

Baseline Survey Census Research Butler 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.

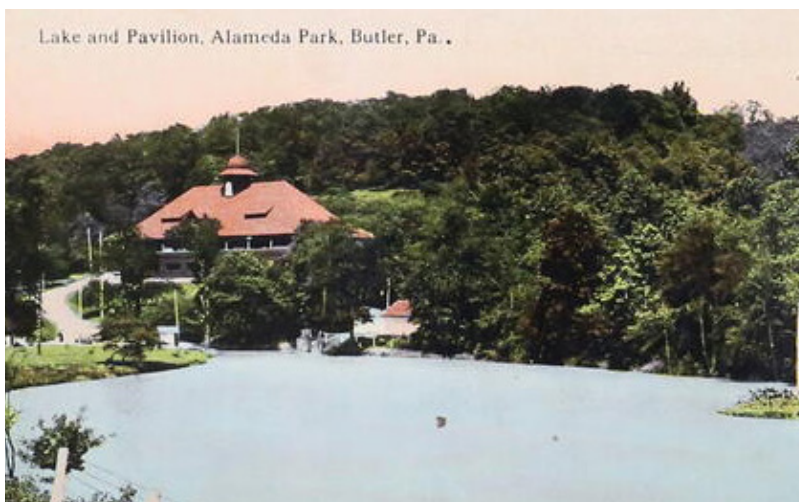
Pennsylvania's historical racial and ethnic diversity and the surviving older and historic places that embody that diversity is not well understood or well documented. By understanding what populations were present, when, and where they lived, the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO)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

Butler 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 Alameda Park Pavilion in the City of Butler, Butler County

Learn More:

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



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Butler County

Butler County was established on March 12, 1800. It has 57 municipalities and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population was 193,763. The population of Butler County was first recorded in the 1800 US Census. A total of 3,916 inhabitants were recorded, 3,913 of whom were White, 1 of whom was an enslaved Black person, and 2 of whom were “Other Free Persons” of non-White race. The total population of Butler County experienced consistent upward growth from 1800 to 1970. The total population raised to five figures by 1820 with 10,421 residents, and then reached six figures in 1960 at 114,639.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Butler County have historically represented less than 1% of the total population from 1800 to 1970. The BIPOC population in Butler County has been predominantly Black through 1970. The Black population was at its largest in 1960 at 513 individuals. While the total BIPOC population between 1960 and 1970 increased, the number of Black Butler County residents decreased to 437.

Asians were documented as living in Butler County as early as 1890 and were predominantly of Chinese descent until 1960. In 1960, the number of Japanese people (20) exceeded the number of Chinese (11) and Filipino people (1). This trend would continue into 1970, where there were 37 Japanese, 25 Chinese, and an increase to 12 Filipino Butler County residents. Native Americans were recorded in Butler County in 1890, 1910, 1930, 1960, and 1970. One person of Hispanic descent was recorded in the 1930 census. The “Other” category has been used to describe different groups through time. In 1800, “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
1790	0	0	0	0	0	0
1800	3913	1	0	0	0	2
1810	0	0	0	0	0	0
1820	10408	13	0	0	0	0
1830	0	4	0	0	0	0
1840	22317	61	0	0	0	0
1850	30262	84	0	0	0	0
1860	35538	56	0	0	0	0
1870	37228	42	0	0	0	0
1880	52408	128	0	0	0	0
1890	55179	154	1	5	0	0
1900	56843	115	0	4	0	0
1910	72462	217	1	9	0	0
1920	76875	387	0	8	0	0
1930	80134	342	1	2	1	0
1940	87306	274	0	0	0	10
1950	96929	369	0	0	0	22
1960	114074	513	7	32	0	13
1970	127296	437	50	74	0	84

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

The 1810 census is not digitized and therefore no data was available. The 1830 census only provided the total population, total number of free persons, and total number of enslaved persons. There were four enslaved people in Butler County in 1830 and no distinction of race among free people, therefore the BIPOC total for 1830 based on what is known is four people.

