

# Baseline Survey Census Research Northampton 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.

Northampton 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 Masonic Temple, Bethlehem, Northampton County

## Learn More:

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

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## Northampton County

Northampton County was established on March 11, 1752. It has 38 municipalities and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population was 312,951. The population of Northampton County was first recorded in the 1790 US Census. A total of 24,250 inhabitants were recorded, 24,094 of whom were White, 23 of whom were enslaved Black people, and 133 of whom were “Other Free Persons” of non-White race. The total population of Northampton County experienced consistent upward growth from 1790 to 1980.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Northampton County have historically represented less than 1% of the total population from 1790 to 1950. From 1960 to 1980, the percentage increased to between 1% and 5%. The BIPOC population in Northampton County has been predominantly Black, except in 1980, where it was predominantly Hispanic. The Black population was at its largest in 1980 at 3,844 individuals.

Asians were documented as living in Northampton County beginning in 1890 and were predominantly of Chinese descent. Native Americans were recorded in Northampton County from 1870 to 1920, from 1940 to 1960, and in 1980. People of Hispanic descent were recorded in the 1930 and 1980 censuses. In the 1980 census, the number of Hispanic people were the most numerous BIPOC group in Northampton County at 6,779 people. The “Other” category has been used to describe different groups through time. In 1790 and 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
<b>1790</b>	24094	23	0	0	0	133
<b>1800</b>	29753	8	0	0	0	241
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	31465	0	0	0	0	200
<b>1830</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	40832	164	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	40099	136	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	47763	141	0	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	61245	186	1	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	69987	322	3	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	83661	533	2	24	0	0
<b>1900</b>	99011	660	2	14	0	0
<b>1910</b>	127033	615	9	10	0	0
<b>1920</b>	152731	749	1	25	0	0
<b>1930</b>	167528	1334	0	22	417	442
<b>1940</b>	167739	1198	16	5	0	0
<b>1950</b>	183683	1509	7	37	0	7
<b>1960</b>	198937	2297	17	93	0	68
<b>1970</b>	210497	3368	0	0	0	542
<b>1980</b>	218356	3844	139	961	6779	46

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## Northampton County

This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Northampton County from 1790 to 1980. Significant events that had a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Northampton 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 no enslaved people in Northampton County in 1830 and no distinction of race among free people, therefore the BIPOC total for 1830 based on what is known is zero people.

