

# Baseline Survey Census Research Blair 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.

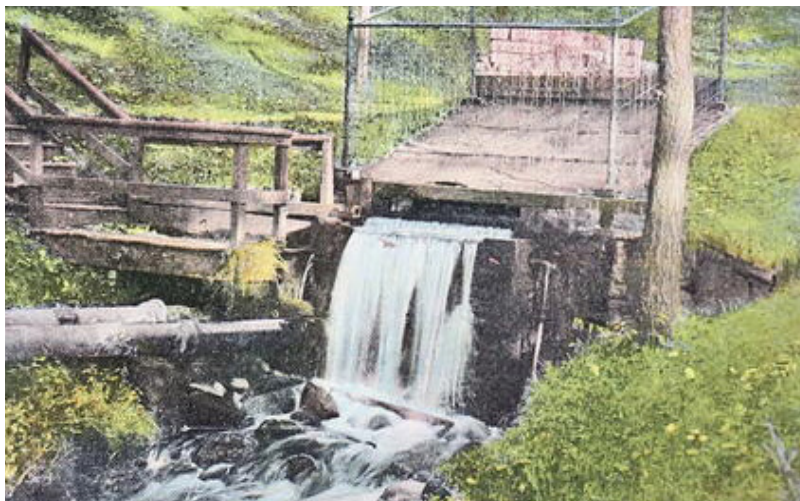
Pennsylvania's historical racial and ethnic diversity and the surviving older and historic places that embody that diversity is not well understood or well documented. By understanding what populations were present, when, and where they lived, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) 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.

Blair County is one of the fifty-two counties in Pennsylvania where PA SHPO and its contractors will be working over the next two 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 Pennsylvanian's 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](#).



Historic Postcard of Roaring Springs, Blair County, PA

## Learn More:

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

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## Blair County

Blair County was established on February 26, 1846. There are 25 municipalities within the county and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population was 122,822. The population of Blair County was first recorded in the 1850 US Census. A total of 21,777 inhabitants were recorded, 21,517 of whom were White and 206 of whom were “Free Colored” people. The total population of Blair County experienced consistent upward growth from 1850 to 1940, peaking in 1940 with 140,358 total residents. From 1940 to 1970, the total population of Blair County plateaued, maintaining around the 130,000 people.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Blair County have historically represented 1% or less of the total population of Blair County from 1850 to 1970. The BIPOC population in Blair County remained predominantly Black through 1970. The Black population was at its largest in 1920 at 1,361 individuals. The total BIPOC population of Blair County was also at its highest in 1920 and in the following decades, the total number of BIPOC residents in Blair County would gradually decrease.

Asians were documented as living in Blair County as early as 1890 and were predominantly of Chinese descent until 1960. In 1960, the number of Japanese people (12) equaled the number of Chinese (12). Three Filipino people were also first recorded as living in Blair County in the 1960s. Native Americans were recorded in Blair County in 1890, 1910, 1920, 1930, 1950, and 1960. Twenty-one people of Hispanic descent were recorded in the 1930 census. The “Other” category has been used to describe different groups through time. Prior to emancipation, “Other” specifically noted BIPOC people, predominantly Black Americans, who were not enslaved. In later decades, it is inconclusive whether “Other” includes only mixed-race people or people of Black, Native American, Asian, or Hispanic descent during any given decade.

	White	Black	Native American	Asian	Hispanic	Other
<b>1790</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1800</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1830</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	21517	206	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	27546	283	0	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	38480	392	0	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	52257	483	0	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	70057	801	2	5	0	1
<b>1900</b>	84811	784	0	4	0	0
<b>1910</b>	108060	786	2	10	0	0
<b>1920</b>	126957	1361	1	15	0	0
<b>1930</b>	138531	1268	3	16	21	1
<b>1940</b>	13181	1164	0	0	0	13
<b>1950</b>	138364	1124	4	15	0	7
<b>1960</b>	136093	1126	9	27	0	15
<b>1970</b>	134138	0	0	0	0	1218



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## Blair County

This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Blair County from 1790 to 1970. Significant events that had a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Blair County's total populations at these important points in time. Data for Blair County is not available prior to 1850 because the county had not yet been formally organized.

