

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Bucks 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.

Bucks 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 HABS Photograph of Bensalem AME Church

### Learn More:

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

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Bucks County

Bucks County is one of the three original counties formed by William Penn in 1682. Today, it is comprised of 23 municipalities and as of the 2020 federal census, the total population is 646,538. The population of Bucks County was first counted during the first United States census in 1790. A total of 25,401 inhabitants were recorded, 261 of whom were enslaved Black people and 581 of whom were “Other Free Persons” of non-White race. The total population of Bucks county remained below six figures through the 19th century and early 20th century. The total population first exceeded 100,000 in 1940 with 107,715 individuals recorded in the census. The total population grew exponentially from 1940 to 1980.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Bucks County have historically represented between 1% and 3% of the total population from 1790 to 1980. Increases in the total number of BIPOC in Bucks County increased proportionally with the exponential growth of the total population from 1940 to 1980. The BIPOC population in Bucks County from 1790 to 1980 were predominantly Black. The Black population was at its largest in 1980, with 11,676 individuals.

Asians were documented as living in Bucks County beginning in 1900 and were predominantly of Chinese descent until 1940. In 1940, the number of Japanese residents (6) exceeded the number of Chinese residents (5). Native Americans were recorded in Bucks County from the 1860 census to the 1980 census. Over 100 Native Americans were documented in the US censuses from 1890 to 1910. Two people of Hispanic descent were recorded as living in Bucks County in the 1930 census. 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>	24559	261	0	0	0	581
<b>1800</b>	26773	59	0	0	0	614
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	36563	1277	0	0	0	70
<b>1830</b>	0	6	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	46368	1739	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	54369	1722	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	61960	1618	1	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	62532	1803	1	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	67107	1546	3	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	68716	1733	166	0	0	0
<b>1900</b>	68788	2200	185	17	0	0
<b>1910</b>	74549	1832	137	12	0	0
<b>1920</b>	160641	1810	16	9	0	25
<b>1930</b>	94601	2080	34	7	2	0
<b>1940</b>	1057378	1956	15	11	0	1
<b>1950</b>	142064	2491	11	46	0	8
<b>1960</b>	302627	5488	107	263	0	82
<b>1970</b>	405471	8332	0	0	0	1253
<b>1980</b>	461936	11676	551	3269	0	1780

# Baseline Survey Census Research Bucks County

This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Bucks County from 1790 to 1980. Significant events that had a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Bucks County's total populations at these important points in time.

The 1810 federal census is not digitized and therefore there is no population data. The 1830 census only provided the total population, total number of free persons, and total number of enslaved persons. There were six enslaved people in Bucks County in 1830 and no distinction of race among free people, therefore the BIPOC total for that decade is six.

