrepresented communities through targeted survey work.

Once this information is collected and added to PA-SHARE, Pennsylvania's online database of older and historic places, this important information will be available to professionals and the public alike, providing everyone with data to support the need to tell broader and more inclusive stories.

It is important to note that census data is only one part of the extensive research that is necessary to understand Pennsylvania's varied and changing communities over the last four hundred years. The information collected, methods for collecting it, and categories and definitions changed from census taker to census taker and from year to year.

Lycoming County is one of the fifty-two counties in Pennsylvania where PA SHPO and its contractors will be working over the next three years to collect information about historic places that are underrepresented in Pennsylvania's statewide historic inventory.

It is important that PA SHPO collects information about the older and historic places that Pennsylvanians value in their communities. PA SHPO welcomes public recommendations for places that should be documented in this survey. If you would like to provide your feedback, please fill out this [short survey form](#).

Learn More:

[Historic Resources Survey in Pennsylvania](#)
[PA SHPO's Baseline Survey Project](#)
[PA-SHARE](#)



Bethel AME Church, Hepburn St, Williamsport



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Lycoming County

Lycoming County was formed from Northumberland County in April 1795 and reached its current boundaries in 1860. There are 52 municipalities in Lycoming County with a population of 116,111 as of the 2010 federal census. Through time, Lycoming County's total population has steadily increased, while **Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)** of Lycoming County experienced periods of growth from 1870 to 1890 and 1940 to 1970.

The first federal population census for Lycoming was in 1800 and counted 4,237 inhabitants in the county: 3,982 white people, 38 enslaved Black people, and 217 other "Free People" except Native Americans. As the table below shows, population in Lycoming County has grown with every census since. Almost two hundred years later, the total population numbers for Lycoming County have changed drastically but the ratio of white to non-white residents has not.

Native American and Chinese people are first counted as Lycoming County residents in 1880 and 1890, respectively, albeit in very small numbers in Williamsport City and larger boroughs. Hispanic, Latino, other Asian and Pacific Islander people were either not living in Lycoming County between 1790 and 1970 or, more likely, they were counted as part of the "White" or "Other" categories.

	White	Black	Native American	Chinese	Other
1790	0	0	0	0	0
1800	3,982	38	0	0	217
1810	0	0	0	0	0
1820	10,751	120	0	0	383
1830	0	0	0	0	0
1840	20,392	359	0	0	0
1850	25,890	367	0	0	0
1860	36,810	399	0	0	0
1870	46,786	852	0	0	0
1880	56,508	977	1	0	0
1890	69,085	1,489	1	4	0
1900	74,310	1,350	2	0	0
1910	79,629	1,182	0	1	0
1920	82,016	1,080	2	2	0
1930	92,352	1,057	0	0	0
1940	91,383	1,144	0	0	10
1950	98,813	1,250	0	0	32
1960	108,046	1,245	0	0	76
1970	111,449	1,305	0	0	252

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This graph shows the relationship between total BIPOC populations (left side axis) and total population (right side axis) in Lycoming County from 1790 to 1970. Significant events that have a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Lycoming County's total populations at these important points in time.

No data is available prior to 1800 because Lycoming County was not yet formed. Data from the 1810 Census is unavailable at the county level. Data from the 1830 Census did not distinguish between White and Free Black people at the county level.

