

# Baseline Survey Census Research Adams 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.

Adams 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](#).



HABS documentation photo of Lincoln Logs Motel near Gettysburg, Adams County

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

# Baseline Survey Census Research

## Adams County

Adams County was founded on January 22, 1800. It is comprised of 40 municipalities and as of the 2010 federal census, the total population was 101,407. The first recorded federal population census in Adams County occurred in 1800. A total of 13,172 inhabitants were recorded, 114 of whom were enslaved Black people and 189 of whom were “Other Free Persons” of non-White race. The population of Adams County has experienced steady upward growth since 1800, plateauing around 34,000 between 1900 and 1920 before growing at a faster rate than previous years between 1930 to 1960.

The Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) population of Adams County represented between 2 and 3 percent of the total population from 1800 to 1860. From 1870 to 1960, the percentage of BIPOC residents began to decrease. The BIPOC population in Adams County was predominantly Black. The Black population was at its highest in 1840 with 772 individuals. From 1840 onward, the total number of Black people in Adams County decreased, with short periods of increase in 1870 and 1960.

Asians were documented living in Adams County in 1890, 1900, and 1960. In 1890 and 1900, the Asian population was predominantly Chinese. By 1960, there were 6 Chinese people, 9 Japanese people, and 2 Filipino people in Adams County. Native Americans were living in Adams County and documented in the census in 1900, 1930, 1950, and 1960. Notably, 24 people identified as Native American in the 1960 census. No people of Hispanic descent were documented as living in Adams County between 1800 and 1960. The “Other” category has been used to describe different groups through time. In 1800, “Other” specifically noted BIPOC people 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>	12870	114	0	0	0	189
<b>1810</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>1820</b>	19161	629	0	0	0	0
<b>1830</b>	0	45	0	0	0	0
<b>1840</b>	22352	772	0	0	0	0
<b>1850</b>	25426	555	0	0	0	0
<b>1860</b>	27532	474	0	0	0	0
<b>1870</b>	30286	578	0	0	0	0
<b>1880</b>	31984	471	0	0	0	0
<b>1890</b>	33166	319	0	1	0	0
<b>1900</b>	34152	338	4	2	0	0
<b>1910</b>	33989	325	0	0	0	0
<b>1920</b>	34288	295	0	0	0	0
<b>1930</b>	36877	247	4	0	0	0
<b>1940</b>	39182	250	0	0	0	3
<b>1950</b>	43909	267	16	0	0	5
<b>1960</b>	51530	330	24	17	0	5



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This graph shows the relationship between BIPOC populations (right side axis) and total population (left side axis) in Adams County from 1800 to 1960. Significant events that have a bearing on the population are included below the graph to show Adams County's total populations at these important points in time.

There is no data prior to 1800 as Adams County was not yet established. Additionally, 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 45 enslaved people in Adams County in 1830 and no distinction of race among free people, therefore the BIPOC total for that decade only reflects those people who were enslaved.

